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MAYON VOLCANO UNREST ELEVATES

MANILA – The level of unrest in Mayon Volcano has increased, particularly at its summit or surface level, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported on Tuesday.

In an interview with the Philippine News Agency, Phivolcs Director Teresito Bacolcol said the near-doubling of rockfall events—from 44 recorded between Jan. 4 and 5 to 85 between Jan. 5 and 6—indicates increasing instability at the volcano's summit, a condition

commonly associated with magma rising from below.

The Phivolcs recorded incandescent rockfall from the summit lava dome on Monday night.

An incandescent rockfall involves hot material that appears glowing, especially at night. This indicates that the rocks came from the hot portions of the summit lava dome or from newly exposed volcanic material.

On the other hand, an ordinary rockfall refers to the collapse

or rolling of rock fragments from steep parts of the volcano due to gravity or instability.

Bacolcol said this could happen when the material is already cool and does not necessarily involve heat from magma.

In terms of implications, ordinary rockfalls mainly indicate mechanical or structural instability, while incandescent rockfalls could signify the presence of heat and pressurized material near the summit, pointing to active magmatic influence.

Pag-IBIG: 3% loan rate amid higher socialized housing price caps

MANILA – The government approved higher price ceilings for socialized subdivision and condominium projects, while the Pag-IBIG Fund continues to offer subsidized housing loan rates under the Expanded Pambansang Pabahay para sa Filipino (4PH) Program.

In a news release on Tuesday, the state-run housing finance

agency said the updated price ceilings are meant to reflect current construction cost conditions and enable developers to deliver improved housing quality and safer standards.

The new price ceilings were issued under the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban De-



velopment (DHSUD) and the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) Joint Mem-

DSWD's livelihood program benefits 235K vulnerable Filipinos in 2025

MANILA – The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), one of the core development initiatives of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), has provided livelihood opportunities to 235,074 beneficiaries as of Nov. 30, 2025.

The program helps provide livelihood opportunities to qualified vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors in Philippine society, supporting the DSWD's mandate to bring development to those who need it most.

“The Sustainable

Livelihood Program (SLP) is among the primary programs of the department, addressing its mandate to provide development, hindi lang puro welfare or ayuda (not just welfare or assistance),” Assistant Secretary Irene Dumlao (Turn to p. 2)



ELEVATED UNREST. Incandescent rockfall shed from the summit lava dome of Mayon Volcano at 10:46 p.m. Monday (Jan. 5, 2026). Alert Level 2 prevails, and entry into the six-km permanent danger zone must be prohibited. (Screenshot from Phivolcs video)

Bacolcol said the earlier rockfall events could include incandescent rockfalls.

However, most of these have occurred during daytime, thus, personnel could not

clearly see whether these were incandescent.

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goal is clear. Filipino workers should have access to homes that are safe, decent and built to last, and that remain within their reach,” DHSUD Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling said.

Aliling noted that updating the price ceilings aligns project prices with prevailing costs, allowing developers to sustain construction while

improving the quality of socialized housing units.

He said it strengthens the housing industry's capacity to deliver homes at scale while keeping affordability at the core of the Expanded 4PH program.

Under the IRR, the maximum selling price for socialized house and lot units was raised to PHP844,440 for a (Turn to p. 2)

orandum Circular No. 2025-001.

“Under President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s housing agenda, our

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"They will just appear as black or ordinary rocks falling. There were likely rockfall events at night as well, but these may not have been observed as incandescent because the summit was covered by clouds," Bacolcol explained.

"The recent rockfall events were clearly observed as incandescent rockfall since they occurred at night. This suggests that some of the earlier rockfall events may also have involved hot material."

At present, even though Mayon Volcano's seismicity remains low, the increas-

ing trend in rockfalls, along with deformation, indicates elevated unrest, Bacolcol pointed out.

Mayon Volcano is under Alert Level 2, and entry into the six-km permanent danger zone (PDZ) is strictly prohibited.

"For those residing inside the PDZ, be ready to evacuate immediately if the alert level is raised to Alert Level 3," the Phivolcs chief said.

He also advised the public to rely only on official advisories from the Phivolcs and local government units. (PNA)

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minimum unit size of 24 to 26 square meters, and PHP950,000 for units measuring 27 square meters and above.

For socialized condominium projects, price ceilings were likewise adjusted based on building classification and unit size, with maximum selling prices set at up to PHP1.8 million for projects above five floors with unit sizes of 27 square meters and above.

For eligible socialized condominium projects in the National Capital Region and other highly urbanized cities, the IRR allows additional charges based on the zonal value of up to PHP200,000, bringing the allowable maximum selling price for select categories to as high as PHP2 million.

Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Marilene Acosta said the Fund will continue to support the Expanded 4PH by

maintaining affordable housing loan terms for qualified members, in line with the Marcos administration's thrust to expand access to homeownership.

"Our strong fiscal position allows us to continue offering subsidized rates under the Expanded 4PH so our members can truly achieve their dream of owning a home," Acosta said.

She added that Pag-IBIG Fund will work closely with housing stakeholders, including partner developers, to help accelerate housing unit production and loan takeouts under the program.

Under the Pag-IBIG Housing Loan for the Expanded 4PH, qualified members may avail of loans at a subsidized interest rate of three percent for the first five years, extendible for another five years for eligible borrowers.

DSWD's... FR. P. 1

said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Ang SLP ang matibay nating programa na nagsusuporta sa ating kagustuhang mabigyan ng development opportunities ang ating mga kababayang nasa sektor na vulnerable (The SLP is a solid program that supports our desire to bring development opportunities to the vulnerable sectors of society)."

Dumlao said the SLP provides two primary tracks for beneficiaries, such as the Microenterprise Development (MD) track, which supports the start-up and growth of small businesses.

Last yvcgear, 200,704 beneficiaries were served under the pathway.

The second pathway is the Employment Facilitation (EF) track, wherein beneficiaries are provided with training and the necessary logistical assistance to help find jobs.

With the two tracks, the SLP is implemented in strategic phases to ensure that beneficiaries are prepared for long-term livelihood assistance and are not given just a token one-time aid.

The five-year Livelihood Sustainability Plan is a five-phase approach that aims to

provide a ladderized and systematic series of interventions for program participants toward resilient livelihood activities.

This approach begins with "Punla/Seeding," wherein program participants are capacitated with basic skills and knowledge in business management and building rapport in workplaces.

This is followed by "Usbong/Sprout" and "Sibol/Budding," which are focused on close provision of capacity-building and partnership linkages.

In the last phase of the strategic approach, "Yabong/Fruition" and "Ani/Harvesting," the program participants are expected to manage their projects with minimal assistance.

"The five-phase approach is also important to us, as livelihood beneficiaries are continuously monitored and provided with technical assistance so that we ensure that their livelihood projects become sustainable. Hindi po natin sila iniwan pag nai-bigay na ang assistance. Patuloy po ang ating pag-monitor sa kanila (We don't leave them upon the provision of assistance. We continue to monitor them)," Dumlao said. (PNA)

Through Pag-IBIG Fund's "Early Bird" promotion, the first 30,000 qualified borrowers may enjoy the subsidized three-percent interest rate for the first 10 years of their housing loan. (PNA)

Gatchalian: Gov't workers' bonuses, pensions intact in 2026 budget

MANILA – Senate Committee on Finance Chairperson Sherwin Gatchalian on Tuesday clarified that bonuses, personnel benefits, and pensions of government workers were not reduced under the 2026 national budget, dismissing claims that these items had been slashed or removed.

Speaking at a press briefing in the Senate, Gatchalian said the Performance-Based Bonus (PBB) allocation remained unchanged between the National Expenditure Program (NEP) and the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

"Ang bonus mabibigay, hindi nabawasan ang bonus. Sa NEP ang performance bonus is PHP27 billion. Ang sa GAA is PHP27 billion din so walang mababawasan na bonus (The bonus will be given, the bonus was

not reduced. Under the NEP, the performance bonus is PHP27 billion, and under the GAA, it is also PHP27 billion, so no bonus will be reduced)," he said.

Gatchalian said the overall allocation for the Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund (MPBF) even increased significantly, explaining that portions were placed under the unprogrammed appropriations (UA) to cover possible additional manpower requirements.

"In fact, yung buong MPBF tumaas pa siya (the entire MPBF even increased)," he said.

He said the MPBF has multiple components, including provisions for hiring additional personnel.

"Kung may plano ang executive na kumuha ng additional manpower... doon sila kukuha

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Cavite sees drop in New Year–related incidents

CITY OF IMUS, Cavite (PIA) — The province of Cavite recorded a decline in holiday-related incidents during the New Year celebrations, according to data from the Cavite Police Provincial Office (PPO).

Acting Provincial Director Col. Ariel Red reported a sharp drop in firecracker- and pyrotechnics-related injuries. Data from the Ligtas Paskuhan campaign showed a 75-percent decrease in incidents, from 36 cases in 2024 to just eight in 2025.

All recorded cases involved firecracker- and pyrotechnics-related injuries. The Cavite PPO reported no incidents of indiscriminate firing, stray bullets, road crashes, or fires linked to fireworks and pyrotechnic devices.

Col. Red attributed the peaceful celebration to



the combined efforts of law enforcers, local government units, and the public.

“The remarkable decrease in incidents during the New Year’s celebration is proof of the effective implementation of the laws and the cooperation of the people,” he said, adding that public discipline played a crucial role in ensuring safety across the province.

The Cavite PPO also

cited intensified operations against illegal firecrackers and loose firearms, heightened police visibility, and close coordination with local government units and the Caviteño community as key factors behind the positive outcome.

The provincial police force extended its gratitude to partner agencies, LGUs, and residents for their continued support in maintaining peace and order. (RBF, PIA Cavite)

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sa MPBF (If the executive plans to hire additional manpower... they will source it from the MPBF),” he said, adding that the transfer to UA was made because the executive branch signaled possible new hires.

Gatchalian said the MPBF allocation rose from PHP39 billion in 2025 to PHP77 billion under the 2026 GAA, nearly doubling year-on-year.

“So, walang katotohanan na mawawala yung bonus. Walang katotohanan yung mga personnel benefits mawawala... Eh dinoble pa natin from 2025 (There is no truth that bonuses will be lost. There is no truth that personnel benefits will be removed... We even doubled it from 2025),” he said.

He added the only possible impact would be on prospective new hires, should the executive decide to expand manpower, noting that

the President’s contingency fund may also be tapped for this purpose.

On pensions, Gatchalian rejected reports of cuts, calling them false.

“Yung pension walang katotohanan na nabawasan yung pension ha, fake news yun (There is no truth that pensions were reduced, that is fake news),” he said.

He said pension allocations under both the NEP and the GAA stand at PHP147 billion.

“Exactly the same. So, hindi ginalaw ang pension amounts (the pension amounts were untouched),” he added, noting that pension funding still increased compared with 2025 levels.



The clarification comes after ACT Teachers Party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio flagged the inclusion of a PHP43.24-billion line item under the unprogrammed appropriations in the bicameral conference committee report, labeled “For Payment of Personnel Services Requirements.”

Tinio earlier claimed the amount matched the reductions made to certain MPBF components and the Pension and Gratuity Fund, warning that placing them under unprogrammed appropriations could make funding uncertain. (PNA)



Cavite holds 4th quarter joint CPPOC, PADAC, PTF-ELCAC council meeting; LGUs honored for excellence in barangay justice and security

The Cavite Provincial Peace and Order Council (CPPOC), Provincial Anti-Drug Abuse Council (PADAC), and Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC) convened their 4th Quarter Joint Meeting on December 17 at The Bayleaf Hotel in the City of General Trias, reaffirming the province’s unified approach to maintaining peace, order, and community security.

Governor Francisco Gabriel “Abeng” Remulla formally called the meeting to order. Afterwards, he led the signing of the PTF-ELCAC’s pledge of recommitment to sustain Cavite’s Stable Internal Peace and Security together with members of the council.

The Provincial Government of Cavite recognized outstanding local government units (LGUs) and barangay peacekeeping personnel for exemplary performance in barangay justice, peacekeeping, and anti-drug initiatives.

Under the 2025 Lupon Tagapamayapa Incentives Award (LTIA) – Municipality Category, the provincial winners were:

Barangay Castaños Cerca, Municipality of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo – 5th Class Municipality

- Barangay San Agustin, Municipality of Magallanes – 4th Class Municipality
- Barangay Talipusungo – 3rd Class Municipality
- Barangay Mahabang Kahoy Lejos, Municipality of Indang – 1st Class Municipality

For the 2025 Lupon Tagapamayapa Incentives Award – Component City Category, the provincial award was conferred on Barangay Maharlika, City of Imus.

The CY 2025 Trailblazers for Outstanding Performance of Barangay Tanods (TOP Barangay Tanod) award was also given to Barangay Maharlika, City of Imus, with Barangay Tanod Joey Garba receiving individual recognition for exemplary service in community peacekeeping.

The councils also took note of the CY 2024 Peace and Order Council (POC) and Anti-Drug Abuse Council (ADAC) Performance Audit, reflecting the collective efforts of LGUs in strengthening local governance mechanisms against criminality and illegal drugs. All 23 LGUs were recognized with varying local POC performance and local ADAC functionality.

Following the awarding ceremonies, the joint councils proceeded with the formal meeting and deliberations. Several joint resolutions of the CPPOC, PADAC, and PTF-ELCAC were presented and approved, covering updates on council membership and meeting schedules, the pursuit of proposed peace and development initiatives, and the utilization of budget allocations as stipulated in the Peace and Order and Public Safety (POPS) Plan.

Major General Ronald Jess Alcudia, Commander of the Reserve Command of the Philippine Army, delivered a directional message urging all stakeholders to remain vigilant, proactive, and closely coordinated to sustain the province’s gains in peace, order, and security.

DILG-Cavite OIC Provincial Director Marcial Juangco also conveyed the agency’s message of support, emphasizing the importance of sustaining peace and order and strengthening coordinated efforts toward ensuring drug-free communities.

PGC extends financial aid to 1,892 Iskolar ng Lalawigan in Naic

The Provincial Government of Cavite through its Provincial Scholarship Program under the leadership of Governor Abeng Remulla, extended financial assistance to 1,892 students during the Iskolar ng Lalawigan ng Cavite educational assistance distribution held recently at Cavite State University–Naic Campus.

Joining Governor Abeng Remulla were Vice Governor Ram Revilla Bautista, Naic Vice Mayor Jacinta Remulla, and 8th District Board Member Jasmin Maligaya Bautista, who expressed their support and reaffirmed their continued commitment to supporting scholars.

Through programs like the Iskolar ng Lalawigan, the Provincial Government of Cavite remains steadfast in investing in the education of the youth, recognizing them as vital partners in building a stronger and more progressive province.

interventions, reaching over 300K beneficiaries

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — Through sustained investments in employment generation, livelihood development, and emergency response, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)-CALABARZON strengthened labor market resilience in 2025 by extending targeted assistance to over 300,000 workers and families, particularly those affected by displacement, informality, and climate-related disasters.

In line with national labor and employment priorities, the regional office released approximately P2.13 billion in employment, livelihood, and emergency assistance to address both immediate income needs and long-term economic recovery. These interventions were strategically designed to expand access to work opportunities, strengthen self-employment, and protect vulnerable workers across the CALABARZON Region.

DOLE Regional Director Erwin N. Aquino, during the agency's general assembly, underscored that these accomplishments were the result of shared responsibility and institutional collaboration, emphasizing that the region's achievements reflect a commitment to excellence grounded in teamwork, innovation, and integrity.

A cornerstone of the region's livelihood initiatives was the implementation of



the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP), which provided P78.50 million in assistance to 4,665 beneficiaries, including 505 parents and guardians of child laborers. The program supported the establishment and enhancement of micro-enterprises through the provision of starter capital, tools, and production inputs, enabling beneficiaries to pursue sustainable income-generating activities and reduce household vulnerability.

Complementing these livelihood efforts, the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers (TUPAD) program served as the region's primary employment safety net. In 2025, TUPAD provided temporary wage employment to 312,400 displaced, underemployed, and disadvantaged workers, with total wage assistance amounting to approximately P1.78 billion. Beneficiaries were engaged in community-based projects implemented in close coordination with local government units, ensuring that employment interventions also contributed to lo-

cal development priorities.

DOLE CALABARZON further intensified its emergency employment response to assist workers and families affected by Typhoons Crising, Dante, and Emong. Through TUPAD, nearly P99 million was allocated to provide short-term employment to 12,120 disaster-affected individuals across Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Cavite, and Laguna. Beneficiaries participated in clean-up, rehabilitation, and recovery activities for a minimum of ten days and received wages based on the region's highest prevailing minimum wage.

To support post-disaster recovery efforts, livelihood assistance under the DILP was likewise expanded, with P11.78 million released to benefit 1,168 affected individuals. The provision of livelihood starter kits and tools enabled families to restore or establish income-generating activities, reinforcing household resilience and contributing to community-level recovery.

The effective implementation of these programs was anchored

Rebound of December '25 manufacturing PMI due to stabilization – exec

MANILA – The country's Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) posted a rebound in December 2025 to 50.2 from the previous month's 47.4 level, which an industry official said is a sign of stabilization, not seasonality.

An index of above 50 indicates expansion, while those below 50 shows otherwise.

In a statement Monday, Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) Chairperson Beth Lee said the 5.9 percent jump of the manufacturing PMI "reflects genuine stabilization rather than Christmas restocking."

"The PMI shows we are back in positive territory—a clear sign of resilience. The challenge and opportunity now is to turn this recovery into lasting industrial strength by investing in innovation, diversification, and resilience," she said.

Lee said the primary factors for the improvement include normalization of factories' operations after the hit from several typhoons last November, the improvement in orders after a slowdown since August, and resumption of purchasing activity

on strong coordination with local government units, partner agencies, and community stakeholders, ensuring that assistance was delivered in a timely, targeted, and responsive manner. This collaborative approach enabled DOLE CALABARZON to align



REBOUND. The Manila South Harbor as photographed on May 8, 2025. The country's manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index rebounded in December 2025 to 50.2 from the month-ago's 47.4 reading, which Federation of Philippine Industries Chairperson Beth Lee on Monday (Jan. 5, 2025) attributed to stabilization after a contraction in the previous month due to calamities. (PNA photo by Yancy Lim)

amidst supply chain challenges.

"Importantly, the rebound was domestically led; as export orders remained subdued at the close of 2025," she said.

"Looking ahead, export growth in 2026 could provide a stronger external tailwind, particularly in electronics, which account for nearly half of Philippine exports. If realized, this export momentum will help sustain PMI readings above 50, signaling broader expansion in the manufacturing sector."

Catalysts for this year include domestic resilience against natural calamities and supply chain shocks, diversification from the current

dual structure of food processing and electronics, and strengthening mid-complexity industries like machinery, chemicals, and wood products "to reduce volatility and broaden employment opportunities."

Lee said the country's manufacturing sector accounts for around 15.7 percent of the domestic economy's annual output, below the regional level of between 22 percent and 27 percent.

This situation, she said, "highlights the urgency of Tatak Piñoy reforms to diversify and deepen industrial capacity, ensuring manufacturing becomes a stronger engine of national

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emergency interventions with broader, long-term development objectives.

As 2026 ushers in, DOLE CALABARZON reaffirms its steadfast commitment to advancing inclusive labor and employment policies by expand-

ing access to decent work, strengthening sustainable livelihood systems, and enhancing social protection mechanisms that empower workers and their families across the CALABARZON Region. (CCM/PIA4A)

CALABARZON's first coconut enterprise subproject to rise in Batangas

LIPA CITY, Batangas (PIA) — Batangas Province will soon become a major player in the country's coconut industry through a P108.32-million coconut oil processing enterprise funded by the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP).

The project is the first enterprise subproject in CALABARZON to be funded under the DA-PRDP Scale-Up project, which provides targeted infrastructure, facilities, technology, and information to raise income, productivity, and competitiveness.

The DA-PRDP tapped the Agricare Multipurpose Cooperative and the Palacpac Malinao San Nicolas Calantas Multipurpose Cooperative for the plant construction, as well as the installation of a coconut oil mill system that will produce high-val-



ue crude coconut oil (CNO) and copra cake for animal feed.

In a press release, the DA-PRDP noted that the project includes a processing facility in Rosario, Batangas, that will help bridge the supply gap for crude coconut oil and copra cake.

"Instead of selling raw coconuts, the project processes copra into high-value CNO and copra cake. This will empower the community to shift from primary production to value-added agro-industry," the DA-PRDP said.

The facility was designed as a local pro-

cessing hub that will consolidate copra from at least 1,207 coconut farmers, increasing the overall copra production in Batangas.

According to the Agricare Multipurpose Cooperative, copra is one of the most in-demand agricultural products in the province, with nine feed mills already committed for product intake.

Furthermore, the DA and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) have committed to providing continuous technical support to the project proponents and the partner copra suppliers. (PB-PIA4A/PRDP Calabarzon)

SC Invites Filipinos to Celebrate Its 125th Anniversary Through Photo Contest



CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS!

The Supreme Court (SC) invites professional photographers, hobbyists, and enthusiasts to be part of its 125th Anniversary Photo Contest with the theme "Accessible and Inclusive Justice."

Capture stories of hope, struggle, and resilience – moments that show what justice looks like in everyday Filipino life. Submit entries in Digital or Film categories and get a chance to be featured in the special SC Photo Exhibit, win cash prizes of up to P125,000, and be recognized at the SC awards ceremony.

Photos must be taken from January 1, 2026 onward.

The deadline for submission is March 31, 2026, with the full contest mechanics to be announced soon.

Let your lens tell the story of justice.

The SC will commemorate its 125th anniversary in 2026—a historic milestone in our nation's enduring commitment to justice and the rule of law. (Courtesy of the SC Office of the Spokesperson)

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growth."

"December's rebound is more than just a number—it is a signal that Philippine manufacturing can recover quickly when demand stabilizes. We are optimistic for this year 2026, banking on the expansion

and implementation of real reforms that affect businesses, together with the strengthening of initiatives like Tatak Pinoy that can build long-term resilience for the country's manufacturing base," she added. (PNA)

The funds will be released directly to qualified large LGU hospitals, similar to the existing zero balance billing system in DOH hospitals, and will not require guarantee letters from politicians.

Further details will

be announced once the DOH receives the official copy of the 2026 General Appropriations Act, which will guide the rollout and operational guidelines of the program.

The zero balance billing initiative is part of

This book of the Law should not depart from your mouth, and you must read it in an undertone day and night, in order to observe carefully all that is written in it; for then your way will be successful and then you will act wisely.

the administration's push to reduce out-of-pocket expenses and improve access to affordable healthcare, particularly for indigent and financially vulnerable patients. (PNA)

P1-B DOH fund to kick off zero balance billing in LGU hospitals

MANILA – The Department of Health (DOH) has earmarked PHP1 billion from its budget to begin the implementation of zero balance billing in selected large hospitals managed by local government units (LGUs).

In a statement on Monday, the DOH said President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. confirmed the allocation, which will be used to reduce patient expenses for basic accommodation to zero in participating LGU hospitals.

The initiative would



expand the government's zero balance billing policy beyond DOH-run facilities.

The DOH said the selection of LGU hospitals that will initially implement the program will be based on their local health systems' maturity lev-

els and other technical preparedness indicators.

These include compliance with eligibility criteria, reporting requirements and operational obligations to ensure the LGU's capacity to sustain the program.

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PFF praises unsung heroes of FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup hosting

MANILA – The Philippine Football Federation (PFF) on Monday praised the people whose dedication, passion, and teamwork transformed the 2025 FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup into a triumph not only for the Philippines but for women's futsal worldwide.

The PFF has expressed its deepest gratitude to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. for the government's invaluable support through the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), headed by Chairperson Patrick Gregorio, the dedicated PSC staff, government personnel, and committed and auxiliary personnel.

"We commend and congratulate the 500-strong unsung heroes who made the FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup 2025 a success. With you, we showed the world that Filipinos can host a truly world-class sporting event," said PFF president John Gutierrez in a news release on Monday.

The PFF also acknowledged the support of the Philippine Olympic Committee, led by President Abraham Tolentino and FIFA Council Member Mariano "Nonong"



COLLECTIVE EFFORT. *The Local Organizing Committee ensured the successful staging of the FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup. Brazil defeated Portugal, 3-0, to claim victory at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City on Dec. 7, 2025. The country's successful hosting revealed the heart of the Filipino spirit: shared pride, collective energy, and an unwavering commitment to uplifting women's sports from the grassroots to the global stage, the organizers said in a statement on Monday (Jan. 5, 2026). (Contributed photo)*

Araneta Jr.

"You are the true heroes of this World Cup. Thank you very much for your dedication, hard work, and perseverance," said PFF general secretary Gelix Mercader, who oversaw the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), which included around 300 volunteers, 150 LOC staff, and 100 auxiliary personnel.

"It was very humbling to host the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup—and even more humbling to see it succeed. We dedicate this to all the futsal and football players across the country who made this possible," he added.

Gutierrez served as chairperson and Mercader as chief executive officer of the LOC. They were supported by the PFF Executive Committee with female-at-large member Isabella Fernando (government relations head), first vice president Lawrence Fortun (FFWWC2025 preparations committee) and deputy general secretary Kevin Goco (oversight committee), and UAAP Football commissioner Rely San Agustin (tournament director).

"This World Cup was the result of collective leadership and shared accountability, where every decision was guided by our re-

PH SEA Games delegation leads PSA top achievers

MANILA – The 1,200-strong Team Philippines, which produced 50 gold medals at the 33rd Southeast Asian Games in Thailand, topped the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) monthly achievers for December 2025.

The contingent, which also scooped 73 silvers and 154 bronzes, finished sixth overall in the medal tally board behind Thailand (233-154-113), Indonesia (91-112-130), Vietnam (87-81-110), Malaysia (57-57-117), and Singapore (52-61-89).

Filipino-Canadian swimmer Kayla Noelle Sanchez debuted in the biennial meet with eight medals, three golds and five silvers.

Pole vaulter EJ Obiena won his fourth straight gold medal while 16-year-old Naomi Cesar dominated the 800m event as the athletics team garnered five golds, seven silvers and 19 bronzes to register its second-best performance since winning 32 medals in 1983.

Practical shooters led responsibility to deliver an event worthy of the global stage, while ensuring the prudent use of resources afforded to us by the government. The discipline and professionalism shown by the LOC reflect the standards we intend to uphold as Philippine football continues to host and lead major international events," said Gutierrez. (PNA)



IMPRESSIVE. *Filipino-Canadian Kayla Noelle Sanchez wins the 100m freestyle event at the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand on Dec. 12, 2025. She got two more gold medals and five silvers. (Contributed photo)*

by world champion Rolly Tecson delivered four golds, five silvers and five bronzes.

Swimming captured three golds, nine silvers and two bronzes, followed by modern pentathlon (3-3-1), triathlon (3-5-2) and gymnastics (3-2-7).

Gilas Pilipinas Men retained the 5-on-5 title, while their female counterparts regained the crown, both at the Thais' expense.

The Philippines won the men's and women's softball titles as well as the men's baseball title.

Tennis sensation Alex Eala ended a 26-year drought in women's

singles, Eumir Marcial produced boxing's only gold and Peter Groseclose pocketed the gold (men's 500m short track speed skating) and silver (1,500m) in winter sports' comeback.

In women's football, the Filipinas dethroned eight-time winner Vietnam on penalties, 6-5, after a 0-0 tie at the end of extra time.

Alas Pilipinas made history in women's beach volleyball with Sisi Rondina, Bernadeth Pons, Sunnie Villapando and Dij Rodriguez ending Thailand's dynasty. (PNA)

**Just a little while longer,
and the wicked will be
no more; You will look
at where they were, And
they will not be there.
But the meek will possess
the earth, And they will
find exquisite delight in
the abundance of peace**

Psalms 37:10-11