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**PESO FALLS TO NEW LOW
OF 62.59 A DOLLAR**

BUSINESS / B4

**'BIG-TIME OIL PRICE HIKE
OF UP TO P5/L NEXT WEEK'**

NEWS / A3

**DOH, PHILHEALTH EXPAND
HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS**

NEWS / A4

Lawyer questions Bonoan's clearance from plunder case

By Maricel V. Cruz and Vince Lopez

A LAWYER on Friday expressed alarm over the decision of the Sandiganbayan to drop ex-Public Works Secretary Man-

uel Bonoan from a plunder case arising from the flood control scandal.

This developed as the Philippine National Police officially released Bonoan from custody, ending a three-month hospital detention following an

Next page

Manila Standard

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QC court issues arrest warrant for VP Duterte

Sara seen posting bail immediately for grave threats rap

By Charles Dantes, Pot Chavez, and Maricel V. Cruz

THE Quezon City Regional Trial Court on Friday issued a warrant of arrest against Vice President Sara Duterte over three counts of grave threats, with her lawyers expected to immediately post bail.

Judge Maria Angelica De Ramos of QC RTC Branch 98 ordered Duterte's arrest after finding probable cause to hold her for trial on charges filed under Section 6 of Republic Act 10175, or the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012.

The charges are bailable, with the court setting bail at P120,000 for each count, or P360,000 in total.

Duterte's legal team said she has no intention of evading the law and would continue to pursue available legal remedies.

"Regardless of the question on jurisdiction, she has no intention of evading the law and will continue to exercise all her legal remedies," her counsel, Atty. Paul Lawrence Lim, said.

Next page

NBI files human trafficking raps vs. Leviste, Paras

By Gwyneth Nolasco

THE National Bureau of Investigation has filed charges for qualified human trafficking against Batangas First District Representative Leandro Leviste, former lawmaker Jacinto Paras, and five other individuals on Friday before the National Prosecution Service

Next page



MORE SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday signs a law amending the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (UAQTE) as part of government efforts to expand access to affordable, quality higher education for Filipino students. The new law mandates all state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), and state-run technical-vocational institutions (TVIs) to implement Equity and Inclusion Plans to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds through targeted measures, such as fee waivers and priority access to facilities. Witnessing the signing are Senate President Sherwin Gatchalian, House Speaker Faustino Dy III, Education Secretary Sonny Angara, Pasig Rep. Roman Romulo, and other officials. PPA Pool

Prosecution drops Madriaga, Lachica as witnesses

Maricel V. Cruz

FORMER Office of the Vice President (OVP) security officer Col. Raymond Dante Lachica and retired Marine Ramil Madriaga will no longer be presented as prosecution witnesses in Vice President Sara Duterte's confi-

dential fund case, House impeachment team adviser and spokesperson Ace Barbers said Friday.

"Colonel Lachica will no longer be presented, and Mr. Madriaga will no longer be presented," Barbers said during an online press conference Friday.

The announcement narrowed the

expected witness lineup as the House prosecution works toward its Sept. 9 target for concluding its presentation under Article I or the alleged misuse of P612.5 million in confidential and intelligence funds released in 2022 and 2023 to the OVP and DepEd when Duterte was education secretary.

Next page

PBBM signs law expanding financial aid, support for poor college students

By Charles Dantes and Gabriel Oliva

• **Public school teachers to get salary hike too**

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday signed a law expanding financial assistance for poor and disadvantaged Filipino students, while the gov-

ernment released P8.68 billion for the career advancement and salary adjustments of more than 93,000 public school teachers and school heads.

The two measures form part of the administration's broader effort to improve access to education—from helping students stay in school

Next page



REMARKABLE LEAP FOR SURGERY.

Photo shows the first use of the da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgical System for a mitral valve replacement on a 45-year-old male patient at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City on Friday, September 4, 2026. The state-of-the-art system enables surgeons to perform highly complex procedures with greater precision, smaller incisions, less pain and faster recovery times for patients. Philippine Heart Center

Alex Eala turns New York into 'Barangay Manila'

By Randy M. Caluag

FOR Alex Eala, a city thousands of miles away from the Philippines is be-

ginning to feel a lot like home.

The Filipino tennis star's breakthrough run at the U.S. Open has not only captured the attention of the ten-

nis world, but has also turned parts of New York into what Filipino fans affectionately call "Barangay Manila."

Next page



PINOY PRIDE.

Alexandra Eala celebrates defeating Ukraine's Oleksandra Oliynykova during their women's singles second round tennis match on day five of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on September 3, 2026. AFP

DND rejects fresh China claim on Batanes

By Rex Espiritu

THE Department of National Defense on Friday rejected a Chinese state media article claiming that Batanes is not part of the Philippines.

The statement came after China’s state-run Global Times published a September 3 opinion piece titled “History shows that Batanes Islands

do not belong to the Philippines.” The article, written by Wang Yuyan, an assistant research fellow at the National Institute for South

China Sea Studies - Center for South China Sea History and Culture, claimed that Batanes was historically and legally part of Taiwan, and that there was no legal basis for including the islands to Philippine territory. The article further claimed that Chinese inhabitants had lived on Batanes “since ancient times” and that residents of the islands shared historical and cultural links with Taiwan.

In response, the DND described the article as “state-sponsored propaganda,” adding that it was another example of China spreading distorted narratives around the world. The DND also stressed that Batanes and other Philippine territories had never been part of China, and vowed to reject any attempt to undermine the country’s sovereign and territorial integrity. “The DND strongly condemns

this state-sponsored propaganda claiming that Batanes is part of China. This only proves that China continues to spread false narratives throughout the world,” the DND said in a statement. “Batanes or any part of the Philippines was never part of China, and never shall we allow any threats to the sovereignty and territory of the Republic of the Philippines to go unchallenged,” the DND said.

QC...

From A1

Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla later confirmed that Duterte’s lawyers had received the warrant and planned to post bail as soon as possible. “Their lawyers confirmed that they received the warrant and they intend to post bail ASAP,” Remulla told reporters.

Paolo Tamase, associate dean of the University of the Philippines College of Law, said the warrant could still be challenged before a higher court, including the Court of Appeals or Supreme Court.

Palace, DOJ ‘respect’ decision
Malacañang said it would respect the court’s action.

“The Palace respects any decision or order issued by the court,” Presidential Communications Office Undersecretary Claire Castro told Palace reporters.

The Department of Justice also backed the court ruling, saying it respects the resolution denying Duterte’s

motion to defer or recall the warrant. “The Department of Justice notes the Resolution issued today, 04 September 2026, by Branch 98 of RTC of Quezon City denying the Motion by the accused Vice President Sara Z. Duterte to defer or recall the warrant of arrest,” DOJ spokesperson Polo Martinez said. Martinez said the court found probable cause to hold Duterte for trial on all three counts of grave threats and ordered the warrant’s issuance. He also confirmed the P120,000 bail for each count and explained that the actual warrant is transmitted electronically by the court to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for implementation. House Deputy Minority Leader Leila de Lima said the warrant showed that the evidence against Duterte warranted a criminal trial. “Even if it is denied, even if they give excuses, the threat was very clear,” said De Lima of the Mamamayang Liberal party-list. House prosecution spokesperson Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong said while

the arrest order was “not a finding of guilt,” it indicated “probable cause.” “Due process must be observed at every stage,” said Adiong, who represents Lanao del Sur’s first district. “A court, however, does not issue a warrant without probable cause. That determination has now been made.” The remedies, he said, “should be pursued through the courts, not outside them.” **Go: Warrant’s timing questionable**
Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go questioned the timing of the warrant, noting that it was issued while Duterte’s impeachment proceedings were ongoing. “Why now?” Go asked, pointing out that nearly two years had passed since the alleged threat was made in November 2024. Go said authorities had sufficient time to act on the case before the impeachment proceedings began but reiterated his respect for the judicial process now that the matter is before the courts. The case stemmed from statements Duterte made during a November 2024 press conference in which she

said she had arranged for the assassination of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and then-House Speaker Martin Romualdez if she were killed. Duterte later reiterated the statements during a virtual press conference but maintained that they had been taken out of context and were not an actual threat. She said she was discussing what she described as a threat to her own security. The DOJ filed the three grave-threat charges after finding sufficient evidence to prosecute Duterte despite her status as an impeachable official. Duterte’s legal team has argued that she cannot be prosecuted for offenses also tied to her impeachment, maintaining that sitting impeachable officials enjoy limited procedural immunity while in office. Duterte is also facing an impeachment trial before the Senate, sitting as an impeachment court, over allegations including betrayal of public trust, graft and corruption, culpable violation of the Constitution and other high crimes. **With Joel E. Zubano and AFP**

Lawyer...

From A1

order from the Sandiganbayan Fifth Division. Lawyer Ade Fajardo, counsel of former Speaker Martin Romualdez, said the exclusion of Bonoan from the plunder and graft case he was facing with other accused, among them Senator Jinggoy Estrada, was not only surprising and alarming but was disturbing as well. “That decision is alarming and shocking; it is deeply concerning,” Fajardo said.

He, however, noted that neither Bonoan nor any DPWH engineer or official has linked the Leyte lawmaker to any flood control irregularity. He recalled that when the Ombudsman created a special panel to conduct the preliminary investigation on Romualdez, no one in the DPWH had made any allegation against the former Speaker. “Going back from the very start to put everything in context, when the special panel’s complaint against Congressman Romualdez began, there was no report, not even a DPWH member, not even a statement from Secretary Bonoan, not even in the Blue Ribbon Committee, not even in the Independent Commission for Infrastructure, no one linked Congressman Romualdez,” the lawyer pointed out.

“This means they cannot point to any specific DPWH project where Congressman Romualdez participated or allegedly exerted influence to sway the outcome in favor of a particular contractor. There is no such allegation, so it is surprising that Secretary Bonoan has suddenly become available as a potential witness.” “And then suddenly, he (Bonoan) is free and granted immunity. Practically, he is no longer a respondent,” he added. Fajardo has asserted that there was no longer any “credible evidence” against his client with the retraction by five of the so-called Maleta Boys, including star witness Orly Guteza, of their allegations against Romualdez. He said this was supported by assertions from 25 other witnesses belying the claims of the original 18 Maleta Boys. Bonoan was cleared of plunder and graft charges after the anti-graft court gave the green light for him to serve as state witness in the multibillion-peso flood control charges. He was discharged from the PNP General Hospital at around 10:35 a.m. after undergoing legal and medical clearance procedures. PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Metro Manila chief Col. John Guiagui said Bonoan was discharged after it was cleared with appropriate authorities that he has no pending cases.

NBI...

From A1

at the Department of Justice over their alleged involvement in a “honey trap” scheme. The complaint stemmed from allegations that women were recruited to fabricate accusations against Executive Secretary Ralph Recto as part of the alleged “honey trap,” also described as a character assassination scheme. NBI Director Melvin Matibag said the bureau submitted its complete investigation affidavit, along with the

evidence and attachments gathered by its National Capital Region office. Matibag said the evidence includes testimonial evidence and CCTV footage, as well as statements made by the respondents during NBI interviews. He said the bureau found inconsistencies in the respondents’ statements that formed part of the basis for the complaint. He also said there was an admission that money had been given to the women who were allegedly recruited for the scheme. Leviste, for his part, said in a social media post: “NBI: National Bureau of Imbento, nag-iimbento ng kalokohan gamit ang buwis habang lubog ang bayan.”

Aside from Leviste and Paras, the respondents include four lawyers from the Rondain & Mendiola Law Firm—Mendiola, Ruy Rondain, Patrick Cariaga, and Josemilio Manuel Apostol—and talent manager Lito De Guzman. Matibag said the complaint has been filed for preliminary investigation and that the respondents will be given time to respond to the allegations. He added the NBI may consider filing disbarment complaints against the lawyers involved and an ethics complaint before the House of Representa-

tives against Leviste. When asked about Leviste’s whereabouts, Matibag said the lawmaker’s last known destination was France and that he may still be outside the country. The alleged “honey trap” scheme targeting Recto may be part of a broader effort to discredit and destabilize the administration, Matibag said in an earlier interview. He said any effort that creates a “black eye or stigma” on the executive secretary could also affect the administration. “The presence of the players on the other side could indicate there was a bigger plot,” Matibag said.

PBBM..

From A1

and complete tertiary or technical-vocational programs to giving teachers greater opportunities for career advancement and higher pay. Republic Act 12325, which amends RA 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, expands government assistance beyond free tuition to cover other expenses that can prevent students from completing their studies. “Free tuition removed a major barrier to tertiary education, but families still face the cost of books, transportation, daily expenses, and other requirements that can prevent students and trainees from completing their studies,” Mr. Marcos said during the signing ceremony at Malacañan Palace. The amended law gives priority to qualified beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, or 4Ps, as well as poor and deserving students in priority programs who are not covered by existing government grants. It also creates the Private Education Assistance program for qualified poor and deserving students pursuing priority degree, diploma or technical-vocational programs in qualified private institutions.

CHED: Disadvantaged students can stay in school, graduate
The Commission on Higher Education said the expanded assistance would help disadvantaged students not only enter higher education but also stay in school and graduate. CHED Chairperson Shirley Agrupis said the government’s free tuition program had helped millions of Filipinos gain access to higher education but stressed that it was “only the first step.” “We also have to help our students stay in school and finish, especially those whose families struggle with the everyday costs of pursuing a degree,” Agrupis said. Qualified Tertiary Education Subsidy beneficiaries will continue receiving assistance for the regular duration of their programs. Those unable to graduate on time because of financial hardship, health problems or disasters may receive up to one additional year of support, CHED said. Public colleges, universities and state-run technical-vocational institutions will also be required to help disadvantaged students enter and complete their studies through measures such as waived admission examination fees, assistive technologies and priority access to available dormitories.

Alex...

From A1

And why not? Eala’s growing popularity and the massive support she has received from Filipinos in the city earned further recognition when she appeared prominently on the front page of the Sept. 3 (Sept. 4 in Manila) edition of The New York Times. The influential American newspaper featured Eala in a story titled “In Little Manila, This U.S. Open Redefines Love,” chronicling how the 21-year-old Filipina star has united New York’s large Filipino community during her campaign at Flushing Meadows. The story focused on Woodside, Queens, home to one of New York City’s largest Filipino communities, where Eala’s success has become a regular topic of conversation. “Facebook, Instagram, even in church, people are talking about her,” Lladen Cruzat, who was distributing samples of Filipino coffee at a pop-up food market, told The New York Times. Eala has brought that same Filipino energy to the Billie Jean King National

Tennis Center, where Philippine flags, Eala merchandise and loud cheers have transformed her matches into virtual home games. Filipino fans have traveled from across New York and even from other states, Canada, the Philippines, to watch and support the country’s fastest-rising tennis star, creating an atmosphere that has become known in the tennis community as “Barangay Manila.” Another supporter, Sharmaine Rivera, who attended an Eala exhibition match, described the young tennis star as “the perfect representation of a Filipino lady.” The Times feature looked beyond Eala’s achievements on the court and explored how her success has created a sense of pride and unity among Filipinos in New York. Eala advanced to the third round of the U.S. Open for the first time after defeating Ukraine’s Oleksandra Oliynykova, 6-1, 6-4, at Louis Armstrong Stadium. Alex Eala will next face American teenager Iva Jovic in the third round of the 2026 US Open, with a place in the Round of 16 at stake. Jovic defeated Francesca Jones 6-4, 6-4.

Prosecution...

From A1

The Senate Impeachment Court earlier ordered COA employee Bresilio Sabaldan, former DepEd Assistant Secretary Sunshine Cherry Fajarda, and Police Maj. Jovelyn Magay to testify from Sept. 7 to 9. Prosecutors also identified former DepEd special disbursing officer Eduard Fajarda and Philippine Statistics Authority official Marizza Grande among the prospective witnesses. Barbers said the prosecution’s latest subpoena requests covered only the remaining witnesses considered necessary for its presentation. He said the prosecution could dispense with Eduard Fajarda’s appearance if the defense agreed to stipulate to facts concerning his designation and

duties as DepEd’s special disbursing officer. Manila Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr. said the prosecution should focus on Duterte rather than continue calling subordinate officials who are not themselves facing impeachment. “The person being summoned is not an impeachable officer. Let us summon the impeachable officer herself,” Abante said. Barbers agreed that the case before the Senate concerns Duterte’s accountability and fitness to remain in office, rather than whether the officials named during testimony could themselves be impeached. Meanwhile, members of the House impeachment team backed lowering the 16-vote threshold for convicting Duterte but said the Supreme Court should ultimately settle whether such a shift is constitutional.

Barbers and Abante supported Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri’s call to revisit the threshold amid the absence of several senator-judges while the impeachment trial is ongoing. “I support Senator Migz’s call to reconsider and lower the threshold from 16,” Barbers said. Barbers argued that senator-judges who vote on Duterte’s guilt or innocence should have personally heard the testimony, examined the evidence, and observed the demeanor of witnesses. “How can you render an honest-to-goodness, objective and fair decision when you have not seen the evidence and heard this testimony?” he said. Abante shared the view that those deciding the impeachment charge should have been present during the proceedings. Zubiri disclosed Thursday that some senator-judges want the impeachment

court to revisit the 16-vote requirement because several senators have been unable to participate in the trial. Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Rodante Marcoleta are detained on plunder charges, while Sen. Ronald dela Rosa remains in hiding amid an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court. Sen. Loren Legarda has also been absent from the trial for weeks due to health concerns. Presiding Officer Sen. Francis Escudero ruled when Duterte’s trial started July 6 that 16 affirmative votes would be required to convict her. Article XI, Section 3(6) of the Constitution provides that no person may be convicted in an impeachment trial without the concurrence of two-thirds of all members of the Senate. The Senate has 24 members. Barbers and Abante acknowledged that any dispute over how the constitu-

tional requirement should apply given the prolonged absence of some senator-judges would ultimately have to be resolved by the Supreme Court. “The final arbiter on that matter is really the Supreme Court,” Barbers said. Barbers, however, said the prosecution does not see a need at this point to bring the question before the Supreme Court because no actual controversy has arisen. “For the prosecution, it is not yet the appropriate time. We are still presenting the evidence,” he said. Regardless of how the issue is ultimately resolved, Barbers said the prosecution remains confident that its evidence is strong enough to secure Duterte’s conviction. “I think, yes, we are confident that we can get a conviction, whatever the number is,” Barbers said.



PET SHOW. Manila Mayor Francisco ‘Isko Moreno’ Domagoso attends the Dog Pawshion Show at the Senior Citizens’ Park & Pet Park in Plaza Azul, Pandacan, Manila, where pet lovers and their dogs showcase elaborate costumes. Norman Cruz

ECOP, PCCI support P85 wage increase plan

By Othel V. Campos

EMPLOYER groups have expressed respect for the wage board’s decision to grant a P85 wage increase while calling for compliance with the order and resolution of the legal issues surrounding its implementation.

Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) chairperson Enunina Mangio said employers who held off on implementing the wage increase because of the court injunction should be prepared to pay back wages if the injunction is eventually lifted.

Mangio also maintained that while anyone may file a case, lawsuits against employers over the wage increase are unlikely to prosper. She urged all parties to continue observing the legal process.

ECOP has called for the Supreme Court to issue the final ruling on jurisdictional and other legal questions involving the wage order. The group said a definitive ruling would help resolve the uncertainty faced by employers and workers.

Following dialogue with labor groups, ECOP said it would no longer seek additional petitions or injunctions to suspend the wage increase. The group reiterated that it had opposed the P85 adjustment during consultations but respects the wage board’s final decision.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) likewise affirmed its respect for the authority of the wage board and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), urging employers to fully comply once the wage order takes effect.

PCCI, however, warned that the wage increase could fuel inflation, weaken business competitiveness, and discourage investment by raising operating and labor costs.

The group said micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) would likely bear the greatest burden, with some businesses potentially delaying expansion, cutting costs, or turning to automation to manage higher expenses.

IN BRIEF

Army, allies prepare for Salaknib-Balikatan 2027

THE Philippine Army and its counterparts from the United States, Japan, and Australia have intensified preparations for the Salaknib and Balikatan 2027 military exercises.

Senior military leaders concluded the two-day Salaknib-Balikatan (SABAK) 2027 Commanders’ Summit at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City on Sept. 2.

Army chief Lt. Gen. Donald Guiramin provided strategic guidance for Salaknib, which will later transition into the larger joint Balikatan exercise.

The summit reviewed results of initial planning conferences and site surveys, including training activities, resource allocation, and operational requirements.

“The Philippine Army is firmly committed to bilateral and multilateral exercises that enhance ground force capabilities and support the country’s external security mission,” the Army said. **Rex Espiritu**

Australia backs peaceful BARMM elections

AUSTRALIA has reaffirmed its support for peaceful, inclusive, and credible parliamentary elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao on Sept. 14.

Ambassador Marc Innes-Brown said the polls give the Bangsamoro people an important opportunity to shape their region’s future through democratic participation.

A senior Australian Embassy delegation visited Cotabato City from Sept. 1 to 3 to assess election preparations and meet with election, security, and civil society officials.

Australia earlier committed AU\$64 million (about P2.4 billion) in peace-building assistance over five years to support the Bangsamoro peace process.

The Philippine Army has also deployed more than 10,000 personnel to help secure the region’s first parliamentary elections. **Ma. Katrina Mikaela Manubay**

PH Embassy assists detained Filipino in US

THE Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the Philippine Consulate General in Seattle are providing consular assistance to Filipino national Loreto Javar as he faces deportation proceedings.

The embassy said Javar has been released from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody on temporary parole while his case is pending.

Philippine officials have coordinated with U.S. authorities and requested humanitarian and medical consideration before his release.

Javar, 76, is a green card holder battling Stage 4 prostate cancer and is required to report to ICE for scheduled deportation hearings.

Reports said his detention caused him to miss cancer treatment appointments, while ICE cited an undiscovered decades-old Philippine conviction in his visa application. **Ma. Katrina Mikaela Manubay**

New class suspension rules eyed

By Gabriel Oliva

THE Department of Education (DepEd) said Thursday it is ready to submit to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. a proposed Executive Order (EO) revising existing guidelines on the suspension and resumption of face-to-face classes and onsite work in education institutions.

In a statement, DepEd said the proposed mandate, which is set to affect all schools across the country, will be presented to President Marcos during the Economic and Development (ED) Council later this year.

The DepEd’s Social Development Committee (SDC) Cabinet Cluster approved the proposed framework after Education Secretary Sonny Angara introduced the order on Thursday.

“Following Secretary Angara’s presentation, the SDC Cabinet Cluster approved the policy measure and is set to endorse it to the ED Council for consideration,” said DepEd.

The proposed EO seeks to update existing guidelines on learning and work-

ing arrangements under Executive Order No. 66, s. 2012, which prescribes rules on the cancellation or suspension of classes and work in government offices due to typhoons, flooding, other weather disturbances, and calamities.

According to DepEd, the proposed EO aims to provide a more “comprehensive,” hazard-inclusive and localized approach to the suspension and resumption of classes to ensure the safety of students and staff while also preserving learning time.

The initiative follows data presented to the Cabinet Cluster showing that basic education institutions lost up to 53 of 180 school days during School Year 2023–2024 due to weather disturbances and disaster-related class suspensions.



FOOD PACKS FOR PAMPANGA. DSWD Field Office 3 distributes 1,000 family food packs to families affected by heavy rains brought by the southwest monsoon at the Mexico Mini Convention Center in Mexico, Pampanga, on Sept. 4, 2026, in coordination with local authorities. **DSWD Central Luzon**

Bar 2026 chairperson issues final reminders for examinees

By Gwyneth Nolasco

THE Office of the Bar 2026 Chairperson led by Supreme Court (SC) Associate Justice Samuel Gaerlan issued a checklist and final reminders for examinees, as the Bar Examinations will begin on September 6.

In the checklist, examinees are asked to bring their requirements before entering their designated Local Testing Center.

They must bring one slim briefcase or messenger-type laptop bag, one transparent bag, one laptop with the assessment platform Exemplify Version 3.10 installed, a printed copy of the Notice of Admission (NOA), a printed copy of the accomplished Honor Code, Health Declaration and Liability Waiver, and other Undertakings of the 2026 Bar Examinees, a valid government-issued ID, and other personal items allowed within the

testing center’s premises.

The SC also uses the acronym “AWESAM-BAR” for its detailed final reminders.

The SC noted that examinees are expected to arrive at their designated Local Testing Center ahead of the closing of the gates for each day of the examination. They must also consider their schedule for each exam day, taking into account traffic and weather conditions.

They are asked to wear decent, comfortable, and appropriate attire for a court-sanctioned proceeding.

Examinations on Exemplify must be downloaded, and examinees have to memorize their login credentials before entering the testing center, as well as secure the allowed items in the examination room. They must also adhere to the Policies, Protocols, Rules of Conduct, and Guidelines during the exam proper.

Pump prices seen rising up to P5/l by next week

By Alena Mae S. Flores

CONSUMERS can expect higher pump prices of as much as P5 per liter next week amid the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East.

An industry source said diesel will likely increase by P4.50 to P5 per liter and gasoline by P4 to P4.50 per liter based on this week’s Mean of Platts and foreign exchange averages for the first four days of the week.

“Oil prices rose as the resumption of hostilities between the US and Iran over mining in the Strait of Hormuz raised concerns about more disruptions to energy flows from the Middle East,” the source said.

He said the US strike on Larak, Iran’s missile response against US interests

in the Middle East, and US President Trump’s renewed threats against Kharg Island have created renewed risk of escalation in the region after more than a month of relative calm.

“Tightening global diesel inventories due to disruptions at refineries around the world, especially in the Middle East and in Russia, where continued Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian energy infrastructure have compounded the supply concern, and diminished flows through the Strait of Hormuz have pushed prices higher,” he added.

According to the source, low inventories, resilient demand, and uncertainty over supply security continue to support Asian gasoline prices, with supply from China likely to be tempered by stockpiling ahead of the Golden Week holidays.

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Applications may be sent to: Analyn A. Arela Email Address: wealthphil2025@gmail.com	
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Applications may be sent to: Analyn A. Arela Email Address: wealthphil2025@gmail.com	
Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Wealth Tools Group (Philippines) Corp. Complete Address: B18 L7 P4, Kanluran, CEZ, Rosario, Cavite Nature of Business: MANUFACTURING	Name: HUANG. DAOZHU Address: ROSARIO, CAVITE Nationality: CHINESE Intended period of employment: Two (2) years
The Company hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job duties described for this position. The Company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and to apply for an Alien Employment Permit (AEP) with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – Central Office, DOLE Building, Murala Wing, Murala Street corner General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila	
Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able, and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired may file an objection with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – Central Office, DOLE Building, Murala Wing, Murala Street corner General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, within thirty (30) days after this publication.	
Please inform the DOLE Central Office if you have any information regarding criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.	



ROAD CLEARING. Government field workers clear a stretch of the Marilaque Highway in Baras, Rizal of debris in the aftermath of recent tropical storms. Baras FB photo

Reforms in healthcare services bared

By Ram Superable

PHILIPPINE health authorities are overhauling the national primary care model, rolling out plans to integrate high-cost specialty treatments, mental health support, and localized funding into a unified coverage framework by 2028.

The Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation announced the policy shift during a Senate budget review on Friday for the proposed 2027 health allocation.

Under the updated strategy, the Ya-

man ng Kalusugan Program (YAKAP) will expand its core coverage package to encompass basic family planning items, virus screening, and outpatient management for long-term health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes, and psychiatric conditions.

“The P9.1 billion is for family health, immunization, nutrition, and responsible parenting. We have now woven this into our YAKAP program. We are already in discussions... on how to also include commodities in our YAKAP. And also so that our HIV testing will be covered,” said acting DOH Secretary Edwin Mercado.

An additional P6.9 billion has been set aside for contagious illness control, with funding heavily targeted toward tuberculosis treatment and human immunodeficiency virus prevention.

Meanwhile, a P2.7 billion allocation has been proposed to manage non-communicable illnesses, covering routine medication and therapy for cardiovascu-

lar, metabolic, and mental health conditions.

Parallel to the primary care expansion, both DOH and PhilHealth are restructuring their long-term financial goals under the Universal Health Care law following pandemic-related delays.

The state insurer, led by its president and chief executive Beverly Ho, aims to reduce out-of-pocket medical bills to 37 percent of overall national health expenditures by 2028, matching targets outlined in the national development roadmap.

Direct patient spending accounted for 41.2 percent of overall health costs in 2025, down from roughly 55 percent recorded a decade prior.

IN BRIEF

Drug-related warrants limited in scope—SC

EVIDENCE of credit card fraud cannot be seized under a search warrant issued for drug-related cases, according to the Supreme Court (SC).

In its decision, the SC’s Third Division held that warrants issued pertaining to drug charges do not authorize the seizure of credit cards or other access devices.

The ruling clarified that as a general rule, authorities may seize only items specifically described in a search warrant.

However, the High Tribunal considers plain view doctrine as an exemption which allows officers to seize evidence they discover while lawfully present in a place. **Pot Chavez**

PNP scores P18.5-m shabu in various raids

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) on Friday reported the seizure of a total of 2.7 kilograms of suspected shabu with an estimated street value of P18.5 million and the arrested of five suspects in separate anti-drug operations in Pampanga, Iloilo, and Batangas on Sept. 2.

The PNP said the largest confiscation came from a raid on the UPS Cargo Area of the Clark Freeport Zone in Malabacat City, Pampanga, where the operatives intercepted an inbound parcel containing approximately 1,573 grams of suspected shabu valued at P10.69 million.

In Batangas City, authorities arrested a suspect and recovered approximately 1,000 grams of suspected shabu valued at P6.8 million during a buy-bust operation in Barangay Balagtas.

In Iloilo City, an operation in Barangay Igcocong, La Paz resulted in the arrest of four suspects and the confiscation of approximately 152 grams of suspected shabu with an estimated value of P1.03 million. **Vince Lopez**

Public hesitation worse than the threats—Study

PUBLIC hesitation to report early warning signs poses a greater threat to campus safety than active emergencies, a study on critical vulnerabilities in Filipino schools revealed.

Based on an Aug. 11 survey of 1,900 respondents by the Agile Data Solutions Inc., while official response protocols focus on immediate attacks, real-time prevention fails long before an alarm sounds due to widespread reporting paralysis.

The findings were released on Thursday, as the Department of Education conducted a rescheduled nationwide active-attack safety drill across campuses.

Uncertainty serves as the primary barrier to early intervention, with 33.4 percent of respondents admitting that fear of being wrong stops them from flagging subtle threats like alarming social media posts or violent hallway chatter. **Ram Superable**



SOMEBODY MISSES P141M IN KUSH. The Bureau of Customs turns over to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency more than P141 million in high-grade marijuana or kush found abandoned at the luggage check-in area of the Ninoy Aquino at International Airport. BOC photo

OCD warns of haze from Indonesian forest fires

By Rex Espiritu and Nash Maulana

THE Office of Civil Defense (OCD) on Friday warned residents of Palawan, Cebu and several areas in Mindanao of massive haze, urging them to limit outdoor exposure and wear an N95 or equivalent mask when going outside.

Meanwhile, Air Quality Index reflects “good” (Particulate Matter) PM10 and PM2.5 levels across all listed monitoring stations in Metro Manila on Friday, even as many areas in the Visayas and

Mindanao recorded “acutely unhealthy” PM2.5 levels amid haze affecting parts of the country.

Areas expected to experience haze include Palawan, Cebu, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, South Cotabato, Misamis Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu.

The haze affecting Southeast Asia is widely attributed to ongoing wildfires in Indonesia.

OCD deputy administrator Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV advised residents

in affected areas to stay indoors as much as possible, keep their doors and windows closed, and seal gaps where haze could enter using damp cloths.

Motorists were also advised to use headlights or fog lights when traveling at night or in areas with reduced visibility.

Alejandro warned that exposure to haze may cause coughing, breathing difficulties, chest pain, watery eyes and nasal irritation. It may also aggravate existing respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Palace belies claim Davao City got no fiscal support from gov’t

By Charles Dantes

MALACANANG on Friday disputed Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte’s claim that the city received little to no funding from the national government.

The Palace cited official records showing that Davao City and its barangays received about P53.11 billion in national funds from 2022 to 2026.

Presidential Communications Office Undersecretary Claire Castro said the amount consisted mainly of the city’s P52.80 billion National Tax Allotment (NTA) during the five years, along with P314.48 million in other releases under

the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

“On allegation that no government funds were allocated for Davao City according to Congressman Pulong (Duterte) this is not true,” Castro said in a message to reporters, presenting what she described as the government’s records of funds received by the city and its barangays.

The dispute came after Duterte claimed that Davao City had effectively received a “zero budget” from the Marcos administration.

Castro’s latest figures, however, covered a broader funding category than the earlier Palace figures.



NO SUCH THING AS UGLY DUCKLING. Ducks generally look the same with none prettier or uglier than the others. But the term ‘flock’ referring to a group of ducks, can change depending on where they are. On water, they are called a raft, a paddling, or a team; on land, they are called waddling or badling; and up in the air, they are a flock, a skein, or a team. **Manny Palmero**



Grinding Grains
Honor Blanco Cabie

Holding the light at 250 years

NEW YORK — As America marks its 250th anniversary in 2026, the copper giant in New York harbor holds a mirror to a shared history.

The Statue of Liberty is more than a landmark. She is a promise in green metal, and greets the weary -- Filipinos and other nationals -- the bold, and the dreamers.

President Ronald Reagan once shared a profound truth about this nation of 345 million -- 247 million in 1989 when he did the sharing.

He noted that you can live in other ancient lands, yet truly never become one of their native people.

You can reside in Japan, he continued, France or Germany, but you do not become ethnically Japanese, French, or German.

In the United States, many ethnic Filipinos have been raised to elective posts or given positions of responsibility in their Filipino-American dominated communities.

America is different.

As Reagan said in his 1989 farewell address, anyone from any corner of the world can come to live in America and become an American.

That idea is the true flame of Lady Liberty, a beacon of renewal.

When the Statue arrived here in 1885 in 214 wooden crates, the country was healing and growing.

The broken shackles at her feet spoke of freedom from oppression. Her raised torch promised enlightenment.

Today, as the United States turns 250, people here face new divisions and old doubts. We hear them wonder if their institutions can hold.

We hear this question if their welcome is wearing thin.

The Statue answers these doubts. She has stood through world wars, economic collapse, and social upheaval.

Her green patina has weathered storms, just as the republic has.

Today Reagan's words remind us that American identity is not about bloodline.

It is about belief. It is adherence to ideals like liberty, equality, and self-government.

When a new immigrant climbs up to the copper crown, they do not see a tribal symbol. They see an open door, a reflection of their own potential.

At 250 years old, America is a grand experiment still under construction.

“

The Statue of Liberty tells the world that the American story belongs to anyone brave enough to help write the next chapter.

The Statue of Liberty remains America's conscience in the harbor. She challenges Americans to live up to their loudest claims.

She tells the world that the American story belongs to anyone brave enough to help write the next chapter.

The torch does not flicker out with age. It burns bright when people remember who they are supposed to be.

The 93-meter Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island in New York arrived in the United States aboard the French ship Isero on June 17, 1885.

It was sculpted by Frederic-Auguste Bertholdi, who also created the 11.50-meter tall replica on the Ile aux Cygnes by the River Seine in Paris.

In the summer of 1997, senior Philippine Airlines executive Rolando G. Estabillo, now the publisher of Manila Standard, and Manila editors including us had a glimpse of the replica during a boat ride on the Seine River.

We are closing the loop with our eyes on the Statue under a watchful and friendly New York sun.



Chasing Happy
Adelle Chua

Contest journalism

I HAVE fond memories of campus journalism contests. I remember first competing in “Balita” at the district level when I was in Grade 4. By the time I was in Grade 6, I was writing editorials for our school magazine, The Graceanette, and competing in the same category in the Metro Manila Young Writers Conference. I remember we were asked to write about drugs. (I don't remember how I, then 12, could have written anything about the matter aside from vague generalities.)

Victory was truly sweet as our teacher-chaperone treated us (all staff members) to a fastfood joint's sundae cone, then a novelty. Our school had rented a jeepney to take us to and from the contest venue, an elementary school somewhere in the belly of Manila. My co-staff members and I reveled in the privilege of being excused from classes the whole day because we were representing the school.

In high school, I was part of the staff of The Gracean Envoy as early as my first year. As a sophomore I competed in Feature Writing, as a junior in Editorial Writing, and as a senior in Newswriting.

In these competitions, the track was clear -- from the division to the regional to the national levels. Our ultimate goal was to reach the nationals because the venue moved from region to region. Representing the school at the weeklong nationals meant taking a long bus ride or even boarding a plane. During my senior year, however, Metro Manila was the host so I found myself billeted at a large public high school in Pasig. There was a treat, though: SM Megamall had just opened and the ice-skating rink, then at the mall basement, was the top attraction. It didn't matter that we did not know how to skate.

But the best part of joining those journalism contests was the preparation.

Our school paper adviser, who sadly has since passed, was a wide reader who inspired us to read. It was always good to be able to carry a conversation with him. We needed to know what was going on, at a time when information was neither instant nor accessible. We practiced by writing, getting critiqued, and writing again. It was an exciting preview to a life I could have, a profession I could actually pursue.

“

To win is to learn well, to know how to struggle, fail, and bounce back.

I remember all these now because it's the start of pressseason again. I've been invited to be a lecturer and judge in one in the next few days.

It's an honor and a privilege to be invited every year -- in this or that city, or that level. The venues are usually far and the processes not too efficient. There is a lot of waiting involved. But all that do not matter when you consider the faces of the students you talk to.

There's a rule that you can't anymore become a judge for a higher level if you've been a judge at a lower-level contest. To be honest, I like talking at the latter. I am able to reach more students, even those who are not yet very good, or who may yet be beginners in campus journalism.

There are now more categories than there were during my time. The students are also more comfortable using equipment. It's a basic requirement that to be at the top of the media game, they must know how to communicate on different platforms using available tools.

Sometimes, however, in the desire to win, many students -- either encouraged or pressured by their teachers or school officials -- see winning as the ultimate prize. Nothing else matters aside from the recognition that one is the best, or among the best. Thus, some shortcuts to success are employed, never mind if these border on dishonest, or that they do not foster real learning, or

EDITORIAL

Where the shadows meet the sunrise

NEXT week, on Sept. 11, the world will mark 25 years since the skies over New York, Arlington, and Shanksville turned to ashes.

A quarter of a century has passed since the twin towers fell, carrying with them thousands of innocent dreams.

This anniversary is not just a calendar milestone. It is a sacred threshold where a raw grief softens into enduring legacy.

The 9/11 Memorial stands today as a quiet mirror. It reflects both the fragility of human civilization and the stubborn, unyielding architecture of the human spirit.

The twin void pools in Manhattan, holding water that cascades into an abyss we cannot see, teach us a profound grammar of loss.

They tell us that absence has a shape, and that memory is the only real armor humanity has against the repetition of darkness.

For many, a tragedy thousands of miles away across the vast Pacific might feel distant -- a localized wound belonging to a foreign soil.

“

The anniversary is a sacred threshold where a raw grief softens into enduring legacy.

But the significance of this day echoes loudly in the Philippines.

The Philippines is a nation intimately acquainted with the heavy cost of terror and the sudden rupture of peace.

When the towers burned in 2001, thousands of Filipino families felt an



Citizen Barok
Louis 'Barok' Biraogo

THIS is not a scandal. A scandal implies something unusual, something aberrant, something that violates the normal order of things. What Senator Panfilo Lacson has dragged out of the polluted depths of Laguna Lake is not an aberration. It is the operating manual—the playbook that has kept this country's political dynasties fat and happy for generations. And make no mistake: this is a dynasty operation. The Cayetanos did not build a political machine in Taguig by accident. They built it with concrete—38.83 hectares of concrete, fill material, and reclaimed lakebed that nobody asked permission for.

Let us begin with the most delicious irony of this entire affair. The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), the very agency created to regulate reclamation, has confirmed that not a single permit was issued. Not one. Zero. Imagine walking into a bank and walking out with fifty million pesos, then telling the police, “But I meant to fill out a withdrawal slip.” That is essentially what has happened here, except the bank is a lake and the money is public domain converted into private land. PD 3-A, the Reclamation Law of 1973, states: “The reclamation of areas under water, whether foreshore or inland, shall be limited to the National Government or any person authorized by it under a proper contract. All reclamation made in violation of this provision shall be forfeited to the State without need of judicial action.” Without need of judicial action. The law is so clear, so absolute, that it does not even require a court to declare the reclamation illegal. It is automatically forfeited. And yet, somehow, mysteriously, titles were issued.

Here is where the story transforms from a mere regulatory violation into something far more sinister. The Land Registration Authority (LRA) is now investigating original certificates of title covering the reclaimed land, some of which apparently originated from homestead patents—the legal mechanism designed for agricultural settlers who cultivate agricultural land. Since when does one plant rice on a lakebed? The Supreme Court has been remarkably clear on this point. In Republic v. Heirs of Daquer, the Court held that a homestead patent cannot lawfully convey property that was never alienable and disposable public land. In Republic v. Bacas, the Court held that a land registration court has no jurisdiction

that integrity, a guiding principle of the profession they wish to enter, is compromised along the way.

Competitions are supposed to be healthy because they mold students and

over non-registrable public property. Republic Act 4850, the LLDA Charter, expressly provides that reclaimed land belongs to the Authority, while the resulting lakeshore remains national government property. So the question becomes: How does water become land, become title, become private wealth?

“

This is a masterclass on how to steal a lake.

If Lacson's investigation is correct, the answer is a masterwork of bureaucratic alchemy. Secure appropriations for “slope protection” and “flood control.” Use that money to dump fill material into Laguna Lake. Wait for the fill to create new land. Commission a survey that treats this new land as if it had always existed. Secure a homestead patent for agricultural land. Obtain an original certificate of title. Sell, transfer, or develop the land. Profit. It is, quite literally, a land-manufacturing scheme disguised as a flood control program.

Now let us discuss Lacson's most explosive allegation: the 33 percent kickback scheme. According to Lacson, contractors in Taguig were required to kick back roughly one-third of their contract value to the people who controlled the DPWH district office. The mechanism is elegant in its simplicity: the contract is inflated to absorb the kickback; the work is either not done, partially done, or done with substandard materials; the accomplishment is documented with recycled photographs—the same geotagged images used to bill for different projects; and the money flows from DPWH to contractor to shell company to political operator to somewhere. Lacson has not explicitly named the ultimate beneficiary, but he has stated that district engineers who did not follow the instructions of Alan Cayetano were replaced. Cayetano, of course, denies everything, calling Lacson a “Senator-Judge troll” relying on hearsay.

Cayetano's defense rests on familiar pillars. The projects benefited residents, he argues. But if the projects actually provided flood protection, why are there ghost projects? Why recycled photographs? Why double appropriations for the same project? The existence of actual infrastructure does not negate the existence of fake infrastr-

install in them the discipline of working hard for something they want to achieve. Let's not ruin the experience for the next generation of journalists, or Filipinos for that matter.

The Taguig land grab

structure—the fake projects are how you pay for the real ones and line your pockets simultaneously. Lacson is politically motivated, Cayetano counters. This is almost certainly true. But political motivation does not make evidence disappear. If Lacson has documents showing double appropriations, recycled photographs, and unauthorized reclamation, those documents exist regardless of why Lacson decided to investigate. And as for having no direct control over DPWH, this is technically accurate but practically meaningless. Control in Philippine politics does not operate through formal org charts. It operates through patronage, influence, and fear.

The institutional failures are equally instructive. The LRA is not the villain of this story; it is, at worst, the unwitting notary—the clerk who stamps the paperwork while the real magic happens upstream. Still, one must ask: if the Torrens system is the gold standard of Philippine property law, how does a lakebed slip through with a homestead patent and a straight face? The PRA's belated confirmation that no permits were secured raises a more uncomfortable question: where was the agency during seven years of unauthorized reclamation? And the Ombudsman, constitutionally mandated to investigate corruption yet chronically underfunded and politically outgunned, has issued subpoenas—a start, but only that.

The Supreme Court's landmark decision in Chavez v. Public Estates Authority is devastating to the private title theory. Reclaimed lands remain subject to constitutional and statutory limitations governing public domain property. The legal chain must be lawful reclamation, lawful classification, lawful disposition, legally qualified recipient, valid title. Skip any step and the entire chain collapses. In Taguig, the first step is already broken.

The Taguig reclamation scandal is not just about 38.83 hectares of lakebed. It is about how political dynasties convert public resources into private wealth, how government agencies fail to perform their regulatory functions, and how the Torrens system can be manipulated to legitimize theft. It is about whether anyone will be held accountable. The Ombudsman has a choice. The PRA has a choice. The DPWH has a choice. And the Filipino people have a choice. The cauldron is boiling. The worms are surfacing. The question is whether anyone will have the courage to pull them out.

To win is to learn well, to know how to struggle, fail, and bounce back -- not to outdo the competition at all costs.

adellechua@gmail.com

Malaysia starts cloud seeding to clear haze

KUCHING – Malaysia launched a three-day cloud-seeding operation in a bid to ease hazardous haze choking Sarawak state, as smoke from Indonesian forest fires pushed air quality to dangerous levels.

The operation, which also aims to bolster water reserves in anticipation of dry weather, targets three hydroelectric dams and 13 water catchment areas, Sarawak’s Disaster Management Committee said.

Residents of the state on Borneo island have endured heavy haze for days as smoke from Indonesia’s Kalimantan blankets the area, driving up respiratory complaints.

Rainfall resulting from cloud seeding “has the potential to reduce the concentration of airborne pollutants, thereby supporting efforts to address air quality deterioration and the impact of haze,” the Disaster Management Committee said.

Committee chair Douglas Ugghah Embas said the operation – which involves the air force, the National Disaster Management Agency and the Malaysian Meteorological Department – also

aims to replenish water supplies ahead of expected hotter, drier weather.

“October might be hotter and drier. We want to increase the water levels as much as possible while we still can,” Ugghah told reporters at the air force’s Kuching base, where a C-130 aircraft prepared for a seeding flight.

The aircraft was due to release a saline solution into clouds at altitudes of 5,000 to 7,000 feet over target areas.

Ugghah said that cloud seeding “can only be carried out when suitable cloud formations and atmospheric conditions are present – it cannot create rain in the absence of suitable clouds.”

“Cloud development and rainfall are subsequently monitored continuously to assess atmospheric conditions and the operation’s outcome,” the committee said.

Air quality in Sarawak deterio-

rated sharply again on Thursday, with seven locations recording hazardous Air Pollutant Index (API) readings above 300.

The town of Serian, about 60 kilometers (37 miles) southeast of Kuching, was worst hit with an API of 475.

Under national guidelines, API levels above 300 are classified as hazardous, while readings beyond 500 could trigger consideration of a local emergency.

A prolonged dry spell has strained water infrastructure, prompting state welfare agencies to distribute more than 450,000 boxes of drinking water to over 225,000 residents since January.

Firefighting and civil defense teams remain deployed to contain local fires, while health authorities have advised the public to limit outdoor activity and wear haze-rated masks in affected areas. **AFP**



WE CAN'T BREATHE. Activists gathered in front of the Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur to submit an official memorandum calling for transparency and corporate accountability across borders on September 4, 2026. Air quality in Malaysia deteriorated further as smoke from Indonesian forest fires drove up respiratory complaints and sent residents scrambling for protective masks. Infographic map (inset) shows temperature anomalies on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra as smoke and air pollution hit parts of Indonesia and Malaysia. **AFP**



Seoul weighs 'contributions' to security of Hormuz Strait

SEOUL – South Korea said Friday it was weighing “contributions” to US security efforts in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, potentially including a military deployment, but noted that no decision has been made yet.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly pressured ally South Korea to provide help for the war in the Middle East, saying Seoul rejected his request for assistance in securing the waterway key to global oil supplies.

“Contributions to the Strait of Hormuz could be managed within limits that do not compromise military readiness,” a South Korean presidential official told reporters.

The president’s office added in a separate statement that the “references made during today’s briefing regarding military contributions — such as combat participation, non-combat roles, and search operations — were merely general descriptions of various options.”

“Please be advised that nothing has been decided yet concerning actual contributions,” it added.

The comments came a day after local broadcaster JTBC reported that South Korea’s government was “leaning toward” dispatching troops to the strait and reviewing details ahead of seeking parliamentary approval.

Broadcaster SBS reported that the defense ministry was considering deploying a maritime patrol aircraft, a naval logistics support ship and an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team.

The maritime patrol aircraft would be tasked with monitoring submarines and surface vessels belonging to potential threats, SBS said, citing a senior military official.

The EOD team would be expected to conduct joint operations with foreign naval forces if deployed, the report added. **AFP**



MIRACLE. This handout photograph taken and released by the Nepal Army on September 4, 2026 shows army personnel carrying a worker who was trapped inside a tunnel during a rescue operation at Trishuli-3A Hydropower Project in Nepal’s Rasuwa district. Two hydropower workers were pulled from the tunnel more than a week after catastrophic flooding swept through the area, government ministers said. **AFP**

2 trapped workers rescued in Nepal ‘miracle’

KATHMANDU -- Two hydropower workers were pulled alive from a tunnel buried by debris in Nepal on Friday, a rare ray of hope on the tenth day of rescue efforts after catastrophic Himalayan flooding.

Rescuers cheered as one man was pulled through a muddy opening, a video released by the energy ministry showed.

He was helped to his feet by rescuers, and later carried on the backs of the emergency workers, raising his hand as they took him towards a helicopter.

A photograph showed the second man caked in mud, his hands pressed together in prayer, as rescuers carried him on a stretcher.

“As long as there is breath, there is hope!” Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha said in a statement.

“Rescue operations are continuing in all the affected tunnels. Let everyone’s efforts and prayers continue. We have not lost hope.”

Rescuers called it a “miracle” after the August 26 glacial and mountain collapse on the China-Nepal border, that has killed at least 1,280 people and left more than 5,500 missing.

“I am so happy, my heart is lighter,” Amir Maharjan, the brother of rescued worker Kabir Maharjan, told AFP.

The men, both Nepali, were named as Sanjay Shah, 30, a mechanical foreman, as well as Maharjan, 45, a mechanical supervisor, by Home Minister Sudan Gurung.

The prime minister’s office said that Shah was in a “stable condition,” and that Maharjan was in intensive care.

Lakshmi Naini, who said Maharjan

is her brother-in-law, waited outside a hospital in Kathmandu, where he was rushed to by helicopter.

“It’s a miracle! I am very happy,” she told AFP. “I heard he is alive through social media, and I could not believe it.”

“I have no words to express how I feel,” said another relative, Shyam Maharjan, 45.

The two were among hundreds of hydropower workers who had been missing since a wall of mud and debris swept through the region on August 26 after a vast glacial and rock collapse on a mountain on the China-Nepal border.

Searches were continuing at the Trishuli 3A tunnel where the two men were rescued, as well as multiple other sites, with at least 12 hydropower projects smashed by the floods. **AFP**

IN BRIEF

Tanker captain arrested over cargo ship sinking off Istanbul

ISTANBUL – The captain of an oil tanker that hit a cargo ship that sank in waters off Istanbul, leaving 10 missing, has been arrested along with his third officer, media reports said Friday.

The pair were formally arrested by a court late on Thursday, a day after the pre-dawn collision in which the ALSU, an empty oil tanker, struck the Tugberk Imamoglu, a cargo vessel carrying rolled steel, in the Sea of Marmara near Istanbul.

The court in Silivri, on the western edge of Istanbul province near where the collision occurred, ordered their arrest, but there were no immediate details on the charges, with four other suspects granted conditional release, Turkey’s DHA news agency said.

Officials said the damaged cargo ship sank “very quickly” in waters about 900 meters (3,000 feet) deep, some 18 nautical miles off Silivri, leaving all 10 crew members missing. **AFP**

More than 80 killed in Yemen clashes Thursday – sources

DUBAI – Clashes between Yemen’s Houthi rebels and government forces have killed 81 combatants since Thursday, according to a tally of figures from two military officials and medical sources in rebel-held territory.

A military official on the Red Sea coast reported 24 of his men killed, while another in the inland Taiz area said 15 had been killed there.

At least 42 Houthi militants were also killed, according to medical sources in areas under their control.

Deadly clashes erupted in Yemen on Thursday, after Houthi forces began a ground assault accompanied by rocket and drone attacks near coastal areas in the Red Sea and around the Taiz region. **AFP**

Air India investigation flags hydraulic loss, pilot drug test

NEW DELHI – An Air India flight that plunged last month, injuring passengers, suffered a temporary loss of hydraulic systems, but its pilot tested “non-negative” for psychoactive substances, Indian investigators said Friday.

The Airbus A320, carrying 137 passengers and eight crew, suddenly lost altitude on August 4 while flying from Phuket, Thailand, to New Delhi, injuring 24 people before stabilizing and landing safely.

India’s civil aviation ministry classified it as a “Serious Incident.”

Both Airbus and France’s civil aviation safety agency, the BEA, said they are assisting the Indian investigation into the flight.

A preliminary report released Friday by India’s Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) said the flight-control system detected the loss of three hydraulic systems for several seconds. **AFP**

FROM SHELVES

TO FEEDS. Brazilian book influencer Marcelo Nogueira, speaks as he holds a pocket book version of ‘White Nights’ of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The short story about a ‘dreamer’ who falls deeply in love with a young woman he meets while strolling through the streets of St. Petersburg in the mid-19th century has become one of Brazil’s best-selling books and is now taking TikTok by storm. **AFP**



How a Dostoevsky novella took TikTok by storm

RIO DE JANEIRO – Marcelo Nogueira is not well versed in the classics but the 27-year-old Brazilian book influencer was seduced by Fyodor Dostoevsky’s “White Nights,” a 19th-century tale of love and loneliness at the center of an unlikely TikTok craze.

Dostoevsky’s story of a dreamer who, while strolling through the streets of Saint

Petersburg, meets a young woman with whom he falls madly in love has become a bestseller in Brazil, nearly 180 years after its release.

Editora 34 publishing house told AFP that its sales of the novella, one of Dostoevsky’s earliest works, had jumped 463 percent year-on-year.

In the United Kingdom and Spain, it is also flying off the shelves.

Nogueira, who has 13,000 followers on TikTok, explained that Gen Z readers found an echo in “the figure of the solitary dreamer, which is how many young people feel today.”

Dostoevsky follows the narrator over four nights and a morning during which he ceases living in his imagination and embraces reality for the first time.

His peregrinations are the prelude to a love story as passionate as it is fleeting.

“My God! A whole minute of bliss! Is that really so little for the whole of a man’s life?” the narrator exclaims in one of the lines most quoted on social media, reflecting on the enduring value of brief bursts of joy. **AFP**

TWO victories in the first four legs have put Yvon Bisera firmly in the Ladies Philippine Golf Tour title hunt – and the Davao ace is out to make it three when the ICTSI Summit Point Championship unwraps Tuesday (Sept. 8) at Summit Point Golf and Country Club in Lipa City, Batangas.

But for Bisera, the P1-million championship is about more than anIt is also her final major test at home before she makes her maiden appearance on the tough Korean LPGA Tour later this month, making a strong showing at Summit Point even more important to the 2025 Thailand LPGA Masters champion.

“I want to perform well at Summit Point kasi preparation ko din ‘to going to Korea,” said Bisera, who is set to compete in the Hana Financial Group Championship on Sept. 17-20 in Gyeonggi Province, on Daebudo Island southwest of Seoul.

Bisera has been in impressive form on the LPGT this season.

She outlasted two rivals in a playoff to capture the Lakewood Championship in March, then produced an emphatic seven-shot romp at the Pradera Verde Championship last July. The victories have established her as one of the tour’s leading contenders heading into the Summit Point showdown.

With her Korean LPGA debut fast approaching, Bisera has used her time between tournaments to fine-tune the part of her game she believes could prove decisive at



Bisera braces for Summit Point challenge, Korean LPGA debut

Summit Point is Yvon Bisera’s final major test at home before she makes her maiden appearance on the tough Korean LPGA Tour later this month.

Summit Point: the short game.

While waiting for her Korean visa documents, the Davaoña has devoted extra time to sharpening her touch around the greens, particularly with the possibility of strong winds adding another layer of difficulty at the Batangas layout.

“Focus ko talaga short game kasi it is very important sa Summit Point, lalo na pag malakas yung hangin,” said Bisera.

The focus will be particularly cru-

cial in a 54-hole event where a fast start can provide an early advantage and the ability to stay composed down the stretch could determine the champion.

Bisera, however, is not expecting another runaway performance like the one she produced at Pradera Verde.

“I really want to win pero lahat kami nag-prepare for this tournament,” she said. “But I will try my best to perform well para may confidence going to Korea.”

And she will have plenty of opposition.

Reigning Order of Merit champion Sarah Ababa leads a compact but formidable field that also features former leg winners Mafy Singson, Tiffany Lee, Chihiro Ikeda and Princess Superal.

Korean challenger Kim Seoyun is likewise expected to figure prominently, along with title-hungry contenders Martina Miñoza, Pamela Mariano, Velinda Castil, Rev Alcantara, Angela Mangana and Gretchen Villacencio.

Filipinos wind up 4th as HK-China holds on to win

TEAM Philippines battled hard on a very demanding final day of the 31st Nomura Cup, tallying a final round level-par 144 to wind up just two shots out of the podium as Hong Kong-China polished off a wire-to-wire triumph with a closing 136 for a four-shot win over Japan.

Jet Hernandez fired a one-under-par 71 and Rolando Bregente accounted for a 73 as the Filipinos finished with a 570 total, 13 shots behind the champions, even as Japan settled for second spot after firing a 138 at Bayhood No. 9 International Golf Club in Beijing, China.

The 21-year-old Hernandez finished in a tie for sixth spot individually, and the Filipinos still wound up with one of their best efforts in what is also known as the Asia-Pacific team golf championship in year, partly erasing the stigma of winding up 11th place at home in 2022.

“I am very proud with how all of us battled even if we didn’t have our A-game the entire week,” Hernandez, who went straight to the airport after his round for a flight back to Manila, where he packs his bags before flying to the United States to resume his psychology studies at the University of Denver.



Jet Hernandez

“We know we can compete with (the best countries in the region),” he went on. “We just have to continue putting ourselves in these situations.”

Team Philippines started out the final day trailing by just five, but just couldn’t hold it together in the stretch.

“It’s a tough pill to swallow, but we gave it our best till the very end,” 18-year-old Shinichi Suzuki said after failing to count with his worst score for the week, a 77.

Get up to speed with Wild Rounds: Pilipinas Open

FOLLOWING an explosive opening split that set the stage for local competitive play, Riot Games’ hit mobile Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) game, League of Legends: Wild Rift, continues its competitive journey in the Philippines through Wild Rounds: Pilipinas Open, bringing together the latest action across its Splits and Road to SMASH: Creator Showmatch.

The recently concluded Split 1 set the stage for flawless group stage runs and the rise of fan-favorite squads. The six-week run had Filipino players and fans witness strategic gameplay and intense rivalries throughout the 74-team split.

Riding that momentum, Wild Rift raised the stakes for Split 2, with 36 squads battling through the qualifiers to secure one of the 16 coveted spots in the group as the competition entered a pivotal turn towards the Road to SMASH 2026 in South Korea this November. Running parallel to the intense action is a highly anticipated Creator Showmatch on September 20, featuring some of Wild Rift’s top creators—five of whom will represent the Philippines at the SMASH Finals in Korea.



Catch the beginning of the Split 2 Playoffs and the highly anticipated Creator Showmatch, happening on the same day as the Road to SMASH Finals.

Split 1 Recap: Dominant Sweeps and Fan Favorites

Split 1 saw several fan-favorite squads make strong runs in their respective groups, with Gensokyo and IIXWR sweeping their opponents in Group A and Group B, respectively. Peekaboo and Cubao Korea also delivered dominant performances, clearing their respective brackets without a loss.

As the tournament progressed, several standout players also emerged, drawing attention with impressive performances and statistics that showcased their impact on the Rift.

Kuro has been a formidable force for Peekaboo, topping Split 1 with an impressive 12.2 KDA and a 72% kill participation rate across the split. Meanwhile, manila alinam anchored

Cubao Korea’s near-perfect run, showcasing unparalleled consistency in the top lane with a 3.13 KDA and 38% kill participation rate. Not to be outdone, Karma shone during IIXWR’s clean Split 1 run, conquering the jungle with a 4.45 KDA and a 65% kill participation rate.

Split 2: What’s Next on the Road to SMASH 2026

Split 2 officially kicked off its Group Stage on August 8, expanding the competition to 36 registered teams. Returning contenders include Cubao Korea, Gensokyo, IIXWR, and Bonus Round.

The group stage matches immediately delivered high-octane action across the board, with powerhouse squads setting a blistering pace. In Group A, Gensokyo continued its undefeated run to claim the top spot at 3-0 (7 points), closely followed by Elder Dragon at 2-1 (6 points). Group B saw Split 1 stand-out IIXWR take total control with a flawless 3-0 record (9 points) ahead of Tempo at 2-1 (4 points), while Bonus Round asserted command over Group C with an unblemished 3-0 record (8 points), just ahead of UAI Esports at 2-1 (6 points).

Lady Chiefs seek 4th straight win as V-L action heats up

Games Saturday
(Gameville Central Park)
10 a.m. – DLSU vs Arellano (Men)
12 noon – FEU vs Mapua (Men)
3 p.m. – Perpetual vs Arellano (Women)
5 p.m. – UE vs UST (Women)

ARELLANO University puts its unbeaten V-League Collegiate Challenge record on the line as it plays fellow NCAA squad University of Perpetual Help System Dalta Saturday at the Gameville Central Park in Mandaluyong City.

The Lady Chiefs shoot for a fourth straight win, but the Legarda-based side cannot afford to be complacent in the 3 p.m. duel with the Lady Altas.

University of Santo Tomas and University of the East, tied with Perpetual at 1-1, clash in the other women’s match at 5 p.m.

Three-peat-seeking Far Eastern University finally makes its debut in the men’s division as it collides with Mapua at 12 noon.

Arellano seeks to join idle Letran in first place at 3-1 as it tangles with De La Salle in the 10 a.m. opener.

The Lady Chiefs have been impressive so far, highlighted by a 25-21, 21-25, 31-33, 25-23, 15-13 reversal of the Tigresses. Arellano is coming off another five-set victory, a 19-25, 25-17, 34-32, 16-25, 15-7 squeaker over the College of Saint Benilde a week ago.

Heart Villaflores and Cris Servidad are the Lady Chiefs’ main reasons for their perfect run.

The Lady Chiefs, meanwhile, are eyeing their first winning streak of the tournament. After being swept by Adamson in the opener, Perpetual upended San Beda, 25-22, 28-26, 21-25, 25-21, last August 22.

One advantage the Lady Altas hope to capitalize on is a good recovery after their supposed August 30 showdown with the Tigresses was postponed due to bad weather.

UST hopes to rebound from a tough five-set loss to Arellano last August 22, with Angge Poyos leading the charge.

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang goes all in to celebrate 10 years of growing with players



Players can unlock a new Nana Epic Skin, Layla’s new Collector Skin, and other anniversary-themed rewards as MLBB celebrates a decade of growth with players worldwide.

fandoms, sport, music, and everyday consumer experiences.

Over the decade, MLBB’s player-first publishing approach has also extended its universe into new genres. Mobile Legends: Adventure (MLA) and Magic Chess: Go Go (MCGG) give fans new ways to engage with familiar heroes beyond the traditional 5v5 format.

Roger Yu, Producer of MLBB at MOONTON Games, said: “MLBB’s first decade demonstrates that global scale and local relevance can reinforce

each other. We have kept the core game accessible while investing in creators, cultural moments, and partnerships that give communities a role in shaping the brand. This approach has enabled MLBB to grow beyond a single title into a broader entertainment ecosystem. ALL IN MLBB recognizes the players who made that growth possible and reaffirms that they will remain central to our next decade.”

Celebrating 10 years together with legendary rewards

As MLBB enters its 42nd season,

ALL IN MLBB thanks the community with free premium rewards, exciting in-game events featuring legacy heroes Nana and Layla, new anniversary skins, and an offline birthday celebration bringing fans together with the game’s developers.

ALL IN MLBB Anniversary highlights include:

- 10th Anniversary Celebration Pass (4 September–1 November): Earn Battle Pass EXP and unlock the new Nana Epic Skin, an Epic Skin Selection Chest and a Random Epic Skin Chest. Returning players can also claim a free Returning Anniversary Skin.
- Anniversary Gala Weekend (25 September–11 October): Choose from 265 skins and earn a new animated emote, Battle Pass EXP and Premium Skin Fragments.
- Layla’s Stellar Gala (9 October–19 November): Play the “Starfall Breakout” mini-game for the opportunity to claim Layla’s new Collector Skin. A free trial of skins and emblems will also run from 9 October to 12 November.

In October, the anniversary will culminate in the MLBB Birthday Party, an offline fan event featuring community activities, limited-edition souvenirs and a developer question-and-answer session. Players can also share their hopes for MLBB’s future. More details will be announced soon.



The Philippines' Alexandra Eala hits a return to Ukraine's Oleksandra Oliynykova during their women's singles second round tennis match on Day 5 of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. AFP

By Jeremiah Sevilla

RISING stars Alexandra “Alex” Eala and Iva Jovic will set their friendship aside when the two top-20 players collide in a blockbuster third-round match in the US Open 2026 in Flushing Meadows, New York.

World No. 18 Eala faces No. 14 Jovic in a highly anticipated Round of 32 tussle either on Saturday or Sunday (Philippine time), with the Filipina ace looking to finally strike back at the American in their third career meeting.

Both the 21-year-old Eala and 18-year-old Jovic have already surpassed their second-round finishes in last year's US Open and are now eager for another exciting battle on the Grand Slam stage.

“She’s an amazing player, young, very talented, and very intelligent. Of course, she’s a high-ranked player and very accomplished,” Eala said after her vengeful 6-1, 6-4 sweep over Oleksandra Oliynykova of Ukraine in the second round.

“I’ve encountered my fair share of challenges against her this year,” added the Pinay lefty, referring to her two previous losses to Jovic.

“I’m super excited. The atmosphere is going to be amazing, and

she’s been playing some great tennis, so it’s nice to be playing each other in the third round, deeper into the Slam,” Jovic said following her 6-4, 6-4 win against British qualifier Francesca Jones.

Jovic owns a 2-0 head-to-head record against Eala, having won 6-4, 6-2 in the first round of the French Open and 6-2, 6-2, in the second round of the Queen’s Club Championships.

The American also defeated the Filipina, 6-3, in the Stars of the Open exhibition match ahead of the US Open main draw.

Their US Open third-round clash, however, will be their first official match on a hard court, where the Filipina enjoyed a stronger run heading into the North American major.

Eala captured her historic first Tour-level title in the WTA 500 Mubadala DC Open where she beat top 10 players Elina Svitolina and

Jessica Pegula as well as four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka.

The highest-ranked Southeast Asian woman tennister then put up fourth-round and third-round performances in the WTA 1000 Toronto Open and Cincinnati Open, respectively.

Jovic, on the other hand, skipped the DC open as part of her injury management before settling for third-round finishes in both Toronto and Cincinnati tourneys.

The American stalwart, though, has already shown her prowess on the hard court by nabbing her lone Tour trophy in the WTA 500 Guadalajara Open last year.

If Eala finally gets one against Jovic, she will have a shot at a third career faceoff versus another good pal in American No. 4 Coco Gauff, who is set to lock horns with Spanish No. 40 Cristina Bucsa in the third round.

Gauff whips Badosa, sets 3rd-round tiff with Bucsa

NEW YORK—Coco Gauff battled into the third round of the US Open on Thursday with a straight-sets victory over Spain’s Paula Badosa.

Gauff advanced to a meeting with another Spaniard, Cristina Bucsa, after powering past Badosa 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) in just under two hours.

The 22-year-old American star, who is chasing a repeat of her 2023 US Open victory, had lost five of her eight previous meetings with Badosa.

But Gauff never looked like letting their latest encounter slip with a largely confident performance to open the Arthur Ashe Stadium evening session.



Coco Gauff AFP

“Obviously, you know, I would prefer maybe not to play somebody I’ve lost to so many times second round. But I think today was a big confidence booster.

“And I think getting through in straight sets too makes a big difference. Yes, I was battle-tested, but I think it was a good battle where I wasn’t out on the court for three hours.”

After a steady start, the American broke Badosa in the seventh game of the opening set when the 28-year-old Manhattan-born Spaniard fluffed a risky drop shot into the net.

Gauff held serve to love to go 5-3 up before comfortably clinching the set with another rock solid service game.

Gauff looked to be ready to take control early in the second set, when Badosa was broken in the third game -- again attempting a delicate drop volley which fell short. AFP

Lanao del Norte, PSC explore NAS satellite campus

CAPAS, TARLAC—Lanao del Norte officials visited the National Academy of Sports (NAS) in New Clark City here to explore the possibility of establishing a satellite campus at the Mindanao Civic Center (MCC) in Tubod.

Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) Chairman Patrick Gregorio personally toured Lanao Del Norte Congresswoman Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo and Provincial Administrator Lyndon Calica through NAS’s state-of-the-art facilities as the delegation benchmarked the academy’s athlete dormitories as models for similar facilities to be constructed at MCC.

“The NAS is designed to nurture the finest grassroots athletes and prepare them to become medal-winning national athletes. Replicating such a facility in Mindanao will give young athletes from the region the same opportunities to reach their dreams without having to leave home too early,” said Gregorio.

The academy, dedicated to discovering and developing the country’s finest high school athletes, provides a clear pathway for promising talents from the elementary and secondary levels to advance into elite national athletes and eventually represent the Philippines in international competitions.

Department of Education Secretary Sonny Angara serves as chairman of the National Academy of Sports (NAS), with Gregorio as vice chairman of its board of directors under the leadership of NAS Executive Director Prof. Francis Diaz.

“A satellite NAS campus at the Mindanao Civic Center will be a game-changer for our youth. It will open doors for Mindanao athletes to train, study, and dream of representing the country in international competitions,” said Quibranza-Dimaporo.

“This is about giving them hope and a clear pathway to success,” she added.

NAS Deputy Executive Director Emil Arroyo led the NAS campus tour of Lanao del Norte officials.

Stoic Verstappen looking beyond ‘painful’ Monza weekend

MONZA—Max Verstappen expects no miracles at this weekend’s Italian Grand Prix where, he said on Thursday, he believes his Red Bull car could be exposed to a painful weekend on the Monza track.

The four-time world champion said the new hybrid era cars are “inefficient for Monza” where long straights at high speed require more power than at any other circuit.

“It’s going to be really painful,” he said.

“The cars are simply inefficient for Monza, but there’s not much point in staying negative.

“It is what it is and I have prepared myself mentally for it. I know this weekend will be different to what we are used to.”

Verstappen won here last year after claiming pole with the fastest lap in F1 history, making it three victories in the last four years revelling in racing on the absolute limit at full speed.

But this year he and his rivals will be



Red Bull Racing’s Dutch driver Max Verstappen walks in the paddock ahead of the Italian Formula One Grand Prix at the Autodromo Nazionale Monza circuit in Monza, northern Italy. AFP

forced to conserve energy and manage their cars on each lap.

“You have to keep an eye on how much energy you are using and make sure you don’t push all the time,” he said.

After crashing out of his home Dutch Grand Prix on the opening lap last month, he is hoping for a better result, but expects a difficult race.

“On inefficient tracks, we just struggle to maximise what we have so I’m not expecting any miracles here and it will be a challenging weekend yet again,” he said.

“The front running teams are bringing upgrades, so they’ll improve. We were already behind them, so there’s no reason to expect that the pecking order will be completely different.”

“We have to remain realistic and get to know the car better, so we know which way to go next year.”

Verstappen is sixth in the standings with 112 points, 130 behind leader Kimi Antonelli. AFP

Davison drops 32 as High Speed Hitters clip Foxies, stay in Finals hunt



PLDT’s Savi Davison tries to score against Fram Fresh’s Ria Meneses.

PLDT re-gripped its slipping hold on the PVL Invitational crown with a clutch victory, turning back Farm Fresh, 25-16, 25-22, 23-25, 25-20, on Friday to wheel back into Finals contention at the Big Dome.

The vital win evened the High Speed Hitters’ slate to 2-2 while placing them firmly back in the wild hunt for the second and final championship berth as the single-round eliminations head toward a frenetic finish on Sunday.

While PLDT kept its title defense alive, Farm Fresh effectively bowed out of the race with a 1-3 record, absorbing its third consecutive defeat after previously posting a four-set win over Ho Chi Minh.

Unbeaten Creamline (3-0) and second-running EST Cola (2-1) were clashing for the top spot, while Nxled and Ho Chi Minh, both sporting 1-2 slates, fight for survival in the other pairing – both at presstime.

The defending champions, anchored by

Games Sunday

1:30 p.m. – Farm Fresh vs Nxled
4 p.m. – EST Cola vs Ho Chi Minh
6:30 p.m. – PLDT vs Creamline

Savi Davison’s sheer firepower, recovered big from a third-set stumble by re-imposing their will early in the fourth to annex the one-hour, 53-minute victory.

Davison delivered a monster 32-point output, including four kill blocks and punctuated by a vicious kill on her second attempt to close out a fiercely contested match.

The High Speed Hitters showcased the poise and grit missing in their shock four-set setback to the Ho Chi Minh side on Thursday – a loss that had cast serious doubts on their title-retention drive.

Now back in the hunt, PLDT vows to go all-out when it collides with the powerhouse Cool Smashers in a make-or-break Sunday showdown.

“I think we talked in the dugout before and last night as well coming off a loss, and we kind of really needed to check in for this game today because it was a must-win for us,” said Davison.

WHAT'S INSIDE?



Mall upgrades lift Ayala Land footfall

B2



DMCI targets early Berong mine rehab

B3



Peso falls to new low of 62.59 a dollar

B4

PH business confidence turns negative

By Thony Rose Lesaca

PHILIPPINE business sentiment turned pessimistic in July 2026 as firms worried about renewed tensions in the Middle East, higher oil prices and persistent inflationary pressures, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said Friday.

The BSP reported that business confidence shifted to negative territory at -20.3 percent in July from a neutral position in June.

Companies also became less optimistic for the next three months as the confidence index declined to 3.7 percent from 18.8 percent the previous month amid expectations of continued geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, rising fuel costs and weaker investor sentiment.

Respondents also became less optimistic for the next 12 months, with the confidence index plunging to 29.4 percent from 42.4 percent in June. Concerns over the economic impact of a protracted Middle East conflict, lower growth prospects amid elevated energy prices and less upbeat investor confidence caused by governance-related issues drove the decline.

Employment prospects for the next three months climbed to 11.0 percent from 1.8 percent, while the outlook for the next 12 months became less favorable as the index fell to 9.0 percent from 20.2 percent previously.

TAIWAN EXPO.

Representatives from the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) lead the official opening of Taiwan Expo 2025 in the Philippines, celebrating stronger ties and opportunities for bilateral cooperation. Taiwanese companies are bringing battery energy storage and hydrogen-based microgrid technologies to the country, highlighting potential solutions for island and distributed power systems. Taiwan Expo Philippines 2026 returns to the SMX Convention Center Manila from Sept. 17 to 19.



DEVELOPMENT MEETING. The Philippine government holds a roundtable discussion with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Directors to strengthen partnership and explore ways to respond to the country's evolving development needs, particularly across Luzon and Mindanao. The Department of Finance underscored the need for greater support for infrastructure, public-private partnerships (PPPs), local government capacity-building and initiatives that help unlock the development potential of local communities. The ADB board reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Philippines's development agenda, building on nearly six decades of partnership and cooperation across key priorities.

P92 billion

Size of Mynt's IPO

9.20 billion

Shares for sale

P10

Target IPO price

SEC approves over P92-b IPO of GCash parent firm

By Jenniffer B. Austria

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has approved a P92-billion initial public offering of Mynt Inc., the parent company of e-wallet giant GCash, setting up the largest maiden share offering on the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

The SEC approved Mynt's registration statement covering up to 66.9 billion common shares, subject to the company's compliance with remaining requirements. Mynt is also the first company to qualify for the lower public float requirement granted to large issuers.

Under the plan, Mynt will sell up to 1.61 billion common shares in a primary offering while a selling

shareholder will offer up to 6.42 billion shares. The offering also includes an overallotment option of up to 1.20 billion shares.

The company will offer the shares at up to P10 each. Assuming full exercise of the overallotment option, Mynt expects to net up to P89.25 billion from the total offering.

Mynt said it will use about P14.95 billion in net proceeds

from the primary offering to support the company's digital financial services expansion, product development and general corporate purposes.

The offer period runs from Oct. 6 to 12, with the shares set to list on the PSE Main Board on October 20 under the ticker "GCASH."

The SEC also approved Mynt's plan to conduct the IPO with a 12-percent public float, lower than the 15-percent minimum required under SEC Memorandum Circular No. 11, Series of 2026. The SEC said the rule allows the commission, upon the recommendation of the PSE, to lower the minimum public float for issuers with exceptionally large expected market capitalization at the time of listing.



WATER OPTIMIZATION.

Manila Water Company's non-east zone operating unit Manila Water Infratech Solutions (MWIS) completes a comprehensive non-revenue water (NRW) optimization program for the Philippine Economic Zone Authority-Cavite (PEZA-Cavite), recovering about 1.7 million liters per day of water and significantly improving system efficiency within a four-month program implementation.

Sulu Sea gas explorer seeks more partners to fund project

By Alena Mae S. Flores

TETRAGON Energy Ltd. will seek more international partners to fund exploration drilling at its Halcon prospect in the Sulu Sea after an upgraded reserves estimate showed a sharp increase in potential gas volumes, the company said in a filing with the Australian Securities Exchange.

The Australia-based company said it plans to engage firms to fund exploration wells aimed at proving resource volumes and driving market value at Halcon, one of its primary offshore projects in the Philippines.

Tetragon's gross 2U, or best estimate, prospective resource for

Halcon rose to 8 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas from 2.6 trillion cubic feet. The gross 1U, or low estimate, increased to 1.7 trillion cubic feet from 188 billion cubic feet, while the gross 3U, or high estimate, rose to 22.6 trillion cubic feet from 19.9 trillion cubic feet.

Tetragon managing director Conrad Todd said the threefold increase in the mid-case prospective resource for a key prospect in the company's Philippine acreage highlights the scale of the opportunity.

"This threefold increase in our mid-case prospective resource for a key prospect in our Philippines acreage highlights the true scale and opportunity we have in these exciting

permits," Todd said.

Todd said that Tetragon aims to replicate major gas and oil discoveries made in neighboring Malaysian and Indonesian waters.

A detailed evaluation of Department of Energy seismic data and expert sedimentological analysis raised the prospect's geological chance of success to 24 percent from 18 percent.

Tetragon holds a 37.5-percent operating interest in Service Contracts 80 and 81 alongside partners Sunda Energy, The Philodrill Corp. and PXP Energy Corp. The licensed areas fall under the joint jurisdiction of the Philippine national government and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Factory output growth slowed to 6.4% in July

THE Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said Friday manufacturing output grew at a slower pace in July 2026, as the country's top two industry drivers lost momentum.

The volume of production index (VoPI) rose 6.4 percent year-on-year in July 2026, slower than 10.6 percent seen in June. The index posted an annual decline of 0.1 percent in July 2025.

The slowdown was led by two industry divisions. The manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products posted a slower annual increase of 43.8 percent in July 2026, compared with 87.0 percent in June 2026. The manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products grew 10.8 percent year-on-year during

the period, also slower than the 16.3-percent increase logged in the previous month.

Data showed that of the remaining 20 industry divisions, 11 posted annual increases in July 2026 while nine recorded annual declines.

For the manufacture of food products, VoPI growth eased to 1.5 percent in July 2026 from 2.7 percent in June 2026. The index grew 13.5 percent annually in July 2025.

Six of the eight industry groups under food manufacturing posted a downturn, led by the manufacture of dairy products, which fell at a faster annual rate of 15.2 percent during the period, compared with an 8.3 percent decline in June 2026.



PH stocks gain 21 points as inflation eases to 6.1%

PHILIPPINE shares rose Friday after August inflation eased to 6.1 percent from 6.2 percent in July.

The peso settled at 62.59 to the U.S. dollar Friday, from 62.52 on Thursday.

The bellwether Philippine Stock Exchange index gained 21.18 points, or 0.35 percent, to close at 6,090.60. The broader all shares index also advanced 7.63 points, or 0.23 percent, to 3,377.44.

Even as August inflation eased, Bank of the Philippine Islands lead economist Emilio Neri Jr. said further rate hikes remain likely, as a potential super El Niño and volatile oil prices pose the biggest upside risks.



Given these concerns, Neri expects the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to deliver two more rate hikes this year, bringing the policy rate to 5.5 percent.

Meanwhile, most sectoral indices ended higher. Mining and oil led the gains, rising 0.75 percent, followed by holding firms at 0.49 percent, services at 0.36 percent, property at 0.37 percent and financials at 0.12 percent. The industrial index was flat.

Market breadth was positive, with 108 advancers against 93 decliners, while 54 stocks were unchanged.

Trading was anemic as value turnover reached P3.86 billion.

Jennifer B. Austria

RYONAN ELECTRIC PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

POSITION TITLE : VICE PRESIDENT

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Assist in overseeing all business operation both Support Group and Manufacturing on their operations and effective management. Establish and implement improvements, policies and procedures to improve business operations

QUALIFICATION:

- Graduate in Economics or Business Management or similar relevant field or any related
- Must have knowledge in Business & Manufacturing Operations
- Must be good in negotiation, strategic thinking and dedicated
- Must be at least 10 years experience working in Japanese firms
- Must be fluent in Japanese and English languages

Applicants may be sent to email to **MS. LEA RAYA / HR & GAD Assistant**. Manager @ lea_iaj@repco.ph or adnobleza@repco.ph

Company/ Employer

Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name: RYONAN ELECTRIC PHILIPPINES CORPORATION
Complete Address: 105 East Main Ave, SEPZ, Liti Biñan, Laguna, 4024
Nature Of Business: Manufacturing of Automotive Wiring Harness

Name: MR. MAKOTO TASAKI
Address: La Residencia, Sta. Rosa City, Laguna
Nationality: JAPANESE
Intended Period of Employment: Two (2) Years

RYONAN ELECTRIC PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 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 DOLE Bureau of Local Employment located at Intramuros, 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 DOLE Bureau of Local Employment located at Intramuros, Manila within 30 days after this publication. Please inform DOLE Bureau of Local Employment located at Intramuros, Manila if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign nationals.

Career Opportunity in POLAR STAR TRAVEL, TOURS AND MANAGEMENT INC.

1 Vacant: TRAVEL OPERATIONS MANAGER

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Manage and supervise the day-to-day operations of the company's travel and tour activities.
- Develop, coordinate, and implement domestic and international travel packages, tours, itineraries and other related travel services.
- Evaluate and negotiate service arrangements, rates, availability and operational requirements with travel suppliers and Chinese partners.
- Handle and resolve operational issues, itinerary changes, cancellations, complaints and other travel-related concerns in timely and professional manner.
- Coordinate with sales and marketing team to ensure that travel products and promotional activities are operationally feasible and properly implemented.
- Ensure that company travel operations are conducted in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, industry standards, contractual requirements, and company policies.
- Willing to work in BGC, Taguig

QUALIFICATION:

- Must be fluent in English and Mandarin Chinese
- At least 5 years of work-related experience
- Bachelor's degree or above in Tourism Management, Hospitality management, Business administration or related field
- Familiarity with travel reservation systems, online booking platforms, GDS, CRM or other travel-related software is preferred

Application may be sent to:
Name: Jovelle Deasera
Number: 09622701926
Email: bellexthompson@gmail.com

Company/ Employer

Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name: POLAR STAR TRAVEL, TOURS AND MANAGEMENT INC.
Complete Address: Unit 1504 One Park Drive, 11th Drive cor. 9th Ave., BGC, Taguig
Nature Of Business: Travel Agency

Name: CHEN LU
Address: BGC, Taguig
Nationality: Chinese
Intended Period of Employment: 3 years

Polar Star Travel, Tours and Management 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.

Career Opportunity in TOYO CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD.

Position Title: SENIOR SITE SUPERVISOR

Job Description:

- Monitor work progress and ensure compliance
- Coordinate and supervise subcontractors and laborers
- Ensure tools, materials, and equipment are available and properly used.
- Inspect work to ensure it meets quality standards and building codes.
- Identify defects or problems and ensure timely corrective actions are taken.
- Enforce compliance with company safety policies and legal regulations (e.g., OSHA, local standards)
- Conduct regular site safety inspections and toolbox talks.
- Liaise with engineers, architects, project managers, and other stakeholders.
- Maintain site records, including site diary, work permits, and attendance logs.
- Report daily progress, site issues, and delays to the project manager.
- Assist in planning site activities and scheduling deliveries.
- Monitor use of materials and manage inventory on-site.
- Ensure efficient use of labor and equipment to minimize waste and cost.

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

- Proven experience as a Site Supervisor or similar role in construction.
- In-depth understanding of construction procedures, materials, and safety standards.
- Ability to read and interpret technical drawings and plans.
- Excellent leadership and organizational skills.
- Strong communication and problem-solving abilities.
- Basic knowledge of construction management software is a plus.
- Deep understanding of construction methods, materials, and legal regulations.
- With basic knowledge in Japanese Language
- Diploma or Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Construction Management, or related field preferred
- Minimum of 2-5 years of relevant experience in construction site supervision.

Applications may be sent to:
Gina Andres - HR Supervisor
Email Address: andres-gina@os.toyo-consl.com

Company/ Employer

Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name: Toyo Construction Co., Ltd.
Complete Address: 3rd Floor, Planters Products Inc. Building, 109 Esteban St., Legaspi Village, San Lorenzo, Makati City
Nature of Business: Construction

Name: Yuki Nishimura
Address: Quezon City
Nationality: Japanese
Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) Years

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 Bureau of Local Employment (BLE) located at 6th Floor, Banco Filipino Condominium, Solana Street, Intramuros, Manila.



FOREST RESTORATION. Members of the Singing Tilapia Growers and Farmers Association participate in an orientation on nursery establishment in Balamban, Cebu, led by Baltazar Tribunalo, head of the local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. The session launched CarbonPH, equipping local farmers to support long-term forest restoration.

Mail upgrades lift Ayala Land footfall, occupancy

By Jenniffer B. Austria

AYALA Land Inc. (ALI) is beginning to see the benefits of its investments in its flagship malls, with higher occupancy and visitor traffic in the first half of 2026 following the completion of major renovations at four shopping centers.

ALI said Friday in a statement that its shopping center portfolio reached a 90 percent lease-out rate as of end-June, up from 87 percent a year earlier. Same-mall revenues increased 7 percent, while visitor footfall grew 5 percent.

The company attributed the improvement to higher occupancy, stronger merchant sales and early returns from the completed renovation work.

Amid weak residential demand, ALI has pivoted toward leasing and other recurring-income businesses.

It began its mall modernization program in 2024, with

major upgrades at flagship malls, namely Glorietta, Greenbelt, Tri-Noma and Ayala Center Cebu.

With transformation of these malls substantially completed, ALI said it is now focused on sustaining occupancy, improving tenant and merchant performance, and increasing the productivity of its retail spaces.

The property firm will also continue to expand its retail footprint in emerging growth centers as it seeks to grow recurring income from its mall portfolio.

“Our reinvention is about keeping our malls relevant as customer needs and retail continue to evolve,” said Mariana Zobel de Ayala, head of leasing and hospitality at ALI

“As we complete the physical transformation of our flagship assets, our focus is on strengthening the overall customer experience, supporting our tenants and ensuring that these properties continue to perform and create value over the long term,” she added.

After the completion of the four flagship malls, ALI will expand the mall modernization program to Ayala Malls Abreeza, Ayala Malls MarQuee and Ayala Malls Cloverleaf.

ALI is also expanding its retail network. It recently opened Ayala Malls Arca South and is set to open Ayala Malls Gatewalk in Mandae City, Cebu, in December.

The company expects to deliver about 200,000 square meters of new retail gross leasable area this year.

ACEN extends P9.24-b loans to unit projects in Zambales

By Alena Mae S. Flores

ACEN Corp. said Friday it executed loan agreements totaling P9.24 billion with two solar subsidiaries to complete their respective projects with a combined capacity of 800 megawatts in Zambales province.

ACEN disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that, as lender, it executed a loan agreement Sept. 3 with its wholly owned subsidiary Sanmar Solar Inc., as borrower, for up to P6 billion.

The loan proceeds will support the construction of Sanmar Solar’s 500-megawatt/1,000-megawatt-hour SanMar battery energy storage system project, which will be integrated with its existing solar plant to form an integrated renewable energy and storage system in Barangay Santa Fe, San Marcelino, Zambales.

ACEN also executed a separate short-term loan agreement as lender with its wholly owned subsidiary GIGA ACE 8 Inc., as borrower, for up to P3.24 billion on Sept. 3.

The loan proceeds will support the construction of the latter’s 300-megawatt-direct-current Palauig 2 solar, transmission line and substation project in Barangays Salaza and Bulawen, Palauig, Zambales.

NOTICE OF DEED OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE INTESTATE ESTATE OF ANGELITA V. ABESAMIS WITH WAIVER OF RIGHTS

Notice is hereby given to the public that the Deed of Extra Judicial Settlement of the Intestate Estate of Angelita V. Abesamis With Waiver of Rights has been executed by and among his heirs, namely: Rolando R. Abesamis, Benjamin V. Abesamis and Paul Benedict V. Abesamis, as per Doc. No. 446; Page No. 91; Book No. IX; Series of 2026 of the Notarial Register/ Book of Atty. Henson M. Montalvo, Notary Public for and in the City of Makati.

(MS-SEPT. 5/12/19, 2026)

NOTICE OF DEED OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE INTESTATE ESTATE OF ROGELIO M. MONTEVIRGEN

Notice is hereby given to the public that the Deed of Extra Judicial Settlement of the Intestate Estate of Rogelio M. Montevirgen has been executed by and among his heirs, namely: Flordina C. Montevirgen, Mary Richelle M. Pascua, Richardroe C. Montevirgen, Richlutz C. Montevirgen, and Richmond C. Montevirgen, as per Doc. No. 418; Page No. 85; Book No. IX; Series of 2026 of the Notarial Register/ Book of Atty. Henson M. Montalvo, Notary Public for and in the City of Makati.

(MS-SEPT. 5/12/19, 2026)

Career Opportunity in EVERSTONE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION INC.

MANDARIN SITE COORDINATOR

Two (2) Vacancy

Job Description:

- Monitor site activities to ensure compliance with safety regulations and operational protocols.
- Conduct regular inspections and audits of the site to identify potential hazards or areas for improvement.
- Maintain accurate records of site operations, including reports on incidents, inspections, and maintenance activities.
- Collaborate with management to develop and implement site-specific policies and procedures.
- Provide training and support to site personnel on safety practices and operational procedures.
- Serve as the main point of contact for contractors, vendors, and regulatory agencies.
- Respond to emergencies and incidents promptly and effectively, ensuring all necessary procedures are followed.
- Prepare reports and presentations to communicate site status and issues to management.
- Foster a positive and safe working environment for all personnel on site.

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

- Fluency in Mandarin (written and spoken) and English.
- Knowledge of safety regulations and compliance standards.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Proficiency in [Relevant Software/Tools]
- Any additional certifications or licenses required

Applications may be sent to:
Shyne DV. Bolosac
Email address: hrlshyne.everstone@gmail.com

Company/ Employer

Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name: EVERSTONE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION INC.
Complete Address: UNIT 801, 8/F ANGELUS PLAZA, 104 V.A RUFINO ST., SAN LORENZO, MAKATI CITY

Nature of Business: GENERAL CONSTRUCTION

Duration of Employment: Three (3) years

EVERSTONE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION 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 - Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines.

Career Opportunity in Tenacity Philippines Corp.

Position title: Senior Customer Relations Analyst

Vacancies (2)

Job Description:

The Senior Customer Relations Analyst is responsible for end-to-end handling and quality assurance of complex customer relations cases for the FR Market, including escalations with legal, regulatory, and reputational risk. The role ensures that case assessment, documentation, response language, and decisioning meet internal standards for accuracy, defensibility, and readiness prior to customer release, external submission (where applicable), or case closure.

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

- Good command of the English and Spanish languages;
- Clear, concise written and verbal communication suitable for Legal, Compliance, and senior leadership audiences.
- Perform quality checks on authority/regulatory/legal threat and other high-risk cases to confirm completeness, accuracy, consistency, and defensibility prior to customer release, external submission, or case closure.

Applications may be sent to:
Name of Company HR: Clarence Mae De Asis
Email address: hmla_buval@tenacity.com

Company/ Employer

Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position

Company Name: Tenacity Philippines Corp.
Complete address: 12th Floor, W Filinvest Building, 32nd Street corner 5th Avenue Bonifacio Global City Taguig City 1634

Nature of business: a domestic corporation primarily to engage in, operate, conduct and maintain the business of providing information technology outsourcing services and business process outsourcing services and support solutions including, but not limited to, inbound calls, back office quality monitoring (non-voice agent monitoring and evaluation), back office training development (non-voice training documentation development or knowledge management development), back office work force management (real time agent monitoring), back office reporting (reporting and data analytics), back office internal help desk - internal IT help desk support and back office IT development and other similar services, and to provide support to all aspects of the business of affiliates and related companies and operations, without engaging as an internet service provider.

Name: Nestor Gonzalez Lazaro
Address: Pasig City
Nationality: Spanish
Intended period of employment: Two (2) Years

Name: Hans Dmitri Rodriguez Zoro
Address: Pasig City
Nationality: Colombian
Intended period of employment: two (2) Years

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 DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002. Please inform Bureau of Local Employment, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national

Career Opportunity in KATOLEC PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

Position Title: Purchasing and Material Control Senior Manager (1)

Job Description:

- Manage all aspects of material flow.
- Maintain control and accuracy over all goods inventories including procurement (planning, scheduling, costs, warehouse, receiving and shipping).
- Ensure that customer orders are fulfilled on time.
- Develop and manage customer and supplier relationship.

Qualifications:

- Proficiency in Japanese Language level 1 (JLPT N1).
- With solid 15 years of experience in Purchasing and Material Control.
- With good oral and written communication skills.
- Knowledgeable in computer applications.
- College graduate of any course or equivalent.

Application may be sent to:
Regina Cabrera
regina.cabrera@katolec.com
Contact No.: (049) 541-0455

Company/ Employer

Name of Foreign National Intending to apply for the position

Company Name: Katolec Philippines Corporation

Name: NOBUMASA HAYASHI
Address: Muntinlupa City

Address: 103 East Main Avenue Special Export Processing Zone Laguna Technopark , Biñan, Laguna
Nature of Business: Manufacturing

Nationality: Japanese
Intended period of Employment: 1 year

KATOLEC hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the service and job description for the 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 – Bureau of Local Employment located at 6F First Intramuros, BF Condominium, Solana St., Corner Soriano Avenue, Intramuros, Manila.

DMCI targets
early Berong
mine rehab

By Othel V. Campos

DMCI Mining Corp. is targeting the early completion of a six-year rehabilitation program for its Berong nickel mine in Palawan as it prepares to turn over the site to the government.

DMCI Mining president Tulsi Das Reyes said the company is implementing additional measures on top of regulatory requirements to ensure the site meets its rehabilitation objectives before turnover.

“We’re over-compliant by design,” Reyes said, noting that the company is working closely with local government units and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Reyes said the rehabilitation program could be completed ahead of its six-year timeline, but the company intends to use the additional period to fine-tune the work and address remaining requirements.

“We really want to fine-tune it and make sure that when we say we’re done, we’re also visiting other mine sites,” he said.

The Berong operation is expected to be the first nickel mine site turned over to the government after rehabilitation, making the project a potential benchmark for mine closure and post-mining land management.

DMCI Mining has been exchanging information with other mining operators, including companies that have visited Berong to study its rehabilitation practices.

Reyes said the company plans to continue monitoring the site after turnover to assess how the rehabilitated area is managed and whether the implemented measures produce intended results.



DMCI Mining president Tulsi Das Reyes



GREEN MOBILITY. Movem Electric Inc. and Barangay Bel-Air in Makati City deploy two electric shuttles to promote community-level sustainable mobility. Standing behind the e-shuttles are Barangay Bel-Air Captain Cynthia Cervantes (left) and Movem President and CEO Ralph Menchavez.

2GO Travel
launches single
itinerary land,
sea service

By Darwin G. Amojelar

2GO Travel has launched TraveLink, a multi-modal service that integrates sea and land journeys into a single itinerary.

Powered by a partnership with Asian travel technology platform 12Go Asia, the service combines 2GO’s domestic shipping network with connecting bus and van transportation.



Passengers can book their entire trip through one platform, eliminating the need to coordinate separate tickets across multiple transport providers.

Initial routes rolling out under the service include Manila-El Nido, Manila-Caticlan (Boracay), Baguio-Cebu, Baguio-Bacolod and Baguio-Siargao.

“Travel doesn’t begin at the port — it begins the moment you leave home,” said Francis John Chua, head of 2GO Travel.

“For years, travelers had to arrange different bookings for every leg of their journey. With TraveLink, we’re bringing those connections together, making it easier for our passengers to travel across the Philippines with greater convenience and confidence,” Chua added.

The initiative is designed for passengers traveling to destinations beyond 2GO’s port cities, offering a streamlined transfer process that reduces the logistics of island-hopping and provincial transit.

The launch forms part of the company’s broader push to modernize domestic tourism logistics across the Philippines.

Celsius to appeal Kalinga
mine stake auction ruling

CELSIUS Resources Limited said it will file a motion for reconsideration this week after a Makati regional trial court denied its petition to block the Sept. 8 foreclosure auction of its 40-percent interest in Makilala Mining Company Inc. (MMCI).

MMCI holds the interests in the Maalinao-Caigutan-Biyog copper-gold project in Kalinga province.

The dispute with Equinaire Holdings Limited over a loan and security agreement is proceeding to arbitration.

Celsius said in a statement the court did not find that a default occurred or that Equinaire is entitled to foreclose, adding that the court described the substantive issues as unresolved and subject to arbitration.

It said that if the court denies the motion, Makilala Holding Limited (MHL), its subsidiary holding the MMCI stake, plans to elevate the case to the Court of Appeals.

The dispute originated from the assignment of an omnibus loan and security agreement (OLSA) from Maharlika Investment Corp. to Equinaire, a subsidiary of Kiri Industries Limited.

Equinaire alleged several defaults, including a notice of relinquishment MHL issued to Sodor Inc., information-security incidents

at MMCI and MHL’s earlier bid for a temporary order of protection. It then issued notices of foreclosure resumption and disposition, setting the Sept. 8 auction.

Celsius disputes the alleged defaults and Equinaire’s authority to foreclose, claiming that the conditions required for enforcement have not been met.

A temporary order of protection previously granted to MHL was lifted after Equinaire posted a P201-million counterbond.

MHL then sought interim court measures to halt the foreclosure pending arbitration. The court denied this, finding the potential loss primarily economic and addressable through arbitration. The court left the OLSA’s interpretation and Equinaire’s enforcement rights to an arbitral tribunal.

Celsius said it is revising its notice of arbitration to seek a full determination of the dispute’s merits.

The company said that any buyer would need a certificate authorizing registration from the Bureau of Internal Revenue, a process typically taking six to eight weeks, before the SEC could register a share transfer — potentially giving Celsius additional time to pursue its legal options.



MAKILALA MINING. Celsius Resources Ltd. will seek reconsideration after a Makati court denied its bid to halt the Sept. 8 auction of its 40 percent Makilala Mining Co. Inc. stake, as its dispute with Equinaire Holdings proceeds to arbitration. MMCI holds the interests in the Maalinao-Caigutan-Biyog copper-gold project in Kalinga province.

More power plant outages trigger red alerts in Visayas, Mindanao

By Alena Mae S. Flores

THE Visayas and Mindanao power grids were placed on red alert for several hours Friday due to insufficient generating capacity.

System operator National Grid Corp. of the Philippines placed the Visayas grid on red alert from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. as available capacity reached 2,233 megawatts, well below the forecast peak demand of 2,504 MW.

NGCP also raised a yellow alert over the Visayas grid from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Eight power plants went on forced outage this September, six plants have been offline since August 2026, one

since July, two since June, seven since May, three since 2025, two since 2024, two since 2023 and one since 2021. Another 17 plants are running at derated capacities.

The outages and deratings rendered 815.8 MW unavailable to the Visayas grid.

NGCP said large coal-fired power plants TVI 1 and PEDC 3 remain offline in the Visayas, while power imports from Mindanao remain limited or unavailable.

NGCP said the supply situation worsened due to the tripping of Leyte-A Maha B — which reduced Leyte-A’s capacity to 300 MW from 360 MW — the tripping of CEDC 1, the

unavailability of PDPP3-E, PDPP3-H and CENPRI U2, and limited power imports from Mindanao.

NGCP also placed the Mindanao grid on red alert from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. The red alert remained despite the return to operation of GNPK 1, which restored 150 MW of capacity, as other large coal plants remained offline.

Mindanao was also placed on yellow alert from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m., with 784.5 MW unavailable to the grid.

A red alert status is issued when power supply is insufficient to meet consumer demand and the transmission grid’s regulating requirement.

Career Opportunity in CONCENTRIX CVG PHILIPPINES, INC.

Position Title: EVP, Philippines Delivery and Operations

Job Description:

- Manage revenue, profit, and operating expenses to realize growth targets and achieve a scalable organization, which includes understanding of financial policies, budgetary requirements, and forecasting.
- Partner with adjacent business units, functional leaders, and operations teams throughout the region and globally to identify and develop continuous improvement protocols and risk mitigation strategies that ensure business continuity.
- Establish and clearly communicate strategy to management team and provide feedback regarding operations.
- Drive performance, client satisfaction, and identify new growth opportunities through effective forecasting, goal setting, and proactive tactics to meet or exceed targets of key performance indicators for the client as well as internal service levels and compliance with security protocols and contractual delivery.

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

- 10+ years of successful leadership experience in the Customer Experience industry including leading operations at the country level, and managing large-scale operations
- Strong strategic and customer focus with a clear understanding of the wider issues impacting the relevant markets.
- Excellent leadership, organizational, time management, judgment, and decision-making skills.

Applications may be sent to:
PH_QC_EASTW_MULTILINGUAL@concentrix.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Concentrix CVG Philippines, Inc. Complete Address: 14/F to 25/F Ayala North Exchange, Tower 2, 6798 Ayala Avenue cor. Amorsolo and Salcedo Streets, Brgy. San Lorenzo, Makati City Nature of Business: Business to Business IT	Name: Amit Jagga Address: Mandaluyong City Nationality: Indian Intended Period of Employment: Two (2) Years
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 Bureau of Local Employment (BLE) located at 6 th Floor, Banco Filipino Condominium, Solana Street, Intramuros, Manila.	

Career Opportunity in CONCENTRIX CVG PHILIPPINES, INC.

Position Title: ADVISOR I, SALES

Job Description:

- Assist external users of the client's technical products or services; identify, investigate, research and provide resolution to user questions and problems
- Ensure service delivered to our customers meets contractual Key Performance Indicator ("KPIs")
- Listen attentively to customer needs and concerns; demonstrate empathy while maximizing opportunity to build rapport with the customer.
- Participate in activities designed to improve customer satisfaction, team camaraderie, and business performance.
- Participate in activities designed to improve customer satisfaction, team camaraderie, and business performance.
- Troubleshoot basic and routine customer issues that are technical in nature; including hardware, software, networking, or other designated client products
- Follow appropriate escalation paths to resolve technical issues; including making follow up outbound calls to customers or other parties as needed
- Solve problems that are generally unstructured and require extensive use of conceptual thinking skills
- Greet customers in a courteous, friendly, and professional manner using agreed upon procedures

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

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in Vietnamese and English language
- Experience working in an international and cross-cultural environment
- Courteous with strong customer service orientation.
- Must be fluent in Vietnamese and English speaking, reading, writing, and listening
- Skilled in multi-tasking; including the ability to be flexible and adapt to changes quickly.
- Demonstrate patience in all customer contact situations, including maintaining a pleasant and professional tone and manner
- Strong analytical, organizational and problem-solving skills
- Experience in software programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Microsoft Outlook and Internet
- Clarity of verbal communication (pace and tone)
- Excellent written communication (grammar)

Applications may be sent to:
PH_QC_EASTW_MULTILINGUAL@concentrix.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Concentrix CVG Philippines, Inc. Complete Address: 10 th 11 th 12 th 14 th 15 th Floors GBF Center 2 Bridgetowne CS Road Ugong Norte District 3, Quezon City 1110 Nature of Business: Business to Business IT	Name: Trieu Tuan Lien Address: Pasay City Nationality: Vietnamese Intended Period of Employment: Two (2) Years
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 Bureau of Local Employment (BLE) located at 6 th Floor, Banco Filipino Condominium, Solana Street, Intramuros, Manila.	

BIR introduces reforms in audit system

THE Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) launched a new nationwide program that changes how it audits taxpayers to make the process fairer and hold its own auditors more accountable.

BIR Charlito Martin Mendoza signed Revenue Memorandum Order (RMO) No. 22-2026 on Aug. 24, 2026, consolidating the bureau's previous audit programs and building on reforms introduced under RMO No. 1-2026 earlier this year.

The order establishes uniform policies, guidelines and procedures for tax audits across investigating offices nationwide.

"This new BIR Audit Program strengthens both sides of the process—fairness for taxpayers and accountability within the BIR. Audits must follow clear rules and proper procedures, and our revenue officers must be able to support the assessments they issue with facts and law," Mendoza said.

The program reinforces the single-instance audit framework for taxpayers, generally limiting audit authority to one electronic letter of authority per taxpayer per taxable year, subject to specified exceptions.

Audits are also limited to the tax types and taxable period covered by the authority issued.

For priority cases, the bureau selects taxpayers through system-assisted, risk-based processes using verifiable data. The bureau keeps taxpayer identities anonymized during selection and assignment as far as practicable to reduce discretion, while workload and eligibility controls govern case distribution.

The program also provides separate rules for mandatory cases and institutionalizes the Revalida, or "audit of auditors," under which audit reports and assessments may undergo technical and quality review to determine whether findings are supported by facts and law and whether the bureau observed due process.

By Thony Rose Lesaca

THE Philippine peso slid to a new record low of 62.59 against the US dollar on Friday, shedding 7 centavos from Thursday's close of P62.52, according to data from the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

The currency opened at 62.43 versus the greenback before touching an intraday low of 62.65 per dollar on the last trading day of the week.

Union Bank of the Philippines chief economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion linked the peso's renewed weakness to a firm US dollar, elevated US

yields and market caution ahead of the US non-farm payrolls report.

"Recent domestic political developments, including reports regarding the arrest warrant for Vice President Duterte, may have added to short-term volatility, but the broader move remains largely driven by

global factors," he said.

Asuncion said that underlying demand for dollars remained strong and was readily absorbed by the market despite indications of efforts to temper excessive currency movements.

"Unless US payrolls data come in significantly weaker than expected, the balance of risks remains tilted toward a supported US dollar and a softer peso in the near term," he said.

Asuncion also said fiscal discipline benefits the economy by helping ensure that public resources go to projects with the highest economic and social returns.

He said the peso's near-term movement will likely stay more sensitive to global market developments since its weakness largely reflects external factors.

"The recent weakness of the peso is largely a reflection of external factors such as a stronger US dollar, higher oil prices and global uncertainty," Asuncion said.

"While sound fiscal management supports long-term economic stability and investor confidence, the peso's near-term movement will likely remain more sensitive to developments in global markets," he said.



Advent Upgrade Solar Inc. and Proterial Philippines Inc. break ground for the first ground-mounted solar project in LIMA Estate, Batangas. Leading the event are Proterial Philippines president Yoshiaki Yamashita (third from left) and AUSI chairperson Ruth Yu-Owen (right) alongside representatives from AUSI and LIMA Estate.

Advent Upgrade signs deal for first solar plant in Batangas' LIMA Estate

By Alena Mae S. Flores

ADVENT Upgrade Solar Inc. (AUSI), a joint venture between AboitizPower Distributed Renewables Inc. (APx) and Upgrade Energy Philippines Inc. (UGEP), signed a 20-year power purchase agreement with Proterial Philippines for the first ground-mounted solar photovoltaic system in LIMA Estate, Batangas province.

AUSI will install a 1,587.20-kilowatt-peak ground-mounted solar PV system at Proterial Philippines' facility in LIMA Estate. Commercial op-

erations are expected to begin by the first quarter of 2027.

"We are incredibly proud to partner with you on what is the very first ground-mounted solar facility in LIMA Estate. By pioneering this installation, Proterial is setting a new benchmark for industrial sustainability in the region," said AUSI chairperson and Upgrade Energy Philippines president and chief executive Ruth Yu-Owen.

"Together with Proterial and LIMA Estate, we are proving that industrial growth and environmental responsibility can move forward hand-in-hand, and we look forward to build-

ing on this partnership over the next 20 years," Yu-Owen said.

Proterial Philippines president Yoshiaki Yamashita said the partnership marks a step toward reducing the company's carbon footprint.

"Through this collaboration, we are taking a meaningful step toward reducing our carbon footprint, enhancing energy efficiency, and contributing to the country's transition to a more sustainable energy landscape," Yamashita said.

"As a responsible corporate organization, we recognize the growing importance of renewable energy in addressing environmental challenges

while supporting long-term economic growth," Yamashita said.

"Once operational, the use of the solar PV system is expected to avoid over 1,400 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually, or roughly about 28,000 tons over the 20-year term of the agreement."

AUSI develops, builds and operates distributed solar solutions for large commercial and industrial consumers. The company offers sustainable and efficient energy solutions that address the energy needs of businesses while supporting the Philippines' transition to renewable energy.

IN BRIEF

ICC-CC endorses TVET project adjustments

THE Investment Coordination Committee-Cabinet Committee (ICC-CC) recommended approval of adjustments to the Supporting Innovation in the Philippine Technical and Vocational Education and Training System (SIPTVETS) project to expand quality education and training for Filipinos, the Department of Finance (DOF) said Friday.

The SIPTVETS project, under the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), seeks to improve the employability of TVET graduates and expand access to quality TVET programs while supporting the modernization of the country's TVET system.

The adjustments include the establishment of a Regional TVET Innovation Center in the Negros Island Region, increasing project coverage to 18 centers, and the relocation of six host institutions to more efficient sites.

ICC-CC Chair and Finance Secretary Frederick Go said the government's investment in technical and vocational education benefits the Filipino people.

"The government's investment in technical and vocational education is an investment on the Filipino people. By expanding access to quality training, modern facilities, and industry-relevant skills, we are helping more Filipinos build better opportunities for themselves and their families," Go said in a statement. **Thony Rose Lesaca**

Globe Business teams up with Chinabank Savings

GLOBE Business has teamed up with Chinabank Savings (CBS) to make selected banking and credit services more accessible to public school teachers, bringing financial assistance directly to schools through mobile technology.

Under the partnership, Globe Business equipped CBS field teams with 215 Samsung tablets powered by GPlan Biz, giving field officers the connectivity and digital tools needed to assist educators on-site and reduce the need for teachers to travel to bank branches during the school day.

The mobile setup is being deployed across CBS's 257 branches nationwide,

supporting field officers who work directly with the education sector.

With reliable mobile data, unlimited calls and texts and landline access, CBS field teams can process non-collateral loans under the Department of Education's (DepEd) Automatic Payroll Deduction System (APDS), manage customer portfolios and address queries in real time while stationed at school sites.

"Technology should make it easier for businesses to serve their customers, especially when that service happens beyond the traditional office," Globe Business vice-president Glenn Estrella said.

"By giving Chinabank Savings field teams secure connectivity and the mobile tools they need on the ground, we are helping them work more efficiently and respond faster to the educators and communities they serve," he said. **Darwin G. Amojelar**

BOI, NDC to establish Marikina investment hub

THE Board of Investments (BOI) and the National Development Co. (NDC) will establish a government agency one-stop shop at the Philippine Innovation Hub-Marikina Enterprise Center (PIH-MEC) to make investment-related government services more accessible.

The two agencies signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to install a self-service digital kiosk at the hub, allowing prospective investors, startups and other stakeholders to access BOI online services, portals and information systems.

BOI managing head and Trade Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo and NDC general manager Robert James Samson led the signing ceremony.

"This partnership marks a new chapter for the BOI and NDC as we advance our shared goal of making it easier to do business in the Philippines," Rodolfo said.

He said the digital one-stop shop would bring BOI services closer to prospective investors while making government transactions more accessible, efficient and investor-friendly.

The partnership aims to improve public access to BOI's digital services and resources, strengthen inter-agency coordination and support government programs for innovation, entrepreneurship and investment promotion. **Othel V. Campos**



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.

Security Bank employees paint newly-built classrooms at Iloilo City National High School through Security Bank Foundation's School Painting Volunteer Program. Fifty-one Security Bank employees from six Iloilo branches joined the activity on Aug. 1, helping prepare the facilities for students and supporting SBF's commitment to improving access to quality education.

31 South Korean firms to scout PH sites in October, says PEZA

ABOUT 31 South Korean companies plan to visit the Philippines in October 2026 to assess possible relocation and investment opportunities, particularly in areas near Samsung Electro-Mechanics Philippines Corp. (SEMPHIL), as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) seeks to attract more manufacturers and suppliers to the country.

The companies supply Samsung Electro-Mechanics Co. Ltd. (SEMCO), whose Philippine unit is undertaking a P50.7-billion expansion project that has received presidential incentives under the CREATE MORE Act.

PEZA director-general Tereso Panga said the Korean suppliers will conduct due diligence and assess the feasibility of establishing operations in the Philippines.

The planned visit follows a three-

day investment mission PEZA conducted in South Korea from August 25 to 27, during which the agency met with Korean companies exploring market entry, expansion, relocation and supplier opportunities in the Philippines.

Among the companies PEZA engaged was a South Korean manufacturer of PCB adhesives and specialty tapes considering the Philippines as a potential market, as well as GAON Cable, South Korea's oldest cable manufacturer, which is assessing opportunities in the country.

PEZA also met with Geumjeung Industrial Co. Ltd., a manufacturer of plastic films for the food and beverage industry that supplies major Korean beverage brands and is exploring opportunities in the Philippine market.

Othel V. Campos

DA bans livestock imports from 23 nations over FMD

By Othel V. Campos

THE Department of Agriculture said Friday it imposed a temporary ban on imports of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)-susceptible animals and their products and by-products from 23 countries following confirmed cases of the highly contagious livestock disease.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued the emergency measure under Department Circular 46, covering Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gambia, Guinea, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

The department said it imposed the restrictions after the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), through its World Animal Health Information System, reported laboratory-confirmed FMD virus cases in the affected countries.

The agency said the ban was necessary to prevent the introduction of the virus and protect the country's population of FMD-susceptible animals.

The order bars entry of meat, casings, tallow, hooves and horns from sheep, goats, cattle, water buffaloes, pigs and deer, as well as semen, from the covered countries.

The restrictions do not cover certain products classified as "safe commodities" under the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code, subject to Philippine import requirements and additional certification.

New POCO F9 Series features flagship power, 185FPS gaming

POCO, a leading technology brand among young tech enthusiasts, today unveiled POCO F9 Ultra and POCO F9 Pro, continuing the F Series legacy in the premium flagship market.

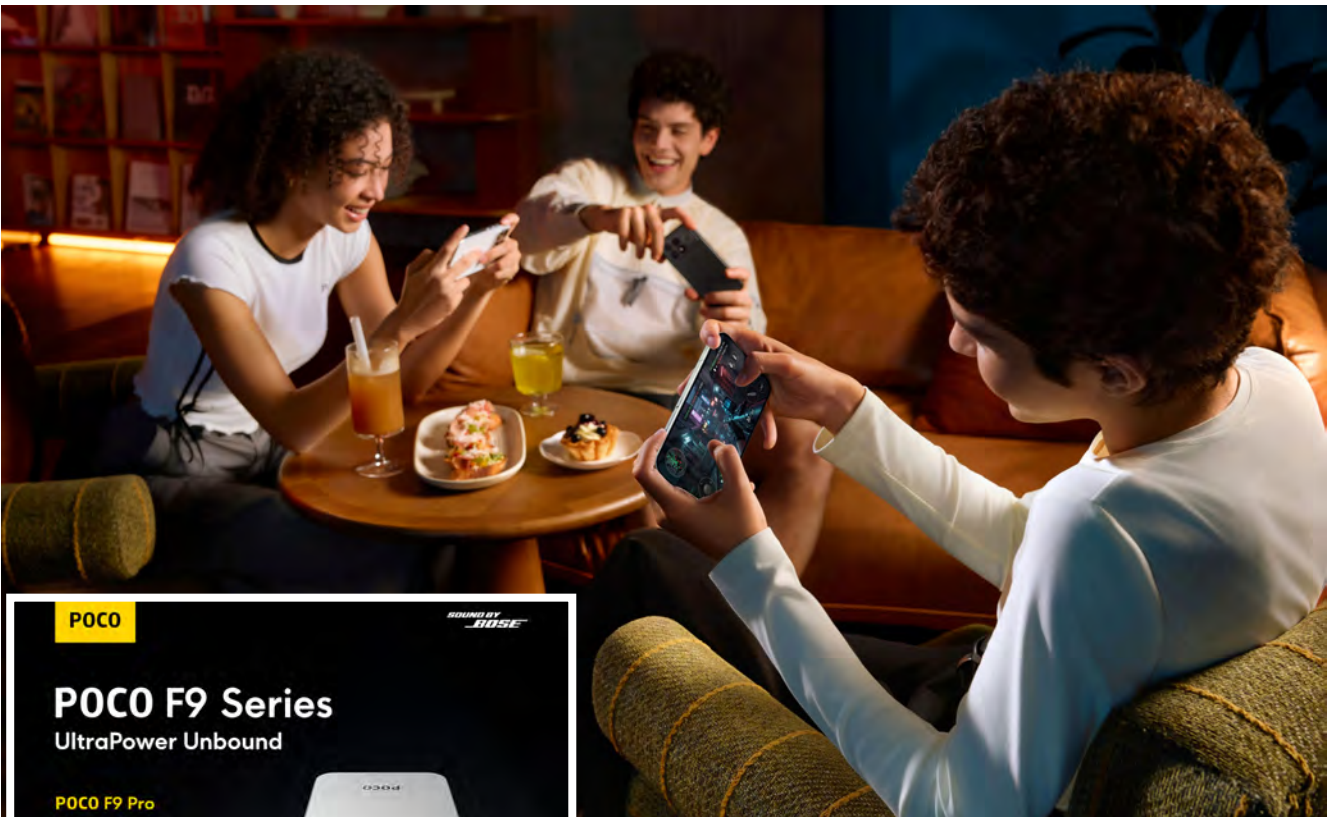
Built for ultimate performance, POCO F9 Series delivers a major technological leap in gaming and brings all-round upgrades in display, imaging, and battery life, showcasing flagship excellence on every front. During the launch, POCO also announced the next chapter of its partnership with Bose, a global leader in audio, to deliver clear, immersive, and high-quality mobile audio experiences to users worldwide.

“As POCO continues to strengthen its position in the premium flagship segment, we remain focused on challenging conventions through technologies and innovations,” said Kang Lou, Senior Product Marketing Manager and Spokesperson at POCO Global. “With POCO F9 Ultra, we’re delivering ultimate performance through cutting-edge technologies and gaming innovations, while POCO F9 Pro brings together flagship gaming power and a well-balanced, versatile experience for more users. Together, POCO F9 Series is designed to meet the expectations of a more demanding and diverse audience, delivering peak performance and exceptional value.”

Ultra Performance Unleashes 185FPS Gaming Dominance

Performance stands at the core of POCO F9 Series, with its flagship dual-chip architecture raising the performance bar for all-round flagships. Both devices are built on Qualcomm’s latest flagship mobile platforms, delivering unmatched performance and speed across intensive multitasking, demanding workloads, and gaming.

Leading the lineup, POCO F9 Ultra is powered by the Snapdragon® 8 Elite Gen 5 Mobile Platform and delivers an impressive AnTuTu score of 4,165,108—the highest ever recorded



POCO

POCO F9 Series
UltraPower Unbound

POCO F9 Pro	POCO F9 Ultra
512GB 12GB RAM	512GB 16GB RAM
P\$3,999 P\$3,599	P\$4,999 P\$4,599
12GB 16GB RAM	16GB 24GB RAM
P\$4,999 P\$4,599	P\$5,999 P\$5,599

FREE REDMI Buds 3 Active

The POCO F9 Series delivers a major technological leap in gaming and brings all-round upgrades in display, imaging, and battery life, showcasing flagship excellence on every front

Beyond hardware, POCO F9 Series integrates Wild-Boost Engine to further elevate the gaming experience.

A standout capability is support for gaming at an ultra-high 185FPS. Compared with 120FPS, it delivers 65 more frames per second, and a refresh interval shortened by 3ms, allowing users to spot enemies earlier and react faster.

This extreme fluidity is available natively across over 20 titles, while 5 additional games can reach 185FPS through Smart frame rate. Complementing this, Game Color Enhancement further enables precise tuning of game visuals for vivid graphics and enhanced scene details.

Matching these visuals, a 4,800Hz instant touch sampling rate, 480Hz

10-point touch sampling rate, and an ultra-high 200Hz gyro sampling rate translate every tap, swipe, and tilt into fast, precise control.

POCO 3D IceLoop cooling system rounds out the performance experience, helping the entire lineup remain smooth and stable for longer—even during demanding gaming sessions.

Immersive Visuals, Refined by Design

POCO F9 Series features ultra-high 185Hz POCO HyperRGB AMOLED displays, delivering exceptionally fluid visuals across various scenarios. POCO F9 Ultra opens up the experience on an expansive 6.9-inch screen, while POCO F9 Pro packs the same flagship display technology into a more compact 6.59-inch form factor for comfortable handling.

realme 16T 5G launches in PH for as low as P37/day via Home Credit

REALME Philippines has officially launched the realme 16T 5G, headlined by an 8000mAh Titan Battery, a 50MP Sony IMX852 camera, and IP69 Pro dust and water resistance under the campaign tagline “More Power, More Moments.”

Power That Lasts Up to Two Days

Equipped with an 8000mAh Titan Battery, the realme 16T 5G provides users up to two days of use on a single charge and comes with a 7-Year Battery Health Guarantee, retaining at least 80 percent capacity even after 7 years of usage. It’s paired with 45W SUPERVOOC Charging, juicing up the battery from 0 to 50 percent in 46 minutes, and supports both wired reverse charging and bypass charging for gaming while plugged in.

Camera Ready for Every Vibe

Camera-wise, the system centers on a 50MP Sony IMX852 main sensor,

realme 16T 5G

More Power, More Moments

Starts at

P15,731	P22,999
P17,387	P24,999

FREE P3,999 Laifen SE Lite

8000mAh **50MP**

Powered by NEXT AI

Shopee | Lazada | TikTok Shop



Pre-order and enjoy P7,298 worth of offers, including a FREE Laifen SE Lite Hair Dryer, Privilege Card, and P2,000 OFF.

running on TÜV Rheinland-certified LumaColor IMAGE Algorithm, built for accurate skin tones and balanced exposure between subject and back-

Auto, but also lets users switch to Pro mode and shoot in RAW DNG for extra editing room, plus tweak the grain, sharpness, and saturation to match their own vibe.

And for those who want to add a little creativity into their shots, the realme 16T 5G is also loaded with NEXT AI imaging suite to achieve that ‘aesthetic shots’, including AI Edit Genie 2.0, AI Perfect Shot, AI Eraser, AI Portrait Glow, and AI Instant Clip

Smooth Display, Built Tough.

On to the display, the phone is equipped with a 6.8-inch display running up to 144Hz and 1,200 nits of peak brightness. It also carries an IP69 Pro rating which certifies it against high-pressure, high-temperature water jets on top of standard dust and submersion protection, along with ArmorShell™ protection, and military-grade shock resistance.

Acer announces New ePaper and Triple-Display monitors



Acer EP130K

to hybrid professionals who need a versatile productivity setup that allows them to visualize broad information or manage multiple workflows simultaneously. The device stands out for combining multiple screens with a space-saving, foldable design and minimized cables, and it enables up to four total displays when paired with a laptop.

When set up, the three screens on the Acer PD163Q P3 serve as independent, foldable display panels that support both extend and clone display modes, allowing users to dedicate one screen to each aspect of their workflow. A single USB-C cable connection to the host device simplifies con-



nectivity and cable management, and the PD163Q P3 comes with an external USB-C power delivery adapter for charging. In addition, screen brightness can be adjusted uniformly across all three panels for optimizing viewing experiences.

Acer C350e Projector: AI-Powered Portable Companion

More than a portable LED projector, the Acer C350e is an AI-powered lifestyle companion for modern homes and families. When not projecting content, the projector remains active through its AI Badge, displaying personal photos, offering useful widgets, and enabling AI-driven in-

teractions powered by Google Gemini. The AI Badge also functions as a detachable remote control for the projector.

For projecting content, it delivers excellent viewing experiences with crisp Full HD resolution at 1920 x 1080, backed by an 8,000 LED lumens light source and 350 ANSI lumens of brightness. Its swivel stand with tilt display enables hassle-free setup by offering 360-degree rotation and 120-degree tilting for projecting in a variety of spaces. A built-in small camera module powers auto focus, automatically adjusting the projection, while 2D keystone correction and 4-corner correction fix distortions for flawless viewing.

The Acer C350e is further equipped with a built-in smart system[1] that enables streaming from popular apps and platforms. It has two 3 W speakers, and its LED light source eliminates the need to wait for powering on and off. Its design also incorporates the principles of sustainability, with a 30,000-hour lifespan and mercury-free materials.

Premium Acer Iconia X16 and Iconia X14 Tablets for Entertainment and Education

The latest generation of Acer Iconia X series tablets includes the new 16-inch Acer Iconia X16 (X16-21M) and the updated 14-inch Iconia X14 (X14-21M). Powered by MediaTek Helio G80 SoCs and running Android 16, the Iconia X series are premium-grade tablets that offer OLED screens with 1920 x 1200 resolution and a metal chassis in Matte Black.

OpenAI begins rollout of new powerful AI model GPT-6 Astra

SAN FRANCISCO —ChatGPT maker OpenAI said Thursday it would begin rolling out its newest and most powerful artificial intelligence (AI) model to select customers, saying it had built in safeguards to mitigate security risks.

“At this level of capability, safety has to become our top priority,” OpenAI President Greg Brockman told reporters on a call about the release of GPT-6, also known as Astra.

Just over a year has passed since OpenAI launched the previous version of its flagship model, GPT-5.

Concerns about the capabilities of advanced models have grown since then, following incidents involving systems built by OpenAI and rival developer Anthropic.

OpenAI paused some model development for two weeks this summer after two models it was testing were involved in a security breach at AI platform Hugging Face.

The San Francisco-based company said Astra was developed with stronger safeguards after that incident, though Astra itself was not involved in the hack.

Some cybersecurity customers will get access to the new model Thursday, the company said, with a wider rollout to other paying customers to follow. Users on the free tier or the cheapest paid plan will



OpenAI founder Sam Altman speaks during the G20 Innovation Ministerial. Tech leaders from around the world gathered in Chapel Hill for two days of the annual meeting before the G20 Summit. AFP

not get access.

“We are working towards getting Astra in everyone’s hands as quickly as we can; I know it is frustrating and I appreciate the patience. It should be quick,” OpenAI CEO Sam Altman posted on social media Thursday afternoon.

In a blog post, OpenAI said Astra can autonomously handle a wide range of “tedious” computer tasks, including website creation, scientific analysis, game development, cyber-

security and coding.

To illustrate the time savings of building autonomous AI agents with Astra, the company said the model could cut apartment hunting from six hours to under 10 minutes.

“It’s not unreasonable to feel that we are now in the AGI era,” Brockman said on the call, referring to artificial general intelligence, a hypothetical stage at which AI systems match human intelligence across most tasks.

OpenAI previously had an agreement with Microsoft, one of its earliest and largest investors, under which an exclusivity clause would end once OpenAI reached AGI. Those terms were scrapped in April.

‘Limited window’

OpenAI chief scientist Jakub Pachocki acknowledged there was still uncertainty about how a new model behaves once released.

“A model can become very good at achieving a goal, and it can still

Converge accelerates enterprise techco shift to power ASEAN’s AI, Cloud surge

LEADING Philippine fiber broadband and technology solutions provider Converge ICT Solutions Inc. is expanding its enterprise operations to address the growing digital infrastructure demands driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud Computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT) across the southeast Asian region.

Speaking at the ASEAN Tech Summit Manila, Grace Jarin-Castillo, Converge SVP and Head of the Converge Global Business Group - Sales and Marketing, outlined the company’s evolution from a traditional broadband provider into an integrated technology company (“techco”).

“Standard broadband isn’t a differentiator anymore. Enterprises trying to scale don’t just need a fatter pipe—they need an integrated digital ecosystem,” said Castillo. “Right now, there is a real, measurable gap between the infrastructure ASEAN has today and what this next tech wave demands. Enterprises need a complete, foundational digital backbone to compete globally.”



Convo and Convy took the stage at the ASEAN Tech Summit Manila 2026, accompanying Jarin-Castillo and serving as exciting signifiers of future innovations that Converge can bring.

Strategic Infrastructure Assets

The strategy is anchored by the rollout of the Converge National Digital Infrastructure, that incorpo-

rates the following core components:

Fiber and Satellite Connectivity: Over 960,000 kilometers of nationwide pure fiber footprint, comple-

mented by Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite integration.

International Subsea Networks: Cross-border capacity via the Bifrost Cable System, the Southeast Asia-Hainan-Hong Kong Express Cable System (SEA-H2X), and the existing City-to-City - East Asia Crossing (C2C-EAC) infrastructure, with international cable landing stations located strategically across the Philippines.

Data Center Facilities: High-density, scalable, Tier III facilities in Caloocan and Angeles, augmenting operational centers in Reliance and Clark.

Cloud Infrastructure: Readily available to host sovereign data and provide compute power for large enterprises.

Market Expansion & Enterprise Adoption

Converge initiated its structural transition to a techco model in 2025, expanding its dedicated product suites for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), large corporations, and the public sector.

“By unifying connectivity, cloud services, managed IT, and cybersecurity into a single platform, the company has already secured enterprise contracts with top-tier Philippine financial institutions and insurance firms,” said Jarin-Castillo.



Bianca Wong, Vice President and Head of the Feel Valued Tribe at Globe.

Globe brings Love Overload to customers with 917 GDay

FOR Globe, thanking loyal customers was never meant to fit into just one day, week or month. At the recent Blueprint by Globe, the company unveiled how it is taking this year’s 917 GDay beyond the annual September celebration. Through Love Overload, GDay becomes a starting point for more rewarding and personalized experiences that customers can enjoy throughout the year.

The celebration begins with GDay Gift, which gives loyal mobile and broadband customers a special surprise to unwrap through the GlobeOne app. G Raffle Rush also returns bigger this year, with weekly draws leading up to major prizes including a brand-new BYD electric vehicle and Avida properties.

GDay is also going nationwide through GDay Everywhere, bringing the festivities closer to customers across Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Customers can look forward to entertainment, games, surprises and special treats in GenSan, Cebu, Lucena, Cavite, Zamboanga and other areas, alongside activities at Globe Stores and Ayala Malls nationwide.

“GDay has always been our way of thanking customers for choosing and growing with Globe. With Love Overload, we want to take that appreciation beyond the celebration itself and create more rewarding moments throughout the year, whether through a surprise, a more relevant offer or simply making their everyday experience with us better,” said Darius Delgado, Globe Chief Commercial Officer.

For Globe, the bigger opportunity is to make the feeling of GDay last. Through GDay Everyday, Globe is carrying the spirit of its September celebration into the rest of the year, creating more moments of delight and gin-hawa sa pang-araw-araw through rewarding, fun and personalized experiences.

That starts with making rewards easier to earn. Beginning this September, opted-in Globe Rewards customers can earn points from telco purchases and payments across more channels, including GlobeOne, GCash and participating suking sari-sari stores. These points can go toward telco promos as pantawid or lifestyle rewards, while customers without smartphones can also receive surprises through text as they continue to load.

Sanya Lopez makes 1st live-selling debut with nubia for NEOverse 9.9 MAXXING

FOLLOWING the momentum of NEOverse Max Out, nubia Philippines is bringing the MAXXING mindset to the 9.9 shopping season with the NEOverse 9.9 MAXXING Live Fest, featuring actress and brand partner Sanya Lopez in her first-ever live selling debut.

Stepping into her role as nubia Philippines’ Maxxing Queen, Sanya is set to bring a new energy to the world of live commerce as she joins nubia’s 9.9 celebration across TikTok and Shopee. The special live selling event will give fans and shoppers an interactive way to discover featured nubia devices, exclusive offers, limited time deals, and special rewards available during the campaign.

More than just another 9.9 sale, NEOverse 9.9 MAXXING transforms online shopping into an experience where consumers can maximize not only their savings, but also their tech, entertainment, and everyday experiences.

From Max Out Your World to Max Out Your Deals

Building on the success of NEOverse Max Out, which encouraged users to maximize the things they love and the experiences that matter to them, nubia Philippines is taking the campaign into its next chapter with 9.9 MAXXING.

This time, the MAXXING mindset extends to the shopping experience, giving consumers more opportunities to max out their deals, maximize their savings, and get more value from every purchase.

Throughout the 9.9 campaign, consumers can shop through nubia Philippines’ official TikTok Shop, Shopee, and Lazada channels and enjoy a range of exclusive offers, including limited time

discounts, vouchers, freebies, and special rewards, while promotional stocks last.

Shoppers can also enjoy Buy 1, Get Up to 4 Freebies on selected products, with possible rewards including a phone cooler, mini fan, charging cable, and Viu Philippines Premium Subscription, depending on the applicable product and promotion.

Adding even more excitement to the shopping event are special live selling deals and limited time offers available during the NEOverse 9.9 MAXXING Live Fest on TikTok and Shopee.



From Max Out Your World to Max Out Your Deals, nubia Philippines brings its #NEOverseMaxOut energy to 9.9 with the Maxxing Queen herself

For shoppers looking to score bigger savings, selected devices from nubia Neo 5 Series will also be featured in special 9.9 offers, including a limited ₱99 deal on Shopee, while promotional stocks last.

The Maxxing Queen Goes Live

At the center of the NEOverse 9.9 MAXXING Live Fest is Sanya Lopez, who is stepping into the world of live commerce with nubia Philippines for the first time.

Known for her versatility and growing presence across entertainment and brand collaborations, Sanya continues to embrace new experiences and opportunities beyond the screen. As nubia’s Maxxing Queen, she now takes on a new role in live commerce, giving fans an opportunity to see a different side of the actress.

During the special live selling event, Sanya will join nubia Philippines to interact with viewers, showcase selected nubia products, and bring exclusive 9.9 offers directly to consumers, combining entertainment, interaction, and shopping in one experience.

Her live selling debut reflects the spirit of MAXXING itself: trying something new, going beyond expectations, and making the most out of every opportunity.

Max Out Your Tech

At the heart of the NEOverse 9.9 MAXXING campaign is the nubia Neo 5 Series, a lineup designed for users who want to maximize performance, entertainment, and everyday productivity.

For those who want more screen and more power, the nubia Neo 5 Max PadPhone delivers a massive 7.5 inch 1.5K display paired with a 7,100mAh battery, giving users an immersive viewing experience and the power to keep up with their everyday entertainment and activities.



The original Viva HotBabes prepare to bring their hits back onstage for a 20th anniversary concert



GB Sampedro (leftmost) works with the Viva HotBabes on a concert that revisits their early-2000s era while adding fresh material for new and longtime fans

Viva HotBabes to go nostalgic but with new beats in reunion concert



Very Wang
Nickie Wang

SOME friendships survive the spotlight. Others survive two decades of it. And that appears to be the case with the **Viva HotBabes**, whose reunion celebrates two decades of friendship among its members.

According to **Katya Santos**, the members of the group have remained closely connected through the years. They make an effort to keep each other updated, offer support, and celebrate one another’s successes.

“We have remained friends, and we have created a bond that grows stronger each year, to the point that almost everyone is already part of each other’s milestones in our personal lives,” Katya started.

As they matured, she said, their relationship grew into something deeper than simply being members of the same group that made hits while touring the world in the early 2000s.

“We talked, and we all cried. It allowed us to really express how much we love and care for one another,” Katya said.

She admitted that, like any group of friends, they had their share of misunderstandings and falling-outs.

“But this planning, this reunion, called us to stay grounded, to love each other more, to support each other more, and to learn to forgive, again and again,” she added. “What matters most to us now is each other.”



That bond will be celebrated onstage in *BULAKLAK: Viva HotBabes Reunion Concert*, announced by VAA Live Inc. and featuring **Maui Taylor**, **Katya Santos**, **Andrea del Rosario**, **Gwen Garci**, **Sheree**, **Jaycee Parker**, **Ella V.**, and **Jennifer Lee**.

The concert will be directed by filmmaker **GB Sampedro**, who said that he appreciates the girls being very involved in the creative process of the concert.

“They constantly update me in our group chat, and they have a lot of suggestions that sometimes I couldn’t keep up [with],” he said.

“I’m just as excited as they are. When I was approached about this, I was thrilled because the Viva HotBabes era was when I was starting out as a director,” he told *Manila Standard Entertainment*.

He also sees the reunion as a chance to revisit an era while giving audiences something new.

“It’s about bringing the past back to life while also introducing something new. It’s nostalgic, yes, but it will also give their fans something the group has never done before,” Sampedro said.

And there is plenty of history to revisit.

Formed in 2003 by Viva Entertainment founder **Vic del Rosario**, the Viva HotBabes became one of the most talked-about acts of the early 2000s, known for their sexy image, novelty dance singles, and routines that found their way into parties and school programs.

The group’s breakout song, “Bulaklak,” was followed by “Kikay” and “Basketbol.”

VAA Live has also made clear that more names will be announced, leaving fans wondering which familiar faces might still join the reunion.

The original members of the Viva HotBabes will reunite onstage for ‘BULAKLAK: The Reunion Concert’ on October 23, 2026

Air Supply to rock Ilagan with ‘A Matter of Time’ tour

AIR Supply is bringing its timeless soft rock hits to Northern Luzon with a one-night concert at The Capital Arena in Ilagan City, Isabela, on Oct. 21, at 7:30 p.m.

The international duo of **Graham Russell** and **Russell Hitchcock** will perform as part of their A Matter of Time Tour, to give fans in Isabela and nearby provinces a chance to see the legendary act without traveling to Metro Manila.

Now in its fifth decade, Air Supply has built a global following with songs such as “All Out of Love,” “Lost in Love,” “Making Love Out of Nothing at All,” “The One That You Love” and “Every Woman in the World.”

The Ilagan concert is expected to draw fans from across Northern Luzon, including Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino,

Aurora, and Kalinga, while also adding to Ilagan’s growing profile as a venue for major live entertainment.

Presented by Nexus Collaboration in partnership with the City Government of Ilagan, the concert promises Air Supply’s signature harmonies alongside a full-scale stage production.

Tickets are available through Veen-tix, priced at P13,852 for VVIP Floor, P10,660 for Platinum Floor, P8,532 for VIP, P7,469 for Gold Floor, P6,405 for Lower Box, and P3,213 for Upper Box. Prices include ticket charges.

For ticket inquiries, contact **Michelle Sansub** at 0920 946 3431.



Graham Russell (left) and Russell Hitchcock bring Air Supply’s soft-rock catalog to fans across Northern Luzon



The returning love team’s new movie, which is directed by Cathy Garcia-Sampana, is set for a September 30 release



The cast members of the new JoshLia film were in Vigan for the movie’s poster reveal

Star Cinema brings back JoshLia magic in ‘Always Yours, Never Mine’

FORMER flames **Joshua Garcia** and **Julia Barretto** are turning up the excitement for their much-anticipated reunion movie, *Always Yours, Never Mine*, with the release of its official poster ahead of its Sept. 30 cinema debut.

The JoshLia tandem unveiled the poster during an event along historic Calle Crisologo in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, one of the film’s shooting

locations. They were joined by cast members **Karen Reyes**, **Bob Jbeili**, **Migs Almendras**, **Paulo Angeles**, and **Joy Barcoma**.

Seasoned actress **Chanda Romero** and Kapuso star **Bianca Umali**, who makes her first movie with Star Cinema, are also part of the cast.

The poster shows Joshua and Julia amid a bustling setting, using warm

cinematic tones that hint at the film’s themes of love and longing.

Always Yours, Never Mine is produced by ABS-CBN Studios and Star Cinema and directed by **Cathy Garcia-Sampana**. The screenplay is by **Olivia Lamasan**, **Trishtan Perez**, and **Vanessa Valdez**.

Ina Ramundo, **Franco Laurel**, **Reign Parani**, **Paolo Gumabao**, and **Jan Silverio** round out the cast.

By Nickie Wang

THE world’s first IQOS flagship store officially opened yesterday, Sept. 4, in Tokyo’s Ginza shopping district. And even before its doors opened to the public, it had already drawn plenty of attention, with some patrons camping out as early as midnight to be among the first to enter.

We got an exclusive look at the flagship just hours before showtime. And our first impression? This is no ordinary retail store.

Start at the entrance, where the experience begins almost immediately.

In the lobby, a sprawling 24-square-meter LED screen shifts through ever-changing landscapes, creating a moving visual backdrop beside Flux, a striking seven-meter-high chandelier and light-art installation by Japanese artist **Takahiro Matsuo**.

On the second floor, the experience takes a more dramatic turn. Make your way to the far end of the space, where the flagship’s most exclusive area awaits: the Immersive Lounge.

The sweetest spot is anchored by a 25-square-meter LED display that stretches across the space. It transports visitors through Japan’s changing seasons, from cherry blossoms in spring to snowy landscapes in winter. The 270-degree panoramic view gives the lounge an almost dreamlike quality. Think of it as a video wall, except the screen surrounds you with scenes of a forest somewhere in Japan, making you feel as though you have stepped into the landscape itself.

From the Immersive Lounge, before going back down to the first floor, you’ll find the Cafe Bar at the Premium Lounge, which serves specially created drinks designed to complement Terea and Zyn by IQOS. Japanese sweets inspired by the four seasons, along with pairing cocktails



The new IQOS Flagship Ginza combines retail with lounge-style spaces designed to encourage visitors to slow down and explore the flagship experience



The Flavor Station introduces visitors to different aroma and flavor profiles through a more sensory approach to product discovery



The store aims to create emotional interactions and promote a deeper understanding of smoke-free products



The Cafe Bar at the IQOS Flagship Ginza's Premium Lounge serves specially created drinks and seasonal Japanese sweets designed around the store experience

and mocktails, complete the experience.

On the first floor, visitors can explore the Flavor Station, where aromas unfold and different flavor profiles can be discovered.

Christophe Scarton, Philip Morris

International (PMI) vice president for consumer experience, explained that the concept was built around three emotions: curiosity, discovery, and the chance to pause.

“We really want to create much more emotional interactions with

these kinds of experiences in the flagship,” he said.

Walking through the store, that intention becomes easy to understand. The products are there, but so are the sights, sounds, scents, and spaces designed to make visitors linger.

IQOS Flagship Ginza is designed to meet the evolving needs of legal-age smokers by delivering a more personalized and elevated customer experience and promoting a deeper understanding of smoke-free products, including heated tobacco.

Pierre Cardin museum brings designer’s futurist style to Venice

HUNDREDS of creations by late designer **Pierre Cardin** will fill his Venice palazzo later this month in a new museum celebrating the cutting-edge vision of fashion’s futurist.



The museum highlights Cardin's architectural approach to clothing, which he viewed as sculptures

A costume ball Thursday evening at Cardin’s Venetian home of nearly 40 years, the Palazzo Bragadin, will kick off the museum opening, scheduled for Sept. 13.



Around 130 Pierre Cardin creations dating from 1951 to 2018 are displayed across the Venetian palazzo he used as a retreat and source of inspiration

The Italian-born French couturier, who died in December 2020 at 98, was a stalwart of 1960s fashion with his unisex, space-age designs that sent shockwaves through youth culture from Paris to London’s Carnaby Street.

Knit minidresses with bold geometric patterns, unexpected cut-outs, and synthetic fabrics cemented Cardin’s reputation as a modernist in tune with the decade.

Cardin bought the Venice palazzo in 1981 and used it as a retreat and a place to refuel his imagination, said his nephew, **Rodrigo Basilicati-Cardin**, chief executive of the label.

“There is an almost 1,000-square-meter space, with important ceiling heights, what better setting to display at least a hundred outfits?” he said during a tour.

The museum aims to remind visitors of Cardin’s innovative design sensibility, which emerged after he worked under **Elsa Schiaparelli** and **Christian Dior** before launching his own line in 1950.

He sought to democratize fashion with a ready-to-wear line in 1959, a controversial move that temporarily got him kicked out of the French haute couture governing body but was soon copied by rivals.

Around 130 outfits, dating from 1951 to 2018, fill the palazzo’s rooms. They include a 1971 emerald green knit tunic with dramatic side cut-outs, a 1991 black velvet gown with an oversized taffeta rose, and a 1963 silver silk minidress with a honeycomb pattern.

Basilicati-Cardin said his uncle viewed clothing as sculpture.

“His entire life was based on structures; all his garments are architectural, nothing purely fluid,” he said. “He considered his dresses as sculptures.” **AFP**

John Hay Hotels extends relief, support after Guisad Surong landslide

LANDCO Lifestyle Ventures, through John Hay Hotels, responded to the Guisad Surong landslide with relief for displaced families, direct assistance for affected employees, and volunteer support during search and rescue operations.

“This landslide reached our neighbors and our own colleagues, and our response had to be equal to that,” said John Hay Hotels general manager **Roberto A. Garcia**. “That is the character of this team, and it holds firmest when conditions are at their worst.”

Working with the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council–Cordillera Administrative Region (RAFC-CAR) and partner organizations, the hotel’s Dap-ayan ti John Hay Labor-Management Cooperation (LMC) gathered and repacked essential supplies for 18 families, or about 66 people,

at two evacuation centers.

The assistance included clothing, cash aid, relief goods, and hygiene kits with towels, dental and toiletry essentials, slippers, and laundry bags. Employees across departments volunteered to collect, sort, and prepare the donations for distribution.

The disaster also directly affected a John Hay Hotels employee who lost six family members and was staying at an evacuation center. The LMC provided the employee and family with rice, towels, linens, energy drinks, dental kits, toiletries, clothing, and P5,000 in cash assistance.

Management representatives also helped the family transfer to a new residence and continued to provide support as they began rebuilding.

“When a colleague loses six mem-

bers of the family in a single night, our response cannot end with a donation,” said Garden Wing resident manager **Christine Marie B. Cua**.

During the severe weather, department heads and Human Resources conducted welfare checks, shared road and weather updates, and inspected hotel facilities for risks. The hotel also activated calamity protocols, providing temporary sleeping quarters, safe transport, charging access during power interruptions, and hot meals and drinks.

Employee volunteerism extended to Ground Zero. Housekeeping Supervisor **Hilda Y. Coycoyen**, known among colleagues as “Sir Kardo,” joined volunteers and rescuers on Aug. 10 to help search for three relatives of the affected employee. All three were later confirmed among those who died.



John Hay Hotels employees sort and prepare relief supplies for families displaced by the Guisad Surong landslide

John Hay Hotels continues to coordinate with RAFC-CAR on further assistance for Guisad Surong and works with

local governments, universities, and other agencies through donations, fundraising, manpower, and volunteer service.