

## NO MORE SHIFTING SCHEME AT GENTRI PUBLIC SCHOOL WITH NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

**GENERAL TRIAS CITY, Cavite (PIA)** — Education Secretary Sonny Angara has underscored the vital role of local government units in addressing the country's classroom shortage during the inauguration of a new classroom building at Santiago Elementary School in General Trias City on Tuesday, January 20.

In his message, Angara highlighted the national government's commitment to collaborating with LGUs to build school facilities and solve the persistent classroom shortage in public schools.

"Ito ang innovative approach ni Presidente [Ferdinand Marcos Jr.]. Dati kasi, ang gumagawa

ng classrooms ay either DepEd lang o DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways) lang."

Angara also lauded the local government for its effort to build 100 classrooms, which significantly helped ease school congestion in the city.

The secretary added, "In

partnership with the city, nakapagpatayo ng 100 classrooms in three years. Thank you for prioritizing building classrooms."

With the new classroom building, Santiago Elementary School can provide an improved learning environment to its students.

Principal Reinalyn Mutalla noted the importance of sufficient learning facilities in providing quality education, especially in public schools.

"It strengthens our capacity to deliver quality, inclusive, and future-ready education for every child entrusted to our care."

Catering to an estimated 2,443 learners, Santiago Elementary School adopts a shifting scheme due to the lack of classrooms. With the new building, Mutalla said that they will not need to adopt this scheme anymore.

"Hindi na po kami three days [with] two shifts para ma-accommodate silang lahat. We can now also provide a better learning

**SILANG, Cavite (PIA)** — Students at the Cavite State University (CvSU) in Silang have developed a digital platform to modernize barangay services and enhance the efficiency of grassroots governance.

Developed as a thesis by Dave Espiritu, Neejay Lazaro, Arianne Jose, Kenneth Naquila, Luvrickx Kelley Lanzona, Ruel Panti, and Ruel Vincent dela Peña of the CvSU Silang's College of Information Technology, the One Bayani, One System was designed to digitize barangay records management systems, improving services and governance.

Cereneo Santiago, thesis adviser and Project Leader of the OneSys Extension Project, emphasized that OneSys was built to modernize barangay recordkeeping to ensure that local services are more responsive to community needs.

"Yung real-time access

sa mga data, mas mabilis 'yung pag-issue ng certificates, at mas organized 'yung blotter and permit tracking. Mayroon rin itong built-it analytics para sa planning, and reporting."

By integrating resident profiling, certificate issuance, and blotter management into a real-time database, the One Bayani, One System can help barangays transition to digitized and data-driven governance.

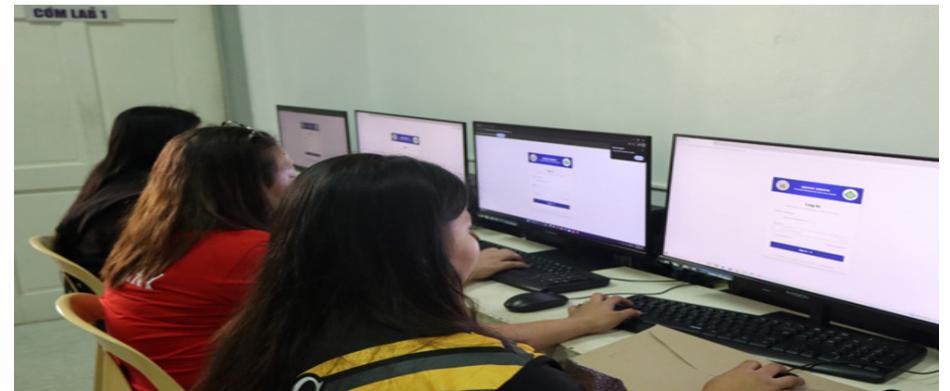
"Yung records ay standardized at nao-audit, at nakapag-generate agad ang mga barangay ng reports na nasenset nila sa DILG [Department of the Interior and Local Government]."

Slated for adoption across all barangays in Silang, the three-year project began in 2025 with a goal of streamlining government services.

According to Santiago, the local government and barangay leaders have shown strong support for the project.

"[By] 2028 ay dapat ginagamit na ng lahat ng barangay. Actually ngayong 2026 ay maa-achieve na namin yun. Yung ibang barangay kasi ay nagrerequest na. In 2026, start na namin yung cluster 2 with 16 barangays."

Once fully implemented in Silang, the One Bayani, One System for possible adoption in the entire Cavite Province. (PB-PIA CALABARZON) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**



## TANZA POLICE NABS DRUG SUSPECTS, SEIZES SHABU AND LOOSE FIREARM

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – Operatives of the Tanza Municipal Police Station, successfully arrested two individuals and seized illegal drugs and a firearm during an anti-illegal drugs operation conducted in Tanza, Cavite at around 10:30 in the afternoon, January 21, 2026.

PLTCOL JOVEN T BAHIL, Officer-in-Charge, Tanza MPS identified the arrested suspects as alias “Dennis” and alias “Mayeth”, both residents of Tanza, Cavite. The operation was conducted by the Station Drug Enforcement Team of Tanza MPS in coordination with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and was properly documented through the use of an Alternative Recording Device.

During the operation, the suspects were apprehended after selling one heat-sealed transparent plastic sachet containing white crystalline substance suspected to be shabu to a police officer acting as poseur-buyer in exchange for three pieces of one hundred peso bills (Php100.00) used as marked money.

Further, search incidental to lawful arrest resulted in the recovery of the following pieces of evidence: five heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets containing white crystalline substance suspected to be shabu with a total weight of more or less 4.70 grams, with an estimated street value of Php31,960.00; three pieces of Php100.00 bills used as buy-bust money; and one .38 caliber revolver loaded with two live ammunitions.

The suspects were duly informed of their constitutional (Miranda) rights and Anti-Torture rights in a language known to them. They are currently under the custody of Tanza Municipal Police Station.

Appropriate criminal charges for Violation of Republic Act No. 9165 (Sections 5, 11, and 26, Article II) and Violation of

Republic Act No. 10591 (Illegal Possession of Firearms and Ammunition) are being prepared for filing against the suspects. The confiscated illegal drugs and firearm will be turned over to the Provincial Forensic Unit for laboratory examination.

In his message, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director, Cavite Police Provincial Office, lauded the personnel of Tanza MPS for their relentless efforts in combating illegal drugs and loose firearms. He stressed that the Cavite PNP remains steadfast in its commitment to protect communities from the dangers posed by illegal drugs and armed criminals and urged the public to continue supporting law enforcement initiatives.

## DASMARIÑAS POLICE ARRESTS CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – Operatives of the Dasmariñas Component City Police Station, successfully arrested a City Level Most Wanted Person during a police operation conducted in Dasmariñas City at around 2:00 in the afternoon, January 21, 2026.

PLTCOL RESTY E SORIANO, Officer-in-Charge, Dasmariñas CCPS, identified the arrested suspect as alias “Porferio”, presently residing at Dasmariñas City, Cavite and listed as Rank No. 6 (City Level) Most Wanted Person.

The arrest was carried out by warrant personnel of Dasmariñas CCPS by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for the crime of Acts of Lasciviousness (Article 336 of the Revised Penal Code) in relation to Section 5(b) of Republic Act No. 7610, as amended by Republic Act No. 11648, issued by Regional Trial Court, Branch 128, Dasmariñas City, Cavite, dated November 28, 2025, with

## GENERAL TRIAS CITY POLICE ARRESTS PROVINCIAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – In line with the intensified campaign of the Philippine National Police against wanted persons, warrant personnel of General Trias Component City Police Station successfully arrested a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person in General Trias City, Cavite at around 2:00 in the afternoon, January 22, 2026.

The arrested suspect was identified as alias “Harold”, a resident of General Trias City, Cavite and listed as a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person.

The arrest was carried out by warrant personnel of General Trias CCPS through a police operation duly recorded using an Alternative Recording Device. The accused was arrested by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for Acts of Lasciviousness under Article 336 of the Revised

Penal Code in relation to Section 5(b) of Republic Act No. 7610, issued by Family Court, Branch 4, Fourth Judicial Region, Imus City, Cavite, with recommended bail fixed at Php 180,000.00.

The accused is presently 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.

In his message, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director, Cavite Police Provincial Office, commended the personnel of General Trias CCPS for the successful arrest of a Provincial Level Most Wanted Person. He stressed that the Cavite PNP remains steadfast in protecting children and vulnerable sectors of society and will continue to relentlessly pursue offenders to ensure that justice is served.

The Provincial Director further reiterated that the Cavite PNP will sustain intelligence-driven and warrant-focused operations to uphold peace and order and strengthen public trust in law enforcement.

## MAGALLANES POLICE ARRESTS MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON IN MASBATE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – A joint law enforcement operation conducted by personnel from Magallanes Municipal Police Station and Monreal Municipal Police Station, resulted in the successful arrest of a Municipal Level Most Wanted Person in Brgy. Togoron, Monreal, Masbate at around 3:10 in the afternoon of January 22, 2026.

PMAJ RAYMOND T BALBUENA, Chief of police, Magallanes MPS identified the arrested suspect as alias “Narciso”, a resident of Monreal, Masbate and listed as Rank No. 6 Municipal Most Wanted Person of Magallanes, Cavite.

The arrest was carried out by joint warrant personnel of Magallanes MPS and Monreal MPS, by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for Violation of Section 10(a) of Republic Act No. 7610, issued by Regional Trial

## CAVITE PNP ARRESTS PARAÑAQUE CITY MOST WANTED PERSON IN IMUS CITY

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite – In line with the intensified campaign of the Philippine National Police against wanted persons, operatives of the Provincial Intelligence Unit, Cavite Police Provincial Office, together with personnel of Imus Component City Police Station, successfully arrested a Parañaque City Level Most Wanted Person, at Imus City, Cavite, at around 5:30 PM on January 22, 2026.

The arrested accused was identified as alias “Josephine”, and a resident of Imus City, Cavite.

The arrest was carried out through an intelligence-driven operation conducted by the Provincial Intelligence Unit of Cavite PPO led by PCPT MICHAEL V LEGASPI JR, under the direct supervision of PLTCOL CHESTER NOEL R BORLONGAN, Chief, PIU, in coordination with personnel of Imus CCPS. The operation was duly recorded using an Alternative Recording Device.

The accused was arrested by virtue of multiple Warrants of Arrest for the following crimes: Illegal Recruitment by a Syndicated – Economic

Sabotage, issued by Regional Trial Court, 7th Judicial Region, Branch 84, Mandaue City, dated May 24, 2024, with no bail recommended; Estafa under Article 315, paragraph 2(a) of the Revised Penal Code in relation to Section 6 of R.A. 10175, issued by Regional Trial Court, 7th Judicial Region, Branch 84, Mandaue City, dated May 24, 2024, with recommended bail of Php 30,000.00; Illegal Recruitment, issued by Regional Trial Court, 8th Judicial Region, Branch 22, Laoang, Northern Samar, dated December 17, 2024, with recommended bail of Php 120,000.00; and Illegal Recruitment under Section 6 of R.A. 8042, as amended by Section 5 of R.A. 10022, issued by Regional Trial Court, National Capital Judicial Region, Branch 196, Parañaque City, dated October 26, 2023, with recommended bail of Php 120,000.00.

The accused was duly apprised of her constitutional rights pursuant to R.A. 7438 and the Anti-Torture Act, in a dialect known to her. A physical examination was conducted, and while awaiting the issuance of a Commitment Order, she was brought to Imus CCPS for custody and documentation. The return of the warrants of arrest will be submitted to the respective courts of origin for proper disposition.

In his message, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Acting Provincial Director, Cavite Police Provincial Office, lauded the Provincial Intelligence Unit and Imus CCPS for the successful arrest of a City Level Most Wanted Person involved in illegal recruitment and estafa cases. He emphasized that the Cavite PNP remains committed to protecting the public from fraudulent recruitment schemes and ensuring that offenders are brought before the bar of justice.

The Provincial Director further reiterated that intelligence-driven operations and inter-agency coordination will continuously be strengthened to uphold the rule of law and safeguard the welfare of the community.

## DENR-EMB MULLS CIRCULAR ECONOMY TO IMPROVE WASTE MANAGEMENT IN CALABARZON

**CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA)** — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources—Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) Calabarzon continues to promote the adoption of a circular economy approach to strengthen waste management systems and reduce environmental pollution across the region. DENR-EMB Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division Chief Corazon Gasapos emphasized that a circular economy shifts the traditional “take-make-dispose” model into a more sustainable system where materials are reduced, reused, recycled, and recovered, allowing waste to be transformed into resources that can still generate value.

“Currently, what we are doing is the linear economy, we are taking resources from our environment. We are

making good products, only the ones we need, but when we use them, we throw them in the trash. So that’s the linear economy. Our direction is towards the circular economy where the things that we can still benefit from, we recover them and we use them,” Gasapos stated during an interview with Philippine Information Agency.

The circular economy is a global sustainability framework that aims to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation by maximizing the efficient use of resources.

Unlike the linear economy, which relies heavily on extraction and disposal, the circular economy focuses on extending the life cycle of products, minimizing waste generation, and reducing pressure on natural resources, Gasapos further explained.

“(For) example is plastics,

when it burns, it releases toxic smoke, or it clogs the drains. Now, what we will do is, after we use these plastics, we will recover these plastics, we can melt them, we can make good products. Or we can grind them, we can incorporate them into concrete products. We will incorporate them into what we throw away, we will continue to use the things that still have benefits through recycling and cycling,” the DENR-EMB official adds.

In the Philippines, the circular economy is increasingly being recognized as a key sustainable strategy to address mounting waste concerns, particularly plastic pollution, landfill congestion, and marine debris.

It complements existing environmental policies such as Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, and Republic

Act No. 11898, or the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022, which directs large companies to recover and recycle their plastic packaging waste.

Moreso, DENR-EMB Calabarzon actively promotes waste segregation at source, recycling programs, composting of biodegradable waste, and the establishment of materials recovery facilities (MRFs). The bureau also works closely with LGUs and the private sector to encourage compliance with RA 9003. The bureau then stressed that public participation remains essential, noting that households and communities play a vital role in reducing waste through mindful consumption, reuse, and proper waste disposal. (AM/PIA Calabarzon) **BY ANNA MOLE**

## EDITORIAL

### Isang Bagong Diskubreng Natural Gas sa Palawan

Bagong mapagkukunan ng natural gas, nadiskubre sa Malampaya East 1 sa Palawan. Ayon sa Pangulo, kaya nitong mag-supply ng kuryente sa mahigit limang milyong bahay sa loob ng isang taon.

Ang Pilipinas ay likas sa natural na yaman, kadalasan ay hindi pa nadiskubre o kaya naman ay naaabuso at hindi nailalagay sa maayos na alokasyon. Sa pagdiskubre ng ganitong klase ng natural gas, sana ay magamit ito sa tama at maayos ang alokasyon nito. Marapat na hindi ito hayaang maging dahilan upang maagaw ang isang parte muli ng ating bansa.

Mayaman ang Pilipinas, ngunit ang yamang taglay ng bansa ay hindi nahahawakan ng maayos upang lalo itong maging sagana. Sana ay alagaan ito upang sa gayon ay hindi ito maabuso at mapagyaman pa.

## PGC EXTENDS MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION TO GENTRISEÑOS

Another round of a successful Medical and Dental Mission was conducted by the Provincial Government of Cavite in Brgy. Pasong Camachile 1, Grand River Side, General Trias City on January 21.

The initiative benefited Gentriseños with a wide range of free health services designed to promote wellness and early detection. Medical consultations under the OPD reached 428 patients, while diagnostic services included 101 fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, 24 ECG procedures, and 18 X-ray services. Meanwhile, 46

patients received dental care through the Rural Health Unit (RHU) of City of General Trias.

The mission was made possible through the combined expertise of the GEAMH medical team and the RHU dental team of General Trias City, who worked hand in hand to deliver efficient and compassionate care. To further support patients’ recovery and well-being, free medicines were distributed by the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG) medical team, ensuring continuity of treatment beyond the consultation.

## FREE MEDICAL & DENTAL MISSION IN BARANGAY MILAGROSA

Governor Abeng Remulla’s Medical Mission Team, in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and the City Government of Carmona,

Adding support to the activity, Councilors Kyle Salazar and Jay Columna graced the event, underscoring the importance of strong local leadership and collaborative governance in advancing community health initiatives.

The activity reflected PGC’s commitment to bringing healthcare closer to the people. — **R. Dones/Cavite - PIO**

successfully conducted a Medical and Dental Mission on January 16, at Barangay Milagrosa, Phase III.

With the support of Mayor Dahlia Loyola, the City Council, and 5th District Board Member Ivey Reyes, the mission served 526 patients with free consultations, medicines, and health services, including 56 tooth extractions, 67 FBS tests, 12 ECGs, and 12 X-rays.

The initiative underscores the local government’s continuing commitment to accessible healthcare, disease prevention, and the promotion of community well-being. — **A. Sarte/Cavite - PIO**

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## DSWD TO PROVIDE CASH-FOR-WORK FOR 1.3K MAYON-AFFECTED FAMILIES

MANILA – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) announced on Thursday that a cash-for-work (CFW) program will be provided to 1,323 families affected by the continuing unrest of Mayon Volcano, aside from the provision of food and non-food items.

In a media forum at the DSWD Central Office, Assistant Secretary Irene Dumlao of the Disaster Response Management Group (DRMG) said these families include farmers and fisherfolk whose livelihoods were disrupted by the volcanic activity.

“Noong nagtungo tayo diyay sa Albay, a few weeks back kasama si Secretary Rex Gatchalian, tiniyak na natin na may mga karagdagang interventions tayong ipo-provide apart from the usual food and non-food items that we have distributed. Mayroon tayong ipo-provide na financial assistance, adopting the cash-for-work modality. We hope na makapag-umpisa na tayo dito before the end of January (When we first visited Albay a few weeks back with Secretary Gatchalian, we already assured that additional interventions will be provided apart from the usual food and non-food items. We will provide financial assistance by adopting the cash-for-work modality. We hope to start by the end of January),” Dumlao told reporters.

Under the CFW program, beneficiaries will receive financial aid based on the regional minimum wage rate multiplied by 30 days, which is the initial period agreed upon by the affected local government units (LGUs) and the DSWD.

Each beneficiary is expected to receive more than PHP13,000 a month in exchange for community-based work, such as planting in vacant areas, tending livestock, maintaining sanitation facilities in evacuation centers, and similar

activities.

“Ang utos kasi ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ay tiyaking handa tayong tumugon sa mga pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayang maaapektuhan ng iba’t-ibang mga kalamidad. Of course, ‘yan din naman po ang sinusunod ni Secretary Rex Gatchalian (The order of President Marcos is to ensure that we are always ready to respond to the needs of our countrymen affected by various calamities. Of course, Secretary Gatchalian is strictly complying),” Dumlao said.

Sustained assistance Dumlao said the DSWD has provided PHP14 million worth of humanitarian aid, including family food packs (FFPs) distributed to Mayon-affected families and individuals.

She also assured the public that sufficient resources are in place to sustain long-term assistance.

According to Dumlao, Gatchalian has directed that there should be more than enough FFPs prepositioned in various warehouses in the Bicol Region.

“Hindi po kasi natin mapepredict kung hanggang kailan tatagal itong pag-aalburito nitong Mount Mayon, but kung tumagal man ito or lumala pa (We can’t predict how long Mount Mayon will continue its restiveness, but if this goes on or worsens), we are ready to provide the necessary augmentation support,” she said.

She estimated the current stockpile of the department at 3 million FFPs, with the Luzon Disaster Resource Center in Pasay City, and the Visayas Disaster Resource Center in Mandaue City, Cebu, producing about 18,000 FFPs daily.

Social workers and Quick Response Teams (QRTs) from the DSWD 5 (Bicol) are currently deployed to various evacuation centers to ensure the safety, welfare, and psychosocial needs of internally

## DHSUD TO ROLL OUT ‘EXPRESS LANES’ FOR 4PH PROJECT PERMITS, LICENSES

MANILA – The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) is set to establish “express lanes” to streamline the issuance of permits and licenses for projects under the Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino (4PH) Program.

In a news release on Thursday, DHSUD Secretary Jose Ramon Ailing noted the initiative is in collaboration with other government agencies and in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s directive to ensure efficient delivery of public service. Ailing presided over a multiagency meeting to discuss the proposed establishment of express lanes for socialized housing projects, aimed at fast-tracking the turnaround time for permits, certifications and licenses under the Expanded 4PH Program.

Officials and representatives from the Departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Environment and Natural Resources and Information and Communications Technology, as well as the Land Registration Authority, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, Board of

displaced persons.

Dumlao also noted that evacuation centers in the region are well-maintained and properly managed by the LGUs.

Based on the DSWD’s Disaster Response Operations Management, Information and Communication (DROMIC) report, the continuing activity of Mayon Volcano has affected 14 barangays, with 1,530 families, or 6,079 individuals, experiencing displacement and other forms of disruption.

About 1,116 families, consisting of 4,060 individuals, are staying in 12 evacuation centers. (PNA) BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT

Investments, Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), National Electrification Authority, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Water Resources Board and the Anti-Red Tape Authority attended the meeting.

Ailing said concerned agencies should initially prioritize policy adjustments that can immediately speed up project approvals, subject to existing laws and regulations.

“Para mas strategic tayo, tutukan muna natin yung mga polisiya ng bawat ahensya na kaya agad mapabilis ang approval ng mga proyekto sa ilalim ng Expanded 4PH Program (To be more strategic, let us first focus on the policies of each agency that can immediately speed up the approval of projects under the Expanded 4PH Program),” he said.

He stressed that each agency plays a critical role in simplifying processes to benefit the public and address the housing shortage.

He also underscored the importance of digitalization to ensure interoperability among government offices, allowing real-time tracking and updating of application statuses.

DHSUD Senior Undersecretaries Henry Yap and Eduardo Robles, who are both involved in the DHSUD’s initiatives to streamline housing project processes, joined Ailing. Earlier this month, the DHSUD secured the commitment of the BIR to simplify and streamline applications for tax exemptions of socialized housing projects.

“DHSUD is taking this seriously to fulfill our commitment to housing stakeholders by 2028. We have cut processes internally to improve the turnaround time of License to Sell issuance. We expect other agencies to cooperate with us to have a sustainable legacy in the housing industry,” Ailing said. (PNA) BY MA. TERESA MONTEMAYOR

## WAGE BOARD OKS P800PAY HIKE FOR KASAMBHAYS IN NCR

MANILA – Domestic workers (kasambahay) in Metro Manila are set to receive an additional PHP800 in their salaries early next month.

This, after the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board-National Capital Region approved Wage Order No. NCR-DW-06, granting the wage adjustment.

In an advisory Thursday, the National Wages and Productivity Commission said the measure will raise the monthly pay of kasambahays in the region from PHP7,000 to PHP7,800 per month, effective Feb. 7 or after 15 days from the order’s publication.

Covered by the salary adjustment are general househelp, whether

stay-in or live-out, yaya, cook, gardener, laundry person and any person who regularly performs domestic work in one household in an occupational basis.

On the other hand, those who are not governed by the increase are service providers, family drivers and any other person who performs work occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis.

The increase was approved after this year’s wage determination activities included a survey of kasambahays in the NCR, a focus group discussion with domestic workers, culminating in a public hearing held in Pasay City last Jan. 12. (PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO

## PH HOSTS 1ST MYANMAR STAKEHOLDERS MEET; DE-ESCALATION DISCUSSED

MANILA – The Philippines has hosted a meeting among political and ethnic groups from Myanmar, the first under its chairship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In a statement Thursday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said the Myanmar Stakeholders’ Meeting, held earlier this month in Tagaytay City, was organized by DFA Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro in her capacity as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar.

The meeting gathered multiple groups from the Southeast Asian state, with participants exchanging views on how to advance de-escalation, facilitate humanitarian assistance, effectively address transnational crime and foster political dialogue among relevant stakeholders.

The meeting also recognized the important

role of the Special Envoy in fostering “constructive dialogue among all parties concerned” and “facilitating mediation of the dialogue process” under the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus (5PC), the DFA said.

Lazaro said the meeting will form an integral part of the ASEAN Chair’s strategy to engage the diverse Myanmar stakeholders, emphasizing that “lasting peace can only be achieved through an inclusive process.”

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. designated Lazaro as special envoy to help facilitate a peaceful resolution to the Myanmar crisis as the Philippines assumes the ASEAN chairship this year.

The DFA earlier said Lazaro would build on the gains of the Malaysian special envoy and focus on promoting constructive dialogue and humanitarian assistance in Myanmar. (PNA) BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA

## LTO FILES CHARGES VS. RECKLESS DRIVER ON NAIAX

**MANILA** – The Land Transportation Office (LTO) is filing several charges against a driver who was caught on video recklessly

swerving across four lanes and nearly causing a collision at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway (NAIAX).

In a statement on Wednesday, LTO Chief Assistant Secretary Markus Lacanilao said a show cause order (SCO) has been issued against the driver and owner of the Ford Everest in the video that went viral on social media.

“Ang kaligtasan sa mga kalsada ay una nating prioridad. Hindi tayo papayag na hayaang magdulot ng panganib ang mga walang ingat na pagmamaneho sa mga mamamayang Pilipino (Road safety is our utmost priority. We won’t allow any reckless driver to endanger the Filipino public),” Lacanilao said.

The driver and owner are facing possible charges of “Reckless Driving, Signals on Starting, Stopping or Turning, Disregarding Traffic Signs, and Improper Person to Operate a Motor Vehicle.”

The license of the driver has also been suspended for 90 days, and the vehicle has been placed on alarm until the conclusion of the LTO’s investigation.

“Hinihingi sa kanila na magsumite ng verified

or sworn comment/explanation kasama ang mga kaugnay na orihinal na dokumento para patunayan kung bakit hindi sila dapat maparusahan ng administratibo o ma-revoke o ma-suspend ang kanilang lisensya sa pagmamaneho (They are asked to submit a verified or sworn comment/explanation with their original documents to prove why they should not be given administrative penalties or why their driver’s license should be revoked or suspended),” Lacanilao said.

Both the driver and the owner have been summoned to a hearing with the LTO Intelligence and Investigation Division (IID) in Quezon City on Jan. 28.

“Hinihikayat din natin ang lahat ng mga motorista na sundin ang mga tuntunin sa kalsada para maiwasan ang mga aksidente at mapanatili ang maayos na daloy ng trapiko (We call on all motorists to follow the rules of the road to avoid accidents and to maintain a proper follow of traffic),” Lacanilao said. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

## DSWD THANKS INDIAN GOV'T FOR HUMANITARIAN AID TO TYPHOONS-HIT FAMILIES

**MANILA** – As the Vice-Chair for Disaster Response of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) gratefully received the non-food humanitarian assistance donated by the People and Government of India for the families affected by Typhoons “Tino” and “Uwan” in November last year.

Ambassador of India to the Philippines, His Excellency Shri Harsh Kumar Jain, handed over the donated goods to Undersecretary Diana Rose Cajipe of the DSWD’s Disaster Response Management Group (DRMG) in a ceremony held Tuesday at the Clark Airbase, Pampanga.

“On behalf of the Philippine Government, DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian, and other agencies who will help us in bringing your assistance to the affected Filipinos in Central Luzon, we are grateful to accept

these donations from the Republic of India,” Cajipe said as quoted in a news release Wednesday.

The donated goods consist of 500 pieces each of sleeping mats, mosquito nets, and blankets; 750 sleeping bags; 1,550 dignity kits for males; 1,350 dignity kits for female children —including 50 dignity kits for women; and 1,000 solar lamps.

These donations will be distributed to the disaster-affected families of Dilasag, Aurora.

The Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita & Maitri (BHISHM) Cube was also donated to the Department of Health (DOH), which consists of various medical equipment and medicines approved by the country’s Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Kumar Jain also shared that the Indian government will provide trainers to ensure Filipino doctors or paramedics are fully equipped to operate the unit.

The training can be

## DA EYES 300K MT RICE IMPORTS AS STAKEHOLDERS VOW SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

**MANILA** – The Department of Agriculture (DA) is considering an initial importation of 300,000 metric tons (MT) of rice in February, as part of its calibrated measures to stabilize supply and retail prices following a consultation with industry stakeholders, which assured support for local farmers.

In a news release Thursday, the DA said that Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. secured the commitments from rice millers and importers for continued support for local farmers by maintaining minimum palay (unhusked rice) buying prices during the approaching harvest season.

Meanwhile, traders also assured continued purchase of palay at no less than PHP17 per kilo for wet palay and PHP21 per kilo for dry palay, depending on quality, as the government

fine-tunes rice imports to stabilize supply without undermining farmgate prices.

“Farmer prices are non-negotiable. Whatever import volume we agree on, farmers must be protected,” Tiu-Laurel said, stressing that the administration’s priority is to prevent farmgate prices from collapsing during the peak harvest.

Rice millers from key producing and trading areas reported that stocks remain tight as the industry transitions toward the incoming harvest season.

They said that in several areas, milling operations now largely depend on newly harvested palay, reflecting seasonal supply conditions that have kept prices firm.

In parts of Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya, harvesting has begun, while more areas, including Pangasinan, Ilocos, Bulacan and La Union, are expected to start harvesting by February.

Meanwhile, larger harvest volumes are projected by mid-March, with milling activity anticipated to increase further by April.

To address retail price pressures, the DA consulted importers on appropriate February volumes, with traders presenting varying estimates.

Despite differing views, traders from Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Pangasinan assured that they would continue buying palay at or above the agreed-upon minimum prices, even as imports arrive.

Tiu Laurel also reiterated that the National Food Authority (NFA) will not compete with private traders, provided buying prices remain at or above the agreed minimum levels.

He added that rice tariffs will not be raised until February and that final operational details will be carefully managed to avoid unnecessary market speculation.

Importers may begin applying for sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances, with shipments expected to arrive by early February, pending ongoing review based on market developments. **(PNA) BY MARITA MOAJE (PR)**

## JAPAN, IOM TIE UP TO BOOST MATERNAL, CHILD HEALTH IN BASULTA

**MANILA** – Japan and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) rolled out a three-year program that will strengthen maternal and child health in remote areas in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (BaSulTa).

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Endo Kazuya and IOM Philippines Chief of Mission Tristan Burnett formally signed and exchanged notes for project Resilient and Equitable Access to Care and Health (REACH)-BaSulTa in a ceremony in Makati City on Thursday.

The new program, to be implemented by IOM, will run from 2025 to 2028 and targets to benefit more than 410,000 people, especially internally displaced persons.

“This project symbolizes a critical step forward in our continued partnership with the Philippines, particularly in addressing the pressing health needs of vulnerable populations in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM),” Endo said.

“Japan has a long standing commitment to supporting BARMM and we recognize the challenges that persist in this region,” he added.

According to IOM, Bangsamoro is beset with systemic issues, including insufficient human resources for health and lack of well-functioning facilities — challenges compounded by several other factors, including security and geography, that inhibit access to necessary care.

Through REACH-BaSulTa, Endo said Japan and IOM would help enhance maternal and child health services by bridging gaps in health facilities, workforce capacity and community

awareness.

One of the project objectives is to improve the local health system by training health workers and developing health facilities in targeted BaSulTa sites. It will also support the rollout of integrated health promotion activities by trained workers there as well as the conduct of community mapping for PhilHealth enrollment, among others.

Burnett said the IOM would provide necessary technical expertise and complement existing efforts by local health authorities in the region.

“Anchored on the Universal Health Care agenda, this program reflects our shared long-term vision for health care systems that are equitable, resilient, adaptive, and inclusive,” she said.

BARMM Minister of Health Kadil Sinolinding Jr., for his part, pledged to support and replicate the program in other parts of the Bangsamoro

“We pledge to continue working hand-in-hand with the Japanese government, JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), and the United Nations IOM to complete, sustain, and even replicate this initiative to other areas as well. We are dedicated to strengthen our health systems, ensuring resilience, equitable, and accessible health services for all our communities,” he said.

Also present to witness the signing ceremony were Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., Department of Health Director Joel Buenaventura and Japan International Cooperation Agency Chief Representative to the Philippines Baba Takashi. **(PNA) BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

## REAL TIME METROLOGICAL DATA NOW ACCESSIBLE IN ABRA TOWN

**LICUAN-BAAY, Abra (PIA)** — Real time meteorological data are now accessible to the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Office (MDRRMO) of this town with the installation of Automated Weather Station (AWS) recently.

The Department of Science and Technology funded this project under its Community Empowerment through Science and Technology program last year. This is the first AWS installed in the province of Abra.

Licuan-Baay Local DRRM Officer Erosbon Sabedo, he said that the AWS enables them to monitor various meteorological data in real time.

“Daytoy kina-adda ti Automated Weather Station tayo toy Licuan-Baay ket real time nga data ti maala tayo ket dakkel ti maytulong kas iti amount ti rainfall, temperature ken comparison ti data from last year,” he explained.

[The existence of an Automated Weather Station here in Licuan-Baay provides real time data that we need like the amount of rainfall, temperature and comparison of historical data]

Sabedo remarked that the AWS brings a swifter data-based decision-making for the MDRRMO especially before and during

calamities.

“Dakkel ti impact na ti DRRM ta masapul iti planning ta saan min nga urayen diay report ti PAGASA ta adda sarilimin nga pagalaanen ti data ket dagitoy ti mamonitor tayo nga insigida,” he added.

[This brings a huge impact on the planning of DRRM since we already have a source of data without waiting on the report of PAGASA since we can't monitor it immediately.]

For the community, they will be informed with a timely warning before tropical cyclones hit.

“Inadaptar tayo met dagiti teknolohia tayo tattan, agus-usar kami ti group chats for updates and announcements mi nga ubraenda on preparedness aglalo ti response da, isu ti pagsayaatanna daytoy AWS tayo ditoy,” he stated. [We adapted the use of various technology, we use group chats to send updates and announcement for their preparedness and especially their response. So, this AWS helps a lot.]

Licuan-Baay has 11 barangays mostly located within landlocked landscapes where rockslides and mudslides are inevitable. (JDP/CAGT-PIA CAR, Abra)

**BY CHRISTIAN ALLISTER G. TUBADEZA**

## TACURONG CITY LGU PRODS BUSINESS OWNERS TO PROCESS PERMITS EARLY

**TACURONG CITY, Sultan Kudarat (PIA)** — The Tacurong City local government unit (LGU) has urged business owners to promptly renew their business permits through the Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) 2026, as the deadline approaches on January 20.

“Do not wait until the last minute to prevent congestion and delays at the processing site,” Mayor Lina Montilla said.

The city government's BOSS is taking place at the City Sports and Cultural Center and is open every day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Montilla stated that the initiative seeks to simplify the renewal process by uniting local offices and national government agencies in one location.

Through the one-stop shop, business owners can simultaneously process

permits and complete documentary requirements with agencies such as the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Social Security System (SSS), PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG Fund, reducing processing time and minimizing inconvenience.

The city government stated that early processing helps entrepreneurs in avoiding penalties and guarantees their businesses can operate without interruption.

The actions of BOSS align with the standards established by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) and the Ease of Doing Business Act.

These standards aim to facilitate faster, simpler, and more transparent government transactions for the public. (ORVR, PIA Region 12) **BY OLIVER ROSS RIVERA**

## HOW DIGITAL SCALE STRENGTHENS SMALL RUBBER PRODUCERS

**DIPOLOG CITY (PIA)** — In the country's agricultural value chain, accuracy is currency. For small-scale rubber producers, even minor discrepancies in weighing translate into lost income, weaker market leverage, and limited growth. In Barangay Situbo, Tampilisan, a shift toward digital precision is redefining how grassroots enterprises compete.

To modernize the local rubber industry and strengthen micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has rolled out a Shared Services Facility (SSF) in Tampilisan, providing the Situbo Farmers Rubber Association with four platform floor weighing scales valued at ₱400,000. The facility positions farmer associations not just as producers, but as emerging players in a

more transparent and data-driven market.

The adoption of digital weighing platforms is expected to improve measurement accuracy, pricing transparency, and record-keeping—key requirements for MSMEs seeking to scale up operations, meet buyer standards, and integrate into formal supply chains. With reliable data, farmer groups are better equipped to negotiate prices, monitor output, and plan production.

“This digital platform is not just a tool for measurement; it is a tool for empowerment,” said DTI Assistant Regional Director Maridel D. Dengal. “It ensures that our rubber farmers get the exact value for their hard work.”

For Freddie B. Acas, president of the Situbo Farmers Rubber Association, the SSF addresses one of the most persistent challenges faced by agricultural MSMEs—ensuring fairness at the point of trade.

“This is a huge help not just to us farmers and our association but also to our neighbors to ensure pricing accuracy, as this is one of our main sources of income,” he said.

The SSF Project is among DTI's flagship MSME development programs, providing shared access to machinery, equipment, and technology that would otherwise be beyond the reach of producers. By reducing production inefficiencies and improving product quality, the program supports the broader national goal of building competitive, resilient MSMEs—particularly in agriculture-based industries.

As the Philippines pushes for inclusive economic growth, initiatives like the SSF in Tampilisan highlight how targeted investments can strengthen rural enterprises, connect farmers to better market opportunities, and reinforce the role of MSMEs as drivers of local and national development. (JPA/PJF//PIA9-Zamboanga del Norte) **BY PAMELA JOYCE FUMERO**

## AUTHORITIES RESCUE RARE ENDEMIC RODENT IN AURORA TOWN

**BALER, Aurora (PIA)** — Authorities rescued a rare Northern Luzon giant cloud rat (*Phloeomys pallidus*) from a residence in Casiguran, Aurora and safely released back into its natural habitat.

The rodent was turned over after a resident

reported its presence inside his house, prompting a coordinated response from the local government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to ensure its safety.

Casiguran Environment and Natural Resources Office Forester Arianne Francia said a DENR Wildlife Officer examined the Northern Luzon giant cloud rat, locally known as “bu-ot” or “kurimaong,” and confirmed that it was healthy and ready for release back into its natural habitat.

She said the rescue team returned the rodent to the same forested area where it was found to reduce stress, help regain natural bearings, and improve chances of surviving in the wild.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists the Northern Luzon giant cloud rat as of “Least Concern,” although habitat loss remains a threat and some related cloud rat species face higher risk of extinction.

These species helps

forests grow by dispersing seeds and improving soil quality, a role that has earned them the description as “silent gardeners” among conservation workers and environmental advocates.

Francia said the decision of the resident to report the animal instead of harming or keeping it reflects rising public awareness that cloud rats and other wildlife deserve care, respect, and legal protection.

She urged the public to follow Republic Act No. 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, which bans the capture, sale, and harm of wildlife and provides penalties for violations.

Through this effort, the local government and the DENR continue to strengthen forest and wildlife protection to preserve biodiversity, support ecosystem balance, and sustain healthy environments for present and future generations. (CLJD/MJRD, PIA Region 3-Aurora) **BY MELODY JOY R. DELIGUIN**

## PUERTO GALERA COUNCIL SEEKS DISCOUNTS FOR DOT-ACCREDITED TOURISM FIRMS

**CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro (PIA)** — The Sangguniang Bayan (SB) of Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, has approved a resolution requesting Mayor Robinhood D. Ylagan to grant discounts on business permit renewals for Department of Tourism (DOT)-accredited tourism establishments in the municipality.

The proposed discounts would apply to business permit renewals from January 12 to 20, 2026, and are intended to encourage more tourism-related businesses to secure DOT accreditation and comply with national

standards.

Vice Mayor Rocky D. Ilagan said the move aims to strengthen Puerto Galera's tourism industry by promoting quality service, safety, and regulatory compliance among establishments operating in the popular tourist destination.

The resolution was authored by SB member Harold N. Marquez, chair of the Committee on Tourism, Trade, and Investment, who emphasized the importance of incentivizing accreditation to maintain the municipality's competitiveness and reputation as a premier

tourist hub.

Meanwhile, the members of the Sanggunian expressed support for the measure, noting that DOT accreditation helps ensure that tourism enterprises meet standards on facilities, operations, and customer service, ultimately benefiting both visitors and the local economy.

The resolution will be forwarded to the mayor's office for consideration and possible implementation. (AS/JBG/PIA MIMAROPA-Oriental Mindoro/Photo from puertogalera.org) **BY ACE SAPIT**

## BYD EMBRACES STRONG DEMAND IN PH, LAUNCHES PREMIUM BRAND

**MANILA** – Riding on strong sales of Build Your Dreams (BYD) vehicles in the Philippines in 2025 amid the government's push for electric vehicles, an official of the publicly listed Chinese automaker said Thursday they are confident the same momentum will carry over to its premium brand, DENZA.

In a briefing, Liu Xueliang, general manager of BYD's Asia-Pacific Auto Sales Division, said the company is optimistic about its local operations, citing its success in several countries in the region.

"Across Asia-Pacific, we've seen strong momentum for DENZA as more markets embrace premium new energy vehicles. That experience gives us confidence in the Philippines, where consumers are increasingly sophisticated and ready to engage with a brand that combines intelligent technology with refined design and comfort," he said.

He added that their presence is not meant to compete with premium American and European brands but to provide

additional options to Filipinos.

He, however, declined to give specifics on their pricing, saying the formal launch of their units will be held next month.

During the event, the company announced its tie-up with three initial dealers nationwide namely DENZA Alabang and DENZA Cebu, to be operated by ACMobility Premium Dealership Inc.; DENZA Makati, operated by Harmony New Energy Auto Service (Philippines) Ltd. Corp.; and DENZA Greenhills, operated by E-Vantage Motors Inc.

Adam Hu, country head of BYD and DENZA Philippines, said they want to build their local operations with leadership clarity and long-term intent. "The Philippine market is advancing rapidly and is ready for a new expression of premium," he said in the same briefing.

"Our responsibility as brand leaders is to introduce DENZA in a way that reflects local expectations while staying true to its global standards." (PNA)

BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

## EU ENVOY SAYS GOV'T REFORMS VS. CORRUPTION LIFT INVESTOR CONFIDENCE

**MANILA** – Investors' confidence in the domestic economy has been boosted by government measures to address corruption, a foreign diplomat said Thursday.

European Union Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Santoro said ongoing policy reforms are helping assure businesses that the country's investment climate remains positive.

"We very much welcome the current efforts being made by the government on good governance, in fighting corruption and ensuring accountability, because this is exactly what triggers investors here and what maintains investors here," he said during the launch of the Doing Business in the Philippines 2026 in Makati City.

He added that policy reforms, including liberalization measures aimed at improving the investment climate, are often cited as evidence of the Philippines' commitment to reform.

Santoro expressed hope that this momentum would translate into increased investment flows next year, contributing to job creation,

technology transfer and the development of sustainable, high-value industries beyond trade and investment.

Free trade agreement Santoro said talks on the Philippines-EU free trade agreement (FTA) are expected to resume by March, alongside smaller dialogues between the two parties.

He noted that the negotiations are important not only for tariff reduction but also for establishing a stable, predictable and rules-based framework for trade and investment.

Discussions will cover areas such as trade in services, investment, intellectual property, digital trade, and sustainability, which Santoro described as "crucial for modern and high quality economic partnerships."

"We think that FTA can foster shared economic growth that can bring us closer to a more prosperous and sustainable future. And let me also add that the FTA also means an amazing occasion for jobs, additional job opportunities, here in the Philippines," he said. (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

## MEASURES VS. CLIMATE CHANGE, AI RISKS TO HELP FUEL PH'S 2026 GROWTH

**MANILA** – Focusing on measures to address climate change and manage risks from artificial intelligence (AI) will help drive the Philippine economy's expansion after a slowdown in the third quarter of 2025, an economist said Wednesday.

In an online briefing, ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) Chief Economist Dong He said the economy remains on a steady growth path but has yet to return to its pre-pandemic pace.

Gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed to 4 percent in the third quarter of 2025, down from 5.5 percent in the previous quarter and 5.2 percent a year earlier. The slowdown was partly due to weather-related disruptions and lower government spending following corruption issues linked to flood control projects.

These factors prompted AMRO to cut its 2025 growth forecast for the Philippines to 5.2 percent from 5.6 percent, and its 2026 forecast to 5.3 percent from 5.5 percent.

He said additional measures to strengthen

resilience against climate change and adapt to AI are needed, as the economy has not fully regained its pre-pandemic growth capacity.

He added that a strong policy framework and prioritized spending plans would support growth, restore investor confidence and encourage private investment.

"Private consumption has been quite firm, and we continue to believe that private consumption will remain firm," he said.

Given the Philippines' significant role in the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector, he stressed the need to upgrade human capital to harness AI while mitigating its potential impact on jobs. "All these require strong public investment or public private partnerships, and that requires very strong policy frameworks, prioritized spending plans and targeted projects that would strengthen the economy's capacity. And that would end up in higher public and the private investments," He said. (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

## PH TAPS INT'L MARKET FOR 3-TRANCHE USD-DENOMINATED BONDS

**MANILA** – The Philippine government on Tuesday launched three tranches of US dollar-denominated global bonds with maturities of 5.5 years, 10 years, and 25 years.

In a news release, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) said the offering is the country's first this year, following the issuance of USD 2.25 billion and EUR 1 billion in debt instruments in January last year.

The BTr said the 5.5-year bond was initially priced at 70 basis points above the benchmark Treasury rate, the 10-year at 100 basis points above the benchmark, and the 25-year at around 5.90 percent.

"The transaction will be priced later today during the New York trading session," it said.

S&P Global, in a report, has assigned its "BBB+"

long-term rating on the proposed debt instruments. "The bonds represent direct, general, unconditional, unsecured, and unsubordinated obligations of the Philippines (BBB+/Positive/A-2). They rank equally with the sovereign's other unsecured and unsubordinated debt obligations," it said.

Moody's, in turn, has assigned its "Baa2" rating on the said global bonds. Tapping the international market is part of the government's strategy to secure funding of its various programs, although finance officials have said that bulk of the borrowings are accounted for by domestic fund sources to address foreign exchange risks.

"The Marcos administration remains firmly committed to promoting strong and

## BIR INTRODUCES E-CALENDAR FOR TAX PAYMENT SKEDS, REQUIREMENTS

**MANILA** – Taxpayers will now have access to a digital calendar that will guide them on when to pay their taxes and the requirements they need to comply with, a Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) official said Thursday.

BIR spokesperson and lawyer Brianna Kay delos Santos said in a Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon interview

inclusive socioeconomic growth. This transaction underscores our steadfast dedication to sound fiscal policy and sustainable development," Finance Secretary Frederick Go said Tuesday.

"We are confident that our policy direction and reform agenda will continue to resonate with the global investment community and support a successful outcome for this offering." (PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA

that the interactive digital tax calendar has been available on the BIR website since Jan. 1 this year.

She explained that the digital calendar aims to provide the public with a centralized and accessible source of information on tax payment deadlines and related requirements.

She added that the calendar is made interactive and user-friendly for the benefit of taxpayers.

"To increase voluntary compliance, we made it easier for the taxpaying public," delos Santos said. The BIR official said there is a plan to embed the calendar into the eGovPH mobile app, but they want to make the public familiar with it first.

She also said the calendar has a link that electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) users can use to

**MANILA** – The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has approved the debt securities program of publicly-listed Century Properties Group Inc., which targets to issue up to PHP5 billion as initial offering.

In a news release Wednesday, SEC said its commission en banc approved Century Properties' application for the shelf registration of up to PHP12 billion in fixed-rate bond on Jan. 15.

The initial offering of up to PHP3 billion with PHP2 billion oversubscription option is scheduled from

pay their taxes. Non-eFPS users, she said, can only view what form to use and has to pay the dues through the eBIR portal for now. (JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)

## SEC OKS CENTURY PROPERTIES GROUP'S SECURITIES PROGRAM

January 26-30. Listing with the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. is on Feb. 6.

China Bank Capital Corporation was tapped as sole issue manager and joint lead underwriter and bookrunner, along with PNB Capital and Investment Corporation.

These bonds, SEC said, include "four-year series D bonds due in 2030, and seven-year series E bonds due in 2033, which will be offered at face value."

"Assuming the oversubscription is fully exercised, Century Properties Group expects to net around PHP4.9 billion in the initial offer," SEC said.

"Proceeds will be used to fund the capital for its residential development projects," it added. (JOANN VILLANUEVA/PNA)



## BENILDE, LETRAN TRIUMPH IN NCAA WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

**MANILA** – College of Saint Benilde kicked off its five-peat campaign in the NCAA Season 101 women's volleyball with a 25-21, 20-25, 25-14, 23-25, 17-15 victory over Mapua University at San Andres gym in Manila on Friday.

Zamantha Nolasco had a career-high 29 points built on 28 attacks and a block for the Lady Blazers.

"Right now, we feel like it will be difficult for us to defend the title, but we're just embracing it," Nolasco, who fueled Benilde's rally in the fifth frame, said.

The Lady Blazers recovered from a 10-14 deficit to wrest the lead at 15-14, before the Lady Cardinals tied, courtesy of Raissa Janel Ricablanca.

Clydel Catarig and Shekainah Lleses scored in the next play to seal the win.

Catarig finished with 18 points followed by Camila Bartolome with 16 points, including five aces.

Ricablanca led Mapua with 27 points while Alyanna

Nicole Ong and Nadine Angeli Berces chipped in 15 and 12 points, respectively.

Meanwhile, Marie Judiel Nitura scored 18 points as Letran beat Arellano University, 25-10, 25-17, 25-17.

"They (the team) are easy to get along with,

our adjustments aren't that difficult. We can adapt everything quickly," new Lady Knights coach Mayette Carolino said.

Crisanta Servidad paced the Lady Chiefs with nine points, followed by Laika Tudlasan with seven points. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**



**TOP SCORER.** College of Saint Benilde's Zamantha Nolasco (No. 21) tries to score against Mapua University's Alyanna Nicole Ong in the NCAA Season 101 volleyball tournament at San Andres Gym in Manila on Friday (Jan. 23, 2026). Nolasco finished with a career-high 29 points to lead Benilde to a 25-21, 20-25, 25-14, 23-25, 17-15 win. (NCAA photo)

## SANYA READY FOR ASIAN BEACH GAMES HOSTING

**MANILA** – The Asian Beach Games (ABG) is returning after a 10-year hiatus with host Sanya, putting a premium on sports tourism.

A total of 63 gold medals in 14 sports will be awarded in the Games, which will be held on April 22 to 30 in the popular resort city situated in south China's Hainan province.

"It's not only all about sports but also promoting the host city," said Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino in a news release Thursday.

"We've been advocating already on sports tourism, that's why the POC and the Philippine Sports Commission are encouraging our country's

very own hosting of international competitions," he added.

Tolentino said the POC is fielding 180 athletes who will compete in 3x3 basketball, open water swimming and water polo, aquathlon, beach athletics, beach handball, beach kabaddi, beach soccer, beach volleyball, beach wrestling, dragon boat, jiu-jitsu, sailing, sport climbing and teqball.

Sanya indicated its preparedness to host the sixth edition of the Games, last hosted by Danang in Vietnam in 2016, during the World Press Briefing and World Broadcasters Meeting earlier this week.

Journalists representing traditional and new media from Asia, Southeast Asia

and Europe attended the briefing conducted at the proposed site of the Main Press Center and Media Hotel at Jianghe Hotel and Resort.

Top officials of the Sanya ABG Organizing Committee presented the program for the games, fully supported by the Olympic Council of Asia. The briefing included an ocular inspection of the field of play for beach handball, sport climbing and beach volleyball as well as the Yasha Park Phase 1 Ring Theater, which will be the venue for the opening and closing ceremony.

Alongside the venue visit was a tour of the island's top tourist attractions, including the iconic Luhuitou Scenic Spot and

the Xidao Island Fishing Village.

The 45 national Olympic committees of the OCA are expected to send their athletes to the games, while Australia, Solomon Islands, Tahiti and New Zealand were invited to send their athletes.

The 5th Asian Beach Games organizing committee is composed of the People's Government of Sanya City and Hainan Province and their Tourism, Culture, Television, Radio and Sports departments, the Chinese Olympic Committee and the General Administration of Sports of China. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**

## ATENEO TENNIS PLAYER LAGAC EYES MORE TITLES

**MANILA** – Miguel Ricardo Lagac III eyes more success as a tennis player. The 15-year-old bagged three titles last Sunday at the Zopiya Morales National Juniors Tennis Championships in Apalit, Pampanga, his first tournament this year. Seeded No. 5 in the U16 category, Lagac beat No. 2 Troan Vytiaco, 6-2, 6-0 (quarterfinals), No. 3 Antonio Bengzon, 6-0, 6-1 (semis) and No. 1 Anthony Cosca, 6-0, 6-0 (final).

Unseeded in the U18 category, he conquered No. 2 Felizardo Lota III, 6-1, 6-0 (semis) and repeated over No. 1 Vytiaco, 6-0, 6-1 (final).

In the U18 doubles, Lagac teamed up with Elijah Okano to prevail over Cyrus Javier and Vytiaco, 8-6, in the final.

"I play point by point and work hard to improve my skills. I learn from every game," said the Grade 9 student from Ateneo de Manila University in an interview Wednesday.

Lagac, who was born in Las Piñas City, has won 45 consecutive singles matches (30 in U16 and 15 in U18) since August last year.

"My mother always tell me to do my best and just enjoy the game," said the 2025 PCA Open Juniors U16 champion.

He learned the sport from his father, Ricardo, a certified Professional Tennis Registry coach.

"What I can say about my son is that he has a good attitude on and off the court," said Ricardo, whose 25 years of coaching

experience include a seven-year stint at the Yashima Tennis Academy in Osaka, Japan.

"Miguel stayed with me in Japan, joining the best-of-the-best tournaments from U10 to U16 categories. He also won many titles there," shared Ricardo, who was appointed Ateneo men's and women's coach last August.

"Miguel dreams of representing the Philippines, such as the SEA Games and the Davis Cup," said Ricardo, a former Top 10 player in the Philippines. "Hopefully, he can get a scholarship in the US Division 1 and become a professional player, to reach at least the Top 100 in the ATP." (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**



**RISING STAR.** Miguel Ricardo Lagac III won three titles at the Zopiya Alexa Morales National Juniors Tennis Championships on Jan. 18, 2026 in Apalit, Pampanga. He also bagged the MVP award in the boys division. (Contributed photo)

## AGRA SECURES 1ST PICKLEBALL TITLE AT PPL LUZON OPEN

**MANILA** – Lawyer Jessica Agra always gives her best in every match, whatever the sport is.

The former national junior tennis player, who is also the country's No. 1 padel player, bagged her first title at the Philippine Pickleball League (PPL) Luzon Open held at the Dink Lab in Kawit, Cavite on Sunday. She teamed up with Fritz Chris Verdad, a pro tennis player, to beat Elise Geluz and Raoul Amirul, 15-14, in the 18+ Advanced mixed doubles finals.

"I'm so happy that we were able to get the gold medal. We were just excited to join our first national tournament in pickleball and of course, we hoped to get a podium but no expectations," Agra said in an interview Tuesday.

"We were out there to have fun and to give it our all and wanted to see how far we could go. It's a bonus to win the tournament. We were down 10-14 in the finals before we won. I'm also happy to team up with Fritz because I know that no matter what's the score of the game, he'll fight until the end. It's always fun to play with someone who

really has the heart to play," she added.

Agra reached No. 1 in the Asia Pacific Padel Tour (APPT) in June 2024, becoming Asia's top player after strong performances, including a win in Phuket (Thailand) and a runner-up finish in Bali (Indonesia).

She enjoyed the experience of playing in the pickleball tournament and was very thankful for the opportunity.

"I want to train more, get better and join more pickleball tournaments this year. It's so exciting to have a racket sport which has this much support here in our country," Agra, who peaked at No. 145 in the International Padel Federation (FIP) rankings in mid-2025, said.

Next in the PPL calendar of events are the Pampanga Ligitlan (Luzon leg) on Feb. 27 to March 1, and March 6 to 8 in San Fernando and the Mindanao Open on March 13 to 15, and March 20 to 22 in Davao del Sur.

They beat Claire Nacito and Lorenzo Jose Manuel Cruz, 11-7, in the quarterfinals and Ayra Rasuman and Toey Bagumbun, 15-6, in the semis. (PNA) **BY JEAN MALANUM**