

### GEN TRI BUY-BUST OPERATION NETS DRUG SUSPECT WHILE SHOOTING INCIDENT INJURES OPERATIVE

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite**

— A buy-bust operation conducted by the General Trias Component City Police Station resulted in the arrest of a street-level drug suspect, while in the course of buy bust operation, a shooting incident incurred led to the

injury of a police officer on the evening of January 8, 2026, in General Trias City, Cavite.

Arrested during the buy-bust operation was alias "ARCE" 35, of Barangay Santiago, General Trias City. Confiscated from his possession were approximately 6.70 grams of suspected shabu valued at Php 45,560.00, along with marked buy-bust money, and other drug paraphernalia. Meanwhile, report from the Gentrì police station

said that in the nearby area of the buy bust site, an individual allegedly fired at the operating team 200 meters from his residence. The operatives returned fire, and PCpl Ryan O Vizmanos, an intelligence operative of said station sustained a gunshot wound. He was immediately transported to Gentrì Doctors Medical Center in Barangay Manggahan, General Trias City, and received medical attention. Said individual involved in the shooting incident was later identified as Patrolman Harvey Perdito Mendoza, a member of PNP Maritime Group.

A follow-up operation led to the arrest of Patrolman Mendoza at his residence. Authorities recovered a Taurus 9mm pistol with PNP markings, a magazine, and fired cartridge shells. Confiscated drugs from the drug suspect alias "ARCE" and the firearms together with ballistic evidence confiscated from Patrolman Mendoza were submitted to the Provincial Forensic Unit in Imus City, Cavite, for laboratory and ballistic examination.

Both individuals are now under police custody as inquest proceedings are being prepared before the Office of the City Prosecutor.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, emphasized the commitment of the Cavite Police to their intensified campaign against illegal drugs while ensuring the safety of both the public and police personnel. "This operation reflects our firm stand against illegal drugs and our responsibility to protect both the public and our police officers. As the investigation continues, we remain committed to due process, discipline within our ranks, and the safety of our communities," PCOL RED said.

also provided, including 100 fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, 32 electrocardiogram (ECG) procedures, and 22 X-ray examinations. Free prescribed medicines were likewise distributed to patients.

Medical and dental services were delivered by health professionals from the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH), with the assistance of the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG) medical mission team.

The mission was attended by local officials, including 7th District Board Member Aldrin Anacan, Councilor Joyce Anne Mojica, Councilor Anne Jomille Humarang, and barangay officials.

The activity underscored the provincial government's sustained commitment to bringing accessible and responsive healthcare services closer to communities, as it continues to roll out health programs aimed at addressing the medical needs of Caviteños throughout the year. — R. Tanael / Cavite-PIO

# PGC CONTINUES HEALTH INITIATIVES WITH MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION IN TRECE MARTIRES CITY

On January 8, the Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted a Medical and Dental Mission in Barangay Cabezas, Trece Martires City, marking the continuation of the PGC's

health initiatives for the new year.

The activity served a total of 582 patients, with 379 receiving medical consultations and 49 availing of dental services. Diagnostic services were



MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION  
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## TRECE MARTIRES PNP ARRESTED A CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite** — In an intensified campaign against wanted person, the personnel of Trece Martires Component City Police Station arrested a City Level Most Wanted Person during a police operation at Trece Martires City, Cavite.

At about 5:30 AM, personnel of Trece Martires CCPS implemented a Warrant of Arrest against RICKY, 29 years old, and a resident of Trece Martires City, Cavite.

The accused was arrested for Qualified Theft under Article 310 of the Revised Penal Code, by virtue of a warrant issued on January 7, 2026, by the Presiding Judge of RTC Branch 131, Trece Martires City. The court recommended a bail amount of Php 30,000.00

for the accused's temporary liberty.

During the arrest, the accused was properly informed of his constitutional rights in a dialect known to him. He is currently detained at the Trece Martires CCPS Custodial Facility pending further legal proceedings.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director commended the operating unit for the orderly and lawful conduct of the operation. "Serving warrants is not just about enforcement, it is about doing so correctly, respectfully, and within the bounds of the law. This operation reflects our continuing effort to maintain professionalism at all levels," the Provincial Director said.

## GENERAL TRIAS POLICE NABS REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite** — Personnel of the General Trias City Component City Police Station successfully arrested a Regional Level Most Wanted Person in Brgy. Santiago, General Trias City, Cavite at about 7:30 in the afternoon, January 7, 2026.

PLTCOL BISMARCK S MENDOZA, COP, General Trias CCPS, identified the accused as Alias James, a resident of Brgy. Santiago, General Trias City, Cavite.

With the use of an Alternative Recording Device (ARD), the accused was arrested by virtue of warrant of arrest for the crimes of Statutory Rape (2 counts) and Acts of Lasciviousness (2 counts) was issued on December 19, 2025, by the Presiding Judge, Family Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 5, Trece Martires City, Cavite. No bail was

recommended for each count of Statutory Rape, while Php180,000.00 bail was recommended for each count of Acts of Lasciviousness.

The accused is temporarily detained at the General Trias City Custodial Facility, Brgy. Bagumbayan, General Trias City, Cavite, pending the return of the warrant to the Court of Origin and the subsequent issuance of a Commitment Order.

The Acting Provincial Director of Cavite Police Provincial Office, PCOL ARIEL R RED, lauded the operating unit for the successful apprehension, stating:

"The arrest of this Regional Level Most Wanted Person demonstrates the Cavite PNP's unwavering commitment to pursue and apprehend wanted individuals, especially those involved in heinous

## JOINT POLICE OPS NABBED A REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON IN INDANG, CAVITE

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite**— A coordinated manhunt operation conducted by the personnel of Indang Municipal Police Station together with the personnel of Provincial Mobile Force Company led to the arrest of a Regional Level Most Wanted Person in Indang, Cavite.

PMAJ IAN JASPER M MONTOYA, Acting Chief of Police of Indang Municipal Police Station, identified the arrested individual as alias Echo, and presently residing at Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

The arrest was made by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for Rape under Article 266-A, Paragraph 1 of the Revised Penal Code, issued on November 8, 2025, by the Acting Presiding Judge of RTC Branch 15, Naic, Cavite.

The offense is classified as not bailable.

The accused is currently under the custody of the Indang Municipal Police Station for documentation and proper legal disposition. The warrant of arrest will be returned to the court of origin, with a spot report to follow.

In a statement, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director underscored the importance of inter-unit coordination in law enforcement operations. "This successful operation shows how cooperation among police units strengthens our ability to serve warrants efficiently and lawfully. Our priority is to protect communities while upholding due process," the Provincial Director said.

## LALAKI ARESTADO SA MATAGUMPAY NA BUY-BUST OPERATION NG MAGALLANES PULIS

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite**— Matagumpay na naaresto ng Magallanes Municipal Police Station ang isang lalaki matapos ang isinagawang buy-bust operation sa Magallanes, Cavite, dakong 9:15 ng gabi ng Enero 6, 2025.

Kinilala ni PMAJ RAYMOND T BALBUENA,

crimes. We assure the public that our personnel will continue to intensify operations, uphold justice, and ensure the safety and security of every Caviteño." This operation underscores the Cavite Police Provincial Office's dedication to bringing lawbreakers to justice and maintaining peace and order throughout the province.

hepe ng Magallanes MPS ng pulisya ang suspek na si alyas "Dex", residente ng Magallanes, Cavite.

Isinagawa ng Municipal Drug Enforcement Team ng Magallanes MPS ang operasyon, gamit ang Alternative Recording Device. Nagresulta ito sa pagkakadakup sa suspek at pagkakakumpiska ng sumusunod na ebidensya: dalawang piraso ng heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets na naglalaman ng hinihinalang shabu na tumitimbang ng humigit-kumulang 0.10 gramo na may Standard Drug Price na Php1000.00 at isang pirasong Php500.00 (buy-bust money).

Ipinaalam sa suspek ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal

## MOST WANTED PERSON NG CAVITE ARESTADO SA BATANGAS

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite** — Sa pinaigting na pagtugis sa mga taong may pananagutan sa batas, matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Mendez Municipal Police Station ang isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person sa Brgy. Caloocan, Balayan, Batangas, dakong 3:00 ng hapon ngayong Enero 8, 2026.

Kinilala ni PMAJ IVAN HOWELL B BAYLA, Officer-in-Charge ng Mendez MPS, ang akusado na si alyas JAY, residente ng Alfonso, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa ng mga Warrant

Personnel ng Mendez MPS sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa paglabag sa Section 3 ng NEW ANTI-CARNAPPING ACT OF 2016 (RA 10883).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa akusadong ito ay patunay na hindi titigil ang ating mga operatiba sa pagpapatupad ng batas upang matiyak na ang hustisya ay mananaig. Patuloy ang Cavite PPO sa pagpapanatili ng katahimikan at seguridad para sa ating mga kababayan."

## CAVITE'S MOST WANTED, ARESTADO NG SILANG PNP AT CPMFC

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite** — Naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Silang Municipal Police Station at Cavite Provincial Mobile Force Company ang isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person sa Silang, Cavite alas-11:00

sa wikang nauunawaan niya. Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Magallanes MPS ang suspek, habang inihahanda ang mga kaukulang dokumento para sa inquest proceedings.

Ayon kay PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang matagumpay na operasyon na ito ay patunay ng walang-sawang dedikasyon ng ating kapulisan sa kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga. Patuloy nating titiyakin na ang Cavite ay magiging mas ligtas at hindi bibigyan ng puwang ang mga nagtatangkang maghasik ng ilegal na gawain."

ng gabi ng Enero 6, 2026. Kinilala ni PLTCOL JOSEPH D MACATANGAY, OIC, Silang MPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Wel" residente ng Isabela.

Isinagawa ng mga tauhan mula sa Warrant Section ng Silang MPS, katuwang ang Cavite Provincial Mobile Force Company, ang joint police operation gamit ang Alternative Recording Device (ARD), na nagresulta sa pagkakaaresto ng akusado sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa kasong Acts of Lasciviousness (5 counts).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite PPO, "Ang patuloy na pagkakaaresto ng mga Most Wanted Person sa CALABARZON ay patunay ng mas pinaigting na operasyon ng Cavite Police upang maipatupad ang batas at mapanatili ang katahimikan sa ating komunidad."

### JOINT OPERATION LED TO THE ARREST OF WANTED PERSON

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite** — Personnel from the Silang Municipal Police Station together with 401st A MC RMFB 4A and the Cavite Provincial Mobile Force Company arrested a Wanted Person in Silang, Cavite on January 6, 2026. PLTCOL JOSEPH D. MACATANGAY, OIC of Silang MPS, identified the suspect as alias "Jorgie," a resident of Silang, Cavite. The arrest was carried out by personnel from the Warrant Section of Silang MPS (lead unit) together with 401st A MC RMFB 4A and Cavite Provincial Mobile Force Company, through a joint police operation using

an Alternative Recording Device (ARD), which led to the arrest of the accused pursuant to a Warrant of Arrest for the case of Qualified Theft (RPC ART. 310) issued by Regional Trial Court, Branch 135, Tagaytay City, Cavite with bail recommended amounting to Php40,000.00 dated July 07, 2025. In a statement, PCOL ARIEL R. RED, Acting Provincial Director of Cavite PPO, said, "The continued arrest of Most Wanted Persons is proof of the intensified operations of the Cavite Police to enforce the law and maintain peace and order in our communities."

### CALABARZON POLICE REAPS MAJOR OPERATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2025, COMMITS TO PEOPLE-CENTERED POLICING IN 2026

**CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA)** – As a result of the intensified efforts in maintaining peace and order in the Calabarzon region, the Philippine National Police Regional Office IV-A records significant operational accomplishments in 2025. Under the leadership of PRO IV-A Regional Director Police Brigadier General Paul Kenneth Lucas, the Calabarzon police conducted 8,770 operations in its anti-illegal drug campaign, leading to the arrest of 11,391 individuals. During the said operations, the authorities confiscated 84,235.02 grams of shabu and 91,349.27 grams of marijuana, with a combined estimated value of Php646,319,834.60, which led to a major blow of illegal drug networks operating in the region. According to PBGen Lucas, these achievements reflect the hard work, discipline, and unity of Calabarzon police officers and personnel in carrying out the agency's mandate

to maintain peace and security across the region. "These achievements are a testament to the hard work, discipline, and unity of our personnel and our partners. Guided by the principle of Bagong PNP para sa Bagong Pilipinas: Serbisyong Mabilis, Tapat at Nararamdaman, PRO 4A will continue to deliver responsive, honest, and people-centered policing for the people of CALABARZON." PBGen Lucas said in an official press release. He also highlighted the crucial support of partner government agencies and local communities, emphasizing that these successes are crucial in the police's commitment to uphold the law, protect the public, and sustain peace and order throughout the region. Additionally, the Calabarzon police has successfully arrested 4,073 wanted individuals under its campaign against most wanted persons. This includes the arrest of 6 National Level; 1,006

Regional Level; and 1,433 Provincial Level Most Wanted Persons. As part of its intensified campaign against illegal gambling, PRO IV-A conducted 9,686 operations across the region, resulting in 22,619 arrests and the confiscation of over ₱4 million in betting money. Meanwhile, campaign against loose firearms in the region has yielded notable results, with 1,478 operations leading to the confiscation, surrender, and recovery of 2,708 firearms, helping reduce election-related and other gun-related incidents. As the new year begun, PRO IV-A sets its sight in delivering responsive, honest, and people-centered policing, making law enforcement fair and effective to build trust and maintain community engagement to deter crimes. (CO/PIA-CALABARZON with reports from RPIO) **BY CHARMAINE ODONG**

### OVER 13.7 MILLION IN CALABARZON REGISTERED UNDER NAT'L IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

**CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA)** — More than 13.7 million Filipinos in Calabarzon have registered under the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys), according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Region IV-A. Based on the PSA's preliminary count as of December 15, 2025, Cavite recorded the highest number of registrants with 3,503,633, followed by Rizal with 2,938,672. Batangas and Laguna posted comparable figures at 2,729,112 and

2,722,663, respectively, while Quezon registered 1,931,698 individuals. PSA Regional Director Charito Armonia said the number of registrants reflects strong public participation in the government's national identification program. "We attribute the steady increase in registrations to the expanded availability of national ID services through fixed and mobile registration centers across Calabarzon," Armonia said. Armonia also reaffirmed PSA's commitment to ensuring inclusive identification and improving service delivery by bringing National ID registration and related services closer to the public. The National ID is widely recognized as a valid proof of identity and facilitates access to government services, social protection programs, and financial transactions. On Dec. 22, the PSA conducted National ID services to bring essential government programs closer to communities. The initiative aimed to improve accessibility for elderly residents and katutubong 4Ps beneficiaries who often face mobility challenges and difficulty traveling to distant registration centers. "By deploying the National ID Registration Team directly to communities, PSA Quezon ensured a convenient, efficient, and responsive registration process tailored to the needs of katutubong 4Ps beneficiaries," Armonia added. The PSA continues to encourage unregistered residents in the region to register at the nearest PSA offices, malls, and partner local government units. Registered individuals are also reminded that updating or correcting demographic information in the National ID System is free of charge at select registration centers. (PIA4A with reports from PSA4A) **BY PIA CALABARZON**

## EDITORIAL

### Pagiging Emosyonal ng mga Bar Passers, Hindi Napigilan

Resulta ng 2025 Bar examination, lumabas na. Mga pumasa sa Bar, hindi napigilang maging emosyonal. 5,594 mula sa 11,420 examinees ang nakapasa sa Bar exam na isinagawa noong Setyembre noong nakaraang taon. Lubos na naging emosyonal ang mga nakapasa mula sa taunang exam, iba'tibang kwento ang ibinahagi na siyang nakakapagbigay ng inspirasyon sa iba na ituloy ang kani-kanilang pangarap sa kabila ng hirap na pagdaraan sa pag-aabogasya.

Nakakatuwa na dumarami ang mga taong ipinupursige ang pagkamit sa pangarap na ito gayong isa ang pag-aabogasya na maituturing na pinakamahirap at matagal na lakbay sa pag-aaral. Sana ay maging katuwang nating ang mga bagong abogado patungo sa maayos na sistema ng hustisya ng mga Pilipinas.

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## DPWH CHIEF ORDERS REPAIR OF DAMAGED DIKES IN CALUMPIT

MANILA—The government, through the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), will be repairing damaged dikes in Calumpit, Bulacan, in a bid to alleviate flooding in the area during the rainy season.

During a meeting on Friday, DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon directed the new officers of the DPWH Bulacan 1st District Engineering Office to prioritize Calumpit and other low-lying areas in the province, emphasizing President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s order to ensure that projects are properly implemented based on the master plan. He also ordered the local DPWH officials to ensure that there will be no "ghost" and substandard projects this time around.

To recall, Marcos in August last year

inspected a river protection project in Barangay Bulusan in response to complaints filed via the [sumbongsapangulo.ph](http://sumbongsapangulo.ph) website.

Despite official records stating the structure was successfully completed, the on-site assessment revealed that more than 200 meters of the dike were never installed.

Marcos also pointed to signs of shoddy construction work on the project, such as structural gaps and steel reinforcements not embedded correctly in the ground.

The [sumbongsapangulo.ph](http://sumbongsapangulo.ph) website was created in line with Marcos' order during his fourth State of the Nation Address to investigate irregularities in flood control projects. **(Ferdinand Patinio/PNA)**

## TESDA TO UPSKILL OVER 600K SCHOLARS WITH HISTORIC P19B BUDGET

MANILA (PIA) — The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) secured a historic P19 billion allocation for scholarships in the 2026 national budget, aimed at upskilling over 600,000 Filipinos and addressing the employability gaps in the K-12 Senior High School (SHS) program.

TESDA Director General Secretary Kiko Benitez announced the funding increase, noting it as the largest in the agency's history.

"Nagpapasalamat na rin po ako dahil ang budget po ng TESDA para sa 2026 ay ang pinakamalaking budget po ng TESDA sa amin pong kasaysayan," Benitez said during a press briefing.

The agency targets to enroll some 600,000 to 650,000 learners in 2026, focusing on high-employability sectors.

A significant portion of the inter-agency discussion focused on the K-12 program's failure to produce "job-ready" graduates. To address this, officials

from DepEd, TESDA, and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) unveiled major curriculum changes.

Education Secretary Sonny Angara announced that the Senior High School job immersion program will be more than doubled to ensure students gain real-world experience.

"From 300 hours maximum dati, gagawin na natin 640 hours, which is almost one semester of job immersion," Angara said.

Angara also noted that the K-12 curriculum has been decongested. From 33 subjects, the required core has been reduced to five, allowing students more flexibility to choose between vocational skills and academic subjects without being "boxed in." Benitez emphasized that TESDA is actively certifying SHS graduates to validate their skills for employers. He reported that 190,000 senior high school students have already been assessed and certified with National Certificates (NC II and NC III).

"So, if the issue is whether or not Senior High School

## PNP VOWS TO INTENSIFY ANTI-CYBERCRIME CAMPAIGN, FIGHT VS ONLINE SCAMS

QUEZON CITY (PIA) — The Philippine National Police (PNP) vows to further intensify its anti-cybercrime campaign and fight against online scams this year.

"Hindi titigil ang PNP. Sa 2026, lalo pa nating paigingtingin ang ating anti-cybercrime campaign. Mas pinalalakas natin ang intelligence, ang enforcement, at ang pakikipagtulungan sa iba't ibang ahensya," PNP chief PLTGEN Jose Melencio C. Nartatez Jr. said.

Nartatez emphasized that public vigilance remains a critical factor in sustaining gains against cybercrime. Last year, the PNP Anti-Cybercrime Group (ACG) reported significant gains in its fight against cybercrime, citing a notable decline in online

scam incidents and improved enforcement against emerging digital fraud schemes.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 4, 2025, PNP's ACG logged substantially fewer cybercrime incidents across most major scam categories compared to the previous year, reflecting the impact of sustained cyber patrolling, digital investigations, and public awareness efforts.

According to PNP, online selling scams are consistently the most common cybercrime modus, and have dropped to 1,525 cases in 2025, down from 3,025 cases in 2024, or nearly a 50% decrease year-on-year. Investment-related scams likewise declined, with Investment and Task Scams going down from 1,101 cases to 291 cases. Significant reductions were also recorded in Hijacked Profile or ID scams, which fell from 604 to 183 cases, while Vishing incidents declined sharply from 589 to just 80 cases.

The PNP chief said the figures show the growing effectiveness of the PNP's cybercrime strategies, particularly the continuous cyber patrolling and quick response of the ACG.

"Malaki ang naitutulong ng tuloy-tuloy na cyber patrolling ng PNP ACG. Nandiyan na tayo sa digital space kung saan kumikilos

they are strengthening the recognition of learning systems so that students can switch between technical-vocational tracks and higher education without losing progress.

"Para po maipatupad ang pangako ni Chair Shirley [Agrupis] na meroon pong seamless pathways and multiple entrances and exits within the formal education system," Benitez added.

The budget also includes training for 18,000 child development workers (9,000 ongoing and 9,000 additional) to assist in the government's anti-stunting measures. (JLN/PIA-NCR) **BY JOHN LESTER NAGUNA**

## MANILA UPDATES BUSINESS GARBAGE FEES AFTER A DECADE

MANILA (PIA) — The Manila City Government has updated its garbage collection fees for the first time in over a decade to address rising hauling costs and increased waste volumes, officials announced.

Mayor Francisco "Isko" Moreno Domagoso approved Ordinance No. 9151 on December 1, 2025, revising rates that had remained unchanged since 2013. City officials emphasized that the new fee structure applies strictly to businesses and will not affect residential households.

City Treasurer Atty. Paul Vega said the adjustments were necessary because previous rates no longer reflected the actual cost of services.

"The existing garbage fee rates were last updated in 2013, more than a decade ago, and no longer reflect current waste generation levels or service costs," Vega said.

City Legal Officer Atty. Luch Gempis Jr. said a primary driver for the cost increase is a shift in disposal logistics.

ang mga scammer, kaya mas maaga natin silang natutukoy at napipigilan." The PNP noted that while overall cases have declined, cybercriminals continued to evolve their tactics in 2025, with cases involving job and task scams, online loan scams, and impersonation scams remaining among the top monitored schemes. Nartatez also called on the public to be cautious and immediately report online scams.

Further, the PNP reaffirms that its anti-cybercrime efforts are fully aligned with the organization's reform agenda under "Bagong PNP para sa Bagong Pilipinas: Serbisyong Mabilis, Tapat at Nararamdaman," as it continues to strengthen cyber patrolling, digital investigations, and public education to better protect Filipinos in the online space. (JEG/PIA-NCR) **BY JIMMYLEY GUZMAN**

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) recently advised the city to redirect waste to the New San Mateo Sanitary Landfill in Rizal, resulting in higher transportation expenses.

"Ordinance 9151 was passed to update garbage collection fees... to address the significant increase in the volume of waste generated from commercial and industrial sectors and increase in garbage hauling fees," Gempis said.

Under the new ordinance, fees are calculated based on the specific industry and estimated waste output of a business. Gempis noted that establishments generating higher volumes of trash will incur higher fees.

Separately, the city addressed concerns regarding updates to real property valuation. Gempis stated that revisions to the schedule of market values are mandated by national law under Republic Act 12001, which requires updates every three years. Manila had not updated its market values since 2013.

To mitigate the economic impact on property owners, Gempis said the local government will adopt a "transitory two-phased increase" and continue offering amnesty programs and prompt payment incentives.

Bureau of Permits Director Levi Facundo advised business owners to verify their assessments through the city's electronic Statement of Account (eSOA) system.

"The assessment stated in their eSOA is generated by the system based on the scheduled fees stated in the ordinance," Facundo said.

Business owners seeking further details on the fee schedules may refer to the schedules provided under Ordinance 9151 and are encouraged to contact the Department of Public Services. (JLN/PIA-NCR) **BY JOHN LESTER NAGUNA**

## BAGONG PILIPINAS SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED FOR TOP INCOMING COLLEGE STUDENTS

**QUEZON CITY (PIA)** — Christine Buela, a 17-year-old graduating senior high school student, expressed a renewed sense of hope upon learning about the government's Bagong Pilipinas Merit Scholarship Program, a P634-million transformative initiative that opens doors for students like her to pursue priority degree programs in college with full government support.

"Marami pong kabataan 'yung magkakaroon ng chance para makapag-aral, makapagtapos, at matupad 'yung mga pangarap nila at makakatulong din ito sa bansa natin kasi dadami ang magkakaroon ng trabaho at makakatulong sa pag-angat ng Pilipinas," said Buela.

(More youth will now have the chance to study, finish their education, and fulfill their dreams. This will also help our country because more people will gain employment and contribute to the progress of the Philippines.)

As one of the newly funded priority initiatives in the 2026 national budget, this scholarship program under the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) provides life-changing opportunities for top-performing students from low- to middle-income families to pursue degrees in priority sectors.

The scholarship specifically prioritizes the top five (5) students of every graduating senior high school class across the country. To ensure equitable distribution, the CHED ensured that slot selection would be conducted on a per-region basis, utilizing a specialized formula to identify the most deserving learners nationwide.

Eligibility requirements To be eligible for the Bagong Pilipinas Merit Scholarship Program (BPMSP), applicants must be:

- A Filipino citizen.
- Incoming freshman intending to enroll in a CHED-recognized Higher Education Institution (HEI) that offers a BPMSP priority program.
- Senior High

School (SHS) graduates awarded High Honors or Highest Honors (with a General Weighted Average of 95% and above).

- TESDA National Certificate (NC) holder, provided they also satisfy the High Honors/Highest Honors requirement in SHS (95% GWA and above) and have not earned any units/degree in tertiary education.

- Belonging to a household classified as low-to-middle-income, based on CHED's income guidelines.

- With good moral character and no existing scholarship grant from other national government programs.

These priority programs are designed to bridge critical labor gaps in the country. By focusing on fields such as health sciences, information technology, agriculture, environmental science, forestry, and education, the scholarship utilizes a return service agreement to ensure that the nation's 'best and brightest' directly contribute to hard-to-fill occupations upon graduation.

Key benefits for college students The merit-based scholarship offers substantial financial support to qualified students, whether they choose to study in private institutions or state-funded universities and colleges:

- For those enrolling in private universities within Metro Manila: Up to P208,000 in total annual support (covering a tuition fee subsidy of P75,000 per semester, a P25,000 stipend, and P4,000 book and connectivity allowance).

- For those enrolling in private universities outside Metro Manila: The total annual support is set at P98,000 (covering P40,000 tuition fee subsidy and P58,000 stipend and book allowance).

- For those enrolling in state universities and colleges (SUCs) within Metro Manila: A total of P29,000 per semester (covering a P25,000 stipend and a P4,000 book and connectivity allowance).

## PNP VOWS TO IMPLEMENT MORE AGGRESSIVE, RESPONSIBLE CAMPAIGN VS ILLEGAL DRUGS

**QUEZON CITY (PIA)** — With the start of the New Year, the Philippine National Police (PNP) vows to implement a more aggressive and responsible campaign against illegal drugs.

"We will not slow down. In 2026, expect a more aggressive yet responsible campaign—one that protects lives, upholds the rule of law, and strengthens public trust," said PNP chief PLTGEN

Building on his 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. institutionalized the Bagong Pilipinas Merit Scholarship Program to honor outstanding high school graduates in line with the vision of ensuring that academic excellence is rewarded while every Filipino household is empowered with at least one college degree holder. "Dahil hangad natin na sa lalong madaling panahon, ang bawat isang pamilya ay may anak na nakapagtapos ng kolehiyo," said Marcos. (Because our vision is for every family to have at least one college graduate at the earliest possible time.)

For fiscal year 2026, CHED reported a 40-percent budget increase, rising to P47 billion from its P33 billion budget allocation in 2025.

Of this amount, a total of P40 billion is dedicated to the Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST), which covers free tuition fees for all students enrolling in state-funded universities and local universities and colleges, as well as financial assistance for those enrolled in private institutions.

The education sector received the highest budget allocation in the 2026 national budget, amounting to P1.34 trillion. This unprecedented funding, the highest ever recorded in the country's history, reaffirms the government's commitment to prioritizing the academic and professional development of the Filipino youth. (JMP/PIA-NCR) **BY JANNA MARIE PINEDA**

Jose Melencio C. Nartatez Jr.

He also reaffirmed PNP's commitment to further intensify the anti-illegal drugs campaign, with greater emphasis on preventive measures, community engagement, and the relentless pursuit of drug syndicates.

In 2025, the PNP capped the year with significant accomplishments in its campaign against illegal drugs, reinforcing the government's bloodless approach under President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. that targets both high-value drug personalities and street-level offenders.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2025, the PNP conducted 55,843 anti-illegal drug operations nationwide, resulting in the arrest of 67,223 individuals involved in the illegal drug trade.

These operations led to the seizure of a wide range of dangerous drugs, including over 3.28 tons of shabu, more than 10.79 tons of dried marijuana leaves, 3.37 million pieces of marijuana, 127,462 grams of marijuana kush, 157,586 grams of cocaine, and 556 grams of ecstasy. In total, the confiscated drugs carried a standard drug price of more than P25.3 billion.

Nartatez said the figures reflect sustained and intelligence-driven police operations anchored on accountability and respect for human rights.

"These accomplishments show that the PNP remains firm and focused in dismantling illegal drug networks, from high-value individuals down to street-level pushers. Malinaw po ang direktiba ng ating Pangulo—isang kampanyang bloodless, makatao, at mahigpit na ipinatutupad ang batas."

Likewise, PNP noted that a significant portion of the accomplishments came in the latter part of 2025. From Aug. 26 to Dec. 31 alone, the police carried out 19,914 operations, resulting in the seizure of P11.3 billion worth of illegal drugs—about 45 percent of the total confiscations for the year.

According to Nartatez, the surge underscores the impact of intensified coordination, sharper

## DEPED SECURES HISTORIC P1T PLUS BUDGET FOR 2026

**MANILA (PIA)** — The Department of Education (DepEd) has secured a historic allocation of P1.015 trillion in the 2026 national budget, marking a massive increase that finally pushes the country's education spending to international standards.

Education Secretary Sonny Angara lauded the approval of the General Appropriations Act (GAA), noting that the funding hike is unprecedented in his political career.

"Makasaysayan, not just because it's so big at 30% increase ito over last year. Ito yung pinakamalaking increase na nakita ko sa aking panahon sa politika," Angara said.

Angara highlighted that for the first time, the Philippines has met the global benchmark for education spending.

"First time na pumasok tayo sa UNESCO Global Standard na sinabing between 4-6% dapat ang gastusin relative to GDP or Gross Domestic Product... para umunlad nang husto," he added.

The 2026 budget aims to aggressively address the classroom shortage. While previous budgets funded only 5,000 to 6,000 units, Angara revealed that the 2026 allocation covers the construction of 24,000 new classrooms.

To prevent delays, the DepEd is shifting to a "flexibility" model, allowing local government units (LGUs) to handle construction rather than relying solely on the DPWH.

"Majority of the projected 20,000-plus classrooms will be built by our local government units or bid out by our local government units," Angara explained.

Beyond physical infrastructure, the budget includes P10.6 billion for the

intelligence gathering, and closer collaboration with communities.

"What we are seeing is the result of focused leadership, committed police work, and stronger cooperation with our communities. Kapag nagtutulungan ang pulis at mamamayan, mas nagiging epektibo ang laban kontra iligal na droga." (JEG/PIA-NCR)

**BY JIMMYLEY GUZMAN**

DepEd Computerization Program to provide schools with laptops and reliable internet connectivity. An additional P19.5 billion is allocated for textbooks and learning materials.

The DepEd is also establishing an AI Center with a P100 million operational budget, with curriculum review assistance provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Significant funds have been set aside to support educators. P42.4 billion has been allocated to create 32,916 new teaching positions and fill administrative posts, a move intended to offload administrative burdens from teachers.

Simultaneously, Angara noted that the budget supports the promotion of over 100,000 existing teachers through the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system, addressing long-standing grievances regarding stagnant wages.

The government is also launching a full-scale academic recovery initiative. The ARAL Program has been allocated P9 billion to hire approximately 448,000 tutors for learners lagging in reading and mathematics.

Furthermore, the budget expands student welfare programs, with P25.6 billion directed toward the School-Based Feeding Program to target undernourished learners—a massive increase from the P3 billion allocated in 2022.

Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Officer-in-Charge Secretary Rolly Toledo emphasized that the administration views this surge in spending as an investment rather than an expense.

"Buong puso po naming ipinagmamalaki na ang 2026 national budget ay tunay na matatawag nating Education Budget. Sa Bagong Pilipinas, ang kabataan ay hindi gastos—silang puhunan," Toledo said.

To maintain fiscal discipline, President Marcos vetoed P92.5 billion in unprogrammed appropriations elsewhere in the national budget but kept the education allocations intact. (JLN/PIA-NCR) **BY JOHN LESTER NAGUNA**

## RDRRMC-7 SETS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS FOR ASEAN SUMMIT 2026

**CEBU CITY, Cebu (PIA)** — As Central Visayas prepares to host the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) as part of the 2026 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and Related Meetings, the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC) 7 has outlined comprehensive security, emergency preparedness, and response plans to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the events.

The Philippines is set to serve as the ASEAN chair and host of the summit in 2026, welcoming leaders and delegates from ASEAN member states and dialogue partners.

As part of the national hosting, Central Visayas—particularly Cebu and Bohol—will host several high-level meetings, including the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF).

The region is expected to host around 88 summit-related meetings. Of these, 73 meetings will be held in Cebu and 15 in Bohol, involving national and international leaders, senior officials, and delegates.

Officials said that multiple staging areas will be established and equipped with personnel and resources from various agencies, including the Bureau of Fire Protection, the Philippine National Police, the Department of Health, and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD).

"These staging areas are strategically positioned to ensure rapid response times of three to five minutes to any incident during the summit," said OCD 7 Operations Chief Rafael Rodrigo Luche.

Emergency preparedness and response operations will be overseen by the Regional Incident Command, headed by OCD 7 Regional Director Joel S. Erestrain.

"This is a whole-of-region and whole-of-government approach, as we expect the participation of national government agencies and Cabinet secretaries," Erestrain said.

Sub-task groups have been designated for medical emergencies, fire safety, search and

rescue, and disaster risk management to ensure coordinated multi-agency operations. Preparations also include securing airports, seaports, venues, convoys, and communication lines to maintain peace and order throughout the summit activities.

Luche said ambulances will meet Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) standards, with emergency response teams on standby to address possible contingencies.

Officials expressed confidence that the extensive planning and coordination among government agencies and partners will result in a successful and incident-free hosting of the ASEAN Summit 2026, underscoring Central Visayas' readiness to welcome delegates and visitors.

A look back at Philippine hosting history

ASEAN is a regional bloc established in 1967 to promote political cooperation, economic integration, and regional stability among Southeast Asian countries.

The ASEAN Summit, held annually, serves as the organization's highest decision-making forum, where heads of state and government set policy directions, address regional security concerns, and advance economic and development initiatives.

The Philippines, a founding member of ASEAN, will serve as ASEAN chair and host of the 48th and 49th ASEAN Summits in 2026 under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The country assumed the chairship a year earlier than scheduled after Myanmar opted out of its turn.

The 2026 hosting will mark the Philippines' fourth time to host the ASEAN Summit. The country first hosted the summit in 1987 in Manila under President Corazon Aquino, marking its inaugural hosting and focusing on regional economic cooperation.

In 2007, Cebu hosted the 12th ASEAN Summit—rescheduled from late 2006 to January 2007 due to Typhoon Seniang—which produced the landmark

## MORE ALBAY COPS DEPLOYED TO AREAS AFFECTED BY RESTIVE MAYON

**LEGAZPI CITY (PIA)** — Two hundred fifty police personnel were dispatched to evacuation centers and communities in the vicinity of Mayon Volcano in Albay for emergency response purposes amid Mayon's unrest, the Police Provincial Office (PPO) said on Wednesday.

The Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office said a total of 1,593 individuals or 392 families have been relocated to evacuation centers after the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology raised Alert Level 3 over the volcano.

Alert Level 3 indicates an increased likelihood of an explosive eruption.

To ensure the safety of the evacuees and residents near the danger zone, PPO Director Colonel Noel Nuñez said 250 police officers coming from the provincial headquarters, police stations, and Revitalized Pulis sa Barangay teams were assigned to attend to the safety of affected families.

"We are strictly enforcing the no-entry policy in restricted areas. Residents are warned not to return to danger zones as this puts their lives at risk," Nuñez said.

Residents welcomed the increased police presence. Jose Balbin, a resident of Tabaco City, said police visibility helps in preventing casualties and property damage.

"It's wiser and easier to prevent untoward incidents from happening than to address them after they've already occurred," he said. Alton Onato from Guinobatan, Albay, praised the initiative, noting that police monitoring and inspections help ensure the enforcement of the provincial government's directives in high-risk areas.

"I salute our policemen," he said.

Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015.

The Philippines last hosted the summit in 2017 in Manila and Clark under President Rodrigo Duterte, coinciding with ASEAN's 50th founding anniversary. (ZCL/PIA7 Cebu) **BY ZOWANNA ROSE LOPEZ**

In a separate initiative, the PPO deployed 56 female police personnel to evacuation centers to support women and children in the shelters.

Nuñez said the deployment aims to promote efficient operations and provide gender-sensitive assistance to women, children, and other vulnerable groups.

"Deploying female personnel allows us to better address the unique needs of women and children in evacuation centers," he said. **(PIA BICOL/ALBAY) BY SALLY ALTEA**

## PBBM INAUGURATES CAMALANIUGAN-APARRI BRIDGE, BOOSTING CONNECTIVITY IN NORTHERN CAGAYAN

**CAMALANIUGAN, Cagayan (PIA)** — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. inaugurated the newly constructed Camalaniugan-Aparri Bridge in Camalaniugan, Cagayan, on Thursday, marking a major milestone in improving connectivity and economic activity in the province's northernmost areas.

Spanning the Cagayan River, the 2.16-kilometer bridge links the eastern and western sides of northern Cagayan and serves as a vital alternative route to the Magapit Suspension Bridge, previously the only river crossing in the area. President Marcos lauded the swift completion of the P2.3-billion infrastructure project, which began in 2020 and was funded under the General Appropriations Act.

He said the bridge is expected to bring transformative economic benefits to nearby communities.

"I think this will serve as a model for many of the other bridge projects that we will be seeing around the country," the President said, noting that the government fast-tracked construction to immediately benefit the public.

With a maximum load capacity of 45 tons, the bridge is expected to enhance accessibility,

**BACOLOD CITY (PIA)** — Bacolod City's Business One-Stop Shop (BOSS) for business registration and renewal now serves local entrepreneurs.

With the recent launch of BOSS at the Bacolod City Government Center (BCGC) lobby, businessmen can conveniently secure their requirements, and renew or apply for a business permit—all in just one location.

From January 5 to 20, relevant city government departments and national government agencies (NGAs) converge at the BCGC Lobby to simplify and hasten the processing

of requirements, such as a fire inspection certificate, a sanitation inspection certificate, a building permit, and an occupancy permit.

The co-location allows entrepreneurs to finish their transactions much faster, as moving from one office to another is no longer necessary, according to the Bacolod City Communications Group in a press release. "Services are available both on-site at the government center and online via ebpls.bacolodcity.gov.ph.

On-site staff will assist applicants who are not comfortable using digital platforms," the press release further read.

Business Process and Licensing Office (BPLO) Head Stela Rose Rayos expressed optimism that this system would encourage more entrepreneurs to register or renew their business permits for 2026, which are critical in maintaining legitimate business operations.

While services at the government center are ongoing, assessment, payments, and the issuance of sanitary and health permits remain at the following city satellite offices: the Bacolod Express Service Office in Ayala Malls Capitol Central and the Government Services Express at SM City Bacolod.

Businesses paying in full their tax dues can enjoy a 10-percent discount, which does not apply to regulatory fees.

"Those who availed of advance processing may monitor their application status through the electronic tracking system to check pending clearances. They may then proceed to the City Treasurer's Office—License Division for assessment and payment," Rayos explained.

Some of the government offices participating in BOSS are the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the City Health Office (CHO), the City Planning and Development Office (CPDO), Office of the Building Official, and the Bacolod Environment and Natural Resources Office (BENRO).

BPLO records in 2025 indicated that 24,912 businesses were registered. (AGP/BPS/PIA Negros Occidental) **BY BERNARD CEASAR SUSBILLA**

strengthen economic linkages, and ensure the uninterrupted movement of goods and people. Travel time between Aparri and Ballesteros via the Magapit Bridge is projected to drop from about one hour to just 20 minutes, benefiting more than 6,000 travelers daily while significantly reducing transportation costs.

Aparri Mayor Dominador Dayag expressed gratitude to President Marcos for leading the formal opening of the bridge, which he said would greatly improve daily life for residents.

The mayor noted that the new bridge will make it easier for farmers and fisherfolk to transport their products to markets and will spare residents of western Aparri from having to use boats to reach the municipal hall for government services.

"This bridge is not just about convenience," Dayag said. "It is about better access, better livelihoods, and better opportunities for our people."

The Camalaniugan-Aparri Bridge is expected to play a key role in accelerating development and economic growth across northern Cagayan. (OTB/PIA Region 2) **BY OLIVER T. BACCAY**

## ED COUNCIL OKS P105.7-B PPP FOR SCHOOL INFRA PROJECTS

**MANILA** — Some PHP105.7 billion has been allocated for the public-private partnership for school infrastructure project phase III (PSIP III) by the Economy and Development Council (ED Council), the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) said Friday.

DEPDev, in a news release, said the ED Council, chaired by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., approved the funding intended to accelerate inclusive growth and investments in human capital during its meeting on Thursday.

It said PSIP III, which is under the supervision of the Department of Education (DepEd), aims to construct around 16,459 new classrooms in 1,095 existing schools in Luzon from March 2027 to March 2028, benefitting at least 800,000 learners per year. Under the program, a solicited PPP modality and a Build-Lease-and-Transfer contractual arrangement will be in place to address delays experienced in conventional procurement. It is aimed to complement DepEd's bid to construct about 25,000 classrooms under this year's national budget.

"Addressing critical infrastructure gaps in education is central to sustaining growth and achieving our development targets. By investing in classrooms that strengthen learning outcomes, we are laying the foundation for higher productivity, stronger human capital, and inclusive growth," DEPDev Secretary and ED Council Vice-Chair Arsenio Balisacan said. Mindanao road project

Aside from the classroom construction funding, ED Council also approved the PHP145.56-billion official development assistance project dubbed Central Mindanao High Standard Highway Construction Project — Cagayan de Oro-Malaybalay Section of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

The project entails the construction of around 64.7 kilometers of four-lane road that will pass through Tagoloan and Cagayan de Oro in Misamis Oriental, as well as Manolo Fortich, Sumilao, Impasugong and

Malaybalay in Bukidnon.

It also entails the construction of 47 bridges, nine of which are special long-span bridges that will help shorten the travel time between the two metropolitan centers from 6.5 hours to 3.5 hours.

"Improving connectivity between CDO and Bukidnon is a welcome development as we continuously revitalize the Mindanao's regional economy. Beyond reducing travel time, this project is expected to generate jobs during construction and operation, stimulate local businesses, and attract new investments. By enhancing market access and mobility, it will help reduce poverty, raise incomes, and boost overall economic activity in the area, creating long-term benefits for communities across the region," Balisacan said.

**Agriculture**  
The Council also approved the PHP 28.24-billion "Pang-Agraryong Tulay para sa Bagong Bayanihan ng mga Magsasaka (PBBM) Bridges Project," which aims to improve market access and rural connectivity for Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) and the productivity and incomes of at least 350,000 households.

This involves the construction of better and well-designed durable, permanent modular steel bridges to link ARCs with growth centers and key value chain nodes.

The ED Council also approved the adjustment to the Farm-to-Market Bridges Development Program implementation period from fiscal year (FY) 2025-2028 to FY 2026-2029.

The PHP27.69-billion program is targeted to construct 300 modular steel panel bridges in 15 regions to help farmers, fisherfolk and rural residents.

"The Marcos administration recognizes the crucial role of rural infrastructure in stimulating economic growth. These projects go beyond engineering solutions — they are strategic interventions to transform subsistence farming and fishing into competitive, profitable enterprises," Balisacan said. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

## BSP'S 28-DAY BILL RATE SLIPS TO 4.8208%

**MANILA** — Average interest of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 28-day securities slipped 3.08 basis points to 4.8208 percent on Friday.

Data released by the central bank showed that it made a full award of PHP90 billion, lower than that PHP100 billion offering a week ago, and tenders reached PHP111.39 billion. This resulted in a bid-to-cover ratio of 1.24 percent. The range of accepted yields narrowed to between

4.6650 and 4.9400 percent, BSP data showed.

The 28-day BSP bill is a primary liquidity management instrument used to mop up excess funds in the financial system. The recent drop in yields indicates sustained demand for central bank securities, even as markets track global monetary trends and domestic economic indicators. **(JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)**

## CAR BODY MAKERS BACK LTO'S DRIVE VS. ILLEGALLY IMPORTED VEHICLES

**MANILA** — The government's campaign against the registration of illegally imported mini vans and Japan Domestic Market (JDM) kei cars has gained support from a local vehicle body manufacturers' group, citing safety and economic concerns.

The vehicles include imported variants of the Suzuki Jimny, Hustler, Spacia, Palette, Wagon R and Stingray —units that were not brought in through official distributor channels but entered the country via used-vehicle auction exporters, according to the Automotive Body Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (ABMAP).

Many of these vehicles, the group said, are right-hand-drive (RHD) converted to left-hand drive (LHD).

In a statement Friday, ABMAP said the "unchecked gray market undermines road safety, government revenue, and the Philippine automotive manufacturing ecosystem." The group cited Republic Act No. 8506, which bans the use of right-hand-drive vehicles in the country.

While some importers convert RHD units to LHD, the Land Transportation Office (LTO) and safety

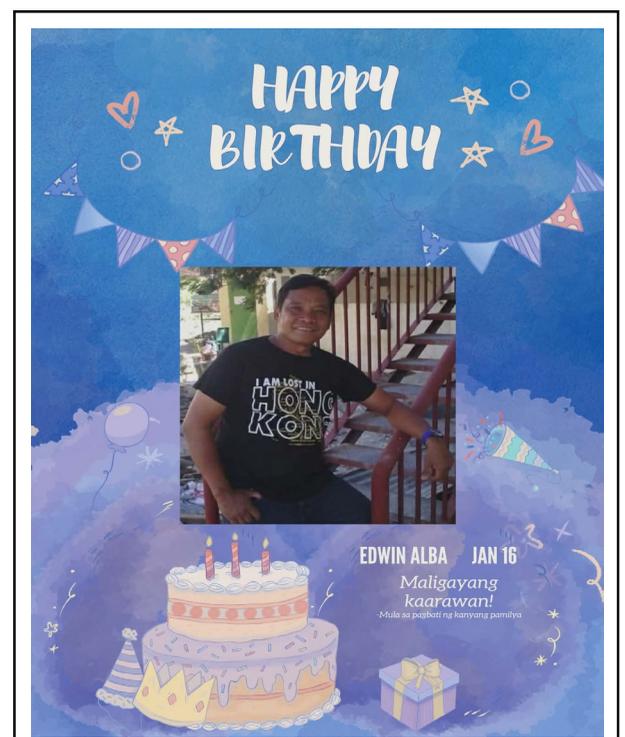
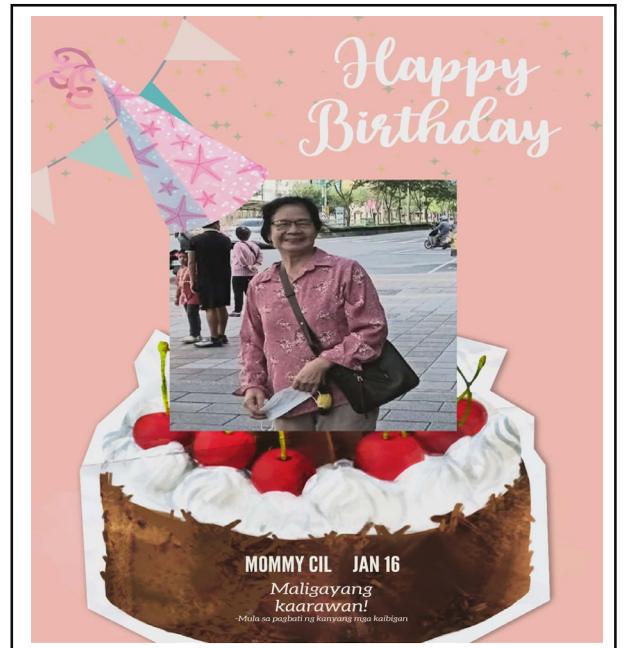
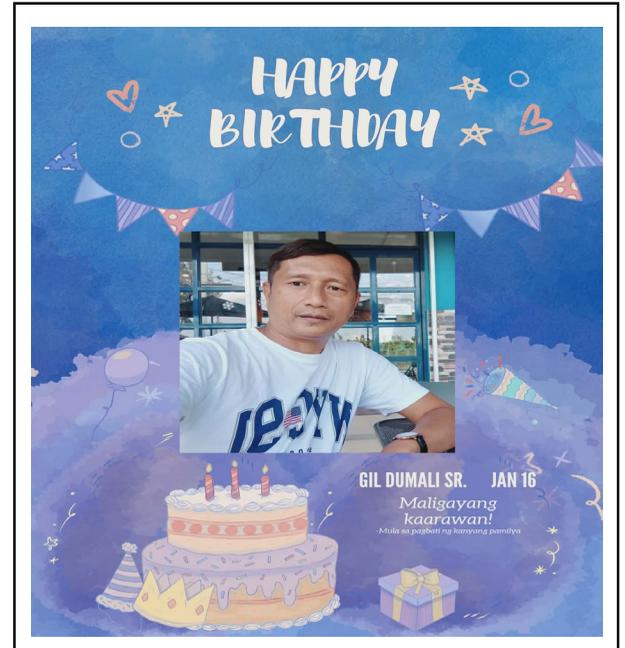
regulators have raised concerns over the structural integrity and crashworthiness of such modifications.

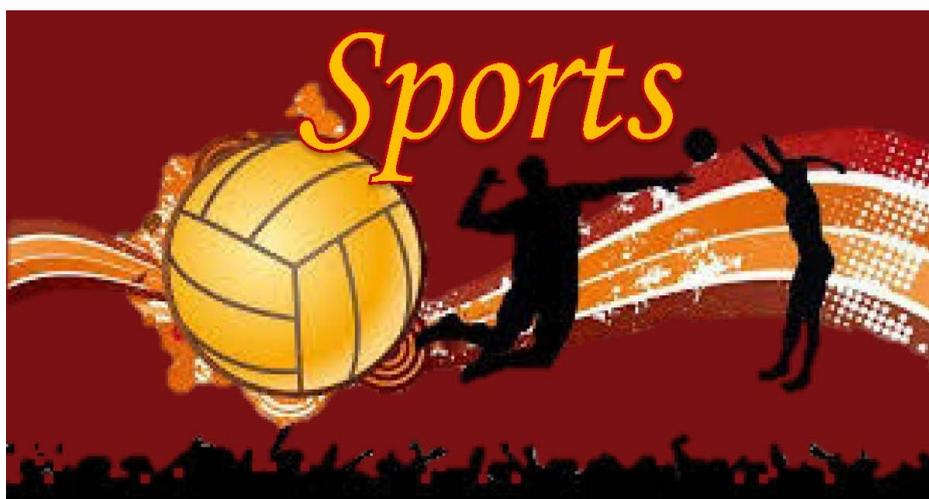
"Conversion is not simply flipping the steering wheel. If improperly done, it can affect steering geometry, braking systems, crash structure, and overall safety performance," ABMAP Executive Director Edgar Manuel said, adding that strict enforcement by the LTO is justified.

ABMAP also highlighted the economic impact of illegal imports, noting that the automotive sector contributes an estimated 1.5 percent to 2 percent of gross domestic product and supports 250,000 to 300,000 jobs nationwide.

It said each illegally imported vehicle can evade PHP300,000 to PHP600,000 in duties and taxes, resulting in an estimated PHP3 billion to PHP6 billion in annual revenue losses.

"These vehicles do not undergo proper homologation, emissions testing, or safety certification," Manuel said. "Gray imports reward non-compliance and penalize legitimate manufacturers that invest in quality and compliance." **(JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)**





## PH TO HOST U19 ASIAN SEPAK TAKRAW CHAMPIONSHIP IN NOVEMBER

**MANILA** – Promising young sepak takraw athletes will display their talents in the Under-19 Asian Championship to be hosted by the Philippines at Rizal Memorial Coliseum in Manila on Nov. 16 to 22.

The landmark continental tournament features regu, quad and mixed quadrant categories.

The hosting was formalized with the signing of the letter of agreement between the Asian Sepak Takraw Federation (ASTAF) and the Philippine Sepak Takraw Association, Inc. (PASTAI) in December last year.

Under the agreement, ASTAF officially authorizes PASTAI to host the tournament in full compliance with the International Sepak Takraw Federation (ISTAF) 2023–2025 tournament hosting requirements, including

adherence to international technical standards, competition formats and governance protocols.

The championship will be officiated by international technical officials and match officials appointed by ISTAF.

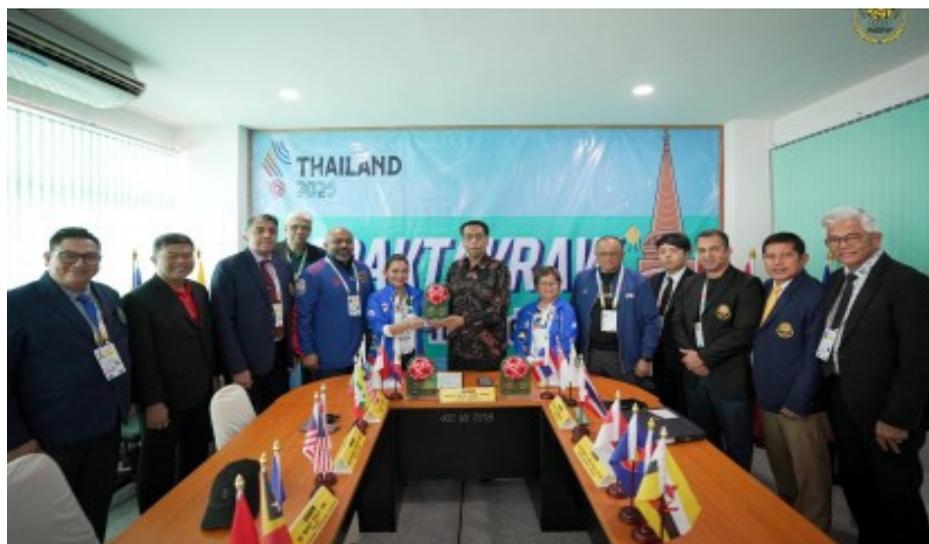
The letter of agreement also outlines the host association's responsibilities covering local event delivery, venue preparation, logistics, security, athlete services, media facilities, transportation, accommodation, tournament promotion and technical operations.

Marketing, commercial and broadcasting rights for the championship remain vested with ISTAF, reinforcing the event's international positioning and ensuring global visibility for one of Asia's premier youth sepak takraw competitions.

The hosting of the ASTAF U-19 Asian Championship 2026 marks a significant milestone for Philippine sepak takraw, strengthening the country's role in regional sports development and youth high-performance pathways.

The championship is expected to bring together Asia's top under-19 athletes, officials and stakeholders, while contributing to sports tourism, regional cooperation and grassroots-to-elite athlete development in the Philippines.

The event further reflects ASTAF's confidence in PASTAI's organizational capacity and the Philippines' readiness to deliver a world-class international sporting event aligned with global standards. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**



**LANDMARK EVENT.** Asian Sepak Takraw Federation and Philippines Sepak Takraw Association Inc. officials pose for a photo opportunity after the meeting and signing ceremony for the holding of the Under-19 Asian Sepak Takraw Championship in Thailand in December 2025. The Philippines will host the first Under-19 Asian Sepak Takraw Championship on Nov. 16 to 22, 2026. (Photo courtesy of ASTAF/PASTAI)

## TORRENTE ADVANCES TO QF IN PAMPANGA JR TENNIS

**MANILA** – Yuan Andrei Torrente delivered another impressive performance Friday to secure quarterfinal berths in the Zopiya Zopiya Alexa Morales National Juniors Tennis Championships at Zentro clay courts in Apalit, Pampanga.

In the U12 category where he is the top seed, Torrente blanked Carl Javier, 6-0, 6-0 to advance against the winner between No. 8 Lucca Bavin Ong and unseeded Francis Gabriel Abacan.

Second seed Liam James Harrow and fourth seed Noel Andre Zachary Zoleta also marched to the Final 8.

Harrow, who likewise bageled Mattei Jenrix Alcantara, 6-0, 6-0, will

meet fifth seed Azl Kirk Gonzaga, who survived Mateo Javier Gutierrez, 6-3, 3-6, 10-3.

Zoleta, on the other hand, beat Grayson Forrest Uy, 6-3, 6-1, to advance against sixth seed Raven De Guzman, a 6-0, 6-0 winner over Kian Riley Pineda.

In the U14 category where he is fourth-ranked Torrente blanked Xian Javier, 6-0, 6-0, to join No. 1 Tyrone Grey Caro, No. 2 Jksky Berille, No. 3 Jairus Peralta, No. 7 Raven Matthew De Guzman and No. 8 Psalm Avriel Panaligan in the next round.

Caro triumphed over Carlisle Baylon, 6-0, 6-0; Berille downed Godfrey Buan, 6-0, 6-2; Peralta

routed Martin Chrysler Soria, 6-0, 6-0; De Guzman clobbered Azl Kirk Gonzaga, 6-0, 6-1; and Panaligan defeated Mxander Alcantara, 6-3, 6-4.

Meanwhile, top seed Troan John Vytiaco won over Rocky John Castillo, 6-1, 6-0, to lead the quarterfinalists in the boys U18 category.

Vytiaco will face fifth seed Gerard Albert Manigque, who beat Lucas Alexander Gordon, 6-1, 6-2.

Other winners were No. 2 Felizardo Lota III over Carl Uhno Calara, 6-0, 6-0; No. 4 Anthony James Cosca over Akio Kenji Kue, 6-3, 6-3; and No. 6 Ole Martin Paulsen over Lei Anderson Santiago, 6-3, 6-1. (PNA)

**BY JEAN MALANUM**



**FAVORITE.** Yuan Andre Torrente holds the U12 (champion) and U14 (runnerup) trophies at the MAC's Crankit event in December 2025. Torrente hopes to keep his form in the ongoing Zopiya Alexa Morales National Juniors Tennis Championships in Apalit, Pampanga. (Contributed photo)

## ASIAN TRACK TOURNEY SET MARCH 25-30 AT TAGAYTAY VELODROME

**MANILA** – Twelve nations have confirmed their participation in the 45th Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) Track Championships scheduled from March 25 to 31 at the Tagaytay CT Velodrome in Cavite.

"It's been three decades since the country hosted the Asian track championships —1995 to be exact— at the then-Amoranto Velodrome in Quezon City," Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino said in a statement Thursday.

"With at least 12 nations confirming their attendance and more than 200 athletes competing as of today at the brand-new and International Cycling Union (UCI)-standard velodrome, the POC, PhilCycling and Tagaytay City will be rolling out the red carpet as we aim for an excellent hosting of the event," he added.

Tolentino also serves as PhilCycling head.

Tagaytay City Mayor Aizack Brent Tolentino has assured the city's full support to the tournament, which features men and women sprint, keirin, one-kilometer time trial, team sprint, individual and team pursuit, points race, scratch, omnium, Madison and elimination race.

To be held simultaneously with the 45th Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) Track Championships is the 14th Asian Para Track Cycling Championships, which has competitions in the one-kilometer time trial, individual pursuit, sprint, elimination and scratch races in six events both for men and women.

Besides host Philippines, also competing are powerhouse Japan, South Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Chinese-Taipei, Kazahksan, Uzbekistan and Iran.

Japan won 16 of the 22 gold medals at stake last year. Host Malaysia got two golds while South

Korea, China, Hong Kong and Uzbekistan had one each.

Tolentino is expecting more countries to send their teams to the championships, which already surpassed the 10 nations that took part in last year's edition in Nilai, Malaysia. The registration deadline is set on Jan. 15. Tolentino and Asian Cycling Confederation head Dato' Amarjit Singh Gill led the inauguration of the velodrome in June last year.

Only 12 countries in Asia have velodromes, with Tagaytay City being recognized as the newest indoor and wood facility that vies as a track cycling epicenter for the Southeast Asian region.

The Amoranto track along Tomas Morato Avenue in Quezon City was demolished last year to give way to a football pitch. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**