

Mekeni Reinforces Philippine Food Manufacturing Excellence at DTI Tatak Pinoy Expo 2026



Reinforcing the strength of Filipino manufacturing on the global stage, Mekeni Food Corporation is showcasing its world-class food manufacturing capabilities at the prestigious DTI Tatak Pinoy Expo 2026 currently taking place at the SMX Convention Center Manila.

Organized by the Department of Trade and Industry, the expo highlights the country's leading



industries and enterprises under the government's Tatak Pinoy Strategy, an initiative designed to strengthen domestic industries, elevate local manufacturing, and position Filipino companies for global competitiveness.

More than simply participating in the expo, Mekeni is using the platform to demonstrate how Filipino food manufacturers can meet international standards in quality, innovation, food safety, and large-scale production. As one of the country's leading food manufacturers and exporters, the company is presenting its wide range of export-quality products that are already reaching international markets across Asia, the Middle East, North America, Europe, and Oceania.

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

Mekeni Food Corporation President Prudencio 'Pruds' Garcia emphasized that the company's participation reflects its commitment to proving that Filipino manufacturing can compete confidently on the world stage. "We are proud to showcase not only our products, but also the strength of Filipino

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

Mekeni products are now available in more than 20 countries worldwide, a testament to the company's continuously expanding international footprint and adherence to globally recognized food manufacturing and safety standards.

By participating in this landmark national initiative, Mekeni reinforces its role not only as a proudly Filipino brand, but also as a manufacturing company helping elevate the reputation of Philippine-made products in the global market. **PR**

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



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

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

"This year's forum aims to solidify cooperation among govern-



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

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



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

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

Flood risk area data and assessments were provided by AMH

Philippines, which was engaged by MPT South, to support evidence-based identification of critical flood-prone areas and inform mitigation planning.

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

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

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

"We recognize that multi-sectoral collaboration creates a ripple of hope for communities in the South, especially during typhoon season. We, at MPT South, will continue to work closely

with LGUs and national government agencies to translate discussions into action," said MPT South President and General Manager Andrew B. Pangilinan.

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

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

across selected towns and cities nationwide as part of weeklong Palengke Caravan, aimed at reducing travel time, long queues, and transaction difficulties experienced by workers, pensioners, and beneficiaries.

The caravan supports the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to bring

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2026 Provincial Agri Trade Fair and Exhibit cum Kadiwa ng Pangulo



The two-day Provincial Agri Trade Fair and Exhibit cum Kadiwa ng Pangulo, hosted by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA), was held on May 13-14 at the OPA Compound. During the course of program, encouraging messages and remarks were delivered by Engr. Gilbert Gandia, Provincial Administrator; Dr. May Magno, Provincial

Veterinarian; Mr. Rexcel Amparo, Department of Trade and Industry Representative; Mr. Rolando Maningas, Agricultural Training Institute Regional Center Director; Ms. Myrachel Cuadra, Office of the Provincial Cooperatives Development Officer – OIC; and Ms. Alysa Luya, Representative of 8th Board Member Jasmin Maligaya-Bautista.

The Provincial Agri Trade Fair and Exhibit remains one of the flagship events of the Provincial Government of Cavite, recognizing the hard work and dedication of Caviteño farmers and fisherfolk while providing them with opportunities for growth and advancement. — OPIO



The Provincial Government of Bohol, through the Provincial Treasurer's Office (PTO), the Bohol Municipal Treasurers League (BOMUNTREAL), and the Bohol Assessors League, recognized top-performing local government units during the LGU Bohol Awards 2026 held on May 20, 2026, at Bohol Tropics Resort.

The awards recognized municipal mayors, assessors, and treasurers for their outstanding performance in real property tax col-

lection efficiency and notable improvements in taxable assessment growth for Fiscal Year 2025. The recognition underscores the crucial role of effective local revenue generation in sustaining development programs and public services.

A total of 27 municipal mayors and 27 municipal treasurers, 25 municipal assessors received awards for exemplary performance, while LGUs that did not qualify in all categories were given certificates of recognition for their continuing efforts. The ceremony gathered

provincial officials, municipal mayors, treasurers, and assessors from across the province. In his message, Governor Aris Aumentado underscored that the recognition reflects the values of integrity, accountability, and dedication in public service.

The initiative reinforces Bohol's commitment to responsive governance supporting the Strategic Governance Roadmap and sustainable local development as the country's first and only UNESCO Global Geopark.

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Imuseños gathered in a medical and dental mission in their community

SSS ROLLS OUT NATIONWIDE PALENGKE CARAVAN TO BRING MOBILE SERVICES CLOSER TO GRASSROOT COMMUNITIES



Q U E Z O N CITY, 25 May 2026 – The Social Security System (SSS) has deployed its mobile e-Wheels to public markets and barangays

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



Realizing the “A” in ACHIEVE: CHED CALABARZON Leads Lifelong Learning Caravan 2026



26 May 2026 | Lyceum of the Philippines University Cavite - CHED CALABARZON successfully launched the Hirayang Dunong: Lifelong Learning (LLL) Caravan and Academic Colloquium 2026 in support of the “A” in the ACHIEVE Agenda, which stands for Accessible Lifelong Learning.

The event aimed to promote lifelong learning as a continuous process of education, personal growth, and human development. It sought to educate, inform, and create opportunities for individuals to better understand how lifelong learning can be realized and maximized throughout different stages of life.

The activity also highlighted the important role of higher education institutions in making lifelong learning more accessible and in supporting individuals who wish to pursue flexible and alternative learning pathways. Dr. Jimmy G. Catanes, CESE, Director IV of the CHED Office of Programs and Standards Development, led the discussion on lifelong learning

initiatives such as the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEP), Microcredentialing, and Open and Distance Learning. He provided a comprehensive presentation on the operationalization of lifelong learning programs and the procedural guidelines for their implementation. Representatives from Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation (MSEUF), University of Batangas (UB), and Lyceum of the Philippines University Cavite (LPU Cavite) also shared their best practices in delivering lifelong learning programs during an engaging panel discussion.

Dr. Claudette Ayala of MSEUF, Dr. Allan Santillana of UB, Mr.

Ariel Belaniso of LPU Cavite together with Dr. Catanes, exchanged valuable insights and experiences on implementing lifelong learning initiatives. Dr. Mark Celis, Vice President for Academics of LPU Cavite and a CHED ETEEP assessor, likewise shared his insights on ensuring quality assurance in lifelong learning modalities.

ETEEP booths were also set up by deputized institutions including Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation, University of Batangas, Lyceum of the Philippines University Cavite, and Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas to showcase their ETEEP programs and services. To further emphasize the importance and impact of lifelong

learning, four ETEEP graduates shared their inspiring success stories. Among them were Atty. John August Vianney D. Guesse, who completed his BSBA degree through ETEEP in 2018

and now works at the City Legal Office of Batangas City; Ms. Lisa Fiona S. Patron, Assistant Manager of ProLife UK; Dr. Allan D. Santillan, now an Assistant Professor at the University of Batangas; and Mr. Redel John Salazar, now an Accounts Manager at Amazon Global.

They shared their experiences, challenges, and achievements in completing their degrees through ETEEP, inspiring participants to pursue lifelong learning and continuous professional growth. **PR**

NBI improves accessibility, reliability of clearance system

SAN PEDRO CITY, Laguna (PIA) – The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) unveiled a new clearance center in San Pedro City, Laguna as part of the bureau's efforts to improve accessibility and convenience for Filipinos securing an NBI clearance.

NBI Director Melvin Matibag led the opening of the Government Service Express Center at SM Center San Pedro on Friday, May 22. The mall houses the bureau's seventh clearance center in Laguna province and fifth such center in an SM mall nationwide.

Matibag said the new center will help reduce

travel expenses for San Pedro residents who previously had to travel to Manila or nearby cities in Laguna just to secure a clearance.

“Pwede nang pumunta dito kaysa pumunta sa opisina namin sa Pasay. Mas matipid, mas mura na makakakuha ng NBI clearance. Yung serbisyon ito na ating kailangan para sa paghahanap ng trabaho, pag-abroad natin nandyan na po,”

The NBI director added that while the NBI clearance system can also be accessed online through the eGovPH app, printed copies needed for employment, travel, and other requirements may

now be conveniently obtained at the center.

SM Supermall Vice President for Mall Operations engineer Junias Eusebio welcomed the renewed partnership between the NBI and the corporation, vowing to continue providing Filipinos with a safe, accessible, and customer-friendly environment.

“Through these partnerships with agencies such as the National Bureau of Investigation, we continue to create accessible community-centered spaces that support the everyday needs of our customers, helping working Filipinos and their families maximize their ex-

perience with every visit,” Eusebio said.

He added that SM is open to further partnerships with the NBI to establish similar clearance centers in other SM branches nationwide, seeing a vision of their malls with greater purpose to communities beyond retail.

Meanwhile, Matibag also introduced several initiatives aimed at improving the clearance system. These include shortening the waiting period for individuals whose names match those appearing in NBI or other criminal records.

“Kapag may mga **cont. on page 3**

June 03-09, 2026 LGUs at forefront of preserving cultural traditions, tourism dev't — DOT

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

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

“The local government plays a crucial role, not only in ensuring security during celebrations but also in extending support to the community. It is important for us to preserve our traditions and showcase our art and culture.

Through these festivities, we are able to promote our heritage while at the same time contributing to economic growth,” Castro said in an interview.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Our strategy has been to help farmers who are having difficulty transporting their products by providing trucks, looking for buyers, and purchasing their goods.

We are on the ground coordinating closely with our farmers, so whatever assistance they need, that is what we provide.”

For the Tourism department, preserving traditions and culture remains essential, alongside addressing the current needs of affected sectors to ensure that cultural heritage is taken care of while safeguarding the welfare of the people at present.

EDITORIAL: Safer cities

EARLY this month, the Department of the Interior and Local Government announced stricter implementation of the ban on alcohol and gambling in public areas under its Safer Cities program.

Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla said the program will initially be piloted in Metro Manila before expanding to other major urban centers nationwide.

Acting on the DILG order, the Philippine National Police (PNP) reported that more than 48,000 violators were apprehended during the first three days of the program in Metro Manila.

Of this total, some 7,389 violators were fined, 403 were charged, while 15,584 were warned and released.

Drinking and smoking in public places were the most common violations with 7,300 apprehensions.

This was followed by individuals outside their homes without shirts, curfew violations involving minors, and videoke or karaoke beyond allowed hours.

According to PNP Chief Police General Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr.: “Let's follow simple rules, avoid violations, and respect others. Small things are a big help in ensuring public order.”

But the Safer Cities project should be evaluated not only in terms of the number of people apprehended for various violations but also across several policy dimensions: effectiveness, legality, governance, fiscal sustainability, and civil liberties.

First of all, what problems will the project hope to solve? Will it target street crime, drug-related offenses, terror threats, or urban disorder? Or maybe all of the above?

The project implementation should rely on evidence such as crime data and urban risk mapping.

It should be aligned with clearly defined and empirically validated risks rather than broad, vague goals like “peace and order” without measurable targets.

Most Safer Cities programs in other countries involve such tools as expanded CCTV surveillance, increased police visibility, ‘smart’ technologies as facial recognition, and community policing.

But these tools must be proven to reduce crime. Heavy reliance on surveillance, for instance, can produce a perception of safety without addressing root causes like poverty or weak prosecution systems.

The DILG must work closely with various local government units (LGUs), so implementation quality will vary. Do LGUs have the technical capacity to operate and maintain surveillance systems? Are accountability mechanisms clearly defined? After all, a structurally sound policy can still fail if local execution is weak.

We must also point out the legal and civil liberties implications. The program should comply with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and uphold civil liberties guaranteed by our fundamental law.

The DILG's Safer Cities project should be considered positive if it is evidence-based, has clear accountability mechanisms, and avoids over-reliance on surveillance as a substitute for systemic reform. However, it becomes problematic if it centralizes surveillance without oversight, burdens LGUs without capacity support, and prioritizes visibility over actual crime reduction.

What is important is to maintain the balance between public order and civil liberties at all times.



Editorial Office

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Mobile No. ----- 09556586520 / 09164731260
TIN NO. ----- 237756418-000

Email ad: newsstraight172@gmail.com
soberanmavic@gmail.com

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION REGIONAL TRIAL COURT OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT DASMARIÑAS CITY, CAVITE

BDO UNIBANK, INC.,

Mortgagee,

File No. FC-DC-2112-26
EXTRA JUDICIAL FORECLOSURE
OF REAL ESTATE MORTGAGE
UNDER ACT 3135, AS AMENDED
BY ACT 4118

-versus-

SPS. MARIO C. VILLAMOR AND
CLARINDA P. VILLAMOR,
Debtors/Mortgagors,
x-----x

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135, as amended by Act 4118 filed by the petitioner/ mortgagee, **BDO UNIBANK, INC.** with postal address at 33rd Floor BDO Corporate Center Ortigas, No. 12 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City against the debtors/mortgagors **SPS. MARIO C. VILLAMOR AND CLARINDA P. VILLAMOR** postal address at (1) No. 122 Manny & Lynn Apt., Brgy. Rizal, Pilar, Bataan; (2) Block 5 Lot 45, Greensborough, Ph3, Brgy. Sabang, Dasmariñas, Cavite and for the satisfaction of the mortgaged debt which as of APRIL 20, 2026 amounts to **FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY THREE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTY SEVEN PESOS AND 55/100 (Php 423,737.55)**, exclusive of all legal fees and expenses incidental to this foreclosure and sale, the undersigned sheriff will sell at public auction on **JUNE 24, 2026 at 10:00 o'clock** in the morning or soon thereafter at the lobby of Branch 90, Regional Trial Court, Ground Floor, Dasmariñas Community Affairs (DASCA) Building, Congressional Road, Buro I, Dasmariñas City, Province of Cavite to the highest bidder and for CASH or CERTIFIED CHECK, in Philippine Currency, the following described real property together with all the buildings and other improvements existing thereon, to wit:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE
No. 057-2016017875

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that certain land situated in BARANGAY OF SABANG, MUNICIPALITY OF DASMARIÑAS, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, ISLAND OF LUZON, bounded and described as follows:

A PARCEL OF LAND (LOT 45, BLK 5 OF THE CONSOLIDATION AND SUBDIVISION PLAN PCS-04-026545, BEING A PORTION OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF LOTS 1-66, BLK. 1; LOTS 1-25, BLK. 2; LOTS 1-66, BLK. 3; LOTS 1-13, BLK. 4; LOTS 1-22, BLK. 5; LOTS 1-28, BLK. 6; LOTS 1-26, BLK. 7; LOTS 1-38, (Continued on next page)

is registered in accordance with the provision of the Property Registration Decree in the name of

Owner: SPOUSES MARIO CASIMIRO VILLAMOR AND CLARINDA PENA VILLAMOR, BOTH FILIPINOS, OF LEGAL AGE
Address: 122 MANNY & LYNN APT., RIZAL PILAR BATAAN

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION (Continued from page 1)
BLK. 8; LOTS 1-5, BLK. 9 & ROAD LOTS 1-8, ALL OF PSD-04-208492, L.R.C. RECORD NO. 8043), SITUATED IN THE BARANGAY OF SABANG, MUNICIPALITY OF DASMARIÑAS, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, ISLAND OF LUZON. BONDED ON THE SE., ALONG LINE 1-2 BY LOT 43, BLK. 5; ON THE SW., ALONG LINE 2-3 BY ROAD LOT 4; ON THE NW., ALONG LINE 3-4 BY LOT 47, BLK. 5 AND ON THE NE., ALONG LINE 4-1 BY LOT 44, BLK. 5 ALL OF THE CONSOLIDATION AND SUBDIVISION PLAN. BEGINNING AT A POINT

MARKED “1” ON PLAN. BEING N. 49 DEG. 02’ E., 543.72 M. FROM MON NO. 139, IMUS ESTATE., THENCE S. 88 DEG. 06’ W., 10.00 M. TO POINT 2; THENCE N. 01 DEG. 54’ N., 5.00 M. TO POINT 3; THENCE N. 86 DEG. 06’ E., 10.00 M. TO POINT 4; THENCE S. 01 DEG. 54’ E., 5.00 M. TO THE POINT BEGINNING, CONTAINING AN AREA OF **FIFTY (50) SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS**. ALL POINTS REFERRED TO ARE INDICATED ON THE PLAN AND ARE MARKED ON THE GROUND BY P.S., CYL. CONC. MONS 15X40 CMS; BEARINGS TRUE; DATE OF ORIGINAL SURVEY JULY 27, 1905 TO JUNE 11, 1908 AND PART OF THE CONSOLIDATION AND SUBDIVISION SURVEY; OCT. 1-10, 2008 & WAS APPROVED ON DEC. 21, 2010

Prospective buyers and/or bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title of the said real property and the encumbrance thereon, if there be any.

All sealed bids must be submitted to the undersigned on the above-stated time and date.

In the event that the public auction should not take place on the said date and time, it shall be held on JULY 8, 2026, at the same time and place without further notice.

Dasmariñas City, Cavite, May 8, 2026.

(SGD) **ARLYN P. BARCELON**
Sheriff IV

(SGD) **ATTY. MARCELA L. BAYBAY**
Clerk of Court VI & Ex-Officio Sheriff

Copy furnished:

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33rd Floor BDO Corporate Center Ortigas,
No. 12 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City

**BDO UNIBANK INC.,
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT UNIT
JACEL DL. FLORENCIO**
33rd Floor, BDO Corporate Center Ortigas,
No.12, ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City

**SPS. MARIO C. VILLAMOR
AND CLARINDA P. VILLAMOR**
(1) No.122 Manny & Lynn Apt.
Brgy. Rizal, Pilar, Bataan:
(2) Block 5 Lot 45, Greensborough,
Ph3, Brgy. Sabang, Dasmariñas, Cavite

Notice posted at:

1. The Bulletin Board of Regional Trial Court, Dasmariñas City, Cavite
2. The Bulletin Board of Dasmariñas City Hall
3. The Bulletin Board of Dasmariñas City Post Office
4. The Bulletin Board of Dasmariñas City Public Market

**STRAIGHT EWS PUBLISHING:
MAY 20, 27 & JUNE 03, 2026**

NBI...

kapangalan, dati po it will take 2 weeks para po makuha ang clearance. We're trying to improve our services na on the same day also ay makuha ang clearance. We've allocated a budget, it's been bidded and awarded already,”

The NBI director said the project seeks to establish an interconnected database with courts and law enforcement agencies to strengthen criminal records management and improve the reliability of the clearance

system.

Matibag also underscored the importance of expanding the scope of NBI records through the inclusion of individuals' dental records, which could help authorities identify victims of heinous crimes and calamities more efficiently.

The NBI vowed to continue promoting law and order as one of its primary mandates while ensuring that Filipinos' right to accessible and efficient government services is upheld.

FROM PAGE 06

Code blue: ‘Doctors to the Barrios’ return to service program keeps healthcare system alive amid worker shortage

A new generation of doctors is poised to revitalize the Philippine healthcare system following the March 2026 Physician Licensure Examination. With 1,954 exam passers as new physicians, the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) highlights an incoming workforce equipped to address gaps in public healthcare, especially in marginalized communities.

Yet, beneath the optimism lies a stark reality: a public health system in dire need of professionals to deliver life-saving services to the country's most remote and underserved communities.

Universally, a hospital “code blue” indicates a medical emergency where a patient is experiencing a life-threatening emergency. In these critical seconds, nearby medical personnel work together to revive a patient. Strict protocol, precise movement, and a heartbeat are what separate a patient from life and death.

Yet, despite life-saving abilities, the public health system remains understaffed. Very few hands are available to help care for millions of patients, especially in rural areas and island towns in need of medical care.

Dr. Brittany Mandalihan, Universal Healthcare Outcomes Manager for the Department of Health (DOH)-CALABARZON, paints a harrowing picture: a country facing a shortage of health workers, with those who remain being stretched dangerously thin.

“Medyo nakakalungkot man po at matalag na po nating problema ang usapin pagdating sa mga healthcare worker. Batay sa datos ng ating rehiyon, masasabi namin na hindi pa rin talaga sapat ang bilang ng ating healthcare workers hindi lang sa ating rehiyon pero pati na rin sa ating bansa lalo na sa mga primary care facility at rural health units.”

Globally, the World Health Organization

(WHO) recommends a ratio of 10 doctors for every 10,000 population—or one doctor for every 1,000 population. However, the DOH operates with fewer resources, targeting one (1) doctor for every 20,000 population. For nurses, the ratio is one for every 10,000 population; 1:5,000 for midwives, and 1:50,000 for dentists.

Despite being already below global standards, the health department records reveal massive significant shortages in healthcare personnel. Public health facilities such as Rural Health Units and Primary Care Facilities are short of at least 2,000 physicians, 4,400 nurses, and 3,900 midwives. Even public dental services were not spared with close to 140 shortages.

Catering to a fast-growing population, the Philippines is very well aware of its depleting supply of healthcare professionals. A study by the Ateneo de Manila University highlighted the country's perennial problem of shortages of nurses and physicians.

“Government primary care facilities and hospitals struggle to hire sufficient staff due to budget and policy barriers, while private hospitals struggle to keep their staff due to fiscal complaints.”

Healthcare workers were not exempt in the country's “brain drain” phenomenon, which sees skilled professionals migrate for better compensation and work conditions. Instead of expanding the workforce, fresh graduates have become a quick fix for the ongoing shortage. Without tenured and experienced professionals to mentor them, new graduates were ill-prepared for deployment.

The DOH admits that it cannot force healthcare workers to stay in the country, choosing instead to strengthen its human resource-centered programs. Initiatives such as the National Health Work-

ers' Support System and the Doctors to the Barrios program aim to deploy specialists into public health facilities and last-mile communities.

“Tayo ay nagbibigay sa mga city at probinsya ng nurses, midwife, medtech, therapist, dentist, and nutritionists. Isa na rin sa mga programa natin ay ‘yung Doctors to the Barrios program kung saan ‘yung mga munisipyo na walang doktor ay binibigyan natin ng mga doktor. Usually ito ‘yung scholars natin na pinag-aaral ng medisina at sila po ay nagre-return to service for three years after nila mag-aral.”

Currently, 38 physicians under the Doctors to the Barrios program are catering to 236 barangays across 52 municipalities in the region that are considered Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA).

“Ang ating Department of Health ay mayroong post-residency placement program sa mga government hospital, at after nila makapasa sa kanilang exams ay kailangan nilang magbigay ng one year na return service sa mga lugar kung saan sila ide-deploy.”

Additionally, the DOH Post-Residency Placement Program binds recent graduates to a one-year service in remote and underserved government hospitals as a return service.

This model has been vital in Quezon province where a delicate healthcare system must constantly adapt to isolated communities and a parade of calamities.

Quezon Governor Helen Tan said the provincial government is sponsoring 33 scholars who are taking medicine courses. As part of their return service program, these doctors will serve Quezon's remote communities without access to healthcare services.

“May 33 na pinag-aaral ng pagdu-doktor ang kapitolyo, libre po

C A L A M B A CITY, Laguna (PIA) — In line with its mandate to strengthen skills development, expand industry partnerships, and prepare Filipino workers for emerging global demands, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) said that it equips learners with new and emerging competencies aligned with standards set by ASEAN member states.

During the opening ceremony of the WorldSkills Philippines CALABARZON held at the Lyceum of the Philippines University Laguna in Calamba City, TESDA officials witnessed the convergence of hundreds of TESDA learners, scholars, and students, together with their trainers and faculty members, competing in a wide range of technical and vocational competencies and disciplines.

TESDA said that technical-vocational institutions (TVIs) and accredited higher education institutions (HEIs) in CALABARZON, as an industry-driven region, align their technical-vocational curricula with the needs of companies and industry partners, while adhering to international standards and programs.

TESDA Deputy Director General for TVET Partnerships and Linkages Nelly Nita Dillera high-

lyon. Para ‘yung mga lugar na walang doktor ay magkadoktor dahil may return of service po iyon.”

More than simply ‘giving back’ to the community, the return service program seeks to augment its health services with specialized doctors, such as occupational and speech therapists.

Health officials openly acknowledge that mandated service is a short term fix in the gaps in the healthcare system. But as long as local offerings pale in comparison to lucrative overseas compensation, the Philippine public health sector will remain a revolving door for trained professionals.

lighted the agency's Enterprise-Based Education and Training (EBET) initiative as a major strategy in workforce preparation as it continues to collaborate with enterprises and industry players.

“What's unique about the [Enterprise-Based Education and Training] is that the training happens in the industry or enterprise.

The programs that are run are programs that are maybe already developed by enterprises or developed by enterprises because they respond to or address certain gaps of the skilled workforce,” Dillera said.

She noted that there are now more than 379 enterprises or companies that have adopted or are already implementing the EBET, with over 3,000 programs already registered with TESDA centers nationwide.

Aside from providing opportunities for training and certification, TESDA also actively participates in international skills competitions aimed at exposing technical-vocational learners and scholars to global trends.

These include the country's preparations for the upcoming WorldSkills ASEAN Competition and the 2026 WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai, China.

TESDA CALABARZON Regional Director Engineer Jovencio Ferrer Jr. emphasized that learners who undergo provincial and regional skills competitions gain critical exposure to advanced technologies and industry standards, helping prepare them for the high-level competencies required in international competitions. “Kung sinong manalo doon ay lalaban sa ASEAN level. Our preparation is we make sure

na lahat ng competencies na kailangan sa mga new and emerging technologies na kailangan ay maibigay namin in terms of lehitimong pag-develop ng mga trainers, and even the programs that we offer, we make sure na meron tayo dito sa Calabarzon nang sa ganoon yung mga workers na kailangan ng industries ay makapag-provide tayo sa kanila,” Ferrer said.



TESDA offers skills training programs aligned with industry demand, ASEAN standards

Bohol-Panglao International Airport Welcomes First Chartered Flight from Japan



Panglao, Bohol — Bohol-Panglao International Airport (BPIA) marked a significant milestone in its connectivity expansion as it warmly welcomed 163 Japanese visitors on May 2, 2026, arriving via the first-ever chartered flight from Narita, Japan to Panglao, Bohol operated by Cebu Pacific via 5J8811.

The arrival signals a renewed interest from the Japanese market and underscores Bohol's growing appeal as a premier destination for international travelers. Bohol Governor Erico Aristotle Aumentado expressed optimism about the development, emphasizing its importance in boosting the local tourism industry and economy.

“This is a very encouraging development for Bohol. We are hopeful that this chartered flight will pave the way for regular international arrivals, particularly from Japan, which has always been a valued tourism market for us,” Governor Aumentado said.

Driving this initiative forward is Aboitiz InfraCapital Bohol Airport Corporation (ABAC), the operator of BPIA. Joining the Governor's official delegation during the September 2025 Bohol Business Mission to Japan, ABAC held exclusive talks with charter flight organizer JTB Corporation. These discussions highlighted the airport's modern infrastructure and laid the groundwork for expanding Japanese tourist arrivals in Bohol.

Building on these engagements, ABAC also

conducted on-site inspection in Tagbilaran in October to assess the readiness and adequacy of the airport's Immigration, Customs, and Quarantine (ICQ) facilities—a crucial step in ensuring seamless international operations and passenger experience.

Bohol-Panglao International Airport General Manager Aldwin Uy highlighted the importance of sustained collaboration in enabling international connectivity. “We are proud to support this milestone arrival made possible through our strong partnership with Cebu Pacific, the Provincial Government of Bohol, and our tourism partners in Japan.

This charter flight demonstrates Bohol-Panglao International Airport's readiness to handle international traffic, connecting travelers to Bohol's unique experiences and opportunities, while we continue enhancing our facilities and passenger experience to support stronger international operations.”

The visiting Japanese tourists were



welcomed with a warm reception upon arrival, showcasing Boholano hospitality and culture. Local tourism stakeholders and airport authorities coordinated closely to ensure a seamless and memorable arrival experience.

Bohol-Panglao International Airport, known as the country's first eco-airport, continues to play a vital role in enhancing connectivity and supporting the province's tourism growth. By connecting travelers to destinations like Bohol, the airport helps open pathways to local communities, businesses, and experiences—supporting a more inclusive and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

The successful arrival of this charter flight reflects ongoing efforts to position Bohol as a key gateway for international travel in the Philippines.

With this milestone, stakeholders remain optimistic about further strengthening international air links and sustaining the upward trajectory of Bohol's tourism sector.

Rippling effect of turning dreams into progress

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

Glaiza began selling vinegar produced by the farmers when she was still a working student in 2008.

As a working student, she balanced her studies with a job at a fast-food chain and selling vinegar at school and in public markets.

Later that year, she took the risk of creating her own vinegar, given the abundance of sugarcane in their area.

Because of her hard work, she completed her education and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce, Major in Management.

After graduation, she entered the corporate world but soon realized that running her own business suited her better.

In 2016, she was determined to take her vinegar business seriously, so she resigned from her job and focused on marketing her product.

Glaiza went to public markets to offer samples to help customers distinguish her all-natural vinegar from other commercial brands.

From then on, more people became her customers.

Through consistency, she built a strong presence in the market.

In 2020, while the pandemic brought hardships to many, it became a blessing in disguise for their business.

With the proper permits and operating requirements in place, most orders came to them, allowing their business to grow.

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

With their mar-



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

keting strategy, they have been able to supply supermarkets, convenience stores, local government units, bus stops, and public markets.

E-commerce platforms also help them reach customers nationwide.

To ensure consistent quality, their employees continue to undergo training, seminars, and workshops on food safety and manufacturing practices.

As the number of customers increased, they were able to build their production facility and invest in assets.

Around 2018, she learned about CARD SME Bank, a thrift bank under CARD Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI).

Her first loan of PHP 3,000.00 was used to buy sugarcane.

She currently has an active loan with the bank, which she uses as additional capital for the business.

Because of her entrepreneurial skill, Glaiza was recognized as the Pagkilala sa Mga Likha ni Inay (PsMLNI) Gawad Maunlad 2025 winner.

This award recognized people like her

Rippling effect of turning dreams into progress

who, through hard work and responsible financing, grew their businesses from simple livelihoods into stable ventures.

PsMLNI is conducted annually by CARD MRI to honor clients who, through hard work and institutional support, have achieved growth and success.

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

It was a ripple effect; she was able to provide for her family, create employment for others, and help farmers earn income.

Her journey may have been tough, but the fact that she can meet not only her family's needs but also help others is what drives her to do even more.

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