

DFA Secretary Lazaro Holds Bilateral Meeting with UAE Minister of State to Boost Cooperation



Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro met today with the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) H.E. Saeed Bin Mubarak Al-Hajeri, a day before the opening of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) 2026 Summit.

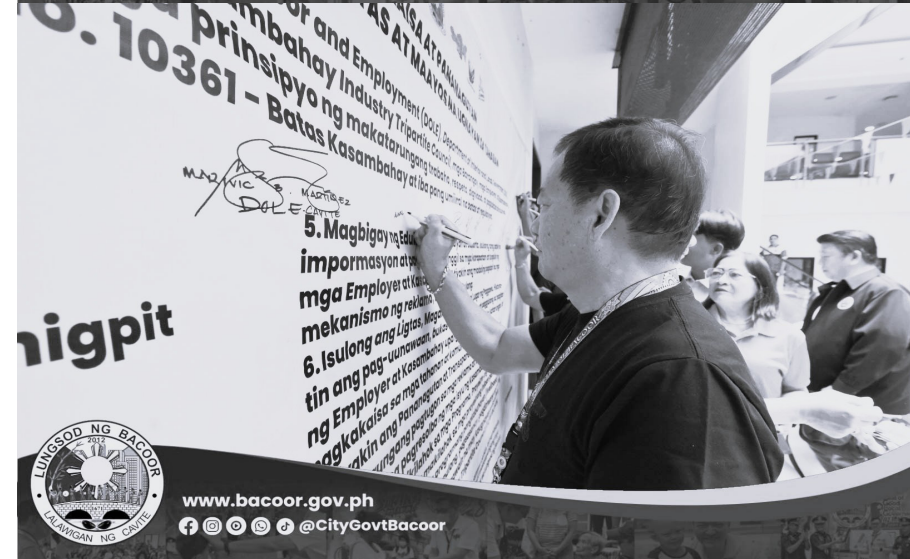
During the meeting, both Secretary Lazaro and Minister Al-Hajeri discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations between the Philippines and UAE, through engagements in various areas of cooperation and regular conduct of bilateral consultations.

Secretary Lazaro also welcomed the imminent signing of the

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City Government of Bacoor

BACoor HONORS DOMESTIC WORKERS AT 2026 “ARAW NG MGA KASAMBAHAY”



City reaffirms its commitment to protect, support, and empower Kasambahay. The City Government of Bacoor, under the leadership of Mayor Strike B. Revilla, through PESCO Bacoor headed by Dr. Abraham “BOB” De Castro, proudly celebrated the 2026 Araw ng Mga Kasambahay on January 16, 2026, at the Bacoor City Hall Lobby.

The meaningful gathering honored the hard work, dedication, and invaluable contributions of Kasambahay to Bacoor households and communities. The event was attended by city officials, barangay leaders, representatives from DOLE, PESO, and DILG, employers, and most especially, the Kasambahay, who were at the heart of the celebration.

Highlights of the celebration included: Promotion of rights and responsibilities of both Kasambahay and employers; Informative sessions on health (PHILHEALTH YAKAP), financial literacy, and the Bacoor Kasambahay ID Act of 2025; Messages of inspiration and pledges of fair and humane treatment from local leaders; Stronger engagement among workers, government agencies, and stakeholders; Mayor Strike B. Revilla emphasized the vital role of Kasambahay in society and reiterated the City Government’s continuous support, protection, and empowerment for domestic workers—ensuring that they are valued, respected, and cared for.

Sa Bacoor, ang bawat Kasambahay ay mahalaga, pinapahalagahan, at pinangangalagaan. Stay connected with the City Government of Bacoor!

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LEADING TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS

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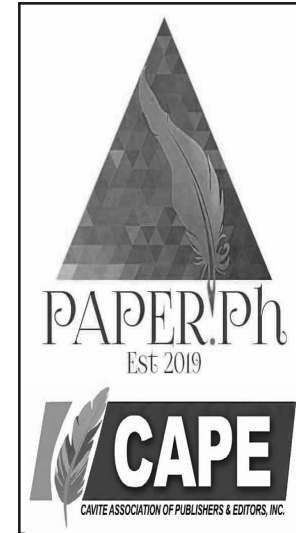
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PBBM-Backed DepEd PPP Aims to Ease Classroom Congestion, Benefit 800,000 Students



City Government of Carmona BUSINESS ONE-STOP SHOP (BOSS) MOTORCADE NG LGU CARMONA

Sa pangunguna ng Office of the City Treasurer, ang Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Carmona ang nagsagawa ng motorcade kahapon, Enero 15, bilang paalala sa lahat ng negosyo at establisyimento sa lungsod na maaari nang mag-apply at mag-renew ng Business Permit sa pamamagitan ng Business One-Stop Shop (BOSS).

Narito ang schedule ng BOSS para sa bawat barangay upang mas maisaayos at mapabilis ang ating transaksyon:



https://www.facebook.com/carmonalgu/posts/pfbid02tfYxC-QqwYpQpZDap1CkZ-FRfUJ5xp5EU2rTwLB-gG45y1di4y2xQ7DE5p-GVoQ4s6x7l. Ang unang hakbang para sa proseso ng BOSS ay magsisimula ang Multa, Magbayad sa Carmona Plaza. Para sa mga katanungan, maaaring dumulong sa ating Office of the City Treasurer. Iwasan ang Multa, Magbayad nang Maaga.

Education Secretary Sonny Angara is pushing for the launch of a Php105.7-billion public-private partnership (PPP) for the construction of 16,459 new classrooms in areas with the greatest need, aimed at easing classroom congestion and addressing the slow pace of school infrastructure development.

Recently, Secretary Angara and the Department of Education (DepEd) team secured the approval of the Public-Private Partnership for School Infrastructure Project Phase III (PSIP III) from the Economy and Development Council (ED Council), chaired by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

“We can no longer rely on just one approach. PSIP is one of our horses in this race to deliver classrooms faster to our communities. Even this initiative complements the nearly 24,000 classrooms already included in our communities. Ev-

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DOTr Accelerates Big-Ticket Transport Projects to Boost Connectivity

Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez on Friday vowed to speed up the construction of big ticket transport projects and resolve issues such as right-of-way to improve the country's transport systems and enhance the Philippines long-term competitiveness.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to expedite the completion of these projects.

Secretary Lopez explained that expediting the construction of transport projects means having to "ramp up spending to ensure that these projects will truly benefit the Filipino people."

"Lahat po ng pondong inilaan para sa mga imprastruktura, diretsong mapakikinabangan ng mga Pilipino," Secretary Lopez said during the Big Bold Reforms Economic Forum organized by the Department of Finance (DOF) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

According to the transport chief, the DOTr construction of transport projects in 2025 has an allotted



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budget of P103.05 billion for its infrastructure projects for railways, aviation, maritime and road sectors. Of the allotted budget, P93.33 billion or 90.57% has already been obligated, while P59.63 billion or 63.89% has already been disbursed.

For 2026, the DOTr has allotted P74.5 billion budget for infrastructure flagship projects, said Secretary Lopez.

"With this, we are very much committed to continuing our efforts to expedite the completion of all existing projects and deliver them within the timeline," Secretary Lopez noted.

"We want to ensure the public and our investors that the budget will be spent efficiently to make sure that our projects truly address the needs of our commuters," he added.

Among the priority projects that DOTr is focused on completing are the 147-kilometer North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), Metro Manila Subway Project, MRT-7 and the rehabilitation of the MRT-3. In the road sector, the DOTr has started modernizing the EDSA Busway, while also fast-tracking the construction of the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit (Cebu-BRT) and the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project (DPTMP).

The transport agency is likewise modernizing the country's airports with the soon-to-be inaugurated Antique and Laoag airports, and the continued expansion of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

The Philippines is likewise positioning its seaports—whether publicly or privately developed – as competitive, predictable, and investment-ready platforms that support trade expansion,

logistics efficiency, tourism growth, and the clean energy transition, according to Secretary Lopez.

Siargao will also get a boost in its tourism sector as the new passenger terminal building of Siargao Airport is also seen to be completed in April this year, expanding its passenger capacity from 200 to 750.

Also to be inaugurated is the Port of Jubang in Dapa, Surigao Del Norte in the first quarter of 2026. The port will serve as a dedicated cruise facility designed to boost tourism by accommodating international cruise ships.

The DOTr is also targeting to finish new road sections in SLEX, CALAX, Cavite-CALAX Link Expressway or CCLink, C-5 and Skyway Stage 3 this year, making land travel faster and more convenient for motorists.

Source: DOTr

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PBBM-Backed DepEd PPP Aims to Ease Classroom Congestion, Benefit 800,000 Students

(From page 1) eliminating multiple-shift schedules, the initiative is expected to increase actual learning time for students, lessen teacher fatigue, and improve overall school operations and safety. The project will also have a positive impact on government finances, with estimated savings of around Php40.15 billion under PSIP III. The project will be implemented through a solicited public-private partnership using a build-lease-and-transfer scheme, with DepEd overseeing implementation and ensuring compliance with education standards and timelines.

More than a decade has passed since the implementation of PSIP I and II, which together delivered 13,391 classrooms. With the goal of accelerating and expanding classroom delivery, PSIP III is set to become the largest classroom PPP in the country's history.

Based on the indicative timeline, bidding is expected to begin in March 2026 following its approval in January. Contract signing is targeted for August 2026, while construction is scheduled to start in March 2027, in accordance with the Public-Private Partnership Code. All classrooms are targeted for completion within 19 months after contract signing, with full completion expected by March 2028. Source: DepEd

Angara also noted that the DepEd team, together with the economic team, the PPP Center, and experts from the Asian Development Bank, is actively accelerating the rollout of PPP classrooms, in line with President Marcos' call to establish a green lane for DepEd PPP projects.

Once fully operational, the new classrooms are expected to directly benefit up to 800,000 students annually. Millions more will benefit from reduced congestion in more than 1,000 public schools. As a result, the average class size is projected to decrease from 50 to about 39 students, creating a safer, more conducive learning environment and enabling more active classroom interaction.

Moreover, by reducing congestion and

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DILG Marks Achievement of 207 Bar Passers Across Its Offices and Attached Agencies

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said 207 of its personnel, including those from its attached agencies, are among the 5,594 nationwide who have successfully passed the 2025 Bar Examinations, and are set to take their oath as new lawyers on February 6, 2026 at the Philippine Arena.

Of the 207 passers, 2

are from the DILG-Central Office, 15 from regional offices, 109 from the Philippine National Police (PNP), 40 from the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), 29 from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), 8 from the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), and 3 from National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF).

Further Extension of the Filing Period for Applications for the Renewal of Accreditation of YAKAP Clinics and GAMOT Package Providers for Calendar Year (CY) 2026

To ensure uninterrupted access to primary care for all PhilHealth members, the Corporation further extends the filing period for applications for the renewal of accreditation for all YAKAP Clinics and GAMOT Package Providers. For these health facilities, the deadline is on Friday, January 30, 2026.

The deadline for filing applications for renewal of accreditation of the other HF shall still be on Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

In addition, applications for renewal of accreditation from the following HF shall be accepted by the Corporation:

1. Private HF that have not yet acquired their 2026 business permits;

and, 2. YAKAP Clinics with partner health service delivery support (SDS) that have not acquired their licenses yet.

These HF are still required to submit their business permits and related licenses on or before Tuesday, March 31, 2026 to ensure continuous accreditation. All applications received beyond the prescribed filing period will be treated as re-accreditation and may result in a gap in accreditation validity. On the other hand,

the accreditation of HF that filed their applications for renewal of accreditation within the prescribed filing period shall be accorded continuous accreditation until the Corporation has denied the application.

Some of the bar passers said their decision to take the Bar was inspired by their firsthand experience in public service and their aspiration to protect people's rights and welfare.

Hana Rea Pagapong of DILG Region 10 reaffirmed her plan to continue serving the people of Misamis Occidental. "I plan to use this opportunity to

further serve my community in Misamis Occidental by building on my ongoing work of guiding elected public officials, particularly at the barangay level," Pagapong said.

Kareen Estabillo of the DILG Bureau of Local Government Development said passing the Bar strengthens her work at the Local Fiscal Reform and Development Division (LFRDD).

"This equips me with legal knowledge necessary in reviewing proposed and existing policies to ensure its compliance with the law while ensuring at the same

time that it will benefit the LGUs and their constituents," she said.

Senior Fire Officer Gilbert Berou of the National Fire Training Institute (NFTI) said his experience as a first responder shaped his journey to becoming a lawyer. "My service in the BFP and my calling as a lawyer are united by one purpose:

to serve with honor, competence, and dedication to the public good," he added.

Nesreen Abdulrauf Hadjirasid of the NCMF, highlighted how passing the Bar strengthens her role in NCMF in advancing

inclusive and responsive governance. "Passing the Bar Exams strengthens my role now as a public servant in NCMF, an attached agency of DILG, because I have legal knowledge useful in policy and program development and budget proposals for the advancement of the well-being of Muslim Filipinos," she said.

The DILG said the success of its personnel reflects the Department's culture of excellence and commitment to building a competent, ethical, and responsive bureaucracy. Source: DILG

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Let's Join Forces for a More Progressive City of General Trias!

DFA Secretary Lazaro Holds Bilateral Meeting with UAE Minister of State to Boost Cooperation

(From page 6)

PH-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and the Memorandum of Understanding on Defense Cooperation. Once signed, the CEPA will be the first free trade agreement by the Philippines with a country in the Middle East, and is envisioned to expand the market access between the Philippines and UAE, and open vast trade and investment options and opportunities for both countries. The MOU on Defense Cooperation, on the other hand, is aimed to strengthen defense and military relations, through education and training, intelligence and security sharing, among others.

Secretary Lazaro is part of the Philippine delegation, led by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., who is in the UAE for a working visit, upon the invitation of the UAE President, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The said visit is aimed at further strengthening bilateral relations between both countries in trade, defense, and sustainable development, among others. Source:DOTr

Before the bilateral meeting, Secretary Lazaro was at the Anwar Gar-



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