

CAVITE GAZETTE

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PGC MEDICAL MISSION BRINGS FREE CARE TO IMUS

On January 30, the Provincial Government of Cavite's medical mission team conducted a successful program

at Palazzo Bello 1, Brgy. Carsadang Bago II, City of Imus, offering free medical and dental services. Mayor Alex Advincula

and Congressman AJ Advincula attended, showing their support for the initiative. With support from medical



DEPED STRENGTHENS TIES WITH CHURCH FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING

TAGAYTAY CITY, Cavite (PIA) — The Department of Education (DepEd) is strengthening its partnership with the Church and civil society organizations to ensure inclusive and holistic learning outcomes.

Speaking at the 42nd National Social Action General Assembly (NASAGA) hosted by Caritas Philippines last February 3, Secretary Sonny Angara lauded the Church for its commitment in extending its services to underserved communities. "DepEd and parishes all over the country work very

well together, dahil 'yung mga efforts ng DepEd you have been doing on the ground for many decades. We take our inspiration from all of you. Your stories and successes drive us towards meaningful reforms."

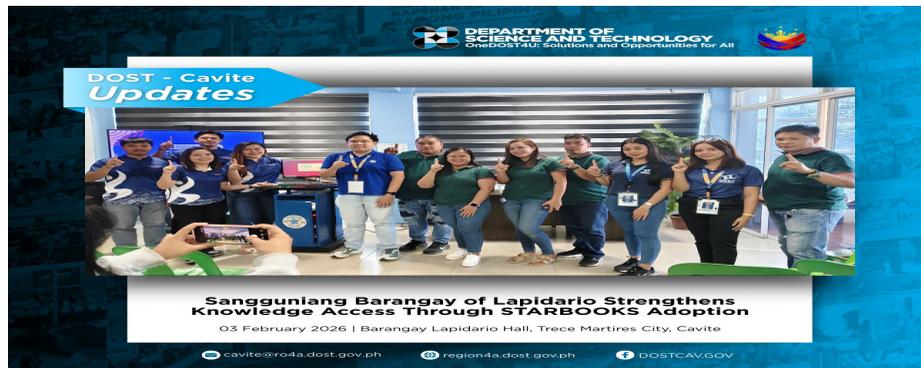
Known as the humanitarian, development, and advocacy arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), Caritas Philippines and its 86 diocesan social action centers coordinate the Church's social action, emergency response,

and poverty alleviation programs across the country.

Caritas Philippines also partners with DepEd to implement programs focusing on lifelong learning and values formation, including its feeding programs and early childhood care.

"Many would agree that the partnership between DepEd and the church is most valuable in the ALS or the Alternative Learning System. These are children coming from backgrounds [who might have] dropped out because they had to work for their families." (PB-PIA CALABARZON) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

SANGGUNIANG BARANGAY OF LAPIDARIO STRENGTHENS KNOWLEDGE ACCESS THROUGH STARBOOKS ADOPTION



Barangay Lapidario in Trece Martires City officially adopted the

Science and Technology Academic and Research-Based Openly Operated Kiosks (STARBOOKS) through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Signing and Orientation held at the Barangay Hall of Lapidario.

The activity was graced by Punong Barangay Remelyn D. Sierra, who delivered the welcome remarks and expressed her support for initiatives that promote accessible science and technology information within the community.

Additionally, Ms. Jenica Krystel Nueva, Project Technical Aide V/ STARBOOKS Deployment Officer, led the orientation and demonstration to guide the users in

maximizing the system's features.

The adoption of STARBOOKS was initiated by SK Chairperson Carren Judea De Leon as part of the barangay's development projects, highlighting the youth sector's active role in advancing education and digital learning resources.

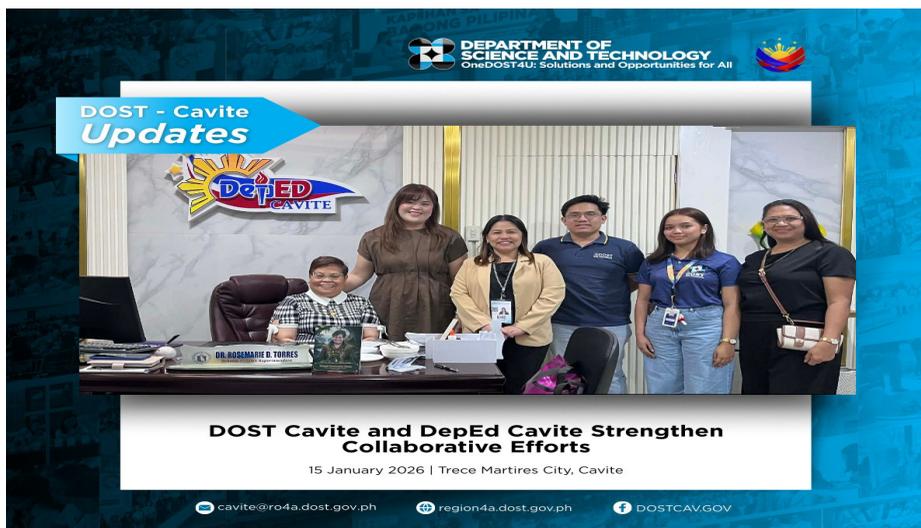
With this milestone, Barangay Lapidario becomes the first barangay in Trece Martires City to adopt the STARBOOKS program, reinforcing its commitment to knowledge empowerment and inclusive access to science, technology, and innovation resources for its constituents. **DOST CAVITE**

DOST CAVITE AND DEPED CAVITE STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

DOST Cavite recognizes the continued collaboration with the Department of Education-Cavite in strengthening inter-agency partnerships. We extend

our sincere appreciation to DepEd Cavite School Division Superintendent Dr. Rosemarie D. Torres for her support, made possible through the initiative of

Board Member Camille M. Del Rosario. Together, we move forward in promoting impactful and sustainable programs for the Caviteño community. **DOST-CAVITE**



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REGIONAL LEVEL MOST WANTED ARRESTED BY GMA POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Demonstrating the unwavering commitment of the Cavite Police to the finality of justice, the General Mariano Alvarez (GMA) Municipal Police Station (MPS) successfully served a Warrant of Arrest to a Person Deprived of Liberty (DPL) tagged as Regional Level Most Wanted Person who is under the custody of BJMP, GMA Facility GMA, Cavite, at approximately 2:00 in the afternoon today, February 5, 2026.

PLTCOL BONNA A OBMERGA, COP GMA MPS, identified the accused as alias "Obet," a resident of GMA, Cavite. The service of the warrant was conducted

by the warrant personnel for violations of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (Sections 5 and 11, Article II of RA 9165) for SERVICE OF SENTENCE. PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office stated, "The service of this warrant against a Regional Level Most Wanted Person is a significant accomplishment in our campaign against illegal drugs. The Cavite Police will continue to work closely with other agencies to monitor and enforce the law to ensure that no offender escapes their legal obligations to society, thereby strengthening the public's trust in our justice system."

MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON NABBED BY MENDEZ POLICE

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — In a successful operation targeting financial crimes and cyber-related offenses, the Mendez Municipal Police Station (MPS) apprehended a Municipal Level Most Wanted Person in Mendez, Cavite, at approximately 1:10 in the afternoon today, February 5, 2026.

PMAJ IVAN HOWELL B BAYLA, Officer-in-Charge of Mendez MPS, identified the accused as alias HELEN, a resident of Mendez, Cavite.

The arrest was the result of a manhunt operation conducted by the station's warrant personnel. The accused was apprehended by virtue of a Warrant of Arrest for the crime of ESTAFA under Article 315, Par. 2(A) of the Revised Penal Code in relation to Section 6 of RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012) and violations of RA 12010 (Anti-Financial Account Scamming Act). The court recommended a bail of Php 18,000.00 for Estafa and Php 48,000.00 for violation of

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite — As part of the Philippine National Police's sustained campaign against wanted persons, personnel of Rosario Municipal Police Station (Lead unit) together with PIT Cavite RIU 4A (Intel Packet) successfully arrested a Rank No. 2 Provincial Level Most Wanted Person at around 2:30 PM of February 3, 2026.

PLTCOL ARDIE O BAGAMAN, Chief of Police, Rosario MPS, identified the arrested accused as alias Jio, a resident of Rosario, Cavite.

The accused was arrested for the crime of 5 Counts Statutory Rape under Article 266-A (1)(D) in relation to Article 266. B

the Anti-Financial Account Scamming Act.

PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office stated, "The arrest of this Municipal Level Most Wanted Person underscores our commitment to enforcing the law against all forms of fraud, including modern financial scams. The Cavite Police will continue to be relentless in tracking down individuals who engage in deceitful activities, ensuring they face the full force of justice."

RANK NO. 2 MOST WANTED, SUCCESSFULLY ARRESTED BY ROSARIO POLICE

of the RPC as amended by R.A. 11648 And Acts of Lasciviousness under Article 336 of the RPC in relation to Sec. 5(B) of R.A. 7610 dated December 10, 2025 issued by Presiding Judge of 4th Judicial Region RTC Branch 17 Cavite City with no bail recommended for 5 Counts of Statutory Rape and Php. 180, 000.00 for Acts of Lasciviousness.

The arrested accused was duly apprised of his constitutional rights in a language known to and understood by him. The service of warrant was properly documented through the use of an Alternative Recording Device.

The accused was brought to Rosario MPS Jail Facility and Warrant of arrest will be returned to the court of origin

In his message, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office, "This successful operation serves as another testament to the strong resolve of the Cavite Police to relentlessly pursue

RANK NO. 8 MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED PERSON, NADAKIP NG MAGALLANES PNP MATAPOS ANG 15 TAONG PAGTATAGO

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite — Matagumpay na nadakip ng mga tauhan ng Magallanes Municipal Police Station ang isang Rank No. 8 Municipal Level Most Wanted Person matapos ang halos 15 taong pagtatago mula sa batas. Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa bandang 8:40 ng gabi noong Pebrero 4, 2026 sa Sitio Tibag, Barangay Panapaan 2, Bacoor City, Cavite.

Kinilala ni PMAJ RAYMOND T BALBUENA, Hepe ng Magallanes Municipal Police Station ang akusado na si alias

individuals who evade the law. Our commitment to maintaining peace and order is strengthened by the dedication of our men and women on the ground. We assure the public that Cavite PPO will continue to uphold the rule of law and ensure that criminals are held accountable for their actions."

WANTED SA REGION 4ASA KASONG RAPE, ARESTADO NG NAIC PULIS

Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite — Matagumpay na nadakip ng mga operatiba ng Naic Municipal Police

Station ang isang Regional Level Most Wanted Person sa Naic, Cavite, dakong 5:30 ng hapon ngayong Febrero 4, 2026.

Kinilala ni PLTCOL JEFFERSON P ISON, Acting Chief of Police ng Naic MPS, ang akusado na si alyas John, residente ng Naic, Cavite.

Ang pag-aresto ay isinagawa sa bisa ng mga Warrant of Arrest para sa kasong RAPE (Article 266-A ng Revised Penal Code) na inilabas ng Presiding Judge ng Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region Branch 132, Naic Cavite noong February 4, 2026 na walang inirekomendang piyansa. Sa kanyang pahayag,

ENAN, tubong Samar at kasalukuyang nakatira sa Bacoor City, Cavite.

Ang akusado ay nahaharap sa dalawang magkahiwalay na kaso ng Estafa sa ilalim ng Article 315 Paragraph 1 (b) ng Revised Penal Code, alinsunod sa mga warrant of arrest na inilabas ng Regional Trial Court, Branch 15, Naic, Cavite noong Agosto 5, 2024. Ang mga nasabing kaso ay may inirekomendang piyansa na nagkakahalaga ng Php16,000.00 at Php20,000.00.

Sa oras ng pag-aresto, maayos na ipinaalam kay Enan ang kanyang mga karapatang konstitusyonal. Kasalukuyang nasa kustodiya ng Magallanes MPS ang akusado para sa dokumentasyon at wastong disposisyon. Ayon sa Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang matagumpay na pag-aresto na ito ay patunay na walang sinuman ang maaaring magtago magpakailanman mula sa batas. Patuloy kaming magsisikap na panagutin ang mga nagkasala at tiyaking naihatid ang hustisya para sa mga biktima, gaano man katagal ang lumipas."

sinabi ni PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director ng Cavite Police Provincial Office, "Ang pagkakaaresto sa Regional Level Most Wanted Person na ito ay patunay ng ating walang humpay na kampanya laban sa mga indibidwal na may mabigat na pananagutan sa batas. Ang Cavite PPO ay mananatiling tapat sa layuning bigyang proteksyon ang ating mga kababayan, lalo na ang mga kabataan at kababaihan, sa pamamagitan ng mabilis at epektibong pagpapatupad ng hustisya."



Belmont Hills Subdivision Pasong Kawayan II, General Trias, Cavite 4107

DSWD STRENGTHENS SHELTER INSPECTION, SUSPENDS UNLICENSED FACILITY

SAN PEDRO, Laguna (PIA) — Stepping up inspections of residential care facilities to ensure the protection and welfare of vulnerable populations, especially children, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), on Thursday, January 29, discovered twelve individuals, including minors, in an unlicensed shelter in Barangay Landayan, San Pedro, Laguna.

The operation was led by the DSWD Standards Bureau (SB), in partnership with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) of San Pedro and DSWD Field Office IV-A (CALABARZON). Representatives from the barangay and local law enforcement were present to guarantee an orderly and transparent inspection. Earlier in 2025, the DSWD IV-A, led by the Regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (RJJWC), conducted multiple monitoring visits of Bahay Pag-asa and other residential care facilities in CALABARZON. These activities aimed to verify that facilities comply with national regulations and provide proper care, protection, and rehabilitation for children in their custody.

The inspected shelter, operated by vlogger Benjie

Perillo (BenchTV), was immediately ordered to suspend operations for lacking the mandatory Certificate of Registration and License to Operate (CRLTO).

Following the inspection, six residents, including two minors, were temporarily placed under DSWD care to receive appropriate support and interventions. The City Health Office (CHO) of San Pedro conducted medical checks, while licensed social workers handled profiling, documentation, and case management. The individuals were later referred to assigned social workers to ensure continued access to assistance programs.

The DSWD also provided guidance to the shelter operator on the process of securing a CRLTO and emphasized that adherence to national standards is essential to guarantee the safety and well-being of all residents.

The agency reiterated its commitment to the protection of vulnerable groups, particularly children, and stressed that routine inspections and enforcement actions will continue to ensure all care facilities meet required standards. (CCM/PIA-CALABARZON) **BY CECILLE MALOLES**

NAIC POLICE WARN PUBLIC AGAINST MAKING BOMB THREATS

NAIC, Cavite (PIA) — Making malicious bomb threats is punishable by law through fines and even imprisonment, the Naic Municipal Police Station (MPS) warned the public following reported bomb threats in five schools.

Last February 1, the Naic MPS reported bomb threat incidents in Cavite Community Academy, Centro de Naic National High School, Pueblo del Mar National High School, Immaculate Concepcion School, and Cavite State University-Naic Campus.

In coordination with the Explosives and Ordinance Disposal (EOD) and K-9 units, the Naic MPS conducted comprehensive clearing operations and inspections in the schools identified in the threat.

The local police reported that no explosive devices were found in any of the institutions.

In a statement, Police Colonel Ariel Red, Provincial Director for Cavite Provincial Police, condemned the spread of bomb threats, especially in schools.

“We strongly condemn this

irresponsible act of sowing fear and disrupting peace in the Municipality of Naic, especially among parents, students, and teachers. Their safety and peace of mind remain our top priority.”

The Cavite Provincial Anti-Cybercrime Unit is investigating said incidents and continues to identify and hold the individuals responsible for the bomb threat accountable.

Red also commended the school personnel who handled the bomb threats and ensured that students and their parents remained calm during the ordeal.

“I also commend the school principals and teachers for remaining calm, vigilant, and united in ensuring that learners and their families were kept safe and reassured.”

Making bomb ‘jokes’ is a criminal offense under Presidential Decree No. 1727 (s. 1980). Violators may be penalized with imprisonment of up to five (5) years, a fine of up to P40,000, or both, at the discretion of the court. (PB-PIA CALABARZON, Naic Municipal Police) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

DPWH TAPS CHURCH FOR MONITORING INFRA PROJECTS

TAGAYTAY CITY, Cavite (PIA) — With over 30,000 ongoing projects all over the country, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has called on the Catholic Church and civil society organizations to serve as ‘watchdogs’ who will help improve transparency and responsiveness of government programs.

Speaking at the 42nd National Social Action General Assembly (NASAGA) hosted by Caritas Philippines on February 3, Secretary Vince Dizon admitted that the sheer volume of projects under its belt—over 30,000 ongoing nationwide—surpasses the department’s monitoring capacity.

“Aaminin ko na hindi namin mababantayan lahat ‘yan nang tama dahil sa sheer number. [At] sa dami nito, kailangan namin ang tulong ng mga diocese, mga civil society organization, [at] ng Caritas.”

The DPWH is collaborating with Caritas Philippines, the social action arm of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), to oversee its projects.

“Apart sa imbestigasyon, kailangan rin natin ang tulong ng simbahan sa pagmo-monitor ng mga report, mga ospital. Ang problema po, the DPWH does not have the capacity to monitor everything. So we really need the support of the church and civil society in the local areas to

help us out.”

Beyond monitoring, the CBCP also advocates for projects responsive to community needs.

“Needs-based ang ating budget. Anu-ano po ba ang mga project na kailangan ng ating mga kababayan? At dyan po napakarami ng ating pakikipag-usap sa CBCP at sa Caritas.”

Dizon also credited the CBCP and Caritas, along with various Non-Government Organizations, to ensure a multi-sectoral approach in monitoring infrastructure projects.

“Mayroon tayong Memorandum of Cooperation kasama ang CBCP at Caritas. Kailangang kailangan natin ‘yung tulong nila

kasi hindi naman kayang i-monitor lahat ng DPWH ang libu-libong projects. Kailangan natin ang tulong ng simbahan at ng NGOs para mag-monitor.”

“Halos 300,00 ang proyekto ng DPWH from 2016, at halos 30,000 ang ongoing. Aaminin ko, hindi namin mababantayan ‘yan ng tama dahil sa sheer number, sa dami nito kaya kailangan namin ang tulong ng ating mga diocese, mga civil society organization, ng Caritas.”

To recall, the DPWH launched a transparency portal designed to grant public access to information on over 247,000 infrastructure projects dating back to 2016. (PB-PIA4A) **BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ**

EDITORIAL

Pagbasa nang Mulat, Hindi Pagbasa nang Bulag

Hindi na sapat ang marunong lang magbasa; dapat ay marunong ding umunawa. Sa gitna ng mababang marka ng Pilipinas sa mga pandaigdigang pagsusulit, napatunayan na marami sa atin ang "nakababasa" ngunit bigo sa pag-intindi ng konteksto.

Ang krisis sa reading comprehension ay hindi lamang problema sa paaralan—ito ay banta sa ating demokrasya. Dahil sa kawalan ng kritikal na pag-unawa, nagiging madaling biktima ang marami ng fake news at maling impormasyon. Ang kultura ng "shortcuts" sa social media ay lalong nagpupuro sa kakayahan nating magsuri.

Upang masolusyunan ito, kailangan ng mas matibay na pundasyon sa mga paaralan at pagbabalik ng interes sa pagbabasa sa loob ng tahanan. Hindi uunlad ang bansa kung mananatili tayong bihasa sa pagbigkas ng mga salita, ngunit bulag naman sa tunay nitong kahulugan.

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PUBLISHING

ANABELLE K. DUMALI
Publisher / Editor in Chief

JOHN RENNIEL K. DUMALI
Circulation Manager

BRYAN V. DE LUNA
Editor Consultant

JO-ANN K. ALCANTARA
Lay Out Artist/Special Project Coordinator

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Contact #: 09954361217

Email: cavitegazette@gmail.com

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PH READY TO HELP FILIPINOS AMID US IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN – ENVOY

MANILA – The Philippine government remains ready to extend help to Filipinos in the United States seeking assistance amid the Trump administration's ongoing immigration crackdown, Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez said Thursday.

"We've always advised our citizens that if you don't have a legal path, then it will be better for you to think about leaving the United States voluntarily," Romualdez said in an interview in Pasay City.

"But if there is a legal path for you, then by all means, and we can find ways to be able to assist," he added.

The Philippine Embassy

and Consulates in the US, he said, could assist by way of facilitating or finding an immigration officer that could assist in their case.

Meanwhile, Romualdez reiterated that the US is not specifically targeting Filipino nationals in the implementation of stricter immigration measures.

"We've seen that on many occasions, that there's few Filipinos," he said.

"Perhaps some of them were involved in some kind of criminal activity, that is what we are being told. And so, that's something that a country can exercise — their right to deport anyone," he added. (PNA)

BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA

PAGCOR DONATES PATIENT TRANSPORT VEHICLES TO 5 LGUS, LUNG CENTER

MANILA – The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) has turned over patient transport vehicles (PTVs) to five local government units and a national health institution to enhance healthcare delivery and emergency response nationwide.

The new PTV beneficiaries were the City of Imus in Cavite; the province of Bataan; the municipality of Libertad in Antique; the municipalities of Ibaan and San Jose in Batangas; and the Lung Center of the Philippines.

PAGCOR Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Alejandro Tengco said the donation is part of the agency's corporate social responsibility initiatives to improve access to essential health services particularly in communities with limited resources.

"These patient transport vehicles can serve as lifelines especially during medical emergencies when time is critical," Tengco said in a news release Thursday. "This PTV donation program

seeks to help build healthier and more resilient communities."

Chief medical social worker Donnabelle Gonzaga-Arcillo of the Lung Center of the Philippines said the PTV donation will address transport constraints faced by the institution in its daily operations.

"Sobrang laking tulong nitong PTV lalo na sa mga pasyenteng hinahatid at sinusundo natin, pati na rin sa aming home visitations at community activities (This PTV is a huge help, especially for the patients we deliver and pick up, as well as for our home visitations and community activities)," Gonzaga-Arcillo said.

Each PTV is equipped with basic medical and safety features, including a stretcher, oxygen tank, wheelchair, first aid kit, and navigation system to ensure safe and efficient patient transport.

In 2025, PAGCOR donated a total of 162 patient transport vehicles to LGUs, partner agencies, and institutions nationwide, including 70 units given

NO SHIFT IN ALLIANCE AS US FOCUSES ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE – PH ENVOY

MANILA – There is no expected major change in the deep defense partnership between the Philippines and the United States as the latter increases focus on the Western Hemisphere, said Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez.

The Pentagon recently released its new National Defense Strategy, establishing homeland defense and the Western Hemisphere as a priority.

"I don't think that there's any major changes as far as our alliance is concerned, especially on our Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), mutual defense alliance with the United States," Romualdez told reporters in an interview in Pasay City.

"[I] think the administration

of President [Donald] Trump is just making sure it's securing the western area, rightly so, because that is their neighborhood," he added.

The envoy pointed out that aside from the US, the Philippines is also working with other allies to sustain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Robert Ewing, meanwhile, reaffirmed that the US is committed to its obligations under the MDT, and would remain a "strong Philippine ally," especially as the relations between the two states enter 80 years this 2026.

"The United States stands with the Philippines and our other allies for a free, open and secure Indo-Pacific," he said. (PNA) **BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

HUMAN TRAFFICKER WHO SOLD 11-DAY-OLD BABY ONLINE CONVICTED

MANILA – The Department of Justice (DOJ) said Thursday that prosecutors have successfully secured the conviction of a woman who sold an 11-day-old infant for PHP50,000 through a social media page purportedly for child adoption.

In a statement, the DOJ identified the accused as Mary Grace Espinar y Dalayday, also known as "Grace Ranipse," who entered a guilty plea to two counts of violation under Republic Act 7610, the law that shields children from abuse, exploitation, and discrimination.

Following the guilty plea, the court sentenced the accused to six years of imprisonment for each count, to be served successively.

The accused sold an 11-day-old baby boy for PHP50,000 through a Facebook group page called "Child Adoption Center Philippines" and via

to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. (PR)

Facebook Messenger.

In a two-page order, the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, Branch 99, accepted the guilty plea during its hearing on Nov. 25, 2025.

The prosecution panel, consisting of Assistant State Prosecutor Gino Angelo P. Yanga, Prosecution Attorney Criselda B. Teoxon-Yanga, and Prosecution Attorney Angelica H. Sy, worked closely with the Philippine National Police - Women and Children Protection Center and social welfare officers to ensure that the case moved forward swiftly, while prioritizing the safety and well-being of the child involved.

"Their coordinated efforts led to a plea bargain that secured accountability without putting the young victim through the further emotional stress of testifying in court. This victory highlights the DOJ's relentless campaign to defend children from abuse in line with the Bagong Pilipinas brand of leadership with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

MARCOS VOWS TO EXPAND TEACHERS' CAREER PATHS, BOOST PROMOTIONS

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Friday pledged to expand career paths for teachers, describing their promotions as a "doorway to a better life" that provides financial stability and well-deserved recognition.

Speaking during the mass oath-taking of Metro Manila teachers and school heads under the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) at the Makati Coliseum in Makati City, Marcos recognized their sacrifices and responsibilities to fulfill their duties beyond school hours.

Marcos said the government is working to create additional teaching positions, reduce paperwork, and ensure no public school teacher retires as Teacher I.

"We will expand our educators' career paths through strategic reclassification. By creating higher-level positions, senior educators can move up based on merit and open new entry positions to new graduates," he said. "We hope to help you achieve greater financial stability and the much-deserved recognition for your very, very hard work. Beyond these benefits and changes, our commitment to creating a system that protects and empowers teachers remains steadfast," Marcos added.

Marcos reaffirmed his administration's commitment to promoting quality education, citing the allocation of over PHP1.34 trillion to the sector, equivalent to 4% of the country's economy.

He also noted the release of the 2025 Service Recognition Incentive for teachers, totaling PHP7.3 billion, as well as a PHP10,000 teaching allowance for the 2025 to 2026 academic year and guidelines for a PHP7,000 medical allowance.

"Batid ko po ang bigat ng inyong tungkulin. Kung minsan, pag-uwi

at the forefront," the DOJ said. (PNA) **BY BENJAMIN PULTA**

ninyo sa gabi, imbes na magpahinga, nakatutok pa kayo sa paggawa ng lesson plan, pagcheck ng mga papel at assignments. Kayo rin ang tumatayong pangalawang magulang ng ating mga estudyante at gumagabay sa ating kabataan (I am aware of the weight of your responsibilities. Sometimes, when you go home at night, instead of resting, you are still focused on preparing lesson plans and checking papers and assignments. You also serve as second parents to our students and guide our youth), Marcos said.

Marcos urged teachers to continue shaping the next generation, not only through academic lessons but by instilling values such as integrity, responsibility and love of country. He made the call, as he acknowledged their vital role in molding the minds of the youth.

"Many of our country's problems today cannot be remedied by laws or by policies alone. They require discipline, they require honesty, and compassion—values that, while first nurtured within the Filipino home, are further shaped and strengthened in our schools, by, you, our teachers," he said.

"The government duly recognizes your efforts, and that's why it has to be met with tangible support." Guided by the Department of Education's (DepEd) core principle of RISE (Resilience, Integrity, Service and Excellence), a total of 2,915 promoted teachers and school heads took their oath before Education Secretary Sonny Angara.

The promotions were implemented through a fast-tracked process that combined appointments to natural vacancies and position reclassification under the ECP framework, enabling the DepEd to immediately address long-standing promotion backlogs across Metro Manila divisions. (PNA) **BY RUTH ABBEY GITA-CARLOS**

DSWD CITES VIOLATIONS OF SUSPENDED SHELTER IN LAGUNA

MANILA – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has cited multiple findings concerning the safety of the residents of a facility in San Pedro, Laguna, including lack of professional staff for the protection of the vulnerable sector that led to the suspension of the shelter managed by Bench TV.

The operation of the facility run by vlogger Benjie Perillo, known as Bench TV, was suspended for giving shelter to individuals, including minors, persons with disabilities, and in street situations without a valid license from the DSWD's Standards Bureau (SB).

"Ang question is saan ba sya hindi nag-comply (what are his shortcomings)? Kasi (Because), we have standards and we have the findings. With regard to the first finding or requirement – legal authority – yung requirement natin sa DSWD ay dapat may (our requirement in DSWD is there must be a) Certificate of Registration and License to Operate (CRLTO). Based on our database ay walang (there is no) CRLTO from DSWD," SB Director Megan Therese Manahan said during the Thursday media forum at the DSWD Central Office in Quezon City.

Manahan said the facility also lacks social workers and a multidisciplinary team to handle case management of the residents and provision of needed interventions.

"Next requirement – professional staffing – as I have mentioned earlier, there are minors, persons with special needs, some are even mentally challenged and hindi maka-communicate (can't communicate) with regard to consent or their needs," she told reporters.

"The standard is there must be registered social workers for case

management and multidisciplinary team for the appropriate intervention. When we went there, there are none. That's very important because social workers have case folders, medical records, but we didn't even see any documentation." Another finding is the lack of safety certifications of the facility.

Under the DSWD's guidelines, social welfare and development agencies (SWDAs) or charitable organizations must have safety certifications such as fire safety inspection certificate, sanitary permit, and occupancy or annual building inspection.

"We are very particular about this because the clients stay there 24/7. The finding of the team was they operated a shelter in a residential area without safety certifications," she said.

The DSWD also noted a violation relative to the right to privacy of the clients and protection of minors and persons with disabilities.

"There must be strict confidentiality protocols. The identities of the clients are protected by law. We saw that the faces of the clients are seen on social media accounts. We wanted to protect their well-being. Some of them are mentally-challenged, others cannot give consent on video recording," Manahan said.

"On minor protection, strictly no public exposure of children."

She said SWDAs are also subject to regular government inspection and financial audits.

"In this case, there is no institutional oversight and the operations were done at the discretion of the owner," Manahan added. The DSWD official said the department already conducted a site visitation in 2022 and provided technical assistance regarding the application of

LAWMAKERS PUSH FOR WEATHER INDEX-BASED CROP INSURANCE SYSTEM

MANILA – A lawmaking tandem from Abra is pushing for the passage of a measure seeking to establish a free weather index-based crop insurance (FIBCI) with an automatic payout system to better help small farmers during calamities caused by climate change.

House Bill No. 6519 or the Weather Ready Farmers bill, filed by Solid North Party-list Rep. Ching Bernos and Abra Lone District Rep. JB Bernos, seeks to create an FIBCI Program overseen by the Insurance Commission with a PHP5.8 billion Premium Subsidy Fund.

The main beneficiaries shall be farmers and agriculture and fisheries producers or farmers' cooperatives who shall register with their respective local government units (LGUs) for the particular crop or production insurance program offered by the LGU as a group policy through accredited insurance providers.

LGUs may also set aside local funds to complement the premium subsidies provided by the national government, while farmers may also pay premiums for added insurance features offered by providers.

Under the bill, payouts shall be triggered when insurance parameters based on an agreed

CRLTO but the facility has yet to secure a certification until now.

Manahan said the DSWD is set to meet Perillo and his team on Friday to provide technical assistance on the application of CRLTO.

"We will orient him with the requirements to get a license from DSWD. I had social workers go there and provide very specific technical assistance on how to do the beneficiary-protection policy and the child-protection policy," she said. (PNA) **BY ZALDY DE LAYOLA**

weather reference index such as, but not limited to, rainfall, wind speed, and temperature, are breached. A FIBCI Oversight Board shall also be formed, which will convene at least twice a year to monitor and oversee the operation of the FIBCI program and the administration of all index-based agriculture insurance in the country.

The board shall be composed of the heads of the Insurance Commission (as chairman); departments of Agriculture and Interior and Local Government; Cooperative Development Authority; National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council; Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA); Department of Science and Technology-Advance Science and Technology Institute; three farmers representing farmer organizations/cooperative federations from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (to be appointed by the President); and three representatives from the insurance industry, including the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. and two from the private sector. "Through this measure, we can ensure that our small farmers receive timely compensation, administrative delays are minimized, and there are no disputes over loss verification," Solid North Party-list Rep. Ching Bernos said in a news release on Thursday.

Bernos said that since the payouts are weather index-based, the declaration of a state of calamity by LGUs is no longer required to trigger the obligation of insurers to farmers/producers.

JB Bernos, meanwhile, underscored the need to shift away from the tedious and costly processes of the traditional crop insurance system.

"Due to the traditional

BILL SEEKS TO INCLUDE MEMBERS OF VULNERABLE SECTORS IN ABSENTEE VOTING

MANILA – Sen. Jinggoy Estrada is pushing for the passage of a measure seeking to include Filipinos in vulnerable situations in the local absentee voting. Senate Bill No. 1075 seek to allow senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), internally displaced persons (IDPs), pregnant women, health workers on duty, and even repatriated overseas workers to cast their ballots ahead of Election Day, or in specially designated accessible venues.

"Karapatan ng bawat Filipino, maliban na lamang kung diskwalipikado ng batas, ang bumoto. Hindi nawawala ang karapatang ito dahil sa kahinaan ng katawan, edad, o sitwasyon sa buhay (It is the right of every Filipino, except those barred by law, to cast their vote. This right cannot be removed because of age, health and class standing)," Estrada said in a statement.

He said that while Republic Act 10366 already

system, insurance payouts are playing catch-up. Dumating na ang kasunod na bagyo o baha, hindi pa rin nababayaran ang mga magkasaka. Kailangan nating baguhin ang sistema para mas mabilis tayong makapag-respond sa pangangailangan ng ating mga magkasaka (The next calamity is already coming, but the farmers have not yet been indemnified. We need to change the system to immediately respond to their needs)," he said.

He reminded that failure to help farmers and food producers recover from each calamity affects the whole country's food security. (PNA) **BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT**

authorizes the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to establish accessible polling places exclusively for senior citizens and PWDs, many voters from vulnerable sectors have remained disenfranchised. Under SB 1075, qualified voters from vulnerable sectors may avail of local absentee voting for at least two days within the week prior to Election Day, which shall be held in accessible establishments designated by the Comelec.

The bill also authorizes the establishment of Emergency Accessible Polling Places in residences, hospitals, quarantine facilities, jails, IDP areas, and other locations where voters may find it difficult to go to regular polling centers.

The proposed bill further sets clearer and more comprehensive standards for accessible polling places, including the installation of ramps and railings, availability of wheelchairs, adequate lighting and ventilation, lists of candidates in Braille, and the presence of sign language interpreters. It also provides for transportation or shuttle services to help vulnerable voters reach polling sites.

To ensure effective implementation, the bill authorizes the creation of a Vulnerable Sectors Office within the Comelec, which shall oversee programs and services for these groups.

"This is about dignity and equal participation. Voting is a right, not a privilege. No Filipino should be denied a voice in choosing our leaders simply because voting was made physically or logistically difficult for them," he said. (PNA) **BY LEONEL ABASOLA**

TESDA-CERTIFIED AI COURSES OFFERED TO DAVAO YOUTH

DAVAO CITY – Affordable TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority)-certified Artificial Intelligence (AI) courses are being offered to Dabawenyos youths, as an alternative pathway to lucrative livelihood opportunities in the Information Technology (IT) industry.

Jairo Institute, an IT-centered school located in Cabantian, Davao City, offers a TESDA-certified program on Bubble.io, a low-code, no-code platform for building web development. They are also offering TESDA NCII-certified CSS (Computer System Servicing) and Python programming for machine learning and AI.

Mary Grace Garcia, program manager at Jairo Institute of Technology, says the training and TESDA-certified programs capacitate learners with skills actually needed by the IT industry.

“Our TESDA programs, these are new programs in the market... providing them with training on things like scrum master, project management using the scale agile framework,” Garcia said.

Global industries use these training programs, and having these skills makes the trainees employable.

“It’s a big opportunity like the youth, or the youth who are not in school or are not working, we also have scholarships provided by TESDA,” Garcia said.

One current scholarship program is an ongoing partnership with the Sangguniang Kabataan of Buhangin.

Jairo and SK Buhangin provide free training on Bubble.io— an AI-assisted technology for developing software and other applications.

“Bubble.io is a new platform being used in software development. When we develop systems, it takes up to six months to one year. But by using Bubble.io, you can actually create a website in just minutes,” says Engineer Arnelita Pulido, Technical-

Vocational Institute head of JIT.

Engr. Karl Jordan Caumban, SAFe project management trainer, says it is important for the youth to learn to harness AI as it is not a replacement but a tool that can optimize or enhance what they are doing.

Another TESDA-certified course is the NC II in Computer System Servicing. They are offering industrial-based training, not only theoretical lessons, but training using an industrial-based training setup.

They are targeting government agencies that are digitizing their processes, and training personnel who set up and maintain their IT systems.

The school is offering affordable short-term courses while awaiting TESDA’s approval of scholarships for out-of-school youths and working adults who need upskilling. (PIA/RGA) **BY RUDOLPH ALAMA**

CAGAYAN VALLEY DRRM COUNCIL, CAUAYAN CITY SEAL PARTNERSHIP TO BOOST DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

CITY OF ILAGAN, Isabela (PIA) — The Cagayan Valley Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Council and the City Government of Cauayan formalized a strengthened partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on January 30, 2026, at Maximilian Hotel, aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness and response capabilities in the region.

Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Regional Director Leon DG Rafael said the agreement seeks to reinforce collaboration in emergency preparedness, disaster response operations, and the efficient utilization of critical disaster management resources, as Cagayan Valley continues to face recurring threats from floods, typhoons, and other natural hazards.

Rafael said the MOA was signed by Cauayan City Mayor Jaycee Dy on behalf

of the city government and by himself in his capacity as chairperson of the Cagayan Valley DRRM Council.

Under the partnership, Rafael said both parties committed to improving coordination during emergencies, strengthening response mechanisms, and maximizing the use of disaster response assets, including the Mobile Command and Control Vehicle (MOCCOV) currently under the custody of the Cauayan City government.

“The MOCCOV is expected to serve as a critical on-site command hub during large-scale disasters, enabling real-time communication, coordination, and decision-making among response agencies,” Rafael said.

Serving as witnesses to the signing were key disaster management stakeholders, including Cauayan City DRRM Officer Ronaldo D. Viloria and Regional DRRM Office

SINING NG ISANG PWD ARTIST, TAMPOK SA ISANG PASYALAN SA BAGUIO CITY

BAGUIO CITY (PIA) — Hindi lamang matatayog na pader at nakakaakit na tanawin ang bumubungad sa mga bumibista sa Igorot Stone Kingdom sa Baguio City. Sa likod ng mga istruktura, masisilayan ang makukulay at kamangh-manghang mga obra ng artist na may kapansanan, si Mark Agcaoili na tubong Ilagan City, Isabela.

Ayon kay Michael Castillo, chairperson ng Isabela Artist Circle, 11-anyos si Mark nang magkaroon ito ng sakit na meningitis na nagdulot ng kanyang disabilidad—hindi na makapagsalita at hindi makakilos nang maayos si Mark.

Nguni ang kanyang kapansanan, hindi naging hadlang para ipamalas ang kanyang angking galing at

representative Ronald L. Villa, underscoring the multi-stakeholder approach to disaster risk reduction in the region. Several municipal mayors from various local government units across the province also attended the ceremony, highlighting the growing emphasis on inter-LGU cooperation and regional convergence in disaster preparedness and response.

Officials from both parties expressed optimism that the partnership will further strengthen local and regional disaster management capacities, promote faster and more coordinated responses, and help safeguard lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure across Cagayan Valley. (OTB/MGE/PIA Isabela) **BY MERLITO G. EDALE, JR**

build a “smart, resilient, and inclusive” Bohol that can serve as a model of sustainable development.

“By emphasizing human development as a key driver of progress, we not only stimulate growth, but also strengthen our communities and ensure that development remains inclusive and meaningful for all,” he said. (RAHC/PIA Bohol) **BY REY ANTHONY CHIU**

talento. Sa halip na kamay, paa ang kanyang ginamit sa pagguhit.

“Imbes na ma-discourage siya, natuto itong gamitin ang kanyang paa sa pag-drawing. Almost 20 years niya din itong prinactice hangang siya’y mahasa,” kwento ni Castillo.

Dahil sa kanyang angking galing at talento, tumanggap ng iba’t ibang pagkilala si Mark. Isa ito sa mga kinilalang Most Outstanding Isabela Artist noong 2020 at Outstanding Ilangueño Visual Artist noong 2024.

Dinala rin niya sa international stage ang kanyang obra. Isa ito sa mga inimitahan ng National Council on Disability Affairs para sa International Art Exhibition sa Milan para sa Cortina Winter Paralympics Games.

Bukod sa pagpapahayag ng kanyang kakayahan, nakilala rin si Mark dahil sa patuloy na pagbibigay niya ng inspirasyon sa mga kabataan lalo na ang mga nangangarap maging artist na kagaya niya.

Isa sa mga artist na tumitingala kay Mark ay si Nickson Daquioag, isang string artist mula Isabela.

“Na-inspire po ako kay kuya Mark. Dahil as PWD artist, ginagamit niya ang kanyang paa sa pagpinta. So, I challenged myself po na gumawa din ng art,” si Daquioag.

Hinikayat naman ng Isabela Artist Circle ang mga naghahangad sundan ang landas ng sining na isapuso ang paggawa ng kanilang mga obra.

“Ang masasabi po namin lalo na sa kabataan katulad namin ay we only live once. Isapuso po natin ang art dahil ang pagpipinta ay dapat nanggagaling sa puso, at ‘wag dapat natin itinutulak ang ating sarili sa isang bagay na di natin kaya,” pahayag ng grupo.

Ngayong Pebrero ay ipinagdiriwang ang National Arts Month na may temang “Ani ng Sining: Katotohanan at Giting.” (DEG/PIA-CAR BSU Intern Delmar D. Acangan)/ **By PIA-CAR**

TESDA, BOHOL PARTNER TO BUILD P5M TRAINING FACILITY FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol (PIA) — The provincial government of Bohol has allocated P5 million to the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in Bohol for the construction of a Training and Competency Assessment Center for domestic work in Pilar town.

Gov. Erico Aristotle Aumentado signed a memorandum of agreement with TESDA for the project, which will host the Domestic Work Technical Vocational Training Program leading to National Certification II at the Provincial Training Center in Pilar.

Signing on behalf of TESDA is Deputy Director General for Special Concerns Felizardo R. Colambo, with National Language Skills Center Chief Technical Education and Skills Development Specialist Mitzi Samon-Endriano.

TESDA-7 Regional

Director Engr. Gamaliel B. Vicente Jr., TESDA Bohol Provincial Director Floro T. Ringca, and provincial officials witnessed the ceremony at the Capitol Ceremonial Hall.

Speaking during the distribution of certificates to 45 language training graduates, Aumentado said the project reflects the province’s commitment to expanding access to quality skills training.

“This initiative goes beyond our continued collaboration with TESDA. It demonstrates our firm commitment to providing quality education across all parts of the province by constructing facilities that will empower Boholanos with the skills needed to access greater employment opportunities,” Aumentado said.

Aumentado also disclosed plans for additional technical courses, including a proposed training on heavy equipment repair that will utilize the facilities of the Provincial Motor

Pool, as part of efforts to prepare the local workforce for new investments.

He noted that while formal schools offer courses in hotel, restaurant management, and hospitality, the new TESDA center will strengthen non-formal technical training to support the province’s growing tourism industry. “As Bohol continues to enhance and diversify its tourism offerings, it is imperative that we also elevate the skills of the Boholanos who serve as frontliners of this vital industry,” he said.

TESDA now operates five provincial training centers with an annex in Balilihan. The centers in Bilar, Pilar, Jagna, Tubigon, and Inabanga offer different specializations to meet local and global skills standards.

During the graduation rites for Korean Language and Japanese Language Level A1 trainees with NC II certifications, Aumentado said the province aims to

EASTWEST EXEC SEES MID-TEEN GROWTH IN LOANS, ASSETS IN 2026

MANILA – East West Banking Corporation (EastWest Bank) projects low- to mid-teen growth in assets and loans in 2026, citing strong performance last year.

The bank has yet to release its full-year 2025 results, but as of end-October, net income rose 14 percent to PHP6.6 billion, revenues increased 16 percent to PHP37.3 billion, and consumer lending grew 17 percent. Assets climbed 11 percent to PHP52.9 billion, supported by a 12-percent rise in low-cost deposits to PHP415.8 billion.

EastWest chief executive officer Jerry Ngo said loan growth remains aligned with funding growth, driven by expanding low-cost deposits.

“The growth of our loan book was almost the same as the loan funding cycle.

Low-cost is growing quite nicely also. So when you’re able to achieve that, it’s okay, rather than getting long-term fundings which you have to pay for the tenor premium,” he told reporters Wednesday night.

Ngo said an ideal loan-to-deposit ratio (LDR) is around 70 to 80 percent, adding that balanced growth on both sides reflects a robust trajectory. “If my growth on both sides are approximating each other, then it’s a good growth. It’s robust,” he said.

The bank has maintained the same growth strategy for the past three years and does not plan to change it in the near term, Ngo said, underscoring the importance of sustaining growth over time. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

BCDA WEIGHS NEW PROJECTS TO BOOST CLARK AS AVIATION HUB

MANILA – The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) is firming up projects to boost Clark’s capacity as an aviation hub, an official said Thursday. BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Joshua Bingcang said Lufthansa Technik Philippines (LTP) has proposed a USD400-million investment to build a maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facility at Clark Aviation Capital.

The joint venture between Lufthansa Technik AG and MacroAsia Corp. is seeking a 15-hectare site at Clark International Airport (CRK) under a proposed 25-year term, with an option to extend.

Bingcang said negotiations are expected to conclude within the quarter, with

construction targeted for completion in three years. BCDA also plans to build a second runway and expand the apron at CRK to support Federal Express Corp.’s (FedEx) expansion. FedEx currently operates three to four daily flights at CRK but Bingcang said the company aims to increase this to 20 with a new USD80-million facility covering about 80,000 square meters.

Apron construction is set to begin this year and will take about 18 months, while the second runway will take around three years to complete, funded by BCDA, the official said. “They’ve already chosen a builder and it is now securing the permits,” he said. (PNA) **BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

PH’S FIRST VENDORS’ BUSINESS SCHOOL IN QC EMPOWERS PEDDLERS, HAWKERS

MANILA – The country’s first Vendors’ Business School, institutionalized by the Quezon City government through an ordinance, continues to empower local vendors, including peddlers and hawkers.

The city government said the ordinance acknowledges that vendors generate revenue through regulatory fees, create jobs, support farmers and manufacturers, and provide affordable access to essential goods.

“Alinsunod sa ating good governance culture, institutionalized ang suportang ito. Sa ilalim ng ating ordinansa, sinisiguro natin ang taunang funding para sa programa, ang libreng training para sa lahat ng qualified

participants, at ang patuloy na pagpapabuti ng inisyatibo upang masigurong makabuluhan ang pagkatuto ng ating mga vendors (In accordance with our good governance culture, this support is institutionalized. Under our ordinance, we ensure annual funding for the program, free training for all qualified participants, and the continuous improvement of the initiative to ensure meaningful learning for our vendors),” QC Mayor Joy Belmonte said in a news release on Thursday.

“Ibig sabihin, ang programa ay hindi one-time training lamang (This means the program is not a one-time training only). This ordinance makes the program official and

sustainable, so vendors can continue to learn, improve, and adapt as the city grows,” she added.

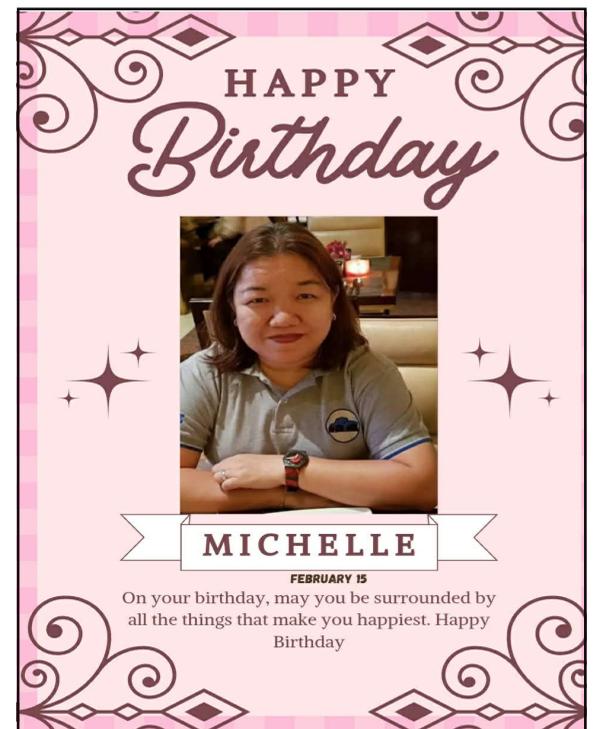
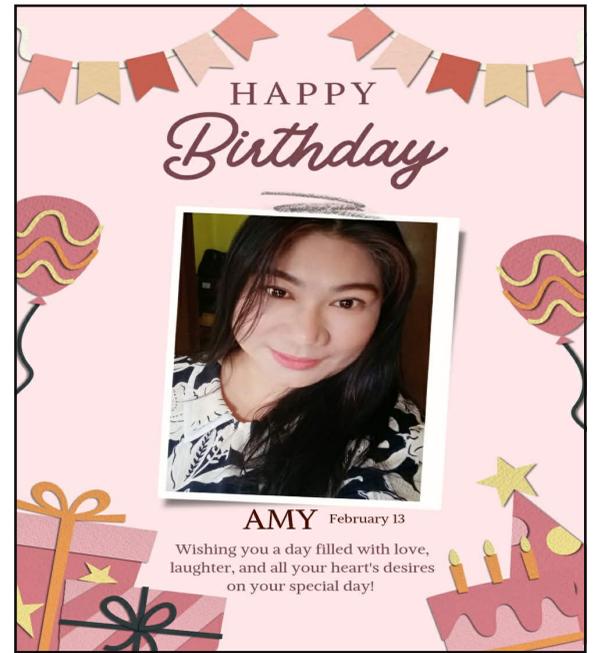
The ordinance noted that informal workers have long been perceived as eyesores or traffic obstructions, a stigma that has exposed them to exploitation and illegal collections and hindered their integration into the formal economy.

Through the initiative, piloted in 2024, 108 vendors already completed the six-month training, while 103 qualified for further assistance under the city’s Pangkabuhayang QC Program.

Section 5 of the ordinance states that the school aims to “empower the learners by equipping them with the knowledge and skills

that can develop and expand their businesses” and promote “innovative and sustainable business practices that enhance their economic resilience and contribute to the overall growth of the local economy.”

The city government said the program is implemented by its Market Development and Administration Department, with support from the Small Business and Cooperatives Development and Promotions Office and the QC Public Employment Office, in partnership with the CGIAR Resilient Cities Initiative, which helped design the curriculum based on actual market conditions. (PNA) **BY MARITA MOAJE**





KOREAN KANG TAKES ONE-SHOT LEAD IN ICTSI PH LADIES MASTERS

MANILA — Korean Jeonghyeon Kang carded a 71 to take a one-shot lead after the second round of the ICTSI Philippine Ladies Masters Thursday at Summit Point Golf and Country Club in Lipa City, Batangas.

Kang was one shot behind first-round leader Yunseo Lee at the start of the day, she bogeyed No. 2 but scored birdies on the next two holes.

Kang faltered at the par-3 17th, where a wind-blown tee shot found a greenside bunker. She failed to get up-and-down and walked off with a double bogey. The mishap erased a three-stroke cushion, leaving Kang at 138 for a shaky one-shot edge heading into the final round of the USD200,000 event.

"I just didn't mind the wind. It was actually windier yesterday, so I was a bit

more comfortable today," Kang said through an interpreter.

Kang said she would welcome the comfort of familiar company in the final pairing.

"Playing with a friend in the final round would make me feel a little bit comfortable," added Kang, who earned her first professional win back home in 2024.

Behind her are Yeonsoo Hwang and Taiwanese Ching Huang, who surged into contention with matching 139 totals.

Hwang produced the day's best round, a 67 highlighted by three birdies over the final four holes, while Huang stayed steady with a 69 marked by three straight birdies from No. 9 for the second straight day.

Hwang, a 22-year-old three-year pro, rocketed from joint 19th with a blistering start, birdieing

four of her first 11 holes before briefly stalling with back-to-back bogeys from No. 12. She recovered in emphatic fashion, closing with three birdies in her final four holes to vault into a share of second at five-under.

"My putting wasn't good in the first round, but today it was. I'm confident for tomorrow," Hwang said.

Taiwan's Lee Min stayed within striking distance with a 71, while Yunseo Lee slipped with a 74 and Tzu Chi Lin charged back with a 68, leaving all three tied for fourth at 140.

Daniella Uy squandered a one-under card after 10 holes with bogeys on Nos. 12 and 16 to settle for a 73, yet still turned in the best Filipino showing at 144, good for a share of 12th, six strokes behind Kang. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

BULLPUPS BEAT JUNIOR GOLDEN SOX TO TAKE UAAP BASEBALL TOP SPOT

MANILA — National University Nazareth School (NUNS) relied on the impressive performance of Chester Mark Mateo to beat University of Santo Tomas, 4-3 and grab the lead in the UAAP Season 88 high school baseball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Baseball Stadium on Wednesday.

The 18-year-old pitcher from Palawan allowed just four hits and three runs, and struck out six UST batters as the Bullpups improved to a 4-2 record.

"Mateo was really exceptional. Surprisingly, he held up the whole game. Actually, this is the first time I've seen him perform like

that. I hope it continues," said NUNS head coach Romar Landicho.

Mateo also went 2-for-3 with a triple, while Justin Lauriquez led the offense with three hits and a stolen base.

In the other game, PAREF Southridge defeated Ateneo de Manila University, 19-7, in eight innings.

PAREF Southridge improved to 3-3 and remains in the hunt for a Finals berth, just half a game behind UST and idle De La Salle-Zobel.

The Blue Eagles raced to a 4-0 lead in the first inning before the Admirals scored four in the third, three each

in the fourth and fifth, and five in the sixth to build a commanding 15-5 lead.

"Although we started slow, I woke them up, made some adjustments, and the team responded. Itong next three games namin, we are treating it as championship games to stay alive," said Southridge head coach Bocc Bernardo.

Catcher Sandro Villarosa led the charge with four hits and two RBIs, while Luis Chavez went 3-for-3 with four RBIs.

Leadoff batter JC Basañes chipped in three hits and three stolen bases, and Yano Antonio had five runs on two hits. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**

ALDEMITA, TORRECAMPO REACH SEMIS IN ITF ASIA U14 CHAMPIONSHIPS

MANILA — Filipinos Alexi Luca Rafael Aldemita and Maristella Torrecampo secured semifinal berths in the ongoing ITF Asia U14 Development Championships in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The Dubai-based Aldemita, seeded No. 4, beat No. 8 Muhammad Gill of Pakistan, 6-2, 6-2, to advance against No. 1 Nicholas Park of Singapore, who won over No. 6 Phu Le of Vietnam.

Also marching to the semis are No. 2 Leon Ho of Singapore and No. 5 Tuan Vu of Vietnam. Ho beat Filipino No. 7 Marcus Go, 6-2, 6-1, while Vu defeated Muaz Shahbaz of Pakistan, 6-2, 7-6 (1).

In the girls division, No. 3 Torrecampo defeated Hannah Tay of Singapore, 6-2, 6-2 to advance against No. 1 Binh To of Vietnam, who won over Kanza Ismail of Maldives, 6-2, 6-1.

Aissata Adama of Mongolia ousted No. 2 Zixi Wang of Singapore, 6-3, 6-1, to forge a semis duel with No. 4 Linh Nguyen of Vietnam,

who clobbered Khadija Khalil of Pakistan, 6-0, 6-1.

"The level of confidence, maturity and tennis IQ is what brought them to the semifinals, we expect the players to do the same in the semis but this time staying composed all throughout the match will be crucial for we expect Team Vietnam to really challenge our players, which is why we are here, to grow as a player and as a person," said Team Philippines captain Gerhard Mamawal in an interview Friday.

Meanwhile, third seeds Vu and Le eliminated second seeds Aldemita and Go,

6-2, 6-2, to reach the doubles final.

Vu and Le will battle top seeds Pak and Ho, who trounced fourth seeds Tenzin Dudu and Pelthop Tshering of Bhutan, 6-1, 6-1.

In the girls' doubles, top seeds To and Nguyen outplayed third seeds Torrecampo and Ella Paglalunan, 6-2, 6-3, to advance in the championship round against second seeds Wang and Tay, who prevailed over Jannat Howlader and Mastora Afrin of Bangladesh, 6-1, 6-2. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



SEMIFINALIST. Filipino Maristella Torrecampo makes a forehand return to Hannah Tay of Singapore, 6-2, 6-2, in the quarterfinal round of the ITF Asia U14 Development Championships in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Thursday (Feb. 5, 2026). She won, 6-2, 6-2. (Contributed photo)

LADY KNIGHTS STAY UNBEATEN IN NCAA VOLLEYBALL

MANILA — Letran pulled off a 17-25, 25-13, 25-13, 25-13 victory over longtime rival San Beda University Tuesday to remain unbeaten in the NCAA Season 101 women's volleyball tournament at San Andres Sports Complex.

Judiel Nitura finished with 22 points, while Vanessa Sarie and Gia Maquilang contributed 14 points each as the Lady Knights rolled to their fourth win in Group B.

Angel Mae Habacon scored 12 points for the Lady Red Spikers, which slid to second place at 3-1. Arellano University is in third place at 1-2, followed by Lyceum of the Philippines (1-3) and Emilio Aguinaldo College (0-3).

In the other match, College of St. Benilde defeated Jose Rizal University, 25-15, 25-18, 25-18, to improve its record to 3-1 for second place in Group A.

Zam Nolasco led the Lady Blazers with 20 points while Camila Bartolome chipped in 12 points. Chenae Basarte registered 23 excellent sets.

Czarina Ramos scored 18 points for the Lady Bombers, who took their fourth consecutive loss.

University of Perpetual is at the top of the standings with a 4-0 win-loss record. Mapua University ranks third place with a 2-1 slate, while San Sebastian College-Recoletos has a 1-3 card. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



UNDEFEATED. Judiel Nitura of Letran tries to score against Angel Mae Habacon of San Beda University in the NCAA Season 101 women's volleyball tournament at the San Andres Sports Complex on Tuesday (Feb. 3, 2026). The Lady Knights won, 17-25, 25-13, 25-13, 25-13. (NCAA photo)