

“...our taxes will keep vanishing into pockets instead of projects.”

EDITORIAL

**Taxes, Taxes: Where Did You Go?**

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INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**DepEd Ends Mandatory Mother Tongue Instruction in Early Grades, Shifts to Filipino and English**

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## FROM SILENCE TO RESILIENCE

### Youth, Gov't Sectors unite vs. corruption in La Trinidad

JARUKO B. GALIAN

For the first time in nearly a century, the streets of La Trinidad once again echoed with the chants of protest. Over 150 participants—composed of students, youth leaders, and representatives from various sectors—gathered at the Km. 5 Parking Lot on October 18 for the “Mass Action Against Corruption,” a collective call to end corruption in the province and across the country. The Baguio-Benguet Laban sa Korapsyon Network, a coalition of youth and sectoral groups that also led the Baguio-Benguet Laban sa Korapsyon March last September 21 in Baguio City, which highlighted concerns over controversial and allegedly anomalous infrastructure projects in the Cordil-

lera region, organized the protest.

**From Dormancy to Action**

According to Kenneth Aroco of Kabataan Partylist-La Trinidad, the demonstration marks a historic moment for the town, as it is the first recorded public protest in 98 years. The last known protest in La Trinidad took place in 1927, when students of the then Trinidad Agricultural School (now Benguet State University) marched against their American principal, James A. Wright, during the colonial era. “This is a powerful reminder that the people of La Trinidad have long carried the spirit of resistance,” Aroco said. “Today, we continue that tradition by standing up against corruption that affects every Filipino.”

“*Kung hindi tayo kikilos ngayon, kailan pa?*”

Tristan Yang-yang  
BSU student protestor

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NEWS

**New La Trinidad Mayor Prioritizes Better Public Services, Clean Governance**

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**BENGUET, YUMAKDER KA!**

BAGUIO-BENGUET LABAN SA KORAPSYON

# BSU-SLS cultural exchange underscores power of information in historical perspective

STACEY B. BALLI

As part of the United Nations (UN) Celebration, Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) hosted a cultural exchange event featuring Dr. Laura Diaz Esteve, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Spanish National Research Council on October 24.

Dr. Esteve delivered a lecture titled "The Power of Information in Historical Perspective," emphasizing the crucial role of information in shaping societies and advancing sustainable development. She discussed public access to information as one of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), stressing that empowering communities through information fosters transparency and progress. Addressing the question, "Why is

information so important?" Dr. Esteve illustrated her point with historical examples, underscoring how access to accurate knowledge can transform societies. "Information modifies our conception of reality and, therefore, our behavior towards it," she noted.

In her discussion on today's "information ecosystem," Dr. Esteve urged participants to critically engage with digital content and to recognize the influence of media on public perception.

She concluded her talk by citing Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Resa: "Our world is facing 'Information Armageddon' as technology companies continue to spread disinformation for profit. Large social media platforms have 'pumped people with lies,' fueling distrust and division across societies."

## INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

# DepEd ends mandatory Mother Tongue Instruction in early grades, shifts to Filipino and English perspective

DEERON A. BOKILIS

In a landmark shift in education policy, the Department of Education (DepEd) has officially ended the compulsory use of the Mother Tongue as the medium of instruction (MOI) for Kindergarten to Grade 3 learners nationwide. This move, formalized through DepEd Order No. 20, series of 2025, marks a significant change in how young students will be taught beginning this school year.

## New Language Policy Highlights

Signed by DepEd Secretary Sonny Angara, the policy mandates Filipino and English as the primary languages of instruction for early-grade students, with Filipino Sign Language incorporated for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners. Regional languages will no longer be the default but may be used as auxiliary tools to support learners transitioning between languages through translanguaging—a practice involving flexible language use to aid understanding.

The policy implements the provisions of Republic Act No. 12027, which revises the previous Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy. Under the new rules, Mother Tongue instruction is now optional and limited to classrooms where all students share the same native language and meet specific readiness criteria.

## Why the Change?

The MTB-MLE approach, introduced in 2009 and strengthened by law in 2013, aimed to improve literacy by teaching children in their first language. While it showed positive results in monolingual communities, DepEd acknowledged significant hurdles in multilingual and linguistically diverse classrooms.

Challenges included limited teacher training, insufficient instructional materials in local

dialects, and logistical issues in implementing uniform policies across regions with complex language landscapes. These barriers, highlighted in a 2024 report by the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2), underscored the need for a more adaptable and inclusive framework.

"The MTB-MLE has been effective in certain settings but difficult to uniformly apply across the country's diverse linguistic environments," the order stated. **Implementation and Flexibility**

To address these complexities, DepEd will conduct comprehensive language surveys in all elementary schools and Community Learning Centers (CLCs) during the 2025-2026 school year. This data will inform the selection of the most suitable MOI on a classroom-by-classroom basis.

The policy outlines the following three scenarios:

Scenario A: Filipino and English as primary MOI in highly multilingual settings.

Scenario B: Filipino and English as primary MOI with regional languages serving auxiliary roles.

Scenario C: Mother Tongue as primary MOI in qualified monolingual classes.

Scenario D: Indigenous languages as MOI in Indigenous Peoples' education programs. This approach emphasizes that no single "assigned" Mother Tongue exists for learners; instead, language choices will be grounded in real-time, context-sensitive data reflecting actual language use among students.

**Supporting Learners' Transitions**

DepEd plans to leverage strategies such as translanguaging, oral scaffolding, and peer-assisted learning to smooth students' tran-

sition from their home languages to Filipino and English. The Department also affirms ongoing support for the use of Indigenous languages and Filipino Sign Language in appropriate contexts.

## Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

Secretary Angara emphasized the principle that "language should serve as a bridge, not a barrier to learning," noting that the new policy provides flexible, context-responsive options designed to support comprehension and literacy development.

The policy encourages collaboration with parents and communities, phased implementation, and continual adaptation to local linguistic realities. It applies to all public and private elementary schools, Alternative Learning System programs, Philippine Schools Overseas, and Special Education programs.

## Teacher Training and Monitoring

Recognizing the critical role of educators, DepEd will prioritize hiring teachers proficient in the learners' first languages where applicable and will provide ongoing professional development through agencies like the National Educators Academy of the Philippines.

Assessment tools, including the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), will be adjusted to align with the language(s) of instruction in use. The Department will also monitor implementation through its Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (BEMEF) and is required to report annually to the President and Congress regarding the use of Mother Tongue instruction in eligible classrooms.

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TAKEN FROM MOUNTAIN COLLEGIAN

# From classrooms to the world: BSU-SLS students' research now globally published

## CAMPUS NEWS

SHAMMAH DOMERIS

Five groups of Grade 11 researchers from the previous academic year at Benguet State University - Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) have achieved a significant academic milestone with the official publication of their research papers in the *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, a prestigious international, peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal.

The published studies, initially conducted under the subject Practical Research 1, are featured in Volumes 5, Issues 7 and 8 of the journal. The full texts are available via Academia.edu and Zenodo, with direct access links provided in the caption of each paper.

The published research papers are "Waste Warriors: Challenges Encountered, Coping Mechanisms, and Suggestions for a Safer Working Environment of Garbage Collectors in La Trinidad, Benguet" by Rhiely O. Anaban, Jackson B. Caburian, Kristiana Charmel C. Caballero, Amanda Lorraine P. Domiclong, Ellah Dwayne P. Sinong, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin; "Calculating the Route: Uncovering the Mathematical Strategies Employed by Buyagan-Baguiyo Route Jeepney Drivers" by Desiree F. Tica-a, Harry Wen S. Salo, Alan Ericka R. Awingan, Gemama C. Duglin, Czem Reizell B. Gorio, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin; "Research Defended: Challenges Encountered by Benguet State University - Secondary Laboratory School Graduates in Their Research Subjects" by Jared Dwayne A. Decoyna, Fraelz Ann P. Atimama, Haiver Judah E. Bagayao, Regina L.

De Mesa, Ember Kate K. Laguitan, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin; "Threads of Resilience: Unravelling the Challenges of Foreign Students Pursuing Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Benguet State University" by Benny Hinn M. Agbalog, Cindy T. Compala, Zerianne C. Lucio, Aisha Mae B. Bad-ay, Arriane Nicole M. Bugtong, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin; "The Cost of Saving Lives: A Glimpse into the Pressures and Coping Strategies Among Emergency Healthcare Professionals in La Trinidad, Benguet" by Ylonah Faith T. De La Cruz, Alyza Subyna A. Licoben, Dwyn A. Dagdagan, Keesha Rylayne V. Camora, Keino F. Bacasan, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin.

Mr. Rostom Niño B. Supsupin, research adviser and co-author in all five studies, expressed his pride in the students' accomplishment. "I am honored and proud to have played a part in this journey. I hope that your love and enthusiasm for research will continue to grow and prosper, and that we'll be able to publish more papers this academic year," he said.

The research teams also acknowledged the support of their panel members, Cheryl C. Anton and Merisa D. Palsaan, and expressed gratitude to Brenda A. Langaon, the school principal, for her continued encouragement.

This achievement highlights the students' commitment to research excellence and their contribution to relevant social and community issues through academic inquiry.



TAKEN FROM MOUNTAIN COLLEGIAN

## FROM PAGE 1

### Pushback Before the Protest

The protest faced hurdles before its launch. The organizers' application for a rally permit was denied on October 16, but following an appeal, approval was granted on October 17, just a day before the event. Despite the uncertainty, participants pushed through, emphasizing their constitutional right to peaceful assembly. **Whispers and Roars from the Frontline**

Among those who spoke was Tristan Yang-yang, a student from the Benguet State University College of Social Sciences, who said he joined the protest due to the lack of accountability for corruption not only in the province but across the nation.

"Naniniwala ako na ang ginagawa nating pagkilos ay hindi lang basta pagpagsaw, kundi paraan para ipakita na may pakatam tayo," Yang-yang said. "Hindi lang ito tungkol sa korapsiyon, kundi pati sa mga isyung tulad ng flood control na puro anomalya at sa mga budget cut sa edukasyon. Kung hindi tayo kikilos ngayon, kailan pa?"

The rally also brought together voices from across Benguet, each sharing firsthand experiences of confronting corruption and social neglect. Mario Pablo of Barangay Bulalacan, Mankayan, recounted his role in the community barricade against the Crescent Mining Company, illustrating grassroots resistance in action. Betty Listino, a member of the Pansigedan Advocacy and a college instructor, highlighted the

persistent challenges of accessing healthcare in rural Benguet, while BSU student Armi-Jay Paragas addressed the looming 2026 education budget cuts, emphasizing the impact on university facilities and development. Rima Mangli, representing the Itogon Inter-Barangay Alliance, spoke on the struggles faced by local farmers amid ongoing economic hardships. Meanwhile, Emy Banivas-Lubos, advocating for women and senior citizens, urged the crowd to "keep speaking out and never stay silent in the face of injustice," tying together the rally's call for collective action and resilience.

**The Struggle Continues**

Gabriel Siscar, fourth nominee of Kabataan Partylist-Cordillera, said the rally was just the beginning of a broader campaign led by the youth of La Trinidad. "Sa mga mamamayan na lumalaban, lalo na tayo ay kritiko, expect natin na may panunupil na magayayan, dahil syempre yung pamahalaan naman natin or yung status quo, makikita niya na ang kanyang mamamayan ay lumalaban. Wala siyang ibang magagawa kundi supilin ang kanyang kritiko yung mga lumalaban, kaya expect natin 'yun and at the same time, hanapin natin yung lakas din kasi kung naniniwala tayong tama sa ating ginagawa at naniniwala tayo sa lakas ng ating pwersa, definitely, madadaig natin ang mga ganitong panunupil," Siscar explained.

As the protest ended peacefully in the afternoon, participants left the venue with renewed determination to continue the fight for transparency and good governance—marking a significant chapter in La Trinidad's long history of civic action.

## From Silence to Resistance

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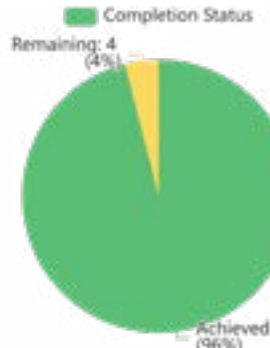
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## IN FIGURES

96%

of ~50,000 Grade 3 learners improved from Low Emergent Reader



8,300

learners reached Grade 3 reading benchmark and is ready for Grade 4

1,827

learners remain at lowest reading level

1:12

teacher-student ratio

49,000+

mastered letter sounds

1/2

can now read & understand short texts

# 96% Literacy Leap: DepEd's Summer Program Delivers Breakthrough Gains for Struggling Readers

TRISHA GAYLE S. BUTANGEN

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Education's (DepEd) 2025 Literacy Remediation Program (LRP) has delivered remarkable results, significantly boosting reading skills among Grade 3 students who previously struggled with basic literacy. According to the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2), 96 percent of the nearly 50,000 participants advanced from the "Low Emergent Reader" category after completing the intensive summer intervention.

The program, which spanned 18 days and was rolled out in May 2025, helped 8,300 learners reach the Grade 3 reading benchmark, making them ready for Grade 4—where English becomes the primary language of instruction. Only 1,827 students remained at the lowest reading level following the intervention.

"This is a testament to the effectiveness of a well-targeted and focused literacy strategy," said EDCOM 2 Executive Director Dr. Karol Mark Yee. "It directly addresses the urgent need to rebuild foundational skills in Key Stage 1—where literacy and numeracy development is most crucial."

## Focused Approach to Foundational Learning

The LRP is part of DepEd's broader summer learning initiative under Education Secretary Sonny Angara, aligned with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s

directive to urgently combat learning loss. It was implemented alongside other key programs, including the Bawat Bata Makababasa Program, the Summer Academic Remedial Program, and Learning Camp.

Targeting over 60,000 low-performing Grade 3 learners identified from more than 1.7 million assessed at the end of the 2024-2025 school year, the LRP was designed to strengthen basic reading competencies—particularly for students struggling with phonics and comprehension skills typically expected of Grade 1 learners.

Highlights of the program included small group instruction with a teacher-student ratio of 1:12, two-hour daily sessions four times a week, and research-based strategies for phonics and reading comprehension. Teachers and school leaders were also trained in diagnostic and remediation techniques.

DepEd reported that over 49,000 students mastered letter sounds by the end of the program, and more than half were able to read and understand short texts—major milestones considering their initial literacy levels.

## A Scalable Solution to the Learning Crisis

Teachers have praised the program's format, citing manageable class sizes and dedicated instructional time—elements often missing during the regular school year due to over-

crowded classrooms and a once-overburdened curriculum. In response, DepEd has started rolling out the decongested MATATAG curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 3 this June.

"The LRP proves that when given the right support and structure, children can overcome literacy challenges," Yee said. "This kind of intervention gives us hope and a blueprint for long-term solutions."

EDCOM 2 encouraged DepEd to adopt the successful strategies of the LRP into the year-round ARAL Program, which supports learners needing continuous academic assistance beyond summer months.

## Sustaining Momentum Beyond Summer

Established under Republic Act No. 11899, EDCOM 2 is mandated to evaluate the Philippine education system and craft legislative responses to the country's ongoing learning crisis. The commission reaffirmed its support for programs that demonstrate tangible improvements in student outcomes.

"The LRP's success underscores what's possible when we focus on the basics and invest in the early years," Yee added. "We commend the dedication of all the teachers, principals, and education stakeholders who made this transformation possible."

# BSU-SLS honors Agusan Manobo Culture in IPed event

## Science Fest ignites young minds of SLS students

JARUKO GALIAN

The spirit of discovery and innovation comes alive as SLS celebrated its annual Science Festival on September 9 under the inspiring theme "Towards a Shared Vision: Exploring the Future for a Better Tomorrow."

Organized by the BSU-SLS Science Club, the annual celebration featured a variety of hands-on and mind-stimulating activities aimed at promoting scientific inquiry and teamwork.

The morning kicked off with the ABC "Choose 1 of 3" game, where students tested their scientific knowledge in individual rounds before advancing to a more challenging paired competition.

Following this was the highly anticipated Battle of the Biggest Brain, featuring students from various grades and sections donning costumes of famous scientists as they engaged in a thrilling showdown of wits.

The latter part of the morning saw simultaneous events including Science Pictionary, Science Quiz Bee, Lava Lamp Making, Clean-Up Drive Competition, and Volcano Making, sparking creativity and teamwork among students.

After lunch, students tackled more hands-on challenges such as the Pasta Bridge Building, Science Spelling Bee, and Egg Drop Challenge. For those not competing, vacant classrooms offered a space to unwind with board games or try their luck in the thrilling Escape Room activity.

Mia Acop, a grade 7 SLS student remarked, "It was fun joining the activities. We are just new in this school and we are happy with the science-related activities, it really sparked our mind and gave us ideas to love science more."

To end the activity, Dr. Cecilia Samonte, the JHS Coordinator and the Science Club Adviser delivered the closing remarks, congratulating all participants and expressing heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the event's success, officially bringing the Science Festival to a memorable close.



CZIRAH VENIZ A. BOADO

Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) celebrated the Indigenous Peoples' Education Month (IPEd) with the theme "Atang Pandayin ang Kinabukasan, Gabay ang Katutubong Karunungan at Karapatan," highlighting the Agusan Manobo culture and the importance of Indigenous knowledge and heritage in shaping identity and community values on October 20.

Guest speaker Carlito Camahalan Amalla started the celebration with his discussion titled "SUYAM: Agusan Manobo Textile Heritage." He explained the social class hierarchy of the Agusan Manobo in Agusan Province, where clothing signifies power, prestige, beauty, and status. The hierarchy is composed of the Datu or Hawudon, the head of the community; Bae, an honorary

title for women; Manigaon-Inay/Amay, recognized family leaders; Bagani, the warriors and protectors; and Baylan or Babaylan, the spiritual advisers. The lower classes include the Kaotawan (townsfolk), Kabatan-onan (children), and Odipon (slaves).

"In Agusan Province, Philippines, where clothing carries social implications tied to power, status, prestige, beauty, and charm, dress serves an important ergonomic and cultural function from womb to tomb," the speaker explained.

He went on to discuss the region's rich textile traditions, highlighting the use of abaca fibers to create symbolic fabrics for ceremonial purposes, adorned with intricate embroidery and natural dyes that convey stories and reflect deeply rooted cultural beliefs.

Amalla also presented various Suyam embroidery designs that represent Agusan Manobo iconography, such as Balangay (boat), Banwa (place), Binuaja (crocodile), Binuyon (moon), Hawod (leader), Inaniting (amulet), Kinaeysag (shield), Maggagaya (god), and Panyukos (youth). He described Suyam as a living tradition that continues to express the cultural identity of the Agusanon Manobo people.

Finally, he concluded his presentation with a performance of "Papat Bagani," a Bunraku and ventriloquist puppetry.

After the lecture, the students participated in various cultural competitions. In the Cultural Dance Contest, Grade 10 won first place, followed by Grade 9 while in Cultural Attire Showcase, Grade 11 took the first place, Grade 7 in second, and Grade 9 in third.

In addition, the students enjoyed the Larong Lahi which featured traditional Filipino games such as Tug of War, Sack Race, and Tahong Relay.

In Motivational Speech, Grade 8 emerged as the champion, followed by Grades 10 and 7 whereas in the Battle of the Bands, Grade 10 claimed first place, while Grade 8 and Grade 11 placed second and third, respectively.

Dr. Cecilia Samonte, the adviser of the SLS Cultural Dance Troupe (SLS- CDT) ended the program with closing remarks expressing her appreciation for the students' active participation and commitment to preserving Indigenous culture.

After the event, Emriel Likigan, SLS-CDT president, shared, "Although we had limited time to prepare for the activity, we still did our best to ensure that SLS students could enjoy and learn about our own and others' cultures."

# New La Trinidad Mayor prioritizes better public services, clean governance

SHAMMAH DOMERIS

La Trinidad, Benguet — Newly elected Mayor Roderick Awingan is set to prioritize internal reforms within the municipal government as part of his administration's commitment to improving the delivery of basic services to La Trinidad's growing population.

In a move signaling a proactive start, Mayor Awingan, accompanied by key department heads, conducted an inspection of the municipal hall to identify areas in need of improvement. The initiative is part of his broader strategy to ensure that municipal services are not only efficient but also responsive to the needs of residents and visitors.

"We won't be indulging in ceremonial launches. Our focus is on immediate action and addressing the pressing issues facing our municipality," Awingan said.

One of the initial concerns identified during the inspection is the poor condition of the comfort rooms in the municipal building. The mayor emphasized the need for clean, functional, and well-maintained restrooms with a reliable water supply, citing public comfort and dignity as non-negotiable elements of service delivery.

Awingan noted that during preliminary meetings with municipal officials and employees, several operational and administrative concerns emerged. To address these, he stressed the importance of internal "good housekeeping" to align all municipal efforts with the goals of his administration.

"As the province's primary urban hub and gateway to Baguio City, La Trinidad must present itself as a model of efficiency and order," Awingan added, referring to the town's role as a trade and commerce center.

The mayor also extended a call to action to residents and stakeholders, encouraging them to submit feedback and proposals for local development programs. He reaffirmed his administration's open-door policy, assuring constituents that his office will remain accessible to those seeking assistance or wishing to voice their concerns.

Transparency, community engagement, and participatory governance will be the cornerstones of his leadership, Awingan said. He committed to holding regular consultations with various sectors of the municipality to ensure that government initiatives reflect the needs and aspirations of the people.

Mayor Awingan concluded by appealing to the public for support in achieving a shared vision of sustainable growth and transformation for La Trinidad.

Together, we can elevate La Trinidad to greater heights through bold, inclusive, and future-forward governance.



TAKEN FROM NORTHLUZON.POLITIKO.COM

### SLS stude earns 5th spot as Benguet's bet in TMCS

EMRIEL B. LIKIGAN

Faith Anne B. Haduca, representing the Benguet Division, finished 5th place in the Tuklas: Mathematics and Computational Sciences - Individual Category, competing among eight participants from Schools Division Offices (SDOs) across CAR and the Cordillera Regional Science High School (CRSHS). The activity is in line with 2025 CAR Regional Science and Technology Fair (RSTF) held at Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School

on November 27, 2025, showcasing young scientific talents under the theme "Harnessing the Unknown: Powering the Future through Science and Innovation." Coach Cheryl C. Anton expressed pride in Faith's achievement, saying, "This activity allows students to explore new ideas and learn from others. I'm proud of Faith's hard work and how much she has grown." She added that she hopes more students will be inspired to take part in similar academic opportunities.



TAKEN FROM FACEBOOK

## BSU-SLS learners unveil language, performance skills at English Fest

AUBREY M. FARODEN

Benguet State University - Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) students conducted this year's English Festival carrying the theme "Language of Change: Empowering Voices through English" on October 14 at the SLS Covered Court.

The event became a platform for students to demonstrate their communication skills, creativity, and confidence through a range of engaging contests and performances.

The celebration opened with welcoming remarks from Dr. Brenda A. Langaon, who encouraged students to embrace English as a tool for personal growth and social influence.

A series of competitions followed, beginning with the Spelling Bee and Jazz Chant performances. The event continued with stage play performed by the Grade 8 sections and powerful speech choir presentations from the Grade 9 students.

In the afternoon, the Reader's Theater competition showcased the interpretive reading and performance abilities of the Grade 7 students.

The program culminated

with the announcement of winners, recognizing the outstanding talents of participants across various grade levels.

Grade 7-1 claimed first place in the Reader's Theater, Grade 8-2 triumphed in the Stage Play, Grade 9-3 took top honors in the Speech Choir, and Group A of Grade 10-1 emerged as the Jazz Chant champion.

In the individual competitions, Cy Ngivas of Grade 11-1 won the Extemporaneous Speech contest while Zerriane Lucio of Grade 12-1 took the top spot in the Spelling Bee.

In competitions held prior to the main event, Luke D. Santiago of Grade 7-1 won first place in Poetry Writing, while Andrei P. Briones of Grade 10-2 stood out in the Pecha Kucha contest. Kimble B. Sadcat of Grade 11-2 was awarded first place in the Immersive Reading Quiz Bee.

Dr. Agustin R. Nang-is concluded the program commending the participants and organizers for a successful celebration.



STUDENTS PERFORMING "INVICTUS" DURING THE ENGLISH FESTIVAL HELD AT BSU-SLS  
PHOTO TAKE BY TRISHA GAYLE S. BUTANGEN

### LT rolls out gray taxis to regulate transport

JARUKO B. GALIAN

To curb the rise of colour or un-registered taxi garages in the municipality, La Trinidad has officially begun operating its new fleet of gray-colored taxis this November, marking the start of an initiative meant to register taxi units locally instead of in Baguio City.

The project, led by a local transport cooperative, will introduce a total of 80 gray Hyundai Stargazer taxis, deployed in two phases: 46 units in Phase 1 and 34 units in Phase 2. The cooperative required a uniform gray color to clearly differentiate the La Trinidad fleet from Baguio City's predominantly white taxis.

La Trinidad Mayor Romeo Salda endorsed the project, stressing the shortage of legally franchised taxis within the municipality. "Only seven taxi units were operating in La Trinidad, that's why I approved the request to increase the number of units," Salda said, explaining the need for expansion.

The taxis are mandated to operate only within Benguet province with a plug rate of P50 and are strictly prohibited from picking up or dropping off passengers in Baguio City.

They may, however, pass through Baguio when traveling to other Benguet towns—an arrangement designed to prevent disputes with Baguio-based taxi operators.

Despite the municipal endorsement, the cooperative is still completing requirements for its Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) from the LTRFB-Cordillera, which will formalize full operations. Mayor Salda clarified that the LGU's endorsement is "only part of the requirements," with LTRFB handling the approval process.

The rollout also comes after earlier coordination issues between Baguio City and La Trinidad. Responding to criticisms, Mayor Salda remarked, "We should not be blamed for the blatant failure of Baguio City officials to coordinate with us. Our traffic enforcers were simply implementing our number-coding ordinance, no more, no less."

Local drivers have expressed cautious optimism. Manong Joel (not his real name) said, "Mayat ta maktulong daytoy para pamilya mi... sapay kuma ta maitutulong daytoy." ("This will help our families... I hope this will continue.")

With the first units now operating as of November, La Trinidad moves forward with its goal of creating a more organized, legally franchised taxi system—one aimed at reducing colour operations and improving transport service for Benguet residents.

## Fil-Am students abroad lead campaign for Tagalog Language Program

BLESS A. SIADTO

At Brown University, a student-led movement is gaining momentum — not just as a call for language inclusion, but as a broader act of cultural reclamation. The Filipino Alliance (FA), a student organization on campus, is spearheading a campaign to introduce regular Tagalog language classes at the Ivy League institution.

For many Filipino American students, learning Tagalog is deeply personal. It's about more than just vocabulary and grammar; it's about identity, heritage, and reversing the silence imposed by history. "When you're surrounded by English all the time, you risk losing a part of yourself," said Alexa Theodoropoulos, FA vice president and co-lead of the campaign.

This spring, the group submitted a petition to the Brown administration with over 1,000 signatures and 250 testimonials, underscoring strong campus-wide support. The campaign seeks to institutionalize Tagalog instruction, following successful efforts by peer universities like Harvard and Yale.

A Language Rooted in the U.S. Experience

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Tagalog ranks as the fourth most spoken language in American households, after English, Spanish, and Chinese. With over 1.7 million Tagalog speakers nationwide, students argue that the language deserves a rightful place among the dozens currently taught at Brown.

Many of those backing the initiative are either fluent speakers or Filipino Americans who never had the chance to learn their ancestral language. "There was this overwhelming sentiment that schools — especially ones like Brown — should help us reclaim what history took away," said Theodoropoulos.

From Pilot to Petition Interest in Tagalog at Brown isn't new. In 2022, students ran a Tagalog course through the university's Group Independent Study Project (GISP) system. While students praised the initiative, logistical issues like the lack of a faculty sponsor and grading support halted its continuity.

Seeing the limitations of the student-run format, FA leaders opted to relaunch their campaign on a larger scale this year.

"We cast a much wider net this time — reaching out beyond just Filipinos to include the broader Brown community," explained Anna Zulueta, FA co-president and campaign co-lead.

More Than Just a Language For many students, Tagalog represents more than a method of communication — it symbolizes resistance against a painful legacy. During the U.S. colonial occupation of the Philippines, English was imposed in schools, effectively silencing native tongues like Tagalog, Cebuano, and Bikol.

The campaign's cover letter calls this out directly, urging the university to recognize how institutions like Brown were complicit in this linguistic erasure.

"We see language education as an act of decolonization," said Zulueta. "Offering Tagalog is one step toward repairing historical harm."

Beyond cultural healing, FA leaders argue the practical utility of Tagalog in fields like migration studies, public health, and diaspora research — all areas where students may need to engage with Tagalog-speaking communities or archives.

Financial Hurdles and Hope Despite strong student support and encouraging dialogue with administrators, funding remains a significant hurdle.

On June 30, Brown University publicly acknowledged serious budgetary constraints, following news of potential federal grant freezes. Hiring has slowed, and non-essential spending is restricted — complicating efforts to add new course offerings.

"We know this isn't their top priority," Theodoropoulos admitted. "But we also believe that cultural preservation shouldn't always come second."

Encouragingly, the Philippine Consulate General in New York has expressed willingness to explore a seed grant to support the course — a gesture FA leaders hope will tip the scales.

A Community Built on Language Whether through policy change or community action, students like Zulueta and Theodoropoulos remain committed to seeing Tagalog taught on campus. For them, every conversation, every class, and every signature is part of a broader journey home.

"When I hear Tagalog, even far from the Philippines, it gives me a sense of warmth," said Theodoropoulos. "It reminds me that I belong."

### BSU-SLS conducts NSED to boost campus safety

SHAMMAH DOMERIS

Students of the Benguet State University-School (BSU-SLS) participated in the 3rd Quarter National Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED) held on Thursday, September 11, at exactly 4:00 PM.

As the bell rang to signal the start of the drill, students immediately performed the "Duck, Cover, and Hold" procedure inside their respective classrooms. The exercise, mandated by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), aims to instill earthquake preparedness and ensure the safety of students and personnel in case of a real seismic event.

After the initial response, students were guided to proceed to their assigned evacuation areas: the SLS First Quadrangle, the space in front of the BSU Library, and the area beside the Outpost Police Station. The evacuation was carried out in an orderly manner, with teachers and Field Study students supervising the flow of students to their respective assembly points.

While the drill was generally successful, some teachers expressed concern over a few students who were seen laughing and not taking the procedures seriously.

Mr. Agustin Nang-is, the SLS Prefect of Discipline stated, "This is a life-saving exercise and should be treated with seriousness. More importantly, preparedness during drills could spell the difference between life and death during real emergencies. With this, we hope that the students who did not take the drill seriously will reflect on its importance and show greater participation in future exercises."

The NSED is a quarterly event spearheaded by the government to strengthen disaster resilience and foster a culture of preparedness across the country.



### WHAT TO DO DURING EARTHQUAKE



When inside a building, stay calm and practice the "DUCK, COVER AND HOLD."



Hide under a strong structure / object and hold tight



After the shaking stops, exit the premises and safely evacuate



If outdoors, evacuate to an open area but avoid tall structures, buildings, trees, electric posts etc.



Stay alert and watchout for aftershocks

### Entrep Skills Unlocked Grade 11 studes dive into real business via Entrep Week

BLESS A. SIADTO

Grade 11 students from Benguet State University - Secondary Laboratory School concluded their 3-day entrepreneurship last November 18-20 at the BSU-SLS Second Quadrangle as part of their Entrepreneurship subject requirement. The activity seeks to tap into the students' creativity, collaborative spirit, and business skills by tasking them to design and operate food stalls.

Entrepreneurship adviser Ms. Praise C. Lumib said she expects the students to apply the skills they practiced into their future business. She added, "They will apply the principles they learned and also experience what it's like to run a business by using the costing, promotional strategies, and other components included in their business plan."

The six themed stalls offered a controlled setting for observing consumer preferences across food and craft products. Although each booth showcased comparable levels of creativity—ranging from handmade bracelets, stickers, crochet items, and press-on nails to seasonal snacks—the food stalls consistently recorded the highest visitor traffic. According to Ammie Mayam of the food stalls student seller, "This pattern suggests a strong bias toward edible products in short-term, school-based market simulations, highlighting how immediate sensory appeal influences consumer behavior."

After the 3-day activity, the grade 11 students left with both earnings and important lessons gained from experiencing the challenges of starting a business. Grade 11 student Shammah Domeris said, "It was exhausting but also enjoyable. We have learned that communication, adaptability, and patience with each other was key to coordinating a group. While there were conflicts here and there, we managed to get past that and prioritized helping each other to offer our best to our customers even if some things didn't go according to plan."

## Double the Win, Double the Pride! BSU-SLS Senior High team wins back-to-back titles in research tilt

CZIRAH VENIZ A. BOADO

Three Grade 12 students from the Benguet State University–Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) once again brought pride and earned distinction to their institution after securing first place in the regional Research, Innovation, Scientific Exploration (RISE) competition in Tabuk City, Kalinga on October 21–22.

The winning team, composed of Ylyonah Faith T. De La Cruz, Jared Dwayne A. Decoyna, and Desiree F. Tica-a, with their coach Mr. Rostom Niño B. Supsupin, impressed judges with their research titled "Ayanan ti Kultura: Exploring the Potential of Tapeey Lees in Cheesecake Fortification."

Their research explored the incorporation of tapeey lees into cheesecake as a means to enhance its nutritional profile while advancing sustainability and preserving cultural heritage. The study further examined

the effects of tapeey lees on the product's nutrient composition, sensory attributes, and consumer acceptability.

The recent victory of the SLS young researchers at the RISE competition follows their earlier success at the Benguet Division Science and Mathematics Festival (BDSMF), where they also clinched first place, earning them the chance to represent the province at the regional level.

After winning the top spot, the SLS team commented, "Joining the RISE Regionals in Tabuk City was a truly fulfilling and unforgettable experience. Representing Benguet and showcasing our research taught us the value of teamwork, perseverance, and confidence. We're grateful to our mentors and friends for their support, and the event inspired us to keep exploring new ideas and embracing challenges as opportunities to grow."

Their mentor, Mr. Supsupin, further remarked "Coaching my students in the Regional Research Innovation and Scientific Exploration competition was both a privilege and a challenge. Representing our province with their research was an incredible honor and a true test of dedication. Their victory stands as a testament to their hard work and sets a new standard of excellence for future participants."

As recognition for their outstanding work, the students received a certificate of achievement and a P15,000 cash incentive.

Anchored on the theme "Atang Pandayin ang Kinabukasan, Gabay ang Katutubong Karunungan at Karapatan," the RISE competition aimed to highlight innovative projects inspired by indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.



### Equinox Workshop sparks BSU writers' creativity

KC CABALLERO

Student journalists from Mountain Breeze (MB) and Ang Tulay (AT), along with other college student writers from different publications of BSU gathered together at the "Equinox: Zine-Making and Poetry Workshop" on September 13, 2025 at the CAS-Little Theater.

The Mountain Collegian with support from Ili Press and BIYAG fellows organized the full day session as the first activity for BSU Writers Guild. A collection of featured zines — small, usually independently published folios or anthologies of poems, illustrations, and/or photographs — made by local creators were displayed and sold under the theme "To Be Loved Is To Be Zine".

Palanca Awardee Heather Ann Pulido started the morning session by discussing the history of zine making and taught techniques for creating self-published booklets as mediums for personal narratives, human-interest stories, and artistic expression.

Pulido emphasized that the quality of a zine lies in its accessibility, its role as a platform for free expression, and its nature

as both art and a reflection on art. After the recess break, the discussion shifted to poetry with Ria Rebollo, a BSU staff and award-winning Ilocano poet, as the speaker with her disclaimer, "I cannot teach you how to write your poems. I can only teach you how I write mine."

According to Rebollo, poetry starts from words and relies on three essentials: emotion, atmosphere, and image, with imagery and metaphor at its core. As parting ways, she reminded the audience, "All can write poems but not all can become poets."

In the afternoon, participants took part in a hands-on zine-making session where they applied techniques and guidance from Pulido and Rebollo to produce zine drafts and layouts.

After the event, Jackson Caburian, one of MB's Managing Editors commented, "It was a very enlightening and very therapeutic experience. Suddenly, we were immersed in this realm where art and poetry do their work, our minds and digits flow in unison"

### SLS studes gain awareness on Vaping Hazards

KC CABALLERO

In line with the observance of National Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Week, the Benguet State University Office of Student Services–Guidance Counseling Unit held a prevention-focused program titled "TutuKK '911: The Gateway Effect—How Vape Is a Trap" on November 14, 2025, for students of the BSU–Secondary Laboratory School (SLS).

The session emphasized the growing health and behavioral dangers linked to vaping, particularly among adolescents. Facilitators explained that e-cigarettes and vape devices pose significant risks, including respiratory damage, nicotine addiction, weakened impulse control, and impaired brain development during the teenage years. They also underscored the "gateway effect," noting that early exposure to nicotine increases the likelihood of experimenting with other harmful substances.

University Physician Dr. Florence Poltic addressed the common misconception that vaping is a harmless alternative to smoking,

"I think there is a false sense of security that it is safer because it is not a cigarette," she warned, stressing that vape liquids often contain high levels of nicotine and chemicals that can cause long-term health complications.

Beyond physical health, the program tackled the psychological and social risks associated with vaping, such as dependency, peer pressure, weakened academic focus, and increased stress. Speakers emphasized that vaping behaviors often develop as coping mechanisms, making it important for young people to recognize the emotional triggers that lead them toward substance use.

To guide students toward healthier choices, the program also introduced positive coping strategies—including stress management techniques, mindfulness activities, healthier recreational options, and seeking support from trusted adults or counselors. These alternatives were presented as practical tools for managing academic and social pressures without resorting to harmful substances.

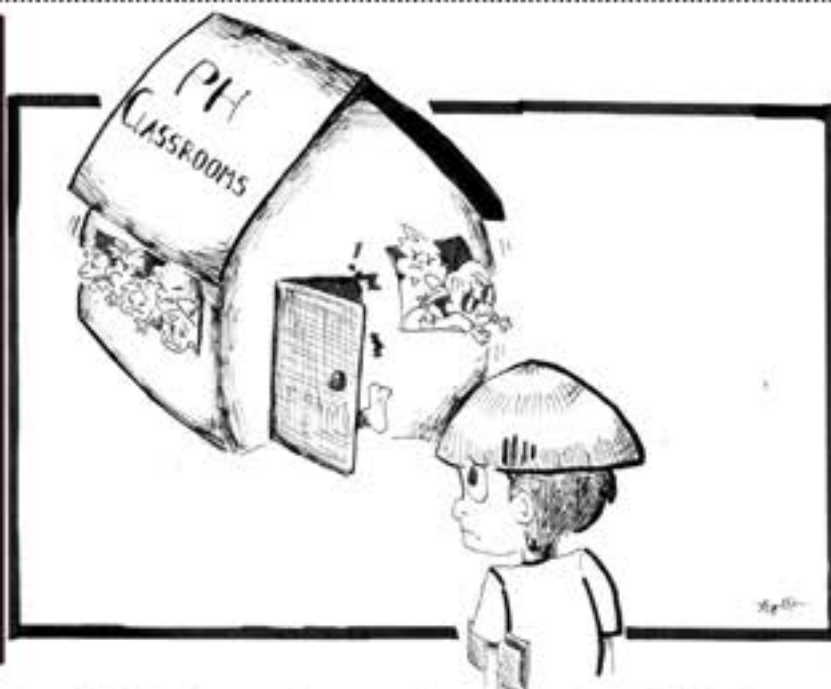
The initiative reflects BSU's ongoing commitment to student wellness and proactive substance

abuse prevention, reinforcing the university's goal of equipping its learners with the knowledge and skills needed to make safe and informed decisions.



WHY

# Government should invest more in schools and facilities



We often hear leaders say that education is a top priority. Yet many students continue to learn in overcrowded classrooms, aging buildings, and facilities that fall short of what 21st-century learning demands. If education is truly the foundation of our nation, then our national budget must reflect that commitment—clearly and consistently.

The Department of Education estimates a 165,000-classroom shortage, a gap so large that it could take five decades to close if construction does not speed up. This shortage means shifting schedules, cramped rooms, and teachers forced to manage environments that make learning more difficult for everyone.

Government agencies have begun addressing this. The Department of Budget and Management recently

released P19 billion for new classrooms and repairs. DBM Secretary Ameh Pangandaman emphasized the seriousness of this investment, saying, "Education is not just manpower, it's infrastructure too," pointing to the need for safer, less congested learning environments.

DepEd has also partnered with the PPP Center to build 15,000 modern classrooms, while its 2026 proposal includes major funding for more classrooms, teacher support, feeding programs, and digital tools. Education Secretary Sonny Angara noted that every peso requested is meant to directly support learners and teachers. Senator Sherwin Gatchalian even called the upcoming budget a "decisive step forward," especially with billions dedicated to closing the classroom gap.

All of these efforts point to one truth

investing in school facilities is not a luxury—it is a necessity. Students cannot learn well in unsafe or overcrowded classrooms. Teachers cannot give their best when school conditions limit their methods. Education cannot advance if buildings, laboratories, libraries, and equipment fall behind.

But these promises must translate into real results. Students cannot wait another generation for classrooms that are safe, comfortable, and equipped for modern learning. Investing in facilities is not about making schools look better—it's about giving every student a fair chance to succeed.

If we want a strong future for the Philippines, then we must build strong schools today. It is time to fund education not just with words, but with the resources students truly deserve.



## Educate to Protect the Sea Before It's Late

LEARN TO SEE BEFORE YOU SEEK

KRISTIANA CHARMEL CABALLERO

Starting S.Y. 2026, the West Philippine Sea (WPS) will finally be included in the Araling Panlipunan curriculum, a national defense move done through education

For decades, China has spread false claims about its so-called "ownership" of the South China Sea. By teaching young Filipinos about the truth early on, we are protecting our sovereignty not just through coast guards, but through classrooms.

The initiative also fills a long-ignored gap in education. Many students can point to other countries on a map but confused when asked about the boundaries of our own waters. Including the West Philippine Sea in lessons helps the youth understand international law, territorial rights, and the meaning of the 2016 Hague ruling—a ruling that clearly favored the Philippines but remains largely unappreciated

by the public. The ruling invalidated China's "nine-dash line" and confirmed that Scarborough Shoal and other areas lie within the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Yet, despite this, China keeps acting aggressively, building artificial islands, and conducting large-scale harvesting of endangered species, even activities mentioned by the Arbitral Tribunal.

This effort also aligns with the Student Council Alliance of the Philippines' (SCAP) call for institutionalized education on the West Philippine Sea. SCAP emphasizes that teaching this issue by adding the topic in Grades 4, 6, and 10 is also a lesson in national dignity, maritime heritage, and the sacrifices of Filipino fishermen and frontliners defending our seas.

The West Philippine Sea Education Bill, filed by the WPS Bloc led by Representative Chel Diokno and

other legislators, underscores the need to institutionalize this curriculum. SCAP believes putting it into law will make sure future generations always know their rights and take pride in defending our seas.

However, the government must ensure that this project doesn't stay as a one-time headline. Materials must be factual, engaging, and continually updated. Teachers should be trained to explain the issue with clarity and balance, not fear or bias. If this effort ends up half-hearted, it will only waste resources and lose the trust of students.

If we fail to teach our youth the truth about the West Philippine Sea now, we risk losing not only territory but identity—and with it, the chance to foster a generation that understands, values, and will defend the Philippines' maritime heritage.



## Smart Students, Poor System

SUPPORT IS THE BACKBONE OF GREATNESS

JARUKO BIEN B. GALIAN

People say the Philippine education system is one of the best. If that were true, our students would be doing great in world tests. Yet every PISA report shows we're still near the bottom.

In the 2022 PISA test, Filipino 15-year-olds got an average of 14 points in the new creative thinking part, putting us in the bottom four out of 64 countries. But it's not because Filipinos aren't smart. It's because the system keeps failing them.

Taiwan have modern schools with iPads, smartboards, and Wi-Fi everywhere. Meanwhile here in our country, we still make magic with chalk board, broken chairs, and crowded rooms.

Teachers also struggle. Many spend their own money on supplies while handling too many students at once. How can they focus on quality teaching when they're stretched thin just to make ends meet? It's hard to teach well when you're tired and underpaid.

Many students don't even have proper

gadgets or internet. Some share one phone for school or rely on weak mobile data to attend classes. Being a great student at school doesn't depend only on gadgets, but they help a lot. Smart students still need good tools.

The government should focus on fixing classrooms, improving internet, and giving schools enough funds. If other countries can do it, we can too. Filipinos aren't behind because we're not intelligent. We're behind because we don't get the support we deserve. Give us the right tools, and we'll show the world how capable we really are.

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**ONE FOR ALL... ALL FOR ONE**

**Locals First: Why La Trinidad Needs Tourist Policies That Protect Its People**

JACKSON CABURIAN

La Trinidad, Benguet, has long attracted visitors—from strawberry pickers to coffee lovers and fans of the StoBoSa hillside mural. Tourism drives the local economy, but growing crowds are putting pressure on residents. It may be time for policies that put locals first.

One proposal under discussion is a P20 environmental fee for tourists, which would fund waste management and infrastructure upkeep. With rising foot traffic at attractions like the Strawberry Farm, it's reasonable for visitors to contribute to maintaining the environment they enjoy.

Tourism has also boosted local agriculture. The number of strawberry farmers has grown from 720 to 1,320 in a year, while coffee growers supply beans to over 80 cafés. Stronger regulations could help ensure fair pricing, protect land use, and prevent over-commercialization that harms small farmers. Cultural sites like StoBoSa also need protection, including

controlled access, visitor guidelines, and limits on commercial vendors, to preserve community dignity.

Yet, overregulation carries risks. Excessive restrictions may drive away tourists, threatening livelihoods for vendors, drivers, restaurants, and homestays. Effective enforcement also requires staffing, funding, and proper planning, which local governments may struggle to provide.

The solution lies in balance. Reasonable environmental fees, visitor limits in sensitive areas, trained guides, and local representation in tourism councils can ensure that tourism supports—not disrupts—community life.

Tourism should enhance La Trinidad without overshadowing the needs of residents. By prioritizing locals while welcoming visitors, the municipality can build a sustainable, fair, and community-centered tourism model. After all, visitors come and go—but locals live with the long-term impact.

**THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK**

**Scroll With Caution**

TYRA CORNEL

In the Philippines, news and rumors spread quickly, especially online, whether in group conversations or social media posts. However, Filipinos cannot tell which information they see is factual or not most of the time.

Fake news cases are especially high during the elections, where people share biased claims of the candidates they are in favor of. Most information is exaggerated, altered, or just completely made up in an effort to persuade others to vote for the said candidate. This results in wrong political choices for the people who did not fact-check the credentials of the candidates.

Social media makes it worse. You can post anything with just a few clicks using common apps and sources like Facebook posts, TikTok edits, and Instagram. These apps' algorithm also makes it easier for social media users to see fake news, where posts with more interactions tend to show up more frequently on users' feeds.

Senior citizens are one of the most vulnerable ones from fake news because most of them were not taught how to verify sources. Students are also vulnerable to fake news as they often use social media for communication and studies.

We might be able to correct fake news, but the damage is already done before people will eventually know the truth. Fake news already caused confusion and panic among social media users, and reputations are already ruined which cannot be undone.

A lot of Filipinos often get tricked by fake news, and since we are one of the largest Facebook users in the whole world, news spreads a lot faster. That's why people should learn how to fact-check, verify sources, and think critically before believing or sharing anything online.

Schools and the Department of Education (DepEd) should push for more media literacy programs, so that more Filipinos could learn how to spot false information and prevent more people from believing catchy headlines and emotional posts easily. The government should also issue warnings about online misinformation.

Before we hit "share," we should ask ourselves: Is this true? We must be cautious on any information we see to avoid being misled by fake news. Unless we take action against fake news, we are going to keep living in a country where online misinformation no longer matters.

**EXTERNAL RISING, INTERNAL STAGNANT**

**Living Beyond Our Means**

YUNAIZAH BLAIRE D. LATIGO

In the Philippines, prices of food, rent, and transportation keep going up, but salaries don't rise as fast.

Because of this, many Filipinos fall into a trap called lifestyle inflation: spending more money when they start earning more. For example, buying a new phone after a raise, eating out often, or buying branded clothes just to "keep up." But since the economy is unstable, this habit can easily lead to debt and stress.

Prices of basic needs like rice, electricity, and gas keep rising, taking up most of a worker's income. Even so, social media pushes the trend of living comfortably and spending on nice things to feel good or look rich. Influencers often show off shopping hauls and vacations, which pressures others to spend money they don't really have.

In a place where every peso matters, the real "flex" is not how much you spend—it's how wisely you use your money.

**When Music Loses its Soul**

JACKSON CABURIAN

I was scrolling through TikTok, my little escape after eight grueling hours at school when something caught my eye—or rather, my ear. It was a cover of an old Western classic, familiar yet strangely different. The slow, soulful rhythm had been flipped into an upbeat pace, the pitch slightly higher. At first, it seemed like just another creative twist on a beloved song.

Then the vocals came in. Cold. Mechanical. Lifeless. Forced. My stomach sank. It was definitely AI. And just like that, my carefully curated afternoon of relief was ruined.

A few years ago, AI had little influence in the music industry. Sure, big AI models could create a create a riff or two, but they are not up to standard with the mainstream's taste. Today, AI is slowly creeping in everywhere—making covers, remixing songs, and filling social media with music that sounds artificial and lifeless.

Recently, AI has made its way into OPM as well. For example, an AI-generated cover of Pahina by Cup of Joe started circulating on social media. Among fans, the reactions were overwhelmingly positive, with comment sections flooded by thousands of listeners amazed at this unique rendition. At one point, it even reached No. 1 on the Philippines' viral songs chart on Spotify.

But the reaction from the song's creators was very different. Cup of Joe's guitarist, Gabriel Fernandez, posted a string of question marks on X, expressing his disbelief at the news. Gian Bernardino, one of the songwriters and founding members of the band, openly said in a livestream that the song was a personal reflection of pain and heartbreak as well as the band's growth and experiences. And to see other people make content out AI is not to be tolerated.

"Support namin lahat ng covers na ginagawa ng mga kanta namin, but to make it through AI is an insult," he points out.

(We support all of our song covers, but to make it through AI is an insult). AI-generated covers might sound technically impressive, but they risk turning heartfelt music into cold imitations. In making a song, every detail—even the tiniest ones—is deliberate. Every line, every note, and how they are played, from the instruments to the vocals, has been carefully crafted to convey a specific feeling to the listener. AI-generated takes these details and throws them out; they do not consider the intention behind each choice.

AI-generated covers don't just imitate songs—they trample over the efforts of real artists who genuinely struggle, practice, and pour their hearts into every cover performance. Imagine spending months learning a

song, practicing every note correctly. You record it late at night, fingers sore, voice raw. Then, online, a lifeless AI cover—perfectly pitched, perfectly timed, and suddenly everyone is paying attention to it.

Music is an art, born from passion, pain, and human experience. To let a machine outcover a human is not just unfair; it is an attack on the very core of art and creativity.

Looking back to that time when I was scrolling on Tiktok listening to an AI song cover was a small moment, but it showed me something bigger: in the future, AI covers might be indistinguishable to the originals. And while they may impress listeners online, no AI can capture the heart, struggle, and story behind a song. That's why we must value the original versions, support artists who pour their souls into their work, and keep music alive and human.

**MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO**

**When We Destroy Nature, We Build Our Own Disasters**

YESHUA SAMARA A. TUAZON

The Philippines has become a country where floods and landslides feel inevitable—but they are not acts of fate. Too often, our worst disasters are man-made, spawned by deforestation, mining, and reckless developments that put profit ahead of people.

One of the most critical cases of nature being sacrificed for short-term gain is the Sierra Madre, Luzon's longest mountain range and a vital natural buffer against storms. According to the Haribon Foundation, the Sierra Madre is losing around 9,000 hectares of forest cover each year, driven by illegal logging, mining, and destructive development. Haribon's Nova Peñaverde Regalarío warns that without this natural spine, "the floods we experience would likely be twice as bad."

This matters deeply—not just for

biodiversity, but for human lives. The forested slopes of the Sierra Madre act like a sponge. When we strip them, rain runs off too quickly, triggering flash floods, landslides, and devastation downstream.

In Cebu City, the high-end residential project The Rise at Monterrazas has become a flashpoint for environmental recklessness. Marketed as a "Banaue rice-terraces-inspired" condo built on the mountainside, it has stirred controversy for seriously damaging hillside ecology. A DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) investigation found that of over 700 trees supposed to exist on the site in 2022, only 11 remain—a staggering loss. Regulators also flagged violations in the project's environmental compliance certificate, and noted that its detention ponds are insufficient to manage runoff from heavy rain.

**TINTED THROUGH THE BONE**

**The Pearl of Transparency**

IRENE KATE C. SANTIAGO

The Transparency Seal is depicted by a pearl shining out of an open shell, symbolizing a policy shift towards openness in access to government information. A bright, shining pearl that is meant to be shared and displayed to the public for all to see.

Government transparency is where government information is available and accessible to the public. It is the principle that a government's finances, decisions, information, and other operations should be open, understandable, and accessible to the people. This is important, as it encourages the people to hold the government accountable and participate in government-related affairs, where a decision can affect their lives significantly.

Section 2 of Republic Act No. 12009, or the New Government Procurement

and noted that its detention ponds are insufficient to manage runoff from heavy rain.

Critics argue that such development weakens nature's defenses. During Typhoon Tino, some linked Monterrazas to increased runoff and flooding in surrounding areas. Siete Young, one of the developers, defends the project by saying they made "300 design revisions" to ensure slope stability and sustainability—including a system to collect rainwater in underground tanks for future use. But for many, these measures do not make up for clearing so many trees and altering the terrain itself.

When we destroy critical ecosystems like the Sierra Madre, and when we build on sensitive hillsides without full regard for ecological costs, we are choosing short-term profit over long-

term regard for ecological costs, we are choosing short-term profit over long-term safety. That is the heart of the problem: "business as usual" is killing us. We chase development while ignoring nature's limits. We trade forests for profit and wonder why floods worsen with every storm.

If we genuinely want resilience, real safety, and sustainable growth, we must change our priorities by protecting and restoring vital ecosystems like the Sierra Madre, holding developers accountable for damaging fragile terrain, investing in nature-based solutions—reforestation, watershed restoration, green infrastructure and demanding truly sustainable design for hillside projects, not just marketing spin.

Caring for nature is not anti-development. It is the only way to build a future where communities live, not drown.

the government is doing with their tax money.

This is why government transparency is so important, especially in the Philippines. In a country where are ghost projects and inappropriate uses of funds, letting the people know what decisions the government makes will help hold the people in power accountable.

Even if this might include information that shouldn't be shown, it is something that citizens deserve to be aware of—something that citizens should know. They should not be left in the dust and unaware of the decisions of government officials when a simple "yes" or "no" can impact their lives severely and significantly. Citizens are allowed to look behind the curtains and see the behind-the-scenes of the government's performance.



LET THEM EAT CAKE

### An 800 million Peso Solution

LOURIZ DAINIEL P. ARZADIN

The flood that swallowed towns across the Philippines this year did not come from Typhoon Tino alone. It also came from years of greed, carelessness, and fake projects supposedly meant for betterment and aid, but turned toward private gain.

Now, the government has announced an P800-million jail for corrupt lawmakers. It sounds like justice, but in reality, it is just another concrete wall built on weak, corner-cut foundations. The government is busy building a prison when what the country truly needs is a clean system.

For many years, billions of pesos have been poured into flood-control projects under the Department of Public Works and Highways. Since 2022, more than P545 billion has been spent on programs meant to stop floods. But every rainy season, the scenes are the same: roads are covered in water, and the same families are left to rebuild.

Why? Because many of these projects exist only on paper. A Senate investigation found that some flood-control programs were repeated, overpriced, or completely fake. In Pampanga, one project that cost P20 million in 2018, suddenly became P183 million in 2024. Yet the flooding only got worse. Department of Finance

estimates that between P42 billion and P118 billion have been lost to ghost projects and inflated contracts in just three years.

As former Senator Ping Lacson said, "More than flood control, what we need is greed control."

So what will an P800-million jail solve? Locking up a few people will not soak up the dirty puddle of corruption. The problem is not that we lack prisons, but that corruption keeps flowing freely and undetected until it's too late.

Real change comes from fixing the system, not building prison cells. The government should strengthen the Commission on Audit to catch fake projects before the money is gone. All flood-control budgets and contracts should be transparent and easily accessible to all. Local communities should help check if projects are truly built, not just announced. Most importantly, engineers and experts should lead planning, not politicians.

Floods are not just caused by heavy rain. They are also caused by dirty hands and broken promises. Until honesty reigns over greed, the water will keep rising and floods will keep coming, and no P800-million jail will ever hold it back.

THE 9-MONTH SHIFT:

### When Life Changes Before High School Ends

GURNEY ANNE E. BALONG

Teenagers nowadays are independent and often stubborn. It's not rare to find a few already dating. Some teens would want to take their relationships to another level with occasional flings and open relationships to satisfy one's desires or to test each other's trust. But these can lead to accidental pregnancies, commonly known as teenage pregnancy.

Teenage pregnancy is an unhealthy problem thousands of teenagers face today, with younger teens having difficulty in labor. Some may have enough money to afford an abortion, but with growing inflation, most are not able to. The child may also be affected by this with the risk of low birth weight, developmental challenges and death at birth. The sudden pregnancy may also cause the mother to drop out of school, delaying her education.

However, teenage pregnancy can open a potential for mothers to have a stronger bond with their child due to closer age and higher energy levels.

There is also the possibility of having more time to see future generations grow up.

Nonetheless, bearing a child at such a young age is full of risks for both the mother and the child, with the possibility of the mother dying in labor, and if she survives, she may face the risk of postpartum complications. The mother may also have to work to provide for her child's needs if she is not with a stable family or community, weighing down more stress and pressure on her.

In addition, in the Republic Act 10354, also known as Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012. While it does not explicitly focus on teenage pregnancy, it provides a framework for prevention by mandating age-appropriate reproductive health education.

To have a healthy relationship, one must be patient and not rush things to avoid these accidents. Being a mother as young as 17 will affect her mental health and her childhood.

BEING A PARENT DOES NOT PAY

### Raising Teachers' Salaries Isn't Costly—Neglecting Them Is

EMRIEL XYKE B. LIKIGAN

House Bill 203, which seeks to raise the minimum monthly salary of public school teachers to P50,000, deserves strong support, as it represents a long-overdue act of justice for educators who have shouldered the burdens of an underfunded education system while earning salaries far below a decent living.

Yes to P50,000 Monthly Salary for Public School Teachers — A Long-Overdue Act of Justice

House Bill 203, which seeks to raise the minimum monthly salary of public school teachers to P50,000, deserves strong support, as it represents a long-overdue act of justice for educators who have shouldered the burdens of an underfunded education system while earning salaries far below a decent living.

Filed by ACT Teachers Party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio and Kabataan Party-list Rep. Renee Co, the bill directly addresses the chronic wage stagnation affecting over 800,000 public school teachers in Teacher I to Teacher III positions. Even after several rounds of salary standardization in 2020 and 2024, many still earn barely over P30,000 per month, an amount insufficient to support a family in today's economic climate.

Labor groups and social researchers estimate a family living wage at P1,217 per day, or over P36,000 monthly. Clearly, teachers' current pay falls short by a wide margin. For professionals who spend years in training to earn

licenses, often go above and beyond to compensate for gaps in the education system, this compensation is not only unfair — it is unsustainable.

Teachers vs. Soldiers: A Stark Wage Gap

The disparity becomes even more glaring when compared with the large pay hikes granted to military and police personnel during the Duterte administration, which ranged from 50% to 100%, while teachers received increases of only 4.95% to 5.6%. This widening gap highlights a skewed prioritization of public service roles and distorts the overall wage structure for civil servants.

This is not to say that soldiers and police don't deserve fair compensation. But if the government can double the salaries of uniformed personnel, it must show equal urgency for educators — the very people shaping the nation's future workforce, leaders, and even law enforcers.

Brain Drain in the Classroom

One of the most damaging consequences of low pay is the migration of Filipino teachers abroad, where salaries are three to eight times higher. This brain drain undermines the quality of local education and signals a harsh reality: our teachers are not being valued. It is time to stop expecting given sufficient reason to stay. How can we expect them to inspire students, uphold standards, and commit to lifelong learning when they are overworked, demoralized, and underpaid?

P50,000: A Price Tag on Justice and Dignity

The proposed P50,000 salary is neither extravagant nor unrealistic — it is fair, justified, and necessary. It recognizes teachers as frontliners of education, especially as the country grapples with learning losses from the pandemic and systemic challenges in basic education.

Moreover, the bill is consistent with the constitutional mandate to provide a living wage and promote human development. It affirms that teaching is a profession deserving full respect and fair compensation, not voluntary service masked as patriotism.

Now Is the Time

To reject this measure on fiscal grounds is to overlook billions spent on projects of lesser long-term social value. Teachers are not asking for luxury — they are asking for justice, dignity, and sustainability, which have long been denied.

Passing House Bill 203 is not a political maneuver; it is a test of societal values. If we truly believe that education is the foundation of national development, we must invest in those who make it possible.

Raising teachers' salaries to P50,000 is more than a numbers game — it is a recognition of their reality: our teachers are not being valued. It is time to stop expecting given sufficient reason to stay. How can we expect them to inspire students, uphold standards, and commit to lifelong learning when they are overworked, demoralized, and underpaid?

TAXES TO CHARITY

### Taxes, Taxes: Where Did You Go?

MYRRIQUE TEOFUANT B. MALUCAY

"I am not disappointed. I am very angry," President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. stated this last August 2025 after visiting a whopping P55 million flood control project in Bulacan, which turned out to be nonexistent — a "ghost project".

According to Marcos, the project was already fully paid last June, based on the Malacañang Palace's receipt. He also stated the project started in February 2025. However, it is already the month of August at that time, and not a single hollow block is placed on the river wall." Marcos said.

"None, 220 meters... P55-million, completed records of the public works. None. Nothing, they did nothing, not a single day did they work on this project." Marcos firmly stated live this August on News 5. According to interviewed residents in Barangay Piel, Bulacan, the project has been idle for a long period of time. The residents faced heavy issues of flood, all because of a negligent act.

Henry Alcantara, a suspended engineer of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) was believed to be a culprit behind this nonexistent project. Alcantara admitted that he had signed a completion certificate for a P55 million flood control project without fully and personally inspecting the project site.

During the first hearing of the House inquiry into anomalous flood control projects, Alcantara said he sometimes signed project documents on the assumption that his subordinates had already performed due to diligence. This was after Manila Rep. Joel Chua confronted Alcantara with papers showing that he had signed off on several projects, including a P55 million 220-meter river wall project in Barangay Piel in Baliuag town, where the contract went to SYMS Construction Trading, where 14 flood control projects were under the institution, which adds the sum of almost P1 billion.

The institution is now facing cases under the Revised Pinal Code. It is truly disappointing and displeasing to learn that our taxes on hard-earned income would only lead to one common thing: corruption.

Alcantara tried making up an excuse, claiming that there were "too many documents that go through my office everyday. I do inspections, but not every single one." He then later admitted being "negligent" and ultimately responsible for the ghost projects.

"We reject Alcantara's defense. We cannot have plunder (as a case) if you're just negligent, what I'm starting is... he knew it. He intended to ghost it." Bicol Saro partylist Rep. Terry Ridon stated.

This is not negligence — it is corruption. Until those responsible are held accountable, our taxes will keep vanishing into pockets instead of projects.

### Jacey Andy P. Minas

With the busy crowds and cool breeze of Baguio City, the air smells of local coffee with top hits playing as teens roam with phone cameras ready for new clothing arrivals and dessert stalls. Teens from Baguio and Benguet gather around Baguio's favored pop-up markets every weekend, taking laps around stalls and rummaging through hauls. This is the Flea Market culture — something that is indeed hard to 'flea' from.

Popping up as a new obsession, pop-up stalls bloomed among Baguio and Benguet teens. It is known as a fun way of expressing creativity, entrepreneurship, and engagement. It started as traditional stalls for local products, transforming and gaining more popularity after the 2020 pandemic. During the outbreak, teens started growing in arts and crafts, learning new recipes, and using social media. These activities led to advertising the idea of pop-up stalls to teens through social media. The concept of pop-up markets focuses on trend of this generation: anime, food, thrift

clothing or "ukay-ukay," and handmade crafts, all in a small booth.

To a lot of high school and college students, pop-up stalls are a simple but enjoyable hangout spot. Instead of going to the usual malls or cafes, teens choose to walk along Burnham Park or Session Road, going from stall to stall, checking for cheap accessories, "merch" from their favorite K-pop group, or trying the newest snack. For young entrepreneurs, the trend is not only a figment of amusement but can also carry opportunities.

Small businesses were recognized because of teens' love for entertainment and the most recent trends. A teen's habits to pass time turned into a small way to earn money. They sell crocheted bags, handmade pins, and commissioned art without the need for big capital or expensive rent. The rise of pop-ups has helped many students and fresh graduates where each of them bring so-

omething new to the demographic. Due to the popularity of social media among Gen Z and A, they can be a big help to teen creators; the aesthetic vibe of each stall can result in a viral post online. Teens show off their bought items and vlog their "taste tests" of savory street food, inviting more people to visit popups.

Considering all this, the teens' obsessions with pop-up stalls, brought to the public, pitched in a new generation of creativity to the artistic culture of Baguio/Benguet.



Denires F. Tiana

With the launch of Good Shepherd Cafe in September 2025, ube lovers now have even more ways to satisfy their cravings — with ube-bingka, ube cheese pandesal, ube latte, ube crinkles gelato, and other innovative treats. The menu also features breakfast meals, a range of drinks, and local dishes with modern twists—like their Kinini burger steak.

Although it operates as an independent business, this venture blossomed through a collaboration with its namesake, Good Shepherd—the iconic Baguio enterprise long cherished for its ube jam and other pasalubong.

The Second World War left a catastrophic impact on all places involved, including the city of Baguio. Survivors did their best to recover. For the Sisters of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, getting back up again was not only a goal they set for themselves but also for the girls left at risk. They realized that this mission would not be possible without a regular source of income. Coupled with a foreign missionary's advice about the need for livelihood, the Mountain Maid Training Center began production using Sister Maria Guadalupe Bautista's strawberry jam recipe in 1953. Over the years, their list of products slowly grew with the addition of ube-

jam, lengua de gato, cashew and peanut brittle, alfajor, and angel cookies, and other products. With the expansion of the enterprise, hopes and dreams of students from the six provinces of the Cordillera were made possible. By trainee youth to work in the production of Good Shepherd products, they become self-sufficient and earn money to support their studies. During peak seasons, they also hire mothers whose husbands have no permanent employment and out-of-school youth who save up for an education. Their legacy has led to over 1,600 graduates who have become engineers, teachers, social workers, and other professionals. The Good Shepherd Cafe follows this initiative as well, hiring students to help with their academics.

The chain of goodness does not end there. They also support farmers' livelihoods by purchasing ube directly from them. Many believe that Good Shepherd's use of high-quality purple yams sourced from these farmers, coupled with the consistent guidance of their classic recipe, is the secret to their success.

With every bite of a Good Shepherd product, satisfaction goes beyond flavor; it comes from knowing the rich history and legacy behind each treat. As stated in their website, Good Shepherd's mission extends beyond their products. Rooted in community and faith, each purchase helps educate Cordillera youth and sustains a tradition of shared blessings and integrity.



For decades, visitors to Baguio City have brought home bright red strawberries, often called "Baguio strawberries" — as a favorite souvenir. The association has become so strong that many Filipinos genuinely believe the city is the source of the country's famous berries. But the truth is different: strawberries do not come from Baguio. They actually come from La Trinidad, Benguet, a nearby town whose rich farming heritage has long been overshadowed by the popularity of the Summer Capital.

Most people think strawberries come from Baguio City, but the truth is they grow best in a nearby town called La Trinidad. This town is only about 20 minutes away from Baguio, but it has something very special: the perfect place to grow strawberries. La Trinidad sits in a valley, which means it has cooler weather, soft and rich soil, and lots of wide, open farms. All these things make it an ideal spot for growing strawberries. Because of this, La Trinidad has the largest strawberry farms in the whole Philippines. The town is so proud of this that they celebrate the La Trinidad Strawberry Festival every year. During the festival, people

enjoy strawberry-themed food, dances, parades, and activities that show how important the fruit is to the town's culture and economy. Baguio City, meanwhile, is very different. Even though it's also cool, Baguio is a busy and crowded city with malls, schools, houses, and roads everywhere. There isn't much space for farming, and the soil and land aren't the best for growing strawberries in big quantities. That's why most of the strawberries sold in Baguio actually come from La Trinidad — they're grown there and simply delivered to the city markets.

Knowing that strawberries come from La Trinidad helps us appreciate the farmers and the place that truly grows them. It reminds us that the berries we see in Baguio were grown with hard work in Benguet.



**It** was a stressful and tiring day of exams. You and your friend decide to go to a cheap nearby Korean samgyupsal to relax from such a tough period. Sizzling sounds of meat can be heard from the entire room, its aroma enters your nose. With freshly cooked meat and a few side dishes, both you and your friend enjoy the small experience of grilling meat and eating together.

Samgyeopsal or also known as "samgyupsal" is a type of Korean barbecue where diners grill their own meat on a tabletop grill. The term "samgyupsal" is actually a combination of the words "samgyeop," meaning "pork belly," and "sal," meaning "fat." Together, they form the word "samgyupsal," which refers to pork belly, one of the most popular meats used in Korean barbecue. With the heavy effect of Hallyu, or also known as the Korean Wave. Many Filipinos took massive interest in South Korean pop culture. These stem from Korean celebrit-

ies like popular K-pop groups such as Black Pink and BTS, to famous actors such as Gong Yoo and Lee Jung-jae from Squid Game.

Other than its media, many express their curiosity of Korean food such as Tteokbokki, Jajangmyeon, Gimbap and many more. As a result of this, samgyupsal has taken the country by storm. Filipinos are actively seeking out the best restaurants for their share of Korean styled meat and appetizing side dishes.

Want to try samgyupsal but don't know how? Well it's actually pretty easy! All you have to do is go to your desired Samgyupsal restaurant and order the food you want in the restaurant's menu. In other cases, places that offer an unlimited menu have a buffet style where the meat and its side dishes are displayed in gastronomic and metal containers with customers having to serve their own. When you receive your order, you can now simply cook it on the grill. Others pr-

fer to cook their meat on their own to cook it in the way they prefer, however some places also offer for the staff to help cook it for you. Most samgyupsal places have a time limit for around 1 and a half hours to 2 hours, with a no leftover policy. If time is exceeded or a customer wishes to take-out the leftovers, most places would ask for additional payment. So it is wise to eat all you can while also avoiding any leftovers.

Eating in a samgyupsal never fails to be such a fun experience. Diners are allowed to cook their own meals, choose their own sauce and side dishes. Those who are not good cooks suddenly become professional grillers, meanwhile good cooks suddenly become professional samgyupsal eaters turning the whole

session similar to those mukbangs seen on Youtube. Some places have dancing waiters, some have music playing in the background, and others have their own built-in karaoke booths to be able to sing and have fun while enjoying your food. Each restaurant has its own unique twist to differentiate it from the rest. So as long as it stands out and provides a good service, invite your friends over and enjoy a fun and relaxing samgyupsal!



Carille Jana O. Sabiano

# SAM-G

Ultimate Reward for Productivity

## FROM TRADITION TO ACTION Binnadang STRENGTHENS LT COMMUNITIES

In the mountainous town of La Trinidad, Benguet, the tradition of binnadang—a time-honored practice of communal cooperation among indigenous and local communities—remains alive and relevant. More than a cultural relic, it has become a practical response to pressing challenges, especially the recurrent flooding that threatens farms, homes, and livelihoods.

### When the Community Acts as One

On 13 September 2025, hundreds of volunteers—students, barangay officials, local government personnel, and concerned citizens—mobilized to clean and clear the town's creeks and waterways in several barangays. Their mission: remove trash, mud, overgrown vegetation, and other blockages that had long clogged drainage and contributed to frequent flooding during heavy rains.

For the town's mayor, the effort was more than a cleanup drive—it was the embodiment of binnadang. "Our people should not only clean their surroundings," he said. "They should also feel the need to check and inspect clogged creeks and canals and do something about them. That's what binnadang is all about."

His words reflect a belief that lasting solutions often begin not at the halls of power, but at the hands of ordinary citizens working together.

### Preparing for the Storm—Together

In the days before Super Typhoon Uwan made landfall, the municipal government of La Trinidad, under Mayor Awingan's leadership, ordered urgent dredging and cleaning of major waterways, including Bolo Creek and drainage canals along key roads—actions meant to improve water flow and reduce the risk of flooding.

The result was striking. When the typhoon hit, many areas that once risked inundation remained dry. The strawberry farms—a signature of La Trinidad—and nearby low-lying zones escaped serious flood damage, a success the mayor credited to the community's early cleanup efforts. "We've seen the benefits of preparation. Cleaning and clearing waterways prevented blockages that could have caused flooding," he remarked.

The 2025 cleanup drive—anchored in the values of binnadang—demonstrated that collective responsibility can be more effective than expensive interventions alone.

### Binnadang: From Ancestral Practice to Modern Necessity

Historically, binnadang (also known by similar indigenous terms like aluyon or ub-ubbo in some Cordillera communities) referred to communal labor and mutual aid: neighbors helping neighbors with planting, harvesting, building houses, or sharing resources during weddings, funerals, or communal events.

Over time, as communities faced new challenges—environmental shifts, increased urbanization, and climate-related disasters—the same spirit of cooperation evolved to meet modern needs. In La Trinidad today, it shows up in community-led waste-management efforts, clean-up drives, waterway maintenance, and disaster-preparedness activities.

This evolution underscores a vital truth: culture is not static. Practices like binnadang continue to matter, precisely because they adapt—becoming tools for resilience, solidarity, and shared survival.

### A Model for Resilience and Unity

For Mayor Awingan and many residents of La Trinidad, binnadang is not a mere tradition—it is civic duty embodied. By organizing clean-ups, dredging waterways, and mobilizing citizens for volunteer work, the local government fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. Such communal cooperation has practical benefits: reduced flood risk, protected farmlands, safer communities. But beyond that, it reinforces social bonds, nurtures trust among neighbors, and strengthens the sense of identity rooted in shared heritage.

In a world facing growing challenges, La Trinidad's 2025 experience shows how old values like binnadang—lived and reinvented—can help communities thrive. When people work together, solidarity can move mountains, and redirect rivers.

Stacey B. Balli

## JAYBOY MAGDADARO The Boy Who escaped death 50x

Triha Gayle S. Dutaigon

On the morning of November 4, 2025, as typhoon Tino (Kalmaegi) battered Cebu with torrential rain and rising floodwaters, most residents of Barangay Jubay in Liloan rushed to find shelter. But one 15-year-old boy did the opposite: he ran toward the danger.

His name is Jayboy Magdadaro, a Grade 9 student of Jubay Integrated School—and the teenager who would later be credited with rescuing more than 50 residents, including infants, seniors, and pregnant women, as their homes filled with water.

Armed with nothing but a small boat and a lifebuoy (salobada), Jayboy paddled back and forth across chest-deep water and strong currents from morning until almost nightfall. Some of the people he saved were complete strangers. Many were crying, scared, or unable to move. But each time he heard a voice calling for help, he turned back again.

"Kahit malakas ang tubig, pinilit kong tumulong kasal na naging ko ang sigaw ng tao," Jayboy recalled—a line that quickly spread nationwide as people praised his courage.

Before heading out to help, Jayboy and his family first evacuated to Sitio San Roque. But when he learned that Villa Lara, another nearby sitio, was hit even worse, he told his mother he needed to go back. His mother, Alina Magdadaro, said she wasn't surprised.

"Palaging tumulong yan," she shared. "Kahit sa SiK events, volunteer siya. Hindi siya mapakali kapag may nangangailangan."

That day, Jayboy didn't stop to eat. He didn't rest. He kept paddling until he developed a fever hours later. But not once did he complain.

As Jayboy's story spread on social media and news networks, support poured in. The Municipality of Liloan and a barangay official from Mabako, Cebu City awarded him a full college scholarship, covering all fees. He was also granted a P5,000 monthly allowance to sustain his studies—an unexpected blessing for his family. Youth organizations and community groups praised him as a symbol of modern-day bayanihan.

Despite the recognition, Jayboy remains humble. He repeatedly told interviewers that he "just did what anyone should do."

When asked about his dreams, Jayboy said he hoped to take up criminology, wanting to continue helping people on a wider scale. Many said that after seeing what he did during the typhoon, he already has the heart of a protector. In a time when the country often reads news about wrongdoing, corruption, and apathy, the young teenager from Liloan stands as proof that courage does not depend on age or title. Sometimes, the bravest people in the storm are those who simply refuse to look away.

Jayboy didn't just save lives—he restored faith in what a young Filipino can do.

Jayboy is not a trained rescuer. He learned to move through water not from formal lessons, but from skinboarding, his favorite pastime along the shores of Liloan. Those skills—balance, strength, and fearlessness around water—became his greatest tools during the disaster.

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**"Sometimes, the bravest people in the storm are those who simply refuse to look away."**

# Counting Coins:

ID? Check. Uniform? Complete. Wallet? Have it. Fare? Not enough. Many students commute as a way of transportation, as some even live far from their school campus. One of the struggles among these students is the increase of jeepney fares.

Pepe is a second year student in junior high school. For Pepe commuting is not just rides and transportation but a routine, a lifestyle even. In a world wherein academic pressure shoots up jeepney fares shoots up even higher, Pepe has mastered the art of commuting. Every morning his routine is perfectly timed just so he would be able to reach the terminal early. He was able to find a half empty jeepney that morning, making his journey to school way easier.

Pepe tries to avoid spending his allowance on lunch and recess as much as possible, even skipping meals. He puts in much effort to save money not by choice but because most of his daily allowance is spent on commuting fare. His fare from his home to school costs approximately ₱35. Considering the fact that he

has to ride the Jeep back home after school, he will end up spending another ₱35, meaning he spends ₱75 on fares daily. With ₱75 decreased from his allowance he is only left with ₱25 to spend on himself.

Jeepneys are a colorful part of our Filipino culture, yet most times it is one of the struggles for many students. Every peso in their pockets count, saving whenever they can to be able to afford riding a Jeep. Although they also understand the struggles that the jeepney drivers go through to provide income for their families. They also get why there is a one peso increase in the jeepney fare because of the rapid increase on fuel prices. Students who go through the same obstacles as Pepe can't help but hope for jeepney transportation to be more accessible and affordable.

ID? Check. Uniform? Complete. Wallet? Have it. Fare? Not enough.



Fena Mae S. Hanson

## A FAMILY'S DETERMINATION TO KEEP THEIR LANGUAGE ALIVE

# Home is where the Filipino is



In a mindful and close-knit family, we meet three young children: Elijah, 10; Ysha, 8; and the youngest, Eiel, 2. Their parents try hard to make Filipino their main language at home, but English still becomes the children's default way of speaking.

Marites Barrios-Taran, the chairperson of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), warns that many children today are losing fluency in Filipino. She urges parents—especially mothers—to actively teach and use the language at home. Since kids hear so much English from a young age, she explains that Filipino will weaken if it's not spoken regularly. To help, the children's father even pretends not to understand English so the kids are encouraged to talk to him in Filipino.

Barrios-Taran also says simple habits like greeting people in Filipino can already make a difference. She supports the use of Filipino in schools and public spaces, and points out that Filipino subjects starting in Grade 3 help children strengthen their skills.

Because children naturally learn English from school and the internet, Navarro encourages parents to speak Filipino at home. Her family's situation is similar to many Filipino households today—trying to balance Filipino for identity and English for opportunity. Barrios-Taran suggests simple activities like reading stories, writing, or singing songs in Filipino to help children practice. To keep Filipino useful and relevant today, the KWF continues to create updated dictionaries, word lists, and learning materials. They also run Bahay Wika centers, where children learn endangered native languages through storytelling and interaction with elders and teachers. These programs need strong support from local governments, private groups, and people who care about culture. Barrios-Taran reminds everyone that saving the country's languages is a shared responsibility.

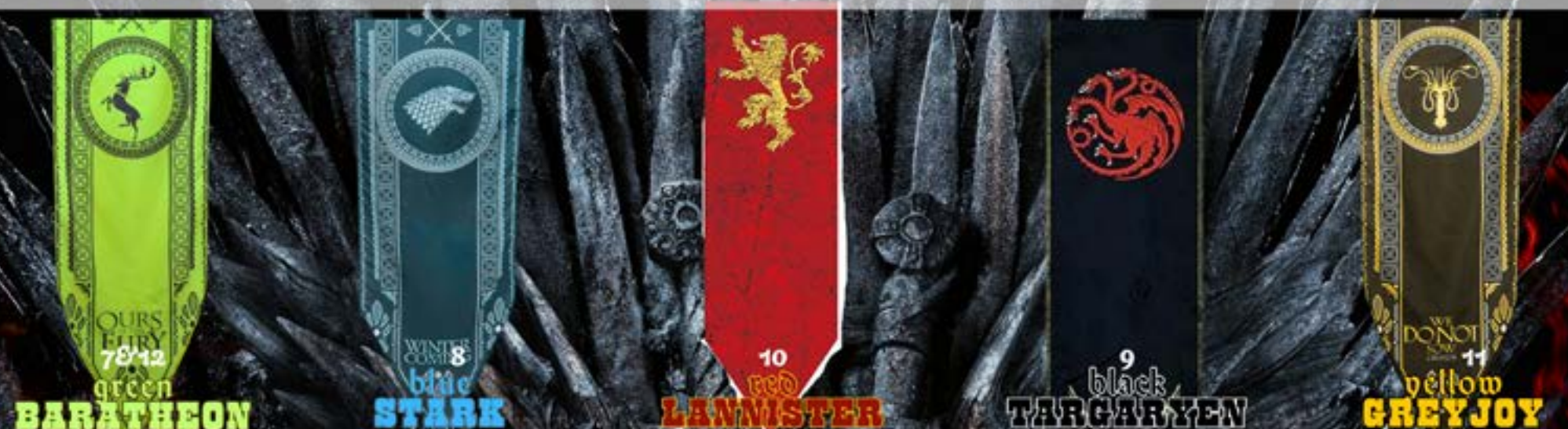
**"Saving the country's languages is a shared responsibility."**

Ska Ellyryn C. Marquez

Stacey B. Balli

FOR ONE EXTRAORDINARY WEEK, SLS'S BLEACHERS ECHOED NOT JUST WITH CHEERS, WHISTLES, AND THE THUD OF RUBBER SHOES ON CONCRETE—BUT WITH THE ENERGY OF WESTEROS ITSELF. BANNERS FLUTTERED FROM EACH YEAR LEVEL, MUCH LIKE SIGLS IN A ROYAL COURTYARD.

ARMED WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE HOUSE COLORS, THE ATHLETE IN EACH STUDENT EXUDED FIERCE PRIDE, AND A KIND OF UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT ONLY AN INTRAMURAL SEASON CAN FORGE. THIS YEAR'S GAME OF THRONES THEME DID MORE THAN ASSIGN NAMES TO GRADE LEVELS; IT TRANSFORMED THE ENTIRE COMPETITION INTO A LIVING FANTASY, WHERE ALLIANCES, RIVALRIES, AND GRIT DEFINED EVERY MATCH.



### BARATHEON

This batch of freshmen, combined with the seasoned Grade 12 seniors, proved themselves a formidable pairing. Their lush green banner, featuring their crowned stag sigil, symbolized both stamina and sovereignty—traits clearly seen in their performance. Raw energy met veteran composure as these two year levels synchronized their strengths. Their plays were marked by boldness, resilience, and a thunderous presence that often shifted the momentum of the court.

Beyond the games, their unity became a standout element. The seniors mentored the younger members with patience and purpose, while the Grade 7 students brought enthusiasm that reminded the competitive fire of the graduating class. The result was a house that not only fought fiercely, but learned and evolved together.

Quiet but deadly—this best describes the Starks of Grade 8. Their icy grey colors and direwolf sigil represented a steady, disciplined approach to the Games. At first glance, their calm demeanor seemed understated, but their focus and consistency revealed a maturity beyond their years. They excelled in events requiring precision and patience, displaying teamwork that felt instinctive, almost familial. Just like the Starks of the North, they reminded everyone that victory does not always roar; sometimes, it arrives with quiet determination and unshakable loyalty.

These athletes in icy blue played with an awareness that made them difficult to breach. Their quiet strength became their advantage; they conserved their energy wisely, struck when least expected, and proved that discipline is like winter—always comes and hits hard.

### LANNISTER

This year's reigning champions, House Lannister of grade 10, embodied everything their golden lion stands for—strength, strategy, and undeniable dominance. Their gameplay was sharp and tactical, making them one of the most calculated houses in the competition.

Sporting red and yellow, they displayed remarkable coordination and athletic prowess, evident from the way they controlled the ball, the board, or the track with authority. Their victories were not just earned; they were commanded. Their championship win was not only a testament to physical skill, but also to mental discipline. The roar of their triumph echoed throughout the campus, solidifying their legacy as the house to beat—and the house that rose with undeniable confidence to claim the crown.

And like true Lannisters, they were rich in power and numbers—especially in each scoreboard.

### TARGARYEN

True to the fiery spirit of their three-headed dragon emblem, Grade 9 charged into every match with intensity. House Targaryen brought a passion that lit up the court, often overwhelming opponents with unpredictability and sheer force of will. Whether in offense or defense, they moved with blazing confidence. Their performances felt like a battle cry: their battles were hard, but every attempt showed their commitment to proving themselves.

Their style was unapologetically bold, and that boldness became their hallmark. Spectators saw in them the same vigor of dragonlords: old—fearless, persistent, and driven by ambition. Their victories were often hard-earned but explosive, favoring the nature of fire itself: bright, consuming, and impossible to ignore. Even in defeat, their persistence showed a foreshadowing of dominance, as if each setback only fueled their next eruption of strength. When House Targaryen played, each venue felt the heat.

### GREYJOY

Refusing to succumb, Grade 11 embraced the Greyjoy identity with admirable boldness. Their ebony and gold trawler banner symbolized toughness, independence, and the refusal to back down—despite being behind in numbers. House Greyjoy thrived in physically demanding events, bringing grit and fearlessness to every contest. Their style was relentless, sometimes wild, but always daring. They may not soar—but they certainly left a mark. Their presence was a reminder that true strength is forged not in comfort, but in challenge.

House Greyjoy's greatest power came from their resilience. They fought even when the odds tilted against them, showing no hesitation and no fear. These warriors in yellow pushed boundaries, took risks, and embraced challenges with the same ferocity as the ironborn warriors of the sea. They competed not for glory alone, but for pride, honor, and the relentless pursuit of self-mastery: they will rise, conquer, and rise again.

*"When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die. There is no middle ground. Power is Power."*

—Queen Cersei Lannister I, Queen of the Seven Kingdoms

### SCARECROW NO MORE? "Local birds outsmart scarecrows" - BSU farmers

SHAMMAH DOMERIS

Farmers at the Benguet State University Farm (BSU-DF) have noticed a surprising shift in local bird behavior and warn that scarecrows may no longer provide adequate protection for their crops.

Martinez and Maya advised our farmers to resort to more modern techniques such as anti-bird netting. In fact, some are already using it.

egrets are not into this yet- it will be a bigger problem for us. But we have advised our farmers to resort to more modern techniques such as anti-bird netting. In fact, some are already using it.

He added that some utilize fishing lines or strings which are laced across fields at strategic heights to confuse and deter birds from flying into the area. Others use PVC Pipes or Aluminum Screening to form protective structures around plants as a cheaper alternative to nets.

Meanwhile, these observations align with research in Philippine agricultural settings, which shows that many bird species can learn and adapt to traditional scarecrow deterrents, reducing their effectiveness over time. For example, a student developed an autonomous "Eye Scare Birds" system using cameras, motion sensors, predator sounds, and lasers. Researchers found that birds quickly became habituated to static scarecrows, confirming that they can learn patterns and adjust their behavior accordingly.

However, according to Glen Adonay, a BSU-DF farmer, "Nalaino dan tat ta. Jay Matinez ken Maya, han da nga mabuteng jay inkabil mi nga scarecrow. Nu maminsan pay ket naka payok da ijay scarecrow ken tuktukukan da pay isu. Baka nu bumayag ket ikaten mi dagitoyen ta han met kabuteng ti billit isudan." (Matinez and Maya have proven surprisingly clever. Matrinez and Maya aren't afraid of the scarecrow we put up. Sometimes they even perch on it and peck at it. Maybe after a while we'll remove it since they're clearly not scared of it.)

Other studies in Philippine rice fields have documented similar phenomena: birds' presence and feeding habits vary depending on crop growth stages, and they often ignore scarecrows after repeated exposure. These findings provide scientific context to what farmers like Adonay and Ligat are witnessing firsthand.

When asked how to resolve this issue, Mr. Kashmir Ligat, the Project-in-charge of BSU Internal Guarantee System (BIGGS) commented, "We fear this in future, the birds are getting smarter. Birds are no longer afraid of the scarecrow. It is good the



### BSU-SLS researchers turn Tapey By-Product into nutritious cheesecake; bags top prize at Reg'l RISE tilt

JACKSON CABURIAN

Three Grade 12 students from the Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) earned first place at the 2025 Regional Research, Innovation, Scientific Exploration (RISE) competition with a groundbreaking study that transforms a cultural by-product into a functional food innovation on October 21-22.

The winning team—Ylyonah Faith T. De La Cruz, Jared Dwayne A. Decoyna, and Desiree F. Tica-a, guided by their coach Mr. Rostom Niño B. Supsupin—captured the judges' attention with their research "Aywan ti Kultura: Exploring the Potential of Tapey Lees in Cheesecake Fortification."

#### Turning Tradition Into Nutrition

Tapey lees, the often-discarded by-product of tapey (traditional Cordilleran rice wine), became the centerpiece of the students' scientific inquiry. Their study explored whether this culturally significant material could be repurposed into a nutrient-boosting ingredient for cheesecake—a familiar dessert with widespread appeal.

Using an experimental research design, the team collected, processed, and incorporated tapey lees into cheesecake formulations. They conducted proximate nutrient analysis using FNRI methods, followed by sensory evaluation from food development experts and consumer acceptability testing.

#### Promising Findings: More Protein, More Fiber, More Antioxidants

The results were striking. Tapey lees significantly enhanced the cheesecake's nutritional profile, particularly in: Protein content, Dietary fiber and Antioxidant levels.

Moderate incorporation of tapey lees retained the product's desirable taste, texture, and aroma. Higher concentrations, however, produced noticeable flavor and texture changes that affected acceptability. Still, consumer tests showed openness to the innovation—especially when framed around health benefits, sustainability, and cultural identity.

#### A Sustainable and Culturally Rooted Food Innovation

The researchers concluded

that tapey lees can successfully be transformed from waste into a valuable fortifying ingredient. Their findings highlight an exciting opportunity to: 1. Reduce food waste, 2. Promote indigenous cultural heritage, 3. Strengthen community livelihoods, 4. Support sustainable food systems and 5. Create healthier dessert alternatives

They recommended refining the formulation further, exploring scalability, and expanding the use of tapey lees to other food products.

#### From Local Festival to Regional Victory

The team's triumph at the RISE Regionals follows their earlier first-place finish at the Benguet Division Science and Mathematics Festival (BDSMF), which qualified them to represent the province in the competition.

Their innovative blend of science, sustainability, and cultural preservation earned praise from judges and demonstrated the growing potential of young Cordilleran researchers.

## Generation Alpha and Millennial parents: HOW THEY SHAPE A FUTURE OF TECH

Nowadays, it's easy to find a toddler who knows more about scrolling on TikTok than how to sound out different words. When it comes to their parents, picture a mother recording their new recipe beside their kid, who's doing a trendy dance off YouTube.

Taking Gen Z's title of the youngest generation, Gen Alpha is known as the generation that can't live without technology alongside their tolerant Millennial parents. They were raised in an environment with iPads, social media, online classes, and artificial intelligence.

Generation Alpha lies in between the years 2010 and 2024, which makes most of them still kids and young teens today. Gen Z, in contrast, was born between 1997 and 2009; their childhoods were not filled with social media, unlike Gen Alpha, who grew up surrounded by technology.

Millennials pass down more emphasis on self-expression and creativity, something different from the traditional parenting styles of Gen X. To kids now, they parent gently, whether when having open conversations or emotional awareness. Back then, parents scrolled on Facebook or Tumblr; now, it's YouTube and TikTok.

Of course, the COVID-19 lockdown had its effect on Gen A. They learned and socialized online earlier than Gen Z did. With remote learning, most kids experienced school online

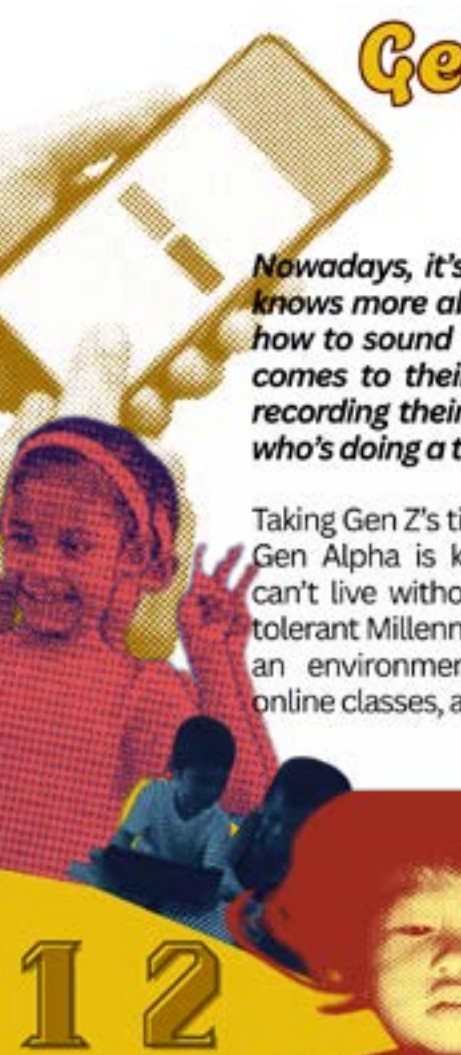
seeing and making friends only through a web camera. Due to social media playing a major part during the pandemic, online games, AI learning, and YouTube Kids influenced Gen A culture.

Alpha kids learn from short-form content, and it usually results in a short attention span, which adds to another problem of screen dependence.

Parents also worry about their children when it comes to online safety; oversharing, scams, and cyberbullying are risks. Putting aside the challenges, Gen A had observable creativity, adaptability, and digital fluency.

The new generation act and think differently from the rest. They change the traditions of previous generations, bringing up a future of a technology-oriented lifestyle.

Lindsay Clarence O. Agtolao





### “Cold weather threatens tilapia production” - BFAR-CAR

SHAMMAH DOMERIS

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Officer in Charge, Mr. Hector De Guzman noted that temperature is an essential factor in the egg production of fish that is why Tilapia produces eggs faster in hot areas. However, in our region the fluctuation of temperature makes it harder and longer for the fish to lay eggs and cold weather can also cause deaths in fingerlings.

“We are grateful for the invention of Mr. Marx Perfecto C. Garcia, the former Officer in Charge of La Trinidad Regional Fish Farm (LTRFF) who modified the old-school method of rearing tilapia giving birth to Modified Intensive Tilapia Hatchery (MITH) that help exceed the demands of people in fish farm”, he added.

The MITH is a type of artificial breeding place for tilapia which employs hatching jars in which eggs are placed until they hatch. Heaters are used to ensure that the water temperature is maintained at 27-28°C and the water used circulates and undergoes a filtration system.

Furthermore, this technology is safe since it has no adverse effect on the environment. However, according to De Guzman, the only problem is that it relies solely on electricity that is why their fish farm uses solar panels to spend less on the electricity

### “Vaping is not a safe alternative to smoking” - University Physician

JACKSON CABURIAN

This was the strong caution of Benguet State University (BSU) Physician Dr. Florence Poltic during National Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Week, as the students of the BSU-Secondary Laboratory School received a deeper look into the science and technology behind vaping hazards during the program “TutuKK ‘911’: The Gateway Effect—How Vape Is a Trap” held on November 14, 2025.

Dr. Poltic notified students about the misconceptions shaped by marketing and social media. “I think there is a false sense of security that it is safer because it is not a cigarette,” she said. She also noted that many vape juices contain even higher nicotine concentrations than traditional tobacco, leading to faster addiction, disrupted sleep patterns, and impaired adolescent brain development—particularly in regions tied to memory, attention, and decision-making.

Her session also examined how modern vape devices—often marketed as cleaner alternatives to cigarettes—use

battery-powered heating systems to aerosolize liquid mixtures containing nicotine, flavoring chemicals, propylene glycol, and other volatile compounds. She explained that although these devices differ technologically from traditional tobacco products, the chemicals they produce can still cause significant biological harm.

“Health experts highlighted scientific findings showing that vape aerosols contain ultrafine particles small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs, where they can trigger inflammation, reduce lung capacity, and heighten the risk of respiratory illnesses. Some liquids also contain heavy metals such as nickel and lead, which leach from the device’s heating coil”, Dr. Poltic added.

Kendrick Wanawan, a faculty member in the Psychology Department on the other hand, addressed the gateway effect, citing studies showing that nicotine exposure alters the brain’s reward circuitry, making teens more vulnerable to experimenting with other

substances. Technology-driven features of vape devices—such as discreet designs, USB-like casings, and flavored pods—were discussed as factors that increase youth appeal and concealment, contributing to early initiation.

Beyond explaining the biological impacts, he also introduced science-backed coping strategies like breathing techniques, physical activity, and mindfulness practices shown to reduce stress hormones and improve emotional regulation. These alternatives were presented as healthier options compared to nicotine use, which artificially stimulates the brain’s dopamine pathways but leads to dependency and withdrawal over time.

Dr. Poltic ended the event by accentuating that by grounding the discussion in scientific research, BSU’s initiative with evidence-based knowledge can better evaluate the risks of vaping in a world where technology often blurs the line between harmless gadgets and harmful health exposures.

### APPS THAT MAKE YOU APT APPS that make your understanding UP

SHAMMAH DOMERIS

Math and science subjects are often regarded as difficult subjects. However, with the application being introduced by the Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS), Science, Math, and ICT teachers, it is hoped that the anxiety of the students over these subjects would be lessened.

Ms. Cheryl Anton, Mr. Jefferson Lumiib, and Mr. Rostom Supsupin introduced basic computer skills and made learning of math and science subjects’ interesting through the use of application software.

Students were taught how to open and shutdown a computer unit, and how to use Microsoft office tools like MS Excel and MS PowerPoint. Headed by Mr. Lumiib, the ICT Coordinator, the students also learned to create files and save their work.

**MATH AND SCIENCE APPS**  
Khan Academy offers instructional videos, practice exercises, and a personalized learning dashboard for math and science. It’s a widely used resource for self-paced learning.

GeoGebra is a dynamic software for math that allows students to visualize and interact with concepts in algebra, geometry, and calculus.

CK-12 is a free app that offers a wide range of math and science resources, including interactive exercises and explanations.

Desmos is an online graphing calculator that is particularly helpful for understanding and teaching functions and data visualization.

Science for Kids (Tappity) provides interactive and engaging content for younger children to learn about various science topics.

**WORRY NO MORE**  
Downloading these apps will let one discover new learnings, from scientific knowledge to mathematical formulas.

As mentioned by Mr. Lumiib in an interview, “We have to make teaching science and math easy for our students. Using these applications is already a big help for many involving my students engaged in learning science and at the same time to be able to discover things on their own.”

Learning science and math can be a tiring and frustrating subject for most of the students. With the use of these applications, students get to be involved in the learning process, making them more interested to attend classes every day. So, what are you waiting for? Get your mobile phone and download these apps now!

### FROM CLASSROOMS TO THE WORLD BSU-SLS students’ research gain global publication

KC CABALLERO

Five groups of Grade 11 researchers from the previous academic year at the Benguet State University – Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) have reached a significant academic milestone with the official publication of their research papers in the *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*.

The published research papers were “Waste Warriors: Challenges Encountered, Coping Mechanisms, and Suggestions for a Safer Working Environment of Garbage Collectors in La Trinidad, Benguet” by Rhiley O. Anaban, Jackson B. Caburian, Kristiania Charmel C. Caballero, Amanda Lorraine P. Domiclong, Ellah Dwayne P. Sinong, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin. Their work highlights the critical yet hazardous work of garbage collectors. The researchers identified persistent issues such as health risks, traffic-related dangers, and poor waste segregation. They also found that collectors rely on LGU support, community cooperation, and personal health practices to cope. The study calls for stricter waste segregation, complete PPE, enhanced safety training, and additional nighttime staff to ensure safer operations.

Another paper, “Calculating the Route: Uncovering the Mathematical Strategies Employed by Buyagan-Baguio Route Jeepney Drivers” by Desiree F. Tica-a, Harry Wen S. Salo, Aian Ericka R. Awingan, Gemaima C. Duglin, Czern Reizell B. Gorio, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin examines the real-world mathematics used by Buyagan-Baguio jeepney drivers. The research reveals that drivers employ practical strategies—such as partial sums, repeated subtraction, and rounding off—to compute fares quickly while multitasking on the road. The study also points to challenges like miscalculations and coin confusion, recommending improved driver training and better fare management systems

The academic struggles of students themselves were also explored in “Research Defended: Challenges Encountered by Benguet State University – Secondary Laboratory School Graduates in Their Research Subjects” by Jared Dwayne A. Decoyna, Fraezel Ann P. Atimama, Haiver Judah E. Bagayao, Regina L. De Mesa, Ember Kate K. Laguitan, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin which investigates the experiences of BSU-Secondary Laboratory School graduates in completing their senior high school research projects. Students reported difficulties ranging from group

conflicts and instructional gaps to time management issues and research-related limitations. Despite these challenges, they used various coping strategies including peer support, stress management, and task-oriented approaches. The authors recommend better research instruction, enhanced teacher training, and improved access to research resources.

“Threads of Resilience: Unravelling the Challenges of Foreign Students Pursuing Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Benguet State University” by Benny Hinn M. Agbalog, Cindy T. Compala, Zerrienne C. Lucio, Aisha Mae B. Bad-ay, Arriane Nicole M. Bugtong, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin on the other hand, reveals challenges such as language barriers, cultural differences, academic pressure, and religious struggles. Nevertheless, students coped through social support, language improvement, and personal resilience. They recommended stronger integration programs and better academic support for future foreign enrollees.

While “The Cost of Saving Lives: A Glimpse into the Pressures and Coping Strategies Among Emergency Healthcare Professionals in La Trinidad, Benguet” by Ylyonah Faith T. De La Cruz, Alyza Subyna A. Licoben, Dwyn A. Dagdagan, Keesha Ryllynne V. Camora, Keino F. Bacasen, Rostom Niño B. Supsupin offers a revealing look into the pressures faced by emergency healthcare professionals in La Trinidad. ER nurses and physicians reported intense physical strain, emotional exhaustion, understaffing, and equipment shortages. While many relied on personal coping methods such as self-care, the study found limited formal support systems within hospitals. The researchers urge healthcare institutions to improve staffing, provide mental health resources, and implement structured support programs for frontline workers.

Originally conducted under the subject Practical Research 1, the students’ studies are now featured in Volume 5, Issues 7 and 8 of the journal. Full texts are accessible through Academia.edu and Zenodo, with direct access links provided in the caption of each published paper.

According to Mr. Rostom Supsupin, their adviser and co-writer, “This achievement highlights the students’ commitment to research excellence and their contribution to relevant social and community issues through academic inquiry.”



### Aeroponics and soilless drip systems boost root crop production

HAIVER BAGAYAO

Farmers in the Cordillera region are set to benefit from innovative aeroponics and soilless drip systems being developed at the Northern Philippine Root Crops Information Agency (PIA), the Research & Training Center (NPRCRC) of Benguet State University.

These modern cultivation methods allow crops like purple yam and potato to grow in nutrient-rich water or air, reducing dependence on traditional soil while minimizing pests and diseases.

“This technology allows us to produce healthier planting materials faster, ultimately improves yield and quality,” said Maria Liza F. Aquino, NPRCRC Research Director. “Farmers can now access resilient

According to the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), the project aims to increase productivity and help local farmers meet market demands. Engr. Roland S. Baclagon, project coordinator, added, “By training farmers in aeroponics and drip systems, we’re empowering them to adopt modern, science-based methods that can be scaled across the region.”

Experts emphasize that controlled-environment farming is especially important as erratic weather and soil challenges threaten traditional agriculture. With these innovations, La Trinidad is positioning itself as a hub for sustainable, climate-resilient root crop production.

### New groundwater recharge facility strengthens water security in LT

DESIREE TICA-A

In a major step toward climate-resilient water management, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) inaugurated an Artificial Groundwater Recharge Facility (AGRF) in the Strawberry Farm area of Betag, La Trinidad. The facility filters rainwater and injects it into deep wells, effectively recharging groundwater rather than drawing it down. Minda S. Odsey, Center Head of DENR-ERDB-WWRDEC, highlighted that the project marks the beginning of inter-agency collaboration to address climate-related challenges.

The AGRF can store up to 44,000 liters of water and features real-time, cloud-based monitoring, allowing officials to track water levels and quality continuously. This system ensures that rainwater collected during heavy rainfall can be efficiently managed and replenished into aquifers, helping mitigate drought and prevent flooding.

Local farmers and residents have welcomed the facility, noting that a stable water supply is crucial for strawberry and vegetable cultivation, as well as household use. Officials also view the AGRF as a model for other Cordillera communities facing water scarcity and extreme weather events. By combining modern technology with practical climate adaptation strategies, La Trinidad is taking a significant step toward sustainable and resilient water management, ensuring the town are better prepared for future environmental challenges.

### VERMICULTURE: Nature's Way of Recycling

✍️ KC CABALLERO

As the awareness on health benefits of organic produce rises, the demand on organic fertilizer also increases. This is the reason why the farmers of Benguet State University Demonstration Farm (BSU-DF) still practice vermiculture to produce vermicast as an excellent organic fertilizer and soil conditioner for gardening and farming.

According to Mr. Kashmir Ligat, the Project-in-charge of BSU Internal Guarantee System (BIGGS), vermiculture is the process of raising or breeding worms like the African Nightcrawlers (ANC).

"Dito sa BSU-DF, ginagamit natin ang ANC, isang uri ng bulate na may kakayahang magparami sa vermbed sa tulong ng tamang substrate o soil mature at tubig. Kinakain nit oang mga organic materials at ang dumi nito ay nagiging vermicompost, o pataba sa ating mga alagang gulay," explained Ligat.

**AFRICAN NIGHTCRAWLERS, NOT JUST AN ORDINARY WORM**

Ligat mentioned that African Nightcrawlers (Eudrilus eugeniae), used in vermiculture usually have grey and purple color and may reach eight inches. They feed on almost anything biodegradable like kitchen, agriculture, and wet market wastes without burrowing on the soil. They can also eat up to 100% of their body weight and excrete the same amount per day.

#### VERMIBED PREPARATION

He also explained that in making vermicompost at Eco Park, vermibed should be prepared fast. Seventy five percent of chopped banana stalk and 25% cow manure are moved in the vermibed. After a month, the ANC may be released on the bed. The bed should be watered regularly to maintain the 60% moisture content of the bed. Vermibed may also be used to cover the bed to protect from predators like birds, ants, and other pests.

"After 30-45 days, maaari na po ilipat ang mga bulate sa panibagong bed at mayroon na tayong casting o dumi ng bulate na

magsisilbing pataba sa ating mga halaman o gulay," Ligat added.

#### HARVESTING AND APPLICATION ON PLANTS

According to Ligat, application of this organic fertilizer is the same with the commercial fertilizer. "Maigi lang dito bukod sa mura at eco friendly ay hindi nakasusunog ng gulay kung hindi tulad ng commercial fertilizer," he mentioned.

#### BENEFITS OF VERMICOMPOST

Aside from BSU-DF, strawberry farmers of La Trinidad also uses vermicompost to have safe and environment-friendly produce and enrich the soil quality of the farm. Roger Langpaoen, a farmer in La Trinidad Strawberry Farm noted, "We practice vermiculture to avoid any chemical (commercial) fertilizer because chemicals may cause cancer according to studies."

Furthermore Clemente Dogyang, a BSU farmer said that he uses organic fertilizer

like vermicompost to promote soil quality, ensure safety of her vegetables and at the same time promote organic farming in BSU.

#### THE LEGACY

BSUs practice of vermiculture spread around town. One of which is in Barangay Basil in Tublay where income from selling vermiculture has helped the barangay sustain its production, providing farmers with a steady supply of organic fertilizer. This has reduced farm expenses and minimized reliance on chemical inputs, contributing to safer and more sustainable agricultural practices.

The practice has also expanded to local farmers and groups even reaching as far as Butuan City.

Up to now, BSU has long served as a hub for vermiculture research and extension in the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines, with its Parents and the Barangay LGU actively support the initiative by gathering local farmers and communities.



LGU has lent the school a shredder to help speed up the composting process.

#### THE BEGINNING

Studies on vermiculture and the advocacy of its practice began in BSU in the 1990s by Dr. Rogelio D. Colting. In the 2000s, Prof. Alex Fagyan and the late Dr. Jose Balaing studied the use of indigenous highland earthworms and the African night crawler in vermiculture. The duo advocated vermiculture through various trainings for farmers and groups even reaching as far as Butuan City.

Up to now, BSU has long served as a hub for vermiculture research and extension in the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines, with its Parents and the Barangay LGU actively support the initiative by gathering local farmers and communities.

### BSU-SLS INTRAMS 2025-2026

## Red Lannisters Sit on the Iron Throne

✍️ STACEY BALLI

The Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) blazed with excitement as the Intramurals 2025-2026 unfolded from October 28 to 30 and concluded on November 3, inspired by the Great Houses of the "Game of Thrones". Much like the fierce battles for power in Westeros, five great houses—each representing a grade level—faced off in games of strength, skill, and strategy to claim the Iron Throne.

In the end, the Red Lannisters, composed of Grade 10 students, emerged victorious and sat on the Iron Throne with a commanding 688 points. True to their house's reputation for pride, intelligence, and power, the Lannisters proved that "Lannisters always pay their debts," showcasing teamwork and dominance across multiple sports events.

Right on their heels were the Black Targaryens from Grade 9, finishing as first runner-up with 578 points. With the Targaryen spirit of "Fire and Blood," they fought fiercely until the end, their performance as fiery as Daenerys' dragons. Close behind were the Yellow Greyjoys of Grade 11, who placed second runner-up with 572 points, just six points short of the Targaryens and only three points ahead of the Baratheons. Like their Game of Thrones counterparts—hardy and unyielding seafarers who proclaim "We Do Not Sow"—the Greyjoys showed grit and endurance throughout the competition.

Meanwhile, the Green Baratheons, a joint team of Grades 7 and 12, secured third runner-up with 369 points. This result broke the long-standing impression that Grade 12 always claims the top spot and Grade 7 always lands last, proving that in this year's games, strength and teamwork—true to the Baratheon motto "Ours is the Fury"—can overturn even the strongest traditions. Finally, the Blue Starks of Grade 8 rounded out the rankings as fourth runner-up with 351 points, showing resilience worthy of their family creed, "Winter is Coming."

Each house didn't just compete—they embodied the very spirit of their Game of Thrones counterparts: the Lannisters' cunning and power, the Targaryens' fiery ambition, the Greyjoys' perseverance, the Baratheons' strength, and the Starks' loyalty and endurance. Famous figures like Tywin Lannister, Daenerys Targaryen, Eddard Stark, Robert Baratheon, and Theon Greyjoy seemed to come alive in the students' determination to win for their houses.

As the final scores were tallied and the banners raised high, cheers echoed through BSU-SLS. The 2025-2026 Intramurals proved to be a true "Game of Sports," where every house fought with pride and passion—but in the end, the Red Lannisters reigned supreme and proudly sat on the Iron Throne, claiming their place as the champions.

### SLS INTRAMURALS 2025 RESULTS



### GAP techniques improve Chrysanthemum production

✍️ DESIREE TICA-A

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of La Trinidad, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), and local flower growers are adopting Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to enhance chrysanthemum (spray-type) production.

The project applies GAP to help farmers increase flower quality and yield, while promoting environmentally sustainable practices. A GAP Learning Center in Bineng, La Trinidad is being upgraded to demonstrate these modern cultivation techniques and provide hands-on training for local growers.

This project empowers growers by showing them how modern, science-based techniques can improve both

the quality and quantity of chrysanthemums," said Engr. Jose Luis M. Rivera, project coordinator.

Ms. Lorna B. Cayabyab, ATI training officer, added, "The GAP Learning Center will serve as a hub for hands-on training, enabling farmers to learn, experiment, and apply best practices directly to their farms."

Local flower growers welcomed the initiative, noting that it helps them meet market demand, reduce losses, and farm sustainably. The project demonstrates how science and technology, combined with GAP, can make flower production more productive, profitable, and climate-resilient in La Trinidad.



### Science Alert: Soil Erosion Threatens Communities in Itogon, Benguet

✍️ HAIVER BAGAYAO

In June 2025, two major soil erosion events struck Sitio Acupan, Barangay Virac, Itogon, displacing 44 families and damaging 18 homes. While the immediate focus has been relief and recovery, scientists warn that these incidents are part of a broader environmental challenge in the Cordillera region.

Soil erosion occurs when topsoil is displaced by water or wind, weakening slopes and increasing the risk of landslides. In Itogon, continuous heavy rainfall—intensified by Tropical Storm Crising, Tropical Storm Emong, and the enhanced southwest monsoon—saturated the soil, triggering collapse in several high-risk areas.

Experts from the Department of Science and Technology—Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA) note that the Cordillera region's mountainous terrain makes it particularly susceptible to hydrological erosion and slope instability, especially after successive storm events. Climate models predict that such events could become more frequent and intense due

to global climate change, with heavier rainfall and more extreme weather.

Beyond displacement and property damage, soil erosion can cause long-term environmental impacts. Exposed land loses nutrients, reducing agricultural productivity, while sediment runoff can clog rivers and damage aquatic ecosystems. In Itogon, erosion-prone areas are also close to mining sites, which can exacerbate soil destabilization.

In response, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) coordinated relief efforts, providing cash assistance and prepositioned family food packs to affected households. Local governments are also assessing slope stability and reinforcing early-warning systems to prevent future disasters.

Scientists emphasize that soil conservation and sustainable land management are essential to reduce the risk of erosion. Techniques such as vegetative cover, terracing, and proper drainage systems can help protect vulnerable communities.

"Frequent storms and heavy rainfall combined with steep slopes create a perfect storm for soil erosion," said a DOST environmental scientist. "Communities need both emergency preparedness and long-term mitigation strategies to survive in a changing climate."

### Queens Gambit of Glory

## Sadcat clinches chess crown via Textbook Queen-Rook combination

✍️ Myriqqe Malucay

House of Greyjoys woodpusher Kimble Sadcat secured the chess championship on October 28 with a precise and disciplined victory over Vince Laruan of the House of Stark finishing the match with a classic queen-rook checkmating pattern that capped off a tightly contested game.

Laruan opened with an aggressive central advance, aiming to control the tempo early. Sadcat responded with solid development, maintaining a compact structure while preparing for a counterattack. Midgame, both players entered a tense tactical battle as pieces traded off and the board thinned, leaving each competitor searching for initiative.

The turning point came when Luruan gained tempo with a well-timed rook lift, placing

pressure on Jim's kingside. Sensing an opportunity, Sadcat coordinated his major pieces, activating his queen along the seventh rank and positioning his rook to cut off the opposing king's escape squares.

Laruan attempted to consolidate his position, but Sadcat's piece activity proved decisive. After forcing Laruan's king onto the back rank, Sdacad executed a clean mating net: the rook sealed the file, and the queen delivered the final blow.

What began as a quiet, methodical duel quickly transformed into a tense tactical spectacle, proving once again why chess is as much a sport of nerve as it is of intellect.

After the match, Sadcat congratulated his opponent for a tough game. "He is good, but I am better. Maybe it's just my day," he jokingly commented.



## SLS Cagers bow to mentors in basketball exhibition game

✍️ Emriel Likigan

It is not only inside the classroom that teachers impart knowledge and skills to students, this time the faculty members showcased their skills in the basketball court!

The SLS basketball men players faced the seven teachers of BSU-SLS in the well-attended crowd of the BSU covered court for the second basketball exhibition game on October 28.

Notwithstanding their ages and the crowd pressure, the faculty players led by the fastbreak points of Martes Dionisio and points in the paint by Mark Galian managed to keep the 1st quarter and 2nd quarter. scores on their favor, 25-20 and 35-28 respectively. However, on the 3rd quarter, momentum shifted as the SLS aces, Christian Sanchez and John Rimando unleashed unanswered three-points that gave the students favor, 48-46. Although the final quarter started in favor of the students, the lead suddenly drifted to the faculty when the varsity team was not able to check the 8 straight fast breaks point of Martes Dionisio. Since then, the lead never favored the student's quicker and younger team and was only limited to shed only 10 points for the final quarter that ended the game with a score of 59-48.

### Greyjoy strike out defending champs

Desiree Tica-a

The blazing Grade 10 Lannister astound the defending Grade 11 Greyjoy during their Baseball championship match on October 29 at the Benguet State University (BSU) oval.

During the first inning of the game, the Lannister belligerently scored against the defending champions ending the first inning with a score of 7-0.

In the second inning, the Greyjoy managed to steal four homes courtesy of Charles Palangyo, Jes Guinandan, Micahel Acosta, and Anthione Bokilis.

Having scored in the second inning, the Greyjoy's hope was kindled. However, Lannister's pitcher, Andrew Tupeng gave fast ball pitches

to make sure that their senior opponent would not win against them.

Even if the Greyjoy had the advantage of being the last batters, they only scored 3 homes ending the third inning with a score of 9-7.

"I feel sad because we lost but happy at the same time because I saw that the players who will be replacing us when we graduate have great potentials in playing," Chanrie Yodong, the Blue Vikings' captain said.

During the interview, Spartans' team captain, Charles Palangyo, replied, "We feel very happy because our effort paid off and it feels nice that the seniors did not have any bad feelings towards us."



### Lannisters volleybelles rip Targaryens

Trisha Butangen

The grade 10 Lannisters spikers reigned over the grade 11 Targaryens as they were able to shake off the intimidation and finished the long and tiring 3 sets match on October 28 at the B.S.U. open court.

Both teams were even and were able to redeem the points they have given making the first set of the match a tough one. However, the grade 11 through Bresie Kefa's perfect placing was able to close the extended set, 27-25.

On the second set, the Targaryens became complacent on their momentum giving a leeway for

their opponent to set their strategies into actions. Lannister's ace Dastine Morales scored 3 straight spikes making the grade 11 unable to refute, thus the giving the grade 10 the second set at 25-17.

The shaken grade 11 tried to turn the table on the final set but the grade 10 kept their momentum.. However, the grade 10 showed a stronger will to win enabling them to close the extended set at 27-25 through Morales' set of spikes and digs without a room for error.

With a 2-1 set win against grade 11, the grade 10 was able to move up in the team standings of the on-going Intramurals of Secondary Laboratory School (SLS).



### Cachero pins down Apolog in wrestling final match

STACEY BALLI

Denmar Cachero of the House of Lannisters dominated over Jazer Apolog of the Greyjoys on one of the most hyped-up combative sports events in the SLS Intramurals, Wrestling on October 29 at the BSU Covered Court.

The match opened with Apolog signaling for a ground engagement, inviting Cachero to take the fight to the mat. Cachero accepted the challenge and immediately worked to control the position as both wrestlers fought for early dominance.

As the bout progressed, both wrestlers exchanged attempts at takedowns and counters, staying low and battling for hand control. Apolog tried to circle out and create space, but Cachero consistently cut off his angles and pressured forward. Their exchange featured several quick shifts in position as each tried to break the other's balance, with Cachero eventually using a well-timed transition to gain the advantage.

The bout featured a brief but intense scramble, with each athlete attempting to secure leverage and score the first points. After the exchange, Cachero gained the upper hand, executing a clean maneuver that allowed him to bring Apolog to the mat.

With control established, Cachero followed through and secured the pin, earning the win. On the other hand Apolog stated that "I believe I only won because of my weight advantage since I noticed that he was defending better than I expected, and out of all my bouts, he was the most arduous opponent I fought, but overall, it was a well-fought match."

### SLS lady kickers claim inaugural BPAM Women's Football crown with back-to-back clinical performances

EMRIEL LIKIGAN

The Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) women's football squad stamped its class in its debut appearance at the Benguet Provincial Athletic Meet 2025, sweeping and leaving La Trinidad scoreless in a best-of-three showdown to capture the first-ever BPAM Women's Football Championship.

With only BSU-SLS and La Trinidad competing for the newly introduced title and each match running 30 minutes per half, the Lady Strikers delivered when it mattered most—showcasing composure, ball control, and decisive finishing under shifting game conditions.

Under the blistering midday heat of Game 1, BSU dictated the tempo early. The breakthrough came at the 15:30 mark, when Avery Kefa slotted home a clean finish off a perfectly timed assist from Trisha Butangen. BSU-SLS kept its backline disciplined, securing the opening win and gaining momentum heading into the next outing.

The intensity rose in Game 2, with a noisy and energized crowd adding pressure to both teams. BSU-SLS stayed composed, and at the 55th minute, Zyfer Balacwid unleashed a strong, well-placed strike that found the back of the net—clinching the series sweep and sealing the championship.

Head coach Martes Dionisio praised the team's grit and execution, saying, "I am proud of my players. They worked hard. It feels good to be the champion of this newly added game in BPAM."

With two composed, clinical performances, BSU-SLS proudly lifts the inaugural BPAM Women's Football title—setting the standard for the event's future and marking a dominant debut on the provincial stage.



### SLS lady duo smashers clinch championship in thrilling U16 LBT

MYRIQUE MALUCAY

The BSU-SLS smashes, putting badminton team constant pressure on made a strong their opponents. statement at the 5th Laruan Badminton Tournament (LBT) made strong held on November 29, 2025, at the La Trinidad Municipal Gym, as Zoe Tabdi and Felle Laruan captured the Under-16 Girls Doubles Championship.

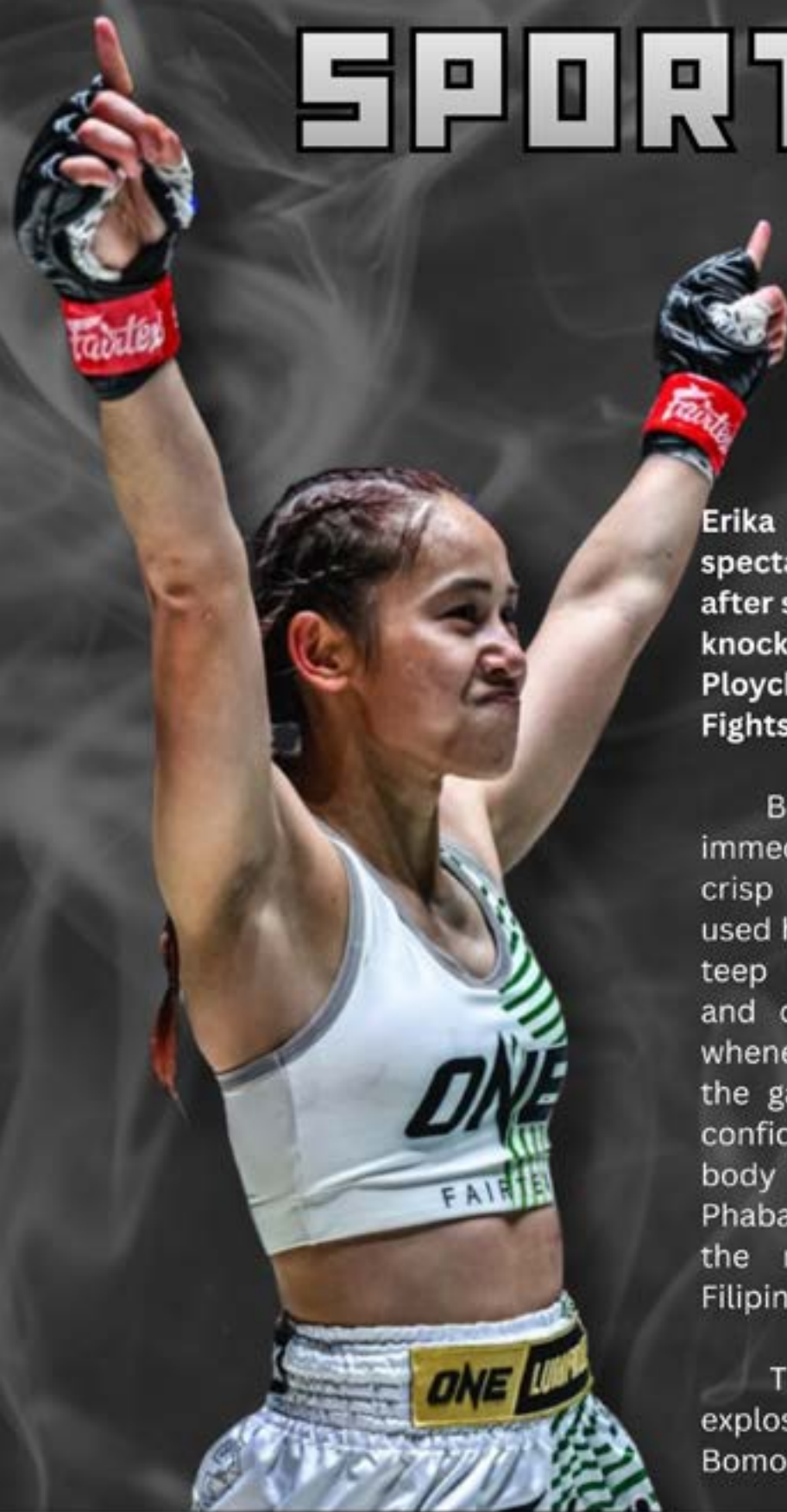
Competing in a bracket of four pairs, the BSU-SLS duo showed impressive synergy and skill, sweeping the finals against a team from private schools with consistent scores of 21-19, 21-19, 21-19 across three sets.

Zoe Tabdi dominated the first and third sets with powerful jump

Meanwhile, the rival team's Regina Cruz made strong counterattacks in sets one and three, keeping the match competitive. The turning point came in the final set when Felle Laruan executed a precise quick net drop, shifting momentum and securing the victory for BSU-SLS.

After the match, both players praised their opponents and emphasized teamwork. "Hats off to our opponents—they are tough to beat. I guess our teamwork did well even if this is the first time we played together," they said.





## Islay slays Thai striker in ONE Friday Fights 134, extends unbeaten record

**DHENS ROSE PEDRO**

Filipina Muay Thai standout Islay Erika Bomogao added another spectacular finish to her growing legacy after scoring a devastating second-round knockout victory over Thai striker Ploychompoo PU Phabai at ONE Friday Fights 134 on November 21, 2025.

Bomogao came out sharp in Round 1, immediately asserting control with her crisp boxing and fluid movement. She used her jab to dictate distance, mixed in teep kicks to disrupt Phabai's rhythm, and connected with stinging counters whenever the Thai fighter tried to close the gap. Late in the round, Bomogao's confidence grew as she landed clean body shots and low kicks that slowed Phabai's forward pressure. By the horn, the momentum was firmly on the Filipina's side.

That dominant opening set up the explosive finish in Round 2, where Bomogao unleashed a perfectly

timed combination that sent Phabai crashing to the canvas—securing the knockout and improving her flawless record 4-0.

Bomogao has been on a remarkable run throughout 2025. Earlier in the year, she went viral at ONE Friday Fights 111 with a one-minute, five-second knockout of Spain's Nerea Rubio—set up by a crushing body shot and a finishing head kick—her third straight win after decision victories over Fuu and Ran Longshu. That explosive finish showcased her power, while her latest demolition of Phabai proved her growing consistency.

The Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) alumni also received a 350,000 THB performance bonus—amounting to over 630,000 PHP—a testament to the dominance she displayed inside the ring. Grateful for the reward, she shared, "I will put it to good use."



### GLORY IN FULL MOTION

## Lobbonan claims gold in Poomsae BPNC '25

**HAIVER BAGAYAO**

Palarong Pambansa silver medalist Trisha Lobbonan bagged the gold medal in the Women's team and individual Poomsae categories during the 2025 Batang Pinoy Championship held in General Santos City on October 27, 2025.

After many days of intense training and dedicated hard-work, the Benguet State University-Secondary Laboratory School (BSU-SLS) Grade 8 student showcased her outstanding performance feeding on her strong and focused mindset.

Facing a field of highly competitive athletes, Lobbonan delivered powerful and consistent performances all the way to the finals. She ultimately won by demonstrating choreographed Taekwondo forms consisting of a series of defense and attack techniques performed in a precise and set sequence. Her execution displayed remarkable accuracy and control, earning her the judges' nod and securing her well-deserved victory.

Meanwhile the 3rd Dan Blackbelt in Taekwondo will be striving for a better performance and a higher achievement in the upcoming Benguet Provincial Athletic Meet on December 1-5.

"Winning gold medal at the Batang Pinoy Championship is a proud and unforgettable moment. I'm grateful to compete with such talented athletes who inspire me to do my best," Lobbonan noted after the game.

## SLS arnisadors shine in 4th BMAF

**YOHAN BOLCIO**

BSU-SLS Arnis athletes showcased an amazing display of talent and skill during the recently concluded 4th Benguet Martial Arts Festival themed "Different Disciples, One Objective" on September 13-14 at the Benguet Sports Complex, Wangal La Trinidad.

Junior High School students, Louriz Daniel Arzadon, Zanzi Kai Wakat, Chris Robertson Bengwasan Jr. proudly brought home 2 bronze and 2 silver medals respectively.

Although Arzadon started strong with aggressiveness and powerful strikes, her opponent outclassed her with defensive skills and counter strikes that

dropped her to silver place. The same thing happened to Roger Bengwasan Jr. After starting strong with head and hand strikes, his much experienced opponent utilized a good and precise timed counter attack that wearied Bengwasan.

In addition, Jayvee B. Boyon reached the quarter finals while Thywill B. Bumaca and Chrysonyx C Lasao-na reached the finals of the said event.

After the activity, BSU-SLS Arnis Coach Ms. Merisa D. Palsaan proudly commented, "As their coach, I am very proud of my children as I saw how much they improved. I hope this will inspire others to join the Arnis Team as well."