

## ANTI-DYNASTY BILL DRAWS MIXED VIEWS IN CAVITE

**CARMONA CITY, Cavite (PIA)** — The proposed anti-political dynasty bill drew mixed reactions from attendees in Cavite province, with the youth clearly favoring the bill while their elders voiced their support to political families belonging to a dynasty for having brought local development.

The House Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms kicked off its public consultation in Carmona City on February 12 to listen to the people before crafting the final version of the bill.

For John Dela Cruz, political families provide stable local development programs. In a democracy

where the people elect and choose their leader, dynasties provide a clear path for local development. "Walang political dynasty sa aming bayan, paibaiba ang nanunugkulan. Pero hindi namin alam ang direksyon ng aming bayan. Hindi po ito usapin ng political dynasty, hindi ang batas na ito ang magtatanggal sa political dynasty, kundi ang taumbayan."

Beth Bihon echoed this sentiment, arguing that political dynasties are not the sole cause of corruption.

"Ang tao, alam namin kung sino ang dapat iboto. Kahit hindi nagmula sa political dynasty and pulitiko, kung

gusto 'nyang gumawa ng kurapsyon ay gagawa 'yan. Kami ay may sariling pag-iisip para pumili ng mga lider."

The youth, however, maintain that a politician's skills are not automatically inherited by their children. For students Hannah Mae Lamutan and Chester Baybay, the anti-political dynasty legislations allow competent individuals to become leaders even without the machinery of political lineages.

"Kung hanggang ngayon ay walang malinaw na pagpapakahulugan sa political dynasty na isinasaad sa Konstitusyon ay mananatiling malabo ang sistema ng bansa.

Competencies are not inherited."

Meanwhile, Baybay emphasized that an anti-political dynasty bill opens electoral seats to citizens with aspirations of public service even without the backing of a popular family name.

"It's fair na bigyan natin ng chance na mamuno ang mga kandidato na mas qualified. It's unfair to leave a position to one family when we can give those who don't have a well-known last name a chance."

Lanao del Sur Rep Zia Alonto Adiong of the House Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms noted that public opinion on political dynasties is frequently linked to a family's track record in driving local development.

"Discussion on political dynasties is very nuanced in every area. That's why we need to go down to the communities para maintindihan natin lalo kung paano tumatakbo ang pulitika sa bawat bayan."

"Kaya kanina, marami ang ayaw rin [sa Anti-Political Dynasty law] kasi sa kanila, ang lived reality ay maayos ang kanilang pamumuhay at pagpapatakbo ng lokal na gobyerno."

Adiong emphasized the importance of public opinion in guiding legislation on political dynasties.

"Malaking basis ng kumite

## FARMER-SCIENTISTS PUSH FOR CLIMATE-SMART AGRI COMMUNITIES



**TRECE MARTIRES CITY, Cavite (PIA)** — The country's farmer-scientists, or those who combine traditional farming experience with modern technology, have renewed their commitment in helping shape the agriculture industry by promoting sustainable and resource-efficient practices.

The Agriculture Training Institute (ATI) in

ang kanilang posisyon. It's not something the members of the House can decide kung dapat itong ipasa kasi ang Konstitusyon ang nagsasabi na dapat i-define ng kongreso."

The lawmaker also recognized the uneven playing field in election campaigns, highlighting machineries such as influence and financing by political families—resources that may be inaccessible to new and independent candidates.

"Hindi lang nila binanggit 'yung kanilang position on political dynasties perse. We also talked about wider access for others to participate in the electoral process.

Campaign financing is also an issue, kasi feeling nila may advantage ang politicians against those who are running na hindi kilala. This concerns campaign financing and not the anti-political dynasty laws."

Adiong added that the proposed measure should echo the voters' lived experiences.

"Laws should be a reflection of the current situation, legislation should go hand in hand with the experience of the people. It should not only be legalistic, but also practical and acceptable to the people." (PB-PIA CALABARZON) BY

PATRICIA BERMUDEZ

CALABARZON reminded the farmers of their role during a seminar on Circular Economy for Magsasaka Siyentista marking ATI's 39th anniversary celebration.

The session underscored the importance of farmers in the country's food production chain as active partners in shaping practical and innovative agriculture solutions.

It also highlighted that combining field experience to research and technology can be applied in farming communities, reinforcing that farmers are active partners in shaping the country's agriculture practices.

Dr. Rolando Maningas, Center Director for ATI CALABARZON, in a statement, emphasized the importance of similar learning sessions in bridging the gap between traditional farming and technological innovations to promote environmentally responsible agricultural communities.

"Through concrete examples and grounded discussions, the session underscored the importance of resilience, environmental responsibility, and sustainability, strengthening the Center's role as a vital bridge between innovation and the field, and supporting the development of climate-smart and environmentally responsible agricultural communities."

The farmer-scientists also renewed their oath to reiterate their commitment to applying the knowledge and innovation provided by the DA-ATI in shaping their farming and fishing communities to become more productive and resilient.

(PB-PIA CALABARZON, ATI CALABARZON) BY PATRICIA BERMUDEZ



### TAGAYTAY POLICE SUCCESSFULLY SERVES WARRANT OF ARREST AGAINST CITY LEVEL MOST WANTED

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite** – In line with the Philippine National Police’s intensified campaign against wanted persons, warrant personnel of the Tagaytay Component City Police Station, successfully serves a warrant of arrest against City Level Most Wanted Person in BJMP Bocaue Municipal Jail, Brgy. Poblacion, Bocaue, Bulacan at 3:00 in the afternoon today February 18, 2026.

PLTCOL RYAN L MANONGDO, Acting Chief of Police of Tagaytay Component City Police Station, identified the accused as Kano, a resident of Tagaytay City, Cavite.

Intel/Warrant personnel of Tagaytay CCPS conducted service of warrant against Most Wanted Person with the use of Body Worn Camera (BWC) and Alternative Recording Device (ARD) resulting in the arrest of the accused for the crime/violation of Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 - Sale, Trading, Administration,

Dispensation, Delivery, Distribution and Transportation of Dangerous Drugs (RA 9165 Art. II Sec. 5 and Sec. 11), issued and signed by Presiding Judge of Regional Trial Court, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 133, Tagaytay City Cavite, dated January 27, 2026, with no bail recommended.

The accused remained detained at BJMP Bocaue Municipal Jail, for another drug case related. Copy of Warrant of Arrest will be returned to the Court of Origin.

Meanwhile, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office, lauded the operating personnel for their dedication and commitment to law enforcement. “The diligent efforts of our personnel ensure that justice is properly enforced and that convicted offenders are held fully accountable. We remain committed to strengthening our manhunt operations and ensuring that no warrant remains unserved.”

### SILANG POLICE SUCCESSFULLY SERVES WARRANT OF ARREST AGAINST MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite** – In line with the intensified campaign of the Philippine National Police against wanted persons, personnel of the Silang Municipal Police Station, successfully serves warrant of arrest against a City Level Most Wanted Person at 5:00 in the afternoon today February 18, 2026 in Quezon City Jail (BJMP) - Male Dormitory, Payatas Rd Quezon City Metro Manila.

PLTCOL JOSEPH D MACATANGAY, Acting Chief of Police, Silang MPS, identified the accused as Rence a resident of Silang, Cavite. Warrant Personnel of Silang Municipal Police Station served a Warrant of Arrest (with the use of alternative recording

device) against most wanted person and presently detained at Quezon City Jail (BJMP) for violation of Murder and Robbery. Above named accused has standing Warrant of Arrest issued by Presiding Judge of Regional Trial Court Branch 18 Tagaytay City Cavite for the crime of Frustrated Murder (under Article. 248 (1) of the RPC) with bail recommended amounting Php200,000.00 dated February 09, 2026.

In his message, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director, Cavite Police Provincial Office states, “This accomplishment reflects the Cavite PNP’s steadfast commitment to the relentless pursuit of wanted persons, to ensure the rule of law is upheld and public safety is protected.”

### MUNICIPAL LEVEL MOST WANTED, SUCCESSFULLY ARRESTED BY GMA PNP

**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 arrested a Municipal Level Most Wanted Person in Brgy. Gregoria De Jesus, GMA Cavite at about 6:10 in the evening of February 17, 2026.

PLTCOL BONNA A OBMERGA, COP GMA MPS, identified the accused as “Lucio” a resident of Brgy. San Antonio, San Pedro Laguna.

Warrant operatives of General Mariano Alvarez Municipal Police Station conducted operation against Most Wanted Person by virtue of Warrant of Arrest for the crime/violation of Reckless

Imprudence Resulting to Serious Physical Injuries, issued and signed by Presiding Judge of Municipal Trial Court in Cities, Fourth Judicial Region, Branch 1, San Pedro City, Laguna dated September 24, 2025, with no bail recommended.

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, making sure that no offender escapes their legal obligations to society, thereby strengthening the public’s trust in our justice system.”

### ROSARIO PNP’S SUCCESSFUL BUY-BUST OPERATION, RESULTED IN THE ARREST OF SUSPECT AND SEIZURE OF FIREARM AND AMMUNITION

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, City of Imus, Cavite** – In an intensified campaign against loose firearms, Rosario Municipal Police Station successfully arrested one suspect in a buy-bust operation regarding illegal selling of firearm in Rosario, Cavite

at about 10:30 in the evening of February 17, 2026.

PLTCOL ARDIE O BAGAMAN, Chief of Police, Rosario MPS, identified the arrested suspect as alias Kuli, resident of General Trias, Cavite.

Intel Operative of Rosario

Municipal Police Station conducted buy-bust operation regarding illegal selling of firearm which resulted in the arrest of the suspect and confiscation of the following pieces of evidence: one piece of .38 caliber revolver, two pieces of .38 live ammunition,

one piece five-hundred-peso bill with serial number “AH8091202” and four pieces one-thousand-peso bill boodle money used as buy bust money and one blue bag pack.

The suspect was duly apprised of his rights under the Miranda Rule and R.A. 9745 (Anti-Torture Act of 2009). The seized pieces of evidence were brought to the Rosario MPS for proper disposition.

The confiscated firearm will be forwarded to the Cavite Provincial Forensic Unit for ballistic examination. Meanwhile, pertinent documents are being prepared for inquest proceedings before the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor.

In his message, PCOL ARIEL R RED, Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office, commended the operatives for their swift action and reiterated the unit’s commitment to maintaining peace and public safety in the province. “The Cavite PNP relentlessly continues its campaign against criminality and loose firearms to ensure a safer and more secure Cavite.”

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## GENTRISEÑOS BENEFIT FROM MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION IN JAVALERA

A total of 436 residents benefitted from free health services during the Medical and Dental Mission conducted by the Provincial Government of Cavite on February 18, at Javalera Elementary School in Brgy. Javalera, City of General Trias.

The outreach program was organized by the Provincial Government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Governor, in coordination with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer. The GEAMH Team led the medical services, while the General Trias Dental Team provided dental care. The activity was supported by the AMIGA District Hospital, Barangay Health Workers,

and Punong Barangay Teodulo Romero.

Of the total beneficiaries, 337 residents received medical consultations, while 39 availed of dental services. Fifty-two individuals underwent Fasting Blood Sugar (FBS) testing, and four patients each received X-ray and ECG procedures. Free medicines were likewise distributed to all qualified beneficiaries.

The activity forms part of the provincial government's continuing efforts to bring essential health services closer to communities and to ensure that every Caviteño has access to timely and quality medical care. — **R. Dones / Cavite-PIO**

## MEDICAL AND DENTAL MISSION GOES TO ANULING CERCA 2, MENDEZ

On February 11, the Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted a Medical and Dental Mission in Brgy. Anuling Cerca II, Mendez, Cavite.

A total of 455 patients benefitted from the activity, which offered comprehensive healthcare services from medical and dental consultations to diagnostic support

such as Random Blood Sugar testing, ECG, and X-ray services to detect and monitor their health conditions.

To ensure continued care after the check-ups, free prescribed medicines were also provided to patients, making the mission a meaningful step towards a healthier and more resilient family in the community.

## GPS TRACKING LEADS TO ARREST OF THREE MOTORCYCLE THIEVES IN DASMARINAS CITY

**Camp BGen Pantaleon Garcia, Imus City, Cavite** — Utilizing modern tracking technology and rapid response, the Dasmariñas Component City Police Station (CCPS) successfully apprehended three suspects, for carjacking and illegal possession of a firearm in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, on the afternoon of February 18, 2026.

**PLTCOL RESTY ESTORIL SORIANO**, Officer-in-Charge of Dasmariñas CCPS, identified the suspects as alias **REMARK, ROVIC and JEFF**.

The incident began when a witness inadvertently left the ignition key in a company-owned Honda Click 125 motorcycle parked in front of a store. One of the suspects seized the opportunity, starting the engine and driving away.

Fortunately, the motorcycle was equipped with a Global Positioning System (GPS) device.

Responding officers from the Paliparan Police Substation immediately tracked the location of the stolen vehicle. The suspects were caught a short distance away while already in the process of tampering with and removing parts of the motorcycle. Upon a search of the vehicle's compartment, officers recovered an improvised shotgun (sumpak).

The suspects were apprised of their constitutional rights under the Miranda Doctrine and Anti-Torture Law. The suspects are facing violations of Republic Act 10883 (New Anti-Carjacking Act of 2016) and Republic Act 10591 (Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act).

**PCOL ARIEL R RED**, Provincial Director of the Cavite Police Provincial Office, stated, "The successful recovery of the stolen motorcycle and the arrest of the suspects within hours of the crime demonstrate the effectiveness of combining community vigilance with modern technology. While our officers acted with commendable speed, we remind the public to remain cautious and never leave keys in their vehicles. The Cavite Police will continue to utilize all available tools to ensure that criminals are brought to justice and that the property of our citizens is protected."

## EDITORIAL

### Pananampalataya bilang armas upang makapanakit ng

Ang salita ng Diyos ay dapat magsilbing tulay ng pagtulong at tanglaw ng gabay, hindi isang matalas na armas na pananakit sa kapwa. Walang sinumansaatin ang mayhawak ng timbangan ng katuwiran; lahat tayo ay may kapintasan. Sa halip na magdikta kung sino ang makasalan, mas marangal na gamitin ang pananampalataya upang umunawa, tumulong, at magpakita ng tunay na pag-ibig.

## FREE HEALTHCARE SERVICES REACH BRGY. SEVERINO DELAS ALAS GMA

A successful Medical and Dental Mission was conducted by the Provincial Government of Cavite on February 13, in Brgy. Severino Delas Alas, General Mariano Alvarez, benefiting a total of 715 residents. Through the collective efforts of dedicated healthcare professionals and volunteers, the activity provided free consultations, diagnostic services, and medicines, promoting healthier lives

within the community.

The mission delivered 555 medical consultations, 106 FBS tests, 28 ECG procedures, and 26 X-ray services, ensuring accessible and preventive healthcare for residents.

Present during the activity were Board Members **Aidel Belamide** and **Ivee Jayne Reyes**, reaffirming the local government's strong support for community health initiatives and sustained public service. — **R. Tanael/ Cavite-PIO**

## PGC EXTENDS HEALTH OUTREACH PROGRAM TO SILANGUENOS

The Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted a medical mission on February 10, at Brgy. Lalaan 2, Silang, bringing accessible and much-needed healthcare services closer to the community.

The Office of the Provincial Governor, in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer through the GEAMH team, and with the support of local health

workers and barangay officials, provided residents with a wide range of free medical services. A total of 561 residents received medical consultations, with diagnostic services including FBS tests, X-ray procedures, and ECG screenings — ensuring timely health assessments and preventive care for community members.

The activity was graced by 5th District Board Member **Aidel Paul G. Belamide**

and Punong Barangay **Eric Sulit**, together with dedicated Barangay Health Workers, whose collective efforts ensured the smooth and organized delivery of services throughout the mission.

The provincial government remains steadfast in its commitment to implementing programs that promote healthier, stronger, and more resilient communities across Cavite. — **R. Dones/ Cavite-PIO**

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## CPD SOUNDS ALARM OVER DECLINING POPULATION GROWTH IN RURAL AREAS

**MANILA** – The Commission on Population and Development (CPD) has sounded the alarm over declining population growth in several rural provinces, citing data from the 2024 Census of Population (POPCEN) and the ongoing demographic shifts across the country.

POPCEN data shows that as of July 1, 2024, the total population of the Philippines is 112,729,484, or an increase of 3.69 million from 109.04 million in 2020, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In an interview during the 57th anniversary of the CPD in Manila on Thursday, Deputy Executive Director Lolito Tacardon noted the emerging issue of rapid urbanization and the depopulation of rural areas.

“Kasi we've seen na palaki ng palaki yung population who are living in the urban areas. Pero meron na rin tayong mga provinces as well as one region actually, nag-incur na ng negative population growth rate, that's region 5, Bicol region (Because we've seen that the population living in urban areas is continuously growing. But we also have provinces, as well as one region actually, that have already incurred a negative population growth rate, that's region 5, Bicol region),” he said.

“So nagbago na yung demographic landscape natin and yet ang ating trust ngayon sa programa is demographic resilience, yung capacity ng bansa natin (our demographic landscape has changed, and yet our trust now in the program is demographic resilience, the capacity of our country) to sustain our socioeconomic development in whatever demographic situation that we have,” he added.

Aside from the Bicol Region, Tacardon said 13 other provinces, including Marinduque, Romblon, Mountain Province and Zamboanga del Norte in Mindanao, posted a

slowdown in the annual Population Growth Rate (PGR).

The data also noted that Marinduque and Mountain Province recorded the fastest declines, with some municipalities fully depopulated.

PSA data also showed that the rate at which the country's population grew from 2020 to 2024 had actually slowed down to 0.80 percent from 1.63 percent from 2015 to 2020. In total, 264 cities and municipalities, or about 16 percent of the country's total, now have negative growth.

Fertility decline, demographic transition The CPD attributed the slowdown to declining fertility rates, elevated mortality during the Covid-19 pandemic, and internal migration.

Total fertility has dropped from six children per woman in the 1970s to 1.9 today, reflecting changing preferences as women prioritize personal goals and delay childbirth.

“Women are now able to achieve their desired number of children, which allows families to provide a better quality of life and enables women to pursue personal and professional development,” he said, adding that this is a positive trend for women.

Another factor, Tacardon said, is the rapid urbanization, citing that around 40 percent of Filipinos now live in the National Capital Region and nearby regions of Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) and Central Luzon, and 60 percent in the rest of the country.

He said this situation creates imbalances in population distribution, as he stressed the need for policies that support rural areas, manage migration to urban centers, and address socio-economic pressures in both contexts. Rising child, adolescent pregnancies

Meanwhile, the CPD said pregnancies among girls aged 10 to 14 years old

## AUSSIE ENVOY CITES STRONG DEMAND FOR PH WORKERS IN MEET WITH SENATOR

**MANILA** – Australian Ambassador Marc Innes-Brown cited strong demand for Filipino workers in Australia in his courtesy call with Senator Raffy Tulfo at the Senate.

Tulfo, who chairs the Senate committees on migrant workers and public services, said on Friday around 400,000 Filipinos are living or employed in Australia, many serving as nurses, skilled workers and other healthcare professionals.

He said Innes-Brown, whom he met last Feb. 18, commended the work performance of Filipino workers and recognized their contribution to the Australian economy, with the news release stating that Australia “continues

continue to rise.

Tacardon cited contributing factors that include lack of information, sexual abuse, and cultural norms.

Responding to the call to regulate minors' use of social media following reports linking increased teenage pregnancies to online exposure, Tacardon stressed that the CPD is looking more closely at how these young people process information.

While admitting that exposure to social media and to sexually explicit content could be a factor in rising adolescent pregnancies, what is more important is how they are guided, amid free access to all sources of information.

“We're more focused on the education and enabling young people to have that informed choice and decision by giving them appropriate information. So even if they access these social media sites dapat, unang una yung mga parents dapat magabayang nila ano ba ang maling information versus sa tamang (should, first and foremost, parents should guide them on what is the wrong information versus the right) information. I guess our concentration is more on education and skills development,” Tacardon said. **(PNA) BY MARITA MOAJE**

to require more skilled workers and prefers to hire more Filipinos.”

Tulfo expressed appreciation for the “excellent treatment” of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Australia, with the news release noting that his office “has not received reports of abuse or maltreatment by Australian employers.”

The two officials also discussed the growing number of Filipinos enrolling in master's and doctorate scholarship programs in Australian universities.

Under existing arrangements, Filipino scholars are allowed to work while studying and may bring their families with them — a setup Tulfo welcomed.

Tulfo further said Australia has ongoing initiatives to help Filipino scholars immediately apply their specialized training upon returning to the Philippines, including agricultural courses designed to benefit local industries.

On defense and maritime cooperation, he said the ambassador underscored that the Philippines remains a priority partner for Australia as both countries seek to strengthen bilateral ties.

The senator said Innes-Brown cited plans to expand military training exercises with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Coast Guard.

Tulfo also acknowledged Australia's donation of drones to the Philippine Coast Guard, saying these would enhance maritime patrols and territorial monitoring in the West Philippine Sea, as well as support efforts to promote regional stability.

He noted the expansion of Australian investments in the Philippines in infrastructure, education, trade, renewable energy and agriculture, which are projected to generate about 45,000 jobs nationwide.

Tulfo thanked Innes-Brown for the visit and conveyed his commitment to continue working with the Australian government to deepen the long-standing Philippines-Australia partnership. **(PNA) BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

## ESTABLISHMENTS URGED TO PROVIDE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO PWDs

**MANILA** – The National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), an attached agency of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), has called on all stakeholders, including business establishments, to ensure that they provide reasonable and proper treatment to persons with disabilities (PWDs).

“We are reminding all establishments that you have to be considerate and to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities because it is their right as a person with disability,” NCDA spokesperson Walter Alava said during a media forum at the DSWD Central Office in Quezon City on Thursday.

The NCDA official made the statement amid a reported case of a child with autism who was asked to eat lunch outside a popular coffee chain in a Pampanga mall due to the store's “no outside food” policy.

Photos of the child with autism became viral after a TV station posted them online and prompted concerns from netizens on social media.

Alava explained that under Republic Act 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled

Persons, reasonable accommodations include the necessary and appropriate adjustments and modifications in facilities, workplaces, schedules, assistive technologies, or policies that will help PWDs to uphold their rights.

“Nakalagay talaga doon na dapat maging considerate tayo, at dapat maglalagay tayo ng (It is explicitly provided there that we be more considerate and provide an) avenue for persons with disabilities. So, we are calling for the review po of the 'no outside food' policy, and then, we will be taking with the different member agencies din natin kasi NCDA is a council,” he told reporters.

Aside from reviewing the policy, he said the NCDA has been working with Persons with Disability Affairs Offices, private partners and organizations to conduct disability-sensitivity training across the country through their online learning system.

The DSWD, together with the NCDA, is committed to ensuring that the vulnerabilities of PWDs and other sectors are considered and provided with utmost respect inherent to their rights. **(PNA) BY JOSE CIELITO REGANIT**

## CABAGAN-SANTA MARIA BRIDGE IN ISABELA TO OPEN IN MARCH

**MANILA** – The temporary passageway/bridge connector that will replace the collapsed span of the Cabagan-Santa Maria Bridge in Isabela province is nearing completion, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported Thursday.

DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon said the construction of the structure is 89 percent complete.

He noted that they are looking to open it to light vehicles in March, in response to the order of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to immediately repair the damaged bridge to resolve the disruption of livelihoods and public services in the area.

On Feb. 27, 2025, span 3 of the bridge, measuring 60 meters, collapsed when a loaded dump truck

that exceeded the 45-ton weight limit attempted to cross, injuring at least six people and damaging several vehicles.

The structure was completed on Feb. 1, 2025. The project cost PHP1.22 billion, and construction began in November 2014. Meanwhile, Dizon went to Sitio Akliyan, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro on Feb. 19 to inspect the situation of the viral patchwork makeshift bridge and plan the construction of a concrete, durable, and safer crossing for residents.

Earlier, the President ordered the repair of hanging bridges in remote areas nationwide to ensure the safety of residents living near rivers and other low-lying areas. **(PNA) BY FERDINAND PATINIO**

## GSIS ROLLS OUT 'GINHAWA GO' MICRO-LOAN PROGRAM FOR GOV'T WORKERS

**MANILA** – The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) on Thursday formally launched Ginhawa Go, a short-term micro-loan facility designed to provide government employees with quick, secure and affordable access to cash for urgent needs.

GSIS President and General Manager Jose Arnulfo Veloso described the program as a “loan on the go” meant to be “convenient, quick, and secure.”

“Napakalinaw ng purpose nito, pantawid with financial dignity, a bridge for small, urgent needs (Its purpose is very clear — it is bridge financing with financial dignity, a bridge for small, urgent needs),” Veloso said.

He said the program was developed to address gaps in access to short-term and transitional credit among government workers.

“Ang Ginhawa Go ay isang pantawid na pautang para sa agarang pangangailangan ng pinansyal ng ating mga miyembro. Idinisenyo ito upang magbigay ng mabilis at maginhawang tulong sa panahong kinakailangan, na may makatuwiran at abot-kayang hulugan upang hindi mabigatan ang nagbabayad (Ginhawa Go is a bridge loan for the urgent financial needs of our members. It is designed to provide fast and convenient assistance when needed, with reasonable and affordable instalments so that borrowers will not be overburdened),” Veloso said.

Finance Secretary Frederick Go, who delivered the keynote message, underscored the importance of accessible microcredit in preventing workers from falling into debt traps.

“The truth is nobody wakes up one day and says can I borrow a million pesos. Everybody starts with a small loan. And that small loan, because of predatory lending rates, grow, and grow, and grow so that

one day you wake up, you started with a ‘payday loan’ and you end up with a massive amount of loan that you cannot imagine how you will ever repay. That is how important this microloan program is,” Go said.

GSIS Board Chairperson Rodolfo del Rosario Jr., in his opening remarks, said the initiative recognizes the immediate credit needs of members.

“This program is a recognition that our members need quick and immediate access to credit to manage their finances. Ginhawa Go is GSIS’ answer to this need by promoting a financial product suited to its members,” he said.

Loan features Under Ginhawa Go, members may avail of loan amounts starting at PHP1,000, PHP2,000, PHP3,000, or PHP4,000, payable within 30, 60, or 90 days. For higher loan needs, members may borrow PHP5,000 to PHP50,000, with repayment periods of three, six, 12, 18, or 24 months.

The micro-loan tier allows borrowing in multiples of PHP1,000, repayable in one to three months, while the standard tier covers loans in multiples of PHP5,000 with longer repayment terms.

Interest is set at 6 percent per annum for members with at least three years of paid premium contributions, and 7 percent per annum for those with less than three years of contributions and special members.

As shown in the amortization schedule, a PHP1,000 loan payable in 30 days at 6 percent carries a monthly amortization of PHP1,005, while the same amount payable in 60 days requires PHP505 per month.

Interest and applicable fees, including a 1-percent service fee and Loan Redemption Insurance (LRI), are deducted upfront. The LRI ensures that in case of death or

## KOREA EASES VISA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FILIPINOS

**MANILA** – The Korean Embassy has waived the requirement to submit three months’ worth of bank statements for visa applications.

The Korean Visa Application Center (KVAC) Philippines said the move aims to make the process more convenient and encourage visits to Korea.

“For all types of required documents, the submission of three months of bank statements will be waived, [effective February 20, 2026],” it said Thursday.

Student applicants may submit either the original School Certificate or a copy of their Student ID.

The requirement to submit an explanation letter for employment-related documents is also waived if no landline number is indicated or if the document bears an electronic signature.

“As long as other reachable contact information (email address or mobile phone number) is provided, the document will be accepted,” KVAC said.

Common documents such as invitation letters, family relationship papers and company-related documents for multiple applicants must be submitted in a single copy and attached to the representative applicant’s file.

KVAC opened in 2023 to meet growing visa demand amid a surge in travel between South Korea and the Philippines.

Located at the Brittany Hotel in Taguig City, KVAC accepts applications for all visa types and releases visas and passports reviewed by the Korean Embassy in Manila. **(PNA) BY JOYCE ANN L. ROCAMORA**

## 7 AIRLINES NOW PART OF DIGITAL ROLLOUT AT NAIA

**MANILA** – Seven carriers have so far integrated their systems into the automated passenger processing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), the airport operator announced on Thursday.

total permanent disability, the unpaid balance will not be passed on to the borrower’s family.

The loan is open to active members with at least one month of paid premium contributions and may be applied for exclusively through the GSIS Touch mobile application. Loan proceeds are e-credited within 24 to 36 hours upon approval by the Authorized Approving Officer.

GSIS said the program replaces Ginhawa Lite and is expected to benefit newly hired employees, low-income earners, and members with limited borrowing history whose needs are not fully addressed by traditional loan products. **(PNA) BY WILNARD BACELONIA**

The phased digital rollout enables passengers to check in, print boarding passes, tag their bags, clear initial security, and board flights through automated lanes, reducing queuing times and congestion at traditional counters.

A phased activation of the automated bag drop feature is also ongoing, the New NAIA Infra Corp. (NNIC) said.

The NNIC added that the automated processing has been available for the following airlines and passenger categories:

Terminal 1  
-Philippine Airlines: international destinations, excluding Middle East and Japan routes

-Asiana Airlines: Korean nationals and foreign passengers with no visa requirements

Terminal 2  
-Philippine Airlines: all domestic destinations

-Cebu Pacific: all domestic destinations

-AirAsia: all domestic destinations

## 2 QC MALL TERMINAL OPERATORS CITED FOR LACK OF NECESSARY FACILITIES

**MANILA** – The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Thursday summoned the representatives of public utility vehicle (PUV) terminals in two malls in Quezon City for lacking the necessary facilities for passengers.

In a statement on Thursday, LTFRB Chair Vigor Mendoza II said show cause orders (SCO) have been issued to the operators and managers of the PUV terminals in Ayala Malls Cloverleaf and Trinoma due to lapses in safety and passenger comfort.

“Our message is clear: it is either you step up and fix what needs to be fixed to ensure compliance, or face the consequences for taking for granted the passengers whom you are

supposed to serve well,” Mendoza said.

He noted that the LTFRB’s inspection of PUV terminals is a nationwide operation and will be done regularly as a “new normal.”

The LTFRB’s crackdown against illegal PUV terminals is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s order to improve the country’s transport sector.

The SCOs issued have LTFRB personnel found that the PUV terminal at the Ayala Mall Cloverleaf has insufficient roofing to protect passengers, inadequate benches, no clear guidelines on trips and dispatching and no information and passenger assistance counters.

The terminal operator was also ordered to seek the necessary permit from the local government to operate and to create a security plan.

On the other hand, the operator of the PUV terminal at the Trinoma Mall was cited for having no information and passenger assistance counters, a lack of comfortable seats for waiting passengers, and priority lanes for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

The representatives of these terminals were ordered to appear before the LTFRB in a hearing on March 18.

The LTFRB is scheduled to hold a public consultation meeting on bus and other PUV terminals on Friday as part of the agency’s crackdown against insufficient facilities in transport terminals.

The consultation will focus on terminal requirements, accreditations, and the sharing of best practices that can be adopted and replicated. **(PNA) BY RAYMOND CARL DELA CRUZ**

routes will be included in the coming months as integration work continues, the NNIC said. **(PNA) BY MA. CRISTINA ARAYATA**

Passengers on eligible flights are encouraged to use the self-check-in kiosks located near the check-in areas of each terminal.

More airlines and

## LANDBANK ROLLS OUT AGRISENSO PLUS LENDING TO ARMERS, FISHERFOLK

**BAIS CITY, Negros Oriental (PIA)** — The LandBank of the Philippines (LBP) rolled out its Agrisenso Plus Lending Program in this province, promising a simplified application process and a low annual interest rate to help farmers and fisherfolk finance their agricultural ventures.

Over 2,000 farmers and fisherfolk in Negros Oriental participated in the program's launching held in the city gymnasium last Feb. 12.

LandBank President and Chief Executive Officer Lynette Ortiz said the program offers easy, accessible, and convenient financing for agricultural workers.

"Sa una, you would have to fill out mga 12 pages (application forms). Now it's just one page. Second, you need to be registered with the RSBSA. Ang among interest sa inyo subong we made it even lower. It's now three percent," Ortiz said.

(Before you need to fill out 12 application forms. Now it's just one page. Second, you must be registered with the RSBSA and we made the interest rate for you now at three percent.) RSBSA refers to the Registry of Systems for Basic Sectors in Agriculture of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

LBP Executive Vice President for National Development Lending Sector Charlotte Conde added that they have simplified the application process and reduced the number of requirements in response to the clamor of farmers and fisherfolk for a faster and smoother process in availing of financing programs.

Conde said the amount that can be borrowed will depend on the proposal.

"Kani gi-cover man gud ang tanang crops na naa sa lugar na ilang itanom. Depende sa project. Kung palay naay certain amount, sugarcane lahi pod. Pwede

pod ni siya og Capex (capital expenditures) like palit sila og farm equipment, depende sa ilahang i-submit," Conde said.

(This covers all crops that they can plant. The amount also depends on the project. If they are going to use it for palay production, they can borrow a certain amount. It's also different for sugarcane. Aside from that, it can also be used for Capex. Then use it to buy farm equipment. It really depends on what they submit.)

LBP's Agrisenso Plus can also finance the improvement of fish ponds, procurement of fishing boats, cages, and other equipment for fisheries, and also fish fingerlings. Livestock farmers can also loan to improve or build facilities, purchase feeds, and biologics or medicines for their livestock animals. Ortiz hopes that through the Agrisenso Plus Program, farmers and fisherfolk will no longer need loan sharks because LBP is here to help them improve their livelihood.

Some farmers who attended the event expressed interest in the said program.

Belmar De Baguio of the Bago Farmers Association in Tayasan town is thinking of venturing into livestock production under the program.

"Para ka namo na mag-uuma, maengganyo gud mi kay maningkamot mi mag-uuma nga modako ang among ani. Naa ang Agrisenso Plus loan dugang nga pangpuhanan namo sa among panghayupan. Ang three percent na interest rate mas maayo gud na kay kung moadto mi sa uban naay 10 percent gud ang mahatag," Baguio said.

(The program is enticing for farmers because we really want to improve our production. Through this Agrisenso Plus, we can have additional capital, which we can use for

## REFILL STORE IN BAGUIO PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

**BAGUIO CITY (PIA)** — In a highly urbanized city with over 415,000 population in a limited land area, challenges on solid wastes management are enormous.

While local officials of Baguio City continue to strengthen its solid waste management programs and initiatives such as the Ecological Waste Management and Sustainability Fair, community members are also seeking measures to contribute in sustainable development.

28-year-old Elke

livestock. The three percent interest is better because if we go to other credit facilities, they impose 10 percent interest.)

Jenny Deciar, president of My Home, Homeowners' Association in Barangay Candau-ay, Dumaguete City, said the program is also beneficial for small farmers' associations to improve their livelihood.

"Sa ako lantaw isip president pwede mi maka-avail mi ani madugang sa amo program for example sa livestock. Pwede mi mo-avail kanang manukan. Pwede mi maka-avail sa amo utanon kay pwede namo siya mabaligya sa gawas," Deciar said.

(In my view, as president of our association, we can avail this loan for additional livelihood programs, for example, livestock. We can use this to establish a poultry farm or for increasing our vegetable production, which we can sell in the market.)

Aside from granting credit to farmers and fisherfolk, another component of the program engaged them in financial education to help them transform from farmers to agripreneurs, equipped with essential knowledge on financial management. **(JCT/RAL/PIANIR-Negros Oriental) BY ROI LOMOTAN**

Cadangen with her siblings co-founded the Tingi Station, a refill store located at the Maharlika Livelihood Center with two branches in the city.

The concept was developed in 2020 after they observed the increasing volume of plastic waste in the city.

An incubatee of the Department of Science and Technology-UP Baguio Social Innovation Laboratory and Business Inclusion (SILBI-TBI), Cadangen innovated the Automated Tingi Machine. This solar-powered vending machine dispenses household essentials like dishwashing liquid, shampoo, and conditioner in "tingi" (small) quantities, reducing or avoiding single-use plastics. They opened the first store in 2022, offering an alternative for residents to purchase daily essentials without additional wastes.

Customers are encouraged to bring their own containers and buy products such as soaps, teas, spices, home care items, and even pet treats in smaller portions, in their store.

"Dito kasi kami lumaki sa Baguio, we have seen the changes throughout the years. Kung paano nag-increase ang basura especially plastics, so we were inspired by the other stores from abroad, from Manila from other cities around the Philippines," Cadangen said.

"I just wanted to contribute to show a practical solution to this growing problem. So, it's really we're trying to give a solution now sa plastic pollution that we were suffering from especially dito sa Baguio na walang landfill, so lahat ng trash tina-transport outside Baguio so it costs a hundreds of millions a year," she explained.

Some customers note that the system offers both environmental and

## POLICE OFFICE SUSTAINS DAVAO CITY NIGHT PATROLS

**DAVAO CITY** — Nighttime, anti-criminality patrols conducted by the Davao City Police Office will be sustained and intensified.

"Mula nang ito'y ating inilunsad, nakita natin last year sabi may kulang tayo so this year pina-sustain and intensify natin ang

economic advantages.

"Dito, puwede kang bumili ng konti lang without producing plastic waste," one customer said.

"100% important ito because if we look at the environment, it's actually getting degraded. Para ma-sustain natin ang livable environment, kailangan mag-adopt tayo ng practices that would lessen waste," he added. Beyond retail operations, the store sources many of its products from local suppliers that are open to reduced or reusable packaging arrangements. This creates opportunities for small-scale producers to align with environmentally responsible practices.

Cadangen hopes that the local government unit further pursues support for sustainable businesses.

"The duty of the LGU right now is really to enable businesses like this to survive. If there are clearer policies and stronger support on regulating plastic consumption, it would really help businesses like ours grow," Cadangen said.

The Tingi Station was awarded first place in the Circular Economy Category at the Grassroots Innovation and Circular Economy (GICE) Expo in Davao City on November 12, 2024.

The GICE Expo 2024 is being conducted as part of the Regional Science, Technology and Innovations Week that the DOST annually organizes to highlight the critical role of science, technology and innovations in the development of the society. **(CVBT-PIA-CAR w/ BSU Intern Abegail Refuerzo) By PIA-CAR**

Oplan Ronda sa lahat ng area sa 14 police stations sa kanilang AOR (Area of Responsibility)," says DCPO acting Director P/ Col. Mannan C. Muarip.

(Since we started, we saw last year there was something lacking, so this year we sustained and intensified our Oplan Ronda to the AOR of the 14 police stations.)

Oplan Ronda is a patrol conducted by personnel of the Davao City Police Office, which aside from the respective police stations is also participated by Police Mobile Force Companies. The patrol is held during 9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. During some of the night patrols, Col. Muarip would join the roving policemen. The acting police city director said they have been able to net several ordinance offenders during the patrols.

"Nakita natin ang oplan ronda on a daily basis from 9 p.m. to almost 4 a.m. more or less ang dami nating city ordinance na nabibigyan natin ng citation tickets ang mga violations," Muarip said.

(We saw during the conduct of Oplan Ronda on a daily basis from 9 p.m. to almost 4 a.m. more or less we have issued many citation tickets to violations of city ordinances.)

Col. Muarip also said that they were able to discover a drug den during their roving operations in Isla Verde, a seaside informal community.

"Meron tayong nahuli na isang drug den, actual on the spot, akala nila walang police dahil almos 12 midnight na yun at maulan-ulan," Muarip recalled.

(We caught one drug den, actually on the spot, they thought there were no policemen, as it was 12 midnight and it was raining.)

Oplan Ronda, ensures police visibility and enhances readiness of operating units during late evenings until the wee hours of the morning. **(PIA/RGA) BY RUDOLPH ALAMA**

## DTI EYES AT LEAST 15 TRADE SHOWS IN NCR FOR 2026

**MANILA** – Some 15 trade shows are being considered by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for the National Capital Region (NCR) alone this year to further help micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Last year, 13 trade shows resulted in sales of PHP668 million.

In an interview after the ceremonial ribbon-cutting ceremony for the National Trade Fair at SM Megatrade Hall in Mandaluyong City on Thursday, DTI Secretary Cristina Roque said sales this year will depend on the actual trade fairs and venues.

"The target is for more MSMEs to join the trade shows, whether locally or globally," she said.

Roque said the DTI has already assisted almost a million MSMEs with the help of mall owners who offer venues.

She said President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is pushing for sustained growth of the MSMEs,

given their large share to the domestic economy. MSMEs account for 99.6 percent of business establishments in the country and 64 percent of the labor force, she said.

In terms of export destinations for MSME products, Roque said they are optimistic for additional demand from countries with which the Philippines has free trade agreement discussions, such as with the European Union, and expanded trade deals, including the Japan-based discount store Don Quijote, which is open to accept Filipino-made products.

She said halal-based products are also being looked into as among the products to be produced by local MSMEs once compliance and regulations have been determined with the help of officials from Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates.

"We really need to be strategic where our growth will be," she added. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

## LIFE INSURANCE FIRM INTRODUCES NEW PRODUCT FOR AFFLUENT SEGMENT

**MANILA** – Pru Life UK is addressing demand for more protection options with a simplified process by introducing the PRUMillion Protect, intended for affluent and high-income segment.

The product, launched on Wednesday, allows policy holders to get hold of insurance protection with investment-linked plan payable in two years only, but provides coverage of up to five times the base annual premium or 105 percent of the fund value, whichever is higher.

Minimum placement level is PHP250,000, and premium payment can be done monthly, but only for those with an initial placement of PHP500,000. "This, in a way, provides an alternative to those who are looking for really short-term commitment, whether those for five-day or single-pay (products)," Pru Life

UK Chief Product Officer Garen Dee, in a briefing in Taguig City, said.

Dee explained that this product is an improved version of their PRUMillion Flex, which was offered for a limited time since 2024.

She said they are eyeing to make this product a driver of their goal to have one million individual account holders by the end of this year.

Demand for protection products has been rising, especially after people realized the need to ensure protection for life and their assets when the pandemic hit, and because of the volatility, according to Pru Life UK chief investment officer Princess Balingit. She, however, noted that with the volatility, people looked for products with guarantees for their investments.

She said it is the customers, on the other hand, who can

## BSP CUTS KEY RATES ANEW TO HELP BOOST DOMESTIC GROWTH

**MANILA** – Citing the need to spur growth after weaker-than-expected output in 2025, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) Monetary Board on Thursday cut key policy rates by another 25 basis points.

The move brought the target reverse repurchase (RRP) rate to 4.25 percent, the overnight deposit rate to 3.75 percent, and the overnight lending rate to 4.75 percent.

Since August 2024, the BSP has reduced rates by a total of 225 basis points as inflation remains manageable.

BSP Governor Eli Remolona said inflation is projected to rise this year and move closer to the 3 percent target next year "due largely to supply-side factors."

"While these factors are largely temporary, they will require continued vigilance with regard to possible lower effects," he said, noting that "inflation expectations remain well anchored."

"Our decision today may actually help to

restore confidence, boosting investment and consumption. The pace of economic recovery will depend on how quickly confidence returns. As always, policy decisions will be driven by the data we have at the time we make those decisions," he added.

BSP Deputy Governor Zeno Abenoja said inflation is expected to average 3.6 percent this year, up from the 3.2 percent forecast in December. The 2027 projection was also raised to 3.2 percent from 3 percent.

He attributed the higher forecasts to the rice tariff mechanism's impact on domestic prices and rising oil costs, among other factors.

Because these are mostly supply-side pressures, "the impact may not be persistent," he said.

"It could fade away after some period of time. Maybe, just one of course, there could be some what is called the base effects also playing, particularly for the first half of 2020," he added. **(PNA) BY JOANN**

## PH BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT NARROWS TO \$373M IN JANUARY

**MANILA** – The Philippines posted a USD373 million balance of payments (BOP) deficit in January 2026, narrower than the USD827 million shortfall

in December and the USD4.078 billion deficit a year earlier, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) reported Thursday.

The BOP measures a country's total transactions with the rest of the world over a given period. Gross international reserves (GIR) rose to USD112.6 billion in January, enough to cover 7.5 months of imports of goods and payments of services, the BSP said.

This exceeds the international benchmark of three to four months of import cover. Jonathan Ravelas, senior adviser at Reyes Tacandong & Co., said the deficit stemmed from imports outpacing exports. "That reflects strong domestic demand and

## PSEI RISES ANEW; PESO SLIPS AFTER BSP RATE CUT

**MANILA** – The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) sustained its rise for the second consecutive day Thursday, but the Philippine peso corrected against the U.S. dollar.

The local bourse's main index rose 0.19 percent to 6,407.15 points, and the broader All Shares by 0.15 percent to 3,547.32 points. Most of the sectoral indices tracked the main index, led by the Mining and Oil after it rose 3.76 percent. It was tracked by the Industrial, 1.20 percent; Holding Firms, 0.60 percent; and Financials, 0.06 percent.

On the other hand, Property declined by 0.86 percent and Services, 0.06 percent.

Volume reached 927.7 million shares, amounting to PHP5.26 billion.

Advancers led decliners at 119 to 89, while 55 shares were unchanged

On the other hand, the local currency weakened to 57.99 to a U.S. dollar from its 57.86 close Wednesday. It opened the day at 57.88, stronger than its 57.94 start in the previous session.

It traded between its opening level and 58, bringing the day's average to 57.96.

Volume reached USD1.6 billion, higher than day-ago's USD1.05 billion.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation chief economist Michael Ricafort, in a report, traced the peso's performance to the widely expected 25 basis points cut in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) key rates during the day.

He noted that the statement issued after the BSP decision is "less hawkish" since the latest statement dropped "the previous statement that the BSP may be near the end of its monetary easing cycle (which caused the recent peso appreciation vs. the US dollar."

This, he said, "could still signal possible future BSP rate cuts, especially if the (US) Fed (Federal Reserve) cuts rates later in 2026." **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**

infrastructure spending, while global demand for our exports — and services like BPO (business process outsourcing) and tourism — has been softer," he said.

Ravelas added that the latest figure "isn't a crisis signal; it's a growth-related deficit, and our external buffers remain solid."

"Looking ahead, the BOP will likely stay in the red in the near term but should stabilize as exports recover, tourism reforms gain traction. The key now is to boost export competitiveness and attract more long-term investments, rather than overreacting to the headline number," he said. Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation

chief economist Michael Ricafort attributed the narrower deficit partly to the "proceeds of the USD2.75 billion Philippine government global bond/ROP (Republic of the Philippines) bond issuance that was settled on January 27, 2026."

"For the coming months, BOP data would improve further if anti-corruption measures and other reform measures, especially in further leveling up the country's governance standards, are taken seriously, just like 10-15 years ago, as these help further improve international investor sentiment/confidence on the country that would increase foreign investment inflows into the country," he said. **(PNA) BY JOANN VILLANUEVA**



## UE, UST TRIUMPH IN UAAP BOYS' BASKETBALL

**MANILA** – University of the East (UE) and University of Santo Tomas (UST) scored contrasting victories Wednesday in the UAAP Season 88 boys' basketball tournament at the Filoil Centre in San Juan.

The Junior Warriors clobbered the University of the Philippines Integrated School Fighting Maroons, 94-61, while the Tiger Cubs beat Adamson University, 75-73, to create a logjam for fourth place.

UE, UST and Adamson now have similar 4-6 win-loss records.

Jamal Diaz finished with 20 points, six rebounds, and three assists for the Junior Warriors, who took a 60-28 lead at halftime.

Eoin Braga chipped in 14 points while JM Edoukou, cousin of former UAAP MVP Angelo Kouame, had 10 points and five rebounds. "We already lost two games in the second round. Painful games, but we're still positive. We are not out of the woods yet, so right now, we want to keep on improving," UE head coach Karl Santos said.

"We need to minimize our mistakes. Again, I'm not asking for perfection—I'm just asking for consistency, for effort. Of course, sharpness and focus will always be necessary. We need that to win."

Justin Hallare had 21 points and six rebounds followed by Bruce

Tubongbawa with 17 points and five rebounds for the winless Fighting Maroons. Meanwhile, Kirk Canete scored 14 points to go with six rebounds, five assists, and two steals for the Tiger Cubs, who led 44-33 at halftime.

Nigerian center Ola Ajani had 11 points and 16 rebounds, while Jetlee Melano contributed 11 points and seven rebounds. Adamson rallied in the fourth quarter, moving to within 73-75 after Fran Flores sank a triple with 12 seconds remaining. The Baby Falcons managed a defensive stop afterward but could not get a shot off as time expired.

"We really needed this win to keep our dream of the Final Four alive, but I was not happy with the way we

played, especially in the fourth quarter. If we want to make it to the Final Four, we need to play better," head coach Manu Inigo said after UST won three of its last five games.

"Again, our problem is the fourth quarter and it showed again in this game," Inigo said, recalling a similar issue in their 79-70 first-round win over Adamson. "We will talk about it and we'll see what the problem is."

Artango led Adamson with 18 points, four rebounds, three assists, and four steals, while Flores had 14 points, including three triples. Keefe Iledan added 11 points and 10 rebounds, and Noah Bautista made 10 points and nine rebounds. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



**STANDOUT.** Jamal Diaz led University of the East to a 94-61 victory over University of the Philippines Integrated School in the UAAP Season 88 boys' basketball tournament at the Filoil Centre in San Juan on Wednesday (Feb. 18, 2026). He finished with 20 points, six rebounds and three assists. (UAAP photo)

## UP SINAG RULES PIA CUP 9V9 FOOTBALL IN DUMAGUETE

**MANILA** – UP Sinag ruled the 7th Pinay in Action (PIA) Cup 9v9 football tournament after beating UP Alon, 3-0, at Gov. Mariano Perdiges Memorial Coliseum in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

Futboleras FC placed third in the three-day, 20-team event that ended Sunday. UP Sinag's Hannah Marie Muros was named Most Valuable Player while

teammates Julian Arrojado (Best Goalkeeper) and Florence Ycong (Best Defender) also received recognitions.

UP Alon's Kylle Franklyn Moreno (Best Midfielder) and Aurea Collenn Reaso (Best Striker), and Pamplona de Pontevedra Football Club (Fair Play) likewise shone in the tournament held in partnership with the Philippine Sports

Commission, provincial government, Negros Oriental State University and Negros Oriental-Siquijor Regional Football Association.

The 9v9 football is a transitional and small-sided format to develop tactical awareness, spatial understanding and prepare the players for the full 11v11 game. **(JEAN MALALUM/PNA)**

## PH'S PROULX READY TO COMPETE IN WINTER OLYMPICS WOMEN'S SLALOM

**MANILA** – Filipino-American Tallulah Proulx sees action in the women's slalom on Wednesday as the Philippines wraps up its short stint in the 25th Winter Olympics in Italy.

The 17-year-old Proulx will return to the Tofane Alpine Skiing Center in Cortina for a morning run and hopefully a second one.

Last Sunday, Proulx finished 52nd out of 76 entries with an aggregate time of 2:41.62 in the giant slalom event. She clocked 1:17.15 in the morning then 1:24.47 in the afternoon.

Italian Federica Brignone won the event in 2:13.50. Swedish Sara Hector and Norwegian Thea St. Jernesund finished the race in 2:14.12 and were awarded the silver medals.

"I'm looking forward to my next event. I'm excited," said Proulx, who was born in the United States. She began representing the Philippines in August 2024. Francis Ceccarelli landed 54th among 81 entries, and was fourth best among Asians in men's giant slalom last Saturday. He couldn't handle the rough conditions in his event last Monday.

Visibility was so poor. It was so testy that after the morning run, the field of 96 was almost cut in half. By the end of the day, only 39 skiers were able to finish.

Lucas Pinheiro, who ruled the giant slalom and gave Brazil its first gold medal in the Winter Olympics, were among those who crashed out in the morning.

Loic Meillard of Sweden, bronze winner in giant slalom, came back strong to win the gold with an aggregate time of 1:53.62, Fabio Gstrein of Austria the silver at 1:53.96 and Henrik Kristoffersen of Norway at 1:54.74.

Five others bombed out in the afternoon session. In the slalom races of alpine skiing, entries must finish two runs, with their combined clockings determining their placing.

Ceccarelli, born in Quezon

City and now based in Italy, came out strong, and managed to get past 10 of at 55 gates, which are tighter and closer compared to giant slalom, before he fell to his right.

"This sport is not very easy. Slalom is really difficult. But next time, I will work harder," said the 22-year-old Ceccarelli, adding the conditions in the morning were harsh but never really complained.

"I'm really happy. But this sport is very hard," said Ceccarelli, who is based in Abetone in Tuscany with his Italian parents. He will compete Turkey next month. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



**READY.** Tallulah Proulx, the first Filipina to compete in the Winter Olympics, will see action in slalom at Tofane Alpine Skiing Center in Cortina, Italy on Wednesday (Feb. 18, 2026). The 17-year-old is one of the youngest in the field. (Contributed photo)

## GAUFF ENDS EALA'S RUN AT DUBAI TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

**MANILA** – Coco Gauff lived up to her status as world No. 4, ending Alexandra Eala's run with a 6-0, 6-2 victory in the WTA 1000 Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships quarterfinals early Friday morning (PH time) in the United Arab Emirates.

The third-seeded American needed only one hour and seven minutes to beat the Filipino star, who ousted sixth seed Jasmine Paolini of Italy, 6-1, 7-6(5), in the second round. Gauff will face the winner between No. 7 seed Elina Svitolina of Ukraine and Antonia Ruzic of Croatia in the semifinals.

Jessica Pegula of the United States, seeded fourth, also advanced after defeating No. 12 seed Clara Tauson of Denmark, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.

Pegula, ranked No. 5 in the world, will battle second-seeded compatriot Amanda Anisimova, who conquered fifth seed Mirra Andreeva of Russia, 2-6, 7-5, 7-6(4).

In the doubles, Laura Siegemund of Germany and Vera Zvonareva toppled No. 7 seeds Storm Hunter of Australia and

Katerina Siniakova of Czech Republic, 7-6(4), 6-4, to reach the Final Four. They will face the winner between Chan Hao-Ching of Chinese Taipei and Tauson, and Romanians Jaqueline Cristian and Elena-Gabriela Ruse.

Fourth seeds Anna Danilina of Kazakhstan and Aleksandra Krunic of Serbia won over Lyudmyla

Kichenok of Ukraine and Desirae Krawczyk of the US, 6-1, 4-6, 10-6, to advance to the semis against No. 5 seeds Gabriela Dabrowski of Canada and Luisa Stefani of Brazil.

Dabrowski and Stefani survived Guiliana Olmos of Mexico and Pegula, 6-2, 4-6, 14-12. **(PNA) BY JEAN MALANUM**



**OUT.** Filipino Alexandra Eala prepares to serve in the WTA 1000 Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in the United Arab Emirates. She lost to third seed American Coco Gauff, 0-6, 2-6, in the quarterfinals early Friday morning (Feb. 20, 2026; PH time). (Photo courtesy of Mosh Lafuente)