



INFOCUS

IN-DEPTH NEWS, FACTUAL AND RIGHT ON TARGET

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ISABELA



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**ISABELA'S JOURNEY
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IN-DEPTH NEWS, FACTUAL AND RIGHT ON TARGET

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Isabela Beyond Borders

In an era shaped by globalization and a growing web of connections, **"Isabela Beyond Borders"** carries profound meaning. Under the visionary leadership of Governor Rodito T. Albano III, the Provincial Government of Isabela embarked on a journey extending its impact far beyond provincial limits to leave an indelible mark on the national stage.

Governor Rodito's official visits to Mexico, Cuba, Japan, and Vietnam not only fortified diplomatic ties but also facilitated trade, agriculture and cultural exchanges.

Isabela's warm welcome to dignitaries from the United States, Britain, the European Union (EU) and China highlights its pivotal role in fostering international cooperation.

In January 2024, Governor Rodito joined President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on a diplomatic mission to Vietnam to strengthen bilateral ties, concluding with the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Rice Trade Cooperation Agreement and Agriculture Cooperation.

As the Philippines' second-largest rice-producing province, Isabela sees the bilateral relations with Vietnam as an opportunity to enhance our agricultural capabilities, promote economic growth, and contribute to food security both within the province and across the country.

Isabela's global presence is further exemplified by three distinguished envoys from Isabela underscoring the far-reaching impact of the province in the international landscape. They are Ambassador Mylene Garcia Albano, spouse of Governor Rodito who represents the Philippines in Japan; Ambassador Bernard F. Dy, former City Mayor of Cauayan, now Philippine representative to the Swiss Confederation and Principality of Liechtenstein in Switzerland; and Silvestre Bello III, former Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, and now Chairman of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) and Resident Representative to Taiwan.

Governor Rodito's second term as Chairman of the Regional Development Council for Cagayan Valley and new Chairman of Luzon Regional Development Committee (Luzon RDCOM) elevates him to a position to push for the holistic development not just of the Cagayan Valley Region but the entire Luzon Island.

Isabela's Rescuers also serve beyond borders. When disaster struck Barangay Cabuluan, Alcala, Cagayan, Isabela's PDRRMO swiftly delivered clean drinking water, saving lives. During the Mayon Volcano crisis in Albay, Isabela PDRRMO and PSWDO team delivered Isabela rice, bringing the staple food beyond its boundaries.

San Agustin Isabela's Municipal Agriculturist Smith O. Valdez now serves as the national president of the Philippine Association of Local Government Accountants (PhALGA) for 2023-2024, while our very own Provincial General Services Officer, Rodrigo T. Sawit, holds national presidency for the Philippine Association of General Services Officers, Inc. (PAGSO) until 2025, exemplifying Isabela's influence on the national stage.

"Isabela Beyond Borders" is a solemn commitment deeply embedded in Isabela's brand of governance.

ATTY. ELIZABETH CUREG BINAG
Editor-in-Chief



In Gov. Rodito Albano's vision, bridges are not just structures of concrete and steel; they are conduits of understanding, peace, and progress, connecting nations and fostering a harmonious global community.

BRIDGING BORDERS

FORGING GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS IN CUBA, MEXICO

Governor Rodito T. Albano III has redefined Isabela's provincial leadership landscape. His commitment to service transcends geographical confines and reaches far beyond local boundaries.

Teaming up with Governor Susan Yap of Tarlac, Gov. Rodito embarked on a series of trade missions to Cuba and Mexico, promoting international partnerships and solidifying his reputation as an advocate for global collaboration.

UNVEILING POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS IN CUBA

From March 19 to March 22, 2023, Gov. Albano, alongside Gov. Yap and their delegation, embarked on a successful trade mission to Cuba. Facilitated by the Philippine Embassy in Mexico, this mission was more than mere diplomacy; it was about forging trade connections.

In Cuba, conversations were sparked, exploring avenues of mutual interest such as trade and investment, agro-alimentary sectors, energy, public health, and people-to-people exchanges.

STRENGTHENING BILATERAL BONDS WITH MEXICO

Simultaneously, Governors Albano and Yap engaged in discussions with the

Mexican State of Jalisco from March 22 to March 24, 2023.

The meeting with the Secretary General of the Government of Jalisco, Enrique Ibarra Pedroza, presented promising opportunities for mutual trade and investment.

This paved the way for innovative economic development and solidified the partnership between Jalisco, Mexico and the Province of Isabela.

Academic and cultural exchanges were explored, fostering a more profound understanding between Jalisco and the Philippines and enhancing their shared global vision.

TOWARD A COLLABORATIVE FUTURE

Governors Albano and Yap's dedication to meaningful cooperation across

sectors like agriculture, economy, innovation, technology, culture, and education is unparalleled.

Their initiatives promise to be a blueprint for future bilateral collaborations. These proactive initiatives underscore the two provinces' unwavering commitment to nurturing international partnerships.

As the Philippines continues its ascent on the global stage, these missions serve as symbolic gateways to mutually beneficial collaborations, marking a significant stride toward a more interconnected world.

In Gov. Rodito Albano's vision, bridges are not just concrete and steel structures; they are conduits of understanding, peace, and progress, connecting nations and fostering a harmonious global community.



Governor Rodolfo T. Albano III and Governor Susan Yap led a trade mission to the State of Jalisco, Mexico in March 2023.

GOV. RODITO JOINS PRES. MARCOS JR. TO BOLSTER PH-VIETNAM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE

Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, accompanied by former Mayor Kervin Francis Uy of Burgos, Isabela, joined President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s delegation during his official state visit to Vietnam on January 29 to 30, 2024.

Among the objectives of the visit was to strengthen bilateral relations and collaboration across various sectors, including maritime cooperation, defense, trade, agriculture, and culture.

As the Philippines' second-largest rice-producing province, Isabela stands at the forefront of the nation's agricultural landscape.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco T. Laurel Jr. highlighted the significance of partnerships between the Provincial Government of Isabela and the Department of Agriculture in enhancing rice production.

He emphasized the importance of integrating technology and implementing benchmark interventions, drawing inspiration from Vietnam's successful agricultural strategies.

RICE TRADE COOPERATION AGREEMENT

A significant milestone in the visit was the signing of the Rice Trade Cooperation Agreement between the Philippines and Vietnam.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on January 30, 2024, both nations affirmed their commitment to ensuring a sustainable food supply amidst

global challenges such as climate change and pandemics.

Under the MOU, Vietnam committed to supply 1.5 to 2 million metric tons of white rice annually to the Philippines, fostering stability in prices and availability.

Furthermore, the agreement facilitates the exchange of crucial information on policies, regulations, and other aspects of rice trade.

MOU ON AGRICULTURE COOPERATION

The MOU on Agriculture Cooperation marks a significant stride in deepening collaboration between the Philippines and Vietnam in various agricultural domains.

Encompassing 19 areas of cooperation, including high-value crops, livestock, aquaculture, and smart agriculture, the agreement sets the stage for comprehensive engagement in agricultural development and sustainability.

Through knowledge sharing, research, training, and expert exchanges, both

nations aim to harness each other's strengths to address common challenges and enhance agricultural productivity.

For the Province of Isabela, the bilateral relations on agriculture with Vietnam open avenues for technology exchange and transfer.

Isabela can learn from Vietnam's successful agricultural practices, particularly in rice production, and adopt relevant strategies to enhance its agricultural productivity.

Bilateral relations with Vietnam offer Isabela the chance to foster mutual growth and development in the agricultural sector.

By leveraging shared expertise and resources, Isabela can enhance its agricultural capabilities, promote economic growth, and contribute to food security both within the province and across the broader Philippines.



JAPAN OFFICIALS PROPOSE SEDIMENT COUNTERMEASURE FOR MAGAT DAM

MAGAT DAM
1982



Incorporated Administrative Agency
Japan Water Agency

Delegates from the Japan Water Agency (JWA), the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Nippon Koei Co., and Philkoei International, Inc. met with Governor Rodito T. Albano III on November 29 to present the concept of the "Magat Dam Sedimentation Countermeasure Project," which aims to reduce the concentration of sediments at the reservoir.

The delegates provided Gov. Albano with an overview of the project, highlighting the necessity of conducting a feasibility study.

They underscored the critical sedimentation-related issues affecting water storage capacity and power generation intake in Magat Dam, such as decreased water storage capacity and clogging of power generation intake. They also emphasized the urgency of

implementing effective sedimentation countermeasures.

Gov. Albano pledged to dedicate all the necessary resources to help the team finish the project.

"We will put up all resources to help you. Don't worry, I told the President already. If any agency will give you a hard time, tell me. We will report to the President. Please inform us of any

developments in your coordination with other agencies. I don't want any delay here," he said.

The project feasibility study will identify measures to reduce the annual sedimentation volume of the Magat Dam reservoir, preserve its water storage capacity, extend its service life, and mitigate the risks of natural disasters and economic losses.

Magat Dam is the water source for the irrigation of 86,887 hectares of farmlands in Isabela province and a source of hydroelectric power generation.

Approximately 400 million m³ of sediment has been deposited over the past 40 years since the start of the dam management.

British Embassy's Historic Visit strengthens Bilateral Ties between Isabela, UK

The Province of Isabela welcomed a distinguished delegation from the British Embassy in Manila, led by Political Counsellor Iain Cox.

WARM WELCOME AND PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE

Gov. Rodito Albano III and Vice Gov. Faustino "Bojie" Dy III showed hospitality to Cox and his team, acknowledging the profound importance of their visit to the province.

Gov. Rodito emphasized that this interaction, lays the foundation for a prosperous future built on cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect between Isabela Province and the United Kingdom.

ENGAGING COLLABORATIONS AND SHARED COMMITMENTS

The visit was marked by engaging discussions and meaningful exchanges, on the shared commitment of Isabela Province and the British Embassy to deepen cooperation across vital sectors.

Political Counsellor Cox, accompanied by Political Adviser Noelle Agudelo and Political Officer Darlene Estrada, expressed gratitude for the warm reception and outlined the objectives of their visit.

Cox received a symbolic gift and a resolution expressing a warm welcome from the Province of Isabela in sincere

The visit of the British Political Counsellor to the Isabela Provincial Capitol deepens bilateral ties and heralds a new era of strengthened partnerships and the exploration of promising opportunities.

appreciation for the embassy's efforts and eagerness to collaborate in crucial areas such as agriculture, education, tourism, environment, climate change, and disaster risk management.

EXPLORING COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

During the visit, a media briefing was held where Cox engaged with local media representatives.

Key among the discussions was Isabela's significant potential in agricultural productivity, especially in rice and corn.

Cox acknowledged the energy and tourism prospects associated with Isabela's Magat Dam and pledged to

facilitate connections between Isabela's Mabuwaya Foundation and The Darwin Initiative, a UK government grants scheme to conserve biodiversity and the natural environment through local projects worldwide.

FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

Cox also introduced the prestigious Chevening program—an initiative by the UK government offering international scholarships and fellowships.

This program provides outstanding Filipino students and professionals with a unique opportunity to pursue one-year academic programs in the United Kingdom, enhancing educational exchanges between the two nations.



US AMBASSADOR CARLSON VISITS ISABELA

The United States of America Ambassador MaryKay Carlson visited Isabela to meet with Governor Rodito Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino Dy III and to strengthen U.S.-Philippine connections in the province, a newly identified Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) site.

Ambassador Carlson, Governor Albano, and Vice Governor Dy visited Camp Melchor F. Dela Cruz to see U.S. service members participating in 2023 Balikatan Exercises, which aims to strengthen the defense alliance of U.S. and Philippines.

They were welcomed by 5th Infrantry Division, Philippine Army Commander Maj. Gen. Audrey Pasia, and U.S. and Filipino army soldiers as well.

She also boosted the morale of the soldiers who joined the 2023 Balikatan Exercises.



PGI extends warm welcome to EU Ambassador Luc Véron

Governor Rodito T. Albano III welcomed to the province His Excellency Luc Véron, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union (EU) to the Philippines, on September 7, 2023.

Joining Gov. Rodito in extending the province's hospitality were Vice Gov. Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III, City of Ilagan Mayor Josemarie L. Diaz, and Provincial Board Member Evyn Jay C. Diaz.

The courtesy visit allowed both parties to discuss potential collaborations that

could benefit the province and strengthen the ties between Isabela and the EU.

Gov. Rodito thanked the ambassador for his visit and reiterated Isabela's eagerness to explore avenues for enhanced cooperation.

The visit of Ambassador Véron not only reinforced the importance of diplomatic relations but showcased Isabela's commitment to engaging with the international community for mutual growth and prosperity.



Gov. Rodito T. Albano III thanks His Excellency Luc Véron, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union (EU) to the Philippines, for his courtesy visit to Isabela, September 7.

Chinese Consulate sends delegation to Isabela Provincial Capitol

To step up diplomatic ties, the Chinese Consulate in Laoag and Chinese Embassy in Manila sent a delegation to Isabela on February 14, 2023.

Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel R. Lopez and Provincial Information Officer Atty. Elizabeth C. Binag warmly welcomed the delegation to the Provincial Capitol.

Headed by the Consul and Head of Post, Mr. Ren Faqiang, the delegation included Councilor of the Chinese Embassy in Manila, Mr. Ji Ling Peng, Consul Ma Ning (wife of Consul Ren Faqiang), and Third Secretary of the Chinese Embassy in Manila, Ms. Shao Dai Hong.

Atty. Lopez expressed gratitude on behalf of Governor Rodito Albano III for the support extended to the province by the Chinese Consulate. He specifically mentioned the Consulate's donations of 42 tons of rice as relief for flood victims affected by Typhoon Ulysses and their previous contributions of premium rice during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consul Faqiang expressed optimism about establishing sisterhood relations between Isabela and one of the 26 provinces in China.

He highlighted the potential benefits of such ties, including promoting tourism and attracting investors to both regions.



Ambassador Mylene, Gov. Rodito welcome Pres. Marcos Jr. in Japan for 3-day summit

Philippine Ambassador to Japan Mylene Garcia-Albano, along with her husband, Isabela Governor Rodito T. Albano III, and Japanese officials, welcomed President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos on December 15, 2023 in Japan, for the 50th Commemorative ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation Summit.

The President attended the summit from Dec. 16 to 18 upon the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. This is Marcos' second visit to Japan this year.

The Philippines will continue to take a lead role in promoting economic partnerships

between Japan and member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), President Marcos said before leaving for Tokyo for the summit

commemorating 50 years of friendship and cooperation between the Asian power and the regional bloc.

Source: Presidential Communications Office



TAKING THE HELM OF NAT'L LEADERSHIP: 2 ISABELEÑOS ELECTED AS NAT'L PRESIDENTS

The Provincial Government of Isabela's very own Provincial General Services Officer, Mr. Rodrigo "Bobot" T. Sawit, was elected as the new national president of the Philippine Association of General Services Officers, Inc. (PAGSO).

The new set of officers of PAGSO, headed by Mr. Sawit, took oath before Vice Governor Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III on July 20, 2023 in Cauayan City. Mr. Sawit will serve as the national president of PAGSO until 2025.

He vowed to strengthen the association and make it relevant in the country.

Meanwhile, Atty. Smith O. Valdez, the Municipal Accountant of San Agustin, Isabela, was inducted as the national president of the Philippine Association of Local Government Accountants (PhALGA) on July 13, 2023, in Cauayan City.

He will serve as the national PhALGA president for the term 2023-2024.

Gov. Rodito Albano III extended his congratulations to the new set of PhALGA officers and expressed his wishes for their collaborative efforts to make a positive impact in the field of local government accounting.

PhALGA plays a vital role in upholding the principles of good governance within Local Government Units (LGUs) by ensuring the integrity and accountability of provincial, city, and municipal accountants.



The 8th Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF) poured a whopping P400-million government services in Isabela on November 25-26, 2023, closing the divide between the Isabeleños and essential national government services. Despite rain showers, it drew an unwavering crowd eager to experience the government's flagship programs.

The two-day fair was a showcase of government programs and a lifeline for over 100,000 beneficiaries of government services providing 195 major government services to Isabeleños.

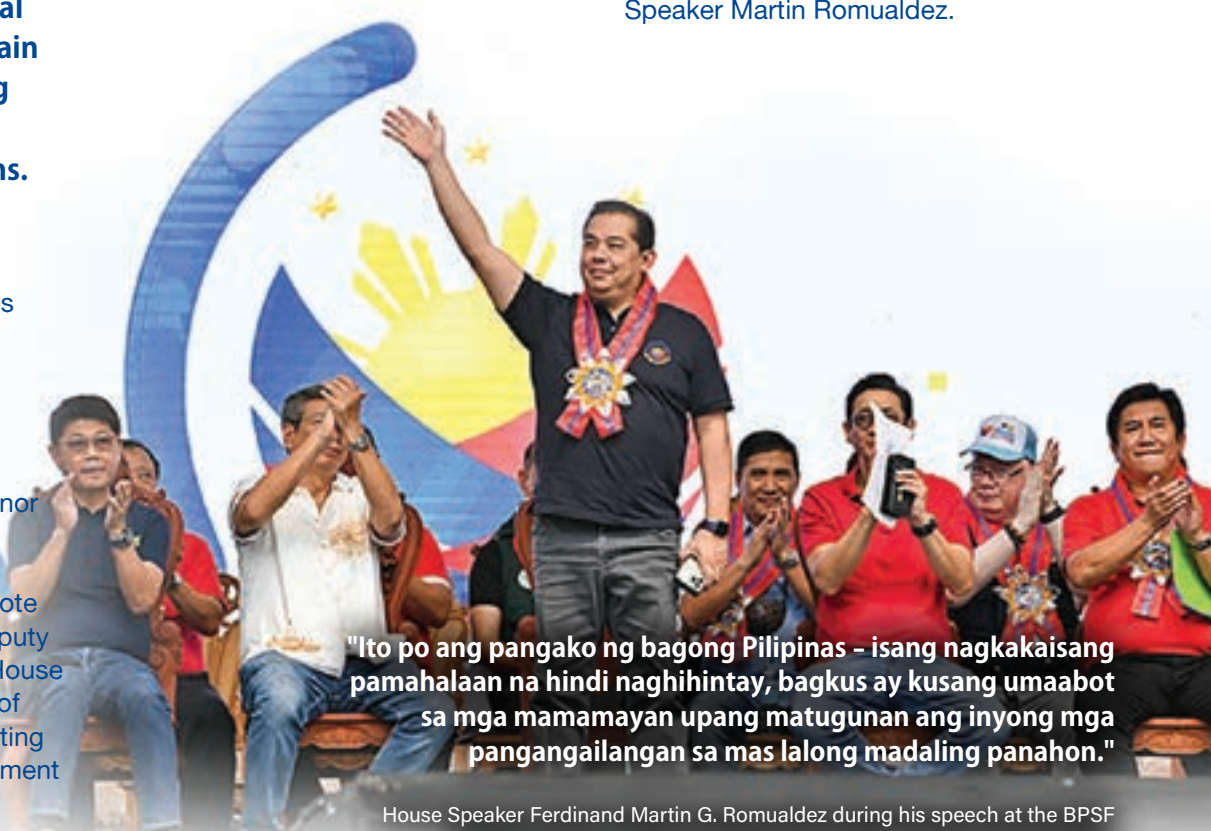
Hosted by Deputy Speaker Antonio "Tonypet" T. Albano, Isabela Governor Rodito T. Albano III, and Ilagan City Mayor Josemarie "Jay" L. Diaz, the BPSF served as a platform to promote the Bagong Pilipinas campaign. Deputy Speaker Tonypet Albano credited House Speaker Martin Romualdez as one of the architects of the BPSF, highlighting the fair's purpose in making government services accessible to all citizens.

'When it rains, it pours'

Governor Rodito T. Albano III expressed his gratitude to the national government, emphasizing the impact of the fair in

advancing the province's welfare.

"When it rains, it pours," he said, metaphorically acknowledging the blessings brought by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and House Speaker Martin Romualdez.



"Ito po ang pangako ng bagong Pilipinas - isang nagkakaisang pamahalaan na hindi naghihintay, bagkus ay kusang umaabot sa mga mamamayan upang matugunan ang inyong mga pangangailangan sa mas lalong madaling panahon."

House Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez during his speech at the BPSF opening program at Ilagan City Sports Complex on November 25, 2023.



36 Agencies, One Mission

A total of 36 government agencies, including DOH, SSS, PHILPOST, DICT, GSIS, PhilHealth, BIR, LTRFB, DOT, OCD, OWWA, NTC, DOLE, DHSUD, DMW, DTI, DENR, FDA, DOST, DepEd, DA, DAR, PCA, BFAR, PNP, and NFA, among others, converged at the fair.

The Serbisyo Fair aimed to streamline government services, eliminating the need for citizens to travel to Manila to access various needs and services from government offices.

The fair featured government programs, that include the Kadiwa ng Pangulo, Passport on Wheels, Rice and Food Packs Distribution, Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD), Assistance to Individual In Crisis Situation (AICS) Program, Government Internship Program (GIP) payouts, land title distribution and laboratory/medical services.

The DSWD orchestrated a province-wide payout, reaching over

42,000 beneficiaries with a total amount of P140 million. Various scholarship programs from TESDA and CHED and livelihood assistance for different sectors were also made available to pre-identified eligible clients.

The Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) also distributed free wheelchairs to senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Breaking Barriers for a Bagong Pilipinas

House Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez stressed the significance of the BPSF in expediting government services. He said that the fair aims to be the country's largest service caravan, dedicated to bringing essential services to underserved communities.

The fair's comprehensive range of services, from healthcare to

employment and education, embodies a proactive approach to addressing the diverse needs of communities.

The BPSF stands as a testament to the government's commitment to progress, unity, and accessibility. In the face of adversity, Isabeleños gathered not just to receive services but to witness the transformation of their communities and embrace the promise of a Bagong Pilipinas.



LUZON RDCOM'S INITIATIVES IN 2023

Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, the new Luzon RDCom chairman, together with co-chair Gov. Hermilando I. Mandanas and members of the Luzon RDCom, pose for a photo after the successful conduct of the 2nd Quarter Meeting at the MMDA Headquarters in Pasig City, April 19, 2023.



The reorganizational meeting of the Luzon Regional Development Committee (RDCom) on April 19, 2023, held at NEDA Region IV-A in Calamba City, Laguna, set a defining moment in regional collaboration.

Often referred to as RDCom, this committee is entrusted with formulating and monitoring policies that reduce regional growth disparities and promote the rational allocation of resources among regions.

During this reorganizational meeting, Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, RDC2 Chair, was endorsed as the principal representative, with Gov. Hermilando I. Mandanas, Chairperson of RDC IV-A, assuming the role of alternate representative of Luzon RDCom to the NEDA Board-RDCom.

This endorsement inaugurated a period marked by strategic agreements and collaborative efforts.

BUILDING UPON FOUNDATIONS: THE INAUGURAL MEETING

Under Gov. Albano's chairmanship, the inaugural Luzon RDCom meeting occurred on July 4, 2023, at the Pasig City Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) office.

At this gathering, a spirit of enthusiasm and determination pervaded the room as Gov. Rodito welcomed the members, expressing confidence in the committee's ability to stimulate economic growth and development across Luzon.

The committee's shared mission, reflected in approving nods and vibrant discussions, laid the foundation for the transformative journey ahead.

PIONEERING PROGRESS: ACHIEVING MILESTONES

The 2nd Quarter RDCom meeting witnessed significant strides, including approval of the Luzon Area RDCom Priority Agenda for 2023-2025.

Addressing vital agenda items such as watershed studies, Universal Health Care Act implementation, and essential



Gov. Rodito T. Albano III leads the 2023 Luzon RDCom 3rd Quarter Meeting in Mabalacat City, Pampanga on October 10, 2023.



infrastructure projects, was more than a mere list of tasks; it was a roadmap for change.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology's (DICT) briefing revolved around the National Broadband Plan (NBP), a cornerstone in achieving a digitally transformed economy.

Gov. Rodito highlighted the need to evaluate the current state of ICT infrastructure, including connectivity in last-mile public schools and heritage/cultural sites, for the subsequent phases of NBP implementation.

The committee also adopted proposed amendments to EO 325, enhancing regional development strategies, and endorsed Ma. Virginia Castillejos-Liquigan as the regional development expert representative for the Luzon area to NB-RDCom.

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS: THE THIRD QUARTER MEETING

The transformative journey reached its height during the 3rd Quarter RDCom Meeting on October 10, 2023, at the BCDA Corporate Center in Mabalacat City, Pampanga where the Luzon RDCom Manual of Operations was approved.

The unanimous endorsement of a groundbreaking port development and interconnectivity proposal under the Strong Republic Nautical Highway underscored the committee's focus on

comprehensive implementation and active LGU participation.

Furthermore, the RDCom approved prioritizing Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) in Human Resources for Health (HRH) services allocation, ensuring equitable healthcare access.

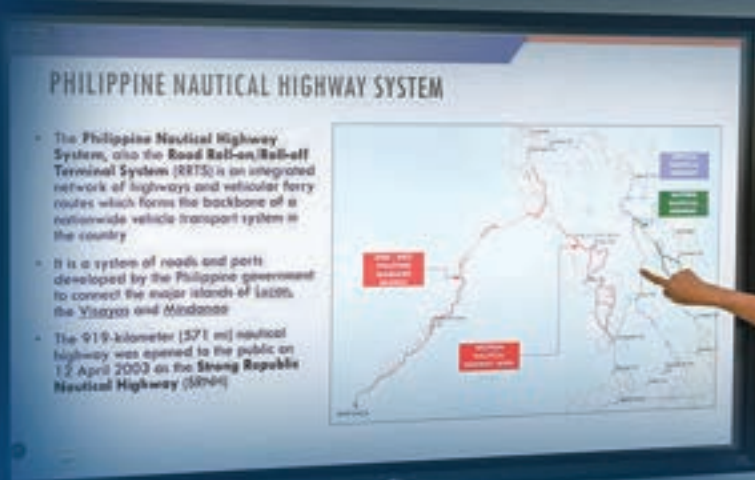
Requests for comprehensive watershed reports from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and endorsements of soil studies by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to mitigate the high cost of fertilizers highlighted the committee's dedication to environmental sustainability and agricultural growth. Meanwhile,

discussions on Philippine Travel Tax Abolition aimed to promote seamless travel within the region.

SHAPING TOMORROW: WAYS FORWARD

Reflecting on the monumental achievements of Luzon RDCom in 2023, these milestones are not merely markers on a timeline but a testament to the committee's dedication to regional integration and sustainable development.

The impact of these initiatives, from fostering environmental sustainability to enhancing agricultural growth, reverberates across Luzon's diverse communities.



The unanimous endorsement of a groundbreaking port development and interconnectivity proposal under the Strong Republic Nautical Highway underscored the committee's focus on comprehensive implementation and active LGU participation.



RDC2's Journey in 2023

Prosperity in the Cagayan Valley Region

With Gov. Rodito T. Albano III as 2nd term RDC2 Chair, the council charted significant milestones in regional development.

These accomplishments are a testament to the region's collective dedication to progress, resilience, and inclusive growth. Gov. Rodito's unwavering commitment and strategic foresight were evident throughout the year, laying the groundwork for Cagayan Valley's resilient and prosperous future. These milestones showcase the council's achievements and mirror the region's shared vision for continuous growth and progress.

126TH RDC MEETING (APRIL 12, 2023)

Comprehensive Discussion and Adoption:

- RDC Chair Gov. Rodito T. Albano III led discussions on critical topics such as the CVRDP, the fiscal year 2024 budget proposals, infrastructure projects, Magat Dam status, and devolution updates.
- The unanimous adoption of the Cagayan Valley Regional Development Plan (CVRDP) 2023-2028 showcased a unified vision for regional development.
- Approval of the Regional Development Investment Program (RDIP) 2023-2028 underscored RDC2's commitment to funding strategic initiatives outlined in the CVRDP.
- The endorsement of the construction of the Lalog Bridge in Luna, Isabela demonstrated regional support for vital local projects.



Memorial Tribute and Strategic Deliberations:

- RDC Chair Gov. Rodito T. Albano III paid tribute to the late Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos M. Padilla, setting a solemn tone for discussions.
- Deliberations focused on critical projects like the Magat Dam Project, Divilacan Seaport Development Project, and the CVRDP 2023-2028 Communication Plan.
- Flood Control Measures and Project Endorsements: Approval of resolutions for the Magat Dam Project's extension and endorsement of flood control initiatives highlighted the proactive approach to regional challenges.
- Endorsement of various infrastructure projects, including airports, ports, and road expansions, demonstrated the council's commitment to enhancing regional connectivity.

Unveiling of CVRDP 2023-2028

(AUGUST 8, 2023)

Strategic Vision and Government Commitment:

- Gov. Rodito Albano III emphasized the CVRDP's role as a developmental compass, outlining strategies focusing on agro-industries, manufacturing, IT-based enterprises, and tourism.
- Key figures, including NEDA Assistant Secretary Greg L. Pineda and Assistant Secretary Ana Carmela Ventura-Remigio, lauded the plan's alignment with national socio-economic agendas, fostering optimism for the region's prosperity.



Pledge of Commitment to the Cagayan Valley Regional Development Plan 2023-2028

Having been present during the launch of the Cagayan Valley Regional Development Plan (CVRDP) 2023-2028 in Itagan City, Isabela on August 8, 2023, we pledge to:

- Fully support the implementation of the CVRDP 2023-2028.
- Align our programs, projects, and activities to the thrusts and priorities of the Plan.
- Collaborate with stakeholders in translating the Plan into actions towards the realization of our regional goals and targets.

Along with this commitment, we pledge to extend our time, effort, expertise, and resources in promoting our regional vision and other Plan advocacies.

Flood Control Measures and Infrastructure Advancements:

- Unanimous approval of funding requests for cut-off channels and comprehensive feasibility studies showcased RDC2's dedication to addressing flooding issues.
- Progress on the Divilacan Seaport Development Project and endorsement of various infrastructure initiatives underscored the region's commitment to robust development.

EXTENDING SERVICES TO CAGAYAN VALLEY

OVP OPENS 8TH SATELLITE OFFICE IN ISABELA

To bring medical assistance and social services closer to Filipinos in need in Northeast Luzon, the Office of the Vice President launched its eight satellite office on April 24, 2023, at San Fermin, Cauayan City, Isabela.

Vice President Sara Duterte-Carpio said that the satellite office in Isabela will further expand the provision of assistance and services to Filipinos in remote areas.

“Ang Isabela Satellite Office ay

ang pangwalo na sa mga naitayong tanggapan ng ating opisina upang higit pang palawakin ang pagbibigay ng tulong at serbisyo sa ating mga kababayan sa malalayong lugar sa Northeast Luzon. Ang walong satellite offices ay itinatag upang matiyak na ang mga serbispong inaalok ng OVP ay maibibigay din sa mga taong naninirahan sa labas ng National Capital Region,” she said.

Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, Vice Gov.

Clients flock to the satellite office of the Office of the Vice President (OVP) in Cauayan City, Isabela to request for financial assistance.

Faustino G. Dy III, OVP Administrative and Financial Services Director Atty. Rosalynne L. Sanchez, OVP Spokesperson Atty. Reynold Munsayac, OVP Isabela Satellite Office head Maria Laiza Frogoso-Pamittan, and the department heads headed by Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel R. Lopez were present during the opening.

The OVP programs include Medical and Burial (MAB) Assistance, PagbaBAGO Campaign, Libreng Sakay, Mag Negosyo Ta ‘Day, and Peace 911.

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

VP SARA CONFERS PASIDUNGOG 2023 AWARD TO PGI

In a ceremony held on June 5, 2023, at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Vice President Sara Duterte bestowed the esteemed Pasidungog 2023 award upon the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI).

The recognition was a tribute to Isabela’s

exceptional contributions to the Office of the Vice President’s (OVP) mission, a testament to their commitment to uplifting communities and fostering collaborative excellence.

Rooted in the Visayan term **“Pasidungog,”** which translates to **“to give honor,”** the award celebrated the remarkable synergy

between government agencies and private sector entities. Accepting the accolade on behalf of the PGI, Gov. Rodito Albano III acknowledged the critical role played by Isabela’s satellite office under the OVP’s Public Assistance Division (PAD).

At the core of Pasidungog 2023 lies a profound acknowledgment of the indispensable role played by OVP’s satellite offices.

These lifelines, strategically positioned throughout the country, provide essential healthcare, education, and social welfare services.

Pasidungog 2023 stands not just as an accolade but as a tribute to the power of unity, empathy, and action, echoing the sentiment that by working together, we can create a society where every citizen thrives.

It is a reminder that through collective efforts and unwavering dedication, we can build a nation where the spirit of collaboration and compassion paves the way for a brighter and more prosperous future.

ISABELA'S RESCUERS: A LIFELINE OF SUPPORT IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Isabela, known for resilience and unity, has made a significant impact on humanitarian efforts that stretch far beyond its borders. From the aftermath of typhoons to the threats of volcanic eruptions, Isabela's rescuers stood undeterred, extending a lifeline of support that knows no bounds.

Crisis Response in Cagayan

The Province of Isabela once again demonstrated its commitment to support its neighboring Province of Cagayan. Isabela's Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) sprang into action when disaster struck in Cabulan, Alcala, Cagayan, after a Super Typhoon Goring-induced landslide on August 30, 2023.

A dedicated group of DART Rescue 831 personnel and volunteers, armed with determination and portable water purifiers, delivered an essential lifeline, ensuring clean drinking water for evacuees and residents affected by the catastrophe.

Aid in Albay amidst Volcanic Threat

When Mayon Volcano in Albay surged to Alert Level 3, placing local residents in grave danger, Isabela swiftly stepped in to lend a helping hand. Pulling together its resources and manpower from the

PDRRMO, PSWDO, and OPE on August 25, 2023, they delivered a substantial donation of 5,749 bags (5 kgs/bag) of Isabela Rice to the people of Albay, providing immediate sustenance to communities amidst the looming threat posed by Mayon Volcano.

Bridging Borders since 2013

On November 11, 2013, Team Isabela Humanitarian and Relief Mission embarked on a journey in the aftermath of the catastrophic Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 to the storm-ravaged Province of Leyte. Comprising 120 diverse professionals, the resolute mission embodied Isabela's unwavering commitment to extend aid, undeterred by the formidable challenges faced. Over the course of five days, various sub-teams carried out medical missions, clearing and retrieval operations, and water sanitation efforts in the affected municipalities.

Isabela has consistently extended humanitarian services to provinces including Cagayan, Albay, Leyte, Bulacan, Tarlac, and Davao Oriental. These efforts have included rice donations, water sanitation operations, relief pack distributions, medical missions, and more.

The PDRRMC's DART 831 Rescue Team also provided essential physical and medical assistance to the residents of Itbayat, Batanes in the wake of the magnitude 5.7 earthquake and subsequent

strong aftershocks that struck the province on July 27, 2019.

The team provided support by supplying clean and potable water to ensure residents' health and sanitation at the evacuation site.

In their longest mission to date, Isabela sent out two teams for "Project Isabela Loves Visayas and Mindanao," a 28-day humanitarian effort spanning from January 27 to February 15, 2022, providing crucial relief and support to communities ravaged by Typhoon Odette in Visayas and Mindanao.

The team distributed a total of 20,000 packs of 2-kg Isabela Rice to Region 6; 30,000 packs to Region 7; 15,000 packs to Leyte; 18,750 packs to Surigao; and 10,000 packs to Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

Isabela's rescuers beyond borders stand as a testament to the province's boundless compassion and unwavering commitment to assist those in need, transcending geographical boundaries.

The province's tireless efforts inspires communities to unite, support one another, and believe in a future where compassion and assistance prevail, knowing no limits or borders.



'KAYO ANG PUHUNAN NAMIN'
ALBANO, DY CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR
EDUCATION, ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Governor Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino "Bojie" Dy III forged a commitment to the youth that echoed beyond the Province of Isabela's boundaries. Their educational program, the Bojie-Rodito Opportunities (BRO) for Education, manifests the duo's commitment to inclusive education and their firm stand that the youth are the province's greatest investment.

In his talks to the BRO-Ed scholars, Gov. Albano emphasized, **"Kailangan ninyong makapagtapos dahil kayong mga kabataan ang puhunan namin sa kapitolyo."** This call underscores the important role of education in shaping the future of our youth and our community at large.

BRO-Ed, tagged as the largest and most comprehensive Local Government Unit (LGU) Scholarship Program, has burgeoned over the years. As of 1st semester of 2022-2023, it proudly supports 34,426 scholars, ranging from small farmers' children enrolled at local institutions like Isabela State University and Philippine Normal University to those pursuing higher education outside the province.

In 2023, the program received an impressive allocation of P100 million. The sustainability measures ensure that the program's integrity remains intact, even with increasing scholarship recipients.

The program is a security for small farmers and indigent parents, assuring them of their children's access to quality education.

Governor Albano's words during the distributions echo the program's commitment to alleviating the plight of the underprivileged, as BRO-Ed goes beyond providing financial assistance. His statements instill confidence and motivate dreams.

Ordinance No. 2020-04-1 Series of 2020 expanded the scholarship program to include post-graduate studies, such as Master's Degrees, Law, Medicine, and Theology. The program extends support even to licensure examination takers.

The BRO-Ed for Education is more than a scholarship program; it catalyzes change. It is a transformative force that empowers Isabela's youth to break barriers and build a future that betters their lives and contributes to the province's progress. With Gov. Albano

and Vice Gov. Dy's unwavering commitment, Isabela's youth are not just students but pioneers of a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow.

To uplift the lives of Isabeleños, Governor Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III expand access to employment and livelihood opportunities. These programs are designed to provide sustainable solutions for income generation and economic empowerment in the province.

Isabela Recovery Initiatives to Support Enterprises (I-RISE)

Under the Executive Agenda of Social Protection, the Isabela Recovery Initiatives to Support Enterprises (I-RISE) Program extends financial grants and market support to cooperative products.

"Sa mga I-RISE beneficiary, gusto kong makita na kumikita kayong lahat dahil kayo ang ginagawa naming puhunan.



government, DOLE-Isabela Field Office, and local government units resulted in a P45 million project cost, demonstrating a commitment to community welfare.

Promise Fulfilled

Governor Albano also fulfilled his promise to the tricycle operators and drivers associations (TODA) by distributing a monthly 5-kg rice subsidy to 22,033 TODA members and 69 kalesa operators in the province.

This subsidy will also extend to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and fisherfolks by 2024, showcasing the government's inclusive approach to supporting all households in Isabela.

Kaming lahat, pagsisilbihan namin kayo nang mabuti. Ang pera ng gobyerno ay pupunta sa inyo para mapag-aral ninyo ang inyong mga anak at makapag-negosyo. Ibabalik sa inyo ang buwis ninyo," Gov. Albano said, underscoring the government's dedication to the prosperity of its people.

In 2023, the Provincial Cooperative, Livelihood and Enterprise Development Office (PCLEDO) distributed P54.8 million to support the livelihood of the 16,204 fish vendors, meat vendors, sidewalk vendors, enterprising PWDs, and market laborers. The provincial government's interest-free lending program also facilitated the growth

of 42 cooperatives and five associations, providing them with a total loan of P19.6 million.

Serbisyong TUPAD

The TUPAD Program, a community-based assistance package, provides emergency employment for displaced, underemployed, and seasonal workers.

The beneficiaries, totaling 11,266 individuals, engaged in tasks like public facility maintenance, canal de-clogging, and surroundings clearing.

The collaboration between the provincial



BRO-TRABAHO PARA SA ISABELEÑO

CATALYZING EMPLOYMENT IN ISABELA

To address unemployment and connect job seekers with potential employers, the Provincial Government of Isabela, through the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) headed by Ms. Cecilia Claire N. Reyes, organized three job fairs in 2023.

The Bambanti Job Fair held during the provincial Bambanti Festival attracted 385 participants and showcased 2,012 job vacancies from 40 local employers, with 11% hired on the spot and 66% identified as near hires.

Similarly, the Isabela Day Job Fair and 3rd Quarter Job Fair continued the trend of connecting job seekers with employers, with the former featuring 249 participants with

18.47% hired, and the latter boasting 470 participants with 21.9% securing immediate employment, demonstrating the province's

dynamic employment landscape and its alignment with evolving job market needs.



NURTURING FARMERS, TRANSFORMING ECONOMIES

KADIWA NG PANGULO IN ISABELA BATTLES RISING FOOD PRICES



The KADIWA ng PANGULO (Katuwang sa Diwa at Gawa Para sa Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita) program in Isabela is a proof of the steadfast commitment of the province to sustainable agriculture as it empowers local businesses and fosters resilience.

EMPOWERING LOCAL BUSINESSES

In a showcase of unity and agricultural ingenuity, the Province of Isabela hosted the grand launch of Kadiwa ng Pangulo in Region 02 on October 17, 2023.

The event brought together farmers, fisherfolks, micro-enterprises, and consumers, marking the initiation of a program designed to provide affordable access to goods and commodities while creating invaluable market opportunities.

The occasion was graced by Regional Executive Director Narciso Edillo of the Department of Agriculture 02, who emphasized the significance of Kadiwa ng Pangulo as a vital link between farmers and consumers.

Isabela's leaders, Gov. Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Gov. Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III, were lauded for their responsiveness and contributions to food security initiatives, setting the stage for a collaborative approach to agricultural challenges.

The initiative received support from partner agencies such as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), with the Department of Agriculture leading the way.

CONNECTING FARMERS AND CONSUMERS

Farmers, fisherfolks, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) offered various reasonably priced fresh agricultural produce, including rice, fish, fruits, and vegetables.

Among the participants were the National Food Authority (NFA), offering rice at an affordable price of P25.00 per kilo, and the Nagkakaisang Magsasaka

ng Isabela Agriculture Cooperative (NMIAC), showcasing their premium rice priced at P38.00 per kilo.

The event featured a diverse range of products, from peanut products presented by the Gonzaga Center of Agronomy to fresh pineapples and bananas offered by Caviteño Isabelino Agriculture Cooperative. Sagittarian Agricultural Phils, Inc. of Santa Victoria, Ilagan also showcased a selection of canned goods such as pork and chicken.

Moreover, the Epiphany Multi-Purpose Cooperative of Abut, Quezon, presented black rice and pink rice options for consumers, while Puregold Ilagan (Alibagu) displayed a variety of affordable grocery items.

The DA-CVRC Multi-Purpose Cooperative also participated by selling eggs, vegetables, and fruits, while the Star Chime Enterprises of Cabatuan offered assorted groceries and even distributed free coffee packs.

The Flow of Pariir Agriculture Cooperative of Cabatuan showcased munggo beans and other agricultural products.

At the same time, the Isabela Aqua Agriculture Cooperative brought their range of tilapia-based products from the Magat Dam in Ramon.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) featured a stall highlighting assorted food products from Isabela's MSMEs. Agar Wood of San Mateo, Isabela presented their wooden products for non-food items, adding a unique touch to the event.





Modernizing Agriculture: A PhilMech Initiative

DA-PhilMech Distributes P240-M Farm Machinery to Isabela Farmers

The Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) distributed state-of-the-art farm machinery under the Rice Competitiveness and Enhancement Program (RCEF) to 75 Farmers Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs), including PGI, LGU Alicia, and Cauayan City at the Isabela Sports Complex, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela on February 21, 2023.

With a total value of P240.18 million, these advanced farm equipment are poised to revolutionize Isabela's agricultural landscape, paving the way for a prosperous future for its farmers.

Under the RCEF, PhilMech distributed a range of cutting-edge farm machinery designed to enhance crop establishment, harvesting, and palay drying processes. These grants, funded by RCEF sources from 2021 and 2022, included rice combine harvesters, recirculating dryers, multi-stage rice mills, hand tractors, walk-behind transplanter, and riding-type transplanter.

A VISION FOR TOMORROW

PhilMech Interim Director for Operations Joel V. Dator reaffirmed the institution's commitment to sustaining the distribution of farm equipment to qualified FCAs/LGUs through the RCEF until 2024.

“Nais namin ang mga pinakabago, pinakamaganda, branded, at tunay na mapakinabangan lamang na makinarya

ang umabot sa inyong mga samahan,” he emphasized, underscoring PhilMech's dedication to providing the best possible machinery to the farming communities.

Dator urged young farmers in Isabela to rally behind the Youth for Mechanization (Y4M) campaign, an initiative aimed at rebranding agriculture among the youth through the use of advanced farm machinery.

Meanwhile, DA Regional Executive Director Narciso Edillo encouraged farmers to adopt hybrid rice varieties to bolster production and shift from transplanting to direct seeding, a method proven to reduce labor costs in rice farming.

CHAMPIONING AGRICULTURE'S TRANSFORMATION

Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Food and Agriculture and the main author of the Rice Tariffication Law (Republic Act 11203), wholeheartedly supported PhilMech during the machinery turnover event.

In her video message, she underscored the significance of the RCEF, a component of the Rice Tariffication Law that allocates P10 billion annually from rice import tariffs for six years.

Villar highlighted the importance of mechanization, which receives 50 percent of

the RCEF allocation, in empowering farmers. **“Para sa machineries, ang Farmers' Cooperative and Associations ang bibigyan ng benepisyo ayon sa pangangailangan,”** she stressed. The senator urged farmers to unite and establish cooperatives, safeguarding their interests amidst agricultural liberalization.

Mechanization, according to Villar, stands as a cornerstone in empowering farmers.

“Mahalagang magawa natin mula sa ating binalangkas na batas ang para sa kapakanan ng ating mga maliliit na mga magsasaka upang makatulong tayo na umunlad ang kanilang buhay at ang kanilang kanayunan,” she concluded, emphasizing the importance of legislation in ensuring the prosperity of small-scale farmers.

With these advanced farm machines and the unwavering support of dedicated officials, Isabela's agricultural sector is poised for a transformative journey, ensuring a brighter, more prosperous future for its farmers and the entire community.

The allocation of P240.18 million worth of farm machinery marks a significant step towards a more efficient, productive, and sustainable agricultural landscape in the province.



INCREASING PH GRAIN OUTPUT



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New DA chief meets Albano, other governors for agri consultation

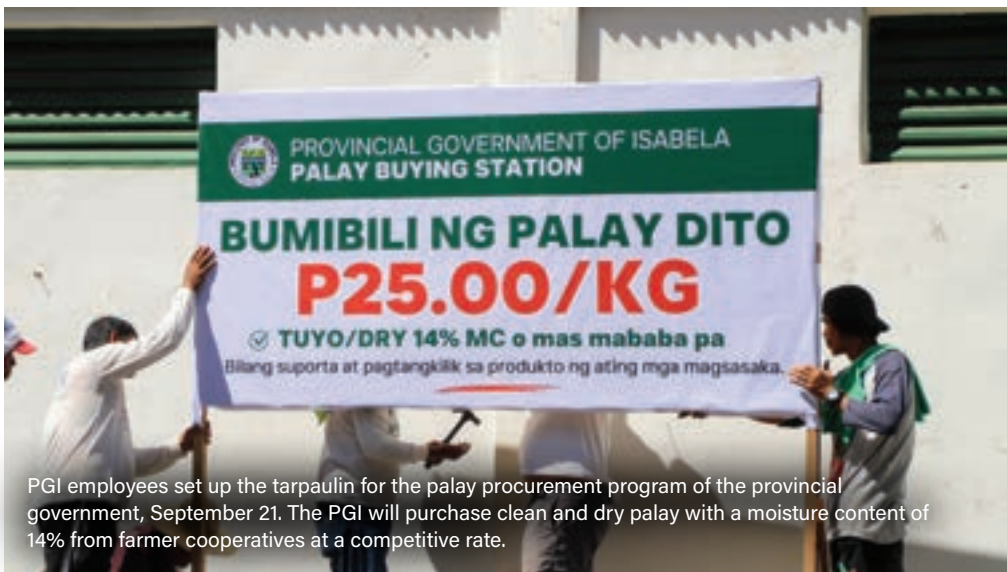
"Maganda ang resulta. Kasi iyan ang unang-una—dapat, makipag-usap si Secretary Laurel sa mga stakeholder na tulad namin. Maganda 'yung ginagawa niya, tulongan. Kung may mga makatutulong sa kanya, magagawa natin ang mga programa, maaayos natin lahat."

This was the statement of Governor Rodito Albano III after the first-ever consultative meeting presided over by the new Agriculture Secretary, Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., with

the governors of the top 10 rice-producing provinces in the country on November 17, 2023.

The meeting was part of Secretary Laurel's initiative to strengthen the DA's partnership with the local government units, anchored in President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s vision of modernizing agriculture, ensuring food security, and lifting farmers and fishermen out of poverty.

PGI ramps up palay procurement program to stabilize rice prices



PGI employees set up the tarpaulin for the palay procurement program of the provincial government, September 21. The PGI will purchase clean and dry palay with a moisture content of 14% from farmer cooperatives at a competitive rate.

In a proactive step aimed at stabilizing palay prices, enhancing buffer stocks, and meeting rice distribution requirements, the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) embarked on its palay procurement program.

The program seeks to provide local farmers with a reliable market for their palay, ensuring a stable income and boosting their investment return.

The PGI acquired clean and dry palay with a moisture content of 14 percent at a competitive rate from P26.00 to P28.00 per kilo, using the Northern Philippines Grains Complex in Sinabbaran, Echague, which was lent by the NFA, as the buying center.

This strategic move not only shields local farmers from market price fluctuations but also significantly

DA-R02, PGI award P10.3M delivery vehicles to Isabeleño farmers

The Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 02, in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Isabela, awarded seven delivery vehicles worth P10.3 million to seven farmer cooperatives and associations on May 25, 2023.

The recipients were San Pablo, Isabela Farmers Dairy Cooperative, Browngold Isabela Organic Farmers Association, Flow of Pariir Agricultural Cooperative, Indigenous People Agricultural Cooperative, Southwestern San Agustin Farmers' Association, Aurora Vegetable Growers Association, and Queen Isabela Mango Producers Cooperative.

DA Assistant Secretary for Consumer Affairs Kristine Y. Evangelista said that capacitating the farmers is the answer to the country's food security.

"Naniniwala kami na hindi pa namin nakikita ang power ng kooperatiba. At kung kayo ay mabigyan ng kapasidad na gawin ang ginagawa ng traders, kayo rin po ang magiging kasagutan sa food security. Ipakita natin na ang programang ito ay talagang nakatutulong sa inyo. Sana ay hindi lamang miyembro ang makikinabang kundi lahat ng farmers," she said.



A farmer cooperative brings home a brand new delivery vehicle through a grant from the DA's Enhanced KADIWA Inclusive Food Supply Chain Program, May 25.

contributes to the overall welfare of the agricultural communities in Isabela.

Since the program's launch on September 21, 2023, until November 9, 2023, the PGI procured 1,783,710 kilos of palay, equivalent to P46,551,060.00. Gov. Rodito emphasized the program's dual purpose – safeguarding local farmers from the perils of low palay prices while ensuring the province's rice sufficiency.

In addition to the palay procurement program, Gov. Rodito has extended his support to tobacco farmers. For the crop year 2019-2020, a significant number of tobacco farmers, totaling 7,925, received financial assistance amounting to P25,000.00 each.

This initiative underscores the governor's holistic approach to agriculture, addressing the diverse needs of Isabela's farming community.

Farmers remain at the heart of Gov. Rodito's policies, approach is poised to impact positively the agricultural landscape in Isabela, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for local farmers.

TOWARD ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Provincial Government of Isabela has taken a decisive step in helping local cooperatives and associations — purchasing their products in bulk.

Under the Isabela Recovery Initiatives to Support Enterprise (I-RISE) Program, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the provincial government and these community-driven groups was inked on October 19 to alleviate the challenges they face in marketing their products.

The ceremony occurred at the Governor's Mini Conference held at the Provincial Capitol, coinciding with the celebration of Cooperative Month 2023.

Governor Albano and Vice Governor Dy's forward-thinking approach aims to create a robust support system, ensuring a flourishing market for local produce and, consequently, providing these enterprising entities with a sustainable source of income.

Under the MOA, the provincial government will purchase products at premium prices, actively participating in the promotion and marketing of items such as local dairy products, dried tilapia, cornick, bottled fruit



The I-RISE Task Force inks a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with local cooperatives and associations for their product marketing, October 19.

juice, bamboo creations, banana chips, woven rattan bags, vegetable and fruit tree seedlings, including rice.

This strategic collaboration not only injects economic vitality into the local market but also showcases the products of Isabeleños to a broader audience.

Furthermore, the provincial government

will act as a bridge, connecting Isabeleño farmers with cooperatives and associations, facilitating the sale of agricultural produce, such as vegetables, turmeric, and calamansi.

By addressing the core challenges cooperatives and associations face in marketing their products, Isabela sets a precedent that prioritizes the welfare of its citizens.

FIRST IN THE REGION

Swine artificial insemination project to rise in Cabagan, Isabela



The officials and leaders of DA Region 02 and PGI break ground for the construction of the region's first Swine Artificial Insemination sa Barangay (SWAIB) Project at the Cabagan Breeding Station, April 18.

The Provincial Government of Isabela will construct the region's first Swine Artificial Insemination sa Barangay (SWAIB) Project worth P3.9 million at the Cabagan Breeding Station.

The SWAIB Project is under the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) Program of the Department of Agriculture-National Livestock Program (NLP) through the

Agricultural Training Institute-International Training Center on Pig Husbandry. The climate controlled facility will have a biogas system, AI laboratory equipment, and breeder boars, producing high-quality, genetically superior processed semen.

Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Belina N. Barboza thanked the Agricultural Training Institute R02 and DA Regional Field Offices for their trust in the provincial government.

"The PVET really desired to get the SWAIB project dahil gusto naming makatulong sa mga hog raiser na nawalan ng baboy dahil sa ASF. On behalf of Governor Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino 'Bojie' Dy III, taos-puso po kaming nagpapasalamat sa inyong tiwala. Thank you for letting us experience having worth 3.9 million swine project," she said.

"Gusto naming makatulong sa pag-angat ng swine industry sa Isabela. Now that this swine program has been awarded to us, we commit to doing the job seriously and strive for maximum productivity. We will not give up. We will stay committed and be encouraged to do services for the sake of hog raisers in the province. Let's not walk away from this job. Let's be available when needed by clients. Let us be consistent in serving them and go the extra mile. If we work for the people, we are also working for God," she concluded.

Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member Hon. Adrian Philip S. Baysac congratulated PVET for seizing the project to hasten the province's swine industry recovery and rehabilitation.

The Provincial Veterinary Office (PVET) hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the project on April 18, 2023.



PGI LAUNCHES 2023 MR-OPV SIA
A CRUCIAL STEP TO PROTECT ISABELA'S CHILDREN AGAINST MEASLES-RUBELLA AND POLIO

The Province of Isabela has significantly protected children aged 0 to 59 months against vaccine-preventable diseases with the provincial launching of the Measles-Rubella and Oral Polio Vaccine Supplemental Immunization Activity (MR-OPV SIA).

In a video message during the event at the Capitol Amphitheater in Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Gov. Rodito Albano III stressed the importance of this immunization campaign.

“Pabakunahan natin ang ating mga anak na may edad 0-59 months old kontra polio at tigdas. Protektahan natin sila laban sa nakamamatay na sakit na ito. Ang mga bakuna ay libre, epektibo at ligtas,” he said.

Gov. Rodito appealed for the cooperation and support of different line agencies, NGO/CSO volunteers, mayors, and barangay officials.

“Bakuna ang pinakamabisang panlaban sa polio, rubella at tigdas. Ipakita natin ang ating pagkakaisa para maabot ang ating layunin na ang Batang Isabeleño, sa bakuna ay protektado. Magpabakuna para sa Healthy Isabela,” he said.

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Nelson Paguirigan emphasized the lifesaving impact of vaccines, especially in the face of health challenges.

“Immunization is proven to be the most effective intervention for saving lives. Ito ay ating napatunayan noong tayo’y nasa gitna ng peligro dulot ng COVID-19. Ang bakuna ang ating naging pag-asa para sa ating ganap na proteksiyon,” he said.

Dr. Elsie Pintucan, Provincial Department of Health (DOH) representative, disclosed the partnership between DOH and local government units (LGUs) to carry out a nationwide measles, rubella, and polio supplemental immunization throughout May 2023.

“Para sa lalawigan ng Isabela mayroon po tayong target na 103,000 plus para sa 9 to 59 months na mga sanggol at bata para sa bakuna kontra tigdas. At may 129,000 plus para sa 0 to 59 months para sa mga sanggol at bata para sa bakuna kontra polio,” she said.

Dr. Pintucan highlighted DOH's goal of immunizing 98% of the eligible population aged 0 to 59 months during the first two

weeks of May, with the commitment to sustain the initiative until every eligible child is protected.

Chamille Jayne Claravall, the Provincial National Immunization Program Coordinator, concluded the event with a resounding call to action.

“Itaguyod natin ang kalusugan at kinabukasan ng ating mga anak. Each of us has a role to play so that every children has a shot for their future. Makialam, makiisa para sa lahat ng batang Isabeleño, sa bakuna ay protektado,” she said.



Gov. Albano gives artificial legs to PWDs, bancas to fisherfolks



The artificial legs offer newfound freedom, enabling the beneficiaries to navigate their daily lives more easily.

In a parallel effort to reinforce sustainable livelihoods and ensure food security, Gov. Rodito distributed 30 bancas to local fisherfolks. Each banca had essential fishing gear, including fish nets, hats, and jackets.

The distribution of bancas to fisherfolks aligns with Gov. Rodito's holistic approach to community development. By providing the necessary tools for local fisherfolks, the initiative supports their livelihoods and contributes to the broader goal of enhancing the community's economic resilience.

As Gov. Rodito continues to champion initiatives that promote community empowerment, the distribution of artificial legs and fishing bancas strengthened the governor's vision for a thriving community that prioritizes the well-being of all its members.

Gov. Rodito T. Albano III distributed artificial legs to 23 persons with disabilities (PWDs) as part of the Handog Tulong for PWDs program. The event occurred at Balai, Provincial Capitol, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela on December 21, 2023.

The Handog Tulong for PWDs program, championed by Gov. Rodito, aims to enhance the mobility and independence of PWDs by providing them with artificial legs. The distribution ceremony marked a significant milestone in the recipients' lives.

Isabela's Busog-Lusog Milk Feeding Program Earns National Recognition

Isabela's Busog-Lusog program garnered national recognition as the National Dairy Authority (NDA) conferred a Certificate of Recognition to Gov. Rodito Albano III on March 22, 2023 at Mallig, Isabela during the NDA's 28th Founding Anniversary.

Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Belina Barboza and Provincial Agriculturist Marites Frogoso accepted the award on behalf of the governor.

The NDA commended Gov. Rodito's unwavering commitment to the milk feeding program, which has positively impacted the lives of countless residents in the province.

Gov. Rodito, in his second inaugural address on June 29, 2022, emphasized the critical role of proper nutrition in the educational development of children.

He stated, "**Lagi kong sinasabi na balewala lahat ang ating pagsisikap sa pagpapatayo ng mga imprastruktura at mga programang pang-edukasyon kung nagugutom o mahihina ang katawan ng ating mga kabataan dahil kulang sa nutrisyon,**" underscoring the program's significance in nurturing the province's school children.

To reinforce these endeavors, the PGI formalized a partnership with SNAP-Magat, culminating in the signing of a



The National Dairy Authority (NDA) confers a certificate of recognition to Gov. Rodito T. Albano III for his milk feeding program that benefits children, pregnant women and lactating mothers in the province.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on December 7, 2022.

SNAP-Magat's generous donation of 3,240 cans of premium-brand milk on December 7, 2022, followed by an additional 9,158 packs on January 31, 2023, supplemented with locally sourced cow's milk, has provided a wholesome and nutritious supplement for malnourished children, senior citizens, pregnant women,

and lactating mothers in the province. On December 19, 2023, Nickel Asia Corporation generously donated 1,217 boxes of milk. Each box contains 6 packs of 150g Ensure Gold Vanilla, totaling 7,306 packs.

Beyond addressing malnutrition, the Busog-Lusog Milk Feeding Program has become a catalyst for economic growth within local communities.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez administered the oath of office to Isabela 1st District Representative Antonio "Tonypet" T. Albano, who was elected Deputy Speaker on November 7, 2023.



ISABELA REP. ANTONIO 'TONYPET' T. ALBANO IS NEW HOUSE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Isabela 1st District Representative Antonio "Tonypet" T. Albano was elected on November 7, 2023 as the new Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, along with Lanao del Sur Rep. Yasser Alonto Balindong.

Cong. Albano and Cong. Balindong replaced former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Davao Rep. Isidro Ungab, respectively.

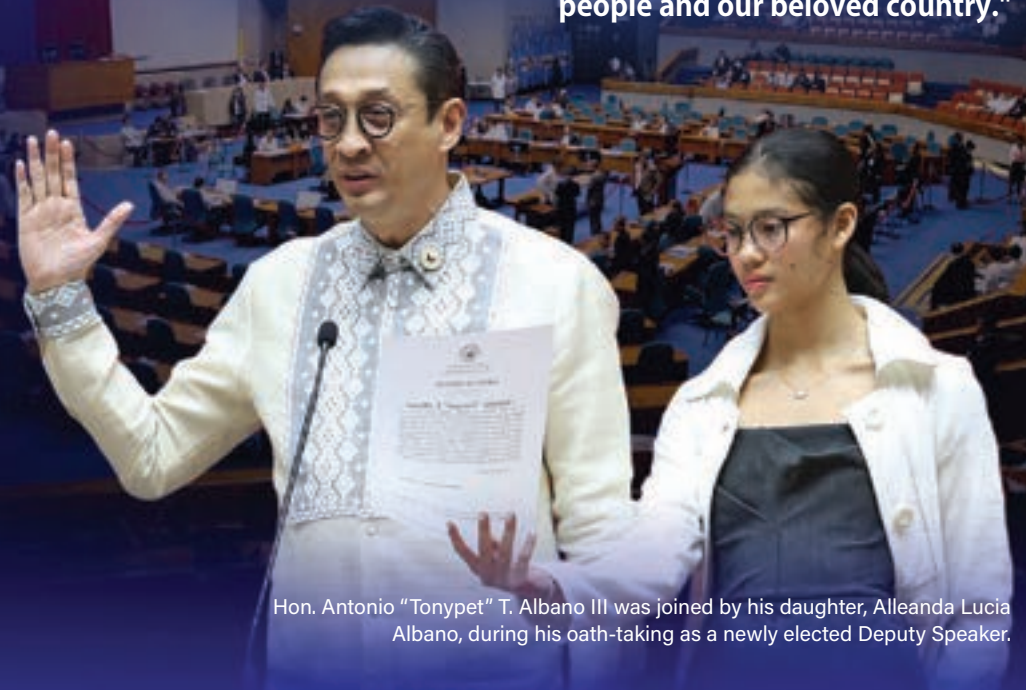
During the plenary session, the House approved the motion of Deputy Majority Leader and Cagayan 1st District Rep. Ramon Nolasco Jr. to elect Albano.

With no objections from the House members, Deputy Speaker and Antipolo City 1st District Rep. Roberto Puno, who presided over the session, approved the motion.

Deputy Speakers Albano and Balindong took their oath of office before House Speaker Ferdinand

Martin Romualdez on November 13, a week after their election.

"It is my job and duty to preside over the proceedings in the House of Representatives as your Deputy Speaker. Every time I begin my work, I always pray to be guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit so that I may render fair judgment and pass good legislative measures that will benefit our entire Filipino people and our beloved country."



Hon. Antonio "Tonypet" T. Albano III was joined by his daughter, Alleanda Lucia Albano, during his oath-taking as a newly elected Deputy Speaker.

DIFFERENT but the SAME

A Customized Training on Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Management of MultiGenerational Workforce

28 November 2023, GFND Session Hall, Provincial Capitol

Organized exclusively for the Provincial Government of Isabela by the Provincial Administrator in collaboration with the Office of the Governor



PA LOPEZ LEADS SERIES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS FOR PGI EMPLOYEES

Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel Lopez has consistently taken the lead in organizing a series of annual office assessments and seminars since assuming office. Over the years, this initiative has expanded to encompass all offices in the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI), aiming to enhance and sustain a professional and skilled workforce.

This year's professional development seminar series, held at the Provincial Capitol Amphitheater, are detailed as follows:

September 29, 2023: The ABCs of Basic Communication and Other Office Documents

This is a forum and lecture on basic communication preparation to enhance the communication skills of PGI employees.

Titled "The ABCs of Basic Communication and Other Office Documents," the event was participated by the 124 employees from 39 different

offices within the PGI.

October 26, 2023

The second batch of the forum on basic communication preparation included a refresher on etiquette and netiquette.

Atty. Elizabeth Cureg Binag, the Provincial Information Officer, emphasized its significance in her welcome remarks, stating, "**This is proof of our commitment to continually improve our communication skills to contribute to rendering excellent service in the day-to-day discharge of our activities.**"

November 28, 2023: Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Management of Multi-Generational Workforce

A Customized Training on Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Management of Multi-Generational Workforce was also conducted.

Mr. Alvin M. Belen, a distinguished trainer from the CSC-accredited training

provider BusinessCoach, Inc., led the session, bringing 102 attendees from 32 different offices within the PGI.

December 20, 2023: Office Gizmos Seminar

The "**Office Gizmos Seminar**" covered four topics—Budget Basics, the Safe Spaces Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and a lecture on Workplace Diversity by PA Atty. Lopez. This underscored the importance of breaking down barriers based on religion, gender, ethnicity, age, and social class to foster collaboration.

As employees embrace diversity and bridge generational gaps, the vision of a stronger, united PGI appears well within reach. PA Lopez's proactive initiatives are pivotal in nurturing a professional and inclusive work environment within the PGI.

Janette A. Castillejo, Provincial Human Resource Management Officer, underscored that all seminars initiated by the Provincial Administrator received accreditation from the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Province of Isabela cops 'Beyond Compliant' in 23rd Gawad KALASAG

The Province of Isabela received a **"Beyond Compliant"** rating in the 23rd Gawad KALASAG Seal and Special Awards for Excellence in Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Assistance for 2023 with a rating of 2.51.

Beyond Compliant LGUs are those that generally exceed the standards for the establishment and functionality of the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils and Offices (LDRRMCOs). This is the highest compliance rating from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

According to the guidelines, Beyond Compliant LGUs receive an assessment rating of 2.5 to 3.0, while Fully Compliant LGUs receive a rating of 1.5 to 2.49.

The province was assessed based on its PDRRMC structure, competency,

management system, enabling policies, knowledge management and advocacy, and partnership and participation.

In 2022, the province was awarded the Gawad KALASAG Seal of Excellence with a rating of Fully Compliant, adhering to the standards for the establishment and functionality of the LDRRMCOs as prescribed in the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 or RA 10121.

Gawad KALASAG (KAlamidad at Sakuna LABanan, SARiling Galing ang Kaligtasan) is an annual recognition that was conceived in 1998 for various stakeholders who promote and implement DRRM, climate change adaptation and humanitarian assistance programs **"to protect high-risk communities against extreme hazards and capacitate them to address their vulnerabilities."**



DILG confers SGLG award to Province of Isabela



The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary, Benjamin "Benhur" de Castro Abalos, Jr., conferred the prestigious Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) to the Provincial Government of Isabela on Dec. 13, 2023 at The Manila Hotel.

The award was received by Isabela Governor Rodito T. Albano III, along with DILG-Isabela Provincial Director Corazon D. Toribio.

The DILG also recognized the Province of Isabela and the Municipality of San Mateo,

Isabela as part of the four consistent 7-time SGLG passers in the Cagayan Valley Region since 2015.

Vice Gov. Faustino "Bojje" G. Dy III said that the performance of the provincial government has been exceptional year after year as the local leaders aim to uplift the Isabeleños' lives under the governance thrust of Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, which is to invest in people.

"Sabi nga ng dating DILG Secretary Jesse Robredo, hindi lahat ng mahusay ay matino, at hindi lahat ng matino ay

mahusay. Kailangang maging mahusay at matino para pangalagaan ang ating bayan. Taon-taon, ang Isabela ay masasabi naming bukod-tangi dahil ang layunin ng mga lider ay maiangat ang antas ng pamumuhay ng mga mamamayan sa Isabela," he said.

During the regional assessment on June 20, Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel R. Lopez thanked DILG R2 and DILG Isabela for always helping PGI to clinch the award.

"Hearing from the 10 assessors who scrutinized every piece of document we presented, I say, let us follow all their recommendations. You [DILG R2 and DILG Isabela] stole our hearts. Even if we won the SGLG several times, the one who helped is greater than the award itself. You are greater than the award," he said.

The SGLG is the highest recognition and the most prestigious award given by the DILG to excellent and performing LGUs delivering public service through compliance with pertinent national laws and guidelines.



Isabela dominates *Gawad Kalusugan Awards*

The Integrated Provincial Health Office (IPHO)-Isabela emerged as the undisputed champion at the Department of Health (DOH) Gawad Kalusugan Awards 2023, held at the Zen Hotel in Santiago City on November 23.

With the theme "**Sa Healthy Pilipinas, Bawat Buhay Mahalaga: Achieving Health and Wellness**," the awards ceremony brought together 36 Local Government Units (LGUs) from the Cagayan Valley region.

Regional Director Amelita M. Pangilinan and Assistant Regional Director Mar Wynn D. Bello acknowledged the outstanding healthcare providers in the region. The competition was intense, with each LGU

vying for recognition in various health service categories.

IPHO-Isabela secured four prestigious awards, including the Family Planning Program Excellence Award, Best Health Promotion Implementer, Health Workforce and Building Block Achievers Gold Award, and a special Recognition for the Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Program 2023.

LGUs within the province also shone, clinching Excellence and Gold awards in various categories.

This collective success earned them a substantial cash prize of P350,000.00 and commemorative plaques.

During the event, DOH Usec. Enrique A. Tayag conveyed his gratitude to Cagayan Valley's health service providers and workers. He acknowledged their unwavering dedication and outstanding service to the community, emphasizing that their awards are a testament to their hard work and commitment to public health.

Usec. Tayag urged health professionals to persist in their unwavering commitment to providing excellent healthcare services, stating, "**Dahil sa inyong makabuluhang pagsusumikap at pagpupursige, maisasakatuparan natin ang ating pangarap na balang araw ang Universal Health Care ay nasa kamay ng bawat mamamayan ng Cagayan Valley.**"

PGI receives *recognition* in DA-BFAR's 60th Fish Conservation Week 2023

The Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) received a Gawad Pagkilala award during the culmination program of the 60th Fish Conservation Week Celebration at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City, Sept. 22, 2023.

Provincial Agriculturist Marites E. Frogoso and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region 02 Director Angel B. Encarnacion received the

award in recognition of the substantial contribution of PGI to the protection and advancement of the fisheries sector in the province.

With the theme "Masaganang Pangisdaan, Maunlad na Ekonomiya," this year's fish conservation week emphasized the crucial role of the Philippine fisheries sector in the nation's economic growth.



THE 2023 STATE OF THE YOUTH ADDRESS

SOYA 2023: SK BINAG HIGHLIGHTS YOUTH DEV SECTOR'S SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Outgoing Sangguniang Kabataan Provincial Federation President Hon. Dax Paolo C. Binag delivered his State of the Youth Address (SOYA) in Cauayan City, September 26, enumerating the significant accomplishments of the youth sector in the province under his leadership in the last five years.

Binag emphasized that the collaborative efforts of youth leaders have paved the way for numerous opportunities to foster the growth and empowerment of Isabela's youth. Through a partnership with local government units, the youth sector mobilizes Isabela's young population to voice their concerns fearlessly, amplifying their impact on community development.

COUNCIL NAGKAISA

Binag reported that in 2018, the provincial government established the Provincial Local Youth Development Council, also known as Council NAGKAISA, which comprises 16 youth member-representatives from different youth and youth-serving organizations.

"The Council-NAGKAISA was a pioneering initiative and one of the country's first convened Youth Development Councils. This marked the beginning of our concerted efforts to empower and amplify the voice of the Isabeleño youth," he said.

PROVINCIAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Binag also boasted the first-ever Provincial Youth Development Plan (PYDP).

"Matagumpay nating naisulong ang approval ng Provincial Youth Development Plan 2020-2022 ng Council NAGKAISA-PYDC sa Sangguniang Panlalawigan, making Isabela as one of the first LGUs to have an SP-adopted Local Youth Development Plan," he said.

ISABELA YOUTH CODE

Binag underscored that the existing youth code in the province was strengthened through Ordinance No. 2020-03-2 and that the Province of Isabela is among the first in Region 02 to have a comprehensive code for the youth.

"Kasama sa mga probisyon nito ang pagbuo at pagpapalakas ng Isabela Youth Development Council; ang mandatong pagdiriwang ng Buwan ng Kabataan tuwing Agosto; ang Gawad Ulingang Kabataan para sa pagkilala sa mga natatanging kabataan; ang Provincial Youth Summit para mapalakas ang pakikilahok ng kabataan; at ang pagbibigay ng tulong sa youth organizations sa pamamagitan ng Development Incentives for Thriving Organizations of Youth in Isabela (DITTOY)," he said.

PERFECT SCORE IN SGLG EVALUATION

Binag also disclosed that the Provincial Youth Development Office achieved a perfect score (4/4) during the regional and national evaluation for the 2022 and 2023 Seal of Good Local Governance.

"Nakamit natin ang perfect score na 4/4 sa regional at national validation. This recognition highlighted the youth development initiatives in the province, underscoring the importance of prioritizing youth welfare and empowerment in governance," he said.

YOUTH ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION PROGRAM (YORP)

Binag said the PYDO successfully developed and strengthened youth organizations through the Youth Organization Registration Program (YORP).

"With zero recorded youth organizations in 2018, we now have 63 registered youth and youth-serving organizations through the YORP. We provided P700,000 worth of assistance to YORP-Registered Youth Organizations through

DITTOY, further empowering them to impact their communities positively," he said.

SOLID YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Highlighting the spirit of youth volunteerism, Binag talked at length about the fruits of solid youth participation in the province.

"The fun run 'Takbo para sa E-Lib ni BRO' raised an impressive P1.1 million for the E-Lib ni BRO, which will benefit our Isabeleño learners," he said.

"Sa Reforestation Target Action: 1 Million Trees in 1 Day, dinala kami sa paanan ng Northern Sierra Madre noong 2019, kung saan matagumpay naming tinanim ang mga seedling para sa mas luntiang kinabukasan. Hindi maitatwa na ang aming pangako sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan ay nagpatuloy noong 2022 sa 1 Million Bamboo in 1 Day planting activity," he added.

Binag ended his speech by recognizing the collective efforts of the youth, the local government, and the private sector.

"Ang bawat tagumpay na nakamtan natin ay resulta ng sama-samang pagsisikap ng mga kabataan, ng pamahalaang lokal at ng pribadong sektor. Bunga ito ng inyong todo-suporta, pakikiisa at paninindigan," he said.

Hon. Jessica Dy elected as *LnB Isabela Chapter President*

Isabela welcomes a new era of leadership with the election of Hon. Maria Katrina Jessica G. Dy as the president of the Liga ng mga Barangay (LnB) Isabela Chapter. The election took place at The Andrea Hotel in Cauayan City on January 12, 2024.

Hon. Maria Katrina Jessica G. Dy is the incumbent LnB-Echague Municipal Chapter President and Punong Barangay of San Fabian, Echague, Isabela and the spouse of Echague Mayor Francis Faustino "Kiko" A. Dy. She will also serve as an ex-officio member of the 11th Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Isabela.

Joining LnB President Dy are Hon. Eduardo G. Viernes of San Mariano, who takes the role of Vice President, while Hon. Noli B. Tamayo of Luna assumes the responsibilities of Treasurer. Hon. Sofia G. Pagauittan of Santa Maria serves as Secretary.

The newly elected Board of Directors comprises Hon. Gaylord M. Malunay of the City of Ilagan, Ronaldo S. Sena of San Manuel, Emmanuel T. Jara of Cordon, Eunice V. Parallag of Alicia, and Victor H. Dy Jr. of Cauayan City.

Under the stewardship of President Maria



Katrina Jessica G. Dy and her dedicated team, the LnB Isabela Chapter is poised to spearhead various programs and initiatives aimed at promoting the welfare and development of every barangay in the province.

Their mission is underscored by values of decency, integrity, and honesty, crucial elements in fostering a vibrant barangay community.

The Liga ng mga Barangay serves as a crucial platform for barangay officials to address pertinent issues affecting local governance and seek constructive solutions through legal and ethical means.

With President Dy at the helm, the LnB Isabela Chapter is set to achieve new milestones in community empowerment and sustainable development.

CATHERINE LEGASPI ASSUMES PRESIDENCY OF SKPP; BINAG PASSES TORCH IN LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Honorable Catherine Joy L. Legaspi, who was crowned Queen Isabela 2023 hailing from San Manuel, assumed the presidency of the Sangguniang

Kabataan Panlalawigan Pederasyon (SKPP) on November 29, 2023, at the Isabela Provincial Capitol Amphitheater, succeeding outgoing SK Federation President Honorable Dax Paolo C. Binag from Cabagan.

Legaspi will serve as an ex-officio member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan for two years.

The SK Provincial Federation's leadership includes newly elected officers: Vice President, Honorable Anbert Ejje T. Pagador from Aurora; Secretary, Honorable Frances P. Medina from Luna; Treasurer, Honorable Lloyd Jerome T. Gaffud from Echague; Auditor, Honorable Angelo A. Corpuz from San Mateo; Public Relations Officer, Honorable Andrie Dominic L. Buhangin from Reina Mercedes; and Sergeant-at-Arms, Honorable Errol John R. Nebalasca from the City of Ilagan.

Facilitated by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)-Isabela, the

oath-taking was presided over by RTC Branch 17 Executive Judge Honorable Andrew U. Barcena.

Meanwhile, outgoing SK Provincial Federation President Honorable Dax Paolo C. Binag handed over all relevant documents, inventories, and properties to incoming President-elect Legaspi.

In his farewell speech, Binag encouraged the new SK Provincial Federation officers to amplify the voices of the Isabeleño youth.

"Listen to the voices of the youth, and I believe that you have the capability to lead the Isabeleño youth towards a united and progressive Isabela," he said.

Binag also expressed gratitude to the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI), under the leadership of Gov. Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Gov. Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III, for their unwavering support during his five years of leadership.





PGI LAUNCHES BAMBANTI COFFEE TABLE BOOK, PREMIERES OFFICIAL ISABELA TOURISM VIDEO

The Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) unveiled two remarkable additions to its tourism arsenal: the Bambanti Coffee Table Book and the premiere of the “Ettam Ngana Ta Isabela” tourism promotional video. The launch event occurred at the Isabela Museum and Library, City of Ilagan, Isabela.

Gracing the event were Dr. Alexander G. Miano, Regional Director of the Department of Tourism Region 2, Engr. Corazon Toribio, Isabela-DILG Provincial Director, and Hon. Mary Grace Arreola, Chairperson of the Committee on Tourism in the Sangguniang

Panlalawigan. Also in attendance were city/municipal tourism officers and department heads from various PGI offices.

Provincial Information Officer Atty. Elizabeth Binag introduced the meticulously crafted Bambanti Coffee Table Book. With over 100 pages and more than 300 captivating photographs, the book offers readers a visual journey into the heart of the Bambanti Festival.

In parallel, the premiere of “Ettam Ngana Ta Isabela” marks an exciting moment in

Isabela's tourism promotion efforts. This 5-minute promotional video extends an open invitation to tourists to explore the beauty of Isabela.

Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel Lopez praised the Bambanti Coffee Table Book and the promotional video, applauding them as outstanding achievements.

He expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the Provincial Information Office and the Isabela Provincial Tourism Office for their unwavering dedication and diligent efforts.

ISABELA SHINES IN 18TH ATOP-DOT PEARL AWARDS

The Province of Isabela earned prestigious spots in the Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines (ATOP) 24th National Convention and 18th ATOP-DOT Pearl Awards in Boracay, Malay, Aklan held on October 5, 2023.

The Isabela Museum and Library: Paglikom sa Kayamanan ng Lahi entry of the province emerged as the 2nd runner-up for Best Program for Culture and The Arts, besting other provinces all over the country vying for the esteemed title.

In the Best Sports Tourism Event Category-City Level, Cauayan City secured the Grand Winner title for showcasing the city as a premier sports tourism destination during the DepEd Dos Regional Invitation Sporting Event (R.I.S.E.) that truly manifested the locality's outstanding sports initiatives in helping the country's sports tourism sector bolster.

Meanwhile, Echague was recognized as a

distinguished finalist in the Best Practices in Community-Based Tourism Awards.

The Pearl Awards is an annual recognition of exceptional practices, projects, and innovations of outstanding Local Government Units (LGUs) that significantly impacted the promotion and advancement of the Philippine tourism industry.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional 02 officially conferred accreditation upon the Isabela Museum and Library as a Gallery/ Museum in recognition of its compliance with the requirements outlined by the DOT.

This recognition underscores the museum and library's unwavering commitment to promoting culture, heritage, and tourism within Isabela.





Sen. Bong Go unveils plans for Super Health Centers at Bambanti Festival 2024

Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go shared on January 25, the 4th day of Bambanti Festival 2024, the government’s plans to establish 18 Super Health Centers (SHCs) in the Province of Isabela, aiming to enhance people’s access to government health services.

Sen. Go, who chairs the Senate Committee on Health, emphasized that these centers are designed to bring government medical services closer to the people, particularly in remote areas where they are most needed.

The proposed Super Health Centers, resembling medium-sized polyclinics and an improved version of rural health units, will offer a range of services, including lab facilities, pharmacies, birthing facilities, outpatient departments, dental services, comprehensive PhilHealth outpatient services, and various minor medical services.

Sen. Go reaffirmed his commitment to the people of Isabela, stating, **“Patuloy akong tutulong sa abot ng aking makakaya.”** He reiterated that patients in Isabela who need to be transferred to Metro Manila can simply contact his office, and he will do everything possible to assist them, including providing free transportation.

He also announced that there are now 139 Malasakit Centers across the

country, including two in the cities of Ilagan and Santiago.

MALLIG SUPER HEALTH CENTER INAUGURATED

Senator Bong Go personally witnessed the inauguration of the Mallig Super Health Center on January 25.

He explained to the people of Mallig that the construction of the center is one of his initiatives to protect the health of Filipinos and deliver high-quality government health services even to remote communities.

According to him, the Super Health Center will provide primary care and consultation to immediately diagnose

and prevent the worsening of patients’ illnesses.

Furthermore, he emphasized that it will reduce the number of patients in hospitals by providing a wide range of medical services, including database management, outpatient care, birthing facilities, isolation units, laboratory services such as X-rays and ultrasounds, pharmacies, ambulatory surgical units, eye, ear, nose, and throat (EENT) services, oncology centers, physical therapy and rehabilitation centers, and telemedicine.

He then attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the Echague Super Health Center later that same day.

“Patuloy akong tutulong

sa abot ng aking makakaya.”



2024 BAMBANTI Festival A HUGE SUCCESS

Vice Gov. Faustino “Bojie” G. Dy III, the Director General of the Bambanti Festival 2024, extended his gratitude on behalf of Gov. Rodito T. Albano III to all those who supported the week-long Bambanti Festival from January 22-27, 2024.

With the theme **"Ettam Ngana ta Isabela,"** the festival celebrated the spirit of thanksgiving to God and honored the industrious and resilient Isabeleño farmers.

"Dahil sa ating mga magsasaka, ang Isabela ay nakilala bilang number one corn producer at munggo capital ng bansang Pilipinas," he remarked.

He extended his appreciation to the participating municipalities and cities, acknowledging their steadfast support throughout the various activities of this year's Bambanti Festival.

Dy also recognized the collective efforts of the entire officialdom of the Provincial Government of Isabela, underscoring the unity among Isabeleños as the driving force behind the province's success.

Meanwhile, Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go visited the province to express solidarity with the Bambanti Festival 2024 celebration.

Echague hailed as overall winner

The Municipality of Echague emerged the most triumphant at the Bambanti Festival

2024, securing the esteemed title of overall winner.

During the grand awarding ceremony at the Isabela Sports Complex, Vice Gov. Dy presented Echague with P1 million worth of projects, marking their outstanding achievement.

Quirino was proclaimed first runner-up, garnering recognition with projects valued at P750,000.00, while Alicia secured the second runner-up title with projects worth P500,000.00.

Jones clinched the third runner-up spot, receiving projects valued at P300,000.00, while Luna attained the fourth runner-up title and was awarded projects worth P100,000.00.

i-Run for Youth Center

The 13,245 registered participants of the i-Run for Youth Center had an exhilarating experience on January 22 as they were chained to the beats and rhythms of the Bambanti Festival 2024.

Before the run, the participants grooved at the Zumba sessions, setting a lively mood for the event. The excitement escalated

with a thrilling rave party, creating a bubbly atmosphere. They also seized the opportunity to have group selfies with the guest artists and influencers.

The event extends beyond the festivities, as all proceeds will benefit the provincial government's Isabela Youth Center, which will serve as a focal point for youth movement and development in the province.

Queen Isabela 2024

Kristine Joy Guzman, from the City of Ilagan, was crowned Queen Isabela 2024 on January 24 at Queen Isabela Park, triumphing over 27 other candidates.

Precious Faith Mirasol from Sta. Maria clinched the title of Queen Isabela Tourism, while Jhudiel Eunisse Taguinod from Echague claimed the title of Queen Isabela Culture and the Arts. The first runner-up is Grace Esther Due, representing Roxas, and the second runner-up is Alexis Ann Ramos from Cauayan City.

Street Dance & Festival Dance Showdown

The 1,600 street dancers from the three cities and 13 municipalities showed breathtaking performances on January 26 at the Isabela Sports Complex. Their lifts, quick costume changes, and intricate hand and foot movements left the audience in awe.

The Bambanti Festival 2024 Arch, a popular spot where visitors capture their memorable photos, was designed and constructed under the supervision of Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel R. Lopez and Provincial Engineer Virgilio S. Lorenzo.



"Ito ang ating paraan upang makapagpasalamat sa lahat ng mga biyaya at harapin ang mga panibagong paghamon. Dahil sa ating mga magsasaka, ang Isabela ay nakilala bilang number one corn producer at munggo capital ng bansang Pilipinas."

VICE GOVERNOR FAUSTINO "BOJIE" G. DY III
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BAMBANTI FESTIVAL 2024

emphasized the event's primary objective – **"to discover dishes and beverages of the Isabeleños that could be introduced not only in Isabela but throughout the entire country."**

Fun Bike

The 2024 Bambanti Festival's 25KM Fun Bike Challenge for Youth Center on January 27 had 450 registered participants.

Riding from the provincial capitol to Namnama, then to Guinatan via Fugu, and finally back to the capitol, the bikers conquered the long road to earn their finisher medals.

Isabela Grand Concert Party

The Juans pulled heartstrings at the Isabela Sports Complex on January 27 as they performed their song **"Hindi Tayo Pwede."** Meanwhile, Morissette's sky-high notes left the audience mesmerized, blowing them away.

Other festival highlights were Festival King and Queen, the multi-day Music Festival, Sports Activities, and Bambanti Musical.

The Bambanti Festival 2024 not only showcased the competitive spirit of the participating municipalities and cities but also underscored the provincial government's commitment to fostering local development through this vibrant festival.

They also rocked the stage with their spectacular and jaw-dropping performances in the Festival Dance Showdown.

The audience was stunned by a whirlwind of compelling storylines highlighting the rich history, vibrant culture, and remarkable development of the participating cities and municipalities.

Agri-ecotourism Booth and Giant Bambanti

Judges grappled with difficult decisions during the final judging of the agri-ecotourism booths and giant scarecrows at the Bambanti Village on January 26.

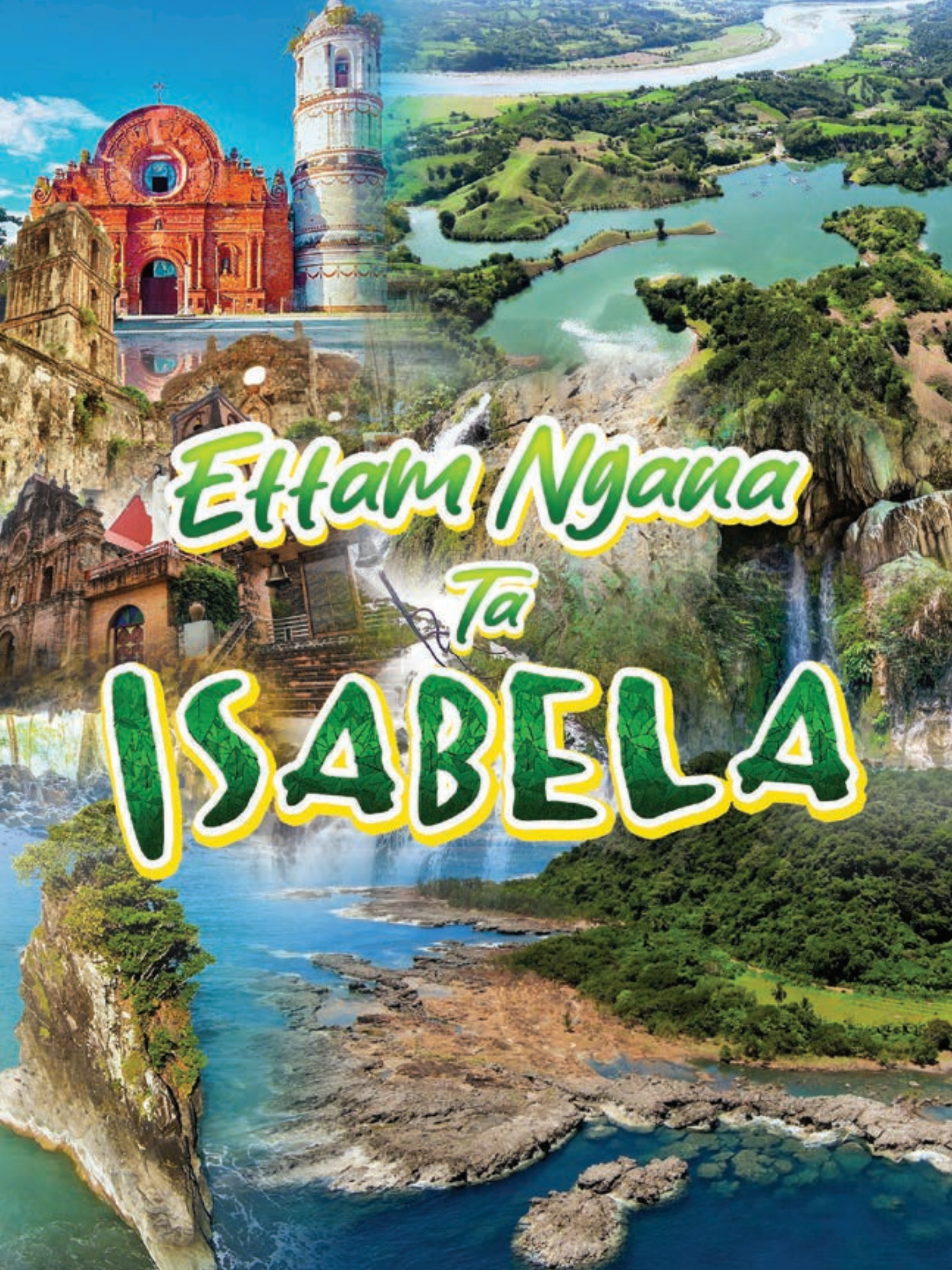
At the Bambanti Village, each booth provided a detailed explanation of its unique display,

featuring environmentally friendly and non-biodegradable Bambanti installations that showcased the distinctiveness of each municipality. Manned by dedicated LGU personnel, they responded with expertise to the challenging questions from the judges.

Makan ken Mainum

The culinary talents of the Kabataang Kusinero ng Isabela, comprised of chefs aged 15-24 from 22 municipalities and three cities, captivated the stage at the Bambanti 2024 Village.

Mary Ann Dy, Chairperson of the Culinary Competition Committee, represented by Sangguniang Panlalawigan Women's Sector Representative Hon. Lourdes Panganiban,



Ettam Ngana
Ta
ISABELLA