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DA lifts temporary ban on imported poultry products from California

MANILA – The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday lifted the temporary import ban on poultry products from California.

The DA issued Department Circular No. 21 after US veterinary authorities reported to the World Organ-

isation for Animal Health (WOAH) the resolution of all Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreaks in the country.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the order is a significant move to ensure food security.

“Lifting the import ban restores vital trade flows while protecting local agriculture. It ensures access to high-quality poultry products without compromising biosecurity,” he said.

It is also expected to help stabilize the sup-
(Turn to p. 2)

Inter-agency body to oversee PhilHealth digital transformation formed

MANILA – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has institutionalized an inter-agency body that will supervise the Philippine Health Insurance Corp.’s (PhilHealth) digital transformation to ensure the delivery of “faster, corruption-free, and citizen-centered” healthcare services.

Under Administrative Order (AO) 42, a project management group

(PMG) is created to manage and oversee the implementation of PhilHealth’s Digital Transformation Program aimed at establishing a “comprehensive, integrated, interoperable, progressive, secure, and sustainable Philippine Digital Health System.”

PhilHealth will lead the PMG, with the Department of Informa-

tion and Communications and Technology (DICT) serving as co-chair.

Other members include the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

“The PMG shall ensure that the PhilHealth Digital Transformation Program is implemented in alignment with the Phil-

ippine Development Plan 2023-2028,” AO 42, signed by Marcos on March 6 but was made public on May 12, read.

“All policies, systems, and activities under this initiative shall conform to national standards on data governance, data privacy, cybersecurity, interoperability, and citizen-centric digital transformation.”

The PMG is directed to convene and adopt a detailed 2026-2027 Roadmap with measurable milestones within 30 days from the effectivity of the order.

It is mandated to create a comprehensive, multi-year roadmap with clear targets, timelines, and success indicators for PhilHealth’s digital transformation.

It also has the authority to exercise central-

ized oversight over the design, development, integration, deployment, and operationalization of PhilHealth’s digital systems.

AO 42 also allows the PMG to institutionalize automated, auditable, and traceable digital processes to prevent fraud and enable real-time monitoring and post-audit capabilities.

The PMG is also directed to ensure com-
(Turn to p.2)

More than 6k CALABARZON drivers find relief in DSWD fuel aid

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — Following the distribution of cash assistance for tricycle drivers, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has also rolled out the Cash Relief Assistance (CRA) program for more than 6,000 jeepney drivers to provide relief amid rising fuel costs.

Last May 13, the DSWD distributed the assistance to more



than 6,000 jeepney drivers worth P5,000 each. The CRA payout was conducted in key areas simultaneously, including Tagaytay

City in Cavite, the cities of San Pablo and Sta. Rosa in Laguna, Binangonan in Rizal, Batangas City, and Tayabas City and Lucena

City in Quezon Province.

Meanwhile, more than 500 tricycle drivers in Tagkawayan town as well as the island municipalities of Polilio and Burdeos also received cash assistance.

In a statement, the DSWD IV-A assured tricycle and jeepney drivers in the region that the CRA distribution will continue
(Turn to p.2)



HEALTHCARE SERVICES. Members process documents and claims at the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation office in Mother Ignacia Avenue, Quezon City on Tuesday (May 12, 2026). Under the National Health Insurance Program, PhilHealth provides health insurance coverage and ensures affordable, acceptable, available, and accessible healthcare services for all citizens. (PNA photo by Joan Bondoc)

INTER-AGENCY. . FR. P. 1

pliance of digital initiatives with national policies and standards on ICT architecture, cybersecurity, data privacy, and interoperability.

It must also make sure that PhilHealth's digital transformation yields concrete and measurable outcomes, taking into consideration relevant local and international practices in digital health systems as benchmarks for performance and continuous improvement.

It is also tasked to facilitate the mobilization of financial, technical, and human resources, as well as assess and mitigate technical, operational, financial, legal and cybersecurity risks.

The PMC may establish a technical working group composed

of technical experts to provide operational and technical support, conduct system assessments, develop implementation plans, and ensure alignment with national data interoperability standards.

The inter-agency body will be rendered "functus officio" (having performed one's duty) upon the attainment of the objectives, unless sooner abolished or dissolved by the President.

The funding requirements for the implementation of the order will come from the available appropriations of PMG member-agencies.

AO 42 takes effect immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. (PNA)

DA. . FR. P. 1

ply and retail prices of poultry products, which experienced temporary price fluctuations during the import ban.

With the restrictions lifted, the government will allow the entry of domestic and wild birds from California, as well as products like poultry meat, day-old chicks, eggs, and semen.

All import transactions will proceed ac-

ording to existing rules and regulations, and strict biosecurity standards on poultry imports will also be maintained, the agency said.

The DA also reaffirmed its commitment to closely monitor global HPAI developments and enforce stringent import protocols to protect the local poultry sector. (PNA)

MORE THAN 6K. FR. P. 1

within the next weeks.

To account for the beneficiary drivers, the DSWD is urging affected drivers to coordinate with their respective transport groups.

"Magpapatuloy ang pamamahagi ng assis-

tance sa mga tricycle driver at jeepney driver sa rehiyon sa mga susunod na araw. Kung kaya't ang mga nasabing driver ay pinapayuhang makipag-ugnayan sa kani-kanilang asosasyon para sa schedule at update sa

Startup coffee brand aims to hit 800 units by end-2026

MANILA – Banking on Filipinos' love for coffee along with more affordable offerings, an official of grab-and-go coffee chain Pickup Coffee expressed confidence for continued expansion amidst the current economic challenges.

To date, the brand has around 500 coffee kiosks around the country, mostly in Metro Manila, and about a hundred stores in Mexico City.

The goal is to have around 800 stores by end-2026, Diego Lorenzo, Pickup Coffee Global Chair and chief executive officer, said in an interview Tuesday night.

The company is now open to franchising, with an initial investment of PHP2 million for the coffee truck's

stock, equipment and construction.

Lorenzo said they plan to open as many as 200 more company-owned stores nationwide this year, with the focus on Northern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

He said they cater to people from all walks of life, from those who can afford high-end brands but are open to cheaper options with quality offerings, to those in the C and D levels.

"The more accessible you are, the faster you will grow," he said.

The brand has received capital from venture capitalists and Lorenzo said this is a sign of the brand's potential to post stronger growth going forward.

Rami Chahwan, president of Pickup Coffee,



EXPANSION. Officials of start-up Pickup Coffee express optimism about the growth of their kiosks this year to 800 units from the current 500, driven by strong operations and the franchising bid. The company on Wednesday (May 13, 2026) is offering its franchise license for PHP2 million, which covers initial stocks, equipment and the coffee truck. (PNA grabbed by Pickup Coffee website)

said franchising will complement the existing branches, citing lessons learned over the last 48 months.

He said they have piloted 10 franchise stores over the last three months to ensure they can efficiently cater to more units once this bid is in full

bloom. "This is basically a complimentary challenge. It's kind of an add-on to what we're doing. And since our mission is to uplift everyone, everywhere, we want to try to reach out to everyone, everywhere," he added. (PNA)

DSWD. . FR. P. 4

is most meaningful when it is participatory, when it empowers people, and when it bridges knowledge and action," Romualdez said.

A Technical Working Group will be established to oversee coordination between the DSWD and UP-CSWCD, including annual planning, development of guidelines, identification of field instruction areas

and continuous program review.

The partnership forms part of the DSWD's continuing efforts to strengthen participatory governance, community empowerment, and capacity-building initiatives in line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to ensure inclusive, responsive, and sustainable development programs for Filipino communities. (PNA)

distribusyon," it said.

Launched to provide relief to the public transportation sector, the CRA is part of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) to

provide Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) drivers with funds for their daily needs. (PB-PIA CALABARZON with reports from DSWD Region IV-A)

**A joyful heart is good medicine, But a crushed spirit saps one's strength
Proverbs 17:22**

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Financial assistance distributed to Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic patients in Cavite

The Provincial Government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Health Officer successfully held the financial assistance distribution for patients of the Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic recently at the New Provincial Government Center, Trece Martires City, reinforcing its commitment to accessible and continuous healthcare for infants and their families.

Messages of support and inspiration were delivered by Dr. Nonie John L. Dalisay, Provincial Health Officer II, Dr. Nelson C. Soriano, Provincial Health Officer I, Ms. Lisa Madlangbayan - Development Management Officer IV of PDHO - Cavite, Ms. Maria Dolores Peñafiel, Social Welfare Officer of OPSWDO, and Ms. Marife Bautista, Legislative staff on behalf of Board Member Romel Enriquez, emphasizing the role of early detection and continuous treatment in improving child health outcomes.

The key highlight of the event was the formal distribution of financial assistance in coordination with the Office of the Provincial Social Welfare Development Officer and the Office of the Provincial Treasurer. The assistance aims to ease the financial burden of families whose children require ongoing medical attention.

Ms. Jhonalyn D. Bantigue, Follow up Nurse of NBS-CC, presented a brief background of the Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic process, helping attendees better understand the services and support available to them.

This initiative reflects the province's ongoing efforts to strengthen public health programs and ensure that every child receives the care they need for a healthy future.--- OPIO



2026 Pre-Employment Fair in LPU-Cavite

Fostering a shared commitment to prepare students for the professional and corporate world, the Office of the Provincial Public Employment Service Manager (OPPESM) and Lyceum of the Philippines – Cavite (LPU-C) worked hand in hand in successfully facilitating the two-day Pre-Employment Fair held at LPU-C recently.

The event brought together 1,292 attendees for career talks and seminars, equipping them



Cavite-Korea collaborated for the distribution of ICT equipment

Reinforcing its continued efforts to strengthen digital and educational technology in the province, the Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Provincial Information and Communications Technology Office (PICTO) under the supervision of Officer-in-Charge Ms. Annie Tazon, led the distribution of ICT equipment at the New Provincial Government Center recently.

The equipment was generously donated by the Ministry of Education and the Jeonbuk State Office of Education of the Republic of Korea to Cavite public schools, supporting primary and secondary educators with updated tools to enhance the delivery and quality of education.

During the turnover ceremony, six (6) Cavite public schools were identified as recipients of the ICT equipment, namely: Amadeo Elementary School, Amaya Elementary School, Bagong Buhay Elementary School, Lumil Integrated High School, Rosario Elementary School, and San Gabriel III Elementary School. In addition, teachers and support staff who underwent comprehensive training in Korea in 2025 were also awarded laptops.

Governor Francisco Gabriel D. Remulla, together with 1st District Board Member Jygs Gandia, Provincial Administrator Engr. Gilbert Gandia, and Chief of Staff Ferdinand Belamide, joined the activity, reaffirming their support for the education sector and their commitment to nurturing globally competitive and digitally literate learners in Cavite.

The Cavite-Korea partnership, which spans over two decades, continues to empower and equip Cavite educators through sustained collaboration in advancing educational technology.--- OPIO

with the necessary skills and knowledge for career pathing and job readiness. Additionally, OPPESM delivered a lecture on Labor Market Information to further guide and support participants in informed decision-making.

Moreover, 403 participants took the opportunity to explore and engage with on-site national government agencies to process requirements and secure essential documents needed for employment preparation and application.

The Pre-Employment Fair served as an avenue to ensure that graduating students and alumni are professionally prepared as they embark on their journey into the employment landscape.--- OPIO



NextGen Naic Leaders Explore Governance Through Educational Tour at the New Provincial Government Center

The Provincial Government of Cavite, through the Office of the Provincial Tourism Officer headed by Ms. Elinia Imelda Rozelle S. Sangalang, successfully conducted the Educational Tour for the NextGen Naic Leaders on April 29, 2026 at the New Provincial Government Center in Trece Martires City, reinforcing its steadfast commitment to youth engagement and leadership development.

Led by Ms. Trisha Emerlyn D. Santiaguel from the Office of the Vice Mayor of Naic, eight student leaders were given a guided educational experience designed to deepen their understanding of local governance and public service in action.

The tour featured an orientation on provincial office processes facilitated by the Office of the Provincial Governor (OPG-E-REG) and the Office of the Provincial Youth Development Office (OPYDO). Participants also gained meaningful insights at the Legislative Building, where Atty. Nathaniel C. De Leon conducted a brief orientation on ordinance-making, followed by an observation of a public hearing at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Session Hall.

The educational experience further included visits to key institutional sites such as the Legislative Library and concluded with a commemorative photo opportunity at the Roof Deck.

Supporting the successful implementation of the activity were Tourism Operations Officers I, Scarlett I. Bantog and Krizza Ricohermoso, who ensured the smooth and organized flow of the entire tour.

The initiative highlights the province's continuing dedication to cultivating informed, civic-minded, and empowered youth-transforming exposure into understanding, and understanding into meaningful leadership.--- OPIO

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

Proverbs 17: 1

DSWD, UP strengthen community-driven dev't, social work education

MANILA – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through its Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) program, on Wednesday entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development (UP-CSWCD) to strengthen collaboration in community-driven development and social work education.

The partnership, which was signed at the Office of the Chancellor of the University of the Philippines-Diliman in Quezon City, seeks to align academic learning with actual community development work by integrating KALAHI-CIDSS modalities as learning engagement platforms for UP-CSWCD students in the Field Instruction Program.

Undersecretary for Operations Monina Josefina Romualdez represented the DSWD during the ceremonial MOA signing.

Under the agreement, social work and community development students will participate in community immersion, practicum, and selected research activities in identified KALAHI-CIDSS municipalities, allowing them to gain firsthand experience in grassroots development initiatives.

“Through the KALAHI-CIDSS, the DSWD continues to advance



PARTNERSHIP. The Department of Social Welfare and Development enters into a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development at the Office of the Chancellor of the University of the Philippines-Diliman in Quezon City on Wednesday (May 13, 2026). The agreement seeks to strengthen collaboration in community-driven development and social work education. (Photo courtesy of DSWD)

community-driven development—empowering communities to take the lead in identifying their needs and shaping their own development pathways. At the same time, UP-CSWCD continues to produce outstanding future social workers and development practitioners, equipping them not only with knowledge but also with the values and lived experiences needed to serve the poor and the marginalized with competence and compassion. This Memorandum of Agreement bridges these two strengths,” Romualdez said in her message.

The DSWD official emphasized that the partnership will provide students with wider exposure to government-led community-based social development initiatives and deeper knowledge of the KALAHI-CIDSS program.

“It creates a space where learning goes beyond the classroom, where students engage

directly with communities through field experiences, and where our programs benefit from academic insight, research, and fresh perspectives from the academe,” she said.

Student interns participating in field activities will receive cash-for-work from the DSWD’s KALAHI-CIDSS program to help support their educational expenses while contributing to program implementation.

“As we move forward with the Panahon ng Pagkilos: Philippine Community Resilience Project, the successor initiative to the KALAHI-CIDSS, this collaboration becomes even more crucial. It strengthens how we engage communities, enhances how we design and implement interventions, and ensures that our work remains responsive, inclusive, and sustainable. More importantly, this partnership reflects a shared belief that development
(Back to p.2)

Experts push for appropriate dengue cases management, vaccination

MANILA – Improper treatment and late intervention are major drivers of mortality among dengue cases nationwide.

At a health forum in Quezon City on Tuesday, Philippine Foundation for Vaccination Director Dr. Lulu Bravo noted that while dengue has been prevalent in the Philippines for 70 years, the medical community still struggles with appropriate case management.

“Sa totoo lang po, maraming doktor, hindi pa rin alam mag-manage ng (To be honest, many doctors still do not know how to manage) dengue, period,” she said.

She said 80 percent of dengue cases are asymptomatic, while only 20 percent manifest symptoms.

Deaths often occur because of failure to recognize the transition from mild symptoms to severe dengue. Patients may experience hypovolemic shock due to late hydration, or conversely, suffer from pulmonary congestion when given too much fluid.

“Sumobra na ang tubig sa katawan. At doon po, marami ang namamatay sa dengue. Kailangan talagang pag-aralan po ng mga doktor ang pag-manage ng appropriate case sa dengue (Fluid overload is a leading cause of death in dengue patients. It is imperative that physicians thoroughly study the appropriate clinical management of dengue cases),” Bravo said.

She emphasized that the one-percent mortality rate among hos-

pitalized patients could be significantly reduced if doctors were better trained in scientific, evidence-based management.

PMA Ad Hoc Committee on Dengue Advocacy Chair Dr. Erica Tania Davillo said the Philippines has overtaken its neighbors by a significant margin.

Data show the country reached 285,109 cases, nearly double that of second-ranked Vietnam at 168,000.

The disparity in fatalities showed that the Philippines recorded 1,132 deaths, while Bangladesh followed with 412.

Other countries in the region have reported zero deaths.

Health experts are looking at countries like Sri Lanka as a model for clinical management.

PMA Ad Hoc Committee on Dengue Advocacy member Dr. Enrique Tayag said the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation spent PHP3.5 billion on dengue in 2024, yet this only accounted for 30 percent of the country’s total direct and indirect costs, which are estimated at PHP11.5 billion annually.

“Parang tina-tax tayo ng dengue ng ganong kalaking halaga (It’s as if dengue is taxing us of such a massive amount),” he said.

Tayag noted that for every 1,000 people infected in the country, four die, whereas other countries have reduced that rate to one in 10,000.

He also emphasized the need for a comprehensive long-term plan to achieve Zero Dengue Deaths by 2030 which is built on

five pillars:

-- Surveillance: Intensified tracking to address the “all-year-round” nature of the virus;

-- Clinical Management: Standardizing care to prevent fatalities;

-- Vector Management: Moving beyond the 4S strategy to address mosquito breeding sites that persist despite information campaigns;

-- Vaccine Development: Utilizing World Health Organization pre-qualified new-generation vaccines already used in 40 countries;

-- Communication and Advocacy: Enlisting the help of high-profile victims

As a leading researcher and vaccine advocate, Bravo appealed to policymakers and the public to embrace immunization as the most effective tool to end the 70-year cycle of the disease.

“Based on the years and years of vaccine development, vaccine is the way forward. Because 70 years have proven that no matter what we do, if we don’t do a definitive control ... we will never achieve [zero deaths],” Bravo said.

She stressed that while vector control and other measures are part of a comprehensive approach, vaccines are the “most important control measure” for vector-borne diseases.

“Please believe it. Vaccine is the most important control measure. It will save lives, and I hope that our policymakers are listening,” she added. (PNA)

Makiling Center strengthens partnerships to safeguard protected area, buffer zones



LOS BAÑOS, Laguna (PIA) — The University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB) Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems (MCME) continues to strengthen partnerships with government agencies, local government units, private institutions, and environmental groups to address the growing challenges in protecting the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve.

In an interview with the Philippine Information Agency, MCME university extension specialist Leonardo Barua said Mt. Makiling covers around 4,200 hectares of forest reserve, making conservation efforts challenging given the center's limited manpower.

"Mt. Makiling is 4,200 hectares na forest reserve and kakuntang kung tutuusin yung staff ng Makiling Center para pangalagaan itong bundok na ito, and that's why we are reaching out sa mga partners para tulungan kami na pangalagaan yung bundok," Barua said, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts in preserving the moun-

tain ecosystem.

Located between Laguna and Batangas, Mt. Makiling is one of the country's ASEAN Heritage Parks due to its recognized forest reserves and biodiversity areas. The mountain serves as a critical watershed that supplies water to nearby communities, agricultural lands, and parts of Laguna de Bay. It is also home to hundreds of plant and animal species, including endemic flora and fauna found only in the Philippines.

Managed by the University of the Philippines Los Baños through the MCME, Mt. Makiling has long been recognized for its ecological, educational, and scientific importance. The forest reserve is frequently used for biodiversity research, environmental education, ecotourism activities, and forest conservation initiatives.

According to Barua, the center has been encouraging private institutions to align their corporate social responsibility initiatives with environmental protection efforts within Mt. Makiling.

Instead of conducting

short-term activities at different locations, companies are encouraged to adopt points along the mountain's boundaries and participate in long-term tree-planting and forest-nurturing activities.

"Number 1 siguro dito yung pakikipag-partner namin sa mga private institutions instead na ang kanilang mga CSR activities ay kung saan-saan gagawin, instead na sila ay nag-a-adopt ng mga certain points ng mga boundaries ng Makiling na hindi niyo kailangang pag-exert-an ng certain efforts. Nagko-conduct kami dito ng tree planting and nurturing activity kung saan aabot ng years ang span ng partnership with them," he said.

Barua also cited boundary protection as one of the center's recent concerns, particularly in ensuring that nearby private properties do not overlap with the protected forest reserve.

To address this, MCME has been coordinating with the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority and the Department of En-



Tanza Strengthens Public Health Through World Immunization Week Celebration

In line with its commitment to delivering accessible and quality health-care services, a total of 84 children and infants were successfully immunized during the celebration of World Immunization Week held on April 29, 2026, at the Municipal Hall of Tanza, Cavite.

The activity was attended by Municipal Councilors Derek Matro and Alexis Dones, who expressed their support for initiatives that promote public health and ensure the protection of young Tanzeños through immunization.

The event was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Municipal Government of Tanza, led by Mayor Archangelo "SM" Matro, in partnership with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Tanza Rural Health Unit. Free vaccines were provided to eligible beneficiaries as part of the municipality's continued commitment to safeguarding community health.

Also present to show their support were Cavite 8th District Board Member Jasmin Maligaya-Bautista and Dr. Nelson C. Soriano, Provincial Health Officer I, who underscored the importance of immunization and noted that children who receive vaccines are fortunate to be better protected against preventable diseases.

The activity was part of the nationwide celebration of World Immunization Week (April 24–30), led by the Department of Health (DOH).---OPIO

vironment and Natural Resources to help maintain and verify the official boundaries of Mt. Makiling.

"For here we are partnering with national agencies like NAMRIA, DENR para siguraduhin na intact yung ating boundaries at, siyempre, kung tayo ay hihingi ng tulong sa mga volunteers, mga NGOS and advocates, definitely kailangan namin ng tulong para siguraduhin na intact yung ating boundaries," Barua stated.

He likewise called on volunteers, non-government organizations, and environmental advocates to support conservation efforts and help protect the mountain's natural re-

sources.

Meanwhile, Barua highlighted the important role of local government units in protecting the areas surrounding Mt. Makiling, particularly the designated buffer zones located outside the forest reserve's boundaries.

He said that existing presidential proclamations identify surrounding areas as environmentally sensitive zones, where land-use activities should be carefully regulated.

"We are partnering with LGUs and DENR para siguraduhin na yung land use sa mismong labas lang ng boundary hindi siya mababago nang so-

bra," Barua said.

He warned that excessive urbanization near the mountain could result in the so-called "edge effect," wherein developments such as subdivisions and other infrastructure projects may gradually affect portions of the protected forest ecosystem.

Because of this, the Makiling Center assures its close coordination with direct stakeholders to ensure that development activities around Mt. Makiling remain balanced with environmental protection efforts and biodiversity targets, not only in the Philippines but across Southeast Asia. (AM/PIA-4A)

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DOH Simbakalusugan brings essential healthcare services to Calabarzon communities



CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) — The Department of Health (DOH) in Calabarzon continues to expand access to healthcare services in communities across the region through its Simbakalusugan program, with residents of Talim Island in Rizal province as the latest beneficiaries.

In partnership with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines — Episcopal Commission on Health Care (CBCP-ECHC), the program aims to bring quality, affordable, and compassionate healthcare services closer to communities, particularly those in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

According to DOH

Calabarzon, more than 350 residents of Barangay Janosa in Talim Island, Binangonan, Rizal benefited from the medical mission conducted on May 9.

Among the services provided were medical consultations, vital signs assessment, tuberculosis screening through chest X-ray, electrocardiogram (ECG), dental services including tooth extraction, oral prophylaxis, and fluoride varnish application, mental health counseling, HIV testing and counseling, nutrition services, and the distribution of free medicines.

Beyond the delivery of medical assistance, the Simbakalusugan program highlights the growing collaboration

among government agencies, faith-based organizations, health-care workers, and local communities in advancing inclusive and community-centered healthcare services.

The Simbakalusugan initiative was introduced by DOH Secretary Teodoro Herbosa during the third National Hospital Chaplaincy Conference last year and was formally launched on February 14 in Imus City, Cavite as part of the observance of the 34th World Day of the Sick.

Since its official launch, the program has continued to reach underserved communities across Calabarzon through a series of medical outreach missions.

On April 11, DOH

La Salle in command at inaugural UAAP golf



GOLF ACTION. La Salle's Perry Bucay in action during the UAAP Season 88 golf tournament at Tagaytay Midlands on Tuesday (May 12, 2026). La Salle leads the individual and team races in both men's and women's divisions. (Pilipinas Golf photo)

MANILA — De La Salle University delivered a brilliant second-round performance Tuesday to tighten its grip on both the individual and team races with 36 holes still left to play in the 72-hole UAAP Season 88 golf tournament at Tagaytay Midlands.

Perry Bucay fired a 71 while Zach Castro shot a 72 as they continue to anchor the Green Archers' charge, staying 1-2 in the men's individual standings for 36-hole totals of 143 and 145, respectively.

Their consistent showing also boosted La Salle's bid in team

Calabarzon, together with the CBCP-ECHC, Diocese of Antipolo, and Sta. Cecilia Parish, conducted a Simbakalusugan activity at Sta. Cecilia Parochial School in Barangay Maly, San Mateo, Rizal.

Earlier, on February 22, another Simbakalusugan mission was held in Barangay Cuyambay, Tanay, Rizal, where residents from nearby communities and members of Indigenous Peoples

competition as junior golf standout Martin Lu debuted with a 74 and counted for the team's 217 output in the four-to-play, three-to-count format tournament.

With a two-day aggregate of 440, the Green Archers stretched their overnight five-stroke lead into a massive 26-shot advantage over the University of the Philippines (UP), which compiled a 466 after a 240 behind Joshua Buenaventura's 75, Emilio Carpio's 81 and Miggy Roque's 84.

Buenaventura remained at third in individual play with 149,

groups from remote sitios also received medical assistance and healthcare support.

Through Simbakalusugan, the DOH Calabarzon reaffirmed its commitment strengthen efforts to make essential healthcare services more accessible to vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities while promoting solidarity and shared responsibility in public health service delivery. (PIA4A with reports from DOH 4A)

while Ateneo's Glenn Unabia carded a 74 for 150, and La Salle's Zedi Lagman pooled a 154 after a 78 for fifth.

"We're not going to step on the brakes. We're trying to make a statement here, especially since it's the first year of UAAP golf," said Bucay of La Salle's approach this week.

Ateneo moved within five strokes off UP with a 471 after a 231 as Unabia registered a two-over round, Schmuel Tan chipped in a 75, while Mich Romero added an 82, while the University of Santo Tomas and Adamson took the next two spots in the five-team field with 251-512 and 367-737, respectively.

The Lady Archers also seized control of both the individual and team competitions.

Julia Lua recovered from an opening-round 86, firing a 79 highlighted by a birdie on the last hole. The inaugural ICTSI Intercollegiate individual champion jumped from third place to grab a three-stroke lead with a 36-hole total of 165. (PNA)