

CAVITE GAZETTE

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CAVITE GOV'T SUSTAINS HEALTH DRIVE WITH MEDICAL, DENTAL MISSION IN TRECE MARTIRES CITY



IMUS CITY COUNCIL APPROVES MEASURES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SERVICES

CITY OF IMUS, Cavite (PIA) — In a move to strengthen public service delivery and enhance the quality of life of Imuseños, the Imus City Council approved a total of 12 resolutions during its second regular session on January 12, 2026,

advancing key initiatives in governance, education, health, and infrastructure development.

Among the major actions was the approval of the 2026 annual budgets of Barangays Maharlika and Medicion 2-E, which will serve as the framework

for the implementation of their respective programs, projects, and basic services for the year.

The council also authorized City Mayor Alex "AA" L. Advincula to enter into partnership agreements with Emilio Aguinaldo College–

Cavite, International Electronics and Technical Institute–Imus, and Josiah Christian Values School. These agreements aim to support on-the-job training and work immersion opportunities for students, strengthening collaboration between educational institutions and the local government.

In support of digital transformation and healthcare services, the city government was likewise authorized to coordinate with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) for the rollout of an ICT capacity development program. Coordination with the Department of Health–CALABARZON was also approved for the implementation of the Specialist for the People (EPSB) Program at the Imus Hospital.

Several resolutions addressed infrastructure development and financial

Government of Cavite (PGC) reinforced its commitment to accessible healthcare as it kicked off the year with a medical and dental mission held on January 8 in Barangay Cabezas.

The outreach activity benefited a total of 582 residents, with 379

individuals receiving medical consultations and 49 availing of dental services. As part of the comprehensive healthcare assistance, diagnostic services were also provided, including 100 fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, 32 electrocardiogram (ECG) procedures, and 22 X-ray examinations.

Patients were likewise given free prescribed medicines to support their treatment and recovery.

The mission was made possible through the collaborative efforts of healthcare professionals from the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH) and the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG) medical mission team, who delivered essential medical and dental care to the community.

Several local officials were present to show their support, including 7th District Board Member Aldrin Anacan, Councilor Joyce Anne Mojica, Councilor Anne Jomille Humarang, and barangay officials of Cabezas.

The provincial government reaffirmed its commitment to bringing responsive and inclusive healthcare services closer to Caviteños, ensuring that essential medical support remains available to communities throughout the year. (With reports from OPIO) **BY RUEL FRANCISCO**



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REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON ARESTADO NG GENERAL TRIAS POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng General Trias Component City Police Station (CCPS) ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa General Trias City, Cavite, dakong 9:20 ng gabi noong Enero 15, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BISMARCK S MENDOZA, Chief of Police ng General Trias CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas BERT, residente ng General Trias City, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa ng mga Warrant Personnel ng General Trias CCPS sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa paglabag sa SECTION

12, ARTICLE II ng R.A. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002). Walang inirekomendang piyansa para sa pansamantalang kalayaan ng akusado.

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa wanted na indibidwal ay patunay na hindi titigil ang ating mga operatiba hangga't hindi sila nahaharap sa kaukulang proseso ng hustisya. Ang batas ay para sa lahat, at siguraduhin nating ito ay mananaig upang mapanatili ang katahimikan sa ating laawigan."

PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON NAARESTO SA DASMARINAS CITY, CAVITE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Sa patuloy na pagsisikap na linisin ang komunidad mula sa mga taong may pananagutan sa batas, matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Provincial Intelligence Unit (PIU) at Dasmariñas City Police Station ang isang Provincial Level Most Wanted Person sa Dasmariñas City, dakong 3:30 ng hapon ngayong Enero 16, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL CHESTER NOEL R BORLONGAN, Chief ng PIU, Cavite PPO, ang akusado na si alyas MARLON, residente ng Dasmariñas City, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa sa bisa ng Warrant of Arrest para sa krimeng ACTS OF LASCIVIOUSNESS sa ilalim ng Article 336 ng Revised Penal Code (RPC) na may kaugnayan sa Section 5(B) ng R.A. No. 7610 (Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act). May inirekomendang piyansa na ₱180,000.00 para sa pansamantalang kalayaan

ng nasabing akusado.

Ayon kay PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Hindi natin hahayaang makapagtago ang mga indibidwal na sangkot sa mga krimen, at siguraduhin nating haharap sila sa kaukulang proseso ng ating batas upang mapangalagaan ang karapatan ng bawat mamamayan."

CALABARZON'S MOST WANTED PERSON, NADAKIP SA TARLAC

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Trece Martires Component City Police Station (CCPS) ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa Capas, Tarlac, dakong 3:15 ng hapon ngayong Enero 16, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL DENNIS A VILLANUEVA, Acting Chief of Police ng Trece Martires CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas IAN, residente ng probinsya ng

STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA BUY-BUST, NETS HVI; P340K WORTH OF SHABU SEIZED

Camp BGen Vicente P Lim, Calamba City — A High Value Individual (HVI) was arrested and illegal drugs valued at approximately ₱340,000.00 were confiscated during a buy-bust operation conducted by personnel of the Santa Cruz Municipal Police Station on the afternoon of January 14, 2026, in Sitio 4, Brgy. Palasan, Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Arrested was alias "TROY", 36 of the same barangay. During the operation, the suspect sold suspected shabu to a police poseur-buyer in exchange for a 500 peso bill used as marked money. Upon arrest, authorities recovered suspected shabu with an estimated total weight of approximately 50 grams valued at ₱340,000.00. The buy-bust operation was conducted in the

presence of witnesses ensuring transparency and compliance with legal procedures. The suspect was duly apprised of his constitutional rights.

Police Regional Office CALABARZON Director, PBGEN Paul Kenneth T Lucas commended the operating team for the successful operation. "We will continue to intensify intelligence-driven operations to dismantle drug networks and protect our communities," he said. The suspect and seized evidence were turned over for proper documentation and case filing before the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Sta. Cruz, Laguna. He will be facing charges for Violation of Section 5 & 11, Art. II of RA 9165 otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. (RPIO4A)

MOST WANTED SA REGION 4A, ARESTADO NG GMA PULIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person ang matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station kasama ang mga tauhan ng RMFB 402nd AMC, dakong 4:50

ng hapon ngayong Enero 14, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL BONNA A OBMERGA, Chief of Police ng GMA MPS, ang akusado na si alyas "Alfred," residente ng General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite.

Naaresto ang akusado sa bisa ng warrant of arrest na inilabas ng Presiding Judge ng Regional Trial Court, 4th Judicial Region, Branch 25, Biñan City, Laguna, para sa kasong Carnapping Defined and Penalized under Sec. 3 of RA 10883 otherwise known as the New Anti Carnapping act of 2016 na inisyu noong September

saan man magtago ang mga may pananagutan, ang ating koordinasyon sa iba't ibang tanggapan ng PNP ay mananatiling matibay upang sila ay maibalik at managot sa korte. Ang Cavite PPO ay hindi titigil hangga't hindi nakakamit ang hustisya para sa mga biktima."

CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, ARESTADO NG BACOR POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na naaresto ng mga tauhan ng Bacoor Component City Police Station (CCPS) ang isang City Level Most Wanted Person sa Bacoor City, Cavite, dakong 3:45 ng hapon ngayong Enero 16, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL ALEXIE A DESAMITO, Chief of Police ng Bacoor CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas ACE, residente ng Bacoor City, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa ng mga operatiba ng Warrant Section ng Bacoor CCPS sa pamamagitan ng isang "Manhunt Charlie"

operation. Ang akusado ay nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa Section 5 at 11, Article II ng RA 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagsisilbi ng mga warrant na ito ay bahagi ng ating layunin na linisin ang listahan ng mga wanted persons at tiyaking mapagsilbihan ang bawat desisyon ng korte. Ito ay pagpapakita na ang hustisya sa Cavite ay gumagalaw nang mabilis at walang kinikilingan."

MOST WANTED PERSON NG CALABARZON, INIHAIN ANG SERVICE OF SENTENCE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Patunay na hindi tumitigil ang daloy ng hustisya, inihain ng mga tauhan ng Imus Component City Police Station (CCPS) ang Warrant of Arrest

(Service Sentence) sa isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person na kasalukuyang nakapiit sa loob ng BJMP Imus dakong 1:00 ng hapon ngayong Enero 16, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL CHEY CHEY I SAULOG, Chief of Police ng Imus CCPS, ang akusado na si alyas Darwin, residente ng Imus City, Cavite.

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng mga operatiba ng Warrant Section ng Imus CCPS (Lead Unit) katuwang ang mga tauhan ng 401st A Maneuver Company, RMFB4A. Ang pagsisilbi ng warrant ay para sa "Service of Sentence" kaugnay ng paglabag sa Section 5 at 11, Article II ng RA 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagkakaaresto at pagsisilbi ng warrant sa mga wanted na indibidwal ay patunay na hindi titigil ang ating mga operatiba hangga't hindi nila lubos na napagilingkuran ang kanilang pananagutan sa batas. Ang batas ay para sa lahat, at siguraduhin nating ito ay mananaig."

Ang operasyon ay isinagawa ng mga operatiba ng Warrant Section ng Imus CCPS (Lead Unit) katuwang ang mga tauhan ng 401st A Maneuver Company, RMFB4A. Ang pagsisilbi ng warrant ay para sa "Service of Sentence" kaugnay ng paglabag sa Section 5 at 11, Article II ng RA 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

Sa kanyang pahayag, sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagkakaaresto at pagsisilbi ng warrant sa mga wanted na indibidwal ay patunay na hindi titigil ang ating mga operatiba hangga't hindi nila lubos na napagilingkuran ang kanilang pananagutan sa batas. Ang batas ay para sa lahat, at siguraduhin nating ito ay mananaig."

LTO CLARIFIES BAN ON E-TRIKES, E-BIKES IN MAJOR ROADS NOT YET ENFORCED IN CALABARZON

LIPA CITY, Batangas (PIA)

— The Land Transportation Office (LTO) Region IV-A clarified that the ongoing strict enforcement of the ban on electronic tricycle and electronic bicycle applies only to certain national roads in Metro Manila and in selected areas of Calabarzon, particularly those leading to Metro Manila.

According to lawyer Patrick Peter Pol De Quiros, Legal Officer of LTO Region IV-A, LTO has begun issuing traffic violation tickets to e-bike, e-trike, and light electric vehicle (LEV) drivers in Metro Manila on January 2.

While this enforcement raised concerns among e-bike, e-trike, and other LEV users in nearby areas, particularly in the Calabarzon region, De Quiros assured the public that these vehicles may still be used on highways and other roads, as long as safety for both riders and pedestrians is at the highest priority.

“For clarification, the current ban on e-bikes is being implemented as a pilot program in Metro Manila and on other key major roads. It does not cover the entire Metro Manila area; the memorandum specifies only certain major roads that will be identified,” De Quiros stated.

Selected areas in Calabarzon, however, are included in the order.

“Within the Calabarzon region, the area affected is Rizal—specifically Sumulong Highway, which I believe is included. As far as I know, that is the only one included for now, as some parts of these major roads connect to Metro Manila.”

Although the use of these vehicles is not prohibited in the Calabarzon region, De Quiros emphasized that the agency’s goal is to ensure that electric vehicles are properly registered, that drivers hold the appropriate licenses based on the vehicle category, and that all traffic regulations are strictly followed to help prevent accidents.

In a recent video statement, LTO Chief Assistant Secretary Markus Lacanilao reiterated that the current enforcement

is the implementation of a long-standing policy, not the creation of a new restriction or ban.

“This enforcement is based on general considerations of road safety. These major roads are designed for faster and larger vehicles and are not suitable for e-trikes due to the speed of traffic flow, volume of vehicles using major roads, and the width of the roads. The use of slower and lighter vehicles in this type of roadways clearly poses a danger to all road users,” Lacanilao said in a press release.

As guidance to the public, e-trikes are strictly not allowed along major highways in Metro Manila, including Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA), C-5 Road, Roxas Boulevard, and Quirino Ave to Magallanes–South Luzon Expressway (SLEX).

Those caught driving e-trikes in prohibited areas will face charges under Republic Act No. 4136, or the Land Transportation and Traffic Code, as well as Joint Administrative Order No. 2014-01.

Meanwhile, LTO said it is ready to collaborate with local government units and industry sectors to establish safer and proper routes for e-trikes. While this order is ongoing, the public is urged to follow existing guidelines and cooperate with authorities to ensure the safe and smooth flow of traffic. **(CO/PIA-CALABARZON) BY CHARMAINE ODONG**

PGC BRINGS MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION TO BRGY. SAN FRANCISCO, GENERAL TRIAS

On January 13, a total of 354 residents received medical consultations while 75 patients availed of dental services during a Medical and Dental Mission spearheaded by the Provincial Government of Cavite in Barangay San Francisco, City of General Trias.

The activity also offered diagnostic services to Gentriseños, with 75 patients undergoing fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, eight availing of electrocardiogram (ECG)

DOST CAVITE CONDUCTS STARBOOKS TRAINING AT ST. DOMINIC COLLEGE OF ASIA

DOST Cavite successfully conducted STARBOOKS training at St. Dominic College of Asia in Bacoor City, with Ms. Jenica Krystel Nueva, Project Technical Aide V, serving as the resource speaker.

The activity aimed to equip faculty members, librarians, and designated school personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively operate and maximize the use of the STARBOOKS system as a reliable offline digital resource for science and technology information. Participants were oriented on the system’s features, content, and practical applications in support of instruction, research, and academic activities.

This training marked the second STARBOOKS orientation conducted for St. Dominic College of Asia,

following its initial adoption of the system in 2017 in partnership with DOST–Science and Technology Information Institute (DOST-STII). The activity served as a refresher and an update to ensure continued and effective utilization of STARBOOKS in the institution.

Through this initiative, St. Dominic College of Asia further strengthened its capacity to provide accessible and quality science and technology information to its academic community, especially in areas with limited internet connectivity.

DOST Cavite remains committed to promoting digital inclusion and supporting educational institutions through innovative, technology-driven solutions. **DOST-CAVITE**

CAVITE PPO SUCCESSFULLY FACILITATED THE SELLING OF THE KADIWA NG PANGULO POP-UP STORE TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite

—The Cavite Police Provincial Office successfully facilitated the Selling of the KADIWA ng Pangulo Pop-Up Store on January 16, 2026 at Camp BGen. Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite. The event was organized by the Police Community Affairs and Development Unit (PCADU) under the supervision of PLTCOL KRISTINE V PARAS,

Chief, PCADU, who spearheaded the initiative to provide accessible and affordable goods to PNP personnel and the surrounding community.

The activity not only offered reasonably priced goods but also fostered camaraderie, reinforced community engagement, and underscored Cavite PPO’s commitment to promoting sustainable and people-centered programs.

procedures, and another eight receiving X-ray examinations. These services aided health professionals in providing proper medical advice and appropriate care. Free prescribed medicines and vitamins were subsequently distributed to the patients.

City Councilor Kyle Salazar graced the activity, expressing his support and appreciation for the medical and dental mission team. Dental professionals from the City Health Office,

along with Barangay Health Workers, also assisted to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of the activity.

Through the continued partnership of the Office of the Provincial Governor and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, the medical and dental mission program continues to expand access to quality healthcare services across the province, promoting hope, wellness, and improved health outcomes for Caviteños. — **J. Reyes Cavite -PIO**

EDITORIAL

Pangamba ng mga Taga-Consolacion, Cebu

Matapos magkaroon ng trash slide sa Binaliw Landfill, ilang residente sa Consolacion, Cebu ang nangangamba ngayong sa kanilang lugar na itinatapon ang mga basura ng Cebu City.

Isa ang mga basura sa mga dahilan nang matinding pagbaha kaya higit na nakababahala ang trash slide na nangyari. Dahil sa aksidenteng nangyari, dapat lamang na magsagawa ng konkretong plano upang hindi na muling mangyari ang mga ganitong pangyayari. Hindi dapat mabigyan ng pangamba ang mga residente sa kalapit na bayan nito gaya ng nararamdaman ng mga taga Consolacion.

Hindi nararapat na maging tapunan ngayon ng mga basura ang ibang lugar sa Cebu, dapat lamang na isipin ng nakatataas ang pangyayaring aksidente at ang posibilidad na mangyari muli ang trash slide kung patuloy na itatapon ang mga tambak-tambak na mga basura sa kalapit na bayan gayong sunod-sunod tumamang lindol sa Cebu at hindi makakasigurado na ligtas ang lahat ng lugar.

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PBBM SEEKS STRONGER TIES, CLOSER COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN PARTNERS

MANILA — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Friday expressed optimism that the Philippines will sustain and further strengthen its ties and cooperation with its foreign allies and partners.

This came as Marcos hosted the traditional Vin d'honneur for members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, and other invited guests at Malacañan Palace in Manila, as the country welcomed 2026 with a "renewed sense of hope, optimism, and vitality."

"We find many, many reasons to be grateful for the years that have passed, and even more reasons to remain hopeful and resolute as we look ahead. On behalf of the Filipino people, allow me to extend our warmest greetings and sincere appreciation to your excellencies and the countries that you very ably represent," Marcos said.

"Our gathering tonight provides us with a valuable opportunity to reaffirm our shared commitments, reflect on our collective journey, and renew our sense of purpose for the work that lies before us." Marcos expressed confidence in the strength of the country's bilateral partnerships and its shared commitment with the international community to a rules-based international order.

He underscored the need to uphold a rules-based international order to achieve lasting peace, as well as sustainable and inclusive development.

"As we enter this new year, we are confident in the strength of our bilateral partnerships, our common commitment to a rules-based international order, and our shared determination to build a more peaceful, resilient, and prosperous future for all our people," he said.

"Over the last three and a half years, the Philippines has been engaging the world with renewed purpose —to promote peace, to strengthen cooperation, and to uphold the rules-based order firmly

founded on international law."

Despite global headwinds, Marcos said the Philippines has made significant progress in forging "meaningful, concrete, and mutually beneficial" partnerships, noting the crucial role of foreign partners since he assumed the presidency in 2022.

He said the Philippines, together with its partners, has navigated a rapidly changing global environment marked by economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, climate-related challenges, and profound technological transformation.

"True to our commitment as an innovative pathfinder, a trusted peacemaker, and a reliable partner, we pursue a proactive diplomatic agenda and strengthen our bilateral partnerships for mutual benefit, expanding cooperation with both longstanding and new partners, particularly in key economic sectors and security areas," Marcos said.

He said the Philippines looks forward to working with new partners to foster cooperation in key areas such as trade, investment, sustainable development, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

As this year's chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Marcos vowed to enhance dialogue and cooperation on regional security and economic integration to improve the lives and strengthen the resilience of the people of ASEAN member states and their global partners.

"At the same time, we will continue to advance people-centered initiatives that ensure that the benefits of regional cooperation are felt by our citizens, especially those most vulnerable," Marcos said.

He said the Philippines is also looking beyond the region as it enters the final phase of its campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2027–2028 term.

He said the Philippines brings to its UNSC bid a clear perspective shaped by its experience as a developing country, a maritime nation, a contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, and a firm advocate of international law, particularly the peaceful settlement of disputes.

"If entrusted with this responsibility, the Philippines will be principled and constructive —a voice that will champion the rule of law, protect civilians, promote conflict prevention, and amplify the perspectives of small and middle powers," Marcos said.

"For our bid to the UNSC for 2027 to 2028, we stand ready to be your partner, your pathfinder, and your peacemaker, working together toward peace, progress, and shared global responsibility."

Marcos assured the international community of the Philippines' steadfast commitment to multilateralism, international peace, human rights, and the rule of law.

Papal Nuncio to the Philippines Archbishop Charles John Brown lauded Marcos' efforts to fight corruption, citing the President's resolve to stop irregularities in the implementation of government projects.

Brown also expressed optimism that the Philippines' ASEAN chairship would enhance regional competitiveness and unlock new opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth.

"The Diplomatic Corps wishes the Philippines all the best in this noble endeavor," he said. "It's my honor for me to express on behalf of all the members of the Diplomatic Corps, our sincere best wishes for a new year, best by peace, progress, and prosperity," he said. **(PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

PALACE SEEKS PUBLIC NOMINATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING OVERSEAS FILIPINOS

MANILA — Malacañang has directed all government agencies and instrumentalities to raise public awareness of the 2026 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas (PAFIOO).

Executive Secretary Ralph Recto, by authority of the President, signed on Jan. 15 Memorandum Circular (MC) 112, mandating all government agencies to extend full support to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) in the conduct of the 2026 PAFIOO.

All local government units, non-government organizations, and the private sector are likewise encouraged to support the initiative.

Under MC 112, the Presidential Communications Office is directed to implement effective measures to inform and encourage

the public to nominate outstanding overseas Filipinos for the 2026 PAFIOO.

"The successful conduct of the 2026 PAFIOO requires the dissemination of information and the active participation of government agencies and instrumentalities, as well as the general public, in identifying and endorsing qualified nominees," the memorandum read.

The CFO opened the call for nominations for the 2026 PAFIOO on Dec. 11, 2025.

Nominations for the award categories — Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award, Banaag Award, Pamana ng Pilipino Award, and Kaanib ng Bayan Award — will be accepted until May 29.

A multi-stage evaluation process will be conducted before the conferment of the awards in December.

Established in 1991 through Executive Order

498, the PAFIOO has been conferred by seven Philippine presidents on 555 individuals and organizations from 55 countries and territories.

The award highlights the enduring excellence, selfless service, and deep commitment of overseas Filipinos and international partners to nation-building.

The PAFIOO is a biennial award conferred by the President of the Republic of the Philippines on outstanding overseas Filipinos, as well as foreign individuals and organizations, in recognition of their exceptional achievements, humanitarian and philanthropic initiatives, and significant contributions to Philippine development and the advancement of the interests of the Filipino diaspora. **(PNA) BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

DSWD TO PROVIDE AICS TO CEBU FAMILIES AFFECTED BY LANDFILL COLLAPSE

MANILA—The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will be providing aid under the Assistance to Individuals and Crisis Situations (AICS) program to the families and individuals affected by the fatal landfill collapse in Barangay Binaliw, Cebu City, an official said Friday.

"The DSWD is working closely with the local government unit (LGU), ensuring that the affected families are provided with the needed intervention, especially as retrieval operations are still on-going," Assistant Secretary Irene Dumlaog of the DSWD's Disaster Response Management Group (DRMG) said in a statement.

"Kasalukuyan na din pong pinoproseso ng Departamento ang

pagbibigay ng Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) sa mga appektado ng krisis na ito (The DSWD is processing the provision of AICS to the affected families)," the DSWD spokesperson said. On Jan. 8, a large section of the landfill operated by the Prime Integrated Waste Solutions Inc. gave way, burying sanitation workers under tons of garbage, soil, steel trusses, and office structures located near the base of the landfill.

In the days following the incident, DSWD Field Office 7 Regional Director Shalaine Marie Lucero, together with Disaster Response Management Division (DRMD) chief Lilibeth Cabiara, visited the site to assess the situation, monitor ongoing operations, and ensure the provision of immediate aid

to the affected families. Read-to-Eat Food (RTEF) boxes were immediately provided to the victims and to the families of those buried in the waste landslide.

Temporary tents were also provided near the landfill to accommodate families seeking updates on their missing loved ones.

As of the latest report, 18 individuals remain hospitalized due to injuries, while 11 individuals are still missing, and 25 fatalities have been recorded.

Search, rescue, and retrieval operations remain ongoing with support from various agencies, including the Cebu Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO), which has augmented ground operations and incident management coordination. **(PNA) BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT**

WAGE DETERMINATION PROCESS IN DAVAO, BICOL ON TRACK, SAYS COMMISSION

MANILA – The National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC) clarified on Friday that there is no delay in the minimum wage determination timelines for the Davao and Bicol regions.

In a statement, the commission explained that under the Omnibus Rules on Minimum Wage Determination (NWPC Guidelines 03, series of 2020), the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs) are authorized to begin the minimum wage determination process, *motu proprio* (on their own initiative) or upon petition, within 60 days before the anniversary date of the Wage Order.

The anniversary date of the last Wage Order for Davao is March 7, and for Bicol, April 5, a year after the effectivity of the last Wage Order in the region.

"The 60-day window

to commence the wage determination process for Davao Region began on Jan. 6, 2026, making the current period well within the legally established timeline, while the 60-day window for Bicol Region begins on Feb. 4, 2026," the commission said. "There is no delay, and the claim suggesting otherwise is misleading."

It added that the labor sector is represented in wage boards, and the concerned RTWPB representatives in both regions are fully aware of the prescribed timelines and the rules.

The NWPC and RTWPs periodically assess and issue minimum wage decisions for workers and enterprises.

The statement was issued after reports claimed delays in the approval of wage orders in the two regions, citing certain labor groups. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

WALANG GUTOM GRANTEES NOW 533K; DSWD EXPEDITES PROCESS TO REACH 600K

MANILA – A total of 533,613 households are now enrolled in the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Walang Gutom Program (WGP), a key anti-hunger initiative of the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

"As of Jan. 15, mayroon na tayong mahigit 533,000 na sambahayan na na-enroll sa ating WGP. Matatandaan na may nauna na tayong 300,000 households noong nakaraang taon at ngayon ay kinukumples naman natin ang ating target na 600,000 beneficiaries (As of Jan. 15, we already have 533,000 households enrolled in WGP. We have an initial 300,000 households last year and we are completing our target of 600,000 this

year)," Assistant Secretary Irene Dumlaog said in a statement on Friday.

The DSWD spokesperson said the department is fast tracking the enrollment through simultaneous verification and registration across regions with the highest incidence of involuntary hunger to complete the 600,000 target beneficiaries.

"A total of 750,000 households in 52 provinces are expected to be enrolled in the WGP before President Marcos steps out of office in 2028," she said. On Jan. 13, the 'Angels in Red Vest' of the DSWD's Field Office 5 (Bicol Region) conducted verification and registration in the municipality of Oas in Albay; Ragay, Baao, Buhí, Caramoan, Tinambac and Presentacion in the province of Camarines Sur;

COMELEC SPECIAL POLLS IN ANTIPOLO TO FILL SEAT LEFT BY ACOP WELCOMED

MANILA – Deputy Speaker Ronaldo Puno of Antipolo City on Friday welcomed the Commission on Elections' (Comelec) move to hold a special election to fill the vacant seat left by the late Antipolo Rep. Romeo Acop, stressing that the poll is a legal mandate of the poll body.

"Nakita ko 'yung communications diyan. Ang election ay parang sini-set nila for March 14, tapos yung filing of Certificates of Candidacy will be Feb. 5 and 6 (I saw the communications. The special election will be on March 14, while the filing of COC will be Feb. 5 ad 6)," Puno, National Unity Party (NUP) chairman, said in a press conference.

He also clarified that while Comelec informed Congress of the planned special election, the request for additional funding is being routed to Malacañang, not the House of Representatives. "Yung paghingi nila ng additional pondo ay sa

Office of the President, hindi sa Congress... Sumulat sila sa Congress, ini-inform lang nila 'yung Congress na ito 'yung ginagawa nila... Pero kasi sa jurisprudence dyan, wala nang karapatan ng Congress magsabi ng kahit ano (The request for additional funds is to the OP not Congress. They just informed Congress what they are doing. The jurisprudence there is that Congress has already no say on it)," he said.

"Obligado na 'yung Comelec (The Comelec is obliged) to do this, it is a mandate, it is an obligation on their part," Puno said.

The House leader also disclosed that his party is preparing a major organizational reset in Cavite, including the dissolution of the Dasmariñas chapter of the National Unity Party (NUP) following the departure of its chapter head, suspended Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Barzaga.

Puno said the leadership intends to move swiftly in Dasmariñas, with the chapter dissolution serving as a transition step before a new local organization is formed.

"Yung congressman umalis na sa partido. So, kung baga wala ng leader 'yan, wala naman kami reports na natatanggap, wala naman silang inirekomenda na kapalit niya. So idi-dissolve muna namin 'yung NUP chapter sa Dasmariñas (The congressman has already left the party. The chapter is leaderless, so to speak. There is no reports coming there and they are not recommending a replacement. So, we will dissolve the NUP chapter in Dasmariñas)," he said.

"Siguro magtatayo kami ng bagong chapter na iba 'yung mga tao doon. So kung matuloy 'yan, by Monday lahat ng NUP members in Dasmariñas (We may establish a new chapter composed of different personalities. So, if that pushes through, by Monday, all NUP members in Dasmariñas) will be

LTFRB TO USE 'WORKING DAYS' IN ALL POLICIES, REGULATIONS

MANILA – The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Friday issued a memorandum to define all compliance periods in its policies and regulations to be "working days."

In a statement, LTFRB Chair Vigor Mendoza II said Memorandum Circular 2026-001 is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s order to prioritize the welfare of Filipinos in all government services.

"This is to avoid confusion among our clients because the existing prescriptive period is also causing inconvenience to the public, especially to our clients," Mendoza said.

The memo, dated Jan. 15, 2026 and signed by the LTFRB board, defined the meaning of working days as "any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or non-working holidays."

"We hope that this will clear the confusion for all the people, especially our clients," he said.

The memorandum is set to take effect immediately following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and filing of three copies with the University of the Philippines Law Center.

"It is crucial in every policy or order that the prescriptive period of compliance must be clear, just, and equitable to avoid any confusion and inconvenience to all the stakeholders," he said.

On Jan. 9, Acting Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez ordered the Land Transportation Office to change the lead time for settling traffic violations to 15 working days and suspend the confiscation of physical driver's licenses of apprehended motorists. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

207 DILG PERSONNEL PASS 2025 BAR EXAMS

MANILA – A total of 207 personnel from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), including those from its attached agencies, are among the more than 5,000 passers of the 2025 Bar Examinations.

Of the 207 passers, two are from the DILG-Central Office and 15 from regional offices, the agency said in a statement on Friday.

Meanwhile, 109 are from the Philippine National Police, 40 from the Bureau of Fire Protection, 29 from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, eight from the National Police Commission and three from National Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

One of the passers, Hana Rea Pagapong of DILG Region 10, said that with her achievement, she will continue to serve the people of Misamis Occidental.

"I plan to use this opportunity to further serve my community in Misamis Occidental by building on

removed from the party," he added. **(PNA) BY ZALDY DE LAYOLA**

my ongoing work of guiding elected public officials, particularly at the barangay level," she said.

Kareen Estabillo of the DILG Bureau of Local Government Development, meanwhile, said passing the Bar strengthens her work at the Local Fiscal Reform and Development Division.

"This equips me with legal knowledge necessary in reviewing proposed and existing policies to ensure its compliance with the law while ensuring at the same time that it will benefit the LGUs and their constituents," she said.

Senior Fire Officer Gilbert Berou of the National Fire Training Institute said his experience as a first responder shaped his journey to becoming a lawyer.

"My service in the BFP and my calling as a lawyer are united by one purpose: to serve with honor, competence, and dedication to the public good," he said.

The successful examinees are set to take their oath as new lawyers on Feb. 6, 2026 at the Philippine Arena. **(PNA) BY CHRISTOPHER LLOYD CALIWAN**

STRONGER POLICIES VS TOBACCO, ALCOHOL URGED TO CURB NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

BAGUIO CITY (PIA) — There is a need for strong policy interventions to curb the use of tobacco and alcohol, the key drivers of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Dr. Donnabel Tubera-Panes of the Baguio City Health Services Office emphasized this during a forum at the Benguet State University on January 13, 2025.

Tubera-Panes said a policy like a total ban on tobacco could reduce the incidence of NCDs, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, the top causes of death in the Philippines.

She cited the enactment of a generational tobacco ban in the Maldives, permanently banning anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 2007, from purchasing, using, or being sold any form of tobacco products within the country. "Structural change first before behavior. Kailangan may polisiya muna bago natin baguhin ang behavior ng isang tao," Tubera-Panes emphasized.

The doctor stressed that adolescence would be the last best chance to break the cycle. With the current generation of young people making lifestyle decisions that could affect their long-term health, intervention at this stage could prevent NCDs from becoming even more prevalent in the future.

She also mentioned that studies show that chewing

betel quid [momma] is a precursor to cancer.

Tubera-Panes said that there are more young people now than before, and if there is no action now, their lives may be at risk of chronic disease.

"Kailangan paingtingin ang campaign on that... They [tobacco and alcohol] are the root causes of NCD. I-correct mo ito, maco-correct natin 'yan. Kailangan as early as now," she said.

Considered cumulative diseases, NCDs develop slowly over long periods. This means that as the population ages, more individuals are affected by the diseases.

The trend is affected by the growing prevalence of unhealthy lifestyles such as poor diet, sedentary behavior, and the use of alcohol and tobacco, all of which contribute to NCDs.

Tubera-Panes urged the public, especially the young adults, to know their numbers, referring to the key health indicators like blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

She also called for greater health literacy to help people understand the risk associated with such practices.

The road ahead is not easy but with the right education, policies and interventions, the future generation can be better prepared to avoid the silent threat of NCDs, Tubera Panes said. (DEG-PIA CAR) **BY DEBBIE E. GASINGAN**

ILOCOS NORTE RALLIES PUBLIC TO PREVENT FOREST FIRES

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte (PIA) — The Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte is ramping up preventive measures against forest fires following recent incidents in the towns of Piddig and Vintar.

Governor Cecilia Araneta-Marcos emphasized during a press conference on January 14 that prevention largely depends on the public, especially those visiting mountainous areas.

Araneta-Marcos urged visitors to avoid discarding cigarette butts improperly, noting that extremely dry conditions make these areas highly flammable.

National laws like the Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act), R.A. No. 8749 (Clean Air Act), and R.A. No. 3701 (Anti-Forest Destruction) strictly prohibit open burning and negligent fire-starting, carrying penalties of fines or imprisonment.

Locally, the Ilocos Norte Environmental Code of 2007 (Provincial Ordinance No. 056-2007) reinforces these mandates by regulating fire use in forested areas to ensure provincial sustainability and environmental protection.

"When people go to these areas, they should be responsible, especially not

smoking and then throwing cigarette butts anywhere. They already know that when an area is very dry, it is susceptible to fire, so if possible, they should really put them out properly and not just throw them away," she said.

She also commended the more than 200 Barangay Range Officers (BROs) for protecting forest areas and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) for responding quickly.

"Our BROs are truly diligent in taking care of our forests, and the BFP is very responsive because they are able to reach the affected areas immediately and contain the bush fires right away," Araneta-Marcos added.

Recent reports show several fire incidents in Piddig and at least one in Vintar. The Governor noted that these were put out before they could spread.

"These fires did not last long because they were acted on immediately," she said.

The provincial government is strengthening coordination with local government units (LGUs) and frontline responders while also reminding residents and visitors to stay vigilant to help protect Ilocos Norte's mountains. (CCMT/MTDA, PIA Ilocos Norte) **BY MARY THERESE D. ANCHETA**

DILG HONORS OUTSTANDING LEGISLATIVE BODIES IN NEGROS ORIENTAL

DUMAGUETE CITY, Negros Oriental (PIA) — The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) here has continued its efforts to honor high-performing councils in various local government units (LGUs) in the province.

DILG Provincial Director Farah Gentuya stated that the local legislative bodies in the cities and municipalities are crucial for translating community needs into actionable policies and ensuring responsive local governance.

With this, Gentuya, in partnership with the Philippine Councilors League Negros Oriental Chapter, the Local Legislative Award (LLA), recently cited outstanding LGUs for their effective legislative measures for a genuine community transformation in a recent provincial awarding ceremony.

Gentuya thanked the local legislators by saying "Your dedication to your roles as public servants, decisions, and legislative actions have the power to shape the future of your communities."

The Provincial Awards Committee (PAC) of LLA conferred the outstanding local legislative councils and individual legislators across the province in Dumaguete City.

The LLA winners under the city category include Bais

City as 1st placer; Bayawan City as 2nd; Tanjay City, 3rd; Dumaguete City, 4th; and Guihulngan City, 5th.

For 1st-3rd class municipalities (category) were Sta. Catalina, Sibulan, and Pamplona.

The municipality of Amlan was declared the winner as the only town that participated under the category 4th-6th class municipalities.

The outstanding Secretaries to the Sanggunian include Adelyn Racal of Amlan, Atty. Julius Jefferson Estoque of Sta. Catalina, and Rodolfo Andrew De Guia Jr., Bais City.

Bais City Vice-Mayor Mercedes Goñi expressed gratitude for being declared as outstanding city council, saying that the innovation and ordinances they passed were implemented properly for the community. "Every fourth session of the month, we hold our sessions in the barangay mismo (itself), we always bisita sa barangay (visit the barangay), aking residents of their needs or concerns, so right there and then we can respond," said Goñi.

It is noted that LLA's criteria go beyond passing ordinances or resolutions of a sanggunian, "It requires that proper laws are aligned with national and local development goals, and legislation that shapes a future that our citizens can look forward to and rely on," said Gentuya. The secretaries of the sanggunian were also recognized for their diligence in ensuring accurate documentation, organized records, timely preparation of agenda, and smooth facilitation of legislative processes and keeps the entire system running with integrity and order.

For his part, Provincial Board Member Bruno G. Bouffard III, president of the PCL, highlighted the significance of the awards or LLA in recognizing exemplary legislative performance and reaffirmed the crucial role of local legislators in promoting good governance and responsive public service. (JCT/PIA NEGROS ORIENTAL) **BY JENIFER C. TILOS**

DEPED ZAMBO CITY PRIORITIZES QUALITY OF EDUCATION, MODERNIZATION FOR 2026

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PIA) — With education, recovery, and long-term transformation high on the agenda, the Department of Education (DepEd) Zamboanga City Division is directing its 2026 budget at improving learning quality, expanding access, and modernizing teaching systems, said Schools Division Superintendent Dr. Roy Tuballa.

According to Tuballa, budget planning for 2026 is anchored on the national Quality Basic Education Development Plan, a 10-year roadmap, and aligned with the current education leadership's five-point

agenda.

These national priorities are localized, in response to Zamboanga City's unique challenges, from classroom congestion to digital gaps.

"From the national priorities, we identify our specific local context. That is where we create programs to enhance existing ones or address needs unique to Zamboanga City," Tuballa said.

For 2026, the division's budget reflects a slight increase from the previous year. Between 60 and 70 percent of the allocation will go to the salaries

and benefits of teachers and personnel, while the remaining portion will fund operations and priority projects.

A major portion of development funds will support the division's Teaching and Learning Process Modernization Program, which includes establishing a city-wide learning management system. The platform will allow teachers to access ready-made learning materials and enable students with internet access to download modules from home.

To support schools without reliable connectivity, the

division has allocated funds for printing equipment, digital copies of modules, and alternative delivery methods. "If learners cannot access materials online, we make sure they still receive printed modules," Tuballa said. Connectivity improvements are also part of the plan, with provisions for internet solutions such as satellite connections and power backup systems in selected areas.

Tuballa highlighted the Special Education Fund, sourced from one percent of the city's real property tax collections. For 2026, the fund is estimated at P238

million, with half allotted for salaries of locally funded teachers and the other half for priority programs, particularly modernization initiatives.

Given budget constraints for infrastructure, DepEd Zamboanga City is also strengthening public-private partnerships to support school buildings, equipment, and technology. Through its 2026 budget direction, the Division aims not only to recover from learning losses but also to move forward with a more inclusive, resilient, and modern education system for its learners. (JPA/ MLE/PIA9-ZAMBOANGA CITY) **BY MYRA CEL L. ESPINOSA**

FINANCE CHIEF: BIG, BOLD REFORMS TO SUSTAIN ECONOMIC GROWTH

MANILA – Key reforms in trade facilitation, transportation and other sectors are in place to support sustained economic growth, Department of Finance Secretary Frederick Go said Friday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Economic Managers Forum in Taguig City, Go said some of the measures are the signing of the single window integrated trade facilitation platform or the National Single Window (NSW); and ensuring budget for the Comprehensive Automotive Resurgence Strategy (CARS) program amidst the veto for the allocation under this year's national budget.

Go said the NSW will consolidate trade requirements into a single digital portal, reducing red tape, delays and costs.

"It's proven by global studies that a country with a national single window will really enhance trade and tax collection," Go said.

On the CARS program, Go said the Department of Budget and Management will soon release details of the new approved funding. "Car manufacturers enrolled in the program can now be assured that government will fulfill its commitment to investors," he said.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. vetoed several items in the proposed 2026 budget, including the PHP4.32-billion allocation for the CARS program to curb unprogrammed appropriations.

The CARS program provides fixed investment support and production volume incentives to automotive firms. As of 2025, the government has released PHP1.44 billion of the program's PHP5.43-billion total budget.

Go also welcomed the government's decision to grant Chinese business

owners and tourists a 14-day visa-free entry through the Manila and Cebu airports, saying it would "boost tourism, trade and investments and further improve relationships with our largest trading partner." He said these reforms, aimed at easing the cost of doing business and improving infrastructure, were presented to private sector stakeholders to boost investor confidence and encourage greater investment.

"This is a clear signal that the Philippines is moving forward decisively and not being distracted," the Finance chief said.

"Despite the challenges of the past year, our long-term fundamentals remain strong and intact. Our stable macroeconomic environment, enabling policies and dynamic workforce provide a solid foundation for sustainable growth. With this, we are now advancing with big bold reforms," he said. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

BSP'S 28-DAY BILL RATE DROPS ON RATE CUT HOPES

MANILA – The average rate of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 28-day securities declined on Friday amid expectations of further cuts in the central bank's key rates.

Data from the BSP showed the average rate fell by 1.09 basis points to 4.8099 percent from 4.8208 percent in the Jan. 9 auction.

The BSP offered PHP90 billion worth of the securities and made a full award after tenders reached PHP129.8 billion. Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) chief economist Michael Ricafort attributed the lower rate to "recent dovish signals from BSP Gov. (Eli) Remolona

15 POWER PRODUCERS VIE FOR MERALCO'S 200MW BASELOAD REQUIREMENT

MANILA – Fifteen power generation companies have submitted expressions of interest to supply the Manila Electric Company's (Meralco) 200-megawatt renewable energy (RE) baseload requirement.

In a news release on Friday, the Pangilinan-led Meralco said the firms that joined the competitive selection process (CSP) pre-bid conference on Thursday are ACEN Corporation, AP Renewable Energy Corporation, Bac-Man Geothermal Inc., Energy Development Corporation, First Gen Hydro Power Corporation, GNPowder Kauswagan Ltd. Co., GNPowder Mariveles Energy Center Ltd. Co., Green Core Geothermal Inc., Mariveles Power Generation Corporation, Negros Island Solar Power Inc., SanMar Solar Inc., Sinocalan Solar Power Corporation, Sual Power Inc., Therma Luzon Inc., and Therma Visayas Inc. "The strong interest from the participating power

generation companies affirms the effectiveness of the CSP as a mechanism for securing sufficient and least-cost supply for our customers," Meralco Bids and Awards Committee Chairperson Lawrence Fernandez said.

"We look forward to receiving their offers on the Bid Submission Deadline scheduled on February 16."

Meralco said the power supply agreement with the winning bidder, subject to approval by the Energy Regulatory Commission, will enable the company to comply with the government's renewable portfolio standards.

"Aligned with its annual Power Supply Procurement Plan approved by the Department of Energy (DOE), Meralco conducts open and transparent CSPs in full compliance with government rules and regulations," it said. **(JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)**

BIR EYES COLLAB WITH TIKTOK FOR DIGITAL TAX EDUCATION

MANILA – The Bureau of Internal Revenue and TikTok Philippines are discussing a partnership to further strengthen digital tax education and promote voluntary compliance as the government rolls out the 2026 National Tax Campaign.

In a news release Thursday, the BIR said Commissioner Charlie Mendoza and lawyer Yves Gonzalez, Head of Public Policy for TikTok in the Philippines, led their respective teams during a meeting at the BIR office in Quezon City on Jan. 12.

Discussions, it said, involved tapping TikTok to disseminate key tax messages through short, platform-appropriate content and creator-led materials, particularly in

PH-MADE METHANOL-POWERED KAMSARMAX BULK CARRIER STARTS JOURNEY

MANILA – The Philippines' contribution to the global shipbuilding industry gained momentum as the first methanol-powered Kamsarmax bulk carrier began its voyage to East Asia following President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s visit to Cebu on Thursday.

The 81,200-metric ton dual-fuel vessel, built by Tsuneishi Heavy Industries (Cebu) at the 540-hectare West Cebu Estate in Balamban, Cebu, was named M/V Brave Pioneer by the President.

Tsuneishi Heavy Industries (Cebu) is a locator in the estate, which is managed by Aboitiz Economic Estate.

In a news release, Aboitiz Economic Estate said the vessel underwent comprehensive inspections to ensure compliance with international maritime standards.

Compared with conventional ships, the M/V Brave Pioneer is

designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 10 percent, nitrogen oxides by up to 80 percent and sulfur oxides by up to 99 percent.

"This milestone aligns with the government's focus on strengthening innovation-driven manufacturing and advancing the country's industrial capabilities. By enabling high-value, technology-led production, the Philippines continues to position itself as a competitive hub for globally integrated manufacturing and export-oriented industries," the statement said.

Tsuneishi has launched nearly 400 vessels and delivered more than 380 ships worldwide.

Aboitiz Group President and Chief Executive Officer Sabin Aboitiz said what began as a single project evolved into a full ecosystem that created jobs, developed skills, strengthened local suppliers and uplifted communities.

"Through this partnership, Balamban has been transformed into the country's shipbuilding capital, enabling the Philippines to compete on the global stage," he said. **(JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)**

create all possible means to strengthen tax collection while providing better assistance to taxpayers," he added.

Gonzales, in turn, said TikTok "is committed to empowering Filipinos with the knowledge and resources to stay informed and navigate their civic duties responsibly in the digital age."

"We look forward to supporting the BIR in transforming the way they connect with the public through accessible, relatable, and engaging content through their official TikTok channel," she said. **(JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)**

February or during Tax Awareness Month.

BIR, for its part, will conduct onsite and online workshops with TikTok that will focus on taxpayer registration, taxable income streams, filing and payment procedures, and common compliance issues.

Mendoza said tapping digital platforms in educating the public "is no longer optional — it is necessary. We must go where the new generation of taxpayers are."

"This initiative complements our ongoing digitalization efforts and is in line with the President's directive to make government transactions easier, as well as the guidance of the Secretary of Finance to



UST FACES DAUNTING CHALLENGE IN UAAP BOYS' FOOTBALL TITLE DEFENSE

MANILA – University of Santo Tomas is expected to face a tougher challenge in its title defense in the UAAP Season 88 boys' football tournament featuring a record seven teams.

Led by Stephen Flores and James Sunog, UST pulled off a 2-1 victory over Far Eastern University-Diliman in last year's final, ending the Baby Tamaraws' 12-year reign.

The tournament kicks off 2 p.m. Saturday at the UP football field, with FEU-D facing newcomer Adamson University.

"In the juniors, what happened to us was painful. First round and second round, we didn't lose. Only in the championship match against UST. It's still not lost, especially to me," FEU-D coach Jake Morallo said in a news release Friday.

"Jerriemy Biton will be back too. He's looking forward to getting back this season. We are hoping to bring back the crown. We know we can, especially with our squad. Now, we'll be working almost every day so I think we're ready," he added.

Guest team Claret School of Quezon City and De La Salle-Zobel collide at 4:30 pm. while Ateneo de Manila takes on guest squad PAREF Southridge School at 7 p.m.

Claret hopes to improve its campaign after debuting last season with only one win in 10 matches, prevailing over La Salle, 3-2, on the final day of the elimination round.

La Salle is also eyeing a better performance after closing Season 87 on a five-game slump from the second round to the Final Four.

Ateneo and Southridge last met in the Season 87 eliminations, with the match ending in a 1-1 draw that proved pivotal for the

Admirals, who earned a crucial point to secure the No. 4 seed in the semis. Meanwhile, UST and La

Salle will square off at 2 p.m. on Jan. 24 at the same venue. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



CHAMPION. University of Santo Tomas ended the 12-year reign of Far Eastern University-Diliman in the UAAP Season 87 boys' football tournament with a 2-1 victory in the final on March 29, 2025. The Junior Golden Booters are facing a daunting challenge in their title defense in the tournament featuring a record seven teams. (UAAP photo)

ICTSI PH LADIES MASTERS KICKS OFF TAIWAN LPGA TOUR

MANILA – The country's finest professionals will face a formidable international field in the ICTSI Philippine Ladies Masters set on Feb. 4 to 6 at the Summit Point Golf and Country Club in Lipa City, Batangas.

The USD200,000 tournament will serve as the kick-off leg of the 2026 Taiwan LPGA Tour, which features at least 17 tournaments.

Regular TLPGA campaigners will be joined by top players and rising stars from South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in the 54-hole championship. The par-72 course Summit Point, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., is renowned for its ambitious concept – replicas of 18 iconic holes

from the world's most famous layouts, including St. Andrews, Augusta National, Pebble Beach and Spyglass Hill.

South Korean Kim Kayoung is expected to return and defend the crown she won over Thailand's Nook Sukapan by one stroke.

The strong contingent from the host country's Ladies Philippine Golf Tour includes reigning Order of Merit winner Sarah Ababa, Chanelle Avaricio, Princess Superal, Florence Bisera and Mafy Singson. Last year's Philippine Ladies Masters was co-sanctioned by the TLPGA, the LPGT and the Korean Dream Tour, highlighting its growing appeal across multiple tours.

The event organized by the

PHILIPPINE AQUATICS INC., AUSTRALIA'S NSC FINALIZE PARTNERSHIP

MANILA – The Philippine Aquatics Inc. (PAI) has forged a partnership with Melbourne-based Nunawading Swim Club (NSC) for a comprehensive program that will elevate the sport for Filipinos.

NSC is one of Australia's premier swimming organizations, with a distinguished legacy of developing Olympians, Commonwealth Games representatives, and world-class competitors since its founding in 1960. PAI and NSC will collaborate on joint training camps, technical knowledge transfer initiatives, and specialized development pathways for both athletes and coaches as per the memorandum of agreement signed Jan. 15, according to a news

release over the weekend. The activities will be hosted at leading Philippine venues, including state-of-the-art facilities at New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac and in Baguio City, leveraging international expertise alongside robust local support to raise performance benchmarks and foster a culture of excellence.

Xiandi Chua, double gold medalist at the Southeast Asian Games (SEAG), is an example of how global exposure and high-performance training environments can accelerate the growth of Filipino athletes.

Chua, who trained at NSC, ruled the women's 200-meter backstroke in the 2023 SEAG in Cambodia, clocking 2

minutes and 13.20 seconds to reset the 2:13.64 record of Vietnam's Nguyễn Thị Ánh Viên established in 2017 Kuala Lumpur.

In the December 2025 Thailand SEAG, Chua was part of the women's winning 4x100 relay team, the others being Olympian Kayla Sanchez, Heather White and Chloe Isleta.

The signatories of the MOA were NSC chief executive officer Simon Beqir and president Matthew Miur (president); PAI secretary general Eric Buhain, executive director Anthony Reyes and foreign affairs head Akiko Thomson Guevarra; and Filipino-Chinese Amateur Athletic Federation representative Rowena Thelmo. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

NUNS, ATENEO TRIUMPH IN UAAP HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

MANILA – National University Nazareth School (NUNS) demolished PAREF Southridge, 27-6, to secure its first victory in the UAAP Season 88 high school baseball tournament Wednesday at the Rizal Memorial Baseball Stadium.

NUNS scored 11 runs in the top of the sixth on eight hits, a hit batter, a walk, and two errors by Southridge across 16 plate appearances to post a commanding 27-5 lead.

Left-handed pitcher Dave Suico then finished the job in the bottom of the inning, taking care of the final three outs to enforce the mercy rule.

"We just have to gain experience because we're just a new team that we've just picked up at NUNS. Maybe the more games we have, the kids will improve," Bullpups head coach Romar Landicho said.

The team aims to follow in the footsteps of the Bulldogs, the reigning champions of the collegiate division.

"Same as our program in NU. The same mentality we have, the way we play in college, is what we do in high school so that the

development of the players is continuous," he added.

Chester Mark Mateo went 4-for-4 at the plate, driving in four runs, while Jericho Catchero also made four hits and brought home five. Orlando Cedillo had four hits and two runs batted in (RBI).

Starting pitcher Justin Lauriquez tossed 3 and 2/3 innings, allowing just three runs and finished with three hits and a walk.

In the other game, Ateneo de Manila University defeated De La Salle Zobel, 8-7, to join NUNS in second place at 1-1, behind University of Santo Tomas (2-0).

With two automatic runners on base in extra innings, Tres Saguisag laid down a bunt and beat the throw to first to load the bases with no outs.

Enzo De Guzman then stepped to the plate and delivered the game-winning hit as the Blue

Eagles recovered from their 12-13 loss to the PAREF Southridge Admirals last Jan. 7.

"Our training worked. Even though we lost last time, it was a lesson for the boys and I was happy because they really followed whatever signal we gave, that's what they did. The courage, they really fought for Ateneo," head coach Pepe Jose said.

DLSZ bounced back from a 1-5 deficit with a six-run seventh inning to take a 7-5 lead, but Tommy Oblea tied the contest in the bottom of the eighth with a two-RBI single to left-center that brought home Saguisag and De Guzman.

Miguel Cruzat, who started the game at second base, steadied the ship for Ateneo in the final 4 and 1/3 innings, allowing just two hits and one run. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



GOOD JOB. Chester Mark Mateo of National University Nazareth School had a perfect 4-for-4 at the plate, driving in four runs, against PAREF Southridge in the UAAP Season 88 high school baseball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Baseball Stadium. The Bullpups won, 27-6. (UAAP photo)

Pilipinas Golf Tournaments, Inc. has become a ground for regional players aiming to sharpen their skills, gain exposure and contend on a broader Asian stage. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**