



## 6 active trenches could trigger magnitude-8.2 quake—Phivolcs

By Rio N. Araja

SIX active trenches could generate an 8.2-magnitude earthquake, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). Phivolcs Director Dr. Teresito Bacolcol, in an interview with the Philippine

News Agency, said these are the Philippine Trench (from East Luzon to Southeast Mindanao), East Luzon Trough, Manila Trench, Negros Trench, Sulu Trench, and Cotabato Trench. He warned that areas located along these active trenches could experience

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# Quake death toll rises to 46

## Marcos: P50k for every victim's family; DOLE to add up to P30k



By Charles Dantes, Rex Espiritu and Jimbo Gulle

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. inspected damaged facilities and oversaw relief operations in some of the hardest-hit areas in General Santos City on Wednesday as the death toll from the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck parts of Mindanao on June 8 rose to 46.

During his visit, Mr. Marcos also announced that the government would provide P50,000 in financial assistance to the families of each person who died in the disaster. In addition, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) said it will provide up to P15,000 to workers affected by the

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**MUCH-NEEDED ASSISTANCE.** (Clockwise from top) The Phivolcs Quick Response Team conducts an aerial survey in Sarangani, documenting the collapse of the southernmost span of the Sapu Masla Bridge as well as damage to river dikes due to lateral spreading following the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck Mindanao. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. personally inspects the St. Elizabeth Hospital in General Santos City on Wednesday, directing concerned government agencies to prioritize structural assessments of hospitals and other health facilities damaged by the earthquake. Rescue teams evacuate injured residents from Balut Island aboard a Philippine Air Force Black Hawk helicopter. At the Sarangani Provincial Hospital, Gov. Rogelio Pacquiao facilitates the delivery of vital supplies, including potable water and oxygen tanks. Revoli Cortez, Sarangani Provincial Information Office, Philippine Army 10th Infantry Division, Phivolcs

## Senate workers now clear who's boss with CSC, gov't nod to Win

By Joel E. Zurbano, Ram Superable, Pot Chavez, Katrina Manubay, and Rio N. Araja

SENATE employees now have clarity on whom to follow after the Civil Service Commission and other institutions recognized the majority bloc led

by acting Senate President Sherwin Gatchalian, Senator Panfilo Lacson said Wednesday. Lacson said the recognition by various government and legal agencies -- most recently the Civil Service Commission, which oversees all government workers -- affirmed the legitimacy of the Gatchalian-led leadership and removed any ambi-

guity within the chamber. "It is clear to all of us in Malacañang, the House of Representatives, the Civil Service Commission, the IBP (Integrated Bar of the Philippines) and other groups who the real leadership of the Senate is," Lacson said.

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## Threat justifies 2-day work-from-home directive—Gatchalian

By Ram Superable and Joel E. Zurbano

ACTING Senate President Sherwin Gatchalian on Wednesday clarified his decision to implement a two-day work-from-home order following a reported security threat involving a possible armed group targeting the upper chamber. Meanwhile, Senator Panfilo Lacson urged the military and the police to stay vigilant against groups that may exploit their concerns to destabilize the government by pretending to be allies. Gatchalian made the clarification after Senator Alan Peter Cayetano asked why the entire chamber was not explicitly informed about the new

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## 16 votes needed still to convict VP Sara Duterte

By Joel E. Zurbano and Maricel V. Cruz

SENATE President Pro Tempore Sherwin Gatchalian said on Wednesday the number of votes needed to convict Vice President Sara Duterte in the ongoing impeachment trial is fixed and will not be influenced by any internal leadership disputes. House impeachment trial spokesperson and Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong, for his part, said internal disputes within the Senate should be resolved promptly to ensure a credible impeachment trial and prevent confusion among the public.

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**PRACTICE.** Military personnel conduct a rehearsal in preparation for the 128th Philippine Independence Day celebration on June 12, 2026 at Rizal Park in Manila where President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is expected to lead the flag-raising ceremony. **Norman Cruz**

## 'Courts, judicial bodies proper venues for flood control cases'

By Maricel V. Cruz

A PUBLIC interest and human rights lawyer has emphasized that questions of criminal liability arising from the ongoing flood control controversy should be resolved by the proper judicial and quasi-judicial bodies, not through legislative hearings. In a radio interview, lawyer Antonio Zoleta Bucoy said the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee serves a different purpose from institutions

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NBI TO PROBE DEATH OF 2 ATENEO CAGERS

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## Quake...

From A1

earthquake, while the families of workers who died in the disaster may receive an additional P30,000 funeral benefit.

Rescuers recovered another body from a collapsed supermarket in General Santos as authorities continued search and retrieval operations in affected areas.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) reported 45 confirmed fatalities as of Wednesday morning, up from 38 the previous day, while the number of missing persons increased from four to 17. The number of injured also rose to 630 from 478.

Meanwhile, more than 1,100 schools across Mindanao were damaged and classes remain suspended in around 8,000 schools – a situation which may last several months -- following the earthquake, Education Secretary Sonny Angara said.

The tremor that struck offshore Sarangani damaged 554 schools in Region 12 or SOCCSKSARGEN. Department of Education (DepEd) Assistant Secretary Jocelyn Andaya said all six regions of Mindanao were affected by the earthquake, with Region 12 – made up of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City -- being the hardest hit.

Also, the Department of Energy expects the power situation in Mindanao to normalize within the week, even as the Visayas grid was placed on red alert Wednesday

In other developments:

- Road accessibility was one factor why the Department of Social Welfare

and Development (DSWD) in Region 11 was having hard times in delivering the food packs to the affected families in Davao Region and other areas hit by the earthquake.

- Senator Francis Pangilinan called for the urgent allocation of P15 billion to facilitate relief, rehabilitation, recovery, repair, and reconstruction initiatives in areas impacted by the earthquake.

- The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development has ordered a moratorium on housing amortization payments in Mindanao and the activation of its regional shelter clusters following the earthquake.

- The Philippine Air Force continued its humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations in areas affected by the earthquake, deploying S-70i Black Hawk helicopters for damage assessment and airlift missions.

### Supermarket employee dies

The latest fatality was identified as 39-year-old Joey Deluvio, one of two employees trapped inside a collapsed supermarket in General Santos City.

Rescuers recovered his body on Wednesday after life-detecting equipment earlier picked up what was described as a weak pulse beneath the rubble.

Local rescuer Michelle Chua said Deluvio was found pinned between two beams. Civil defense officials said the fatality had yet to be included in the official death toll pending validation.

OCD Deputy Administrator for Administration Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV said most of the newly reported deaths came from Davao Occidental, particularly the municipalities of Jose Abad Santos and Malita.

“From 38 last night, we now have 45

recorded fatalities,” Alejandro said.

He said six of the additional deaths were caused by landslides, while others resulted from falling debris and collapsing structures triggered by the powerful quake.

The number of missing persons also surged after local authorities reported 13 additional missing residents in Davao Occidental.

“Our numbers remain fluid as we continue receiving reports from the field,” Alejandro said, noting that casualty figures remain subject to verification.

### Marcos: P100 million for City Hall repair

In General Santos, the President also announced the release of P100 million from the Local Government Support Fund to repair the damaged General Santos City Hall.

“All families who lost a loved one in the earthquake will receive P50,000 in assistance,” he said, adding additional funding would be provided through the same fund for the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure in Sarangani and South Cotabato, areas heavily affected by the earthquake.

“Sarangani is really the hardest hit,” Mr. Marcos said.

The President reported that electricity service had been restored to about 85 percent of affected areas, although damaged roads and landslides continue to hamper access to some communities.

To reach isolated villages, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has been conducting helicopter missions to deliver food, medicines and other emergency supplies, particularly in parts of Sarangani.

Mr. Marcos said telecommunications services have largely been restored, while

efforts are ongoing to stabilize water supply systems in affected localities.

The President also directed the Department of Health to implement mental health support programs for survivors, particularly children, and provide training for teachers to help identify and assist students experiencing trauma.

### Hospitals, health facilities are priorities

Earlier in the day, Mr. Marcos inspected St. Elizabeth Hospital in General Santos City and ordered government agencies to prioritize structural assessments of hospitals and other health facilities damaged by the earthquake.

He emphasized the need to restore healthcare services as quickly as possible while ensuring the safety of patients, medical personnel and the public.

Government engineers are also assessing damaged schools, hospitals and public buildings to determine whether they can still be safely used or require major repairs or demolition.

The earthquake, one of the strongest to hit Mindanao in recent years, caused widespread destruction across several provinces, damaging homes, government buildings, schools, hospitals, roads and commercial establishments.

It also triggered landslides, disrupted power and water services, and prompted tsunami warnings that were later lifted.

According to authorities in General Santos, more than 77,000 people from nearly 18,000 families have been affected by the disaster in the city as recovery and rehabilitation efforts continue across Southern Mindanao. **With Cherrie Anne Villahermosa, Alena Mae Flores, Rio Araja, Joel Zubano, Vito Barcelo, and AFP**

## 16 votes...

From A1

“The two-thirds vote required to convict Vice President Sara Duterte is a constitutional mandate. It is not affected by any internal Senate leadership arrangement or dispute,” Gatchalian said.

Article XI, Section 3(6) of the 1987 Constitution stipulates that no person shall be convicted without the concur-

rence of two-thirds of all the members of the Senate.

With the Senate’s membership fixed at 24, the conviction threshold is 16 votes — and it will remain 16 votes regardless of how many senators attend the trial, which bloc controls the chamber, or who presides over the impeachment court, Gatchalian said.

Gatchalian said the pre-trial conference is set for June 18 and both the Duterte camp and the House prosecution

panel have been directed to submit their pre-trial briefs by June 15, with the trial proper set to begin on July 6.

“The constitutional threshold — 16 votes — will be faithfully observed. The Constitution is clear. Our duty is to obey the Constitution and we will do that,” Gatchalian said.

Former Senate President Franklin Drilon said earlier that the prosecution needs at least 16 affirmative votes to achieve a conviction, regardless of the

total number of senators in attendance during the impeachment proceedings.

He said detained senators remain eligible to be counted towards the required voting threshold for conviction.

Adiong, meanwhile, said the House prosecution panel respects the Senate’s authority to settle its own internal affairs, but stressed that any disagreement should not be allowed to undermine public confidence in the impeachment process.

## 6 active...

From A1

very strong earthquakes.

The Philippine Trench, also known as the Philippine Deep, Mindanao Trench, or Mindanao Deep, is a submarine trench east of the Philippines.

The East Luzon Trough, or East Luzon Trench, is an oceanic trench north of the Philippine Trench and east of Luzon Island.

The Manila Trench is an oceanic trench in the Pacific Ocean located west of Luzon and Mindoro islands.

Meanwhile, the Sulu Trench is located west of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, while the Cotabato Trench lies off the southwestern coast of Mindanao.

Bacolcol identified the six active trenches following the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck Mindanao on June 8.

He said the tremor was the strongest recorded in the Philippines so far this year.

The country’s strongest recorded earthquake was the magnitude 8.1 quake that struck Mindanao on Aug. 17, 1976.

## ‘Courts,...

From A1

tasked with determining criminal responsibility.

“That is prosecution. What is happening in the Senate is a public hearing for oversight—to determine where wrongdoing occurred, where anomalies took place, and what loopholes in the law require legislation to correct the process and prevent similar incidents from happening again. However, as I mentioned, there is already a process underway at the Ombudsman. We should allow that process to move forward,” he said.

Bucoy noted that allegations involving irregularities in flood control projects are already the subject of proceedings before the Office of the Ombudsman, which has the authority to investigate and determine whether criminal charges should be filed.

According to him, the existence of an ongoing Ombudsman process underscores the need to allow legally mandated institutions to perform their functions without interference or duplication.

“The problem is that there is already a case before the Ombudsman. That is the proper process where these matters should be discussed. There are pending

plunder and malversation complaints related to flood control projects. If he appears in another proceeding, it could compromise or complicate the process before the Ombudsman,” he added.

Bucoy explained that congressional investigations are intended primarily to aid legislation and recommend policy reforms, while the determination of criminal liability belongs to institutions such as the Ombudsman and the courts.

He also questioned the basis for the precautionary hold departure order (PHDO) obtained by the Ombudsman against former Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez.

Bucoy argued that the issuance of a PHDO should comply with standards established by the Supreme Court.

“A precautionary hold departure order is allowed because there is a Supreme Court administrative order governing it. However, according to the Supreme Court, it may only be issued if a preliminary investigation has already been conducted,” he said.

He pointed out that based on public statements by Ombudsman officials, the flood control investigation remains at the fact-finding stage.

“In the case of Speaker Romualdez, according

to statements from Ombudsman Remulla himself, they are not yet at the preliminary investigation stage. They are still in the case build-up and fact-finding phase,” he said.

“So what was the basis for applying for a precautionary hold departure order? The Supreme Court requires at least a preliminary investigation and preliminary findings. Why was such an order issued under these circumstances?” Bucoy asked.

He stressed that the constitutional right to travel may only be restricted under narrowly defined circumstances.

“The right to travel is protected by the Constitution. There are exceptions—for example, if a person has a case, intends to flee, will not return, or is considered a flight risk. Those are exceptions to the rule. If none of those circumstances exists, then it is not proper to issue a precautionary hold departure order,” he said.

Bucoy maintained that the Ombudsman’s request for a PHDO should not have been granted at this stage.

“The basis is not yet sufficient to justify a precautionary hold departure order because it does not conform with the administrative order of the Supreme Court. In that regard, the issuance was improper,” he said.

## Threat...

From A1

schedule which he claimed would disrupt legislative activities on June 10 and 11.

At the same time, Gatchalian expressed his readiness to engage in discussions with Cayetano’s group.

“I just cannot disclose it in detail, but there is a possibility that someone will cause trouble in the Senate, and it is a possibility that an armed group will cause the trouble. We informed everyone through the memo,” Gatchalian said.

Cayetano earlier argued in a social media post that transparency regarding institutional security was necessary, especially since the scheduled dates coincided with a planned Blue Ribbon Committee hearing by his group.

The security protocol stemmed from intelligence provided by National Bureau of Investigation director Melvin Matibag to Senator Erwin Tulfo during the Blue Ribbon Committee consultative meeting on Monday.

Matibag warned of an unspecified armed group aiming to stir chaos inside the institution, a threat Gatchalian noted could be linked to 18 former Marines who were allegedly involved in the delivery of flood control project kickbacks to government officials.

In response to the warning, the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms collaborated with multiple national intelligence agencies to verify the credibility of the information.

Gatchalian emphasized that the Senate could not afford complacency and must treat all intelligence reports with serious precaution.

The temporary defense measures included a strict no-visitor policy, under-chassis vehicle screenings, and an expanded deployment of security personnel around the perimeter.

Gatchalian clarified that the current status is not a total lockdown but a heightened security arrangement that allows lawmakers with official business to enter on a case-to-case basis.

Still, Lacson said he is not ruling out the possibility that the so-called “18 ex-Marines” who were previously brought into the Senate could be used as part of a broader effort to sow chaos and trigger destabilization.

## Senate...

From A1

He added that directives issued by the minority bloc led by Senator Alan Peter Cayetano were intended to create confusion.

Lacson said Gatchalian has been meeting with department heads and committee secretaries to remind them that only lawful and official directives should be followed. He also assured employees that the Senate leadership would protect them.

Gatchalian, meanwhile, reiterated his openness to dialogue with Cayetano and his supporters.

“Our office is open. My doors are open. My heart is open,” Gatchalian said.

He maintained that he exercises operational and management authority over the Senate, citing the signing authority granted to him by the Land Bank of the Philippines over Senate accounts.

Gatchalian also assured Senate employees that their salaries would continue to be released on schedule – most

of them are paid weekly -- despite the ongoing leadership dispute.

The developments came as the Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition seeking to declare the presence of 12 senators during the Senate’s June 3 session as a valid quorum.

Sitting en banc, the High Court ruled that petitioner Barry Tayam, a senior high school teacher, lacked legal standing because he failed to show that he had suffered or was at imminent risk of suffering direct injury from the actions he challenged.

Tayam had sought a declaration affirming the validity of the June 3 session presided over by Gatchalian and raised the issue of whether Gatchalian was the lawful acting Senate president or whether Cayetano remained Senate president.

In his petition, Tayam argued that the attendance of 12 senators constituted a valid quorum under Section 16(2) of the 1987 Constitution and existing jurisprudence, including the Avelino vs. Cuenco case.

Retired Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio agreed

with the dismissal, saying Tayam had no legal personality to bring the case.

“Either the Cayetano group or the Gatchalian group should bring the case,” Carpio said.

Tayam said he would study his legal options following the ruling. He also suggested that either Senate faction seek judicial intervention or that the Executive branch call a special session, particularly in light of funding needs arising from the recent Mindanao earthquake.

Earlier, Gatchalian said it would be preferable for the Senate to resolve the leadership dispute internally.

On Monday, Senator Erwin Tulfo apologized to Senate employees for remarks he made amid the leadership controversy.

Tulfo had earlier warned staff that failure to comply with the new leadership could result in investigations and possible charges of insubordination.

“My remarks were driven by intense emotion and extreme frustration over stalled legislative proceedings, but that does not excuse my behavior. It was highly inappropriate, and it is not how

a public official should conduct themselves,” Tulfo said.

Rosel Eugenio, president of the Sandigan ng mga Empleyadong Nagkakaisa sa Adhikain ng Demokratikong Organisasyon, accepted the apology and said the union recognized the senator’s sincerity.

She added that the group looks forward to meeting with Tulfo to foster a more collaborative relationship.

Vice President Sara Duterte, meanwhile, said the ongoing dispute in the Senate reflects broader issues in the country’s leadership.

In an interview in General Santos City, Duterte urged senators to act as one institution and focus on their constitutional responsibilities rather than functioning as opposing factions.

“The chaos in the Senate reflects the leadership of the administration. The confusion and lack of direction in our country reflect the kind of leadership that sits in the Palace and leads the administration,” she said.

When asked whether she recognized the legitimacy of the June 3 Senate session, Duterte said it would be best for

the Supreme Court to determine what should be recognized and recommend a way forward for the chamber.

Earlier this week, Malacañang said it recognizes only the Senate leadership headed by Gatchalian.

The Senate’s official website has also updated its roster to list Gatchalian as Senate President Pro Tempore and removed the title of Senate President from Cayetano’s profile.

Separately, religious leaders led by Fr. Robert Reyes criticized Cayetano over the Senate leadership dispute and the impeachment proceedings involving Vice President Duterte.

Speaking at a media briefing in Quezon City, Reyes accused Cayetano of contributing to instability in the country and called on senators to uphold integrity, impartiality and accountability in the impeachment process.

The faith-based groups, collectively known as the Kingdom Keepers, said they were aligned neither with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. nor Vice President Duterte, but with principles they believe should guide public service and governance.





**PRELUDE TO INDEPENDENCE DAY.** Members of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, Association of Volunteer Fire Chiefs and Firefighters of the Philippines Inc. watch a parade of fire trucks as part of the Invitation Parade for the 128th anniversary of Philippine Independence Day. Norman Cruz

DAR writes off P423m in unpaid land amortizations

By Rio N. Araja

THE Department of Agrarian Reform has condoned P423 million in unpaid land amortizations of over 6,000 beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in Region 13 or the Caraga Region.

DAR Secretary Conrado Estrella III cited the Agrarian Emancipation Act or Republic Act 11953, which formally clears amortizations, interests, and surcharges through the issuance of certificates of condonation with release of mortgage (CoCRoMs).

The region is composed of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Dinagat Islands.

DAR also distributed 6,396 land titles and turned over P1.5 million worth of farm machinery and equipment to boost rice production and reduce harvesting costs.

Under the World Bank-supported Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project, some 4,342 farmers received 6,081 electronic land titles covering 10,130 hectares, while 373 agrarian reform beneficiaries were awarded 261 certificates of landownership award (CLOAs) through DAR's regular Land Acquisition and Distribution program.

Additionally, 52 beneficiaries received 101 hectares under Executive Order No. 75, which turned over idle government lands suitable for farming.

"This is a victory for the hard work and sacrifices of our farmers. The land titles, CoCRoMs, and machinery we are awarding are proof that DAR stands with its beneficiaries," Field Operations Undersecretary Kazel Celeste said.

'Pinoys favor WPS defense allies'

By Rex Espiritu

NEARLY nine in 10 Filipinos want the Philippines to work with like-minded nations, specifically the United States, Japan, Australia, Canada and South Korea, in helping defend the West Philippine Sea, according to a recent Pulse Asia survey.

The poll, commissioned by Stratbase Institute, was made public on Wednesday, ahead the Philippine Independence Day and the 10th anniversary of the landmark 2016 Arbitral Ruling on the South China Sea that invalidated Beijing's sweeping claims over the vital sea lane.

The survey asked 1,500 respondents from May 3-7, 2026 whether they agreed

or disagreed that the Philippines should defend the West Philippine Sea with like-minded countries in accordance with the 2016 decision.

Nationwide, 86 percent said they agreed, with Mindanao leading the regions with the highest positive sentiment (91 percent, with 63 percent saying they strongly agreed) followed by the Nation-

al Capital Region with 90 percent (and 64 percent saying they strongly agreed).

Only 3 percent said they disagreed while 11 percent said they could not say whether they agree or disagree.

In another question, the respondents were asked to pick at least five countries or organizations that the Philippines should work with in defending the West Philippine Sea.

The survey showed that 84 percent of Filipinos nationwide want the government to work with the United States, followed by Japan (67 percent), Australia (57 percent), Canada (51 percent) and South Korea (44 percent).

The National Capital Region registered the highest desire to work with the US at 86 percent, followed by Balance Luzon and Mindanao at 85 percent. Support for the US was also highest among

Class E respondents at 86 percent.

Meanwhile, support for China appears to have been pulled upward by Mindanao where 23 percent of respondents said they wanted the government to work with Beijing to defend the West Philippine Sea.

In a statement, Stratbase Institute president and CEO Victor Andres Manhit said the poll findings reflect that Filipinos see "that upholding the 2016 arbitral award and strengthening cooperation with like-minded nations are essential components of preserving our independence in the 21st century."

"As we mark a decade of our victory at The Hague, we must do our part in defending our hard-won triumph so that future generations inherit a nation that is free, secure and respected in the international community," he said.

PH, Japan, US renew push vs. coercion in South China Sea

By Katrina Manubay

THE Philippines, Japan, and the United States reaffirmed their opposition to unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the South China Sea by force or coercion during the second Japan-US-Philippines Maritime Dialogue in Manila, while reiterating the significance of the landmark 2016 arbitral ruling.

This followed the 2nd US-Philippines-Japan Trilateral Maritime Dialogue in Manila on June 8, where senior officials from the three countries affirmed the importance of the partnership in the "current situation" in the region.

"During the dialogue, the United States, Japan, and the Philippines discussed areas to deepen maritime cooperation in support of a shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. This included trilateral alignment of foreign assistance, joint opera-

tions and exercises, and capacity building initiatives," the US Department of State said.

In the same meeting, the parties also reaffirmed their recognition of the 2016 Arbitral Ruling on the South China Sea, as the landmark decision marks its 10th anniversary in July.

"The three parties concurred on strengthening their respective bilateral initiatives in a mutually complementary and multilayered manner. They also concurred on maintaining and strengthening the momentum of trilateral cooperation in the future," said the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in a separate media note.

Speaking at the Nikkei Forum in Tokyo on Wednesday, Foreign Affairs Secretary Theresa Lazaro said the partnership with Japan and the U.S. enhances the Philippines' defense capabilities.



**FUTURE OF ASIA MEETING.** Foreign Affairs Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro delivers a speech at the Nikkei Forum at a hotel in Tokyo on Wednesday, June 10, 2026. AFP

On its 125th year, SC vows to continue as pillar of justice

By Pot Chavez

THE Supreme Court is celebrating its 125th anniversary today (Thursday) with a renewed commitment to ensure all Filipinos "see, feel and practice" justice.

Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo is scheduled to deliver a message, and a mass is set to be celebrated alongside several performances.

A historical marker from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) was installed last week in recognition of the Supreme Court's rich history as a pillar of the country's democracy.

It was enacted on June 11, 1901, with Cayetano Arellano as its first Chief Justice.

The High Court, through the

initiative of the SC Office of the Spokesperson, culminated its first nationwide poster-making contest for children earlier this week as part of its celebration.

"The Supreme Court has stood as the pillar of justice in our country. But as we fulfill our constitutional duty, we are mindful that justice should never feel far away from the people it serves. Justice must also be understood by children, and it must be something they can see, feel, and practice," SC Associate Justice Jose Midas Marquez said.

For her part, SC spokesperson Camille Ting said the activity shared the ideas, hopes and dreams of Filipino children through art, encouraging them to make the world a better place through a justice lens.



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# CIDG sends Dumlao to New Bilibid

By Vince Lopez

THE Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) on Wednesday committed convicted former police officer Lt. Col. Rafael Dumlao III to the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntinlupa City by virtue of a Mittimus Order issued by the Court of Appeals in Manila dated June 9, 2026.

The convicted former officer was formally received by the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC) of the New Bilibid Prison.

Dumlao's commitment stems from his conviction in the high-profile 2016 kidnapping with homicide case involving South Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo inside the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame.

The Court of Appeals' issuance of the Mittimus Order serves as the formal directive implementing his prison sentence, effectively transferring custody from law enforcement authorities to the Bureau of Corrections.

Nonetheless, Dumlao maintained that he had already been acquitted in the killing of Jee.

"I was acquitted. I was the one who solved that, I was the one who attempted to rescue the person," Dumlao was heard saying through the window of a CIDG service bus while being transferred to the New Bilibid Prison.

In 2024, despite his acquittal by a lower court in 2023, the appellate court reversed the ruling and convicted Dumlao.

CIDG-National Capital Region chief Col. John Guiagui emphasized that higher courts had found Dumlao guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

"Even if he says he was acquitted in the lower court, we have the Court of Appeals, we have the Supreme Court. And there is a higher court that says he is guilty beyond reasonable doubt," Guiagui said.

"There is also a corresponding punishment for him. He may say that, but we have a judicial process. What the higher court says is that he is guilty," he added.



**HEAT IMPACT.** A farmer walks across a dried-up field, highlighting the impact of emerging El Niño conditions in the tropical Pacific. PAGASA confirms sea surface temperature anomalies have reached the +0.5°C threshold, signaling the onset of El Niño. Edd Castro

## IN BRIEF

### Human error, overloading eyed in bus collision

TUBA, Benguet June 10 – Probers are now looking into alleged human error and overloading as the primary causes of the collision between two Victory Liner buses on May 30, which resulted in the death of a 35-year-old female passenger and injured more than 90 others at Sitio Caucalan, Barangay Taloy Sur.

Sources, who requested anonymity for personal reasons, raised questions over the high number of injured passengers, suggesting that one of the buses may have been overloaded at the time of the incident.

The source said that if the Baguio-bound air-conditioned Victory Liner bus carried around 39 passengers, the Dagupan-bound ordinary bus may have had more than 60 passengers, indicating possible overloading that requires deeper investigation to determine responsibility for the collision. **Dexter A. See**

### Lazatin gives property for Angeles daycare

PAMPANGA First District Rep. Carmelo Lazatin Jr., acting as president of Biotop Philippines Agriculture Co., formally signed a Deed of Donation transferring a company-owned property to Barangay Sapalibutad, Angeles City.

The property currently serves as the site of the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPATs) headquarters and is intended to become the future location of the barangay's daycare center.

Barangay Sapalibutad, represented by Barangay Captain Cristina Pineda, officially received the donated property during a signing ceremony.

With the donation, ownership of the property is formally transferred from Biotop Philippines Agriculture Co. to the barangay government.

The initiative underscores Lazatin's continued support for community development projects aimed at improving services and facilities for children and families in the barangay. **Butch Gunio**

### Cordillera schools short of 2,030 classrooms

THE Cordillera office of the Department of Education (DepEd-CAR) reported that public elementary and high schools across the region are short by about 2,030 classrooms for school year 2026-2027 following the opening of classes last Monday.

Based on DepEd data, Benguet recorded the highest shortage with 540 classrooms among its 3,917 schools, followed by Abra with 295 lacking classrooms out of 2,187 schools.

Mountain Province ranked third with a shortage of 288 classrooms from 1,449 schools, while Kalinga followed with 264 classroom shortages from 887 public schools.

Ifugao recorded 288 missing classrooms from 1,945 schools, while Tabuk City reported a shortage of 197 classrooms from 1,031 schools. Baguio City had 114 lacking classrooms from 1,795 schools, while Apayao recorded the lowest shortage with 112 from 1,437 schools. **Dexter A. See**

## 'QC school as proof of use of public funds'

By Charles Dantes

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday inspected a newly rebuilt school building at San Francisco High School in Quezon City, highlighting the project as evidence of what government agencies can accomplish when public funds are spent properly and efficiently.

He visited the newly completed DAO Building and Henry Sy Sr. Hall at the campus in Barangay Bago Bantay, nearly a year after a fire destroyed the previous structure and disrupted classes for thousands of students.

The president recalled inspecting the

site shortly after the fire, when the damaged building was no longer usable and was close to being condemned.

Originally planned as a two-story structure, the replacement building was redesigned into a four-story facility capable of accommodating significantly more students, he said.

"The most important thing is that this construction was completed in eight months," President Marcos said.

The new building contains 60 classrooms, a sixfold increase from the 10 classrooms previously available. It is also equipped with a sprinkler system intended to improve fire safety and prevent a

repeat of last year's incident.

Mr. Marcos said the project demonstrates the results that can be achieved when government resources are directed toward public infrastructure rather than lost to corruption.

"It should demonstrate very clearly what can be achieved when funding is used properly. It does not go into people's pockets but goes directly towards projects such as this," he said.

According to the president, the additional classrooms have eliminated the need for double-shift schedules, allowing students to finish classes earlier and teachers to return home at more regular hours.



**INSPECTION.** President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. joins DepEd Sec. Sonny Angara, DPWH Sec. Vince Dizon, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, and SM Prime president Hans Sy during the inspection of two school buildings inside San Francisco High School in Quezon City—one a 26-classroom structure donated by SM Foundation and another a 36-classroom building constructed by DPWH—as part of the rebuilding of facilities damaged in the June 15, 2025 fire. **Revoli Cortez**

## Govt urged to fast-track funding for evacuation law

By Maricel V. Cruz

FORMER Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate on Wednesday urged the Marcos administration to immediately allocate a significant portion of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) budget to fund the construction of disaster-resilient evacuation centers.

Zarate also cited the government's failure to fully implement the Permanent Evacuation Centers Act more than two years after its enactment, stressing that the urgency of the measure has been underscored by the recent magnitude 7.8 earthquake that devastated parts of Mindanao.

"The law was a measure the progressive Makabayan bloc championed for over a decade. Now, after two years of inactivity, it needs to be fast-tracked and funded adequately, especially as our people face yet another massive disaster," Zarate said.

He said the recent earthquake, which caused widespread panic and structural damage across Southern Mindanao, highlights the critical need for permanent, safe shelters.

"I witnessed the fear and the devastation firsthand. People are afraid to return to their homes, and many are crammed into makeshift, unsafe shelters. This is precisely the scenario the Permanent Evacuation Centers Law was designed to prevent," he said.

The former lawmaker traced the origins of the law to House Bill 3648, filed by Bayan Muna in December 2013 after Super Typhoon Yolanda. He said climate change has intensified natural disasters, making them more frequent and severe, including stronger typhoons, flooding, and earthquakes.

## Palace adviser lauds BARMM response to Mindanao quake

By Rex Espiritu and Nash Maulana

PRESIDENTIAL Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Secretary Mel Senen Sarmiento on Wednesday commended the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) government for its swift humanitarian response to communities affected by the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck parts of Mindanao.

Sarmiento praised the deployment of BARMM's Rapid Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (RDANA) team, together with personnel from Bangsamoro READi under the Office of Civil Defense–BARMM, to assist in emergency response and relief operations in affected

areas of SOCCSKSARGEN and the Davao Region.

He said the Bangsamoro government's immediate action demonstrates its growing capacity to contribute to national humanitarian efforts, reflecting the values of compassion and solidarity fostered through the peace process.

BARMM Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua told Sarmiento that initial assessments identified Sarangani Province and General Santos City among the areas most severely affected by the earthquake.

Macacua assured that BARMM's contingent has prepared emergency assistance for affected residents and has established an Incident Command Post in General Santos City to support ongoing response operations.



**QUAKE DRILL.** Pupils, teachers, and barangay officials at Bagong Silangan Elementary School take part in an earthquake drill on June 10, as part of the school's disaster preparedness program to ensure readiness and safety during emergencies, particularly earthquakes. **Edd Castro**





So I See  
Lito Banayo

Ang maleta, bow!

FUNNY how the luggage that airport cargo handlers throw from airline containers into the carousel, the “maleta,” has become the poster product of corruption.

A big importer of luggage confessed to this writer that he still has a huge inventory of unsold “maleta’s,” because he never thought the demand for it would end.

“Sale was so brisk in the last three years. Each time I would bring out containers of imported maletas from the pier, these would be sold in a week, such that I had to place another import order,” said the Chinoy businessman.

“Akala ko, sobra dami ng OFWs lumalabas ng bansa,” he said, until Orly Guteza and then the 18 bagmen, los cargadores de basura, described with pictures and videos, Zaldy Co’s choice of money containers.

I remember Chavit Singson claiming that he brought 40 million in cold cash to President Erap’s Polk Street house in the early days of the latter’s presidency.

Chavit claimed he came up with “cash advance” to get to be the central collector of “inteli hensya” from all the jueteng operators in the country. He stuffed 40 million pesos in a big milk box, he said.

During the impeachment trial, Senator Ramon Revilla, father of Bong, weighed a one million peso stack of bills which came up to 986 grams, and wondered how Chavit could carry a box that weighed 40 kilos.

That was the one nugget of wisdom from the senior Revilla that came out during Erap’s impeachment trial.

When the 18 ex-soldiers first exposed their deliveries to the political elite, I measured a stack of plastic-wrapped million pesos fresh from the bank and saw that indeed 50 such stacks could fill up a large Rimowa suitcase, the kind that one would check-in at the airport.

I knew that 20 million in thousand-peso denominations would fit into a carry-on suitcase, because a businessman-friend once handed his contribution to a principal I was handling years back.

In the old Erap days, I would see Chavit bring huge designer labelled paper bags to the palace almost every week and just leave these on the floor of the president’s office in the renovated Guest House.

I used to think these were “pasalubong” from trips abroad until the jueteng payola accusations against the president blew up.

Looking back at how the Erap haters piloried him, including the extremely political “pakialamero” Cardinal Sin, who from Cory’s time never complied with the doctrine of State and Church separation, one wonders why the Filipino princes of the numerous Church today have not been as vociferous against the present administration where billions inside maletas are delivered to recipients of the flood control “porsyento.”

Erap may have received his share of jueteng payola, just as governors, mayors and congressmen did and get till now, but he never asked DPWH secretary Greg Vigilar or DBM Secretary Ben Diokno for any cut



Duty Calls  
Florencio Fianza

Detentions

EVERY time there are high profile cases involving powerful and prominent people, detention always becomes an issue.

This is because the public has grown to expect that, regardless of who the person is, confinement must be where all the general prison population are being held.

When they are not, there is an uproar. This is the reason why former senator Revilla and Senator Estrada are being confined at the new Quezon City Jail at Payatas to show that they are not being given any VIP treatment.

With Curlee Discaya now also under arrest, his confinement at the Bulacan Provincial jail will be separate but no special treatment, according to the jail warden.

But if we look at the practices of many countries, this is not the general and established norm.

We are perhaps the only country doing it. And if we also try to look back in time, this was not always the case.

Former Senator Leila De Lima who is now a Congresswoman spent her detention lasting almost seven years at a special facility in Camp Crame.

Former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo spent her time in the Presidential Suite of the Veterans Memorial Hospital while Former President Joseph Estrada spent his time at his house somewhere in Antipolo.

(Editor’s note: Estrada was detained in Tanay, Rizal, not Antipolo. During his plunder trial and following his 2007 conviction, he was held at the military facility of Camp Capinpin and subsequently placed under “rest house arrest” at his private 15-hectare villa located just next to the camp.)

All these were were done to separate and isolate them for their safety because,

on infrastructure projects.

Jueteng, after all, is private money, not public funds. Erap’s presidency fell on slim pickings compared to the present trillions or compared to millions.

Meanwhile the Davao Doctors Hospital led by Father Flavie Villanueva (Rev. Fr. Flaviano Antonio L. Villanueva, SVD), a prominent Roman Catholic missionary priest and outspoken human rights defender, and their bishops, so vociferously condemn alleged corruption in the way confidential and intelligence funds were disbursed by the office of the vice president.

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*Will we ever know the truth behind the three-year grossly criminal budgets of this administration, or will the new 12-man Senate majority succeed in their cover-up?*

These funds, by their very nature, are not scrutinized by COA nor even Congress until the present leadership identified the vice president as their public enemy Number One.

The “Brave 18” did not know why or for what the “who’s” were given sums inside expandable envelopes or designer-label bags or even maletas, until the flood control scandal blew up with El Presidente’s “mahiya naman kayo.”

Were these campaign funds for the Alyansa’s candidates in 2025? Was one senator who got 5 maletas given the same months before the campaign started to make sure he and his friends joined the Alyansa slate?

Were then “private” citizens running for Congress given paper bags also as campaign contributions, or were the congressmen, including the “progressive” leftists given millions because they were conscripts in the demolition job against the vice president and her father, in the Quad Com and Public Accountability inquisitions?

Will we ever know the truth behind the three-year grossly criminal budgets of this administration, or will the new 12-man Senate majority succeed in their cover-up?

Now some senators even accuse the maleta boys of being destabilizers, as if the conduct of governance these days is not the real destabilizer.

Wonder no more why Filipinos, 10 to one, listened intently to Pia and Rodante’s “unauthorized” hearing last June 4, as against Erwin’s bored listeners.

whether we like it or not, they are not ordinary people and their safety must be ensured by the government.

Yes, former presidents Estrada and Arroyo were detained in a relatively comfortable surroundings but they were nonetheless deprived of their liberty during their years of detention.

In the case of Leila de Lima, the conditions of her confinement was sparse where only the most basic amenities were available.

“

*We are supposed to be a civilized nation and must act judiciously*

Another common practice is to require high profile detainees to wear orange T-shirts with the BJMP Detainee emblazoned on them which really does not achieve anything except to further humiliate the detained person.

This is in spite of the fact that in our system of justice, unless someone has already been pronounced as guilty beyond any reasonable doubt by a court of law, that person is still considered innocent.

The reason for all these efforts is to demonstrate that even the powerful when they are arrested must be treated no differently than the poor who are kept in those very crowded jails.

But this issue would not even be a problem at all if only our detention facilities are least equipped with the basic amenities for human habitation.

EDITORIAL

Projected missed growth target by 2028

THE bad news is that the Philippines is unlikely to meet its goal of reducing poverty to single-digit levels by the end of the Marcos Jr. administration, according to the World Bank.

In its latest Poverty and Equity Assessment, the Washington-based lender projected the poverty rate to decline to 12.3 percent in 2028 from 15.5 percent in 2023.

It warned that millions of Filipinos remain vulnerable to economic shocks despite years of progress in poverty reduction.

The World Bank’s assessment is significant not simply because it questions the government’s poverty-reduction target, but because it highlights a deeper structural problem in the Philippine economy: economic growth has not translated into rapid and broad-based improvements in living standards for millions of Filipinos.

The report acknowledges that poverty is continuing to decline.

A projected reduction from 15.5 percent in 2023 to 12.3 percent in 2028 means that hundreds of thousands of Filipinos will move above the official poverty threshold.

This is positive news and suggests that economic recovery after the pandemic has produced some gains.

However, the World Bank’s forecast also indicates that the administration’s ambition of reducing poverty to below 10 percent is unlikely to be achieved.

The gap between the government’s target and the World Bank’s projection may appear small numerically, but it represents

millions of people. In a country with a population exceeding 115 million, every percentage point translates into more than a million individuals.

“

*Economic growth has not translated into rapid and broad-based improvements in living standards for millions of Filipinos.*

Thus, the difference between a poverty rate of 12.3 percent and 9 percent is not merely statistical—it means that several million Filipinos may remain trapped in poverty by the end of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s term.

More importantly, the report emphasizes vulnerability. Many Filipinos who have technically escaped poverty remain only one crisis away from falling back into it.

A serious illness, loss of employment, typhoon, inflationary surge, or crop failure can quickly erase years of progress.

This phenomenon reflects the large



EVERYMAN

By Jose Antonio Goitia

PUBLIC trust is not a commodity you manufacture with a clever slogan or a flashy PR campaign.

Anyone who has lived through decades of broken promises from our national institutions knows this truth intimately.

Trust is a fragile ecosystem. It is built painstakingly slow—brick by brick, through small and large actions alike—and it can be demolished in a single moment of indiscretion.

That is why the quiet but profound shift currently taking place within the Philippine National Police demands our attention.

Since assuming leadership, General Jose Melencio C. Nartatez Jr. has steered the organization toward a paradigm where professionalism, accountability, and genuine public service are no longer mere buzzwords, but the central pillars of the PNP’s operational DNA.

This vision is encapsulated in the organization’s guiding principle: Bagong PNP para sa Bagong Pilipinas: Serbisyon Mabilis, Tapat at Nararamdaman.

When public confidence in law enforcement has been severely tested, Nartatez has focused on the hardest task in institutional leadership: rebuilding credibility.

**Justice Without Exception**

One of the clearest barometers of this shifting tide was the recent arrest of Rafael Dumlaog III.

For many Filipinos, that name triggers the memory of a deeply troubling and dark chapter—the kidnapping and brutal killing of South Korean businessman Jee Ick Joo, executed within the very walls of Camp Crame by the people sworn to protect the public.

That a convicted former police officer was finally brought to account matters deeply. It does not erase the tragedy, but it sends a seismic shockwave through the ranks: the system can, and will, catch up with those who betray the badge, regardless of rank, connection, or former authority.

As DILG Secretary Jonvic Remulla said, the government would enforce the court’s decision, and the institution would not shield one of its own at the expense of justice. In a country accustomed to empty rhetoric, this arrest made those words mean something.

After all, even if they are under detention, they are still human beings and not animals.

The real problem is that our jails and detention facilities are atrocious. They are so overcrowded that detainees have to take turn sleeping because there is not enough space to bed down.

The solution therefore is to improve the living conditions of all detainees so that each one will at least have a bed to sleep on and a place where they can clean themselves like any human being.

If this is done, then there would be no need for so-called VIP treatments.

In other countries, for instance, there are special facilities to hold people separately

**Cleaning the Ranks**

While high-profile arrests grab the headlines, the internal cleansing of the PNP has been just as significant, if less dramatic.

More than 1,500 police personnel have faced sanctions in recent months, with hundreds dismissed outright from the service.

These are not numbers to celebrate; they are a sobering measure of how much still needed fixing. But confronting misconduct openly, rather than quietly burying it to protect the “republic of the uniform,” is precisely how an institution begins to recover its soul.

“

*The shadows of the past are long*

Under General Nartatez, internal accountability has evolved from a talking point into an operational priority. We are seeing:

The aggressive resolution of long-standing administrative backlogs.

The strengthening of internal oversight mechanisms.

A culture top-down that treats discipline as inseparable from public trust.

**From Headlines to Convictions**

That same institutional rigor has carried over into frontline operations. A prime example is the recent conviction of a Canadian national linked to the seizure of approximately 1.4 tons of suspected shabu worth P9.68 billion in Batangas—one of the largest illegal drug busts in Philippine history.

Major drug operations often generate sensational headlines, but successful prosecution is what ultimately determines whether justice is served. This case was the product of sustained intelligence work, extensive investigation, and meticulous coordination among law enforcement agencies.

It traced its roots back to operations conducted during General Nartatez’s tenure as Regional Director of the National Capital Region Police Office.

It serves as a potent reminder that effective policing is built on patient case-building and re-

from the general prison population and this has nothing to do with giving these detainees special treatments.

It is more for efficient management, security and the kind of crime committed. Since the crime these individuals are being accused of are white collars crimes, there should be nothing wrong if they will be confined in a separate facility like Camp Crame or elsewhere.

It makes it easier for the custodial force to secure the place and transport them to their trial venues and hospitals if medical care is needed.

Yes, at the moment, we know that the facilities in Camp Crame are a little better than a city jail, but is nonetheless very

number of “near-poor” households whose incomes exceed the poverty line only marginally.

The World Bank’s warning also raises questions about the quality of economic growth.

The Philippine economy has expanded steadily in recent years and remains among the faster-growing economies in Southeast Asia.

Yet growth has been unevenly distributed.

Wealth creation has been concentrated in urban centers, large corporations, and higher-income sectors, while many rural communities, agricultural workers, informal laborers, and low-skilled employees continue to face stagnant incomes.

The WB report serves as an independent assessment of the Marcos administration’s socioeconomic performance. It does not suggest failure; poverty is still expected to decline.

However, it indicates that current policies may not be sufficient to achieve the government’s stated objectives.

In the end, the WB forecast underscores a central challenge facing the Philippines: sustaining economic growth is not enough.

The more difficult task is ensuring that growth becomes inclusive, resilient, and capable of lifting millions permanently out of poverty.

The report suggests that while progress is occurring, the pace remains too slow to achieve the administration’s ambitious poverty targets, and too many Filipinos remain vulnerable to setbacks that could reverse hard-won gains.

lic trust through accountability, service, results

lentless follow-through, not shortcuts. The conviction reflects a broader, healthier metric for success: results are measured not by the weight of the seizures alone, but by the ability to secure convictions and permanently dismantle criminal networks.

**Service Beyond the Badge**

Then came the earthquake.

When the magnitude 7.8 tremor struck parts of Mindanao, thousands of police officers shifted almost immediately from law enforcement to something closer to neighbors helping neighbors.

They joined rescue teams, distributed relief, secured evacuation areas, and worked alongside local governments to restore stability to shattered communities. Strikingly, many did this while their own stations and homes sustained severe damage.

That kind of response doesn’t flow simply from a top-down directive. It comes from a deeply ingrained understanding that showing up for the Filipino people—especially when your own world is shaking—is the core definition of the job.

**The Path Forward**

Accountability, operational results, and community service are not separate narratives.

They are threads of the exact same fabric: an institution that holds itself to the same standards it applies to the public, delivers on its mandates, and remains present when citizens are at their most vulnerable.

The PNP still faces real, deeply entrenched challenges. No honest assessment of our law enforcement landscape would suggest otherwise.

But leadership is measured not by the absence of problems, but by the political will to confront them head-on. Under General Nartatez, there is undeniable evidence that accountability is being enforced, reforms are being institutionalized, and tangible results are being delivered.

The work is far from finished. The shadows of the past are long. But the direction is undeniably clear—and for a public that has rightfully learned to be skeptical of its institutions, that is no small thing.

(The writer, *Chairman Emeritus of Alyansa ng Bantay sa Kapayapaan at Demokrasya, People’s Alliance for Democracy and Reforms, Liga Independencia Pilipinas, and the Filipinos Do Not Yield Movement, holds Juris Doctor, PhD, MNBA, MPA, and MBA degrees.*)

sparse with only the most basic of amenities available as Leila de Lima might like to attest.

Furthermore, in the case of former DPWH Secretary Manny Bonoan where-in his medical condition is precarious because of his many maladies, it is better for him to be in a hospital, house arrest or perhaps be granted bail while undergoing trial.

He won’t be going anywhere due to his advanced age and medical condition.

It is absolutely disgusting that Alcantara who lost P500-m in the casino and Bernardo are free while Bonoan is going to jail.

We are supposed to be a civilized nation and must act judiciously.



‘LIVING IN FEAR.’

A building is set alight in the Sandy Row area of Belfast city center, Northern Ireland, in Tuesday evening. Northern Ireland police appealed for calm after the stabbing in Belfast allegedly by a Sudanese suspect and captured in a graphic video prompted calls for anti-immigration protests from UK far-right figures. **AFP**



Protesters torch buildings, block roads over stabbing

BELFAST—Anti-immigration protesters torched buildings and vehicles in Belfast on Tuesday evening and blocked roads, a day after a stabbing allegedly by a Sudanese refugee, captured in a graphic video that shocked the country. Hundreds of protesters, many masked, gathered at several locations across Belfast, AFP journalists saw. A bus and several cars were set alight, while a building fringing the city center caught fire and its residents had to be evacuated. “By 7:30 pm they started (a) fire in the bins...we heard police cars and sirens,” said one resident, Eemran, an engineer of Indian origin who has been living in Belfast for slightly over a year.

“More and more people started coming, they started throwing petrol bombs. Suddenly the fire started going...we had smoke inside the building...fire people came in and they said ‘go down’,” he said in broken English. Camila, a 36-year-old Chilean who moved to Belfast a month ago, said it was “scary”. “Of course I’m not used to it,” she said. “I understand the people’s rage but also there are ways of discussing these things more peacefully”. Sky television showed other buildings on fire. Police helicopters patrolled above the city and shops were also closed early. Michelle O’Neill, the First Minister of Northern Ireland, slammed the protests and urged calm. **AFP**

Iran, US trade blows as deal draws no nearer

TEHRAN—Iran attacked US bases in Jordan and Bahrain on Wednesday, the latest salvo in tit-for-tat strikes with the United States

after the downing of a US helicopter over the Strait of Hormuz. The worst bout of fighting between Washington and Tehran since their April 8 ceasefire has cast further doubt on US President Donald Trump’s earlier claim that negotiations were in their “final throes” before reaching an enduring settlement to end the Middle East war. The fresh Iranian strikes came after the United States carried out its own attacks on the Islamic republic in response to Tehran shooting down an American helicopter. Iranian forces fired “long-range missiles” and “targeted and destroyed four

major targets” in Jordan, including F35 fighter nests at an air base and the US command centre in Al-Azraq, the country’s Revolutionary Guards said in a statement quoted by state-run IRNA news agency early on Wednesday. Jordan’s military said it shot down five missiles from Iran, with no casualties or material damage. The hostilities extended to other countries in the Middle East, with air raid sirens sounding in Bahrain after the Guards said they had struck another US base there. The Kuwaiti military said its air defences were engaging “hostile aerial targets”, without immediately mentioning the aggressor, though Iran has recently carried

out deadly attacks on the US ally. The incidents came after the US military said it had “completed” what Trump portrayed as a retaliatory assault on Iran over the downing of an Apache attack helicopter. US Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American forces in the Middle East, said on X that it had “struck Iranian air defense, ground control stations, and surveillance radar sites near the Strait of Hormuz with precision munitions from US Air Force and Navy fighter jets”. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had earlier threatened payback, saying on X: “The U.S. (has) opted to test our determination. Our Powerful Armed Forces will leave no attack or threat unanswered.” **AFP**

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Notice is hereby given that an “Affidavit of Self-Adjudication” has been executed by **MA. TERESA LLAVORE**, as sole heir of the late **CESAR LLAVORE**, who died intestate on December 21, 2020, under Doc. No. 260; Page No. 60; Book No. II; Series of 2025, executed before Atty. Alma E. Siapno – Cagungao, Notary Public for the Province of Rizal.

(MS-JUNE 4/11/18, 2026)

ERRATUM

In the RTC-Mandaluyong City re: **BDO UNIBANK INC., Mortgagor vs. JOANNA FRANCISCA FEDERICO FERMO, Debtor/Mortgagor**, published on **May 11, 18 & 25, 2026** the ffg., should have been read as follows:

1. The Debtor/Mortgagor name should have been read as **JOANNA FRANCISCA FEDERICO FERMO** NOT **JOANNA FRANSISCA FEDERICO FERMO** as published.

2. The **FRE-MC-26-2156** should have been read as **FRE-MC-26-2156**.

3. Under second paragraph the word **embrace** should have been read as **embraces** and not as published. Our apology.

(MStandard - June 11, 2026)

Career Opportunity in Hitachi Digital Payment Solutions Philippines, Inc.

Position title: IT Technical Consultant

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- Develop and Maintain applications based on client requirements
- Troubleshoot and prepare patches for application bugs
- Conduct unit testing and performance testing on applications
- Provide technical support for the Live system.
- Closely working with project team to develop applications throughout their life cycle according to the coding standards and best practices.
- Tackle challenging functional and technical problems independently.

Qualification (Education, Experience, Professional License, Skills Certification, Specialized Training):

- Knowledgeable in Java tools and technologies

Applications may be sent to:  
Name of Company HR Atty. Consuelo Cruz  
Email address: consuelo.cruz@hitachi-dps.com

Company/ Employer

Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name:  
Hitachi Digital Payment Solutions Philippines, Inc.

Name: Chareka Lakmal Weerasinghe Arachchige  
Address: Makati City  
Nationality: Sri Lankan  
Intended period of employment: one (1) years

Complete address:  
Unit 31D, 31/F Rufino Pacific Tower, 6784 Ayala Avenue San Lorenzo Makati City

Nature of business: a domestic corporation primarily engaged in the business of selling software applications and other related software products and services.

Hitachi Digital Payment Solutions Philippines, Inc. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.

Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired for, may file an objection at Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila after this publication.

Please inform Department of Labor and Employment –NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national

Pakistan carries out new deadly strikes on Afghanistan—officials

KHOST, Afghanistan—Pakistani strikes killed at least 12 people in Afghanistan near their border, Afghan government officials and local sources said Wednesday, the deadliest in weeks and following a period of relative calm. “Last night, the Pakistani military once again violated Afghanistan’s airspace and bombed civilian homes in the provinces of Kunar, Khost, and Paktika,” Afghan government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid wrote on X. “As a result of these attacks, 11 children, one woman, and one elderly man were killed.” An official in Khost province who requested anonymity told AFP a house in Spera district was struck, killing nine people and wounding 10 others. In neighboring Paktika province, two residents said a separate attack killed three civilians in Barmal district. The strike hit a home, and those killed were children, one of the residents said. Pakistan’s military and the prime minister’s office did not immediately respond to AFP’s request for comment, but Islamabad has repeatedly said strikes on Afghanistan are aimed at militants who have carried out attacks on its territory and that it does not deliberately target civilians. The strikes are the deadliest in weeks and follow a period of relative calm at the border after conflict between the two countries erupted in late February. An escalation saw fierce fighting along the frontier and unprecedented Pakistani airstrikes on Afghan cities—including the capital, Kabul, and southern Kandahar, where the supreme leader is based. At least 372 Afghan civilians were killed and 397 others wounded in that conflict in the first three months of this year, a United Nations report published last month said. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been fraught since the Taliban took power for a second time in 2021. Security issues have proved a sticking point, especially Pakistan’s demand that Afghanistan curb the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan militant group. **AFP**



**ALLEGATIONS DENIED.** People visit the pop-up exhibit ‘Donald J. Trump and Jeffrey Epstein Memorial Reading Room’ where 3,437 bound volumes of the ‘Epstein Files’ are on display in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, Manila time. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates was set to face questioning Wednesday (Thursday, Manila time) from US lawmakers over his relationship with Epstein, whose network of wealthy and powerful associates has fueled years of scrutiny and conspiracy theories. **AFP**

US expects to finish Mexican wall by 2027

WASHINGTON, DC—The United States expects to complete President Donald Trump’s long-promised southern border wall by late 2027, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Rodney Scott said Tuesday. The barrier along the US-Mexico border is made of reinforced metal beams and is intended to run from San Diego to the Gulf of Mexico, except in selected areas “where we’ve made a conscious decision that we don’t need it,” Scott said at the Center for Immigration Studies event in Washington. “The primary border wall will be done by the end of 2027,” he said.

“There’s a couple of gaps,” Scott said. “The only places we’re not building a border wall is places where we’ve made a conscious decision that we don’t need it. Big Bend National Park, for example—super remote area, some very, very high cliffs.” The wall will be supplemented by electronic surveillance and other devices, which would be installed by “about July, maybe at the latest August 2028,” Scott said. The long stretch of the Rio Grande along the border of Texas, which runs more than 1,200 miles (1,900 km) between the two countries, will have its own physical barriers. **AFP**

IN BRIEF

Saudi’s new nat’l carrier gets off ground despite war

RIYADH—Saudi Arabia launched its second national carrier Riyadh Air after more than a year of delays on Wednesday, defying the economic turmoil triggered by the Middle East war and strong competition from established Gulf airlines. A London-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Riyadh Air’s white and lavender livery took off at 2:30am (2330 GMT Tuesday), putting in motion a flagship project in Saudi Arabia’s push to reduce its economic reliance on oil. Riyadh Air, the country’s second state-owned airline after Jeddah-based Saudia, is meant to help turn the Saudi capital into a global hub to rival Dubai, the world’s busiest for international passengers. “We want to bring glamour, we want to bring refinement, we want to bring grace back,” Riyadh Air CEO Tony Douglas told AFP. The launch, originally planned for 2025, was set back by delivery delays from Boeing, which has suffered a series of manufacturing and safety problems in recent years. It also follows unprecedented attacks from Iran, which has fired thousands of drones and missiles at Gulf targets including airports, casting the wealthy region into sudden economic uncertainty. But, for Douglas, ex-CEO of Abu Dhabi’s Etihad airline, the inaugural flight is “the culmination of four years’ worth of preparation.” **AFP**

SoKor University students protest in ballot shortage row

SEOUL—University students across South Korea staged protests on Wednesday as anger grew over ballot paper shortages at recent local elections. Dozens of polling stations nationwide were short of around 7,000 ballot papers on June 3 election day, official data showed. The supplies were eventually replenished on voting day, but the mishap fuelled fury in a nation where unfounded claims of vote tampering have found a growing audience. The local election was the first nationwide vote since President Lee Jae Myung took office following conservative Yoon Suk Yeol’s ouster over his brief martial law declaration in late 2024. Lee’s ruling liberal Democratic Party won most races in the vote for mayors, local government officials and assembly members, but failed to flip the critical Seoul mayoral seat. The head of the election watchdog has resigned over the ballot paper row, but authorities have not offered to hold a new vote, sparking huge protests at the weekend. Student unions at 18 universities said they will hold new demonstrations from 6 pm Wednesday. “We are determined to protest because people are universally outraged regardless of political affiliation,” Hwang In-seo of Yonsei University’s student council, told AFP. Analysts say the National Election Commission, a constitutional body with limited external oversight, has long faced gaps in internal discipline and review mechanisms. **AFP**

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Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

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Name: Aravindha Mahabaleswara Bhat

Complete Address: Plant C & D Champaca Street, Barangay Fortune, Parang, Marikina City

Address: Taguig City

Nationality: Turkish

Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) Years

Nature Of Business: Wholesale And Retail Trade; Manufacturing

Company hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.



FIGHT FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE.

Members of civil society organizations and stakeholders dismantle a symbolic octopus called 'Kraken of Destruction' during a protest outside the 21st Asia Clean Energy Forum 2026 in Mandaluyong City. The rallyists denounce the Asian Development Bank's continued financing of fossil fuel projects and extractive industries which they say worsen climate impacts and threaten communities, and call for climate justice, an end to fossil fuel investments, and a just, people-centered energy transition grounded in community-led renewable energy solution. Manny Palmero



Customs seizes P86.6-m worth of abandoned Chinese onions

By Vito Barcelo and Joel E. Zurbano

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) has seized 26 unclaimed containers of fresh red onions from China valued at P86.684 million.

Meanwhile, Senator Francis Pangilinan called for improved protections for local farmers in remarks made during an inspection of the 26 containers of smuggled red onions from China.

This inspection took place at the Manila International Container Port on Wednesday, with the presence of officials from the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Customs, and Bureau of Plant Industry.

Customs Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno said the shipments consisted of 72,215 bags of fresh red onions weighing 650,000 kilograms.

The cargo was estimated at P86,684,000, exclusive of duties and taxes computed at P9.648 million.

The discovery resulted from a verification conducted by the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service-Manila International Container Port (CIIS-MICP) in coordination with the Manila International Container Port (MICP) under District Collector Atty. Geoffrey De Vera IV and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

The BPI confirmed that import permits had been issued for the shipments but noted that the consignee failed to process and release the cargo. Due to the prolonged storage period, the agency said the quality and integrity of the onions may have deteriorated, making them unfit for human consumption.

The BPI also recommended against releasing the shipments to the local market, citing the ongoing peak harvest season for local onion farmers.

Further verification showed that the shipments had unclaimed and unpaid entries, prompting the issuance of an abandonment decree under Section 1129, paragraphs c and d, of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA).

DSWD intends to feed 1.8m kids nationwide through SFP

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)'s Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) aims to enroll more than 1.8 million children in Local Government Unit (LGU)-run Children Development Centers (CDCs) and Supervised Neighborhood Play (SNP) programs to be implemented across the country starting Monday, June 15.

The SFP, also known as Batang Nutri-Care, provides nutritious hot meals over a 180-day period to children aged three to five years.

Director Alfrey Gulla of the DSWD Protective Services Bureau (PSB) said the number of children to undergo the feeding program this year was expected to surpass the figures recorded in 2025.

"More children will be served by our supplemen-

tary feeding program this year compared to last year because of increased budget allocation and the extension of support from 120 days to 180 days. As of now, we allocated a total amount of 8.5 billion pesos to feed some 1,620 local government units (LGUs) nationwide," Gulla said.

Additionally, the program supplies milk or fresh milk-based products to areas with high

prevalence of undernourished children and poverty, Gulla said.

The program also distributes indigenous or locally produced food to children aged 2 to 4 years participating in the SNP.

According to Gulla, 74.63 percent of the undernourished children served last year demonstrated an improved nutritional status.

The DSWD targets to surpass this percentage as part of the government's initiative in fighting stunting, malnutrition, and even involuntary hunger.

"This achievement reflects the commitment of DSWD to fight malnutrition and hunger that may be experienced by many Filipino children. This is also proof that the DSWD adheres to the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 to boost child nutrition in the country," he emphasized.

IN BRIEF

Private firm donates Tanauan bldg to PRC

A PRIVATELY owned company on Tuesday donated a building in Tanauan, Batangas to be used as headquarters of the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) in the city.

Former senator Richard Gordon accepted the donation in his capacity as PRC chairman and CEO from Felcaster Torres, president and general manager of Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing Inc.

"I am not here to accept a building or a monument. I am here to celebrate the life of a great person who is a humanitarian at heart and who leads by example. We should show how a great Filipino is heralded not by his wealth but for his effort," Gordon said.

The donated three-storey building was established in memory of Feliciano Torres who passed away in 2020. **Pot Chavez**

Over 12k Isabela farmers receive cash aid from DA

MORE than 12,000 rice farmers in Isabela have received cash subsidies under the Department of Agriculture's Presidential Assistance for Farmers and Fisherfolk Program.

The two-day ayuda payout was led by Isabela 2nd District Rep. Ed Christopher Go and counselor Ed Christian Go.

The assistance aims to help defray the farmers expenses for the upcoming cropping season and strengthen food security in the Cagayan Valley region.

"Farmers are the true heroes of every Filipino table. They wake up before dawn, till the land under the heat of the sun, and plant the rice that feeds every Filipino family," Rep. Go said in his opening remark.

"This payout is more than assistance; it is recognition of their sacrifice, their resilience, and their vital role in keeping our communities fed and our economy strong. It is proof that government stands with them, from planting to harvest and beyond," he added. **Jessica M. Bacud**

Bill aims to name Islam converts rep in NCMF

A BILL seeking to guarantee dedicated representation for Islamic converts by adding a specific commissioner to the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos was introduced on Wednesday by Senator Robinhood Padilla.

Senate Bill 604, also known as the Balik-Islam Commissioner Act, proposes to amend the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos Act of 2009 to include a leader from the convert sector into the regulatory body.

"It is important for the Balik-Islam sector to have direct representation in order to better convey their experiences, needs, and perspectives on matters related to faith, education, livelihood, and community development," Padilla said. **Ram Superable**

Comelec sets special legislative election for Dasmariñas City

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) has scheduled a special election on

Aug. 29, 2026 to fill the vacant congressional seat in the lone legislative district of

Dasmariñas City, Cavite following the expulsion of congressman Francisco Barzaga

from the House of Representatives.

Comelec chairman George Erwin Garcia announced Wednesday that the poll body approved the conduct of the special poll after the House formally declared the seat vacant earlier this month. The winning candidate will serve the remainder of Barzaga's term.

Garcia said the election date complies with legal requirements that special elections for vacancies in the House of Representatives be held not earlier than 60 days and not later than 90 days from the occurrence of the vacancy.

He added that the Comelec has already informed Malacañang of the funding requirements for the exercise, estimated at around P191 million.

The vacancy arose after the House of Representatives voted on June 2 to expel Barzaga for what lawmakers described as "disruptive" and "disorderly" behavior, as well as conduct unbecoming of a member of Congress. The expulsion was approved by an overwhelming vote of 265 lawmakers in favor, with 14 opposing and eight abstaining.

Following the expulsion, Dasmariñas City has been left without representation in the House, prompting Comelec to move forward with preparations for a special election to ensure that the district's more than 400,000 registered voters regain congressional representation.

The Comelec is expected to release the calendar of activities, including the filing of certificates of candidacy and campaign period, in the coming weeks. **Vito Barcelo**



CLERGY WEIGHS IN ON SENATE MESS. Members of the Kingdom Keepers led by Fr. Robert Reyes of the Clergy for Good Governance, along with the Faith-Based Groups, hold a press conference where they urged the senators to cease squabbling and do their mandated tasks of legislation. **Manny Palmero**

Hit-and-run SUV driver turns self in at HPG headquarters

By Vince Lopez

THE Philippine National Police-Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG) on Wednesday reported the voluntary surrender of the driver of a sports utility van who allegedly hit a HPG member at the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) on June 6.

HPG director Brig. Gen. Rommel Batangan said that the 21-year-old Filipino-Indian national from Marikina City, together with his parents, showed up at the HPG headquarters in Camp Crame on Tuesday.

"Based on our interview yesterday when he was here with his parents on why didn't he stop after hitting someone, he claimed he was scared, and he panicked. Even so, we told him that he has accountability for what he

did because he ran away, it just aggravated it so it's a good thing that his parents are cooperative and his mother said she didn't know her son was involved in the accident," Batangan said during a press briefing.

Batangan also said that the sports utility vehicle, was posted online by the driver to be sold, and was brought to a repair shop in Antipolo for repair works.

According to him, they traced the location of the affected vehicle also through the internet.

"We have information obtained from our intelligence assets, and they have provided information," he said.

The HPG director also said that suspect had apologized to the victim, Pat. Jeric Aya-ay who had decided to press charges for physical injury and damage to property.



TOWARD A STRONGER FUTURE. The Armed Forces of the Philippines inaugurates the BAHAYANI Child Development Center (CDC) in a gesture of reaffirming its commitment to strengthening the foundation of the AFP community for the future. First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos graces the event, together with AFP chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. and members of the AFP Officers' Ladies Club, Inc. chaired by Mrs. Melody Mariele Brawner. **PAO/AFP**



# Alas faces Taipei as AVC Cup semis race intensifies

CITY OF CANDON — Alas Pilipinas finds itself in a precarious situation as it faces Chinese Taipei, its semifinal hopes no longer entirely in its own hands as the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) Women’s Volleyball Cup returns to action on Thursday at the Candon City Arena.

With two wins against two losses, the Philippines sits third in Pool A with seven points.

But Korea and Chinese Taipei already have nine points each after winning their three matches, while Australia has five points with two matches to play in the preliminaries.



The clearest path for Alas Pilipinas is to defeat Chinese Taipei convincingly; a straight-sets win or four-set victory would earn them the maximum of three points and raise their total to 10.

If Korea sweeps its next two assignments against Australia and Chinese Taipei, the Philippines would be in a strong position to reach the semifinals.

The top two teams from each pool advance to the semifinals, while the remaining teams move on to the classification round.

But even teams that fall short of the medal rounds still have plenty to play for.

Every match in the 12-nation tournament presented by the Philippine Sports Commission and the City of Candon headed by Mayor Eric D. Singson counts toward the FIVB World Rankings, making each result crucial for qualification and seedings in future international tournaments.

Skipper Alyssa Valdez says Alas Pilipinas will hold nothing back.

# Lawyers offer free legal aid to Baterbonias

By Randy M. Caluag

A GROWING number of legal experts have offered free legal services to the family of late Ateneo basketball player Rene “Bobet” Baterbonia as they consider pursuing legal action following his death in a drowning incident during a team-building activity.

Agusan del Sur Governor Santiago Barriga Cane Jr. said several lawyers have reached out to signify their willingness to represent the Baterbonia family pro bono, or free of charge, should they decide to seek justice in court.

“The number of lawyers who have reached out to me signifying their intention to represent the family of the late Rene ‘Bobet’ Baterbonia in finding justice for his death is growing,” Cane said in a social media post, bringing in Jimmy Bondoc and Atty. Israelito Torreon to support the family’s legal team in their hometown of Talacogon.

Among those who have volunteered their services are Israelito Torreon and his law firm, as well as Iris Pauline Taganas-Bacaltos. Cane added that other lawyers have also expressed interest but have yet to give consent for their names to be made public.

Baterbonia, 19, and 21-year-old foreign student-athlete Divine Adili died during a water activity held as part of the Ateneo men’s basketball team’s training in Dipaculao, Aurora. The incident has sparked widespread concern over athlete safety and supervision during team activities.



Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Barriga Cane Jr.(left) with Rovelyn Baterbonia. **Screen grab from Santi Cane Jr. FB**



# Zaragosa, Sajuela nail JPGT Elite Final spots

BACOLOD City—Precious Zaragosa completed a big late-season surge, securing a wire-to-wire victory in the ICTSI Negros JPGT Championship at the Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club here on Wednesday to book her spot in the upcoming Junior PGT Elite Grand Finals.

By winning the final two legs of the six-stage Visayas-Mindanao Series, the rising Davaoeña star rocketed from the middle of the standings to a joint-first finish. She and Tashanah Balangauan will headline a formidable South team in the girls’ 15-18 division, setting up a highly anticipated, Ryder Cup-style showdown against the North side this August in Cagayan de Oro.

Ranked fifth overall after her victory at the Pueblo de Oro leg last month, Zaragosa’s commanding performance at the par-70 Marapara layout this week propelled her to the top of the leaderboard.

She finished with 42 points, tying Cebuana standout Balangauan, who

had already secured the first finals berth.

Zaragosa closed out her dominant Negros run with a final-round 74 for a 13-over-par 223 total over 54 holes.

In the boys’ final, Cebuano Sebastian Sajuela turned what had appeared to be a down-to-the-wire battle into a cruising victory. Facing off against Del Monte’s Clement Ordeneza in hot and humid conditions, Sajuela clinched a two-stroke win, finishing with a 75 for a 224 total despite a double-bogey mishap on No. 18.

Apple Gotiong pulled to within two strokes off Zaragosa after an impressive frontside 36, putting pressure on the two-day leader. After storming to a six-shot lead after 36 holes, Zaragosa faltered early, wavering with four bogeys in the first eight holes.

She, however, snapped her skid with a crucial birdie on the ninth, regaining her composure with a string of pars to start the back nine. She pulled away by six again as Gotiong hobbled with three straight bogeys from No. 11.

Precious Zaragosa’s commanding performance at the par-70 Marapara layout this week propelled her to the top of the leaderboard. **Manny Marcelo**

# NBI to investigate drowning deaths of 2 Ateneo cagers

By Pot Chavez, Vince Lopez and Cherrie Anne E. Villahermosa

THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) will conduct an investigation into the drowning incident that claimed the lives of Ateneo de Manila University basketball players Divine Adili and Rene Baterbonia during a team-building activity in Dipaculao, Aurora.

In a statement on Wednesday, the Department of Justice said the NBI Central Office had been directed to create a special task force to carry out a “thorough, comprehensive, and impartial investigation” into the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

“As part of its investigation, the NBI will determine whether there is sufficient basis to recommend the filing of charges before the

DOJ,” the department said.

The DOJ stressed its commitment to ensuring that all facts surrounding the incident are established and that justice is served.

The move came as local authorities released initial findings on the deaths of the two athletes.

Aurora Provincial Police Office director Col. Percival Pineda said the post-mortem examination conducted on Baterbonia showed that the cause of death was “asphyxia by drowning.”

“Base sa hawak namin na certificate of post-mortem examination, lumalabas na asphyxia by drowning ‘yung result,’” Pineda said during a video conference with reporters.

The police investigation revealed that members of the Ateneo team arrived at the resort for a team-building activity and requested privacy from resort personnel during their stay.

“Humingi ‘yung grupo na maging private ‘yung lakad kaya hindi natin masasabi kung ano ang nangyari sa kanila sa may tabing dagat,’” Pineda said.

Authorities said Adili and Baterbonia were reported missing after entering the waters near the shoreline at around 2:30 p.m. Their bodies were eventually found about five meters from shore af-

ter a search that lasted between 30 and 40 minutes.

Based on accounts gathered by investigators, strong waves and currents may have contributed to the tragedy.

Pineda also revealed that resort management had informed the group that the waters directly in front of the property were considered safe and monitored by lifeguards. However, the players reportedly moved approximately 300 meters away from the designated area.

Philippine National Police spokesperson Col. Allen Rae Co said investigators have so far found no indication of foul play, but authorities are still determining whether negligence or liability on the part of any individual or institution may have played a role.

“Wala pong magiging takipan. Everything will be transparent. Ilalabas natin resulta ng investigation,” Co said.

Calls for a deeper investigation have also gained support outside Metro Manila.

In Davao del Norte, the 20th Sangguniang Panlalawigan passed a resolution urging the NBI and other concerned agencies to conduct a transparent, impartial, and comprehensive probe into the deaths of Baterbonia and Adili.

# Bata, Django, Dela Cruz lead coaching staff of new billiards NSA

POOL legends Efren “Bata” Reyes and Francisco “Django” Bustamante and carom ace Francisco dela Cruz banner the coaching staff of the newly-formed national sports association National League for Billiard Sports of the Philippines (NLBSPH).

The NLBSPH replaced the Billiards Sports Congress of the Philippines (BSCP), which the Asian Confederation of Billiard Sports suspended for its failure to hold regular elections and conflicts of interest.

The Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) took over as “caretaker” of the NSA until the BSCP eventually failed to comply with instructions from its continental confederation, leading to its dissolution as a duly-recognized federation of the POC.

“We are very serious in bringing back the luster of Filipino billiards,” said NLBSPH president Atty. Wharton Chan, also secretary-general of the POC, during the NLBSPH’s general assembly



The legends and stars of Philippine pool and their support are in attendance for the general assembly—(standing, from left) Francis Irang (team staff), Carlo Biado, Richard (trainer), AJ Manas, Alfredo Ferrer (executive director), Francisco de la Cruz, Basil Hassan Alshajjar, Reyna Maria Legaspi, Carmille Buhat, Rubilen Amit, Michael Angelo Mengorio, Sofia Yvanca Rosales, Rhaki Roj Constantino, Charles Ladiana, Johann Chua—and with them are (seated, from left) Dr. Paulo Pagteilan Jr., Atty. Wharton Chan, Kevin Wong, G.O.A.T. Efren ‘Bata’ Reyes and POC president Abraham ‘Bambol’ Tolentino. **NLBSPH Photo**

at the Solaire Theater in Pasay City on Wednesday.

“We are optimistic the programs we are laying down will put the Philippines back where it is supposed to be in world billiards,” Chan added.

Gracing the general assembly are the stars of Philippine pool Carlo Biado (pocket), AJ Manas (pocket), Alfredo Ferrer, Basil Hassan Alshajjar (snooker), Reyna Maria Legaspi (snooker), Carmille Buhat

(snooker), Rubilen Amit (pocket), Michael Angelo Mengorio (snooker), Sofhia Yvanca Rosales (pocket), Rhaki Roj Constantino (pocket), Charles Ladiana (pocket) and Johann Chua (pocket).

# Ubas extends reign as PH’s long-jump king

By Jeremiah Sevilla

CAPAS, Tarlac—National team veteran Janny Ubas remained as the undisputed king of long jump in the ICTSI Philippine Athletics Championships.

Up against youth gold medalists, Ubas picked up his seventh straight gold medal and ninth overall in the last decade after leaping 7.61 meters on his first attempt in the men’s long jump final on Wednesday at the New Clark City Athletics Stadium here.

The 32-year-old Asian Championships bronze medalist, representing the Philippine Army in this year’s iteration presented by the Philippine Sports Commission, beat his national squad mentee Kent Francis Jardin with 7.43m and De La Salle University’s UAAP champion Joshua Patorara with 7.36m.

The Southeast Asian Games 2023 gold winner achieved his season-best so far, surpassing his 7.40m mark in the Singapore Open Track & Field Championships last April, wherein he nabbed a bronze mint.

“Masaya ako dahil season-best agad sa first jump pa lang kasi noong last time na naglaro ako sa Singapore, nakakuha ako ng 7.40m at sa last jump ko pa ‘yon nagawa,” said Ubas, who holds the 8.08m national record he set during the decathlon event in the Cambodia SEA Games.

“Siguro ‘yong advantage ko dito ‘yong home court kasi wala na masyadong travel, then medyo nakapag-prepare ako nang maayos,” he added.

After extending his reign in the National Open, the SEAG multi-medalist is looking to maintain his form heading to the Korea

Athletics Open slated June 20 to 21.

Another national squad standout in Yacine Guer mali stretched his dominance in the meet co-presented by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) as the Filipino-Moroccan trackster clinched his third consecutive 5,000-meter gold.

The SEA Games 2025 double silver winner Guer mali broke away in the first 400 meters and never looked back, stopping the clock in 14 minutes and 15.34 seconds and shattering his previous meet record of 14:18.33 in the 2024 edition in Pasig City.

“I talked to my coach and we said it was a good time to really come here and put up a better time than the one I ran in 2024,” said the 26-year-old distance runner, who made the most out of his only event in the five-day tilt.



Janny Ubas of the Philippine Army soars to 7.61 meters to win the Gold in the long jump competition of the ICTSI Philippine Athletics Championship 2026 at the New Clark City Track and Field Stadium, Capas Tarlac. **PSC-PATAFA Photo**





PLDT, KKR to resolve issues on Maya IPO

B3



German firm raising P12.6b for solar plant

B4

DOE hikes EV penetration goal to 60% by 2040

By Alena Mae S. Flores

THE government is pushing for a more aggressive shift toward green transportation to raise electric vehicle penetration to 60 percent of the country's total fleet by 2040 and 80 percent by 2050 to cut its exposure to volatile oil imports.

The Department of Energy's draft plan raises previous targets of 50 percent EV penetration by 2040 and 60 percent by 2050. The policy shift comes as ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East threaten domestic energy security.

The proposal also calls for significantly higher biofuel use, targeting up to an 80-percent ethanol blend and a 50-percent biodiesel blend. The new figures represent a substantial leap from the previous voluntary targets of a 20-percent ethanol blend and a 5-percent biodiesel blend under the Philippine Energy Plan 2023–2050 clean energy scenario.

DOE officials said the proposed increase in biofuel blending will require careful consideration of feedstock availability and its implications on domestic pricing.

Department of Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said during a Management Association of the Philippines energy forum that the transport sector remains the primary focus of the new fuel transition plan due to its heavy reliance on petroleum products.

Garin said key interventions include accelerating EV adoption, increasing biofuel blending requirements, expanding railway infrastructure, promoting sustainable aviation fuels, developing alternative maritime fuels and exploring hydrogen fuel cell technologies for heavy-duty transport.

For non-transport sectors, the plan focuses on fuel switching, energy efficiency improvements and the adoption of cleaner technologies across households, industry, services, agriculture and off-grid power generation.

The measures are intended to gradually reduce dependence on diesel and other petroleum-based fuels while supporting a broader transition toward cleaner and more sustainable energy sources.



PH banks outlook deteriorating—Fitch

By Thony Rose Lesaca

FITCH Ratings downgraded its sector outlook for Philippine banks to “deteriorating” from “neutral” as rising energy prices caused by global geopolitical tensions fuel inflation and slow economic growth.

The global rating agency said weaker domestic demand and tighter policy settings will likely drive credit deterioration in the more vulnerable markets of the Asia-Pacific region.

“In the Philippines, significantly higher inflation is hurting a consumption-led economy. We also expect weaker loan growth, higher credit costs and lower operating profitability, even if higher rates provide some support to margins,” Fitch said.

Elevated energy prices and slowing growth are creating uneven credit

conditions across Asia-Pacific banking systems, the agency said.

The region remains vulnerable to rising inflation and weaker economic activity amid the ongoing US-Iran conflict because of its heavy reliance on oil and gas imports from the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The situation has led to downward sector outlook revisions for banks in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, Fitch said.

Meanwhile, resilient growth across China and Hong Kong, alongside easing deflationary pressure in China,

supported revisions to “neutral” for those markets.

Domestic regulators are also tracking internal pressures. The financial system remained stable last year, but regulators should boost coordination to tackle growing risks from property prices, conglomerate debt and unsecured consumer loans, the Financial Stability Coordination Council (FSCC) said in its 2025 annual report.

While banks maintain sufficient capital to absorb unexpected losses and continue lending, the council highlighted pockets of vulnerability that require close monitoring. Leverage has increased across several sectors, with the council flagging elevated real estate prices, concentrated lending to large conglomerates and a rapid growth in credit card debt as key domestic risks. External shocks, including cyber threats and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, also pose risks.



**SUSTAINABLE LIVING.** Recognizing the growing role of private sector innovation in nation-building, Trade and Industry Secretary Cristina Roque engages with architect Kaydee Marie Velasco on initiatives that promote sustainable living, inclusive growth and long-term investment opportunities. Discussions also provided an avenue to explore opportunities for local economic development and collaboration in support of thriving communities and resilient local economies. **Source: DTI**

Spot electricity prices jumped 40% in May—IEMOP

AVERAGE systemwide spot electricity prices surged nearly 40 percent in May 2026 as intense heat and unexpected power plant shutdowns triggered a sharp spike in demand, the market operator said Wednesday.

The systemwide average price climbed to P7.79 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) from P5.63 per kWh in April, after high temperatures shrank the country's power supply margin.

The Independent Electricity Market Operator of the Philippines (IEMOP)

reported that overall demand jumped 9.4 percent to 15,755 megawatts (MW), outpacing a modest 2.7-percent increase in supply to 21,374 MW.

The price surge followed the May 1 lifting of a market suspension by the Energy Regulatory Commission. The regulator had capped the administered price at P5.63 per kWh since March 26 to shelter consumers from volatile global energy costs linked to Middle East tensions.

Regional power grids felt the squeeze

unevenly, with the central Visayas islands suffering the worst price shocks.

Visayas electricity prices soared 81.4 percent to P10.20 per kWh from P5.63 per kWh in April. Grid operators struggled with a razor-thin buffer as regional supply sat at 2,360 MW against a peak demand of 2,178 MW.

“We also had a lot of forced outages and these forced outages are very evident in Visayas,” IEMOP trading operations vice-president Isidro Cacho said. **Alena Mae S. Flores**

Boeing supplier signs 25-year lease in Clark

By Darwin G. Amojelar and Othel V. Campos

CLARK International Airport Corp. (CIAC) has signed a 25-year lease agreement with Heatcon Asia Inc. to establish an aerospace manufacturing and repair facility in Clark Freeport, the state-run firm said.

The deal allows Heatcon, a global provider of composite repair solutions and a supplier to Boeing, to build a manufacturing, material distribution and in-shop composite repair facility within the Clark Civil Aviation Complex.

CIAC president and chief executive Jojit Alcazar said the partnership

aligns with government mandates to drive high-value industrial growth.

“This investment represents a significant milestone in Clark's continued emergence as a leading aviation and aerospace hub,” Alcazar said.

“Heatcon's facilities support major aviation players in the region, including Boeing, and are expected to further strengthen Clark's position as an attractive destination for aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul [MRO] services,” he said.

CIAC is looking to capture rising regional demand for aircraft maintenance as global commercial and military fleets expand.

**FERRY WI-FI.**  
The Free WiFi for All Program continues its mission of providing inclusive and reliable connectivity services for all, with the installation of connectivity at the Pasig River Ferry Service, operated by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). The provision of reliable connectivity in various transport hubs remains a key focus of the program, ensuring that transportation systems in Metro Manila remain efficient, connected and accessible to the public, according to the Department of Information and Communications Technology. **Source: DICT.**

\$1.717 billion

FDI inflows in Q1 of 2026

\$2.068 billion

FDI inflows in Q1 of 2025

\$7.79 billion

Total FDI inflows in 2025

Net FDI inflows dropped to 1.7b in first quarter

NET foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the Philippines fell to \$1.717 billion in the first quarter of 2026 from \$2.068 billion a year ago, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) data showed, as a drop in debt instruments offset gains in equity capital placements.

The BSP said that from January to March 2026, foreign equity and reinvested earnings remained broadly steady, indicating continued investors' confidence in the country.

Net FDI inflows in the quarter included \$1.175 billion in net debt instruments, which fell from \$1.52 billion a year earlier.

Reinvested earnings declined to \$206 million from \$251 million, while equity capital placements rose to \$337 million from \$298 million.

Japan, the United States and Singapore supplied the bulk of the equity capital placements, which went largely into the manufacturing, financial and insurance, and real estate industries.

The first-quarter contraction follows a broader downward trend, with net FDI inflows reaching \$7.79 billion in 2025, down from \$9.4 billion in 2024.

The BSP compiles its FDI statistics based on the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, 6th Edition (BPM6).

Under this standard, FDI includes investment by a nonresident direct investor in a resident enterprise where the foreign equity capital is at least 10 percent.

Thony Rose Lesaca



**CRITICAL MINERALS.** Graciela Marie Juatco, assistant chief of the Board of Investments' (BOI) Resource-Based Industries Service, presents the Philippines' critical minerals potential, investment opportunities and investment support mechanisms during Session 1 of the International Investment Forum on Critical Minerals held on June 4 to 5, 2026. The BOI underscored investment opportunities in the country's critical mineral sector during the International Investment Forum on Critical Minerals, held from June 4 to 5, 2026.





Republic of the Philippines  
PROVINCE OF RIZAL  
City of Antipolo

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL TREASURER

NOTICE OF AUCTION OF SALE OF DELINQUENT REAL PROPERTIES

Pursuant to Section 260 & 263 of RA 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, the undersigned will sell at the public auction on July 23, 2026, Thursday, 9:00 a.m. at the Ynares Event Center, Ynares Center Complex, Brgy. San Roque, City of Antipolo, Province of Rizal, the real properties herein enumerated below in lot which are hereby certified to be delinquent in the payment of real property taxes and penalties due thereon as of this date to wit:

Declared Owner	Tax Declaration Number	OCT/TCT No.	Kind of Property	Area (sq.m.)	Location of Property	Assessed Value	Years Delinquent	Total Delinquencies as of 2026	Cost Of Sale	Total Tax Due
MUNICIPALITY OF MONTALBAN										
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41381	346105	L/Res	67.30	San Jose	41,460.00	1998-2026	22,807.88	3,000.00	25,807.88
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41390	346114	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41391	346115	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41392	346116	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41393	346117	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41394	346118	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41395	346119	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41396	346120	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41397	346121	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41398	346122	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41399	346123	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41400	346124	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41401	346125	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41402	346126	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41403	346127	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41404	346128	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41405	346129	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41406	346130	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41407	346131	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41408	346132	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41409	346133	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41413	346137	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41414	346138	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41416	346140	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41420	346144	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41421	346145	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41422	346146	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41423	346147	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41424	346148	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41426	346150	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41428	346152	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41429	346153	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41430	346154	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41431	346155	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41432	346156	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41433	346157	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41434	346158	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41435	346159	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41436	346160	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41437	346161	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41438	346162	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41439	346163	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41440	346164	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41441	346165	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41442	346166	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41443	346167	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41444	346168	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41445	346169	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41447	346171	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41448	346172	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41450	346174	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41453	346177	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41454	346178	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41455	346179	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-41456	346180	L/Res	64.60	San Jose	39,790.00	1998-2026	21,890.18	3,000.00	24,890.18
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42198	345269	L/Res	65.00	San Jose	40,040.00	1998-2026	22,030.46	3,000.00	25,030.46
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42222	345298	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42251	345322	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42252	345323	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42253	345324	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42255	345326	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42256	345327	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42257	345328	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42258	345329	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42259	345330	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42260	345332	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42310	345382	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42311	345383	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42342	345482-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42343	345483-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42344	345485-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42345	345486-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42346	345487-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42347	345493-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22,400.00	1998-2026	12,323.52	3,000.00	15,323.52
Philippine Veterans Bank	18-R-010-42348	345494-A	L/Res	40.00	San Jose	22				



<sup>2</sup> Only the email used for registration may be admitted to the actual online meeting





**CLIMATE PRIORITIES.** Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan meets with Climate Change Commission (CCC) vice-chairperson and executive director Robert Borje on June 9, 2026 to discuss key climate and development priorities. Balisacan and Borje tackled the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the country's roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening climate action. They also discussed strategies to accelerate its implementation across key sectors and align national policies with climate targets.

## GSIS, housing agencies provide Mindanao assistance

THE Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the housing agencies announced financial relief packages and housing loan moratoriums for people affected by a magnitude 7.8 earthquake in Mindanao.

GSIS president and general-manager Jose Arnulfo Veloso said during a stakeholders' dialogue that the state pension fund set aside P15.1 billion in emergency assistance for 608,343 members and pensioners. Veloso said the agency will fast-track insurance claims of government agencies whose properties sustained damage.

"Our thoughts are with our fellow Filipinos in Mindanao affected by this powerful earthquake," Veloso said.

"The GSIS is ready to provide accessible financial relief to help our members, pensioners, and partner

government agencies recover and rebuild," he said.

Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling also ordered key shelter agencies to implement a moratorium on housing amortization payments and activated regional shelter clusters.

Aliling directed the Pag-IBIG Fund, National Housing Authority, Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC) and National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC) to draft guidelines for the loan deferments.

NHMFC extended its ongoing housing loan moratorium program by an additional three months or until October 2026 for qualified borrowers, allowing them to temporarily defer

monthly payments without penalties, surcharges or interest.

SHFC also suspended monthly amortization payments from June 8 to July 7, 2026, for member-beneficiaries in affected communities, specifically targeting Davao City and General Santos City.

The agency noted the period remains subject to extension depending on the severity of the damage.

SHFC president and chief executive Federico Laxa said the moratorium intends to help families focus on recovery and rebuilding in the aftermath of the earthquake.

"In times of calamity, families should focus on their safety and rebuilding their lives—not on worrying about their monthly payments," Laxa said.

# German firm to raise P12.6b for solar facility

By Alena Mae S. Flores

GERMAN renewable energy firm ib vogt has mandated China Bank Capital Corp. and RCBC Capital Corp. as lead arrangers for up to P12.6 billion in project financing to build a 320-megawatt solar-plus-storage facility in southern Philippines.

The project in Barobo, Surigao del Sur marks the third venture of ib vogt in Mindanao. Construction will begin in the fourth quarter of 2026, and commercial operations are expected by the end of 2027.

Once operational, the facility is expected to generate more than 500 gigawatt-hours of clean energy annually. Company officials said the output would be enough to power more than 480,000 Filipino households and avoid more than 200,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year.

The Berlin-headquartered firm considers the Philippines its priority Southeast Asian market and targets more than 1,000 megawatt-peak of capacity in the country.

The Mindanao deal follows a recent announcement by ib vogt that it secured a P4.5 billion senior debt facility from Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) to finance a

separate solar-plus-storage project in the central Visayas region, known as Project Luca.

For Project Luca, RCBC served as the sole lender and RCBC Capital Corp. acted as the lead arranger. The company signed an omnibus loan and security agreement with RCBC for the 99-megawatt-peak solar plant, which features a 4-megawatt, 16-megawatt-hour battery energy storage system in Ajuy, Iloilo.

Early engineering, procurement and construction works for Project Luca began earlier this year, with commissioning targeted for the second quarter of 2027.

The plant is expected to generate more than 160 gigawatt-hours of clean electricity annually, which is enough to power more than 85,000 Filipino households and avoid more than 70,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year.

## IN BRIEF

### Korea to fund \$1-b clean energy project in PH

A RENEWABLE energy partnership between the Philippines and South Korea expects to generate up to \$1 billion in foreign direct investments under a proposed 1,000-megawatt clean energy program.

Local government units, industry stakeholders and foreign energy firms signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Wednesday to launch the initiative.

The South Korean government is willing to fund an initial \$800 million for the first 1,000 megawatts, according to South Korea-based renewable energy tech company CS Tech Company managing-director Dong Myeong Seo.

"We are expanding the partnership to an additional \$200 million, bringing total planned investments to \$1 billion over 10 years," Seo said in a briefing on Wednesday. He said the total project is a grant under the climate change program of the South Korean government.

Participating local governments will facilitate site identification, permitting, land coordination, environmental compliance and community engagement under the framework. Meanwhile, the South Korean consortium will provide technology, engineering expertise, engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) services and capital investment support.

Developers will build the 1,000-megawatt program in modular phases. Each 10-megawatt solar project is estimated to attract around P480 million in private sector investment. **Othel V. Campos**

### PH ships Guimaras mangoes to Europe

THE Philippines shipped 200 kilograms of its prized Guimaras mangoes to Europe and Hong Kong on June 9, 2026 in a renewed push to expand the global footprint of the country's premium tropical fruits.

The initial consignment from the PhilGAP-certified Kokomojo Mango Farm in Sibunag, Guimaras divided the fruit into three destinations. It sent 50 kilograms to the Netherlands, 50 kilograms to Belgium and 100 kilograms to Hong Kong.

The Bureau of Plant Industry provided technical, laboratory and regulatory assistance to the farm to ensure the fruit complied with strict international food safety and plant health standards.

The European shipments will land in Brussels, serving as the port of entry. The Department of Agriculture is positioning these initial boxes as promotional trial exports to introduce the sweet variety to prospective buyers and industry stakeholders across Europe.

In Hong Kong, handlers will showcase the 100-kilogram consignment during the 127th Philippine Independence Day celebrations, distributing the fruit directly to diplomats and distinguished guests.

Department of Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the government is intensifying efforts to open new markets for local agricultural products.

**Othel V. Campos**

### Roxas Holdings unit sells idle assets

ROXAS Holdings Inc. (RHI) said its wholly owned subsidiary agreed to sell idle refinery assets for P600 million to monetize non-operating assets and strengthen its balance sheet.

The subsidiary, Central Azucarera Don Pedro Inc. (CADPI), executed a deed of absolute sale on June 9, 2026 covering the disposal of machineries and equipment previously used in the operations of its sugar refinery plant in Barangay Lumbangan, Nasugbu, Batangas, the listed company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Infinity Multi Agri Development Corp. bought the assets for P600 million. Full payment will be completed by December 2026 under the terms stipulated in the deed of sale.

The assets consist of idle machineries and equipment from the refinery facility, which has not been operating. The facility closed down its sugar business in February 2024 after 97 years in operations due to mounting losses.

RHI said the sale forms part of its continuing efforts to unlock value from non-core and underutilized assets. The company also sold its sugar mill and ethanol plant in La Carlota City for P4.89 billion to Universal Robina Corp. in 2020.

**Jennifer B. Austria**

## Globe, Starlink deploy Mindanao satellite-to-mobile service

By Darwin G. Amojelar

GLOBE Telecom Inc. and Elon Musk's Starlink have deployed a satellite-to-mobile service in the southern Philippines to restore emergency communications after a magnitude 7.8 earthquake caused widespread power and network outages.

This is the first time Globe has used Starlink's direct-to-cell technology for disaster response in the country. The deployment follows rapid ap-

proval of a demonstration permit by the National Telecommunications Commission.

The emergency service will cover South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani provinces, targeting more than 700,000 Globe and TM customers.

The service allows users to send vital messages via SMS and WhatsApp using their existing subscriber identity module cards and long-term evolution enabled phones.

Globe is offering the service free of charge for up to 30 days while engineers repair ground infrastructure.

The powerful earthquake triggered tsunami warnings from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology for several coastal communities in Southern Mindanao. The tremor also caused network disruptions across roughly 30 municipalities because commercial power failures knocked out local telecommunications facilities.

## Ferry company has become DENR nemesis



Out in the Open  
Ray S. Eñano

The footage showed the ship releasing a murky looking liquid from a portion of its hull directly into the sea.

AN AILING passenger ferry company is emerging as an antihero in the eyes of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

For the second time since 2013, a ferry owned by Asian Marine Transport Corp. (AMTC) is caught discharging waste into the waters of Camiguin province.

The ferry company, obviously, has not learned its lessons. The Coast Guard in 2013 sanctioned the company's Super Shuttle Ferry 1 after Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources personnel witnessed how the vessel discharged around 10 liters of oil sludge near Benoni port, Mahinog town, Camiguin, with the slick spreading toward the shoreline.

The skipper was cited for the discharge and for failing to notify the Coast Guard.

History repeated itself. A video clip posted on social media on May 13 this year captured the actual discharge of what looks like wastewater from MV Super Shuttle Ferry 6 near its port of call in Benoni, Mahinog. The footage showed the ship releasing a murky looking liquid from a portion of its hull directly into the sea.

The Super Shuttle Ferry 6 is also operated by AMTC, which has been struggling to keep up with nearly P5 billion in defaulted loans.

The DENR has launched a full-scale investigation into the passenger ferry that was caught discharging what appeared to be untreated sewage directly into the waters off Camiguin province.

The Philippine Coast Guard detained the vessel on May 26 after a spot inspection indicated it may have violated Presidential Decree No. 979 on marine pollution.

"The alleged act may result in adverse environmental impacts on marine biodiversity and coastal ecosystems, which are among the priority areas of protection and conservation under the mandate of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources—Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) 10," Camiguin Gov. Xavier Jesus Romualdo wrote to the agency on May 14.

EMB-10 instructed the provincial environment office on May 25 to immediately convene a multi-agency task force to inspect AMTC's ship. The provincial environment team was given five days to report its findings and recommendations to EMB-10, according to the memorandum signed by officer-in-charge Engineer **Dahn Suan**.

LandBank in 2025 filed a court complaint seeking the seizure of 11 AMTC vessels and several assets mortgaged against P3.413 billion in unpaid principal. The Development Bank of the Philippines is separately pursuing P1.479 billion from the company.

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**VIRTUAL CARD.** Mastercard, PayMongo and Paymentology launch a virtual prepaid card with business functions. Merchants can onboard through PayMongo and fund their card through their PayMongo wallet, giving them a faster and more seamless digital alternative to traditional payment processes. Attending the launch are (from left) Minh Ha Truong, APAC regional director, Paymentology; Jojo Malolos, chief executive, PayMongo; and Jason Crasto, country manager-Philippines, Mastercard.





The Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry hosts a joint independence and friendship day celebration in Pasay City, emphasizing diplomacy and community support.

# PH, Chinese leaders celebrate ties amid strained relations

By Michael Wong Ho

THE Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FCCCCI) recognized mutual respect and ongoing diplomacy between Manila and Beijing during a joint celebration of the 128th Philippine Independence Day and the 25th Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day.

The event, held on June 8, 2026 at the SMX Convention Center, brought together political figures, diplomats and business executives at a time of heightened diplomatic friction between the two nations.

Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan acknowledged the current strains in Philippines-China relations but stressed that historical friendship remains the prevailing sentiment.

“China stands with the local government and the Filipino people,” Jing said, while also extending deep condolences and sympathy to victims of a recent earthquake in the southern Philippines.

Jing recounted his visits to various Philippine provinces where he

experienced the warmth of the local population. He expressed confidence in the deep-rooted ties and shared interests between the two nations, adding there is no reason for the countries to drift apart or be at odds.

He urged both sides to prioritize dialogue over confrontation and focus on public welfare to foster a stable relationship.

The gathering also served to recognize local governance and fund grassroots community projects.

FCCCCI and the Angelo King Foundation Inc. jointly conferred the 2026 Exemplar City Mayor Award to Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte for her leadership and public service initiatives.

The business federation distributed P1 million sponsorship grants to support regional initiatives. Manila Mayor Isko Moreno accepted a P1 million grant for the Manila Day Project. Pasay City social services executive assistant Angelica Roa Yu accepted a separate P1 million grant on behalf of Pasay City Mayor Imelda “Emi” Calixto-Rubiano.

First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos attended the gathering alongside lawmakers and executive officials.

Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, a guest speaker at the event, underscored the need for the Philippines to maintain constructive relations with all nations while prioritizing its own national interests.

# PH seeks greater agricultural access to Guangxi, China

By Julie Ann Lope

THE Philippine Consulate General in Guangzhou met with regional Chinese commerce officials on May 29, 2026 to discuss expanding market access for Philippine agricultural products into China through the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The meeting between Philippine Consulate General Consul General Iric Cruz Arribas and Department of Commerce of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Secondary Inspector Cao Kedi focused on preparations for the “Big Market for All: Export to China” — “ASEAN Fruits, Gather in Guangxi” initiative scheduled for June 18, 2026 in Nanning.

The event aims to showcase high-quality Southeast Asian fruits to Chinese buyers and promote agricultural supply chain cooperation.

The initiative operates under a model described by officials as “ASEAN production, Guangxi distribution, and China sales.”

Cao highlighted 2026 as a pivotal year for China-ASEAN ties, noting it marks the 35th anniversary of dialogue relations and the 5th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership.

She also pointed to Guangxi’s strategic role in the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor and the forthcoming opening of the Pinglu Canal as key enablers for regional trade.

Arribas welcomed Guangxi’s growing role as a gateway for Association of Southeast Asian Nations produce into China. He said the new corridor offers Philippine exporters a faster entry point to reach Chinese markets through Guangxi.

The Philippine Consulate General is coordinating with the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Guangzhou to facilitate the participation of Philippine companies in the Nanning event.

The initiative is expected to strengthen trade links, broaden market access for Philippine fruits, and deepen cooperation between Philippine exporters and Guangxi distributors.

# DOT, Cebu Pacific promote PH in South China

THE Philippine Consulate General in Guangzhou backed a joint product presentation by the Philippine Department of Tourism and Cebu Pacific on June 2 to promote the Philippines as a top travel destination for South China.

The event at the Marriott Hotel Guangzhou showcased the country’s wide-ranging attractions, including beach and island getaways, eco and wellness tourism, culinary experiences, shopping and cultural heritage sites.

The presentation provided travel industry partners with updates on the latest tourism offerings and flight opportunities.

Guangzhou Philippine Consulate General Consul General Iric Cruz

Arribas underscored South China’s significance as a key source market for Philippine tourism and stressed tourism’s role in strengthening people-to-people ties between the two countries.

Arribas welcomed expanding cooperation between the Department of Tourism and Cebu Pacific to broaden travel opportunities and attract more visitors.

“We hope that Cebu Pacific will continue to grow confidently in this market by building on its strengths- affordable fares, extensive domestic connections, and direct access to some of the Philippines’ most beautiful destinations,” Arribas said.

“We encourage Cebu Pacific to increase flights to South China,

especially Guangzhou,” he said.

Discussions highlighted the rising preference among Chinese travelers, particularly Free Independent Travelers, for flexible and personalized itineraries.

The Philippine tourism sector and carriers like Cebu Pacific aim to meet this trend through enhanced route networks and tailored travel products.

The presentation gathered Philippine tourism stakeholders and travel partners from across South China. The gathering served as a platform to strengthen partnerships, explore new cooperation areas and support efforts to boost tourist arrivals from China to the Philippines.

**Julie Ann Lope**



Philippine Consul General Iric Cruz Arribas meets with Department of Commerce of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Secondary Inspector Cao Kedi to expand agricultural market access ahead of the June 2026 ASEAN fruit expo in Nanning.



Philippine Consulate General in Guangzhou supports DOT and Cebu Pacific in a tourism drive targeting South China's flexible independent travelers.

# Two leaders recognized for PH–China understanding

THE Chinese Embassy in the Philippines and the Association for Philippines-China Understanding (APCU) honored two prominent figures on June 3, 2026 for their work in strengthening bilateral ties.

About 400 representatives from government, academia, business and civil society attended the 6th Award for Promoting Philippines-China Understanding ceremony at the Manila Hotel.

Former National Security Adviser and political scientist Dr. Clarita Carlos and Baguio Filipino-Chinese Community executive committee chairman Peter Leung Ng received the top honors.

Organizers also presented the honorary award to Chinese hybrid rice expert Zhang Zhaodong to recognize his contributions to agricultural cooperation.

The event featured addresses from key diplomatic and political leaders emphasizing grassroots diplomacy.

Presidential Special Envoy to China for Trade, Investment and Tourism Benito Techico said that truly lasting international relations stem from connections between people.

Techico lauded the laureates for promoting understanding

and friendship between the peoples of the Philippines and China through education, culture, business, community service and professional exchanges, thereby laying a solid cultural foundation for bilateral relations.

Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan recounted his visits to 18 Philippine provinces since assuming his post. Jing cited bilateral cooperation in agriculture, green energy, infrastructure, education, tourism and people-to-people exchanges, saying such cooperation yields tangible benefits for both nations.

APCU chairman Raul Lambino reflected on the organization’s evolution from an online launch during the COVID-19 pandemic to recognizing 45 laureates.

Lambino introduced APCU’s illustrated coffee-table book “Building Bridges to Prosperity,” which the group published for its 50th anniversary as a tribute to those who foster people-to-people ties.

Senator Loren Legarda sent a congratulatory message to the gathering, while former President and APCU honorary chair Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo addressed the attendees via video.

**Michael Wong Ho**

# Filipino-Chinese groups hold Pasay medical mission



The Chinese Embassy, PCCAI and FCGCI team up with Pasay City for a medical mission and rice distribution marking 51 years of Philippines-China ties.

THE Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, the Philippine Chinese Charitable Association Inc. (PCCAI), and the Filipino-Chinese General Chamber of Commerce Inc. (FCGCCI) teamed up with the Pasay City government to hold a medical outreach and rice distribution at the Cuneta Astrodome on May 31.

The event, themed “Handog ng Pagmamahal,” celebrated the 51st anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and China as well as Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day to foster mutual assistance and support local residents.

Organizers provided free medical consultations to about 1,000 patients and

distributed 3,000 bags of rice to families in need during the activity.

PCCAI chairman Antonio Tan lauded the charitable spirit of the initiative, saying the program “embodies the power of unity and service to the community.”

Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan expressed gratitude to the individuals and groups working to stabilize Philippines-China relations, promote bilateral friendship and assist local communities.

Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano thanked the Chinese Embassy, PCCAI, FCGCCI, and the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center (CGHMC) for their collaboration.

**Julie Ann Lope**





Bad Bunny draws attention during Pope Leo XIV's Spain visit as Vatican officials confirm a brief stadium encounter with the Puerto Rican star

## Bad Bunny meets the Pope in Madrid

POPE Leo XIV held a surprise meeting with Puerto Rican music star **Bad Bunny** at Real Madrid's Bernabeu stadium during his state visit to Spain, the Vatican said on Tuesday.

"Yes... I confirm it. He (Bad Bunny) was with his family and some other people", and Leo "greeted them briefly before leaving the stadium", Vatican spokesman **Matteo Bruni** told reporters of the encounter on Monday.

Spanish media said the papal team and Bad Bunny's entourage were still deciding on the best moment to publish photos of their meeting. Around 80,000 people packed the iconic football ground for a meeting between the pope and Madrid's diocesan community on day three of Leo's trip to Spain.

His stay in Madrid coincided with a series

of concerts by Bad Bunny at the Metropolitan stadium of Real Madrid's cross-town rivals Atletico Madrid, part of his hit "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" ("I Should Have Taken More Photos") world tour.

Some observers pointed to modern youth being torn between spirituality and profane music in a historically Catholic country where traditional religious observance has declined for decades.

But as his plane headed to Madrid on Saturday, Leo told reporters he was "very pleased by the reports" that young people were increasingly interested in the Catholic Church.

"I think many will see Bad Bunny. But I think there will also be a few here to see the pope. And that says something," Leo said of the conflicting loyalties. **AFP**



Pope Leo XIV says he welcomes signs of renewed youth interest in the Catholic Church during a Madrid trip that coincides with Bad Bunny's concert run

### FRONT ROW

By Nickie Wang

MILLENNIALS today increasingly face a different life script, with career goals, financial stability, and personal freedom often taking priority over starting a family.

For many, parenthood is no longer a default milestone but a choice shaped by economic pressures, shifting values, and lifestyle preferences that favor mobility, travel, and self-directed growth.

It is within this changing landscape that *Project Baby* finds its premise.

Directed by **Eric Quizon** and produced by Regal Films, the movie follows Sandy (**Sue Ramirez**), a 31-year-old advertising agency founder who decides she wants a child on her own terms. Firm on skipping marriage and traditional partnership, she sets out to find a "baby daddy" as part of her carefully planned "baby project."

She eventually meets Migo (**Rico Blanco**), a charming and artistic man whose presence complicates her structured plan. What begins as a transactional arrangement slowly shifts as Migo connects with Sandy's



Sue Ramirez (center) and Rico Blanco (fifth from right) joined the 'Project Baby' cast, along with director Eric Quizon (fifth from left), on the red carpet during the film's premiere on June 9

family and friends, gradually challenging her emotional boundaries.

Despite its potentially complicated subject matter, the film leans on a straightforward romantic comedy approach. It avoids heavy dramatization, opting instead for a light, accessible tone that keeps the narrative easy to follow.

The film's strength lies in its restraint. It does not overcomplicate its central idea of planned parenthood outside traditional relationships, instead presenting it in a way that prioritizes character interaction over social commentary.

Performances are carefully controlled yet natural in delivery. Sue Ramirez plays Sandy with clarity and control, showing determination with moments of vulnerability. Rico Blanco brings a steady charm to Migo, offering a gentle

contrast to Sandy's calculated mindset.

The supporting cast, including **Matt Lozano** and **Alice Dixon**, adds color without overwhelming the central storyline. Lozano delivers a memorable, flamboyant turn, while Dixon brings emotional texture as a mother-daughter dynamic adds subtle tension.

Overall, *Project Baby* functions primarily as light entertainment. It touches on modern questions around family and choice but keeps its focus on romance and comedy rather than a deeper exploration of the subject.

Now showing in cinemas nationwide, *Project Baby* also stars **Arra San Agustin**, **Yasser Marta**, **Alex Calleja**, **Kimson Tan**, **Christian Ty**, **Charuth**, **Drei Arias**, **Jonathan Perez** and **Jazzil Sarinas**.



Touchbass  
Yugel Losorata

## Marites goes app, does it good

MARITES has become a byword among Filipinos for the right and wrong reasons. But gossiping is not traditionally associated with a righteous society, so whether we like it or not, it is no good to be tagged as a "Marites" or be among a group of random ladies in a social media post that's obviously branded as good-for-nothing rumor mongers.

The app 41ph.net, which I chanced upon thanks to a friend here in Southern California who urged me to explore it, seems to have found a platform to twist this matter in a positive way. To put it simply, it is seeing the bright side, or trying to, to say the least, of this now very Filipino way of sharing information.

To say it another way, it is embracing the nature of being Marites to pull in the larger chunk of Filipinos who are not into AI and who see digital technology as only for intellectuals and high society. It is an app that welcomes the so-called common tao with a friendly tap as opposed to alienating them.

Try clicking 41ph.net, and you'll be greeted with the question you've heard before and probably hear every once in a while: *Anong chikka, Mars?* See. You're living under a

rock if you've not encountered that kind of question. If you were born and raised Filipino, that's "matic." "You can't walk into the masa market with a health app or an education platform. They won't come. But they will come for chismis. Every single time," said the makers of the 41ph app, which presents its engine as very down-to-earth and then explains the rationale behind it.

"So Marites meets them where they are. She speaks their language," they pointed out.

The app intends to provide help with the latest in entertainment and show business, health tips, and some sort of pointers on how to avoid scammers. I've been told that the Philippines is among the most scammed countries in the world. Well, it doesn't take a genius to understand that. Just take a look at current Philippine politics. The toxic drama and all that. I once saw a post from a Facebook friend who said that he voted for a certain person because of that person's promise to kill those apparently destroying the country. That's basically the narrative of bloodlust, and if one believes in that, chances are they've been scammed.

And beyond politics, scam victims among kababayans come in various forms. They may encounter a con artist in need of immediate money or a lover boy eyeing an unsuspecting benefactor.

In using 41ph.net, as stated in its mission, "The budol story becomes financial literacy. Celebrity health drama becomes awareness. Scam alert becomes consumer rights."

They stressed, "That's the *Sesame Street* model. Entertainment first. Education inside. Right at the end." Just for the sake of asking, I inquired about my former band, **Syato**.

The reply sounded like it came from someone with an amiable personality who verifies facts out of curiosity. It said, "*Ay Mars, selyado 'to! May bandang Syato nga!*" It mentioned five songs we recorded, namely, "Jeddah Queen," "Lab Na Lab," "Heroes," "Broken Tuesday," and "Sticking By," which happen to be mostly my compositions. It added, "*May mga lyric video din sila para sa 'Sa 'Yo Lang' at 'Kung Wala Ka Na.' Makikita mo ang kanilang mga kanta sa YouTube channel ng Ivory Music & Video, na siyang record label nila.*"

And then there was more. It further



Marites becomes the voice of a digital tool that turns gossip-style conversations into practical tips on entertainment, health, scams, and everyday awareness (**AI-generated image**)

expounded on the band's name: "Pero Mars, alam mo ba na 'Syato' din ang tawag sa isang traditional na laro ng mga bata sa Pilipinas? Stick game 'yan na may dalawang kahoy, isang mahaba at isang maikli. Fun fact 'yan diba?"

Surely it is. If all Marites possessed a mentality like the one serving as the voice of 41ph.net, what a wonderful world it would be. Here's to gossiping in style.



# Telco activates satellite mobile service in Mindanao quake response

GLOBE Telecom, in partnership with Starlink, deployed its satellite-to-mobile service in South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani following the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck the provinces.

Globe deployed the service to support emergency communications and disaster response in badly hit areas upon approval of its demo permit from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).

The deployment marks Globe’s first use of Starlink’s satellite-to-mobile technology for disaster and emergency response in the Phil-

ippines. More than 700,000 Globe and TM customers stand to benefit from the deployment, providing messaging through WhatsApp and SMS at a time when it is needed most. Globe will offer the service for free for up to 30 days as critical support to affected communities until its network is fully restored.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to support our kababayans in Mindanao and we hope that through the demo permits previously issued by the NTC, this deployment will demonstrate how this technology re-

ally works,” said **Carl Cruz**, president and CEO of Globe. “This initial deployment will show how satellite-to-mobile technology can provide communications support and strengthen network resilience during these times.”

The earthquake prompted the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) to issue tsunami warnings for several coastal communities in Southern Mindanao. It also caused network disruptions across multiple provinces, affecting around 30 municipalities as commercial

power interruptions impacted telecommunications facilities in several locations.

Globe is working closely with local government units and local electric cooperatives to fully restore its services in badly hit areas.

Globe will reach out to customers directly to provide instructions to connect to the satellite service using their existing Globe SIMs and LTE-enabled phones.

The satellite deployment complements Globe’s broader disaster response efforts across Mindanao.

By Nickie Wang

SENATOR Robin Padilla hinted that the *Bad Boy* title may be passed on to a younger actor in the planned fourth installment of the action franchise, with his nephew **Daniel Padilla** being introduced in the role.

“I-introduce *po namin bago sa Bad Boy 4 mas bata*,” Robin said during a talkback session after the special screening of *Bad Boy 3* last Thursday at Cinema 17 of Gateway Mall. He added that it was time for a younger actor to take on the role, saying the character is no longer believable for him.

The senator said the fourth installment is currently in production and will be developed as a series instead of a film.

Robin’s brother, **Rommel Padilla**, confirmed Daniel’s involvement, noting the importance of giving the role to someone with strong capability. He also reacted to the idea of **Kailla Estrada** possibly being cast as Daniel’s leading lady, saying he supports the pairing.

“*Oo naman, para naman makita sila magkasama sa Bad Boy 4*,” Rommel said.

The Padilla family was in full force when they attended the *Bad Boy 3* special screening, including Rommel Padilla, Robin’s wife **Mariel Rodriguez**, his children **Queenie** and **Zhen**, and his mother **Eva Cariño Padilla**. Cast members **Dennis Padilla**, **Nadia Montenegro**, **Ejay Falcon**, **Juancho Trivino**, and **Joko Diaz** were also present.

Senator Robin returns to his signature action role in *Bad Boy 3*, reviving the franchise that defined his career in the 1990s.

The *Bad Boy* series began in 1990 with the original film, followed by *Bad Boy II* in 1992, which helped cement Senator Robin’s status as one of the country’s leading action stars of the era.

More than three decades later, he reprises the role in *Bad Boy 3*, which aims to introduce the franchise to a

# Senator Robin Padilla to pass ‘Bad Boy’ mantle to Daniel Padilla



new generation while maintaining its action-driven style.

While a commercial release date has yet to be announced, Sen. Robin Padilla said he wants the film shown in cinemas, saying its action sequences and effects are designed for the big screen experience.

“We made this film for a cinema-first experience. It’s rated R-18, and we don’t want any cuts because every scene is essential to the story. We also want to bring the action genre back into mainstream cinema. We may be behind our neighboring countries, but we can still compete because of our talent, even with limited resources,” Senator Robin said in the vernacular.



Create a vision board by using words and pictures to emotionally connect with and manifest your goals

OPERATING on autopilot – moving through your day driven by conditioned habits, regular routines, and automatic reactions – may lead to reduced self-awareness, presence, and feelings of control, it also encourages healthy habits, supports better decision-making, and strengthens relationships.

By becoming more intentional in your day-to-day behavior, you can design a life around your core beliefs—one driven by goals and filled with clarity and personal happiness. Ultimately, intentional living not only enhances mindfulness, presence, and feelings of control, it also encourages healthy habits, supports better decision-making, and strengthens relationships.

**Margarita Tartakovsky**, MS, author of the mental health journal *Vibe Check: Be Your Best You*, advises, “Take action and make decisions that are important to you.”

“The key is to identify what that

# Eight ways to shift to intentional living

personally means for you—and make small but significant shifts and conscious choices to build it,” she added.

The expert clarified that making changes can be difficult, especially if your current intentions do not align with what you learned in early life.

“Remind yourself that it is totally natural to feel a range of emotions while on an intentional living path,” she advised. “After all, you’re a human being doing the best you can.”

For guidance, experts from the Benilde Well-Being Center (BWC) of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) shared Tartakovsky’s tips. These include insights from **Shelley Meche’tte**, a certified life purpose and confidence coach; **Genevieve Piturro**, a coach and speaker; and **Jackie Tassello** and **Lisa Olivera**, both therapists.



Refocus by infusing intentionality into daily activities, such as using your senses while cooking and understanding the purpose of chores to enhance peace or self-care

- meditation practice, or giving thanks. This will remind you of the choices you make.
- 1. Tune out the noise.** Pause. Identify the biggest distractions in your life. Limit or let them go altogether. Do not allow social media, other people, or anything else dictate your goals.
  - 2. Identify your values.** Ask yourself: What does an ideal day look like? What inspires you? What activities bring meaning and contentment?
  - 3. Set a morning intention.** It can be a few words, a sentence, a
  - 4. Refocus.** Infuse intentionality into your activities. When cooking, use your five senses to notice the sensations. During chores, identify their purpose, whether it is to create a more peaceful home or to care for yourself.
  - 5. Create small shifts.** When you know what is important to you, you can make the best choices for yourself. Start a slow morning ritual to reconnect with yourself. Avoid social media at night if it keeps you up past bedtime. Have a weekly call with a friend to grow relationships.
  - 6. Create a vision board.** Transform your dreams into words and pictures. Emotionally connect with your goals. Manifest them into life. Contents may include your family, career, love life, hobbies, and empowering phrases.
  - 7. Recount your intentions.**

Identify and limit distractions, including social media, to stay focused on your goals



Reflect on your daily intentions and contributions to living with purpose by either mentally recounting or journaling them

Replay the ways you contributed to living with purpose each day. Simply recite these in your mind or jot them down in your journal.

- 8. Give yourself a break.** Use kind self-talk that validates your emotional experience. Listen to meditations that encourage self-kindness. Be like a good friend to yourself.





By Nickie Wang

NOW & NEXT

DR. LAWRENCE Sembrano, known to patients and colleagues as Doc Larry, points to a persistent strain on the Philippines’ health system, citing what he describes as a widening gap between doctors and the population they serve.

Estimates place the ratio at roughly one doctor for every 20,000 to 23,000 patients, a figure he said highlights uneven access to care across the country,

# Health advocacy show reaches streaming audience online



Doc Larry (center) joins the show’s director, Roman Perez Jr. (rightmost) in a sitcom-style program designed to improve public health awareness and understanding



Dr. Lawrence Sembrano launches ‘Itanong Natin Kay Dok Larry,’ a digital-first health program designed to make medical information more accessible to the public

particularly outside major urban centers.

In response, Sembrano has launched a passion project tied to his advocacy: a medical public service series aimed at making basic health information more accessible to the public. Titled *Itanong Natin Kay Dok Larry*, the program shifts from traditional television distribution to a digital-first release on YouTube.

He said medical programs can help bridge part of the gap by improving awareness, especially in areas where health centers are often staffed by nurses rather than physicians and where patients may rely on unverified claims about treatments and procedures. The discussion also raises questions on whether such platforms can improve public understanding and health outcomes.

“There’s a clear shortage of doctors in the Philippines, and that really weighed on me,” Sembrano said.

“That’s why I chose to come back and practice here, even if there were more opportunities abroad. At the end of the day, it’s about where you feel you’re needed the most.”

Director **Roman Perez Jr.** said the decision to move the project online was driven partly by cost and accessibility, noting that advocacy programming often struggles to compete in mainstream broadcast spaces.

“We wanted to go mainstream, but it’s really expensive nowadays,” Perez said. “Since this is an advocacy project, we decided to use a platform that is accessible not just in the country but also beyond our shores.”

Sembrano, an occupational medicine specialist at Our Lady of Grace Hospital in Calocan City, is also familiar to some viewers for his supporting role as a doctor in the prime-time series *Batang Quiapo*.

The program uses a sitcom-style structure, blending storylines with

short instructional segments designed to make common health issues easier to understand. Episodes run 20 to 25 minutes.

The first batch of episodes tackles some of the country’s most common causes of hospitalization, including dengue, pneumonia, asthma, diabetes, and animal bites, with plans to expand into more sensitive topics such as HIV in later runs.

The series follows interconnected characters portrayed by **Divine Villareal**, **Enki Gray**, **Taba Sumulong**, and others, drawing on television anthology experience from Perez, who previously worked on *Maalala Mo Kaya* and *Ipaglaban Mo*.

Sembrano said programs such as *Salamat, Dok*, *Healing Galing*, and *The Doctor Is In* have long helped shape public understanding of medicine in the Philippines, where modern healthcare continues alongside traditional healing practices and folk beliefs.

## A chapter a day keeps the doctor away

READING a book is often seen as a way to unwind from daily stress, offering a break through stories ranging from thrillers to romance. Health experts say the habit also delivers measurable benefits to both mind and body.

“Experts describe reading a book as a full-brain workout,” said **Cymbeline Perez-Santiago**, MD, neurologist and head of the Neurology Unit of Makati Medical Center.

A 2020 study cited by Perez-Santiago found increased gray matter in the left superior temporal cortex, a brain region linked to cognitive function, among children with stronger reading performance. She noted that continued mental engagement through reading may help delay cognitive decline in older adults and support overall physical and mental health.

A separate 2017 survey tracking more than 3,000

adults over 12 years found a 20 percent reduction in mortality among those who read books. A Yale study also found that reading 30 minutes a day was associated with an average increase of 23 months in life expectancy.

“Reading, of course, broadens one’s vocabulary and knowledge, which proves helpful in entrance exams, job opportunities, and life in general,” Perez-Santiago said. “Moreover, it develops one’s ability to empathize—to put oneself in other people’s shoes. Experts call this ‘theory of mind,’ or skills needed to build, navigate, and maintain social relationships.”

Reading printed words, rather than viewing images or videos, requires the brain to form its own mental imagery, which engages imagination in a different way, Perez-Santiago said.

“Books, particularly long-form content, train us to focus and pay attention at a time when the digital world’s fast-paced, short-form content has reduced our attention span,” she said. “Reading books also strengthens memory, challenges your analytical thinking, and makes you a better writer.”

Despite these benefits, reading habits have declined. A 2023 National Book Development Board survey found that 42 percent of Filipino adults read non-school books in the past year, down from 80 percent in 2017.

Perez-Santiago said the key is to make reading an enjoyable routine rather than a task.

### Practical habits

She advised keeping a book accessible at all times, whether in a car, bag, or desk drawer, to make use of idle moments such as waiting at a bank or appointment. She also suggested setting manageable goals, especially for new readers.

Those intimidated by longer books may start with shorter reads or anthologies, which can help build focus over time.

“There are no rules that you should finish a book in a week, or that you should finish one book before starting another,” she said. “Read several books all at once and go at your own pace. As proven by studies, even a few minutes of reading can do wonders for your health.”



Reading regularly sharpens memory and focus, challenges analytical thinking, and even delays our cognitive decline

## How ‘zest moments’ are reshaping daily wellness habits among young Filipinos

MORNINGS today often begin with early alarms, overflowing inboxes, and long to-do lists. For many Filipinos, especially students and young professionals, the pace of daily life has made midday fatigue a regular part of their routine.

Instead of pushing through these slumps, some are turning to small, intentional habits to reset their focus and energy. These include brief walk breaks, a few minutes of journaling, or pausing for a short break with a beverage such as Minute Maid Nutri+.

For this group, wellness is increasingly defined by smaller, more manageable routines rather than major lifestyle changes. The idea is to build simple habits that fit into busy schedules and help restore a sense of balance during the day.

A growing trend centers on what some call “zest moments,” short pauses meant to break up the day’s rhythm and provide a mental reset. These can happen in the morning before work begins, during an afternoon lull, or at any point when concentration starts to dip. The focus is on brief pauses that help people regain attention and momentum.

Some link these moments with familiar routines, such as taking a short break with a drink that includes Vitamin C and fiber, like Minute Maid Nutri+, as part of an everyday routine rather than a structured wellness plan.

“I used to rush through everything,” said **Bianca**, a young marketer in Quezon City. “Now, I make it a point to slow down, even just for a few minutes in the morning. I’ll play music, take a sip of something, and ease into the day. It sounds simple, but it really changes how I feel.”

Students and freelancers describe similar habits, stepping away from screens during long study or work sessions to reset. They say these brief pauses help restore focus when tasks become repetitive or ideas stall.

As workloads and digital demands continue to increase, these short breaks are becoming part of how some people manage productivity and attention throughout the day.



Many Filipinos are embracing ‘zest moments’ throughout the day to combat midday fatigue and restore focus (AI-generated image)