

DTI 4-A launches 2nd OTOP hub in Cavite

To market more innovative and competitive micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with strong brands that contribute significantly to the national economy, the Department of Trade and Industry Region 4-A launched its second One Town, One Product (OTOP) Hub in the province of Cavite on February 14, 2023 at the 2nd Floor Main Square Mall, **>> P2**



LGUs to enjoy more autonomy once devolution starts

Local government units (LGUs) will enjoy more autonomy in managing resources when the full devolution of basic services and facilities from the national government is implemented.

In a recent radio interview, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said facilitating the devolution of functions to the localities would be an advantage as they will be given **>> P2**

Brides flex 'veggie bouquets' at Cavite mass wedding
 CAVITE CITY – A total of 32 couples officially tied the knot as husbands and wives during a "kasalang bayan" (mass wedding) at Chua's Pavillion here on Monday afternoon, with the brides proudly carrying their bouquets of vegetables, instead of flowers.
 The unique mass wedding was organized by the city government here. "They are just being practical with their unique flower bouquet composed of mixed vegetables, including the highly-priced 'sibuyas' (onion), in- **>> P3**

Comelec starts delivery of supplies for Cavite special polls



Comelec spokesperson John Rex Laudiangco (File photo)

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) on Tuesday started the delivery of poll paraphernalia and other supplies to be used in the special elections in the seventh legislative district of Cavite province on Feb. 25.

"Election forms, supplies, and paraphernalia, including official ballots, as well as all automated elections system-related equipment will already be deployed to the provincial hub," said Comelec spokesperson John Rex Laudiangco in a statement. **>> P3**

Big-ticket transport infra projects to boost PH tourism



Big-ticket infrastructure projects of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) will improve tourism in remote areas and unlock economic potential in the provinces, Department of Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista said. During a general membership meeting of the Philippine International Air Transport Association Agents Travel Association on Wednesday, Bautista said such infrastructure **>> P3**

Quezon town model LGU for senior citizens program in Region 4A

Sampaloc town in Quezon was named the model local government unit (LGU) for 2022 for the diligent implementation of the social pension fund for senior citizens in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) or Region 4A.

Of the town's 1,800 registered senior citizens, 1,632 receive a monthly pension of PHP500.

Those who receive other social pensions, like from the Social Security System, are no longer qualified for the LGU benefit.

An additional PHP200 is given during the birthday month of the senior citizen. Mayor Angelo Devanadera, **>> P2**

Completion of 3 Luzon expressway projects eyed this year: DPWH



DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan (File photo)

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on Monday said three major projects under the Luzon Spine Expressway Network (LSEN) Program are set to be completed this year.

During the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023 - 2028 Forum held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City, DPWH Sec- **>> P3**

PH solidifies bilateral ties with Japan through several agreements

QUEZON CITY (PIA) – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida commit to continuing the good relationship between the Philippines and Japan.

The two leaders witness the signing of agreements focused on the developments in infrastructure, disaster relief, agriculture, and digitalization, all are expected to be beneficial to the country.

Listed under the continuing projects between the Philippines and Japan are the Japanese Official Development Project: NSCR – Malolos to Tutuban Project (II) and the North-South Commuter Railway Extension (NSCR) Project (II). These projects are financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The NSCR – Malolos to Tutuban Project (II) will run from Malolos, Bulacan to Tutuban Center, Manila. Construction of this railway began in 2019 and as of January 2022, it is more than 50% complete. This breakthrough project uses Japanese technology and is expected to be completed by 2024.

Providing more access to the Filipino people, ADB and Japan also funded the NSCR-Extension project which is a 51-km North extension that will run from Malolos in Bulacan to Clark International Airport in Pampanga, while the 55-km South extension will run from Solis, Manila to Calamba, Laguna.

During the visit, the two leaders also shared their notes about the progress of these projects. After the exchange of notes, both projects were also granted loan agreements.

Japan has a long history of assisting the Philippines' railway sector. Aside from NSCR projects the foreign nation also proposed for Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line 1 extension to Cavite. It

Quezon town << P1

accompanied by Municipal Social Welfare and Development officer Mylene Gariguez, received the award handed out by the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Tagaytay City on Wednesday.

In a phone interview on Sunday, Gariguez said the town was recognized as it achieved a 100-percent implementation of the social pension fund program in all four quarters last year.

"We promptly downloaded the fund from the national office allocated for the social pension of our se-

nior citizens and immediately disbursed them, according to the schedule given to us," said Gariguez.

Gariguez attributed the recognition to the cooperation displayed by all beneficiaries as they completed their requirements.

She also clarified that a senior citizen who wants to receive the grant need not be a registered voter of the town to be included in the program.

An identification card from the village or the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs is enough, she added. (PNA)

also supported the recently completed extension of LRT Line 2 to Masing, Antipolo under the Capacity Enhancement of Mass Transit Systems in Metro Manila Project, Metro Rail Transit (MRT) Line 3 Rehabilitation projects, in addition to the Metro Manila Subway. As part of his role as the head of the Department of Agriculture, a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on Agriculture was signed together with Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

Japan is one of the best partners when it comes to technology and its advancements, a MOC in the Field of Information and Communications Technology was also signed.

Aside from these government-to-government agreements, there were also government-to-business partnerships with leading Japanese firms also signing Letters of Intent (LOI) on investments and agreements.

For his part, the President says this move is vital and game-changing for the local business environment.

Umbrella Terms of Reference (TOR) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Cooperation is one of the agreements made by Marcos and Kishida. Department of Na-

increased autonomy due to the increase of their national tax allotment (NTA) shares.

The NTA shares of LGUs are based on the tax collections of the government.

"Ang advantage po ay 'yung proper identification ng mga proyekto because sila [LGUs] po 'yung nakakaalam kung ano talaga ang kailangan nung kanilang mga nasasakupan (The advantage is the proper identification of projects because they [LGUs] know what their constituents really need), so I think this will be beneficial for them," she said.

"Nako-compute 'yung total IRA [internal revenue allotment] po nila based po sa kinita ng Customs at saka po ng BIR. Basically tax collections po ng national government... doon po nakikita 'yung makukuha po nila (They can calculate the total IRA based on the income of

the Customs and then the BIR. Basically tax collections by the national government... that's where you can see what they can get)," she added.

Consistent with Section 284 of Republic Act 7160, or the Local Government Code of 1991, the amount of LGU shares in the national taxes for a given fiscal year is based on the collection of the third fiscal year preceding the current fiscal year.

Consequently, Section 2.2.1 of Local Budget Memorandum (LBM) No. 85 reiterates that the total fiscal year 2023 NTA shares of LGUs shall be based on the actual collections of national taxes in FY 2020, as certified by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs, and Bureau of the Treasury.

Pangandaman likewise reassured LGUs that the DBM would provide technical assistance and will per-

form oversight functions to ensure proper budgeting and expenditure management practices.

Earlier, Pangandaman said that DBM, together with other concerned agencies, are formulating measures to enable LGUs to assume their devolved functions by 2027.

She said capacity building, training, and seminar for LGUs will help guarantee that they will be able to stand on their own two feet.

Moreover, she said programs for procurement, proper planning, identification of projects, and implementation are also expected to help capacitate LGUs.

Executive Order (EO) No. 138, signed by former President Rodrigo Duterte on June 1, 2021, orders the full devolution of the provision of basic services and facilities to LGUs in line with the Supreme Court's Man-

danas-Garcia ruling. Late last year, the DBM submitted to President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. a draft executive order to amend EO 138 and extend the transfer of some national government functions to LGUs from the previous 2024 to 2027.

The Supreme Court Mandanas-Garcia ruling resulted from the petition made by Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas and former Bataan Governor Enrique Garcia Jr. before the Supreme Court on local government shares on internal revenue allotment.

With the increased budget share, the LGUs are expected to be responsible for the funding and delivery of the activities, which have been devolved to them under Republic Act 7160, the Local Government Code of 1991, and other subsequent laws. (PNA)

LGUs to enjoy more autonomy << P1

DTI 4-A launches 2nd OTOP << P1

Bacoor City. The project is in cooperation with the Local Government Unit of Bacoor City, Main Square Mall, and 39 Cavite OTOPpreneurs who were beneficiaries of the OTOP Next Generation Program of DTI Cavite.

OTOP is a priority stimulus program for MSMEs as government's customized intervention to drive inclusive local economic growth. The program enables localities and communities to determine, develop, support, and promote products or services that are rooted in its local culture, community resource, creativity, connection, and competitive advantage. One of its major components is the OTOPPH or OTOP Philippines Hub. This provides the physical and online channels and market access platform where OTOP products, especially those that have been assisted via product development, are showcased on a day-to-day basis.

"This new OTOP Hub in the province of Cavite will offer quality food and non-food products and cater not just to Caviteños but also to the general mainstream market in the CALABARZON region, local buyers from other regions, and tourists," said DTI 4-A OIC Director Marissa Argente.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to inaugurate the new OTOP Hub led by DTI Secretary Alfredo Pascual, Assistant Secretary Dominic Tolentino, Region 4-A OIC Director Marissa Argente, Region 4-A OIC Assistant Director Revelyn Cortez, Congresswoman Lani Mercado-Revilla, Board Member Ram Revilla Bautista, Bacoor City Mayor Strike Revilla, Vice Mayor Rowena Bautista Mendiola, and AGIMAT Party List Representative Bryan Revilla.

Present during the launching were partner agencies and organizations such

as the Department of Science and Technology, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Labor and Employment, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, Office of the Provincial Governor, Provincial Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office, Provincial Cooperative, Livelihood, & Entrepreneurial Development Office, Cavite Small Medium Enterprise Development Council, Food Processors Association of Cavite, Likhang Kabitenyo Foundation, Inc., and the Philippine Information Agency.

"We want to encourage our MSMEs to join our programs as we help you step up your game by producing quality products in terms of design, packaging/labeling, marketability, branding, and production and delivery capacity. By doing so, we also help our economy by creat-

ing more jobs," said DTI 4-A OIC Assistant Director Revelyn Cortez.

OTOP Hub Cavite offers food products like mushroom chips, banana chips, tahong chips, pastries, coffee, peanut butter and jams, lemon tea, tablea, papaya pickles, bagoong and non-food products like hand-painted bags and bayongs, candles and candle holders, vases, embroidered kitchen linens and utensils, rugs, pet supplies, and many more.

"This is not a personal achievement but a collective achievement of all sectors. We, in the government, always lead, advocate, nurture, and inspire.

The OTOP Hub is a welcome addition to the array of services that we offer to our constituents, visitors, and tourists. We hope that this will become a go-to destination for everyone," said Congresswoman Lani Mercado-Revilla.

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MMDA set to open a center for disaster preparedness training

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is set to open a center for disaster preparedness training that will provide instruction to help emergency and calamity responders prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

The training center aims to improve and institutionalize disaster response measures in the metropolis and to provide a safe, conducive, and controlled learning environment to capacitate individuals and stakeholders on emergency response and public safety that outlines the effective management of emergency situations and all matters related that may occur in the face of a crisis.

In a news release, MMDA Acting Chairman Atty. Don Artes, the MMDA Disaster Preparedness Training Center was conceptualized after the agency saw the gaps in the capacity-building and training of rescuers after an earthquake hit Abra province in October last year, where rescuers had to come from different areas.

"The agency saw the need to build a center that will focus on disaster response to empower rescuers and provide those

affected by disasters with immediate assistance," Artes said.

It is also a preparatory measure to avoid estimated casualties in the event that a 7.2-magnitude quake hits Metro Manila, according to the 2004 Metro Manila Earthquake Impact Reduction Study (MMEIRS) conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

In the study, the estimated impact of the quake, which is called "The Big One," may reach at least 35,000 people dead, 120,000 injured, and an economic loss reaching 2.5 trillion pesos.

The center, with a lot area of more than one hectare, will be furnished with the necessary facilities, and tools to provide participants with an experiential learning opportunity. It will be built on a vacant property of the MMDA at the Carmona Sanitary Landfill in Cavite City.

The Disaster Preparedness Training Center will feature four training facilities: Rappelling tower, Confined Space Structure, Wrecked Building with Structure Rubble Pile, and Pancake Collapsed Structure which will provide training on real-life rescue scenarios.

The rappelling tower is designed to provide trainees with the skills required for safe, effective, and reliable methods of rescuing trapped and injured persons from elevated structures or areas of difficult access; confined space structures to provide individuals with collapsed structure rescue tasks with the knowledge and skills necessary to search for, stabilize, and extricate victims trapped in structures using the safest and most appropriate procedures; wrecked buildings with structured rubble piles to provide training that involves the location, extrication, and initial medical stabilization of victims trapped or missing; and pancake collapsed structures to provide a training ground for building appears to have fallen in a "pancake collapse" scenario wherein a building's lower floors or foundation triggers the top floors to collapse vertically in the floors below.

Completion of 3 Luzon expressway << P1

retary Manuel Bonoan said these are the NLEX-SLEX Connector Road, Cavite-Laguna Expressway and Central Luzon Link Expressway, Phase I. Of the soon-to-be-completed undertakings, the PHP14.94-billion Central Luzon Link Expressway Phase I is set to be finished in March as the project is 97 percent complete.

Once the 30-kilometer, four-lane expressway from Tarlac City to Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija is completed, the travel time between Tarlac City and Cabanatuan City will be reduced from 70 minutes to 20 minutes and is projected to benefit around 11,200 motorists per day.

The whole project was funded under the Japan International Cooperation

Agency (JICA) amounting to PHP249 billion. The construction started in March 2016.

On the other hand, the NLEX-SLEX Connector Road worth PHP12.20 billion funded under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program target completion is December 2023.

He said civil works is 69 percent complete, the right of way (ROW) acquisition is 94 percent complete while Section 1 (Caloocan - Espana) is targeted to be completed in April 2023.

The project is an eight-kilometer, four-lane elevated expressway extending the NLEX southward from the end of Segment 10 in C3 Road, Caloocan City to PUP Sta. Mesa, Manila and con-

necting to the Skyway Stage 3, and mostly traversing along the PNR rail track.

Upon completion, the travel time from SLEX to NLEX will be reduced from 2 hours to just 20 minutes. It is projected to benefit 35,000 motorists per day.

The construction of the project began in May 2019.

Another project that is set to be finished before the end of the year is the Cavite-Laguna Expressway, a 44.58-kilometer expressway connecting the CAVITEX in Kawit, Cavite province and SLEX- Mamplasan interchange in Biñan City, Laguna province.

The project's civil works is 59 percent complete while the ROW acquisition for the Laguna and Cavite side are at

99.8 percent and 65.07 percent completed, respectively. It started construction in July 2017. Bonoan added that the PHP35.74-billion project is also funded via the PPP.

Upon its completion, it will reduce travel time between CAVITEX and SLEX from 1 hour and 30 minutes to just 45 minutes, and spur economic growth in the provinces of Cavite and Laguna.

The LSEN program involves the construction of 1,213 kilometers of expressways/high standard highways in Luzon.

Once these projects are completed, the travel time between Ilocos region and Bicol region will be reduced from 20 hours to just nine hours. (PNA)

Big ticket transport infra projects << P1

projects will help "cement the Philippines as a prime tourist destination."

"Improving and modernizing the country's transportation system will be crucial to ensure tourists enjoy their travel and vacation experience," Bautista said.

He cited the new passenger terminal building of the Clark International Airport, the ongoing construction of the New Manila International

al Airport in Bulacan, Sangley Point International Airport in Cavite, improvement works at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, and the Bicol International Airport.

To date, he said the DOTr and the Department of Tourism are working together towards improving the local economy through tourism. "We are closely coordinating with the Department

of Tourism towards boosting tourist arrivals," he said.

Railway projects are in full swing such as the North-South Commuter Railway project, the Metro Manila Subway project, the Common Station, the Metro Rail Transit Line 7 (MRT-7), the Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1) Cavite Extension, the Philippine National Railway North and South Long-Haul project, the Subic-Clark

Railway, and the Mindanao Railway.

In Metro Manila, he said the EDSA Busway has improved the mobility of commuters.

In the maritime sector, the DOTr is working with the Philippine Ports Authority to improve commercial and social tourism ports with the goal of more efficiently moving passengers and goods while lowering costs. (PNA)

Comelec starts delivery of supplies << P1

He added that the deployment of poll supplies will run until Friday.

A total of 355,184 official ballots along with 5,538 final testing and sealing (FTS) ballots have been printed for the special polls.

On the other hand, 426 vote counting machines along with the same number

of backup units will be used for the special polls.

The simultaneous FTS will be held on Feb. 19.

The Cavite police shall provide security escorts from the Comelec's warehouse in Santa Rosa City, Laguna to the provincial hub.

The special polls were set to elect the new represen-

tative of the district after then congressman Jesus Crispin Remulla was appointed as Justice Secretary.

Meanwhile, the poll body official reported that as of Tuesday, the deliveries to the municipality of Tanza have been finished.

"As of 11:23 a.m., February 14, 2023, deliveries to

the Municipal Treasurer of all election forms, supplies and paraphernalia, including official ballots for the Municipality of Tanza had been completed," he said.

The municipalities of Tanza, Amadeo and Indang and the city of Trece Martires comprise the province's seventh district. (PNA)

Brides flex 'vegie bouquets' << P1

stead of real expensive flower arrangement that will just go into trash after the celebration," said Mayor Denver Reyes Chua, who officiated the wedding.

In an interview, he said this is the first time that a mass wedding was staged "after two years of pandemic, from the first quarter of 2019 until the latter part of 2021."

One of the married couples, Danica Dalmacia, 25, and Paul John Tagle, 27, said they decided to finally say their 'I do's' after five years of living together.

"Now we know how it feels for your union to be legitimate and have the blessings of our parents," said Paul, while Danica said she would stir fry the vegetables

in her flower bouquet after the wedding.

The oldest couple among the 32 pairs, Sherly Alfonso and Carlito Eugenio, both senior citizens at 60 and 64, respectively, has lived together for more than 34 years, with two offspring.

"We finally decided to get married and promised to be at each other's side till our

last breath," Carlito said.

Wrapping up the wedding ceremony was a photo opportunity for every couple with the "ninong ng bayan" (godfather of the town), 1st District Representative Ramon Jolo Revilla III. The couples also had free wedding cakes and reception, along with cash and a sack of rice. (PNA)

Republic of the Philippines
Fourth Judicial Region
Regional Trial Court
Branch 20
Imus, Cavite

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND
(Pag-IBIG Fund) Mortgagee,
-versus-
Extra-Judicial Foreclosure of
Real Estate Mortgage Under
Act No. 3135, As Amended by,
Republic Act 4118

NICK D. REMOROZA married to
DEVORAH B. REMOROZA,
Mortgagors.

X-----X

FC CASE NO. 17603-22

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135 as amended by Act 4118 filed by HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND (Pag-IBIG Fund), mortgagee with principal office address at The Petron Mega Plaza Bldg., No. 358 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City, against NICK D. REMOROZA married to DEVORAH B. REMOROZA, mortgagors, with residence address at 29 Amapola St., Pembo, Makati City, Metro Manila/Block 5, Lot 6, Greenplace Homes, Malagasang II, Imus, Cavite, to satisfy the mortgage indebtedness which as of October 17, 2022 amounts to FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN PESOS & 29/100 (P451,518.29) Philippine Currency, including interest and penalty charges, but excluding attorney's fees, sheriff's fees and all other charges incidental to this foreclosure and sale, the undersigned Sheriff IV will sell at Public Auction on **March 7, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.** or soon thereafter at the main entrance of the Office of the Clerk of Court, Bulwagan ng Katarungan, Aguinaldo Highway, Imus, Cavite, to the highest bidder for cash and in Philippine Currency, the following property with all the improvements therein, to wit:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 057-2012018500

A parcel of land (Lot 6, Blk. 5 of the cons. and subd. plan Pcs-04-024772, being a portion of the cons. of Block 12, Psd-04-199624 & Lot 1873, Imus Estate, L.R.C. Rec. No. 8843) situated in the Barrio of Malagasang-2, Mun. of Imus, Province of Cavite, Island of Luzon. Bounded on the SW., along line 1-2 by Lot 8, Blk. 5, on the NW., along line 2-3, by Road lot 24; on the NE., along line 3-4 by Lot 4, Blk. 5 and on the SE., along line 4-1, by Lot 5, Blk. 5 all of the cons. and subd. plan. xxx containing an area of thirty-six (36) square meters, more or less. xxx.

All sealed bids must be submitted to the undersigned on the stated time and date.

In the event the public auction should not take place on the said date, it shall be held on March 14, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. without prior notice.

Prospective bidders/buyers are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title to the said property and encumbrances thereon if any there be.

Imus, Cavite, Philippines, February 6, 2023.

ANSELMO P. PAGUNSAN, JR.
Sheriff IV

Approved:
ARMIE A. FRANCISCO
Clerk of Court VI

Copy furnished:
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2/F AZPHI Bldg. Ma. Aurora St., cor. E. Zobel St., Brgy. Poblacion, Makati City

SPS. NICK D. REMOROZA & DEVORAH B. REMOROZA
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DA-ATI holds 2-day work ethics and accountability training

TRECE MARTIRES, CAVITE (PIA) – Around forty staff of the Department of Agriculture (DA) – Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) – CALABARZON participated in the two-day seminar-workshop on Public Service Ethics and Accountability held on February 8-9, 2023.

The activity was initiated thru DA-ATI's Administrative and Finance Unit with guest speakers and discussants from the Civil Service Commission

Regional Office IV, Ms. Melania Guanzon, and Attorney Henry Pablo.

Topics discussed during the program were the importance of public service values such as Patriotism, Integrity, Excellence, and Spirituality (PIES), the responsibility of officials and employees under the “Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees,” and ways to fight corruption.

The activity also allowed the participants

to conduct self-assessments through various workshops and accompanying activities. At the end of the program, TCS II/ Center Director Rolando V. Maningas, Ph.D. emphasized that ‘being a public servant requires responsibility and accountability’ and expressed hope for the participants to uphold high ethical standards in delivering efficient services in the region. (RBF/PIA-Cavite with reports from DA-ATI Calabarzon)



Test of automated poll system set in 3 villages for 2023 BSKE



Comelec spokesperson John Rex Laudiangco (File photo)

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) on Thursday announced that it would pilot test the automated election system (AES) in three barangays in Quezon City and the province of Cavite for the October 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE).

In a statement, Comelec spokesperson John Rex Laudiangco said Zone II Poblacion and Paliparan III in Dasmariñas City, Cavite and Barangay Pasong Tamo in the 6th District of Quezon City were chosen for the AES pilot testing.

“The choice of participating barangays in the pilot testing is the direct outcome of last Tuesday’s Regular Hearing of the House (of Representatives) Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms. The decision was reached upon mutual consultation and mutual agreement between the House and the Comelec,” Laudiangco said.

On the other hand, he noted that there would be minor changes in the Calendar of Activities for these barangays, including the filing of Certificates of Candidacy (COCs) by aspirants.

“In view of this limited pilot testing of the AES in the BSKE in the specified barangays in Dasmariñas City and Quezon City, the filing of COCs will be earlier in view of the need to print the names of the candidates in the machine-readable official ballots,” Laudiangco said.

“The election period shall remain the same, with the exception of the said period of filing of COCs in the pilot tested barangays, as well as the other periods (deployment, Final Testing and Sealing, etc.) inherent to the implementation of an automated elections system.”

The three barangays have nearly 112,000 registered voters – 84,100 regular and 27,817 youth voters – with 227 clustered precincts. (PNA)

February is National Health Insurance Month

February of each year marks the country's observance of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Month by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 1400 s. 2007 which underlines the important role of social health insurance in every Filipino's life.

The National Health Insurance Program, as a social health insurance (SHI) scheme, is a form of financing and managing health care based primarily on risk pooling. The SHI pools the health risks of the people on one hand; and the contributions of individuals, households, enterprises, and the government on the other. This system protects people against financial burden of diseases, and considered a relatively fair method of financing health care.

The NHIP is guided by the principle of social solidarity or community spirit, where risks are shared among income groups, age groups, persons of differing health status and those residing in different geographic areas. This solidarity principle is best exemplified by the spirit of *Bayanihan* where everyone carries the burden towards achieving a common goal, which in this case is to provide every Filipino with adequate financial protection when seeking medical care through everyone's contributions, big or small.

The *Bayanihan* spirit is best demonstrated in the PhilHealth program where the young is helping the old, the healthy subsidizing the sick, those earning more is subsidizing those who are earning less, and where the able subsidizes the poor and the vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), being the administrator of the National Health Insurance Program as provided for in Republic Act 7875 as amended, spearheads the nation's observance in parallel with its 28th anniversary on February 14. The theme for this year, “*Pinalawak*



at mga Bagong Benepisyo para sa Mamamayang Filipino”, amplifies its commitment to continuously expand and to make the benefits even more responsive to the changing medical care needs of the Filipino people.

The observance aims to stimulate public awareness on the issues involving social health insurance and to encourage partners in fulfilling their respective roles to ensure the success of the NHI program, i.e., for Direct Contributors religiously paying their contributions, employers remitting and reporting their contributions on time, health care providers filing claims that are in order, among many others.

This is also an opportune time to inform the public of the essential role that PhilHealth plays in each family's health as well as how social health insurance work to shield Filipinos against costly hospitalization. During the pandemic years alone, PhilHealth has paid a total of 307.70 billion in benefits for over 33.93 million claims filed on behalf of the members and their dependents.

To further raise awareness on the NHI Month, PhilHealth is spearheading low profile but high impact activities such as a press conference to announce new and expanded health care benefits for rollout in 2023 and beyond, and a Social Health Insurance symposium involving internal and external stakeholders to showcase its various feats in the implementation of the NHIP especially during the pandemic years.

The state insurer also enjoins government agencies including local government units, the mass media and the entire citizenry to support the celebration geared towards fulfilling the vision of providing all Filipinos with equitable access to adequate, affordable and acceptable health care services without resulting to economic hardship; now and into the future. ###