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DSWD boosts disaster response efforts for Mayon-affected families

MANILA – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) continues to strengthen its disaster response efforts in providing sustained assistance to families affected by Mayon Volcano's restiveness.

Assistant Secretary Irene Dumla of the DSWD's Disaster Response Management Group said the agency has so far provided more than PHP7.8 million in humanitari-

an aid, including 5,338 family food packs (FFPs), 1,003 ready-to-eat food boxes, and 2,289 non-food items.

"In collaboration with other agencies and local government units (LGUs), we are intensifying our efforts and making preparations to ensure that the needs of the affected families taking temporary shelter in evacuation centers are well taken care of," Dumla said in a news release on Tuesday.

"Patuloy ang monitoring sa mga tent sites at evacuation areas para masigurong maayos ang serbisyo at agad natutugunan ang pangangailangan ng mga

NNC cites PH nutrition guides amid new US dietary guidelines

MANILA – The National Nutrition Council (NNC) on Wednesday acknowledged the release of the United States Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025–2030, while reminding the public that the Philippines will continue to follow its

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(Photo courtesy of National Nutrition Council)



The Department of Social Welfare and Development (Facebook)

displaced families. Ang direktiba ng ating Pangulo, President Jr. at ni Secretary Rex Ferdinand R. Marcos

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DILG commits to support LGUs, strengthen disaster resilience programs under 2026 budget

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) – The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) CALABARZON has committed in supporting local government units (LGUs), strengthening disaster resilience initiatives, and prioritize community development as key programs follow-

ing the approval of the P310.5-billion budget for the department under the 2026 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

In a statement released on January 9, DILG Calabarzon Regional Head Ariel Iglesia emphasized that a significant portion of the funding will be directed toward capaci-



tating LGUs to deliver efficient, transparent, and responsive public services.

These include gov-

ernance reforms, community-based development programs, disaster preparedness

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DSWD extends P14M aid to 100K shearline-affected families in 4 regions

MANILA – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) continues to extend humanitarian assistance and maintains heightened readiness for the effects of the shearline that has affected several parts of the country.

Based on 6 a.m. Wednesday report of

the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Communication (DROM-IC), 101,295 families or 376,159 persons had been affected in 558 barangays across four regions.

The shear line, which has impacted communities since Jan. 4, has

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Gatchalian ay walang maiwan at tuloy-tuloy ang tulong hangga't kinakailangan (Tent sites and evacuation areas are monitored continuously to ensure that services are orderly and the needs of displaced families are immediately taken care of. The directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and Secretary Rex Gatchalian is no one should be left behind and assistance would be sustained until needed)," she said.

In addition to FFPs, the DSWD also serves hot meals through its mobile kitchen.

Potable water is supplied through a mobile

water station, benefiting the affected families since the first day of operations on Jan. 9.

Dumlao said relief operations remain uninterrupted, with field teams actively coordinating with LGUs to address the basic needs of affected communities and ensure safe and humane conditions at the tent sites.

"Handa po ang DSWD na tumugon sa mga pangangailangan ating mga apektadong Bicolanos (The DSWD is ready to respond to the long-term needs of affected Bicolanos)," she said. (PNA)

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own locally developed dietary tools anchored on Filipino food culture and nutrition data.

The new guidelines jointly issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture emphasize the consumption of nutrient-dense foods and the limitation of highly processed products.

The recommendations were presented through an inverted food pyramid highlighting protein, dairy, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and whole grains.

The NNC, in a statement, said that while international guidelines offer useful insights for public health and nutrition practitioners, the Philippines remains guided by the Daily Nutritional Guide Pyramid developed by the Department of Science and Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI).

The council noted that both the US dietary guidelines and the Philippine guide promote healthy eating, increased physical activity, and the reduction of refined sugars, fatty and salty foods, and al-

coholic beverages.

However, the NNC pointed out that the US guidelines place stronger emphasis on specific food groups such as protein and dairy, while the Philippine Daily Nutritional Guide Pyramid highlights the consumption of whole and fresh foods, guided by the core principles of balance, variety, and moderation.

The NNC reaffirmed its commitment to advancing nutrition policies and programs that are evidence-based, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the needs of Filipinos.

It said local dietary tools, grounded in Philippine research and food traditions, remain the most suitable foundation for promoting healthy eating among Filipinos.

By continuing to promote the Daily Nutritional Guide Pyramid, Pinggang Pinoy, and the 10 Kumainments, the NNC underscored its goal of strengthening nutrition as a pillar of public health and national development.

The council said these locally developed tools collectively guide balanced meals, proper

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and response initiatives, and projects that improve basic service delivery at the grassroots level.

"The 2026 national budget gives us the capacity to further strengthen our priority programs that directly empower our local government units and bring essential services closer to the peo-

ple," Iglesia stated.

The DILG director adds that local programs and services aimed at improving the way of life of communities are among the urgent matters for the year.

"Through this allocation, LGUs will be better equipped to enhance disaster preparedness, sustain

DSWD EXTENDS P14M... FR. P.2

triggered flooding and displacement in Mimaropa, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, and Eastern Visayas.

Based on the same DROMIC report, a total of PHP13,926,961 worth of assistance has been provided to affected families and individuals.

To ensure sustained assistance, the DSWD has readied ample standby funds and prepositioned relief supplies nationwide.

These include PHP32 million in Quick Response Fund (QRF) at the DSWD Central Office, PHP11.8 million available through the field offices of the affected regions, and an additional PHP30.9 million in other field offices that may be mobilized through inter-field office augmentation.

In terms of relief goods, some 712,091 family food packs (FFPs) are currently available at the Luzon and Visayas Disaster Response Centers. This is on top of 580,787 boxes of FFPs already prepositioned at the concerned field offices.

food portions, adequate hydration, and an active lifestyle, underscoring the importance of grounding nutrition advice on Philippine data, food habits, and public health needs. (PNA)

peace and order initiatives, and implement development programs that respond to the actual needs of our communities."

Iglesia then noted that under the leadership of Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla, DILG will intensify the monitoring of fund utilization to ensure accountability, efficiency, and measurable results including close coordination with LGUs to guarantee that priority programs are implemented properly and contribute to long-term development goals.

"Under the leadership of Secretary Jonvic Remulla, we remain steadfast in monitoring the effective utilization of these funds to foster peace, order, and progress throughout the region. Together, we

move forward with our collective pursuit of a safer and more prosperous Bagong Pilipinas for every citizen in CALABARZON," Iglesia said.

The 2026 General Appropriations Act serves as the national government's annual spending plan, outlining the allocation of public funds to sustain government operations, deliver essential services, and implement priority development programs nationwide.

For 2026, the DILG received the fourth highest allocation among national government agencies, after the Department of Education, Department of Public Works and Highways, and Department of Health. (AM/PIA CALABARZON)

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PGC's Medical Mission in Paliparan III, Dasma

Through the collaborative initiative of the Office of the Provincial Governor and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, a medical mission was successfully conducted in Barangay Paliparan III, City of Dasmariñas, serving a total of 452 patients.

The provincial government's health outreach program provided free medical consultations, X-ray services, fasting blood sugar tests, and electrocardiogram (ECG) examinations, allowing constituents to directly consult medical practitioners regarding their health concerns.

Prescribed medicines and vitamin supplements were also distributed to help ease the financial burden of residents, particularly those at the grassroots level.

The Provincial Government of Cavite, under the leadership of Governor Abeng Remulla, remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the health and overall well-being of every Caviteño.--- OPIO



PGC Conducts Medical and Dental Mission in Kawit

The Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC), through the collaborative efforts of the Office of the Provincial Governor and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, successfully conducted a medical and dental mission in Brgy. Magdalo, Potol, Kawit on January 6, 2026, delivering free healthcare services to a total of 425 residents.

The activity provided essential health interventions, with 350 residents receiving medical check-ups, 49 availing of dental extractions, and 26 underwent electrocardiogram (ECG) examinations. Free medicines were also distributed to beneficiaries. Medical and dental professionals from OPHO shared their expertise, underscoring the importance of preventive care and the promotion of healthier communities.

The mission was made possible through the combined efforts of the provincial government, healthcare practitioners, and the barangay officials led by Brgy. Chairperson Francis V. Fernandez, ensuring the smooth and efficient delivery of services.

This health initiative reaffirms the Provincial Government of Cavite's commitment to bringing accessible, responsive, and quality healthcare services closer to communities across the province.--- OPIO



On January 8, the Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted a Medical and Dental Mission in Barangay Cabezas, Trece Martires City, marking the continuation of the PGC's health initiatives for the new year.

The activity served a total of 582 patients, with 379 receiving medical consultations and 49 availing of dental services. Diagnostic services were also provided, including 100 fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, 32 electrocardiogram (ECG) procedures, and 22 X-ray examinations. Free prescribed medicines were likewise distributed to patients.

Medical and dental services were delivered by health professionals from the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH), with the assistance of the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG) medical mission team.

The mission was attended by local officials, including 7th District Board Member Aldrin Anacan, Councilor Joyce Anne Mojica, Councilor Anne Jomille Humarang, and barangay officials.

The activity underscored the provincial government's sustained commitment to bringing accessible and responsive healthcare services closer to communities, as it continues to roll out health programs aimed at addressing the medical needs of Caviteños throughout the year.--- OPIO

CALABARZON teachers clinch top spots in LEPT 2025

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — Aspiring teachers from the CALABARZON region swept the top rankings in the September 2025 Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT).

Last December, the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) released the list of topnotchers and passers during the recent LEPT.

Meanwhile, the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) CALABARZON released a scaled-down list of topnotchers, highlighting takers who graduated from the region's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Stephanie Alyssa M.

Llandonez of the Philippine Normal University South Luzon ranked fifth among this year's takers with a score of 93.20 percent, while Sarrah Lynn N. Cedeño of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna ranked eighth with a score of

92.60 percent among the takers of the LEPT Elementary Level.

Also included in the top examinees for the LEPT Secondary Level were Joseph Matthew Delmiguez of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Exequiel Bagtidon of the Batangas State University (BatStateU) — Lipa Campus.

Delmiguez and Bagtidon both ranked tenth in the

country with a score of 93.00 percent.

Among the top performing schools was Batangas State University — Batangas City campus, which had 100 or more examinees and with at least 87 percent passing average.

The LEPT is a mandatory examination administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) for individuals aspiring to become professional teachers in the Philippines.

In a social media post, CHED CALABARZON congratulated the newly-licensed teachers.

"We celebrate this exceptional milestone
(Turn to p. 5)

DMW cites comprehensive assistance to increased OFW deployment in Calabarzon



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — Strengthened government programs aimed at protecting and equipping Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) with in-demand skills helped improve deployment across Asia.

Citing 2024 data, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that Asian countries remain the top destination, hosting 74.5 percent of OFWs. In particular, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are leading the region, accounting for 21.9 percent and 12.4 percent of the workforce, respectively.

The PSA also noted that the CALABARZON region contributes the largest share of workers at 20.5 percent, followed by Central Luzon (11.3 percent), and Western Visayas (9.5 percent).

Meanwhile, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) attributed this growth to improved enhanced programs for OFWs ranging from employment to welfare services.

Lawyer April Casabuena, Regional Director for DMW CALABARZON, underscored that the

comprehensive support for OFWs and their families—including skills training, welfare, legal assistance, onsite and post-arrival support, and emergency response services for distressed OFWs—kept Filipinos highly competitive and in-demand to foreign employers.

“The strong presence of CALABARZON Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in key destination countries further highlights the region’s role in supplying a skilled, adaptable, and competitive workforce that effectively responds to evolving international labor market demands, thereby reinforcing the Philippines’s position in the global labor landscape.”

Noting the migrant workers’ significant contributions to the country’s economy, the DMW ensured that its services go beyond skills training and assistance to distressed OFWs.

“The Department’s proactive coordination with foreign posts, host-country institutions, and local government units has ensured timely intervention and effective case resolution, reinforcing trust in gov-

Flu infections in US top 15M as child cases, hospital visits surge

ANKARA — Flu infections have continued to climb across the United States, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimating at least 15 million illnesses, 180,000 hospitalizations, and 7,400 deaths so far this season.

CDC data released over the weekend showed a 10-year high in the rate of young children visiting doctors for flu-related symptoms.

More than 18 percent of doctor visits for children under age 4 are now flu-related, the highest rate since at least 2016.

“I have been watching the data over the past couple of weeks coming out, and concerned about the little kids and how sick we are seeing them come in,” ABC News quoted Anne Zink, an emergency medicine physician who works with Yale’s PopHIVE tracking platform, as saying.

Zink described crowded emergency rooms, saying: “We didn’t even have enough places to sit people in our lobby.”

ernment-led migration governance,” Casabuena said.

More than employment opportunities, Casabuena underscored that the DMW’s programs include reintegration initiatives for OFWs looking to permanently settle in the Philippines after years of working abroad.

“Equally important

A true friend shows love at all times and is a brother who is born for time of distress

About 7.2 percent of all health care visits are now for flu-like illness, defined as a fever with cough or sore throat, marking a record for this time of year, according to the CDC.

Eight more pediatric flu deaths were reported last week, bringing the total to 17 this season.

Last year, 289 children died from flu, with about 90 percent of them unvaccinated, CDC data said.

The majority of infections are linked to a new H3N2 subvariant called subclade K, which has circulated globally since summer and contributed to earlier spikes in countries like Canada and Japan.

As of Dec. 27, only 43.5 percent of U.S. adults and 42.5 percent of children had received a flu vaccine despite ongoing public health recommendations.

Doctors continue to urge vaccinations, noting the current vaccine offers protection against severe illness, even if it is not fully matched to the dominant strain. (Anadolu)

are DMW’s accomplishments in reintegration and livelihood development, which aim to transform overseas employment into a pathway for long-term socio-economic mobility.” (PB-PIA CALABARZON, Philippine Statistics Authority – Calabarzon, DMW Region IV-A)

PCCI lauds new PH-UAE trade deal

MANILA — The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is expected to provide a long-term boost to the resilience of the Philippine economy.

The CEPA was signed Tuesday on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2026 Summit at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center, with Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Cristina Roque signing for the Philippines, according to a statement from the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) released Wednesday.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan witnessed the signing.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), in a separate statement, described the CEPA as “a landmark step in expanding Philippine trade, investment, and global market access.”

“The UAE serves not only as a major destination for Philippine exports but also as a global gateway linking

Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe,” PCCI President Perry Ferrer said.

He said the agreement provides exporters, investors and small and medium enterprises with a stronger platform to expand in the UAE and the wider Middle East.

Ferrer added the CEPA will help diversify the Philippines’ trade partnerships and reduce reliance on traditional export markets. By leveraging the UAE’s logistics and re-export networks, the agreement strengthens trade resilience and supports long-term growth.

He said the deal opens new opportunities in food and agriculture, manufacturing, construction materials, and digital and professional services, while allowing Filipino service providers to compete under more predictable and non-discriminatory conditions.

“Finally, we have an agreement that will allow our small businesses to export products, offer services, and partner with UAE companies more easily,” Ferrer said. (Joann Villanueva/PNA)

The one walking with the wise will become wise, But the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.

Proverbs 13:20

Private renewables firm assists public college in Laguna town to improve education

CALAUAN, Laguna (PIA) — The municipal government of Calauan, Laguna, through its municipality-run Calauan Community College (CCC), has received educational assistance worth P700,000 from private renewables firm Aboitiz Renewables, Inc., in partnership with Aboitiz Foundation Inc., aimed at enhancing digital learning access and helping the institution meet national standards for tertiary education.

The assistance includes desktop computers and office furniture that will directly benefit more than 500 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Midwifery and Bachelor of Science in Public Administration programs.

The donation seeks to strengthen digital learning capabilities and ensure compliance with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) standards for quality education across specific academic disciplines.

CCC President Dr. Jovellano expressed optimism over the support, highlighting how partnerships with the private sector can create tangible impacts on youth empowerment and access to quality education—especially for students from indigent families who now have a local, tuition-free pathway to becoming professionals.

“Sa Calauan, karapatan ang edukasyon at hindi lamang pribilehiyo, lalo na para sa mga indigent members ng



ating komunidad. We aim to offer quality and free education to our college students. Our vision is to produce future professionals—lawyers, doctors, and public servants—who will bring pride to our municipality,” Jovellano said.

For CCC students, the newly provided equipment offers vital academic support, and helps create a more conducive learning environment.

“Malaking bagay ang mga bagong computers para may magamit sa aming term papers, research, at assignments,” said Rhea Laurente, a BS Midwifery student.

BS Public Administration student Alexandra Santarin echoed the sentiment, noting the importance of having access to quality education close to home. “Nang dahil sa aming paaralan na malapit sa aming tahanan dito sa National Housing Authority, hindi na kinakailan-

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with you and look forward to the impactful contributions you will make in the field of [Professional Teaching].”

The Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers is a nationwide test to qualify teachers aspiring to teach in the country. (PB-PIA CALABARZON, CHED Regional Office IV/FACEBOOK)

gang lumayo ng mga kabataang kagaya ko para makapagtapos sa de-kalidad na kolehiyo,” she said.

Aboitiz Renewables and Aboitiz Foundation emphasized their commitment to driving positive change and supporting host communities through education.

“Education empowers communities. By supporting the youth, we’re investing in future professionals who will drive inclusive growth,” Ireneo Itoses, First Vice President and General Manager for the Geothermal Business Unit of Aboitiz Renewables said in an interview.

Calauan serves as the host community of Aboitiz Renewables’ geothermal plant. The company reaffirmed its partnership with the municipality as it continues to advance its business operations while opening opportunities for community members. (CH/PIA-Laguna)

Lawmaker assures ALS, PWD learners supported in 2026 budget

MANILA — The 2026 General Appropriations Act (GAA) strengthens inclusive education by ensuring sustained funding for learners with disabilities and the Alternative Learning System (ALS), Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian assured on Wednesday.

Under the 2026 national budget, PHP4.92 billion is allotted under the Flexible Learning Options, which includes PHP897 million for ALS and PHP400.67 million for the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM).

The amount of PHP3.62 billion is allotted for learning resources for ALS and ADM.

Meanwhile, PHP56 million under the Basic Education Facilities Program is set aside for the construction of ALS Community Learning Centers (CLCs).

In selecting sites for ALS CLCs, Gatchalian said priority will go to areas with limited access to formal education, communities with high numbers of



MICRO-CERTIFICATION. An Alternative Learning System graduate receives his certificate in this undated photo. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Wednesday (Jan. 14, 2026) said the 2026 budget by ensuring sustained funding for learners with disabilities and the ALS. (Photo courtesy of DepEd)

out-of-school children and adults lacking basic literacy skills or have dropped out of school, or both.

The Special Needs Education Program, meanwhile, will receive PHP1.04 billion to better support learners with disabilities.

Gatchalian said the amount of PHP209 million is also allotted to establish Inclusive Learning Resource Centers across the country or convert existing Special Education centers; while PHP100 million is al-

located for textbooks and other instructional materials for learners with disabilities.

“Sa 2026 budget, malinaw ang ating paninindigan sa inclusive education. Walang ALS learner o learner with disability ang maiwan (Under the 2026 budget, our commitment to inclusive education is clear. No ALS or learner with disability will be left behind),” the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Finance said in a statement. (PNA)

YAKAP, GAMOT providers given until Jan. 30 to renew accreditation

MANILA — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) has set Jan. 30, 2026 as the new deadline for Yaman ng Kalusugan (YAKAP) clinics and Guaranteed and Accessible Medications for Outpatient Treatment (GAMOT) package providers to file their applications for renewal of accreditation.

In a Facebook post on Thursday, the state insurer said the extension aims to ensure uninterrupted access to primary care services.

All YAKAP clinics and GAMOT package

providers are given additional time to comply with accreditation requirements for calendar year 2026.

PhilHealth clarified that the filing deadline for other health facilities remains Jan. 14, 2026.

PhilHealth said it will accept renewal applications from private health facilities that have yet to secure their 2026 business permits, as well as YAKAP clinics with partner health service delivery support that have not yet obtained their licenses.

These facilities are re-

quired to submit their business permits and related licenses on or before March 31, 2026 to maintain continuous accreditation.

PhilHealth warned that applications filed beyond the prescribed period will be treated as re-accreditation and may result in a gap in accreditation validity.

Meanwhile, health facilities that submit their renewal applications within the set deadline will be granted continuous accreditation until the corporation issues a decision on their applications. (PNA)

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NUNS, Ateneo triumph in UAAP high school baseball

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

players is continuous,” he added.

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

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

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

With two automatic runners on base in extra innings, Tres Saguisag laid down a bunt and beat the throw to

first to load the bases with no outs.

Enzo De Guzman then stepped to the plate and delivered the game-winning hit as the Blue Eagles recovered from their 12-13 loss to the PAREF Southridge Admirals last Jan. 7.

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

DLSZ bounced back from a 1-5 deficit with a six-run seventh inning to take a 7-5 lead, but Tommy Oblea tied the contest in the bottom of the eighth with a two-RBI single to

PFF celebrates historic achievements in 2025

MANILA – The Philippines had an outstanding performance in football last year, capped by the historic gold medal victory of the women's team in the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

The country also hosted the inaugural FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup at the Phil-Sports Arena in Pasig City—the first FIFA World Cup held in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

The senior squad qualified for the Asan Football Confederation (AFC) Finals, while the U17 team made a second appearance at the AFC Asian Cup and first-ever qualification via a clean sweep.

The women's futsal team (Filipina5) achieved multiple firsts: qualifying for the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup, debuting at the FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup, and reaching the SEA Games semifinals.

The men's squad, on the other hand, went unbeaten in the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers, climbing from FIFA rank 150 to 136.

Youth squads recorded historic wins, including the U16/U17's Lion City Cup championship, the U19/U20's biggest quali-

left-center that brought home Saguisag and De Guzman.

Miguel Cruzat, who started the game at second base, steadied



CHAMPION. The Philippine women's squad won the gold medal in the 2025 Southeast Asian Games in Thailand last December. The men's team, on the other hand, reached the semis for the first time, capping the Philippines' outstanding performance in football in 2025. (Contributed photo)

fying victory (4-0 vs. Brunei), and the U23/U22's first SEA Games semifinals since 1991.

The U23 team also reached the ASEAN Championship semifinals, beating Malaysia, Indonesia, and Tajikistan.

The Philippine Football Federation (PFF), led by President John-Anthony Gutierrez, focused on empowering regional football associations, strengthening grassroots programs, expanding professional education, and improving national team performance through good governance.

“Looking back at 2024, we understood that rebuilding and reforming were necessary and that aiming for our agenda would come with difficult lessons,” Gutierrez said in a news release

Monday.

“Those lessons guided our decisions in 2025, helping us refine our operations, stay steadfast with our plans, and ensure that when opportunities came, Philippine football was better prepared to move forward,” added Gutierrez, who was elected in 2023.

The PFF, which is the biggest National Sports Association in the country with 38 regional football associations, oversees the sport from grassroots participation to elite international competition.

The 2024–2025 period has shown sustained progress driven by sound governance, strategic partnerships, and a clear long-term vision.

The achievements highlight how coordinated investment in national teams, grassroots development, talent identification, professional leagues, and institutional capacity has strengthened Philippine football's foundation while elevating its global standing. (PNA)

SAY NO TO DRUGS