

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER THAT'S NATIONAL IN SCOPE

VOL. XXVII NO. 27 OCTOBER 15-21, 2026 P10.00
ISSN: 2651-7450

PBBM orders nat'l framework for carbon markets, puts DENR in charge

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the formulation of a national policy framework for carbon markets, designating the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as the country's national authority for regulating participation in carbon-credit mechanisms.

Under Executive Order 127, Marcos direct-



ed the DENR to formulate the Philippine Carbon Market Policy Framework, subject to

approval by the newly created Inter-Agency Committee on Carbon Markets.

PWD beneficiaries welcome government's rice subsidy program, cite relief amid cost of living, El Niño effects

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The government's rice assistance is bringing relief to persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Calamba City, Laguna, with beneficiaries saying the support will help stretch their household budgets and ensure that food remains available for their families.

The rice distribution forms part of the city government's continu-

ing efforts to provide assistance to vulnerable and priority sectors from the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF) Bawat Bayan Makikinabang program under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

Among the beneficiaries was 65-year-old Marcelino Ameglio of Barangay Pansol, who said the assistance comes as a wel-



come support amid the challenges faced by families dealing with limited income and livelihood opportuni-

The framework seeks to establish a coordinated national approach to the Philippines' participation in international and voluntary carbon markets, ensuring that carbon-credit activities align with the country's climate commitments and applicable safeguards.

It will cover the country's participation in
(Turn to p.2)

CALABARZON wage hike seen to ease workers' burden amid El Niño threat, inflation

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The latest minimum wage increase in the CALABARZON region is expected to provide additional financial support to workers as they cope with rising living costs, inflation,

and the potential economic effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

The Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) Calabarzon announced a new round of minimum wage increases for workers under

Wage Order No. IVA-23 with the new wage rates are scheduled to take effect on October 26, 2026.

The wage order provides daily minimum wage increases ranging from P25 to P45,
(Turn to p.2)

SSS assures members that their contributions are managed prudently to sustain pension fund

Quezon City, - The Social Security System (SSS) assures its members, pensioners, and the public that their contributions are managed with care to protect the pension fund and ensure the continued payment of benefits.

SSS invests only in companies with strong earnings track records and stable business performance and does not place members' money in risky or speculative investments. Its portfolio is diversified across different asset types, helping reduce risk as gains in some investments can offset declines in others.

While stock prices may fluctuate, SSS continues to receive dividend income from its equity holdings, adding an estimated P9 billion to its net income annually. Dividends are part of the

earnings distributed to stockholders. SSS clarified that a paper loss is an unrealized decline in the market value of an investment that has not yet been sold. No cash is actually lost unless the asset is sold below its purchase price. It does not mean members' contributions have been used or that pensions are at risk; market prices may recover over time.

SSS strong financial performance has enabled higher benefit payouts. From January to June 2026, benefit payouts rose 19% to P173.45 billion from P145.73 billion in the same period in 2025.

SSS also implemented the second tranche of the Pension Reform Program, releasing P7.4 billion in additional pension benefits P4.1 million pen-
(Turn to p.4)

ties.
“Malaking tulong kasi sa hirap ng buhay ngayon, mahirap
(Turn to p.2)

PBBM... FR. P. 1

international carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, as well as in voluntary carbon markets.

Article 6 allows countries to cooperate voluntarily in achieving their climate targets, including through the transfer of verified emissions-reduction outcomes between countries. Such transactions require proper accounting to prevent the same emissions reductions from being counted more than once.

The framework will set the principles and eligibility requirements for carbon-credit projects, establish criteria for authorizing international transfers of emissions-reduction outcomes, and prescribe rules governing the issuance and transfer of carbon credits.

It will also cover benefit-sharing mechanisms, recognized carbon-credit standards, safeguards, reporting requirements, and administrative fees.

The executive order provides for the operation of the Philippine National Carbon Registry to track and report internationally transferred mitigation outcomes, helping ensure proper accounting of emissions reductions associated with carbon-credit transactions.

Through carbon markets, the government aims to advance the country's climate commitments while expanding access to climate finance, technology, investments, and capacity-building support. (Darryl John Esguerra/PNA)

CALABARZON... FR. P. 1

depending on the classification of the city or municipality and the sector, the RTWPB Calabarzon said in a statement.

"The issuance of the new wage order reflects the Board's continuing mandate to review minimum wage rates in the region, taking into consideration the needs of workers and their families, the capacity of employers to provide higher wages, and the region's prevailing economic conditions," RTWPB stated.

Under the new wage order, workers in the non-agriculture sector in the Extended Metropolitan Area and component cities will receive a P45 daily wage increase from P600 to P645. Those

employed in first-class municipalities will receive a P40 increase from P550 to P590, while those in second to fifth-class municipalities will get a P25 increase from P525 to P550.

Agricultural workers in extended metropolitan areas, component cities including Rosario, Cavite and first-class municipalities will receive a P25 daily wage increase from P525 to P550, while those in second to fifth-class municipalities will have a P42 increase from P508 to P550.

The same P42 daily wage increase will apply to workers in retail and service establishments regularly employing not more than 10 workers across all

PWD... FR. P. 1

ang trabaho. malaking tulong talaga ang binigay ni Pangulong BBM. Dahil sa aming barangay din, hindi naman lahat ng mga PWD ay may angkang yaman para suportahan. Yung mga ayudang kagaya nito malaking tulong talaga para sa kanila," Amelio shared during the emergency rice distribution.

He expressed hope that similar programs would continue to benefit PWDs and other vulnerable sectors.

areas.

For minimum wage earner Catherine Orza from Calamba City, Laguna, even a modest increase in wages can help workers meet their daily needs amid increasing expenses.

"Malaking bagay na rin ('yung wage increase). Kahit konti yung nadagdag, okay na rin kasi nag-i-increase kahit papaa-no. At least, hindi tayo nag-i-stay lang sa mababa. Malaking bagay pa rin talaga sa pang-araw-araw," Orza said in an interview with Philippine Information Agency.

She emphasized that workers like her still hope to receive fair compensation that can better cover their everyday expenses, particularly as prices of basic goods and other necessities continue to increase and the poten-

"Ang mensahe ko lang, sana po ipagpatuloy mo, pangulong BBM, ang serbisyong totoo, tama, at para sa kapakanan ng mga mamamayan. 'Yung sa aming punong lungsod, Mayor Ross Rizal, sa napakaraming programa ay damang Calambeño," he added.

Qualified PWD beneficiaries received 20 kilograms of rice each, providing them with additional food supply that they can use for their households and

tial effects of El Niño may add to these challenges.

She added, "Siyempre bilang manggagawa, sana maibigay nang patas, 'yung kaya ng pang-araw-araw, hindi man lahat, pero 'yung sumasapat pandagdag, malaking tulong siyempre itong wage increase ngayon pero sana mayroon pa kasi maraming gastusin, maraming tumataas na bilingin, sana sa susunod mas tumaas pa para sa amin na minimum wage earner."

The implementation of Wage Order No. IVA-23 on October 26 gives needed cushion to minimum wage earners across CALABARZON, while recognizing the varying economic conditions and business capacities across different areas and sectors. (AM/PIA CALABARZON)

intended to help beneficiaries meet their immediate food needs while allowing them to redirect a portion of their household budget toward other essential expenses such as medicines, utilities, transportation, and other daily necessities.

The distribution also reflects the administration's efforts to bring social protection programs closer to communities and ensure that assistance reaches sectors that may be more vulnerable to economic challenges.

Meanwhile, Rachine Medina, also from Barangay Pansol, said the assistance would provide food for her family for several weeks, particularly as the prices of basic commodities continue to increase.

"Malaking tulong ito siyempre 'di ba sa

laki ng bilingin, sa mga mamahaling bigas, ito pang-ilang linggo namin kakainin, at sana masundan pa. Itong binigay ni presidente, malaking tulong ito sa amin dahil sa El Niño kaya titipirin namin ito hanggang sa aking makakaya at sana masundan pa 'to," Medina said.

She likewise thanked President Marcos and Mayor Rizal for extending assistance to PWDs and other sectors in the community.

The rice assistance also underscores the importance of continued coordination between the national and local governments in ensuring that social protection programs are translated into concrete support for communities. (AM/PIA CALABARZON)

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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MEMBER of PRIME ALLIANCE of
PUBLISHERS, EDITORS, &
REPORTERS of the Philippines Inc.

THIS NEWSPAPER IS EDITED, PUBLISHED AND CIRCULATED
IN THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE AT BLK. 8 LOT 19
SAINT FRANCIS ST. CARDINAL VILLAGE
SALITRAN 3 DASMARIÑAS CITY OF CAVITE

Commercial Advertising Rate: P200.00/col.cm
Legal Rate P160.00/col.cm.

Better is a piece of dry bread
where there is peace Than a
house full of feasting along
with quarreling.

Proverbs 17: 1



Medical Mission Serves 519 Patients in Buro I, Dasmariñas City

The Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC), through the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG) and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (OPHO), conducted a medical mission in Barangay Buro I, Dasmariñas City, on October 9, 2026, providing essential healthcare services to 519 patients.

The medical team of the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH) provided medical consultations and diagnostic screening services, while OPG staff distributed maintenance medicines to beneficiaries. Of the total patients served, 405 received medical consultations, 36 underwent electrocardiogram (ECG) examinations, and 78 availed themselves of fasting blood sugar (FBS) testing.

Barangay Chairperson Edwin C. Unlayao graced the activity and expressed his support for the initiative, highlighting the importance of collaboration between the provincial and barangay governments in bringing essential healthcare services closer to the community.

The medical mission reaffirmed the Provincial Government's commitment to promoting accessible healthcare, encouraging early detection of potential health concerns, and supporting the well-being of Caviteños through community-based medical outreach.--- OPIO



PGC's Cavite Service Caravan Brings Healthcare to 1,100 Patients in Maragondon

Bringing essential healthcare services closer to the people, provincial government of Cavite's Service Caravan reached its seventh leg at Maragondon Town Plaza on October 13, 2026, providing medical and dental services to a total of 1,100 patients.

The medical mission recorded 818 medical consultations, 60 dental services, and 39 fluoride treatments. Residents also benefited from 21 electrocardiogram (ECG) examinations and 162 fasting blood sugar (FBS) tests, expanding access to essential healthcare services within the community.

The initiative was carried out through the collaborative efforts of the General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (GEAMH), Rural Health Unit (RHU) of Maragondon, and Naic Medicare Hospital, demonstrating the importance of coordinated efforts in delivering public health services directly to Caviteños.

The activity was graced and supported by Governor Abeng Remulla, Vice Governor Ram Revilla Bautista, Eighth District Board Member Jasmine Maligaya Bautista, and Acting Municipal Mayor Miguel U. Arca.

As one of the flagship service initiatives of Governor Abeng Remulla, the Cavite Service Caravan brings government programs and essential services



PGC Convene 2026 CTEC Congress to Strengthen Community Training and Employment Partnerships

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Provincial Government of Cavite brought together key stakeholders in technical-vocational education and training (TVET) and employment services during the 2026 Cavite Community Training and Employment Coordination (CTEC) Congress on October 8, 2026, at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City.

With the theme, "Empowering Local Communities Through Stronger CTEC Partnership for Quality, Inclusive, and Future-Ready TVET," the congress aims to strengthen collaboration among local government units, industry partners, training institutions, and employment service providers to expand access to skills development and employment opportunities for Caviteños.

TESDA Cavite Provincial Director Gerardo R. Marasigan formally opened the program followed by opening messages by TESDA IV-A Regional Director Engr. Jovencio M. Ferrer Jr., and Deputy Director General for Special Concerns DDG Felizardo R. Colambo will provide the inspirational message.

The congress featured discussions on the future of local TVET governance, community-based training, and the role of stronger partnerships in delivering skills development programs responsive to local needs.

Among the key sessions were "CTEC and the Future of Local TVET Governance," and "Train LOKAL – Bringing TVET Opportunities Closer to Communities." Both sessions were handled by Wendell P. Lalong-Isip, TESDA Specialist II and Regional Personal Focal Person for Community-Based Training Programs of TESDA IV-A.

The event also highlighted the LGU success stories and CTEC best practices, demonstrating how local initiatives and inter-agency cooperation can help bring training opportunities closer to communities and improve access to employment.

In the afternoon session, participants discussed the industry-driven TVET and the matching of local skills with employment opportunities. The session was led by Anggel Riz Venneze A. Balleta, Regional Planning Focal of TESDA IV-A. A panel discussion followed focusing on strengthening partnerships among TESDA, local government units, and industry stakeholders.

The congress likewise explores digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) in local TVET and public service, with Roehel Ramon Gurango, Executive Secretary of the National ICT Confederation of the Philippines (NICP), serving as resource speaker.

To translate the discussions into concrete initiatives, participants took part in the CTEC Action Planning Workshop, where they developed proposed local TVET actions and identify commitments for implementation. The activity culminated in the presentation of CTEC action plans and commitments, followed by the signing and adoption of the Provincial CTEC Commitment.

The program concluded with a closing message from Ms. Rizalie Pinpin-Enero, Provincial PESO Manager and CTEC President, followed by a photo opportunity and fellowship.

The initiative underscores the importance of collaborative governance in bringing quality technical-vocational education and employment services closer to local communities.--- OPIO

closer to communities across the province, helping residents access assistance without having to travel far.

With its seventh leg reaching Maragondon, the caravan continues to turn public service into a more accessible, community-centered experience—because when healthcare comes closer to home, better opportunities for healthier communities follow.--- OPIO

Laguna strengthens information gathering, coordination for unified action on El Niño

SANTA CRUZ, Laguna (PIA) — Disaster risk reduction and management officials from the province of Laguna, together with its cities and municipalities, convened to strengthen preparations against the threats, dangers, and other potential effects of the expected Very Strong El Niño phenomenon.

During the meeting held on Monday, October 12, at the Provincial Capitol in Santa Cruz, Laguna Governor Sol Aragonés praised the effective communications system among local governments in ensuring that the needs of Lagunenses are promptly addressed by concerned agencies.

“Nakakakuha kami ng mga impormasyon, ng malinaw sa bawat bayan dahil maganda ang coordination ng mga disaster head dito sa probinsya. Napakahalaga po nito sa akin dahil napakahalaga ng role na ginagampanan ninyo para agad makaresponde ang ating probinsya,” Aragonés said.

The Laguna governor outlined several scenarios that she identified as top priorities for the province’s action plans.

“Paano natin paghahandaan na matiyak ay may maiinom na tubig ang ating mga kababayan sa buong lalawigan ng Laguna? Ikalawa ay ang sunog. Ikatlo, importante ay nakahanda at naka-red alert ang bawat ospital. Ano man ang mangyari, handa ang ospital. Ito ang mga



elemento na kailangan nating ihanda,”

Aragones has instructed the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office to prepare early and develop contingency plans for the possible effects of extreme weather conditions.

She also pushed for the establishment of an El Niño Command Center where issues and vital information from local governments can be consolidated and where requests for augmentation from the provincial government can be readily addressed.

“Ang pinakamahalaga sa amin ay ang makausap kayo dahil nais ko pong malaman ang plano ng bawat bayan at ng bawat lungsod para naka-align po tayo sa gagawin po natin sakaling tuluyan nang manalasa at maranasan natin ang El Niño,” she added.

One of the recommendations raised by local governments was for Laguna to preemptively declare a State of Imminent Danger to facilitate the procurement of needed solar-powered pumps and other aid, as well as ensure faster and more reliable response to the phenomenon.

“Baka puwedeng

magamit to allow us na magamit din ang aming mga quick response funds because these are funds na naka-lump sum and walang appropriation. So in case po na magka-Super El Niño, we can use this to procure medicine and baka puwedeng ibili ng mga solar-powered pumps para ma-secure ang food security, said lawyer Jerome Carrillo, municipal disaster risk reduction and management head of Pila.

Meanwhile, the health sector is preparing for possible cases of heat stroke and heat exhaustion, with the Provincial Health Office exploring additional guidance and training from the Department of Health.

Dr. James Lee Ho of the PHO Laguna reiterated, “Ise-set namin ang preparedness ng ospital para i-manage ang mga cases na dadalhin sa atin. In cases na magkakaroon ng heatstroke, ‘yan ang paghahandaan namin magkakaroon ng announcement sa mga ospital na maghanda,”

Aragones affirms that the new ambulances awarded by the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. can be utilized as early as November for

Palace: 6.49-M Filipinos get first tranche of UPLIFT aid

MANILA — The first tranche of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (UPLIFT) assistance has reached around 6.49 million Filipinos, Malacañang said Tuesday.

As of Oct. 7, the government has disbursed a total of PHP19.55 billion for the implementation of the UPLIFT Program, the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) said in a statement.

The program, expanded upon the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., aims to assist 7.5 million vulnerable families affected by rising global oil and commodity prices. Under the expanded UPLIFT, around 3.5 million beneficiaries of the Pantawid Family-ang Pilipino Program

a more rapid health response.

The provincial government will reconvene with local disaster officials in two weeks to assess their respective response plans and ensure that all response operations are aligned.

The Laguna governor expressed confidence that the province can withstand the extreme effects and hazards posed by the Very Strong El Niño, provided that early preparation and mitigation efforts are put in place and all local government units work under a unified approach to address the risks posed by the extreme weather phenomenon. (CH/PIA-Laguna)



(4Ps) and the Walang Gutom Program will receive a one-time additional cash assistance of PHP2,000.

Other beneficiaries include around 2.5 million poor and near-poor households identified through the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS), as well as 1.5 million low-income workers and families validated through the Social Security System (SSS). UPLIFT beneficiaries under the CBMS and SSS will receive PHP2,000 per month from July to December.

Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said the government would take into consideration the findings of a recent survey to improve assistance delivery and identify ways to provide workers with more sustained support.

The survey, conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) on May 26 to 27, found that 96 percent of

SSS... FR. P. 1

sioners to help them cope with inflation and higher energy costs. SSS regularly reviews its investment strategy and strictly complies with the Social Security Act of 2018 and its internal policies to safeguard the pension fund. PR

1,200 surveyed transport workers who received PHP5,000 in fuel assistance under UPLIFT said the aid helped them stay on or return to their routes.

Commissioned by the Australian government’s Social Protection, Inclusion and Gender Equality (SPRING) Program, the survey covered 1,200 registered Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) cash relief beneficiaries.

Recto welcomed the findings, saying the independent survey provided concrete feedback on how government assistance was reaching its intended beneficiaries.

“This is proof that the President’s timely assistance is working and making a big difference,” he said.

Recto also noted that the survey identified opportunities to strengthen social protection, as more than a third of respondents were not enrolled in any government program, including the SSS and PhilHealth.

“This points to an opportunity to use the DSWD’s existing beneficiary database as a gateway to connect more vulnerable workers with other government services and social protection programs,” Recto said. (PNA)

DTI cautions consumers to avoid panic buying, hoarding bottled water amid El Niño threats

LUCENA CITY (PIA) — The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) reminds consumers to remain vigilant and make informed purchasing decisions amid concerns over the possible impacts of the Very Strong El Niño, reminding the public that panic buying and hoarding bottled water may trigger unnecessary fear and supply concerns.

According to DTI CALABARZON Regional Director Marissa Argente, panic buying and hoarding could drive up demand for essential goods, potentially leading to supply shortages and limiting other consumers' access to basic necessities.

"Hindi tayo kinakailangan mag-panic, kasi kapag tayo ay nag-panic, uubusan lang natin ang iba. Hindi 'yon ang tamang reaksiyon. Ang kinakailangan, magtipid, at nang lahat ay magkaroon ng pagkakataon. So, antabayan lang tayo kung ano pa 'yung magiging other directives pagdating sa ating pangangailangan sa tubig," Director Argente said in an interview with the Philippine Information Agency.

The Trade department assures that it conducts regular price monitoring to ensure that establishments and businesses do not take advantage of the challenges facing the country, by imposing unjustified price increases.



The DTI director said that its Fair Trade Group, coordinates and engages with manufacturers of basic necessities and prime commodities to discuss and review proposed price adjustments in accordance with existing regulations.

However, some manufacturers and brands may implement price increases due to various factors, including the potential impacts of a Very Strong El Niño, rising fuel costs, higher electricity charges, and other operational expenses. These manufacturers and brands may fall outside the scope of the DTI's price monitoring and regulatory jurisdiction.

Such increases could affect the prices of certain goods in the market, underscoring the importance of continued price monitoring and consumer awareness.

"Maraming factors talaga that play doon sa decision ng isang company to increase its prices, pero ang ma-assure lang namin

ay kinakailangan talagang magtulungan ang gobyerno at ang ating mga negosyo kasi hindi naman maaari na 'yung isa lang ang kilos, kinakailangan talaga partnership ito kaya ang DTI nakikipag-usap talaga sa manufacturers," Argente said.

As the DTI observes Consumer Welfare Month this October, the agency aims to strengthen consumer awareness by encouraging the public to make informed purchasing decisions, understand their rights and responsibilities, and adopt wise buying and saving practices amid concerns over the possible impacts of a Very Strong El Niño, the ongoing fuel crisis, and other economic challenges.

She further stated, "Sinasabihan tayo na maghanda; bilang mga responsableng consumers, tayo ay magtipid. 'Yan talaga ang message na gustong iparating ng ating national government sa lahat. Everybody is a consumer. Kahit ikaw ay may negosyo, con-

DOTr: Train rides from Clark Airport to Mandalay possible by 2029

MANILA — The North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) will carry airport passengers and other commuters from Clark International Airport in Pampanga to Mandalay in Valenzuela City by 2029, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Wednesday.

DOTr Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan said the NSCR will open in phases, starting with the first 27 kilometers and seven stations by the end of 2027.

"Next year, makikita natin na may tumatak-bong tren rito (we can already see a train running here)," Batan said.

The second phase will extend the line from Malolos to Clark Airport, adding 53 kilometers, and open between the end of 2028 and early 2029. Operations will then expand south from Alabang to Calamba by 2031, with the central segment connecting Valenzuela and Alabang targeted for full line operations by 2033.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the agency to speed up construction of the NSCR to ease the daily commute of Filipinos in the northern and southern provinces adjacent to Metro Manila.

On Tuesday, the DOTr, members of the House of Representatives and officials from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted a joint site inspection of NSCR facilities.

"With the firm backing of Congress and our project partners, we are pushing forward to ensure that the Filipinos get a world-class, reli-

ous activities for the month and encourages the public, particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) across the region to partici-

Director Argente also shared that the agency has lined up vari-



MALANDAY HUB. An aerial view of the North-South Commuter Railway's Mandalay Station and Depot in Valenzuela City on Tuesday (Oct. 13, 2026). The Department of Transportation said on Wednesday that the railway will carry commuters between Clark International Airport in Pampanga and Mandalay by 2029. (Photo courtesy of DOTr)

able, safe, and efficient commuter rail system," Acting Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez said.

During the inspection, House Committee on Flagship Programs and Projects chairperson Rep. Kenneth Gatchalian assured the DOTr that "we are here to support. We are all here to help out and to ensure na ma-achieve natin 'yung target dates natin (that we achieve our target dates)."

The inspection covered the operations control centers at Clark Depot and Mandalay Depot, and platform and track alignment progress at Balagtas Station in Bulacan. At Mandalay, the legislators tested a train simulator and viewed electric multiple unit train sets stationed along the tracks.

Spanning 147.26 km across 30 local government units, the 35-station NSCR will connect Clark International Airport and Calamba, Laguna.

ous activities for the month and encourages the public, particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) across the region to partici-

The system is designed to serve about 800,000 passengers daily and cut end-to-end travel time from more than four hours to two hours. It will have 51 commuter train sets and seven express train sets for direct airport service, with all eight cars of the fourth trainset already delivered and positioned at Mandalay Depot.

The Japanese government, through JICA, and the Asian Development Bank jointly finance the project.

Also present were Minister for Economic Affairs Naobumi Yokota of the Embassy of Japan; JICA Philippines Chief Representative Takashi Baba; Representatives Agatha Cruz, Elijah San Fernando, Antolin Oreta, Mark Anthony Santos and Monique Yazmin Lagdameo; Assistant Secretary for Railways Eduardo Danilo Macabulos; and Posco E&C project manager Jae-Heung Kim. (Raymond Carl Dela Cruz/PNA)

pate in the initiatives aimed at promoting consumer awareness, and fostering fair and responsible business practices. (COP/PIA CALABARZON)

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER THAT'S NATIONAL IN SCOPE

VOL. XXVII NO. 27

OCTOBER 15-21, 2026

P10.00

NLEX-C5 Northlink Section Nears Completion, Enhancing Road Connectivity



Motorists from North and Central Luzon and western Metro Manila can look forward to faster, more convenient access to Quezon City as the NLEX-C5 Northlink Mindanao Avenue to Quirino Highway section nears completion, with construction now at 96% on the 2-kilometer section.

The new all-weather elevated expressway is designed to give motorists with a safer and more convenient travel experience. It will be equipped with CCTV and speed management systems; advanced RFID readers and Neology antennas for toll collection; roadway lighting, traffic signs, pavement markings, and protective barriers and re-



flective safety devices to enhance road safety, visibility, and traffic management. The segment will extend NLEX eastward to Quirino Highway, providing motorists with

Marcos sees WPS escalation, vows PH won't back down

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Sunday warned of a new phase of escalation in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) following the reported blocking by Chinese personnel of a medical evacuation for a Filipino sailor aboard the BRP Sierra Madre.

He vowed the Philippines would continue defending its sovereign rights.

“Unfortunately, there really is an escalation,” Marcos said at a media briefing in Singapore, noting that Chinese personnel were increasingly imposing requirements and demanding permission for Philippine operations in the disputed waters.

The President said the latest incident would figure in discussions with Beijing, including those concerning the provisional under-



standing between the two countries and negotiations for a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.

Marcos said the medical evacuation incident was particularly distressing because the Filipino sailor needed treatment.

“Medevac lang naman ‘yan eh. May sakit nga ‘yung tao. Bakit naman tayo, ba’t tayo naman pipigilan para gamutin ‘yung tao natin na may sakit (It was only a medical evacuation. The person was sick. Why would we be stopped from retrieving our own personnel for medical treatment)?” he said.

He noted that even during wartime, humanitarian missions such as those involving the Red Cross are allowed to pass.

Despite the reported obstruction, Marcos said Filipino personnel managed to carry out their mission through their skill, courage and determination.

He praised those supporting Filipino fishers and maintaining the presence of the BRP Sierra Madre, saying they help defend the country’s territory and sovereign rights.

maintaining civil works needed to prepare the new segment for operations.

The President said the Philippines is receiving assistance from several countries that support its position based on international law, including through new forms of engagement in the region.

He stressed that the Philippines would not comply with what it considers unauthorized demands for permission to conduct operations in its own territory.

“Nobody . . . In my own property, you’re going to tell me what I’m allowed to do and not to do, within my own territory?” Marcos said.

He added that the Philippines continued to issue Notices to Airmen as part of standard operating procedures, but rejected the notion that it needed to seek permission for its activities.

Marcos said the latest developments put Filipino fishers and Coast Guard personnel at risk, underscoring the need to sustain the country’s presence and support operations in the WPS. (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*

Psalm 37:10-11