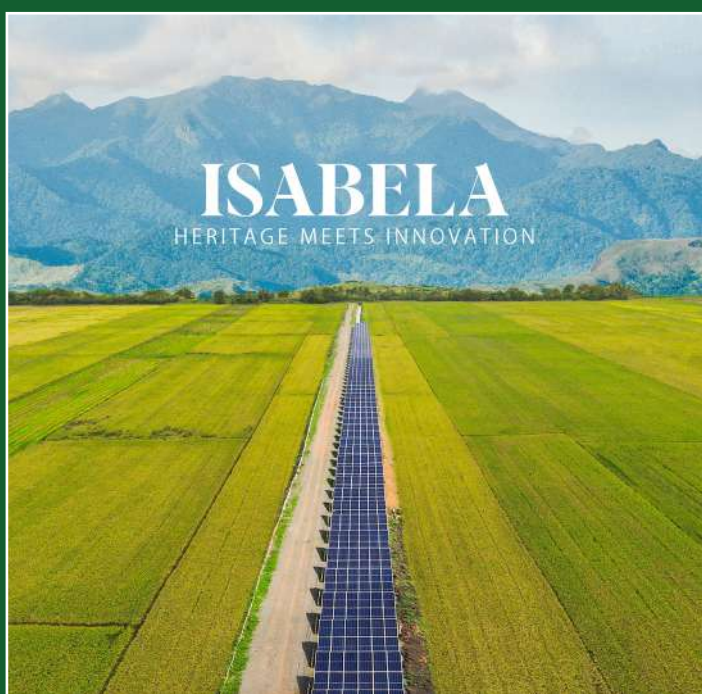


An aerial photograph showing a long, straight row of solar panels installed in a lush green valley. The panels are arranged in a grid pattern and run parallel to a dirt road. The surrounding landscape is a patchwork of vibrant green agricultural fields. In the background, a range of rugged, forested mountains stretches across the horizon under a blue sky with light, wispy clouds.

ISABELA

HERITAGE MEETS INNOVATION





ABOUT THE COVER

The cover of *Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation* highlights the province's seamless blend of tradition and progress. Framed by the Northern Sierra Madre Mountain Range, it portrays the vast golden rice fields that have sustained Isabela's people for generations.

The fields, a testament to the province's agricultural heritage, are complemented by rows of solar panels that symbolize Isabela's forward-thinking approach to sustainability and renewable energy. This cover encapsulates Isabela as more than a province rooted in its past—it's a place where history fuels the future.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation is a visually captivating coffee table book that thoughtfully combines the province's rich cultural history with its drive for progress.

As the second-largest province in the Philippines, Isabela is brought to life through evocative photography and engaging narratives that celebrate its stunning landscapes, vibrant communities, and innovative strides. The book is a tribute to the province's exceptional governance and steadfast commitment to sustainable growth.

With an introductory message from Governor Rodito T. Albano III, the book sets the tone for a province that looks ahead while remaining deeply connected to its roots. Governor Albano highlights Isabela's focus on sustainability, featuring its pioneering programs in agriculture, disaster preparedness, and renewable energy—efforts that have established Isabela as a leader in sustainable development.

The book is organized into five distinct chapters, each offering a deeper look into Isabela's unique identity:

Chapter I: Isabela in a Nutshell – An overview of the province's history, geography, and physical attributes, revealing how these have shaped its culture and people.

Chapter II: The Soul of Isabela – A deep dive into the province's cultural core, exploring festivals, gastronomy, local products, religious landmarks, and the spirited lives of its people.

Chapter III: Isabela's Breath – A showcase of the province's stunning natural beauty, including beaches, caves, rivers, and parks, as well as its pledge to preserve biodiversity.

Chapter IV: The Heartbeat of Isabela – A focus on Isabela as an agricultural province, featuring rice, corn, high-value crops, livestock, fisheries, and dairy, along with its ventures in renewable energy and economic investments.

Chapter V: Excellence in Governance – A highlight of Isabela's innovative governance initiatives, including sustainable agriculture, disaster resilience, and the iconic "1 Million Trees/Bamboos in One Day" project.

Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation captures the spirit of a province that respects its past while boldly embracing the future. With its striking visuals and thoughtful commentary, the book is a tribute to Isabela's enduring legacy and a source of pride for all who call the province home.

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE GOVERNOR

Thank you for picking up this book and taking the time to explore its pages. Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation is not just a collection of stories and images, but an invitation to experience the heart of our beloved province. Within these pages, you'll witness how nature, culture, and progress come together to shape Isabela into what it is today.

This book tells the story of our transformation—a journey rooted in tradition, fortified by the unity of our people, and driven by a shared passion to elevate our province. It highlights Isabela's vibrant festivals, rich culinary heritage, abundant harvests, and the forward-thinking leadership that has positioned us as a leader in renewable energy and sustainable development.

Each page reflects Isabela's commitment to progress, embodied in sustainable practices, thriving industries, and inclusive governance.

From the tales of Isabela's resilience and perseverance, to the showcase of its heritage and tourist attractions, and the development of key industries, Isabela's story is truly remarkable. These stories and images reveal the beauty of our land and the enduring spirit of our people—steadfast, resourceful, and united in the pursuit of shared prosperity.

I hope Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation deepens your appreciation for how we balance rich traditions with bold innovation. This balance defines us—a province that treasures its past while embracing the future.

May it inspire you and leave you with a reminder of the strength, unity, and potential that define our province.



FAUSTINO G. DY III
Governor

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

It is with immense pride and excitement that I present *Isabela: Heritage Meets Innovation*, a stunning chronicle of our province's remarkable journey. Beyond being a tribute to our beloved province, this book is a celebration of Isabela's indomitable spirit, unyielding resilience, and limitless potential. Through these pages, you are invited to explore how our deep-rooted heritage harmonizes with groundbreaking innovation, leading us toward a future brimming with promise.

Isabela has long stood at the intersection of culture and progress. As the second-largest province in the Philippines, our rich cultural heritage is woven into the fabric of our daily lives, even as we embrace cutting-edge advancements. This coffee table book beautifully captures the very essence of Isabela—a place where the past and future converge to create a lasting legacy of sustainable growth and innovation.

Through the stunning visuals and thoughtfully crafted narratives within these pages, you will discover the true heart of Isabela: our landscapes, vibrant communities, and pioneering initiatives. Our province's programs in agriculture, renewable energy, disaster preparedness, and economic development are a testament to our constant commitment to sustainability, resilience, and excellence.

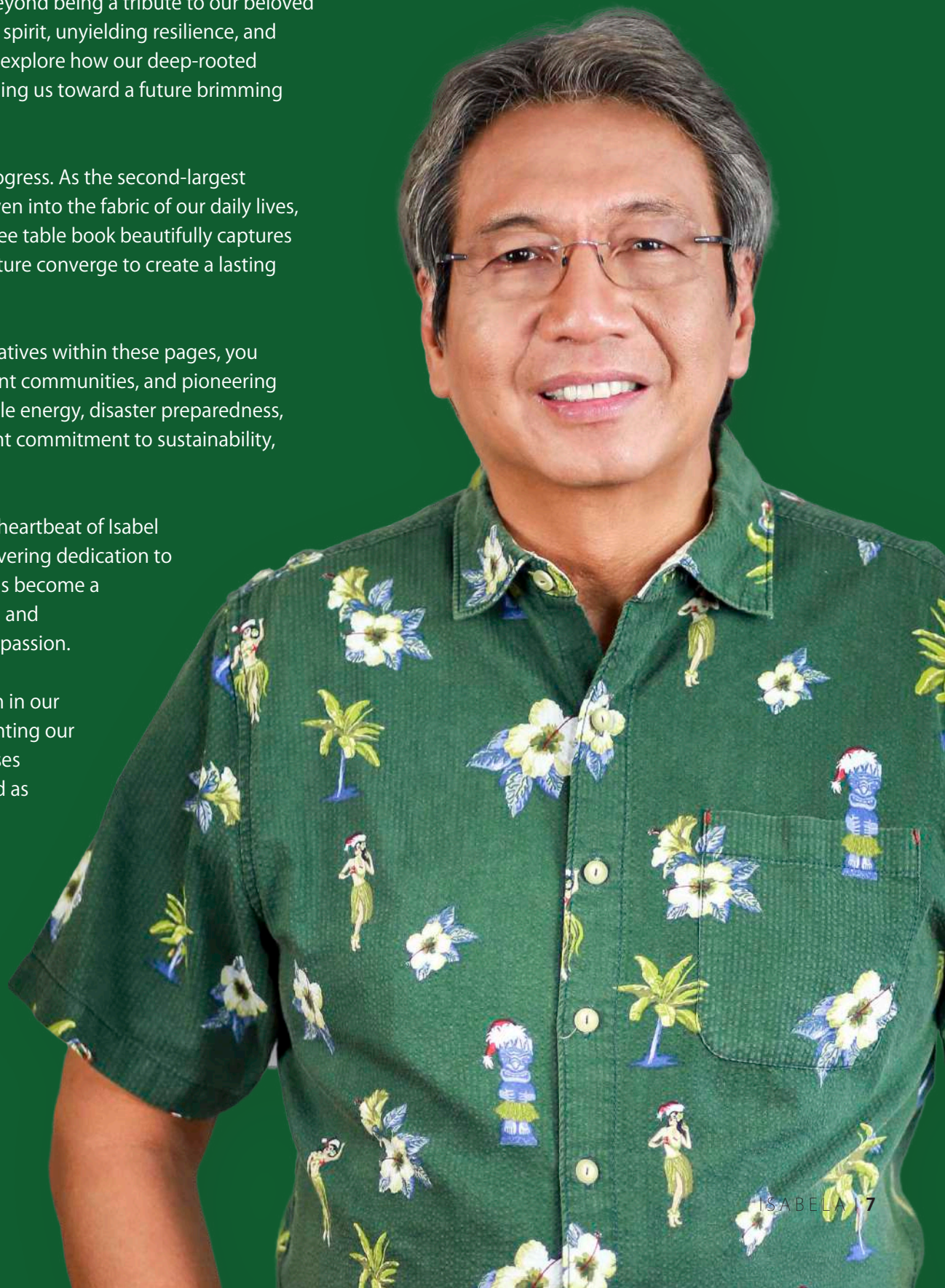
Yet, our strength transcends these achievements. The true heartbeat of Isabela lies in its people—our creativity, determination, and unwavering dedication to progress. It is through their collective efforts that Isabela has become a shining example of hope and progress, inspiring the nation and embodying a vision of leadership rooted in action and compassion.

As you turn the pages of this book, may you find inspiration in our province's rich heritage and transformative innovations lighting our path forward. This book is both a celebration of our successes and a powerful reminder of the bright future that lies ahead as we continue to build on our shared legacy.

Thank you for being part of this extraordinary journey. Together, let us strive for even greater heights, ensuring that Isabela remains a model of sustainable development and progress for generations to come.

Mabuhay ang Isabela!

RODOLFO T. ALBANO III
Governor



CHAPTER I

Isabela in a nutshell



■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Isabela's history stretches back over 25,000 years, beginning with the Agtas, the ancestors of the Dumagats, who settled in the region during the Pleistocene Epoch, commonly known as the Ice Age. These indigenous groups, known for their deep connection to the land, continue to inhabit the mountainous forests of eastern Isabela and its coastal areas today. Later, between 200 BC and 1500 AD, waves of Indonesian and Malay migrants arrived, whose descendants—including the Ibanag, Gaddang, and Yogad—formed communities primarily centered around corn agriculture.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish colonization brought Christianity, the *encomienda* system, and the tobacco monopoly to Isabela. Spanish rule, marked by oppression, sparked revolts led by local chieftains like Dabo and Marayag. In 1856, Isabela de Luzon was officially established, named after

Queen Isabella II of Spain. The province originally consisted of towns from the larger Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya provinces, created to aid in the conversion of the local population to Catholicism.

In the late 19th century, migration surged, particularly from the Ilocanos and other ethnolinguistic groups, earning Isabela the nickname "Melting Pot of the North." During the Philippine-American War, the coastal town of Palanan gained historical significance when General Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Philippines, was captured by U.S. forces in 1901. This event marked a pivotal moment in the conflict and the beginning of American colonial rule.

Under American governance, Isabela's political system changed, but its economy remained largely agricultural. The province endured Japanese

occupation during World War II from 1942 until its liberation in 1945. Following the war, the Philippines gained independence in 1946, and despite the challenges during those turbulent times, Isabela continued to thrive and develop.

From the late 20th century to the present, Isabela has emerged as a leading province in the Philippines. Santiago achieved independent city status in 1994, followed by Cauayan in 2001 and Ilagan in 2012. Today, Isabela's rich cultural heritage and dynamic progress make it a key player in the region.

■ GEOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE

Located in the Cagayan Valley Region of the Philippines, Isabela occupies the northeastern section of Luzon and ranks as the second-largest province in the country, covering an expansive area of 10,664.56 square kilometers (1,066,456 hectares).

The province is organized into 34 municipalities and 3 cities, with the City of Ilagan serving as its capital. It is further divided into 6 legislative districts and includes a total of 1,055 barangays.

Isabela is divided into three physiographic areas:

Eastern Isabela is rugged and densely forested. The massive Sierra Madre Mountain Range extends the entire length of the province from north to south. This region features a vast natural park that is home to a variety of wildlife and is known for its high-quality timber.

Western Isabela is a vast, fertile valley bordered by the Sierra Madre to the east and the Cordillera Central to the west. This flat, rolling terrain is interspersed with smaller valleys and plains, carved by the Cagayan River—the longest river in the Philippines, extending 301 kilometers.

Coastal Isabela, generally flat to gently rolling, this area is distinguished by its 113-kilometer shoreline facing the Pacific Ocean. This area includes the province's expansive fishing grounds, beautiful bays, caves, small islands, and white sand beaches.

Isabela's varied landscapes offer a wealth of opportunities for tourism and investment, from eco-tourism in the mountainous east to agricultural ventures in the fertile west, and coastal development along its picturesque shores.





CHAPTER II

The Soul of Isabela



■ PEOPLE

Isabela is home to 1,697,050 people. Based on the 2020 census, it enjoys a healthy growth rate of 1.33%, reflecting a vibrant and evolving population.

Ilocano is the common language understood and used throughout the province. The influx of Ilocanos into Isabela has made them the predominant group in the province's resident population. Ibanags constitute the second-largest ethnolinguistic group and are concentrated in the municipalities of Cabagan, Tumauni, and City of Ilagan.

Gaddangs and Yogads are scattered among the western and central lowlands, while Agtas and various other Negrito groups reside in the Sierra Madre Mountains.





Churches



OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR CHURCH

This exquisitely designed Hispanic church, dedicated to Nuestra Señora del Pilar, is renowned for its well-preserved ruins and historical significance. Established by Dominican missionaries, it became a full-fledged parish in 1741.

The church, located in Cauayan City, is noted for its imposing Baroque architecture and breathtaking interiors. A highlight is the majestic fresco above the altar, depicting "The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary," which beautifully captures the church's grandeur and spiritual essence.

SAN PABLO CHURCH

San Pablo Church, built in 1624, is the oldest church in Isabela and a historical landmark in the province. It is best known for its impressive six-level bell tower, which stands as the tallest in the Cagayan Valley. The bell tower, or campanario, is constructed from adobe blocks and features a distinctive circular apex. San Pablo itself—founded by Padre de Sto. Tomas—is Isabela's oldest town, established 210 years before the province was officially created.



SAINT MATTHIAS PARISH CHURCH

Saint Matthias Parish Church is an ultra-Baroque church renowned for its extensive use of bricks in both its exterior and interior ornamentation, a choice made due to the lack of good-quality stones in the area. A closer look at the brick façade reveals numbers and dates, marking the correct sequence of bricks in Forto's design.

Attached to the church's façade is a unique cylindrical belfry, built in 1805 during the colonial era. It is the only known Spanish colonial-era cylindrical tower in the country, with a tiered structure that notably resembles a wedding cake. The belfry houses a historical, bullet-ridden bell that was never recast.

OUR LADY OF ATOCHA CHURCH

The Our Lady of Atocha Church in Alicia is a notable example of Castilian architecture, originally built by Spanish missionaries in the 18th century. Dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Atocha (Our Lady of Atocha), this historic church has become one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Isabela, especially during Holy Week.



SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF THE VISITATION OF GUIBANG

The Shrine of Our Lady of the Visitation of Guibang is home to the Miraculous Lady of the Visitation. The church can accommodate up to 10,000 devotees, especially during the Lenten season.

The image was crowned by the Papal Nuncio to the Philippines on May 26, 1973, and the church was declared a national shrine by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines on January 26, 1986. It has since been renovated into a full-sized church to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims, especially on her feast day, celebrated on July 2.





CATHEDRAL OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

The Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel, located along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Upi, Gamu, Isabela, near the boundary of Ilagan City, was formerly known as Saint Ferdinand Cathedral. The cathedral showcases a modern architectural design, with construction beginning in 1999.

Along the sides of the church, the history of the diocese and the story of salvation are illustrated through sixteen mural-sized oil paintings. With a floor area of 2,400 square meters, the cathedral can accommodate up to 2,000 parishioners.



BAMBANTI FESTIVAL

Bambanti Festival, aptly called the "mother of all festivals" in Isabela, draws locals and foreigners worldwide, with 34 municipalities and three cities participating.

The festival has bloomed into a vibrant, week-long celebration that engages all sectors of the province. It showcases the best of Isabela—from world-class products, rich heritage and culture, and the people's ingenuity to its mouthwatering cuisine and captivating street dance performances.

There is more to the Bambanti Festival than just the scarecrows. It is primarily celebrated as a communal gesture of thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest, resilience, strength, and determination of the Isabeleños.

Popular Festivals



MAMMANGI FESTIVAL

Corn production was one of the significant farming activities among the first ethnic inhabitants of the Corn Capital of the Philippines, the Ibanags, who were referred to as “Mammangi” or corn farmers.

The Mammangi Festival is celebrated every May to pay tribute to the strength, industry, resilience, and perseverance of typical Ilogueño farmers.



GAWAGAWAY-YAN FESTIVAL

The Gawagaway-yan Festival is observed from the last week of March to the second week of April as a way of giving thanks for the city’s progress and development.

Gawagaway-yan, a Gaddang word meaning bountiful livelihood and merriment, traces the ancestry of the Cauayeños to the Gaddang ethnolinguistic group and recognizes the cultural diversity of the groups residing in Cauayan City.

ANOTHER FIRST: ISABELA SETS NEW GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Bambanti Festival set a world record for Guinness when 2,495 performers wearing scarecrow costumes did a simultaneous street dance number in Ilagan City, Isabela.

“You are officially amazing!” said Pauline Ann Sapinska, adjudicator for the Guinness World Records, after proclaiming the new world record set by the province for the largest gathering of people dressed as “bambanti” (the Ilocano term for scarecrows).

The number of performers during the event exceeded the prerequisite of the Guinness World Record of 250 performers who danced at the same time for five minutes or less.





CERTIFICATE

The largest gathering of people dressed as scientists was achieved by the Provincial Government of Ilocos (Philippines) in Ilocos, Philippines on 23 January 2013

OFFICIALLY ENDORSING



MENGAL FESTIVAL

The Mengal Festival is a month-long celebration of Echague's culture, history, cuisine, beauty, and hospitality. Held every October, the festival honors the courageous Mengals, a Yogad term used to describe the clever warriors who fought for freedom against the Moros.

BAKA FESTIVAL

San Pablo, the northernmost town with vast cattle ranches, is known for its Baka Festival. Held every mid-January, the festival aims to promote the local cattle industry in the province.

PAGAY FESTIVAL: BALITOK TI ALICIA

The Pagay Festival upholds the town's cultural identity and heritage while promoting the municipality's primary agricultural product, pagay (Ilocano for rice).

It showcases the industriousness of the town's people, who put their hearts into the laborious, muscle-numbing work in the fields to yield the golden grains.

PANSI FESTIVAL

The Pansi Festival is an annual event in Cabagan, celebrated from January 20th to 25th in tribute to the town's flourishing native noodle industry.

Pansi, the Ibanag term for pancit, is the most beloved noodle dish in the Cagayan Valley and has gained widespread recognition throughout the Philippines.

BALATONG FESTIVAL

The Balatong Festival of San Mateo honors the mung bean, which has become an additional source of income for the town between rice harvests. The first Balatong Festival was held in 2008, after the townspeople discovered a solution to reduced harvest yields caused by chemical-intensive farming.

KANKANEN FESTIVAL

The municipality of Cabatuan is home to the Kankanen Festival.

This annual event, held in early November, showcases various native cakes and pastries made

from sweet rice. The festival aims to enrich the cultural heritage of Cabatuan, particularly in the culinary preparation of native delicacies.

BATO ART FESTIVAL

The Bato Art Festival has become a symbol of Luna's industrial potential.

By utilizing the town's natural stones, residents have turned their creative passions into income-generating activities, further enhancing Luna's appeal as an emerging town.

BALAMBAN FESTIVAL

The Balamban Festival, previously known as the Balamban Butterfly Festival, is the founding anniversary celebration of Santiago City, held during the first week of May. Balamban, an Ilocano term for butterfly, is a cultural dance of lowland Christians that originated in Santiago City.

The dance mimics the graceful movements and fluttering of butterflies in Dariuk Hills' scented gardens.





Gastronomy



PANCIT CABAGAN

Pancit Cabagan is a noodle dish that originated from the Municipality of Cabagan. It was introduced by Sia Lang, popularly known by locals as Diang-ga, a Chinese trader from Amoy (now Xiamen in China) sometime in the 19th century.

Pancit Cabagan is cooked using locally made noodles called Miki Cabagan, sautéed with pork belly strips, pork broth mixed with soy sauce, and topped with vegetables, igado, carajay, and egg.

BINALLAY

Binallay, Isabela's unique version of suman, originates from the City of Ilagan. This traditional rice cake is made of glutinous rice flour mixed with water, wrapped in banana leaves, and steamed to perfection.

Served with a rich caramel sauce called laro, made from coconut milk and raw sugar, Binallay holds deep cultural and religious significance, especially during Holy Week when it symbolizes the body and blood of Christ.





MORIECOS

Moriecos is a cherished native delicacy made from galapong (ground glutinous rice) and sweetened with a rich latik filling. Wrapped in banana leaves, this suman variation boasts a smoother texture and a delectable coconut milk and sugar paste.

Originally a family backyard industry, Moriecos has become a hallmark of Cabatuan, with its reputation spreading to various towns, cities, provinces, and even abroad.



INATATA

Inatata is a traditional Isabela delicacy made from sweet glutinous rice wrapped in banana leaves and steamed. Tied in batches of ten, it resembles a magazine of bullets, symbolizing patience, industriousness, perseverance, humility, and unity.

Known locally as bala-bala, Inatata has been a cherished part of Isabeleño cuisine for generations, reflecting deep cultural values and culinary heritage.

LITSON BAKA

Isabela is also emerging as a destination for the mouthwatering lechon baka, a culinary masterpiece cooked slowly over hot charcoal.

This tender, flavorful roast beef is infused with a blend of traditional herbs and spices, giving it a rich, smoky flavor that captivates the senses. The slow, meticulous roasting process ensures the meat is succulent, with a crispy outer layer that contrasts perfectly with the tender interior.

Born from the town's deep-rooted cattle industry, lechon baka has become a celebrated dish at local festivities, offering a delicious and authentic taste of San Pablo's rich culinary heritage.







Local Products

SABUTAN

In Palanan, Isabela, Sabutan, a coastal Pandan plant, is crafted into beautiful handmade products including bags, hats, fans, mats, and placemats. Each item showcases traditional weaving techniques and vibrant local culture. These crafts are highlighted annually during the Sabutan Festival, underscoring the town's rich heritage and providing essential income for its local weavers. The unique artistry of Sabutan reflects Palanan's cultural pride and craftsmanship.



With skilled hands and a deep connection to tradition, an elder in Palanan prepares sabutan leaves for weaving, preserving an age-old craft. From cutting and drying to weaving intricate patterns, these fibers will soon become hats, baskets, and vibrant decor.



TURMERIC + GINGER CALAMANSI JUICE

Gin-C products, a natural juice drink made from a blend of turmeric and calamansi, originate from Jones, Isabela. What started as a gesture of appreciation for frontliners during the COVID-19 pandemic quickly gained recognition. Initially, a group of local individuals distributed Calamansi Juice Drinks to frontline workers, which caught the attention of Gov. Rodolfo T. Albano III. Impressed by its success, he promptly ordered over a thousand boxes.

As a result, the group was formally established as the Jones Producers Cooperative with support from LGU Jones, LPGMA, and Governor Albano, allowing them to scale up production and maximize their impact.



MUNGBEAN NOODLES

San Mateo, Isabela, is renowned for its diverse mung bean products, including sprouted munggo (mung beans) used in lumpia and pansit, as well as ingredients for popular snacks like butchi and empanada. The municipality also offers ground munggo, pulvoron, flour, and munggo coffee. New innovations include munggo noodles, fried munggo sprouts, instant sautéed mung bean, instant munggo soup, and crispy mung bean chips.

Supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), local cooperatives have advanced the development, packaging, and marketing of these products.



BIG BROTHER KORNIK

The Isabela's "pasalubong ng bayan," the Big Brother Kornik from Cauayan City, is a family tradition snack made from native white corn with bits of natural garlic flakes. Cooked to perfection, it offers a rich taste and crunchy texture.

Available in three delicious flavors: Spicy (Red), Garlic with Chips (Green), and Classic Cheese (Yellow).

CHAPTER III

Isabela's Breath



Tourism

DIPUDO COASTLINE

The coastal municipalities of Palanan, Divilacan, Maconacon, and Dinapigue in Isabela are home to powdery white beaches and warm, crystalline waters.

This 113-kilometer expanse of pristine white sand stretches along Isabela's Pacific coast.

The beaches of Coastal Isabela fringe the azure waters of the Pacific Ocean. In Palanan, surfers enjoy excellent wave breaks and strong winds, all while taking in breathtaking views of the Sierra Madre Forest. The Palanan Rainforest, part of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, is one of Asia's last remaining virgin forests and was declared a protected wilderness area in 1979.

Coastal Isabela's extensive seacoast is rich in untapped fisheries and marine resources. Pointed-nose dolphins and humpback whales have been sighted in the hidden paradise of Dicotcotan Beach, a three-kilometer stretch that borders a coastal forest and a seafont village.



DIMASILONG

Recognized as an Eco-Tourism Site under Municipal Resolution No. 2022-19, Dimasilong Eco-Tourism Park is a serene retreat featuring caves and a scenic river with depths of up to four meters. Visitors can enjoy boating, swimming, picnicking, and fishing just 19.5 kilometers from Poblacion.



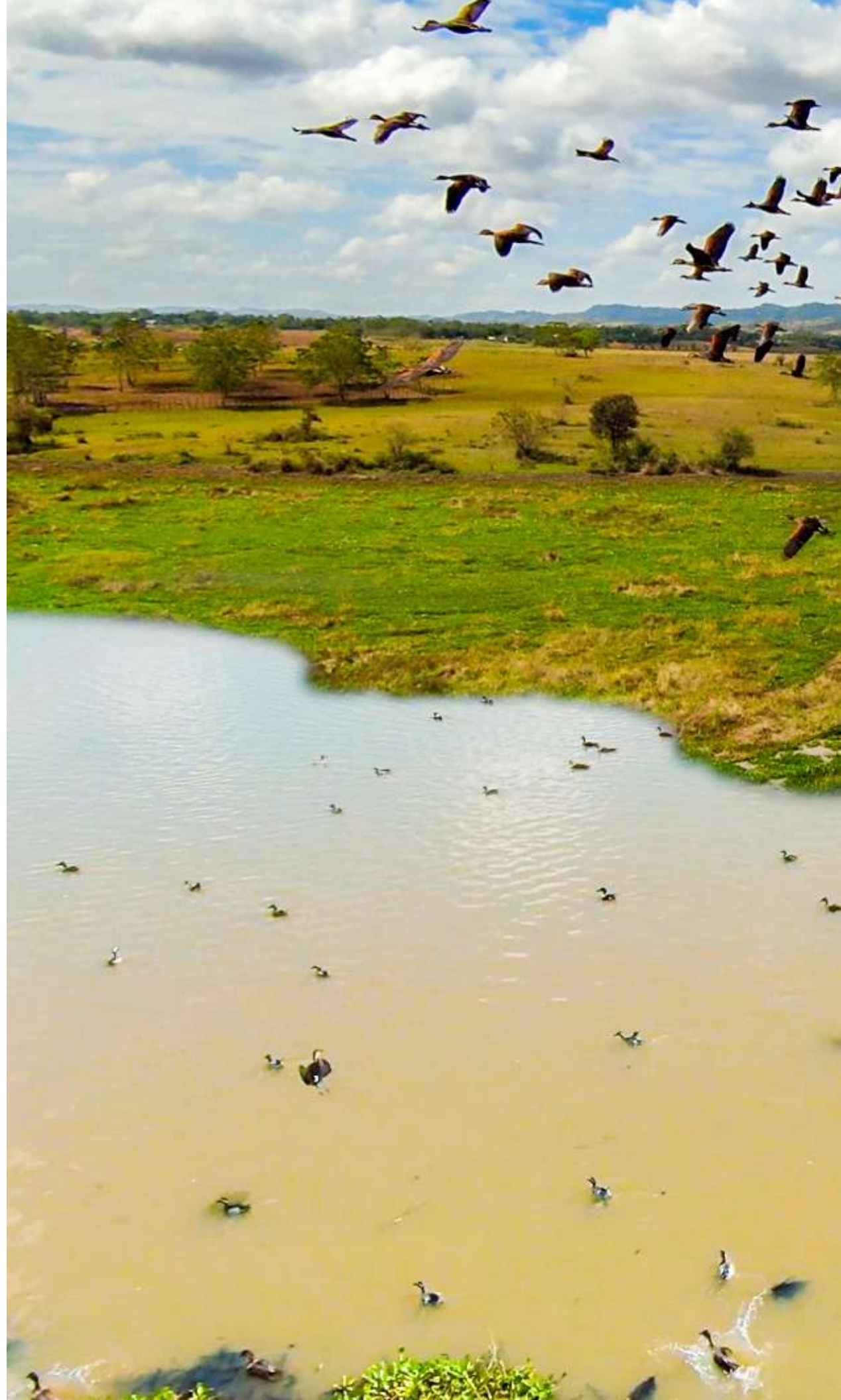


MALASI LAKE, CABAGAN

Malasi Lake in Brgy. San Antonio, Cabagan, Isabela, is officially designated as a municipal bird sanctuary, crucial for migratory birds and renowned for its population of endemic Philippine Ducks (*Anas luzonica*). The sanctuary is celebrated among birdwatchers for its diverse avian species and is set to develop into a key environmental education and ecotourism destination.

The sanctuary consists of two natural lakes set in open grassland west of the Cagayan River. One lake serves for irrigation, while the other, fringed with reeds, provides essential breeding grounds for waterbirds. Local ordinances safeguard the site by prohibiting hunting, egg collection, and limiting agricultural development around the lakes.

Administrative Order No. 2012-01, issued by former DENR Secretary Ramon Paje, designates Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary as a critical habitat. This designation ensures that any development activities are subject to thorough assessment to preserve the area's ecological integrity. It aligns with Republic Act 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, and addresses the decline of the Philippine duck, which is classified as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).









MARANNAO SWIP DAM: A HIDDEN OASIS IN SAN MARIANO

A water-impounding project, Maranna SWIP Dam, collects rainwater during the wet season, providing vital irrigation for crops and supporting fish farming during the dry months. Visitors can enjoy serene boating on the tranquil waters and relax with family and friends in this picturesque setting, making it an ideal spot for peaceful picnics and outdoor recreation.



KWEBA DANUM

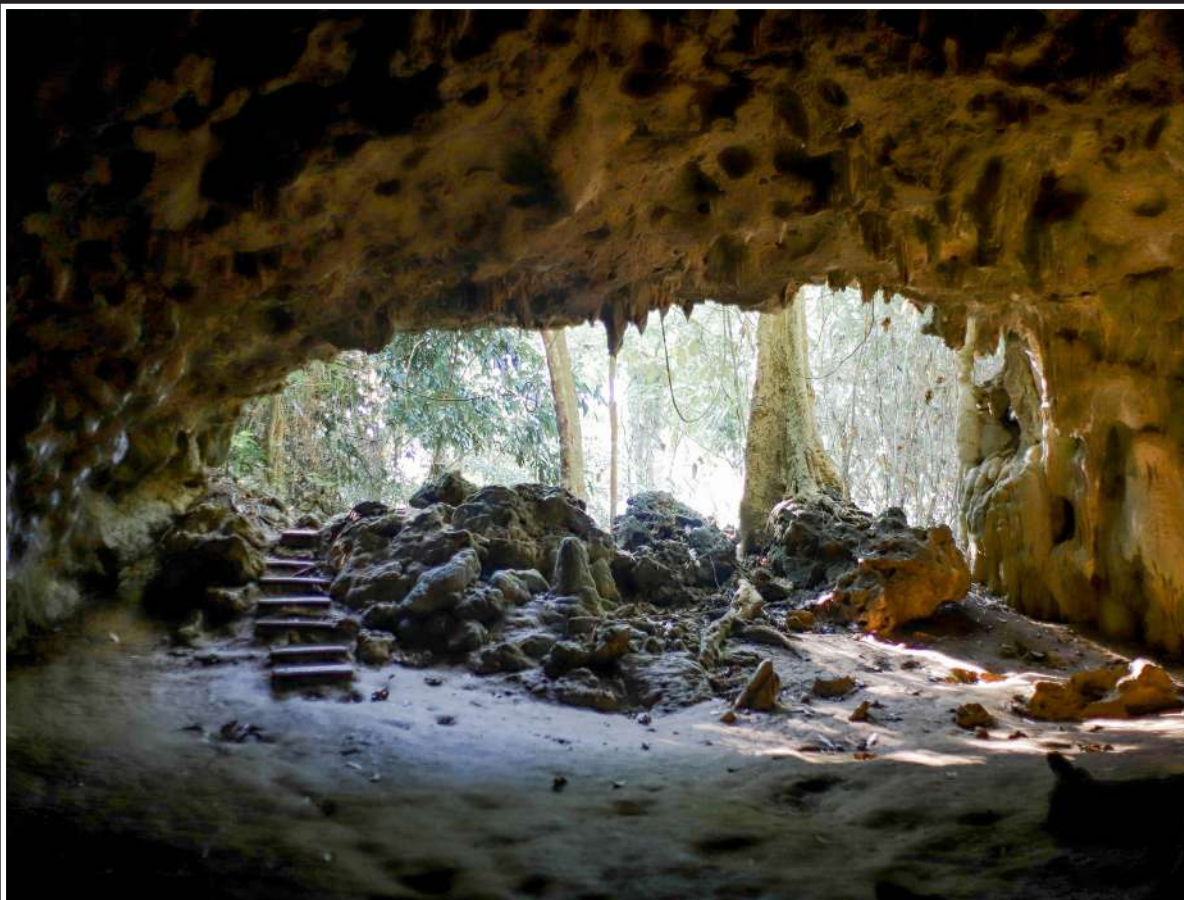
Located in Barangay Cumabao in Tumauni, Isabela, near Sinabuluan Cave, is a hidden gem within the Tumauni Watershed Natural Park, managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Kewba Danum is a pristine cave renowned for its captivating water tunnel that originates from the surrounding mountains. The name “Danum,” derived from the Ilokano word for water, aptly reflects the cave's defining feature.



STA. VICTORIA CAVES

Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range in Isabela, the Sta. Victoria Caves consist of over 12 limestone caves, renowned for their striking rock formations, subterranean waterfalls, and glittering stones.

These caves hold archaeological significance, as they are believed to have once been home to the nomadic Dumagat or Agta people.







ABUAN RIVER

Supported by local government, private sectors, NGOs, and the community, it is gaining popularity as a must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts. Once regarded by the Department of the Interior and Local Government as the “cleanest river” in Cagayan Valley in the 1990s, the river has been a favorite spot for villagers and tourists who enjoy whitewater rafting, rappelling, waterfall trekking, kayaking, and other water activities.



MERAKI GARDEN: THE MOST POPULAR GARDEN IN REGION 2

Located in Brgy. Napaccu Pequeño in Reina Mercedes, Meraki Garden offers a cultural blend of Greek-inspired charm and Filipino warmth. Adorned with bougainvillea, bonsai trees, and Santorini-inspired blue and white hues, this Instagram-worthy spot is a haven for relaxation and entertainment.

With attractions ranging from playgrounds and delectable café treats to live local bands and enchanting magicians, Meraki Garden promises a delightful experience for all ages. Experience its soul, creativity, and love—all for just a P50 entrance fee.





ISABELA MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

The Isabela Museum and Library (IML) Building, located in Barangay Osmeña, Ilagan, was originally the Isabela Provincial Capitol Building, serving as the seat of the provincial government from 1950 to 1991.

Over the years, the IML has undergone various uses and renovations. It served as a temporary office shelter for the Municipal Government of Ilagan from 2004 to 2006 and was later utilized by several organizations. Significant renovations were undertaken in 2017 under Governor Faustino G. Dy III, and by 2020, the building was fully rehabilitated.

In 2019, over 46,000 books were donated by Children's International (Kansas, USA), which

were distributed to isolated and disadvantaged areas. The museum's ground level features diverse exhibits, including the Tilamsik ng Liwanag Exhibit and the Art Capital of the North Gallery, while the library houses 22,000 books, periodicals, and other materials.

Supervised by the Isabela Tourism Office, the museum is affiliated with the National Library of the Philippines and was officially accredited by the Department of Tourism on September 21, 2023.

This accreditation, conferred during a ceremony in Tuguegarao City, recognized the IML as a Gallery/Museum.

The IML houses the "Paglikom sa Kayamanan ng Lahi" program, dedicated to collecting and preserving cultural treasures and safeguarding Isabela's vibrant cultural legacy for future generations.

The IML has also significantly contributed to the province's Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) in tourism, culture, and the arts. The museum is open from Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.



■ ENDEMIC BIODIVERSITY IN ISABELA

The Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP) is one of the Philippines' most biodiverse protected areas, renowned for its rich ecosystems and species diversity. The park plays a crucial role in protecting species that are critically endangered or extinct elsewhere.

Among its inhabitants are 128 species listed as threatened or near-threatened on the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2018). Isabela proudly supports a remarkable array of endemic species, each vital to its distinct ecosystems.





GOLDEN-CROWNED FLYING FOX (*Acerodon jubatus*)

The Golden-crowned Flying Fox, among the largest bats globally with a wingspan of 1.5 meters, is endemic to the Philippines and faces severe threats from hunting and habitat loss. Isabela's Northern Sierra Madre Mountains host vital roost sites, like Divilacan, where local efforts protect these endangered bats.

Golden-crowned Flying Fox, endemic to the Philippines, finds refuge in Isabela's Northern Sierra Madre, where conservation initiatives are crucial.

PHILIPPINE EAGLE (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*)

The national bird of the Philippines, the Philippine Eagle, faces extinction due to habitat loss and hunting. Recent sightings in the Northern Sierra Madre highlight ongoing conservation efforts to protect this majestic bird.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)



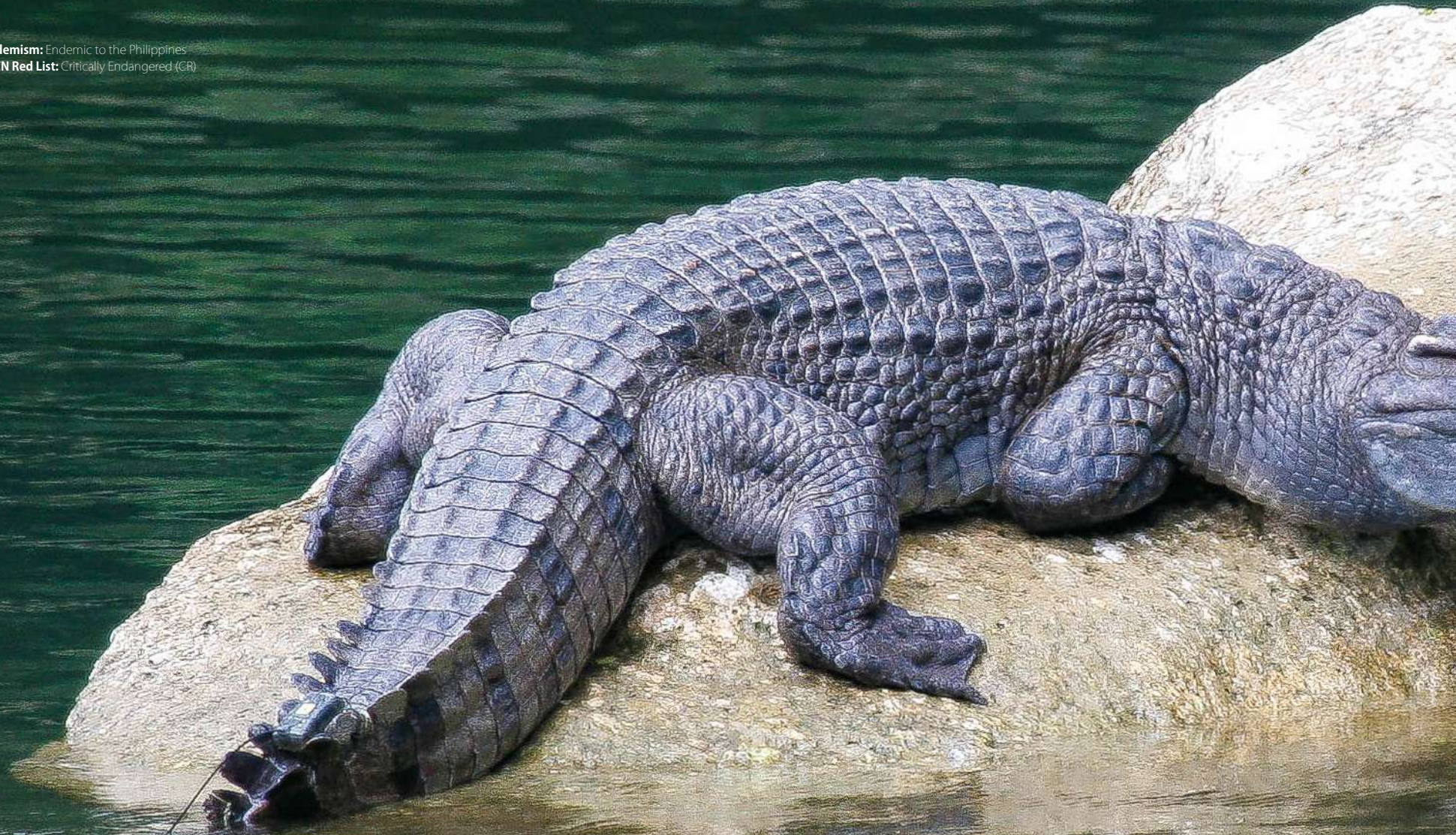


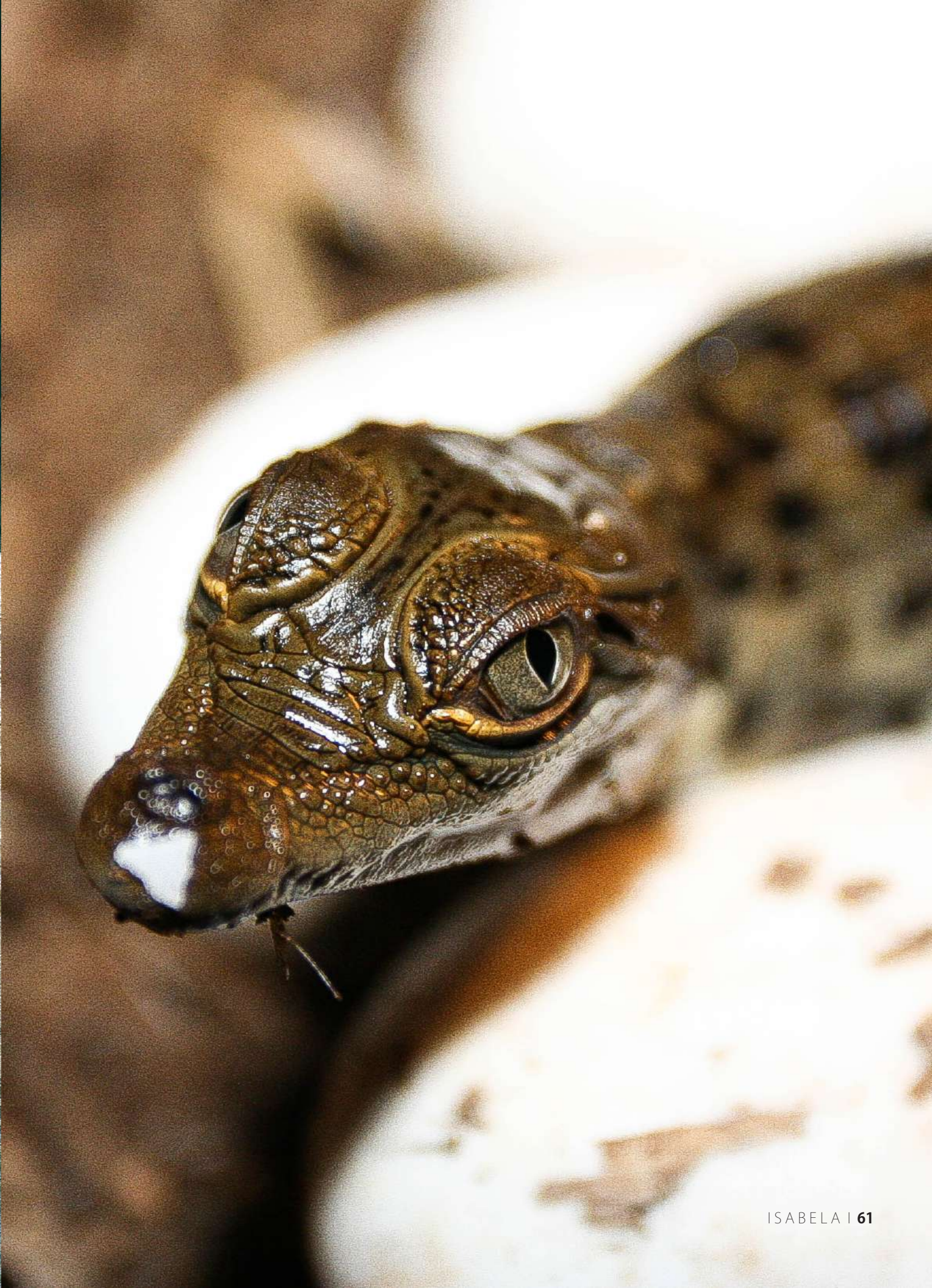
PHILIPPINE CROCODILE (*Crocodylus mindorensis*)

Once widespread, Philippine crocodiles now number fewer than 250 individuals. Found in isolated pockets like San Mariano and Divilacan, these freshwater crocodiles play a crucial ecological role and are protected in local sanctuaries.

Philippine Crocodile, critically endangered, thrives in Isabela's coastal habitats, supported by local conservation efforts.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)







ISABELA ORIOLE (*Oriolus isabellae*)

Named after Isabela, this bird was thought extinct until rediscovered in the Northern Sierra Madre. With only around 50 individuals left, conservation efforts are essential in preserving this symbol of Isabela's biodiversity.

Isabela Oriole, critically endangered, embodies the province's promise and continuous efforts to safeguard its unique avian species.

Endemism: Endemic to Luzon
IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered (CR)

LUZON BLEEDING-HEART (*Gallicolumba luzonica*)

Known for its distinctive red chest marking, this ground-dwelling pigeon faces threats from hunting and forest fragmentation, underscoring the need for conservation actions in Isabela.

Luzon Bleeding-heart, endemic to Luzon, exemplifies Isabela's rich biodiversity amidst conservation challenges.

Endemism: Endemic to Luzon and satellite islands
IUCN Red List: Near Threatened





LUZON HORNBILL (*Penelopides manillae*)

Known locally as Tarictic, the Luzon Hornbill is a vital seed disperser in Isabela's forests. Despite being less threatened, habitat loss and illegal pet trade pose significant challenges to its conservation.

Endemism: Endemic to northern Philippines
IUCN Red List: Not Threatened



SPOTTED WOOD KINGFISHER (*Actenoides lindsayi*)

Found in lowland forests, the Spotted Wood Kingfisher is characterized by its distinct call and serves as an indicator of forest health in Isabela.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines
IUCN Red List: Not Threatened

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon gularis*)

Known locally as Salaksak, the White-throated Kingfisher is a familiar sight along Isabela's rivers, its distinctive call echoing through the province's diverse landscapes.

Endemism: Endemic to the Philippines
IUCN Red List: Not Threatened



CHAPTER IV

**The Heartbeat
of Isabela**

Isabela stands as the economic powerhouse of Cagayan Valley, accounting for 44.8% of the region's total economic output in 2022.

It is one of the most prosperous and progressive provinces in the Philippines, boasting a first-class income classification primarily supported by agriculture and agri-based industries.

■ RICE PRODUCTION IN ISABELA

Isabela plays a vital role in rice production in the Philippines, significantly impacting the country's overall staple supply. It is the second-largest producer of rice in the country, following Nueva Ecija.

In 2023, the province recorded a total rice production of 1.48 million metric tons, an increase of 1.5% from the previous year, driven by the return of economic activities to pre-pandemic levels.

In the first half of 2024, Isabela produced approximately 751,110 metric tons of rice—still the highest in the region.

Within Cagayan Valley, Isabela consistently ranks as the top rice producer among all provinces, accounting for nearly half of the region's rice production. Isabela's contribution is crucial to the surplus needed for the country's goal of rice self-sufficiency.

Under the MRIDP, the national government aims to achieve 97.5% rice sufficiency by 2028. However, in 2023, Isabela had already reached a rice sufficiency level of 460.64%—the highest in the country.

The rice sufficiency level achieved in 2023 marked a sharp improvement from 457.71% in 2022, 451.70% in 2021, and 386.99% five years ago.





■ CORN PRODUCTION IN ISABELA

Isabela maintains its status as the top corn-producing province in the Philippines.

In 2023, the province produced a total of 1.09 million metric tons of corn, nearly unchanged from the previous year.

In just the first half of 2024, Isabela recorded a total corn production of 538,230 metric tons, the highest in Cagayan Valley.

In the region, Isabela has consistently ranked as the top corn producer among the five provinces, accounting for 55.5% of the total regional corn production in 2023.

At the national level, Isabela contributed about 12.96% of the total corn production in the Philippines in 2023.

■ HIGH-VALUE COMMERCIAL CROPS PRODUCTION

In addition to its traditional crops, Isabela continues to enhance its high-value commercial crop (HVCC) production to boost farmers' incomes and create alternative livelihood opportunities in the province. HVCCs are distinguished by their defined niche markets, potential for domestic and regional trade, and typically higher market prices.

The major HVCC vegetables grown in the province include mung beans, peanuts, cabbage, eggplant, tomatoes, garlic, onions, sweet potatoes, and cassava. Priority vegetables include habitchuelas (string beans), kangkong (water spinach), native pechay, bitter melon (ampalaya), squash, okra, ginger, gabi (taro), radish, and white potatoes.

For fruits, major HVCCs include banana, calamansi, mango, and pineapple, while priority fruits are lanzones, papaya, rambutan, tamarind, watermelon, mandarin, and orange. Other crops grown in the province include tobacco, cacao, coconut, coffee, sugarcane, orchids, and roses.





■ FISHERIES

Fisheries is another flourishing industry in Isabela, supported by aquaculture and inland fishing across 1,108 hectares of developed freshwater fishponds and 450 hectares of fish cage culture at the Magat Dam Reservoir.

Rich marine resources are found along the coastal seaboard towns of Maconacon, Divilacan, Palanan, and Dinapigue. The province also has numerous lakes, Small Water Impounding Projects (SWIPs), diversion dams, Small Farm Reservoirs (SFR), rivers, and rice fields that serve as vital fishery resource areas for development.

Isabela ranks second to Cagayan province in total fish production, but leads as Cagayan Valley's top tilapia producer. This confirms that the aquaculture industry is a promising venture in the province.

The province contributes around one-fourth of the total fish production in the region annually. In 2023, the volume of fish production in Isabela totaled 9,615 metric tons, the second-highest level recorded in five years.

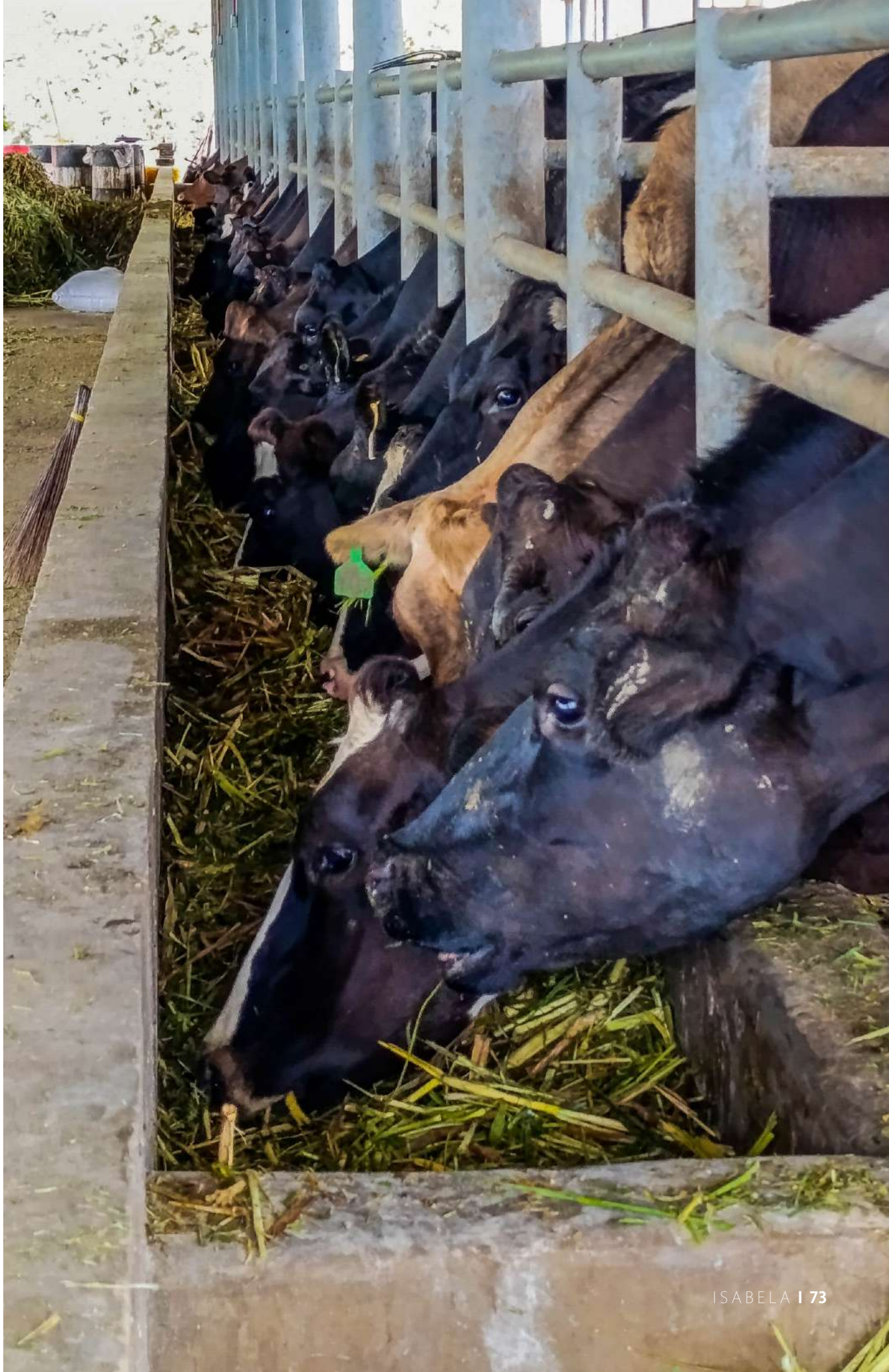


■ DAIRY PRODUCTION

Another emerging enterprise in the province is dairy production. The Provincial Government of Isabela, with support from the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), the World Bank, and the Department of Agriculture, has been continuously modernizing the industry by providing essential infrastructure and assisting dairy cooperatives.

In fact, dairy production and processing are among the province's priority investment areas.

The Philippine Carabao Center and the National Dairy Authority are also contributing to increasing the livestock supply.





■ LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY PRODUCTION

Isabela's livestock and poultry industries are steadily growing, particularly in dairy processing, hog production, cattle breeding, and commercial poultry raising.

In 2022, backyard production accounted for more than 90% of the livestock and poultry population in the province of Isabela.

The province's livestock and poultry industry is primarily focused on the production of cattle, carabao, goats, swine, chickens, and ducks.

Isabela is recognized as a reliable source of cattle and carabao, whether for meat or draft purposes.

In 2023, Isabela recorded the highest sufficiency level in carabao production (carabeef) at 213.77%. The province also had high sufficiency levels in goat (chevon) production at 198.33%, cattle (beef) at 140.86%, and chicken at 132.27%, indicating that the province produces more than it consumes for these livestock.

Poultry, particularly chicken and duck, is widely produced in the province. Chicken and duck are the two most commonly raised animals in farm backyards, providing an easy source of meat for farm families.





■ MAJOR INVESTORS

Isabela Province has become a leading destination for significant investments across various sectors, driving its economic growth and sustainability.

These investments promote economic diversification and reinforce Isabela's role as a vital contributor to the Philippine economy, supporting sustainable development and improving the quality of life for its residents.



SN/ABOITIZ POWER GROUP

Operates the 360-megawatt Magat Hydroelectric Power Plant, a cornerstone of Isabela's energy security and a significant contributor to the region's renewable energy capacity.





GREEN FUTURE INNOVATIONS INC.

With its cutting-edge facility producing 200,000 liters of anhydrous alcohol daily, the company supports local industries and export markets while promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

UNIVERSAL LEAF PHILIPPINES, INC.

A global leader in the tobacco industry, Universal Leaf plays a vital role in Isabela's agricultural sector through tobacco cultivation, processing, and export activities, contributing substantially to the local economy.

ISABELA BIOMASS ENERGY CORPORATION (IBEC)

A pioneer in renewable energy, IBEC generates electricity from biomass sources, reducing carbon emissions and advancing environmental sustainability in Isabela.

SAN MIGUEL FOODS, INC.

With significant investments in Isabela, San Miguel Foods boosts local agriculture and food production, creating employment opportunities and supporting rural development.

Additionally, multinational oil companies such as Chevron, Petron, and Shell have established a strong presence in Isabela, contributing to the province's energy sector and infrastructure development.

Telecommunications giants Smart and Globe, along with beverage manufacturers Coca-Cola, RC Cola, and Pepsi, have enhanced Isabela's connectivity and consumer market, further solidifying its position as a dynamic economic hub in Northern Luzon.



Renewable Energy Investment Opportunities

MARKET POTENTIAL

The renewable energy market in the Philippines is rapidly expanding, driven by favorable government policies and increasing demand for clean energy. Isabela's solar projects present a unique opportunity for investors to enter a growing market with strong long-term prospects. The country's strong intentions to raise the share of renewables in its energy mix provides a supportive regulatory environment and numerous incentives for green energy initiatives.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Investing in Isabela's renewable energy sector offers direct economic benefits, including stable returns from energy production and sales. The province's projects are designed to generate substantial electricity output, ensuring a steady revenue stream. Additionally, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering energy costs strengthens the region's overall economic stability.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Renewable energy investments in Isabela play an important role in social development by creating jobs, advancing local skills, and improving community welfare. Initiatives such as solar-powered irrigation systems directly benefit agricultural communities, boosting productivity and enhancing food security. This socio-economic upliftment fosters a stable and supportive environment for business operations.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Isabela is at the forefront of integrating cutting-edge technologies in renewable energy, including energy storage solutions and smart grid systems. These innovations enhance the efficiency and reliability of solar energy projects, giving investors the chance to be part of groundbreaking advancements in the energy sector.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Investing in Isabela's solar energy initiatives aligns with global sustainability goals and contributes to environmental preservation. By reducing carbon emissions and promoting clean energy, investors can strengthen their corporate social responsibility (CSR) profiles and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and stakeholders.

"The formal inauguration of the Cabaruan Solar-powered Pump Irrigation Project is the next phase in the story of Isabela's progress."

FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
President of the Republic of the Philippines

DURING THE INAUGURATION OF THE CABARUAN SOLAR-POWERED PUMP IRRIGATION PROJECT IN QUIRINO, ISABELA ON JUNE 10, 2024.

INAUGURATION OF THE CABARUAN SOLAR-POWERED PUMP IRRIGATION PROJECT

On June 10, 2024, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. inaugurated the Cabaruan Solar-Powered Pump Irrigation Project in Quirino, Isabela. This groundbreaking initiative, valued at P65.77 million, is the Philippine government's largest solar-powered irrigation project, designed to address the growing challenges of energy costs in providing water to farmlands.

Farmers can now harness solar energy to power irrigation pumps, replacing the need for oil-powered machines to transport water from canals to fields, significantly reducing operational costs and promoting sustainable agriculture.





440 MWp Isabela Ground Mounted Solar Power Project

PHP 18 billion in renewable energy investment

More than 700,000 solar panels to be installed

700 gigawatt-hours of clean energy to be produced annually

to 4,000 connection jobs

Enough to power 500,000 Filipino households

400,000 tons of CO2 emissions avoided annually



SAN IGNACIO
ENERGY RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



ANTHONY L. ALMEDA

MIGUEL RICARDO P. MAPA

SIGNING OF THE CONNECTION AGREEMENT FOR THE ISABELA SOLAR PROJECT

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. witnessed the signing of the connection agreement for the 440-megawatt peak (MWp) Isabela Solar Power Project at the Provincial Capitol on June 10, 2024.

This partnership between the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) and the San Ignacio Energy Resources Development Corporation (SIERDC)—a joint venture between TotalEnergies and the Filipino renewable energy developer Nextnorth Holdings Corporation—aims to enhance the country's renewable energy sources.

PROJECT SITE OF THE 440 MWP SOLAR PROJECT LOCATED IN BARANGAYS CABANNUNGAN 2ND, ARUSIP, BAGONG SILANG, AND PILAR IN THE CITY OF ILAGAN, ISABELA.



With an investment of PHP 18 billion, the project is set to generate approximately 700 gigawatt-hours of clean energy annually using over 700,000 solar panels, enough to power 500,000 households. Additionally, it is expected to create employment opportunities for over 4,000 Filipinos during its construction phase.

CHAPTER V

**Excellence in Local
Governance**



**"The thrust of our government
is to invest in people."**

HON. RODITO T. ALBANO III

Isabela: A Gateway to Sustainable Growth

As the Rice Granary of the North, Isabela is celebrated for its fertile agricultural lands, abundant natural resources, and a forward-thinking approach to governance, highlighting its focus on progress.

Isabela's leaders continuously work to ensure that today's development is not at the expense of future generations, creating a business-friendly environment with policies that attract investment. Its strategic location offers access to key domestic and international markets, making it an ideal hub for trade.

The province's commitment to excellence is evident in the accolades and distinctions it has garnered. Since 2011, Isabela has been recognized as the Most Business-Friendly Province in Region II by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It also stands out for its agricultural achievements, being the top producer of corn and a leading surplus producer of rice in the country.


Governance in Isabela is marked by efficiency and innovation. It is the only Hall of Fame recipient in Region II for the implementation of the Anti-

Red Tape Act and has consistently earned the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Seal of Financial Housekeeping and Seals of Good Local Governance since 2012. With a highly educated workforce, paired with strong provincial and municipal support, Isabela offers a safe and conducive environment for growth.

Isabela's strategic connectivity enhances its role as a gateway to major economies, with excellent road networks linking it to key markets in Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. As the largest province in Luzon and the second largest in the country, Isabela is home to 45.7% of the regional population, presenting a significant demographic advantage for businesses and investors alike.

Proactively supporting investment, Isabela provides a comprehensive Provincial Incentive Code and other legislative measures designed to foster and sustain business growth.



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves and a mound of dark, rich soil. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers gently cupping the plant. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green field, suggesting a rural or agricultural setting. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting the textures of the soil and the freshness of the plant. The overall mood is one of care, growth, and hope.

**As the Rice Granary of the North,
Isabela is celebrated for its fertile
agricultural lands, abundant natural
resources, and a forward-thinking
approach to governance, highlighting
its focus on progress.**

BRO FOR EDUCATION

"A college graduate in every farmer-family"

The Bojie-Rodito Opportunities for Education (BRO-Ed) Program, pioneered by the Provincial Government of Isabela, is dedicated to ensure that every small farming family in Isabela has a college graduate, creating a ripple effect that uplifts communities and strengthens the province.

One of the most remarkable aspects of BRO-Ed is that it was launched even before the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, highlighting the province's proactive commitment to accessible education for all.

BRO-Ed embraces inclusivity, open to students from all academic backgrounds. Students receive financial assistance ranging from P3,000 to P5,000 per semester. In addition, each student is provided with 20 kilos of rice per semester, alleviating the financial burden on their families while supporting Isabela's rice farmers.

Through partnerships with institutions such as Isabela State University and private colleges, BRO-Ed extends its reach to as many students as possible. Its support doesn't stop at the undergraduate level—it also covers licensure exam reviews, postgraduate degrees, and professional programs in fields like law and medicine.





Today, over 15,000 scholars benefit from the program, many of whom come from small farming families.

BRO-Ed continues to embody the Provincial Government's commitment to education, ensuring that every farming family has the opportunity to produce a college graduate, thereby paving the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for Isabela.

RICE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

Isabela's rice distribution program plays a strategic role in ensuring food security for vulnerable populations, particularly during times of economic instability or natural disasters. By maintaining a strategic rice stockpile and coordinating with local farmers, the provincial government guarantees a steady supply of this essential commodity.

This program addresses immediate food security needs and supports the local agricultural economy. It serves as a model of efficient resource management and crisis response, fostering partnerships with agricultural organizations and empowering local farmers.





The program exemplifies efficient resource management, stabilizing food supply while promoting sustainable farming practices. By providing farmers with a reliable market and promoting fair trade, it strengthens the local food system and builds more resilient communities.

This illustrates how effective governance can safeguard food security while driving agricultural growth.

NAGKAKAISANG MAGSASAKA NG ISABELA AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE (NMIAC)

In response to the challenges posed by the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) established the Nagkakaisang Magsasaka ng Isabela Agricultural Cooperative (NMIAC).

With substantial financial backing, NMIAC has stabilized local rice sufficiency and reduced dependency on imported rice. The establishment of a "Super Cooperative" in August 2020, supported by a P40 million loan, has been critical to its success.



By July 2024, NMIAC had expanded to 8,510 farmer-members, serving as a reliable market for rice farmers' produce.

NMIAC's success highlights the transformative impact of local government support in stabilizing the agricultural sector.

This initiative not only sustains local rice production but also provides farmers with valuable resources and market access. By enhancing rice sufficiency and reducing reliance on imports, NMIAC exemplifies effective local governance and fosters economic stability within the province.



HAULING TRUCKS

To enhance local mobility and support agricultural activities, the PGI has distributed hauling trucks to 94% of Isabela's barangays, with a total of 953 units deployed by July 2024. This initiative, representing an investment of 1,323,852,500.00, provides essential transportation support for farmers, disaster response, and community events.

These multi-purpose trucks improve access to markets, healthcare, and education, playing a crucial role in economic activities and emergency responses.



By enhancing local transportation networks, the program improves market accessibility, stimulates economic growth, and increases overall efficiency.

This investment highlights Isabela's pledge to continue advancing growth and development across the province.





ISABELA RICE PROCESSING CENTER (IRPC)

Located in Ipil, Echague, the Isabela Rice Processing Center of the Provincial Government of Isabela is crucial for advancing the province's rice industry and implementing the Isabela Rice Assistance Program.

This facility processes palay purchased from farmers into premium rice, which is then distributed to identified beneficiaries, including vulnerable sectors.







ISABELA'S BUSOG-LUSOG MILK FEEDING PROGRAM

The Busog-Lusog Milk Feeding Program, supported by partnerships with SNAP-Magat and Nickel Asia Corporation, provides nutritious milk supplements to malnourished children, senior citizens, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. The program is complemented by the establishment of dairy farms in five strategic locations, ensuring a continuous supply of milk products for feeding programs.

This initiative boosts community health and nutrition, demonstrating the power of public-private partnerships in driving social change.



By leveraging resources and expertise from various stakeholders, the Busog-Lusog program addresses specific nutritional needs within the community. It serves as a model for effective collaboration between public and private entities, delivering targeted interventions that promote overall well-being. This program improves health outcomes while contributing to a more productive and vibrant local economy.



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: HALL OF FAME AWARDEE OF THE NATIONAL GAWAD KALASAG

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) of Isabela stands out for its excellence in disaster preparedness and response. Through comprehensive risk assessments, community-based training, and early warning systems, the PDRRMC significantly enhances the province's ability to manage and respond to disasters.

This proactive approach ensures that Isabela is well-equipped to handle emergencies and maintain resilience during crises. The province's disaster preparedness framework is a testament to its commitment to safeguarding communities and ensuring business continuity. By investing in disaster readiness and response, Isabela creates a secure environment for both residents and investors. This focus on preparedness mitigates risks and strengthens the overall resilience of the province.

ISABELA'S RESCUERS BEYOND BORDERS

Isabela's rescuers extend their aid beyond provincial borders, highlighting their unparalleled conviction and resilience during crises.

Their efforts to provide essential sustenance and support during natural disasters reflect the province's enduring spirit of generosity and resilience.


This passion to help others beyond jurisdiction inspires people to come together, share resources, and collaborate on various projects, fostering a unified approach to challenges.





ONE MILLION TREES IN ONE DAY

The One Million Trees in One Day project, held on December 20, 2019, exemplified Isabela's dedication to environmental conservation and its reputation as the "Volunteer Capital of the Philippines." Despite inclement weather, thousands of volunteers from all sectors—including government agencies, non-government organizations, private enterprises, and youth—united to plant trees as part of the Reforestation Target Action (RTA).

A photograph of a young tree with green and brown leaves against a blue sky with white clouds. The tree is the central focus, with its branches extending across the frame. The background shows a hazy, green landscape, possibly a field or a forest. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is bright and natural.

Spearheaded by Gov. Rodito T. Albano III through Executive Orders No. 15-2019 and 16-2019, the initiative focused on restoring the Sierra Madre's biodiversity by planting one million trees in strategic locations, such as Sitio Lagis in Ilagan City. Participants, each tasked with planting at least 50 hardwood seedlings, aimed to reforest critical areas along the Ilagan-Divilacan Road and beyond, reinforcing the province's resolve to combat deforestation and promote long-term environmental resilience.

This ambitious undertaking saw the active involvement of a diverse array of groups, including BRO-Ed scholars, local government units, cooperatives, national line agencies, and civic organizations. Each group was assigned designated reforestation areas, resulting in thousands of trees planted across key sites, including roadsides and vulnerable forest zones.

The One Million Trees in One Day project has demonstrated Isabela's firm dedication to protecting the Sierra Madre, highlighting the power of community action, as citizens from all walks of life came together to ensure a greener, more sustainable future for the province.

ONE MILLION BAMBOOS IN ONE DAY

The Provincial Government of Isabela, led by Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, launched the One Million Bamboos in One Day project on December 20, 2022, as a proactive measure to mitigate flooding in areas vulnerable to typhoons. This riparian initiative focuses on planting bamboo along the riverbanks of the Cagayan River and its tributaries, which are particularly prone to flooding.

By planting one million bamboo propagules across towns such as Roxas, Sta. Maria, San Mariano, and San Pablo, the project aims to reduce the impacts of natural calamities by stabilizing the riverbanks and protecting nearby communities.



Gov. Albano emphasized that this project was not just an environmental effort but a communal one, with thousands of Isabeleños—including barangay residents, government employees, and volunteers—participating in the massive planting activity. The bamboo planting serves as both a flood mitigation strategy and a symbol of unity, as Gov. Albano noted that the initiative strengthened bonds within communities. He referred to the effort as "a Christmas gift for nature," highlighting the long-term environmental and social benefits of this historic project.

DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY HOSPITALS

Isabela's district and community hospitals are united by a common goal: to provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality healthcare to Isabeleños. Each facility takes a comprehensive approach, addressing both curative and preventive health needs.

At the core of this network is the Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital, a tertiary care center that collaborates closely with patients, families, and communities to ensure a broad range of medical services. This commitment to inclusivity and quality care is mirrored across the province, with Manuel A. Roxas District Hospital aiming to become a fully departmentalized, 75-bed facility by 2028, offering a wide array of medical specialties.

Other hospitals, such as Milagros Albano District Hospital, Echague District Hospital, and Cauayan District Hospital, continue to uphold high standards of care, with plans to expand and accommodate the growing healthcare needs of their communities.

Even in Isabela's more remote areas, hospitals like San Mariano Community Hospital and Palanan Station Hospital ensure access to modern medical services, with ongoing efforts to upgrade their facilities and enhance service delivery.





HEMODIALYSIS CENTERS

The recent expansion of hemodialysis centers in Isabela marks a significant advancement in the province's healthcare services.

The new hemodialysis centers at Cauayan District Hospital (CDH), Milagros Albano District Hospital (MADH), and Manuel A. Roxas District Hospital (MARDH) are crucial in addressing the rising demand for dialysis services, each equipped with 10 dialysis machines.

These centers boast dedicated teams and state-of-the-art equipment, reflecting strong efforts to improve kidney care in the province. They supplement the existing center at the Gov. Faustino N. Dy Sr. Memorial Hospital in the City of Ilagan, which houses 21 dialysis machines.





Charting the Future: Isabela's Path to Lasting Progress



**Isabela stands at the forefront of a new era,
where the richness of its heritage converges
with a future driven by innovation and
sustainable growth.**

We invite you to be part of Isabela's ongoing transformation. Here, opportunities are not just discovered, they are shaped through a shared ambition to uplift the province and its people.

Together, we are building a sustainable future that honors our past while propelling us forward.

Isabela is not simply a place—it is a living, breathing community of innovators and visionaries. By working together, we can unlock our collective potential, stimulate economic growth, and create a legacy that generations to come will be proud of.

As we chart a course toward a future of shared progress and lasting success, we welcome you to join us in shaping the next chapter of Isabela's remarkable journey—where heritage meets innovation and progress is shared by all.



SEAT OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ISABELA
BRGY. ALIBAGU, CITY OF ILAGAN