

# DA eyes P50/kg price cap on imported rice by month's end

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) is eyeing to implement a price cap on imported rice by the end of the month after the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) said it is set to submit its recommendation to adopt a PHP50 per kilogram price cap to the Office

of the President.

In an interview, DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the decision will come from President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

“Hopefully by the end of the month,” Tiu Laurel said, citing that the move will help address potential profiteering amid the fuel

price surges due to the U.S.-Iran conflict in the Middle East.

As of Wednesday, premium imported rice in Metro Manila sells from PHP55 per kilo to PHP63 per kilo, according to the DA Bantay Presyo (Price Watch).

The price per kilogram of import-

ed well-milled rice, meanwhile, ranges from PHP45 to PHP49; and imported regular-milled rice, from PHP42 to PHP45.

Tiu Laurel, however, said there's no need for a price cap for local rice amid the dry harvest season.

“Hindi masyadong wise na lagyan natin ng price cap kasi kasagsagan ngayon ng harvest. Since marami harvest ngayon, the tendency

is the only way to protect infants who are still too young for the shots.

Data from the DOH showed that 1,627 cases were recorded from Jan. 4 to March 21, significantly higher than the 1,121 cases reported during the

same period last year.

Of the total recorded cases, approximately 1,111 individuals — or 68 percent — were unvaccinated.

The current national MR vaccination coverage stands at roughly 66 percent of the (Turn to p. 2)

## GenTri e-Bus line goes green with no fare hike

GENERAL TRIAS CITY, Cavite (PIA) – Public transportation in General Trias is going green as the city transitions to using electric buses.

Starting April 7, the PERJODA Transport Cooperative's electric bus line will start plying routes within the city following the launch of its charging station in Barangay San Francisco.

Mayor Luis Ferrer

IV said launching the electric bus line will help Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) drivers and operators, as well as the riding public, save fuel amid rising costs.

Despite going electric, the local chief executive assured commuters that there will be no fare hike.

“Napapanahon po ito lalo na sa gitna ng patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng krudo, kaya't



malaking ginhawa sa ating mga tsuper at mananakay ang pangako nilang walang dagdag na pasahe.”

Ferrer said the elec-

tric bus line promised to provide inclusive transportation services, with bus conductors assisting (Turn to p.2)

## DOTr, LTFRB fuel subsidy to assist more drivers, operators in Calabarzon



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) – The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) in Calabarzon is assisting drivers and operators in the region following the direc-

cy is for prices to go down,” he said.

To date, local premium rice is at PHP51 per kg to PHP60 per (Turn to p.2)

tive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to further support the transportation sector amid rising fuel costs.

During a radio interview with the Philippine Information (Turn to p.2)

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kg, while the prevailing prices for well-milled rice and regular milled rice are PHP45 per kg and PHP40 per kg, respectively.

Tiu Laurel also assured the continuous availability of cheaper rice varieties under the DA – at PHP48 per kg and PHP45 per kg – alongside the intensified expansion of the PHP20 per kilo rice under the Benteng Bigas Meron (BBM) Na program.

Meanwhile, Tiu Laurel said price caps on other agricultural products may depend

on the price trends.

“Kung may profiteering, yes, gagawin natin iyan. Kung wala naman profiteering at iyan ang magiging value talaga along the chain, hindi natin lalagyan ng price cap (If there’s profiteering, we will do it. If none, and the value is fair along the chain, then we will not impose a price cap),” he said.

He also assured a stable supply of other agricultural commodities during the summer season, including chicken, pork and fish, among others. (PNA)

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eligible population, leaving about 821,000 children unprotected.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) recorded the highest number of cases at 344; followed by Soccsksargen (322); Davao Region (163); the National Capital Region (158); and Central Luzon (154).

The DOH also expressed concern over a recently reported measles death in Quezon City.

Despite the city’s 96 percent vaccination rate, infants younger than the recommended age for the first dose remain highly susceptible to the virus.

The routine age for the first dose is typically nine months, though it can be administered as early as six months during supplementary immunization activities.

Neighbors should be vaccinated to protect those who cannot be, the DOH said, empha-

sizing that high coverage among eligible groups provides “ring-fence protection” for ineligible children.

It noted that Quezon City’s current response, including Outbreak Response Immunization and Active Case Finding, remains vital in containing the spread.

Measles-Rubella vaccines are proven safe and effective, serving as the primary defense against the viruses and their potentially deadly complications, the agency said.

While routine immunization continues nationwide, the DOH confirmed that logistics preparations for the MR Supplemental Immunization Activity - Phase 2 in Luzon and the Visayas are currently underway.

Parents and guardians are urged to ensure their children’s vaccination schedules are up to date to prevent further outbreaks and fatalities. (PNA)

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Agency, LTFRB Calabarzon Regional Director Rudolph Dimas said that over 18,000 drivers and operators in the region have already been issued Pantawid Pasada Program (PPP) cards, where their P5,000 fuel subsidy assistance will be loaded for use.

Dimas highlighted that the agency is meticulously verifying records of drivers and operators to minimize possible complaints or reports of missed beneficiaries under the assistance program.

“18,000 drivers ang

nabigyan na ng PPP cards and may tinitingnan na lang kami na 3,000 [additional drivers]. We expect [complaints] to happen. We hope not, but we are expecting na may mga magrereklamo diyan na bakit kami hindi nakatanggap.”

The LTFRB director also called on drivers and operators to properly comply with the application process and complete all necessary requirements to be included among the program’s beneficiaries.

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passengers, including Persons With Disabilities and pregnant women.

The city’s transition to electric vehicles started in November 2025, when PERJO-

DA launched its Modernization program that promised modernized and eco-friendly electric public utility vehicles. (PB-PIA CALABARZON, Jon Ferrer/Facebook)

## PH-US health cooperation to expand access to TB treatment

MANILA – The Department of Health (DOH) and the U.S. State Department have strengthened their cooperation to bolster the Philippines’ tuberculosis (TB) response, focusing on enhanced detection and expanded access to treatment nationwide.

In a Facebook post on Wednesday, the DOH reported that U.S. has turned over essential health commodities to the DOH as part of this health support initiative.

These include TB medications for 230,000 patients and 12 ultraportable X-ray machines designed to

reach remote communities.

The turnover coincides with the Strategic Objective Agreement for this year, a bilateral pact aimed at further solidifying the partnership between the United States and the Philippines in promoting the health and well-being of Filipinos.

The DOH noted that the ultraportable X-ray units will play a critical role in early disease detection, especially in areas with limited access to traditional hospital facilities.

It emphasized that  
(Turn to p.3)

“Until now naga-gather pa rin kami ng data kasi po is medyo nagkakaroon ng confusion sa mga format, mga template na binibigay namin at yun ay inaayos na. Hopefully sa atin dito sa IV-A pagdating sa Fuel Subsidy ay mayron na lang 3,000+ na hinahanap na data, and then ipapasok na namin yun sa LTFRB Central Office nang sa ganoon is alam nila kung gaano kadami ang bibigyan ng fuel subsidy.”

According to the latest report from the LTFRB Central Office as of April 7, nearly P1 billion has already been distributed to intended beneficiaries nationwide. In the Calabarzon region, a total of P99 million has been allocated to the agency, covering drivers and operators of modern and traditional

jeepneys, UV Express units, regular and point-to-point (P2P) buses, TNVS partners, taxis, and tricycles.

Delivery service providers and motorcycle taxis are also included in the list of beneficiaries, the LTFRB said in a statement.

Following the guidance of LTFRB Chairperson Vigor Mendoza to further intensify coordination with government agencies and stakeholders for a more efficient and faster distribution process, Dimas said coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Calabarzon has been sustained.

Dimas expressed confidence that all fuel subsidies will be released to beneficiaries before the end of the month. (CH/PIA-Laguna)

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**OPPDC facilitated training on ELA-PDIP Monitoring Report preparation**

The Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, successfully spearheaded the Training on the Preparation of Executive-Legislative Agenda – Provincial Development Investment Program 2025-2028 Monitoring Report at the New Provincial Government Center, on March 26, 2026.

The activity gathered ELA-PDIP focal persons from provincial government departments and units, to enhance their understanding of the monitoring system and capacitate them on how to properly accomplish the monitoring tool for the status of their respective programs, projects and activities (PPA).

Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator Engr. EnP Lorna Leyran welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of the training in effectively tracking the progress and outcomes of PPAs. This was followed by an overview of the activity delivered by EnP Mary Grace Reyes.

The training featured a series of interactive lectures, discussions, workshops, and presentation of outputs aimed at equipping participants with the necessary knowledge and skills in preparing accurate and reliable monitoring reports. These efforts contribute to ensuring transparency and data integrity in the implementation of provincial programs and projects.

By the end of the activity, participants gained a clearer understanding of the importance of well-planned and effectively monitored projects in achieving the province’s development goals.

The training was conducted by the governance sector, covering Economic, Infrastructure, and Environmental Management, and will continue with the Institutional and Social sectors. --- OPIO



**Former OFWs Enhance Skills in Pastry-Making Training by OPCDO**

The Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Office of the Provincial Cooperatives Development Officer (OPCDO) – Livelihood Division, successfully conducted an in-house training on pastries and delicacies, focusing on brownies and chocolate chip cookies making, on March 23, at Bahay Kalinga, Cavite Command Center compound, Trece Martires City.

The activity gathered 20 former Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and was organized in collaboration with the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer (OPSWDO), aiming to equip participants with practical skills that can serve as a source of livelihood.

Ms. Myrachel P. Cuadra, Officer-in-Charge of OPCDO, formally opened the program and welcomed the participants, emphasizing the importance of skills development in building sustainable income opportunities. This was followed by an inspiring message from Mr. Allan Valencia, RSW, MMus, of OPSWDO, who encouraged the participants to maximize the training as a stepping stone toward self-reliance.

An orientation on OPCDO programs and services was also conducted by Ms. Sheryll H. Loyola, Livelihood Division Head, to further guide participants on available support for their future ventures.

The training proper was facilitated by Ms. Corazon A. Tepora, who shared her expertise in baking, providing hands-on learning for the participants.

Through initiatives like this, the Provincial Government of Cavite continues to empower returning OFWs by providing them with opportunities to develop skills and establish sustainable livelihoods within the province.--- OPIO

**PH-US . . FR. P. 2**

providing medicines to over 200,000 patients will ensure a steady supply of life-saving treatment, supporting the government’s goal of eliminating TB as a public health threat.

The collaboration reflects both nations’ ongoing commitment to addressing infectious diseases through

shared resources and strategic interventions under the “Bagong Pilipinas” framework.

According to the DOH Epidemiology Bureau Integrated Tuberculosis Information System, the TB cases in the National Capital Region has reached 101,807 as of Feb. 16.

This prompted the

agency to intensify its campaign for early detection, prompt treatment and TB prevention.

The public is reminded to consult a physician if cough persists for two weeks or more, if chest pain, fever, weakness, night sweats, or weight loss occur. (PNA)



**Ugnayan sa Barangay strengthens community engagement in Cavite City**

The Provincial Government of Cavite successfully conducted its Ugnayan sa Barangay program on March 26 in Cavite City, reinforcing its commitment to community engagement and responsive public service.

The initiative was spearheaded by Governor Abeng Remulla, who emphasized the importance of direct communication between the provincial

government and local communities. The program served as a platform for residents to access government services, and engage with key officials.

Also present during the event were Vice Governor Ram Revilla Bautista, 1st District Congressman Jolo Revilla, and 1st District Board Members Romel Enriquez and Jygs Gandia, Mayor Denver Chua, Vice Mayor Raleigh Rusit and the Sangguninang Panlungsod members who all expressed their support for initiatives that bring government services closer to the people.

The Ugnayan sa Barangay program continues to be a vital avenue for fostering transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration between the provincial government and its constituents.--- OPIO

## DTI: Prices of basic goods steady until April 30 amid fuel cost hikes

MANILA – Prices of basic and prime commodities monitored by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will remain unchanged until April 30, Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque said Wednesday.

“Me and (Department of Agriculture) Secretary Kiko (Francisco Tiu Laurel), we go together in the palengke (markets) and also in the supermarkets to make sure that there’s enough food supply and also the prices are stable. I would also like to announce that there is no price increase for basic necessities and prime commodities until the end of the month, until April 30,” she said during the DTI-Bagong Pilipinas National Food Fair opening at SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

The extension adds two weeks to the April 16 date announced earlier by the DTI following meetings with manufacturers.

Roque assured the public that the government is closely monitoring prices and supply amid rising fuel costs linked to tensions in the Middle East.

She said regular meetings with manufacturers, retailers, and logistics firms are ongoing to protect both businesses and consumers.

### Price monitoring

Roque also led a market inspection at a mall supermarket, where she said some goods were even priced below the suggested re-



**STABLE PRICES.** Trade and Industry Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque (left) engages in a conversation during a market monitoring event at a mall in Mandaluyong City on Wednesday (April 8, 2026). She said prices of basic and prime commodities remain stable and that manufacturers have agreed to maintain their prices until the end of April. (PNA photo by Joann Santiago-Villanueva)

tail price (SRP).

DTI personnel continue regular price checks to ensure compliance, even before the Middle East conflict, she added.

“So, again, no need to panic. No need to worry. Prices of basic and prime commodities under DTI’s list remain stable,” she said in a mix of Filipino and English.

### MSME support

Roque said the government remains committed to supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through trade fairs and expanded access to global markets.

“This fair is proof that when we provide the platform and the right

support, Filipino MSMEs can succeed both locally and globally. For local, we have a huge market. We have almost 115 million Filipinos. The market is big. Let’s take advantage of this market and this opportunity,” she said.

Roque said export growth reached a record 15.4 percent in 2025 and continued to expand in early 2026.

“So there’s really a lot of opportunities for Filipino products out there,” she said.

“Let’s continue to support the MSMEs as best and as aggressive as we can. That determination is showing up in our numbers.” (PNA)

**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.**

## PH unemployment rate eases in February

MANILA – The number of unemployed Filipinos declined to 2.66 million in February this year from 2.96 million in January, reflecting improved labor conditions in the country, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Results of the PSA’s latest Labor Force Survey released on Wednesday showed that the unemployment rate in February dropped to 5.1 percent from 5.8 percent the previous month.

In a briefing, National Statistician Dennis Mapa said the Labor Force Participation rate (LFPR) was recorded at 63.8 percent, higher than the 62.3 percent observed in January.

The February 2026 LFPR translates to a total of 52.09 million Filipinos aged 15 years and above who were in the labor force.

The employment rate in February 2026 was recorded at 94.9 percent.

In terms of magnitude, the number of employed persons in February was 49.43 million, up from 47.94 million in January.

Underemployed persons or those who expressed desire to have additional hours of work in their present job, or to have an additional job, or to have a new job with longer hours of work was recorded at 5.84 million, translating to an underemployment rate of 11.8 percent.

In a statement, the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) said the government is stepping up efforts to protect jobs amid the Middle East conflict.

DEPDev Secretary Arsenio Balisacan noted that the geopolitical



**BOOSTING EMPLOYMENT.** Jobseekers line up for screening during a local and overseas mega job fair at a Manila mall in this photo taken on March 25, 2026. Latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority shows unemployment fell to 2.66 million in February, down from 2.96 million in January. (PNA photo by Yancy Lim)

conflict in the Middle East will continue to affect global and domestic economic conditions and disrupt labor markets.

“Recent developments highlight the urgency to strengthen the resilience of our labor market. We must ensure that our policies and programs respond effectively to rapidly changing global conditions, especially for affected and displaced Filipino workers here and abroad,” he said.

In response to these risks, the government is implementing strategic measures identified by the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (UPLIFT) Committee under Executive Order 110.

“The measures aim to safeguard the national interest by mitigating the impact of the conflict and ensuring the stability or continuity of essential services, sustaining economic activity, and supporting incomes amid rising fuel costs,” Balisacan said.

Affected workers will receive timely support through cash assistance, rollout of the service contracting program, and fuel subsidy to vulnerable sectors.

The Department of Agriculture is also mobilizing its PHP1-billion quick response fund for fuel subsidies and biofertilizer procurement.

Public transport and farm workers can avail of emergency employment assistance through the Department of Transportation’s Service Contracting Program, and the Department of Labor and Employment’s Tulong Pang-hanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers.

The government will also strengthen efforts to promote renewable energy and electric vehicle ecosystems to support long-term resilience and workforce readiness.

“We expect an accelerated transition towards other sources of fuel and energy. Thus, we are building the skills, investment, and innovation ecosystem to support this move. Skills training programs on the operations and maintenance of renewable energy facilities and electric vehicles, including the needed parts and components, will also be provided to displaced workers,” Balisacan said. (PNA)

## 166 OFWs from Kuwait set to arrive April 9 as repatriation continues



**REPATRIATION EFFORTS.** A total of 166 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their dependents from Kuwait depart for Saudi Arabia early Wednesday morning (April 8, 2026). They are set to arrive in Manila at around 11 a.m. on Thursday (April 9), as part of the Philippine government's repatriation efforts amid the Middle East conflict. (Photo courtesy of PY Caunan Facebook page)

MANILA – A total of 166 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their dependents from Kuwait departed early April 8 for Saudi Arabia and are expected to arrive in Manila at 11 a.m. on Thursday as part of the Philippine government's repatriation efforts for Filipinos affected by the Middle East crisis.

In a social media post, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Chief Patricia Yvonne Caunan announced the arrival of the 5th batch of OFW repatriates from Kuwait.

"Tuloy-tuloy ang ating repatriation operations this week (Our repatriation operations continue this week). From Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE (United Arab Emirates), our One Country Team of DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs), DMW (Department of Migrant Workers), and OWWA on the ground continues to work around the clock to ensure the safe and orderly return of our kababayans," she said.

Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac, meanwhile, said during a committee hearing at the House of Representa-

tives on Wednesday that the government is taking a whole-of-government approach to ensure the safe return and reintegration of OFWs, in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to protect the welfare of Filipino migrant workers.

In total, Cacdac said the DMW has so far assisted 4,611 OFWs on commercial flights.

"So far, 3,736 OFWs have arrived via government-funded, commercial, or chartered flights, with additional chartered flights scheduled over the weekend," he said.

Of the total, Cacdac said 2,870 are OFWs and 866 are dependents.

Aside from financial support, the DMW has also provided over 21,000 services, ranging from food packs to temporary on-site shelters, to repatriated OFWs.

OWWA also provides post-arrival support, including airport reception, temporary accommodation, domestic transport, medical aid, financial assistance, and livelihood programs such as Balik-Pinas, Balik-Hanapbuhay, which provides up to PHP25,000 in seed capital.

Meanwhile, the DMW has also stepped up reintegration efforts through initiatives such as the National Reintegration Network (NRN) Fair held on Monday, which serves as a one-stop hub for employment, training, and financial assistance. (PNA)

MANILA – The Senate is pushing for fuel and fertilizer subsidies to sustain farm production and prevent a potential decline in food supply in the coming months.

During a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform on the impact of rising oil prices on Wednesday, Senator Bam Aquino said rising input costs are affecting farmers' capacity to plant, warning that delays in government support could lead to lower harvest and higher food prices.

"Kung hindi ho natin mabibigay 'yung tulong na 'yan, makikita natin tataas talaga 'yung presyo ng bilihin sa palengke at 'yun 'yung ayaw natin makita (If we fail to provide

## Fuel, energy savings used for logistics aid to farmers, fishers – DA

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday said savings from fuel and energy consumption cuts are being utilized to provide logistics aid to farmers and fishers.

National government agencies have been ramping up efforts to slash energy and transport costs amid the surging global oil prices.

"Nagtitipid kami sa amin pero (We are being frugal in the agency but) we refocus our funds for the logistics needs of our farmers and fishers," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said in an interview on Wednesday.

The DA minimizes utilization of government vehicles, down to regional field offices, as well as the imposition of flexible work arrangements.

Efforts to support local farmers, meanwhile, include the deployment of trucks, particularly in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Tiu Laurel said these trucks serve as logistics aid to deliver goods



**VEGETABLE SUPPLY.** Fresh vegetables fill a stall at the Quinta Market in Quiapo, Manila on March 26, 2026. The Department of Agriculture on Wednesday (April 8, 2026) said there are logistics aid in place to support vegetable farmers in delivering produce from farm to markets. (PNA photo by Yancy Lim)

from vegetable farms to trading posts and markets.

He said DA teams are already deployed in mountain regions to assess the actual need for logistics.

"We are preparing a package for them for possible fuel assistance, fertilizer assistance, and seed assistance para tuluy-tuloy silang mag-harvest (so that they can continuously

harvest)," Tiu Laurel said.

"At tuluy-tuloy nating maibaba ang produkto nila mula sa (And that we may continuously deliver their products from) mountain regions to markets."

The DA is also now exploring options and studying possible funding sources to provide targeted assistance for agricultural trucks in the country. (PNA)

## Fuel, fertilizer subsidies pushed in Senate to sustain farm output

this support, we will see prices in the market rise, and that is what we want to avoid)," Aquino said.

Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Asis Perez said the country currently produces about 78 percent of its rice requirement, but output could decline by at least 20 percent and possibly up to 50 percent if no intervention is made.

"That is the cost of not doing anything," Perez said, referring to the projected drop in production.

He added higher fertilizer and fuel prices are already impacting farm inputs, particularly for the upcoming planting season from May to June, with harvest expected around August to September.

Perez said fertilizer

prices increased shortly after global supply disruptions, while rising fuel costs continue to affect land preparation and transport operations.

To address this, Aquino urged the immediate rollout of subsidies for diesel, gasoline, and fertilizer to ensure farmers can continue planting during the critical months.

The DA estimates that about PHP37 billion is needed to support major crops, including rice, corn, and fisheries, for a three-month production cycle.

Aquino said around PHP200 billion in government assistance funds could be tapped to support farmers and fisherfolk.

"Ngayon na natin 'to gamitin... para matulongan natin ang ating

mga magsasaka at mangingisda (Let us use these funds now to help our farmers and fisherfolk)," he said.

Meanwhile, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Undersecretary Aliah Dimaporo said existing assistance mechanisms can cover affected sectors, including farmers and fisherfolk.

"We respond to anyone in crisis that's under our assistance for individuals in crisis situations," Dimaporo said.

The Senate is continuing discussions with concerned agencies, including the Department of Finance, on how to mobilize available funds and ensure timely delivery of subsidies to sustain farm production and stabilize food prices. (PNA)

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## Cavite strengthens child protection with launch of Revised Case Management Protocol

A decisive step toward strengthening child protection systems took center stage on March 26, as the Department of Justice, in partnership with the Provincial Government of Cavite, formally launched the Revised Protocol for the Case Management of Child Victims of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, and Discrimination (Cane + D) under the banner “Kabitenyong Kumikilos Para sa Karapatang Kabataan.”

Held at the New Provincial Government Center, the initiative signaled more than a ceremonial rollout – it underscored a firm, province-wide commitment to place children, particularly the most vulnerable, at the heart of governance.

Organized in collaboration with the Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC) through the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, the launch of the revised protocol sharpens the province’s response framework – one that listens with intent, protects with urgency, and responds with both compassion and precision.

In her welcome address, 8th District Board Member Jasmin Angelli Maligaya-Bautista emphasized the power of



collective action, acknowledging the presence of key stakeholders and partners. She expressed confidence that the initiative would deepen collaboration and reinforce shared responsibility in building a safer and more protective environment for every child in Cavite.

Also present during the event was 1st District Board Member Romel R. Enriquez, Chairperson of the Committee on Social Services, Family, Women, Children and Elderly, alongside provincial government agencies, city and municipal mayors and their representatives, as well as department heads and personnel of the Provincial Government of Cavite – demonstrating a unified, whole-of-government approach to child protection.

Delivering the opening message, Undersecretary Raul T. Vasquez of the Department of Justice (DOJ), stressed that meaningful change is realized at the community level—through the convergence of lo-

cal government units, national agencies, and civil society. With the leadership of Governor Francisco Gabriel “Abeng” D. Remulla and the support of local chief executives, he noted that Cavite is taking a significant step closer to ensuring that every child is understood, protected, and given the opportunity to heal and thrive beyond trauma.

Further reinforcing this direction, DOJ Secretary Frederick A. Vida described the revised protocol as a product of robust inter-agency collaboration. It responds to evolving challenges, including emerging forms of exploitation, by integrating trauma-informed and child-sensitive approaches, strengthening confidentiality safeguards, enhancing multi-disciplinary coordination, and preventing retraumatization throughout the intervention process.

In a firm commitment, Governor Abeng Remulla assured stakeholders that the initiative would move beyond policy into

## Ateneo spikers survive UP to boost semis campaign

MANILA – Ateneo de Manila University kept its semifinal bid alive after beating University of the Philippines, 25-23, 22-25, 23-25, 25-18, 15-7, on Wednesday in the UAAP Season 88 men’s volleyball tournament at the SM Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay.

Season 87 Best Opposite Spiker Amil Pacinio finished with 25 points, including eight in the fifth set, as the Blue Eagles improved to a 6-5 record.

Nigerian Aimar Okeke chipped in 16 points and 10 excellent receptions, while captain Jian Matthew Salarzon had 13 points, 15 receptions and eight digs for Ateneo, which will face De La Salle University at the Filoil Centre in San Juan on Saturday.

“We’ve always reminded them that the grit is always there, but we had to shake them up, from the beginning they are actually the better players inside the court. They just need to remember what they prepared for,” Ateneo assistant coach Tomie Rivera said.

The Blue Eagles

sustained action. “This program will be applied and taken care of here in our province,” he affirmed, emphasizing the provincial government’s resolve to translate frameworks into tangible protection for children.

Adding depth to the province’s commitment, Vice Governor Ramon Vicente H. Bautista, underscored that the undertaking goes beyond formalities. He described the signing not merely as a procedural step, but as a covenant for the most valuable members of society. He fur-



**VICTORY.** Skipper Jian Matthew Salarzon (No. 4) reacts after Ateneo de Manila University defeated University of the Philippines, 25-23, 22-25, 23-25, 25-18, 15-7, in the UAAP Season 88 men’s volleyball tournament on Wednesday (April 8, 2026) at the SM Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay. The win boosted the Blue Eagles’ semifinal campaign. (UAAP photo)

banked on Okeke, Enzo Gutierrez and rookie middle blocker Rodge Alejos to win the fourth set and wrapped up the match with Eijra Taluban’s service ace after two hours and eight minutes.

“It’s in my heart and mind [during the fifth set] that it’s really now or never. It might really be my last season, so we really had to go all out and show the team that we could do it,” Pacinio, who also had six digs, said.

Middle blocker Kristofer Rodge Alejos and outside hitter Julio Miguel Yu contributed

nine points and eight points, respectively.

Lorenzo Samuel Gutierrez dished out 19 excellent sets and Lance Andrei de Castro had 14 receptions and 13 digs.

Olayemi Raheem delivered 27 points for the Fighting Maroons, who slid to 3-8.

Tommy Castrodes added 15 points, 16 receptions while Angelo Lipata had nine points and 16 receptions for UP, which will meet Far Eastern University on April 12 at the UST Quadricentennial Pavilion in Manila. (PNA)

ther emphasized that the gathering was not driven by obligation, but by duty to uphold children’s rights – assuring that as long as leaders carry this mandate, no child in Cavite will ever have to face adversity alone.

The event’s highlight was the ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, led by the Governor, members of the Provincial Board, and city/municipal Local Chief Executives – symbolizing a unified and institutionalized approach to implementing the revised

protocol across Cavite. In closing, Undersecretary Monina Josefina H. Romualdez of the Department of Social Welfare and Development reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding the welfare and future of every Filipino child, pledging continued partnership in advancing child protection efforts.

The occasion echoed a firm commitment: in Cavite, protecting children is a shared priority, where every voice counts and every system moves to respond and defend.--- OPIO