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# Oct. 7.8% inflation a 44-month high

## *Transport, energy costs log sharpest hikes*

**By Othel Campos, Maricel Cruz and Ram Superable**

INFLATION climbed to a 44-month high of 7.8 percent in October on the back of soaring petrol prices driven by the Middle East conflict and as the country continues to struggle with a devalued peso.

It was the fastest price increase since February 2023, when inflation reached 8.6 percent, Philippine Statistics Authority data showed.

Up from 7.2 percent in September, the October reading brought average inflation since January to 5.6 percent.

Inflation was at 1.7 percent in October 2025.

Rice remained the largest contributor to overall inflation, while transport and energy costs recorded some of the sharp-

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# Zalameda succeeds Gesmundo, who retires today, as Chief Justice

**By Pot Chavez and Charles Dantes**

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has selected Supreme Court Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda as the next Chief Justice, succeeding Alexander Gesmundo, who retires today, Nov. 6, upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70.

Presidential Communications Office Acting Secretary Lino Cayetano announced the selection Thursday.

He cited Zalameda's more than three decades in public service, including assignments as a trial court official, prosecutor,

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**CHANGING OF THE GUARD.** Supreme Court Associate Justice Rodil Zalameda (left) is named the 28th Chief Justice of the Philippines, succeeding Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo, who retires today. **Supreme Court Public Information Office**

# PAGASA fears onset of socio-economic drought due to El Niño

**By Rio N. Araja and Gabriel Oliva**

THE Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) fears not only for meteorological drought, but also for a socioeconomic drought amid a full-blown El Niño by end of 2026.

Meanwhile, an economist from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) warned against the potentially lasting economic

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**ENERGY MILESTONE.** President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., together with Prime Infra Chairman Enrique Razon, leads the ceremonial push-button activation of the first gas from the Malampaya Phase 4 (MP4) Project yesterday at the Malampaya Onshore Gas Plant in Barangay Tabangao Ambulong, Batangas City. Inset shows the platform where 220 billion cubic feet of new gas is harvested. Revoli Cortez

# Ex-Speaker's camp welcomes Tulfo's recantation

**By Maricel V. Cruz**

THE camp of former Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez on Thursday welcomed broadcaster Ramon Tulfo's admission that his allegations about the former House leader secretly leaving his detention facility were false, citing the jail superintendent's testimony disputing the claims and underscoring the responsibility of journalists to verify serious accusations before publishing them.

"We welcome Mr. Ramon Tulfo's public acknowledgment that the allegations he circulated concerning former Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez's supposed unauthorized movements outside his detention facility were false. Mr. Tulfo has admitted that he was fed incorrect information, failed to independently verify it, and subsequently passed it on to the public," lawyer Ade Fajardo, counsel for Romualdez, said in a message to reporters.

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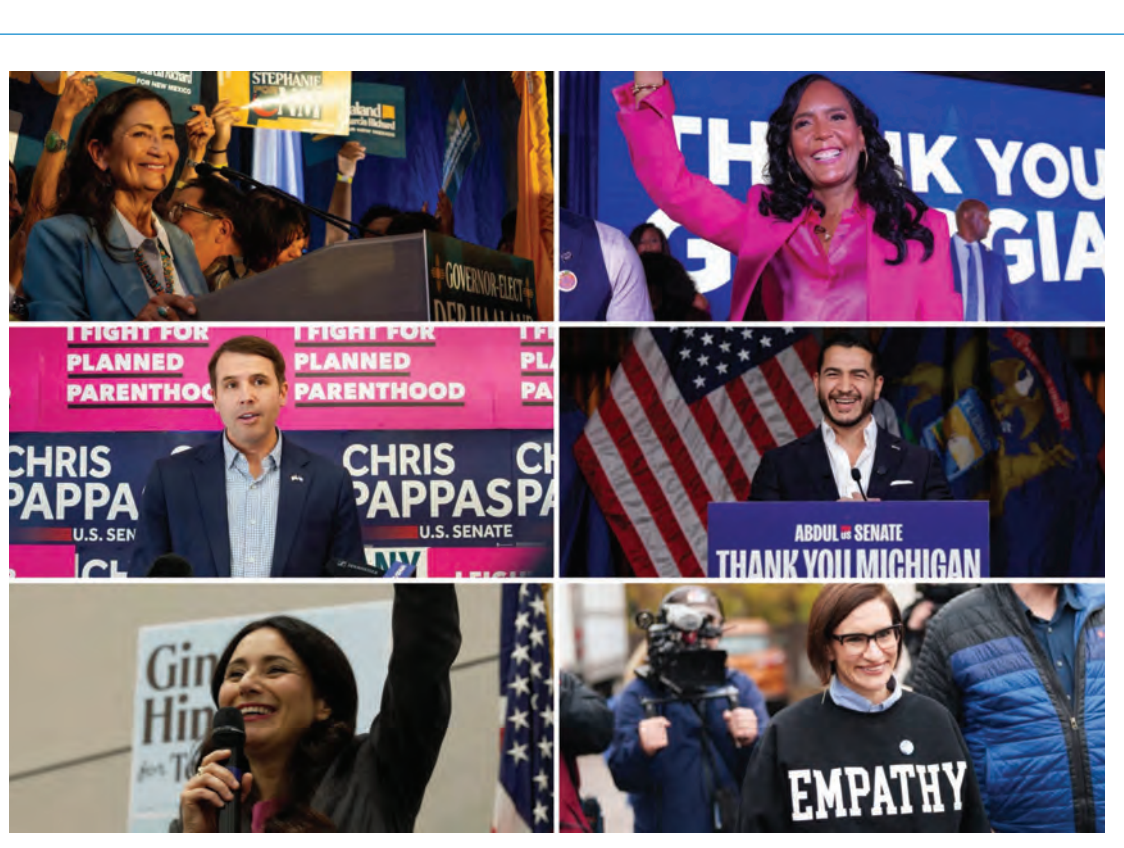
# PBBM touts Malampaya gas milestone in PH energy security

**By Charles Dantes and Alena Flores**

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday hailed the first delivery of natural gas from the Malampaya Phase 4 (MP4) project, saying the expanded production would strengthen the country's energy security and help reduce its dependence on imported fuel.

Meanwhile, Prime Infra chair-

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# US midterm polls usher in historic leadership firsts

THE US midterm vote ushered in a wave of historic leadership firsts across the country on Tuesday, electoral milestones on a night that saw voters issue a sharp rejection of President Donald Trump's second term.

Meanwhile, world leaders voiced hopes for a reset with the United States on Wednesday after vot-

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**HISTORIC SHIFT.** American political leadership underwent a historic shift in the 2026 US midterm elections, with Democrat minorities scoring a series of landmark victories, including (top to bottom from left) New Mexico Governor-elect Deb Haaland, Georgia Governor-elect Keisha Lance Bottoms, New Hampshire Senator-elect Chris Pappas, Michigan Senator-elect Abdul El-Sayed, Texas Governor-elect Gina Hinojosa, and Minnesota Senator-elect Peggy Flanagan. **AFP**

# VP Sara accepts withdrawal of defense witness

**By Katrina Manubay and Ram Superable**

VICE President Sara Duterte's defense team has accepted law professor and Dean Ralph Sarmiento's decision to decline its invitation to testify as a defense witness at her impeachment trial when it resumes Nov. 9.

Meanwhile, Senate Impeachment Court spokesperson Atty. Regie Tongol on Thursday defended the court's exclusive constitutional authority to determine its own voting thresholds following an official filing before the Supreme Court.

"We respect Dean Sarmiento's personal decision and appreciate his initial

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**DOLE TO PAY WAGES OF DISTRESSED FIRMS** NEWS / A3

**PNP EYES INCREASED VISIBILITY AT NIGHT** NEWS / A4

**VISITOR ARRIVALS TOP 5 MILLION—DOT** BUSINESS / B1

## Ex-Speaker's...
*From A1*

Tulfo had claimed in a November 3 Facebook post that Romualdez secretly left and returned to the New Quezon City Jail through a backdoor staircase leading to a waiting ambulance while the jail warden supposedly cut electricity to prevent security cameras from recording his movements. The broadcaster subsequently acknowledged that the information he received was erroneous.

"He has now described the allegations as fiction. This public retraction is significant, particularly because the allegations had already circulated widely and subjected our client to public suspicion and criticism," Fajardo said.

The former House leader's legal team also pointed to the testimony of the jail superintendent as further support for Romualdez's categorical denial, maintaining that the official responsible for overseeing the detention facility had directly contradicted allegations that he was being allowed to leave without authorization.

"It is also consistent with the categorical testimony of Jail Superintendent Pacion, who denied that Mr. Romualdez had been leaving the detention facility or using an ambulance or other vehicle for unauthorized trips," Fajardo explained.

The statement followed a formal demand letter dated November 4 from the law firm Solis Medina Fajardo Malilong, which directed Tulfo to stop circulating the disputed allegations, refrain from repeating claims that Romualdez had left the jail, and immediately remove or correct his original post with a prominent clarification, while warning that legal remedies would be pursued if the demands were ignored or the allegations were republished.

"We appreciate Mr. Tulfo's willingness to acknowledge his mistake publicly. It takes responsibility to correct an erroneous report, especially after it has gained widespread attention," Fajardo noted.

## PBBM...
*From A1*

man Enrique Razon Jr. highlighted Malampaya's enduring contribution to national development and the need for continued resource investment.

The MP4, located in northwest Palawan, has achieved its first gas milestone, successfully bringing natural gas from the Malampaya East-1 and Camago-3 wells into the existing Malampaya production system in Batangas City.

The delivery followed the successful drilling and testing of the Malampaya East-1 and Camago-3 wells in the first quarter of 2026, which yielded an estimated 222 billion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, Marcos said during a ceremony at the Malampaya Onshore Gas Plant in Batangas City.

The two wells were connected to the existing Malampaya subsea production system in June, allowing locally produced gas from offshore Palawan to flow through the existing transmission infrastructure to gas-fired power plants serving the Luzon grid.

"What does this mean for every Filipino family? Our own gas. More reliable electricity. More stable energy for our country," Marcos noted.

The President said maximizing the use of Malampaya gas could help make electricity rates more competitive by reducing the country's exposure to volatile international energy prices.

"Last year, more than half of our energy supply came from abroad," he said, warning that the country's energy sector remained vulnerable to geopolitical tensions, supply disruptions and price fluctuations.

## Oct. 7.8%...
*From A1*

est increases amid rising fuel prices.

Slower price increases for several other food commodities helped moderate food inflation, according to the Department of Economy, Planning and Development (DEPDev).

"To address these pressures, the government is strengthening agricultural production and logistics while providing targeted assistance to sectors affected by higher energy costs," DEPDev Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the government would continue reducing costs across the food supply chain through fuel and toll subsidies, financial assistance, production inputs and insurance for farmers, and lower tariffs on key feed ingredients such as corn.

The department is also expanding "Benteng Bigas, Meron Na!" -- the government's affordable rice program, to cover more vulnerable households, including those with senior citizens, solo parents and persons with disabilities.

PSA data showed that inflation in fish and seafood eased to 6.4 percent in October from 8.4 percent in September, while vegetables, tubers and pulses slowed to 7.9 percent from 9 percent.

The gains were partly offset by faster price increases in corn, which accelerated to 21.5 percent from 20 percent, and fruits, which rose to 10.8 percent from 8.9 percent. Rice inflation remained high at 23.6 percent, while meat prices declined 3.6 percent.

Food represented 49.7 percent of their total inflation.

Despite the faster price increases, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said the October inflation was within its forecast range of 7.1 percent to 8.1 percent.

"It is also consistent with our projection that inflation is likely to remain elevated in the coming months," the BSP said.

However, the average headline inflation for the first ten months at 5.6 percent was above the full-year target of 3.0 percent and beyond the tolerance range of ± 1 percentage point, the BSP said.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy items, also accelerated from 4.8 percent in September to 5.4 percent in October.

Inflation for households with incomes in the lowest 30 percent of the population increased from nine percent in September to 9.5 percent in October.

The BSP said it will remain vigilant and guided by incoming data and will continue to assess the impact of latest developments in the Middle East and ongoing El Niño conditions on the outlook for inflation and growth.

Inflation in the National Capital Region quickened to 5.9 percent from 5.3 percent in September. It was 2.9 percent in October 2025.

Transport inflation in NCR rose to 17.2 percent from 11.5 percent, and housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels inflation rose to 8.8 percent from 7.7 percent.

Inflation in areas outside NCR (AONCR) also picked up to 8.2 percent from 7.6 percent in September. It was 1.3 percent in October 2025.

DEPDev said to ease the impact of inflation, the government has expanded support through the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), which provides farmers with certified seeds, farm machinery, training and credit assistance to improve productivity and strengthen domestic rice supply.

As of October 21, the DA had released P11 billion in production support, indemnification assistance, cash aid, and other interventions for affected farmers and fisherfolk, DEPDev said.

To cushion the impact of elevated fuel costs, the government began rolling out P3 billion in fuel subsidies in October for around 300,000 farmers, fisherfolk, and agricultural delivery-truck drivers. Farmers and fisherfolk will receive a one-time subsidy of P5,000, while delivery-truck drivers will receive P2,000 weekly to support farm-to-market deliveries.

In the energy sector, the Department of Energy is taking steps to ensure adequate power supply amid El Niño conditions, including augmenting generation capacity and accelerating the deployment of energy storage systems.

"We will continue strengthening targeted interventions that support producers, improve supply, and provide relief to vulnerable sectors," Balisacan said.

"By improving agricultural productivity and logistics and addressing constraints in food and energy supply, we can ease price pressures, protect purchasing power, and build greater resilience against external shocks," he said.

As the peso fell to 64 to the dollar last week, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. told Filipinos "don't panic," and blamed the exchange rate woes on the rising prices of oil.

While Manila could "do nothing" about global oil prices, Mr. Marcos said Philippine foreign exchange reserves were at a healthy level and the government had "all the tools to defend the peso."

Rising inflation has impacted the growth of the economy, which expanded by a paltry 2.3 percent in the three months to June, the lowest since the fourth quarter of 2009, excluding the pandemic years.

Third-quarter gross domestic product growth data is scheduled to be released on Monday.

As this developed, Senator Bam Aquino called for the urgent passage of a bill raising the personal income tax exemption cap to offset the combined impact of rising inflation and a depreciating local currency.

"Families feel that they are bringing home less food on the exact same budget. Their earnings need to keep pace with the rising prices of goods," Aquino said in renewing his push for Senate Bill No. 267.

Under the proposed legislation, the annual personal income tax exemption limit would increase to P480,000 to improve the purchasing power of working citizens.

The target ceiling matches a monthly living wage of P40,000, which the lawmaker cited as the necessary income to sustain a household of four or five members.

At the House of Representatives, the Makabayan bloc scored the administration over its inability to address runaway inflation.

Deputy Minority Leader Antonio Tinio said: "And they wonder why President Marcos's survey ratings are dropping. It's because of the economy...The public feels the crushing weight of high prices every single day, yet the administration keeps offering shifting excuses instead of taking real action."

"Immediately, workers' wages must be raised to a living wage—at least P1,200—and their benefits must be increased as well. While the prices of all commodities continue to climb, wages remain virtually stagnant," Tinio said. **With AFP**

## PAGASA...
*From A1*

effects of the "super" El Niño which was expected to affect the Philippines during the latter part of 2026 until the first half of 2027

In a related development, PAGASA administrator Nathaniel Servando said a very strong El Niño is currently present in the Tropical Pacific, expected to reach its peak by the end of 2026.

"A very strong El Niño is currently present in the tropical Pacific and is expected to persist until the first half of 2027, potentially reaching its peak by the end of 2026," PAGASA said in an advisory.

The El Niño phenomenon increases the likelihood of rainfall deficits, resulting in dry spells and drought in several areas of the country.

PAGASA said, however, that there would still be episodes due to the passage of tropical cyclones within the Philippine area of responsibility and other rain-bearing weather systems.

Analiza Solis, PAGASA's climate monitoring and prediction chief, cited most climate models predicted that the ongoing El Niño will persist until the first quarter of 2027.

The impact of El Niño is expected to continue through the first half of 2027.

"There will be prolonged dry spell that will lead to meteorological drought conditions and even other forms of drought, such as the agricultural drought, hydrological drought," Solis said.

"May it not end up in a socioeconomic drought. But there is always a possibility," she added.

Drought can trigger most damaging environmental hazards, affect the people's quality of life, threaten food and water security, and endanger the economic livelihood of the people, the weather bureau said.

A prolonged water scarcity may affect the production of industries that are dependent on water, too, it added.

Based on the latest drought assessment, PAGASA said five provinces — Albay, Catanduanes, Negros Oriental, Samar and Siquijor — have experienced meteorological drought, 11 provinces under dry spell, and 10 provinces under dry conditions in October.

"This is a prolonged drought, meaning to say that around five months, there was a significant reduction of rainfall of up to 60 percent," Solis pointed out.

For November, below-normal to way-below normal rainfall is expected over most parts of the country, with several provinces likely to experience meteorological drought and dry spell conditions by the end of the month.

Warmer than average mean air temperatures are also expected across most parts of the country.

All provinces in the country are forecast to experience drought by March and April next year, according to PAGASA.

The public and all concerned agencies are strongly advised to implement appropriate sectoral interventions, conservation and mitigation measures, particularly water conservation and efficient management of water resources, to minimize the potential impacts of El Niño.

In an entry to the Asian Development Blog, ADB's official forum for economic analysis, commentary, and research insights shared by international experts, economist Roshen Fernando said the 'lasting' economic effects of the weather phenomenon may go beyond its expected timeframe.

"The immediate risks are failed rains, heatwaves, and higher food prices. But the lasting economic damage from a powerful El Niño could emerge next year—and continue long after the weather pattern has passed," said Fernando.

He added that the current El Niño is expected to peak around November, with a high chance of becoming the strongest on record.

According to Fernando, public attention may only focus on the coming months as the extreme weather phenomenon reveals failed rains, heatwaves, and rising rice and cooking oil prices, but added that an economic story will come months after it.

### Hit hardest a year after it forms

Fernando said the effects of the El Niño will hit hardest a year after it forms, while debunking a claim that it will only deliver a "sharp but brief blow to growth" where economies are expected to recover from.

"Recent research suggests otherwise: in hot, dry economies, El Niño can slow productivity growth persistently. The 1997–98 event alone is estimated to have cost the world economy $5.7 trillion in lost output," he said.

## VP Sara...
*From A1*

consideration of our invitation," defense spokesperson Atty. Michael Poa said. "We wish him well in his continued contributions to constitutional discourse," he added.

In a Facebook video, Sarmiento said he had asked the defense to withdraw its request for a subpoena compelling him to appear before the Senate impeachment court. He said he needed to preserve his independence and impartiality as a constitutional law expert.

The defense had earlier asked the impeachment court to issue a subpoena requiring Sarmiento, a political and constitutional law professor and former vice chancellor for administration at the University of St. La Salle, to testify. He was identified as the defense team's first witness.

In its request, the defense also asked Sarmiento to bring his curriculum vitae and other documents relevant to his qualifications and testimony.

The defense said it would disclose the identities of its other witnesses for hearings scheduled on Nov. 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20 and 23 in accordance with the five-day notice requirement.

Sarmiento had been invited to testify in connection with the second article of impeachment, which accuses Duterte of unexplained wealth, failure to disclose all her assets in her Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth, and prohibited business interests.

## US midterm...
*From A1*

ers delivered a huge midterm election defeat to President Donald Trump and his Republican party.

The first Black female governor, the first openly gay male senator, the first Muslim senator and the first female Native American governor all won groundbreaking elections in the vote that racked up resounding gains for Democrats.

Bill Shiebler—chief strategy officer at the non-profit State Voices, a network of advocates for civic engagement and equity—told AFP the night was "a huge rebuke against hate and division."

"We're witnessing an electorate that increasingly sees itself in its leaders, and the leaders who come out of communities they now represent," Shiebler said.

In Michigan, leftist Abdul El-Sayed became the first Muslim elected to the US Senate.

The former medical administrator drew huge campaign crowds but faced a surge of anti-Muslim rhetoric from his detractors in the bruising race.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations advocacy group praised El-Sayed for persevering despite "endless Islamophobic attacks."

"Our communities worked hard to make sure our voices were heard and that we are properly represented in the Senate," the organization said.

"This is what is possible when we show up and vote together."

### 'Historic election'

In the southern state of Georgia, Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms won the race for governor, making her the first Black woman elected to the top office in any US state.

A former Atlanta mayor, Bottoms defeated billionaire health care executive Rick Jackson, a win that returns the governor's office to Democrats after more than two decades of Republican control.

Democratic Representative Chris Pappas, meanwhile, will become the first openly gay man to serve in the US Senate after winning in New Hampshire. He has served in the US House of Representatives since 2019. **AFP**

## Zalameda...
*From A1*

Court of Appeals justice and Supreme Court associate justice.

Cayetano later defended the appointment, noting Zalameda's experience under several administrations had given him a broad understanding of the judiciary and demonstrated his qualifications to lead the High Court.

Zalameda served for 11 years in the Court of Appeals, where he chaired its 17th Division, before then-President Rodrigo Duterte appointed him to the Supreme Court in 2019.

He earned his law degree from Ateneo de Manila University and passed the Bar examinations in 1988.

### Role in favorable Marcos rulings

Zalameda's appointment drew criticism over his role in a Supreme Court ruling that overturned the Sandiganbayan's conviction of former first lady Imelda Marcos on seven graft counts involving her alleged financial interests in private foundations in Switzerland.

In a September 2026 decision, the Supreme Court's First Division acquitted Imelda Marcos, ruling that the prosecution failed to establish her guilt beyond reasonable doubt and that Swiss documents presented as key evidence were inadmissible.

Former presidential spokesman Harry Roque was among those who questioned Zalameda's selection.

Cayetano defended the new Chief Justice's independence, noting that the ruling cited by critics was issued by a division of the Supreme Court.

He also pointed to Zalameda's service under former presidents Fidel V. Ramos, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Benigno Aquino III and Duterte.

### President confident in Zalameda

"We believe in his impartiality and we look forward to working with the new Chief Justice," Cayetano added.

He said Mr. Marcos was confident Zalameda would perform his duties with integrity, impartiality and commitment to the rule of law.

He described the appointment as consequential for the country, particularly as the administration pursues reforms that could face legal challenges.

The Judicial and Bar Council submitted five nominees for the post: Zalameda, Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen, and Associate Justices Alfredo Benjamin Caguioa, Japar Dimaampao and Jose Midas Marquez.

Zalameda's selection marks Marcos' first appointment to the country's top judicial post.

### Gesmundo credits SC accomplishments

Meanwhile, Gesmundo thanked Supreme Court justices, officials and employees during his final flag ceremony on Wednesday, crediting them for the accomplishments of the High Court during his tenure.

"None of the successes we achieved was the result of one person's efforts alone. All of these were made possible by each one of you," Gesmundo said.

He described his service with the Court as a lifelong honor and said a strong Judiciary depended not only on efficient systems and processes but also on the people who served and upheld its mission.

Gesmundo recalled the challenges during his term, including adapting to the pandemic, improving court systems and responding to growing public expectations.

Manila Standard

# DOLE tack pays up to 3 months' salaries

**By Vito Barcelo**

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will shoulder three months' salaries of workers in financially distressed businesses under a new program designed to help companies cope with wage increases and difficult economic conditions.

DOLE Secretary Francis Tolentino said the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) Flagship Innovations-Sagip Trabaho Program would provide temporary financial assistance to qualified businesses in exchange for a commitment to continue operating for at least six months.

Tolentino announced the program during its launch at Mega-Jesta Prints, a printing company in Valenzuela City and one of its beneficiaries.

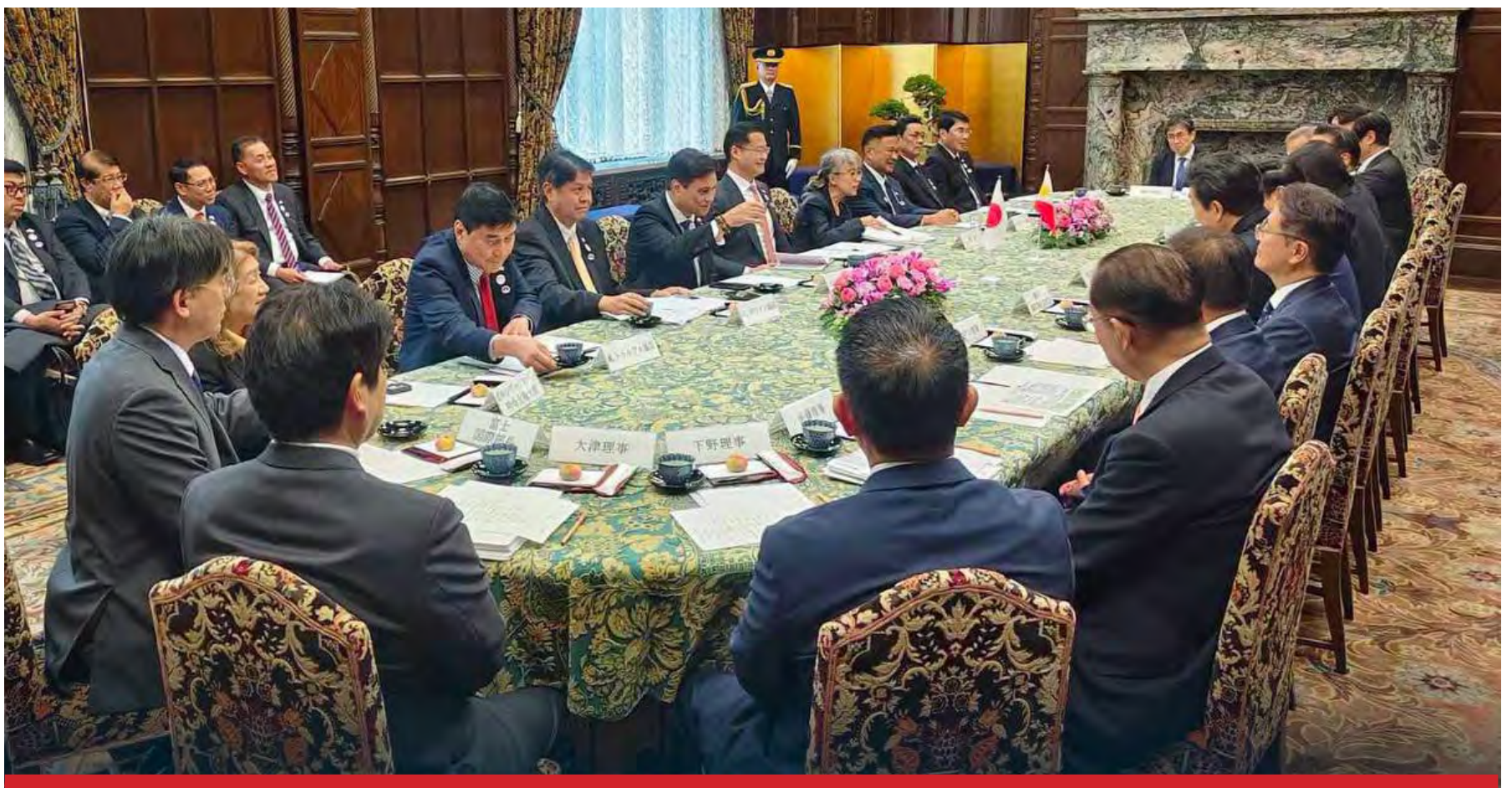
He said applicants must establish that their businesses are financially distressed and unable to absorb additional labor costs. Applications may be submitted online.

The program will initially cover Metro Manila and Central Visayas, where recent wage increases have reportedly placed additional pressure on businesses.

Mega-Jesta Prints owner Ma. Teresita Ortico said the assistance would cover the salaries of about half of her 60 workers, helping the company manage higher labor costs and maintain operations. She said the application process took less than a month.

Valenzuela Mayor Wes Gatchalian welcomed the initiative, saying it would help balance the interests of workers and employers.

He said the city has about 15,000 factories and business establishments, around 90 percent of which are micro, small and medium enterprises vulnerable to rising fuel costs and weaknesses in the country's export sector.



**TRADE PUSH.** Members of the Philippine Senate delegation meet Japanese officials in Tokyo during their official visit marking the 70th anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship. The senators pushed for zero tariffs on Philippine-made heated tobacco products, fruits and other agricultural exports to strengthen bilateral trade (see story below). Office of Sen. Erwin Tulfo

# Canada PM to visit Manila to negotiate trade pact

**By Charles Dantes**

CANADIAN Prime Minister Mark Carney will visit Manila from Nov. 11 to 19 to advance negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement and push for the completion of a broader trade pact with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Canadian government said.

The Philippines is part of a four-country trip that will also take Carney to Ireland, Cambodia and China, according to a Canadian government statement.

In Manila, Carney will attend the ASEAN Summit as Guest of the Chair and work toward finalizing the ASEAN-Canada free trade agreement, which Ottawa said could unlock more than $3.5 billion in exports to one of the world's fastest-growing economic regions.

He will also seek to conclude negotiations on a Canada-Philippines free trade agreement, which the Canadian government expects could triple bilateral trade by 2035.

The visit highlights Canada's efforts to expand economic partnerships in Southeast Asia and diversify trade and investment opportunities amid shifts in the global economy.

Ottawa said the proposed agreements would open new markets for Canadian businesses and workers while expanding trade and investment opportunities with the Philippines and other ASEAN member states.

Carney's trip will focus on advancing Canada's interests in trade, investment, culture and security through participation in four major international summits.

# LGUs warned vs. corruption of disaster fund

**By Charles Dantes**

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday warned local government officials against ghost projects, kickbacks and substandard rehabilitation works as he announced P8.6 billion in disaster recovery assistance for 306 local government units (LGUs) affected by calamities from 2024 to 2026.

"There must be no room for corruption in this program," Mr. Marcos said during the ceremonial turnover of Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Assistance Program (DRRAP) funds at Malacañan Palace.

"This is the people's money, intended for our fellow Filipinos affected by disasters. This is not a fund to make money from, nor is it a fund for anyone who wants to enrich themselves amid the tragedies we are experiencing," he added.

"Ghost projects are prohibited. Kickbacks are prohibited. Substandard rehabilitation projects are prohibited," Mr. Marcos said.




**POLICE PREPARATIONS.** Manila Police District-Civil Disturbance Management personnel conduct intensive training at their headquarters on UN Avenue in Manila in preparation for possible protests during the 2026 ASEAN Summit and the anticipated visit of US President Donald Trump. Police will monitor areas in Manila and Pasay City. **Norman Cruz**



**MEDICAL EVACUATION.** Coast Guard personnel assist in the medical evacuation of a pregnant passenger who experienced labor pains aboard MV Star Ferry I while traveling from Tabaco City to San Andres, Catanduanes, on Nov. 5. The Coast Guard coordinated with local disaster response personnel for ambulance transport upon the vessel's arrival at Tabaco Port. **Coast Guard District Bicol**

# Zero Japanese tariffs on PH exports eyed

**By Ram Superable**

PHILIPPINE senators are urging Japan to eliminate tariffs on selected Philippine exports, including heated tobacco products, fruits and other agricultural goods, to expand trade and economic ties between the two countries.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vice Chairman Erwin Tulfo and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Francis Pangilinan presented the proposal during a parliamentary visit to Japan's National Diet on Thursday.

"This will not only ensure a continuous supply to our neighboring countries in Asia, but it will also boost the manufacturing, agriculture, and export industries of the Philippines, which will ultimately stimulate the country's economy and create more jobs," Tulfo said.

The proposal seeks to update the 2008 Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, which reduced or eliminated tariffs on more than 90 percent of traded goods.

Tulfo said heated tobacco products and certain agricultural exports were excluded from the original negotiations.

He urged Japanese officials to grant these Philippine products zero-tariff access, saying this would allow them to compete more fairly with imports from the European Union.

Tulfo is in Japan as part of an official Senate delegation conducting parliamentary exchanges with Japanese counterparts.

## IN BRIEF

### CBCP to hospitals: Treat poor patients

THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has urged healthcare institutions to provide medical treatment to poor patients regardless of their ability to pay, stressing that access to healthcare must uphold human dignity.

CBCP President Archbishop Gilbert Garcera of Lipa made the appeal during a Mass at the Luzon Health Care Summit in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, on Nov. 5.

"Healthcare must not be a privilege reserved for the wealthy. It must be a service that recognizes the dignity of every person," Garcera said in his homily.

He urged hospitals and healthcare providers to respond with compassion to patients facing financial difficulties and ensure that no one is turned away because of a lack of money. **Vito Barcelo**

### PH eyes BrahMos missiles from India

THE Philippines is seeking additional BrahMos cruise missile systems from India as part of its defense modernization program, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. said.

Teodoro said the Philippines had submitted a wish list to the manufacturer and Indian authorities to tailor the missile system to the country's operational requirements and environment.

He made the remarks during the 3rd Delhi Defence Dialogue via video conference Wednesday.

The Philippines was the first foreign country to acquire the Indian-made system, described as the world's fastest cruise missile. **Rex Espiritu**

### FBI scrutiny of NPA networks welcomed

THE National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) has welcomed reports that US federal authorities are investigating possible links between American citizens and organizations and the communist insurgency in the Philippines.

The task force issued the statement after the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) disclosed alleged FBI inquiries involving the family of an American activist detained in the Philippines.

According to the NDFP, Gabe Pasion, an Anakbayan activist, said during a press conference in Baltimore organized by the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) that his family had received repeated calls, home visits and workplace inquiries from FBI personnel and the US Embassy in Manila. **Rex Espiritu**

# Marcos foresees deeper PH, Spain bilateral relations

**By Charles Dantes**

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sees opportunities to expand Philippine-Spanish relations as the two countries prepare to celebrate 80 years of diplomatic ties next year.

Marcos expressed optimism over strengthening the bilateral partnership during the presentation of credentials by Spain's Ambassador-designate Xavier Martí Martí at Malacañang on Wednesday.

"The centuries-old relationship between our two countries is unmatched in any other in the history of the Philippines, and I believe also in Spain. It is as deep as any relationship can be between two countries," Marcos told the envoy.

"Still, the modern world presents us with many opportunities to enlarge and expand the scope of that relationship," he added.

Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines began in the 16th century and lasted for more than 300 years, shaping the country's religion, culture, economy and political institutions.

Marcos said he looked forward to working with Martí Martí to identify new ways to strengthen bilateral relations.

For his part, the Spanish envoy conveyed the regards of King Felipe VI and reaffirmed Madrid's commitment to deepening ties with Manila.

Martí Martí said 2027 would also mark the 25th anniversary of Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day.

He said Spain wants to expand economic and investment ties, strengthen defense and security cooperation, deepen bilateral dialogue and uphold a rules-based international order.



**PH-SPAIN DIPLOMACY.** President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. receives the credentials of Spain's Ambassador-designate to the Philippines, Xavier Martí Martí, during a ceremony at Malacañang, witnessed by Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro. Marcos cites the two countries' deep historical ties, and expressed interest in expanding bilateral partnership ahead of the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2027. Revoli Cortez

# Nartatez eyes increased police visibility at night

**By Vince Lopez**

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday ordered an immediate increase in police visibility in communities and public spaces during nighttime following recent global survey fshowing concerns about personal safety after sunset.

The Philippines scored 84 out of 100 overall on the Gallup Law and Order Index, matching the ratings for the law and order situation in the United States and the United Kingdom.

PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez, Jr. particularly cited policemen at the frontlines, notably those deployed for police visibility and beat patrol, saying visibility not only prevent crimes, but also enhances a sense of security among the people.

The survey data reinforced the consistent decline in crime rate across the country, especially on index crimes.

Nartatez wants heightened police visibility including patrols would address concerns that only 64 percent of the people feel safe walking alone at night in their communities.

"The report is a reminder that maintaining peace and order is not measured by crime statistics alone. Our success must also be reflected in the confidence of every Filipino inside their home, in walking the streets and in moving around their communities without fear any time of the day," the PNP chief stated.

According to data cited in a report, the disparity suggests that while many Filipinos continue to express confidence in law enforcement institutions, concerns remain about personal security in public spaces after dark.

"This is why I am directing all police regional directors and local chiefs of police to reassess their nighttime deployment, intensify mobile and foot patrols, and strengthen police visibility in identified crime-prone areas," Nartatez said.

"We must bring police presence closer to the communities and ensure that no area is overlooked, particularly during hours when people are most vulnerable," he added.

Under the directive, regional and local police commanders are required to review patrol schedules and personnel distribution, particularly in areas with recurring nighttime crimes and locations frequently used by commuters, workers, students, and residents returning home in the evening.

This is in line with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., to ensure visible, responsive, and community-centered law enforcement throughout the country.

Alongside heightened patrols, Nartatez instructed local police units to collaborate closely with local government officials.



**QUAKE EXERCISE.** The Malabon City government and Ospital ng Malabon staff take part in the 4th Quarter Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill as part of all-of-government approach to disaster risk reduction during earthquakes. **Andrew Rabulan**

# NBI arrests mother abusing own child for pornography

**By Gwyneth Nolasco**

THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has arrested a mother in General Santos City for allegedly selling child sexual abuse or exploitation materials (CSAEM) involving herself and her minor child.

The NBI's Violence Against Women and Children Division (NBI-VAWCD) and the NBI's Sarangani District Office (NBI-SARDO) conducted the raid in Purok Malayang Nayon, Barangay Mabuhay last Oct. 28.

In a press statement, NBI director Melvin Matibag commended the coordination with the bureau's Digital Forensic Laboratory (DFL) in staging the search and rescue operation.

He said the operation demonstrated the NBI's commitment to protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation, particularly when their parents are allegedly involved.

The case was referred to the NBI by the Department of Justice's National Coordination Center Against Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (NCC-OSAEC-CSAEM), based on reports from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The reports flagged the suspect's account on the messaging application Kik.



**WASTE RECYCLING TRUCKS.** The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority under chairman Romando Artes hand over brand-new Mobile Material Recovery Facility trucks to 15 local government units in the National Capital Region in keeping with its sustained campaign to enhance solid waste management and promote proper recycling practices in the communities. **MMDA photo**

# Sotto files reso on extended absences

**By Ram Superable**

SENATE President Pro Tempore Vicente Sotto III has filed a resolution directing the Committee on Rules to recommend measures and possible sanctions to address senators' prolonged and unauthorized absences, including possible sanctions.

Senate Resolution 751 seeks to close the gap in existing rules that Sotto said leaves the chamber without clear procedures for handling lawmakers who repeatedly miss legislative duties without authorization.

Sotto said the measure aims to strengthen accountability among elected officials "whose salaries and allowances come from taxpayers."

"There is a policy gap as regards the possible sanction on a member of the Senate with prolonged unauthorized absence rendering them unable to participate in major legislative functions," the resolution stated.

Sotto cited public concerns over prolonged absenteeism, with complaints already filed with the Senate Committee on Ethics.

"Such absenteeism and neglect of duty is deemed a waste of taxpayer funds and has caused public clamor over the past months," the resolution said.

The measure asks the Committee on Rules to review the Senate's internal regulations and develop a framework for handling prolonged unauthorized absences while ensuring that senators fulfill their constitutional responsibilities.

It does not specify penalties, but seeks to establish procedures for determining appropriate sanctions.

## IN BRIEF

### OPAPRU conducts 6th peace research confab

THE Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) has underscored the importance of integrating local knowledge, community experiences, and grassroots practices into peacebuilding research and policies.

OPAPRU Undersecretary Jonathan Ferdinand Miano made the observation in remarks at the opening the agency's 6th Peace Research Conference, set Nov. 4-5 in Pasig City, with the theme "Localizing Peace: Reframing Peace Research, Epistemologies, and Practices Through Local Perspectives."

Miano highlighted research on indigenous knowledge, customary practices, territorial knowledge, local dynamics and historical experiences in understanding peace and conflict.

He also cited the contributions of local actors, including women, former combatants and third parties, to peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives. **Rex Espiritu**

### SC adopts revised rule on child testimonies

THE Supreme Court (SC) has adopted revised procedures allowing greater use of technology and child-friendly measures in examining child witnesses to protect them from further trauma during court proceedings.

The SC en banc approved the revised rule on the Examination of Child Witnesses last June 17, but was released only on Wednesday.

Under the revised rule, courts may allow children to testify through videoconferencing from outside the courtroom and limit their exposure to the accused when appearing in person could cause them trauma, while preserving the accused's constitutional right to confront witnesses.

If a child cannot testify in court or through videoconferencing because of a disability, health condition or other circumstances, the court may permit an electronically recorded deposition in the presence of the judge and lawyers for both parties, the rule stipulated. **Pot Chavez**

### Navy probes socmed post on juvenile row

THE Philippine Navy is investigating the online posts of a Navy reservist about the recent youth disturbance in San Andres Bukid, Manila, saying the respondent could face sanctions, including dishonorable discharge, if found to have violated military regulations.

Navy spokesperson Capt. Marissa Martinez said the probers are looking into posts made by one of its reservists to establish accountability.

The Navy stressed that it does not tolerate remarks that incite violence or show disregard for human life, adding that these run counter to the discipline and core values expected of all its personnel, including members of the Reserve Force.

The Navy meanwhile also reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining discipline, accountability and professionalism among personnel in both the Regular and Reserve Force. **Rex Espiritu**



About Town
Ernesto M. Hilario

# Montemayor and the hypocrisy of rice politics

POLITICIANS have short memories. When they sit in power, pragmatism rules. When they step out, populism takes over.

Former agriculture secretary Leonardo Montemayor loves the cameras lately.

He portrays himself as the ultimate champion of Filipino farmers, slamming rice imports with fiery outrage.

To hear him speak today, opening the country's ports to imported grain is like an act of treason against local farmers.

The rhetoric sounds good. It hits the right emotional notes. But check history and he is quickly unmasked.

Back in 2002, Montemayor sat in the hot seat as Department of Agriculture secretary. Did he shut the country's borders and rely solely on local harvests? Far from it.

Under his watch, the National Food Authority initially projected an import volume of 390,000 metric tons.

Yet by late 2002, that figure ballooned to approximately one million metric tons—more than two and a half times the original target. He even went before the Senate to defend plans to bring in another one million metric tons the following year.

Lawmakers back then hammered him for excessive imports and selling out local farmers. Montemayor's defense was unyielding: the country needed a strategic food security buffer. His justification? An incoming El Niño threatened local crop yields.

The irony is hard to miss.

Today, facing erratic climate patterns and the threat of super El Niño, the Marcos Jr. administration adopts the exact same strategy.

Yet Montemayor now stands on the other side of the fence, condemning the very tool he leaned on to keep the nation fed.

Let us face the uncomfortable truth that Filipino policymakers hate to admit.

The Philippines has not been self-sufficient in rice for decades. Geography, typhoons, shrinking arable land, and high production costs have consistently left a gap between what local farmers can harvest and what Filipinos consume.

Decades of data show that domestic yield alone cannot fill every family's bowl.

What then is the alternative to supplementing production through imports?

We have lived through that nightmare before.

In the mid-1990s under the Ramos administration, policy miscalculations and delayed shipments led to empty warehouses.

Citizens stood in sweltering queues for hours just to buy a few kilos of low-grade NFA rice.

Panic gripped the markets. Prices spiked out of control. Empty granaries do more than hurt economies; they topple governments. A hungry population is a volatile spark that can easily ignite mass social unrest.

Look around the region.

Sensible neighboring nations are aggressively building stockpiles.

> *When drought parches the fields, the overriding duty of any rational leadership is clear: the greatest good for the greatest number*

With volatile global crude prices, escalating shipping costs, and climate shocks hammering Southeast Asia, stockpiling food is basic common sense.

Why should the Philippines gamble with empty silos when the warning lights are blinking red?

Protecting farmers is essential. Government must invest heavily in irrigation, modern machinery, subsidized fertilizer, and cold storage. But agricultural policy cannot afford to be short-sighted.

Governance requires a delicate balancing act.

The state must keep local farmers productive while ensuring over 110 million citizens do not starve.

When drought parches the fields, the overriding duty of any rational leadership is clear: the greatest good for the greatest number.

Stockpiling grain during looming climate crises is not an assault on agriculture. It is an insurance policy against national catastrophe.

Montemayor knew this when the responsibility of feeding the nation rested on his shoulders in 2002.

Pretending he never did might make for convenient politics today, but that is a dangerous, misleading kind of leadership. *(Email: ernhil@yahoo.com)*

# RIP MAGA? Stunned US right contemplates life after Trump

WASHINGTON, DC – Has MAGA fever finally broken? Will the American right shed Donald Trump's populist ideology and return to more traditional conservatism?

After a resounding defeat in midterm elections that were all about one man, many Republicans on Wednesday are questioning the party's future -- and the role, if any, of President Trump in shaping it.

The Wall Street Journal, whose opinion pages are the standard-bearer of the establishment right, has demanded "soul-searching" and called for a break with the ultranationalist, identity-based rhetoric that fueled the octogenarian's rise to power.

"Tariffs and mass deportation are no substitute for rising real incomes. Playing to the bro MAGA base is no substitute for persuading Hispanics, independents and suburban swing voters who abandoned the party on Tuesday," the Journal's editorial board wrote Wednesday morning.

**'Still your president'**

The White House was in a less reflective mood.

Its first X post Wednesday featured a stern-looking Trump with the words "Trump is still your president" superimposed on it -- a reminder he can remain in office until January 2029.

But the American political cycle is relentless. Wednesday effectively marks the kickoff of the 2028 campaign, which will culminate in a vote on Trump's successor.

And in this race, Trump is out for good, since the US Constitution bars him from seeking a third term.

There was no plausible scenario in which Trump would have emerged from the midterms in a stronger position.

But the absolute thrashing Republicans took Tuesday night -- far outpacing all but the most optimistic scenarios for Democrats -- has accelerated Trump's loss of power.

**Eyes on 2028**

In an essay-length X post Wednesday, Vice President JD Vance -- a likely 2028 White House contender -- took care to avoid confrontation with his boss.

"The reason we lost is the war," Vance wrote, immediately adding: "The president himself said so last night."

That is not entirely true. Trump only partially blamed the Middle East conflict for the defeat. He also said Republicans fielded poor candidates.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis described an "extinction-level event" for Republicans and thinks they may have to wait until 2032 to regain control of Congress.

The party "needs to reclaim our Reagan principles," Republican lawmaker Don Bacon wrote on X. "Voters rejected populism, chaos, Putin and tariffs."

Former congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, a far-right figure who now fiercely and publicly opposes the president, said, "If the GOP wants any chance in the future, it will have to kick Donald Trump out of the party."

> *For now, the criticism remains relatively muted. Few conservative figures, whether moderate or radical, have attacked Trump by name*

"Republicans need to get back to basics," Matthew Boyle, a leading figure at far-right news site Breitbart, wrote on X.

"No more endless wars... When it comes to the economy, the number one issue, pursue policies that help ordinary people not special interests," he added. "And be sane with immigration enforcement."

**Criticism, not by name**

But for now, the criticism remains relatively muted. Few conservative figures, whether moderate or radical, have attacked Trump by name.

The Republican Party has, after all, tied its fate entirely to the billionaire since 2016.

"The big question is, are some of these Republican leaders in the House and Senate going to distance themselves from Trump?" Amy Dacey, a former Democratic official who is now an expert at American University, told AFP.

The same goes for far-right influencers, whose audiences -- and incomes -- have tracked Trump's popularity.

A stunning loss dings influence, "but this is not going to, in any way, eradicate some people who are affiliated with some of the MAGA movement," Dacey added.

Some of MAGA's digital foot soldiers have tried to redirect the reckoning.

"Great work, neocons," Jack Posobiec wrote sarcastically on X, referring to a Republican faction known for interventionist foreign policy and a hawkish stance against Iran.

But it may only be a matter of time before the break becomes definitive.

Former congressman Bob Good said on the same platform: "Gotta start by acknowledging that Trump was and is the problem. Quietly whispering it won't do it." **AFP**

EDITORIAL

# December deadline for Sara Duterte impeachment trial

THE House prosecution panel wants the impeachment trial to be concluded before Christmas 2026.

But the debate over Vice President Sara Duterte's impeachment trial is not really about whether it should end before Christmas 2026. The more important question is whether the Senate can deliver a decision that is both timely and fair.

There are strong reasons to finish the trial before the holiday break.

The proceedings have dominated public attention since July, and prolonged uncertainty over the political future of the country's second-highest official does little to promote stability.

The public deserves a clear answer on whether the accusations against Duterte are supported by sufficient evidence. An impeachment trial should not drag on indefinitely and become a permanent political spectacle.

A faster resolution may also be possible because the prosecution has narrowed its case.

In October, it withdrew three of the four impeachment articles and retained only the allegation of unexplained wealth.

Prosecutors argue that focusing on a single charge should significantly shorten the proceedings.

They maintain that the remaining case is supported by financial records and forensic accounting evidence, including claims of substantial undeclared assets and income.

With fewer issues to litigate, the path to a decision appears more manageable.

The defense has also previously indicated that it may require only a limited number of trial days to present its case.

If both sides can avoid unnecessary delays and stick to a reasonable schedule, there is no obvious reason the Senate could not reach a verdict before Christmas.

Beyond timing, there is also a principle at stake.

> ***The country needs not just closure, but confidence that the outcome was reached through a process worthy of a constitutional democracy***

Impeachment is a constitutional mechanism for holding high officials accountable. If the evidence supports conviction or acquittal, the Senate should not allow political calculations or the holiday calendar to delay its responsibility.

At the same time, there are compelling reasons not to rush the process.

The strongest is Duterte's right to a full and meaningful defense.

Regardless of public pressure, the Senate must ensure that she has enough time to present evidence, call witnesses, and challenge the prosecution's claims. A rushed proceeding risks undermining the fairness and credibility of the outcome.

The remaining allegation is also highly complicated. It involves questions of wealth, financial transactions, business interests, bank records, and possible discrepancies in asset declarations.

These issues require careful examination and cannot be resolved through a superficial review of documents.

The defense must be given a real opportunity to explain the transactions and contest the prosecution's interpretation of the evidence.

The prosecution spent dozens of trial days presenting its case before dropping three impeachment articles.

It would be difficult to justify giving the defense substantially less time to respond to the remaining charge. A decision reached under unequal conditions could face questions about its legitimacy.

We know that the Senate must balance the impeachment trial with its other constitutional duties, including deliberations on the 2027 national budget.

Accelerating the trial cannot come at the expense of its broader responsibilities.

The Senate's responsibility is to deliver a verdict that is credible, evidence-based, and defensible.

If the case can be fairly resolved before Christmas, it should be. If more time is genuinely needed to ensure justice, then fairness must take precedence over speed.

The country needs not just closure, but confidence that the outcome was reached through a process worthy of a constitutional democracy.



Eagle Eyes
Tony La Viña

# An injustice to workers

IN THE final weeks of October, students and staff of Ateneo de Manila University held a series of events celebrating and saying farewell to the Megaforce security guards who had spent the last decade and a half attending to the security needs of the he community.

After 15 years, the guards' service to Ateneo end on Oct. 31 as the school transitioned to a new security agency. Their exit was marked by warm tributes commemorating their years of service to the Ateneo community.

These tributes were well-deserved, and the guards should be celebrated for all that they have done for the students, staff, and alumnI of Ateneo.

However, this transition from one security agency to another, and the resulting displacement of the security guards who the community celebrates, exposes the glaring injustice of labor contractualization and agency employment.

For a school like Ateneo de Manila University, it raises the question: is the practice of outsourcing its labor to manpower agencies such as Megaforce consistent with its vision of forming "persons-for-and-with-others who, following the teachings and example of Christ, will devote their lives to the promotion of service and justice, especially for those who are most in need of help, the poor, and the powerless," as stated in its Mission and Vision?

Defenders of manpower agencies argue that agency employees still have security of tenure even after they are dismissed from their worksite.

This is because they remain employed with their manpower agency. While legally true, the reality is much grimmer.

Agency workers who are pulled from their jobsite have no immediate guarantees of redeployment.

Under the Labor Code, employers may be kept on a "floating status" for up to six months, a period in which they will not be entitled to any salary or benefits from their ostensible employer.

For agency workers who are often only earning minimum or near-minimum salaries, and thus have no opportunity to earn substantial savings, six months without pay is tantamount to starvation for them and their families.

> *Are warm send-offs and offers of absorption to a new security agency a sufficient substitute for genuine security of tenure?*

Then, there is the psychological impact of spending years, if not decades, working in a particular place, serving a particular group of people, with the same colleagues, only to be told that you can no longer go to your place of work because your service contract has expired.

There is no certainty where your new deployment will be or what the new environment will be like. For agency workers, these are massive, life-changing transitions that should not be dismissed as simply being part and parcel of being employed by a manpower agency.

In the case of the Megaforce security guards, it has been reported that they have the option of resigning from their work and applying to be absorbed by Ateneo's new security agency. But what of their length of tenure?

In effect, their years of service will be reset to zero, which has implications on benefits such as retirement pay and separation pay.

The issue of labor contractualization, and particularly agency employment, is one that goes beyond Ateneo de Manila University.

In recent years, we have seen labor strikes by agency employees who have asserted their regular status, in companies such as NutriAsia, Zagu, and Robinsons Handyman.

In the 2016 Presidential elections, one of Rodrigo Duterte's major campaign promises was to "end contractualization," a promise that resonated with thousands of Filipino workers. Duterte would later go on to abandon this promise when elected, vetoing a proposed Security of Tenure Law that would have tightened restrictions on manpower agencies.

Labor groups and trade unions continue to advocate for the rights of agency workers. Organizations such as labor center Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino call for the passage of a law that would totally prohibit manpower agencies.

However, up to now, even modest reforms aimed at protecting the rights of contractual workers remain stuck in Congress.

But the Ateneo de Manila University community is not Congress. If it takes its own mission and vision of forming persons-for-and-with-others seriously, it must ask itself: is what is happening to the security guards of Ateneo just?

Are warm send-offs and offers of absorption to a new security agency a sufficient substitute for genuine security of tenure?

Is it enough to be merely compliant with our nation's weak labor laws, instead of going above and beyond to ensure that those who keep us safe are actually being treated as they deserve?

I submit that the answer to all of these questions is no.

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# France braces for demos as unions strike

PARIS – Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to take to the streets across France on Thursday, as unions hold strikes alongside student-led demonstrations that have gripped the country for weeks.

The high school student movement that began with youth protesting dismal learning conditions has coincided with widespread anger over the rising cost of living and inequality, which culminated on Oct. 17 in the worst rioting France has seen in years.

On Thursday, authorities estimate some 500,000 to 700,000 people will protest across the country, while as many as 80,000 people are expected to march in the capital Paris.

"It's going to be a strong mobilisation," said Marylise Leon of the CFDT union, anticipating a turnout comparable to France's pension reform protests in 2023 that saw over one million people march.

Public and private education unions have called for strike action, as well as unions representing rail workers, public hospitals and postal services.

In demands addressed to both the government and employers, the unions are calling for an increase in the minimum wage, which has not received any discretionary boost since 2012, across-the-board wage raises, tax reforms and better learning conditions for young people.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez announced Wednesday that 70,000 police officers and security forces would be deployed across the country, promising "an extremely firm response" to any "acts of violence" or disorder.

Although student-led protests were largely peaceful, some saw clashes with police erupt with tear gas and water cannon fired to disperse crowds.

An attempted murder investigation has been launched after petrol bombs were thrown at security forces in Paris on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the police response has been criticised as heavy-handed and internal police investigations have been launched over allegations of brutality against demonstrators.

Several teenage protesters have been seriously wounded and thousands arrested.

Authorities have admitted to security and intelligence failures that paved the way for the clashes, large-scale looting and vandalism of public property that erupted on Oct. 17.

On Wednesday, the Paris prefecture banned a major protest route planned between Place de la Bastille and Place de la Concorde, which would have crossed the center of the city.

Police instead replaced it with an authorized route moving eastward away from the centre.

Several unions have denounced route bans as a move to repress freedom of demonstration, and some have filed last-minute appeals to have the routes reinstated. **AFP**



**LOCKED AND LOADED. An Iranian woman holds a portrait of Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei during an anti-US rally in Tehran's Enqelab Square the other day. Tehran taunted the US president over his midterms defeat on Wednesday as the US leader admitted the war against Iran was the key factor in his stinging electoral rebuke. Eight months after US-Israeli strikes started the war, voters angered by rising diesel and consumer prices turned on Trump's Republicans, who lost control of both chambers of Congress. AFP**

# Wong, HK's pro-democracy poster boy, gets 10 more years in prison

HONG KONG – Joshua Wong was one of the poster boys of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, long a thorn in Beijing's side as it seeks to stamp its authority on the territory.

On Thursday, Wong -- already serving time for a previous conviction -- was sentenced to 10 more years for "foreign collusion," meaning the 30-year-old isn't expected to be released until late 2036.

Wong was the subject of a Netflix documentary and his picture was splashed on magazine covers the world over -- until he disappeared from the public eye and into prison.

Born to middle-class Christian parents in 1996, a year before Hong Kong was handed over from Britain to China, Wong was politically aware from a young age.

He got an early taste of activism at 13, protesting against plans for a high-speed rail link to mainland China.

In 2012, Wong campaigned successfully for Hong Kong to drop a pro-China national education curriculum, after rallying 120,000 people to blockade the government's headquarters.

He embraced and promoted the ethos of non-violent civil disobedience, helping to organize strikes, boycotts and street demonstrations.

Wong became a household name during Hong Kong's 2014 protests, known as the Umbrella Movement, after he gave speeches alongside fellow student leaders Nathan Law and Alex Chow.

But the 2014 movement failed to win any concessions from China's communist leadership or Hong Kong's pro-Beijing leaders.

Wong's activism has come at a cost, as authorities prosecuted him and other Umbrella Movement leaders.

Wong went on to found a political party, Demosisto, in 2016, to campaign for self-determination, meaning that the city's residents and not Beijing should get to decide Hong Kong's fate.

Unlike more radical activists, Wong did not call for the city's independence -- a red line for Beijing.

He was also involved in the huge and sometimes violent democracy rallies in 2019, which prompted Beijing to impose the national security law on Hong Kong the following year.

Thin with gaunt features and a studious frown, Wong took his fight beyond Hong Kong, meeting with politicians in Taiwan, Germany and the United States. **AFP**

# N. Korea tests new air-defense missile system — state media

SEOUL – North Korea test-fired a newly designed air-defense missile system and held a strategic cruise-missile strike drill, state media reported Thursday, in the latest showcase of its weapons abilities.

Wednesday's test came during a flurry of weapons demonstrations in recent weeks that include cluster munitions, attack drones, a precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile.

South Korea's military said Wednesday it detected several missiles launched from the North Korea's Sondok area into the Sea of Japan.

Pyongyang has also hardened its stance towards Seoul and Washington, with a landmine dispute plummeting inter-Korean relations and Kim Jong Un's powerful sister this week signaling little appetite for renewed talks with the United States.

The newly designed system was test-fired to confirm its technical specifcations, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Thursday.

"The test-fire proved the technical specifications and reliability of the new material and intelligent multiple guided mode of the projectile," KCNA said, without elaborating on the new material.

It also demonstrated the missile system's ability to identify and track targets, as well as the reliability of its detection data processing device, it added.

KCNA also said a firepower sub-unit of a long-range strategic cruise-missile unit in eastern North Korea also staged a strike drill on Wednesday.

The unit "perfectly performed its mission to strike a virtual airport target with a long-range strategic cruise missile", state media said.

The two exercises were aimed and maintaining weapons systems "on a technically high level and improve the combat reliability of the strategic weapon", KCNA added.

Unlike ballistic missile launches, North Korean cruise missile tests are not prohibited by UN Security Council sanctions.

North Korea has a history of launching missiles around US elections, widely seen as a show of force, including during the midterms four years ago and the presidential election two years ago. **AFP**

amazon

Career Opportunity in Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)

Position title: Risk Specialist I

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- To disrupt bad actor behaviors and generate insights to help us understand where bad actors are prioritizing their efforts.
- Have experience in fraud investigations, identity verification, and authenticating fraudulent documents and invoices.
- This role will involve interviewing sellers through video calls.
- The working hours will align with business hours in China.
- Develops, teaches, and mentors other investigators to deliver accurate, comprehensive investigations with detailed, thoughtful annotations.

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

- Proficient in Mandarin (reading, listening, speaking, and writing in simplified and/or traditional Chinese languages) and English, with an ability to compose grammatically correct, concise, and accurate written responses
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to comfortably engage with internal and external customers
- Ability to think beyond the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and recommend the right outcome. - Leverages team knowledge across several specialty areas to help resolve recurring seller issues .
- Demonstrate the ability to self-manage on priority tasks and objectives

Applications may be sent to:
Name of Company HR: Ivanka Patricia Quinial
Email address: https://www.amazon.jobs/en/search

| Company/ Employer | Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position |
|---|---|
| Company Name: Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)<br>Complete address: 9th to 14th Floor, Four E-Com Center, Blk. No. 22, Harbor Drive, Mall of Asia Complex St., District 1, Barangay 076, Pasay City, Metro Manila, 1300<br>Nature of business: AOSPI is a corporation organized under Philippine laws. It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) under SEC Certificate of Registration No. CS201722700. It is authorized to provide support services, including but not limited to remote technical support services, IT development, customer support, customer care services, business process outsourcing, back-office support (including but not limited to systems, hardware, software, financial operations, vendor management, and human resources relating to the back-office), and other activities necessary or useful thereto, as well as marketing support activities, without engaging in retail trade, the practice of a profession, or acting as an Internet Service Provider. | Name: Ngalim Jerry<br>Address: Pasay City<br>Nationality: Cameroonian<br>Intended period of employment: two (2) years. |

Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI), 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 (DOLE) Central Office, DOLE Building, Muralla Wing corner, General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines

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) Central Office, DOLE Building, Muralla Wing corner, General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform Department of Labor and Employment – NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.

amazon

Career Opportunity in Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)

Position title: Investigation Specialist I

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- Provides prompt and efficient service to Amazon Sellers, including the appropriate escalation of Sellers' issues in a contact center environment.
- Maintains a positive and professional demeanor, always portraying the company in a positive light while effectively managing sensitive issues.
- Demonstrates excellent time-management skills and the ability to work independently while using departmental resources, policies, and procedures.
- Maintains acceptable performance metrics such as quality, productivity, first contact resolution, and attendance .
- Actively seeks solutions through logical reasoning and data interpretation skills, and identifies trends to the appropriate channel, including improvement suggestions

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

- Interpersonal skills, with the ability to communicate complex transactional issues correctly and clearly to both internal and external customers.
- Clear, crisp, and proactive documentation of operational procedures required to tackle known risk-related patterns.
- Problem-solving skills, having demonstrated ability to recognize non-obvious patterns and analyze problems logically.
- Self-disciplined, diligent, proactive, and detail-oriented, impacting time management and organizational skills.
- Proven ability to work in fast-paced, dynamic environments where decisions are made without compromising on customer experience and financial losses.

Applications may be sent to:
Name of Company HR: Ivanka Patricia Quinial
Email address: https://www.amazon.jobs/en/search

| Company/ Employer | Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position |
|---|---|
| Company Name: Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)<br>Complete address: Unit No. 2C, Flr. no. 4th, One E-Com Bldg., Ocean Drive, Mall of Asia Complex St., Zone 10, Barangay 076, District 1, Pasay City, Metro Manila, NCR, 1300<br>Nature of business: AOSPI is a corporation organized under Philippine laws. It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) under SEC Certificate of Registration No. CS201722700. It is authorized to provide support services, including but not limited to remote technical support services, IT development, customer support, customer care services, business process outsourcing, back-office support (including but not limited to systems, hardware, software, financial operations, vendor management, and human resources relating to the back-office), and other activities necessary or useful thereto, as well as marketing support activities, without engaging in retail trade, the practice of a profession, or acting as an Internet Service Provider. | Name: Xiuliang Li<br>Address: Quezon City<br>Nationality: Chinese<br>Intended period of employment: two (2) years |

Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI), 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 (DOLE) Central Office, DOLE Building, Muralla Wing corner, General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines

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 at the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Central Office, DOLE Building, Muralla Wing corner, General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform the Department of Labor and Employment – NCR if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national

amazon

Career Opportunity in Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)

Position title: HR Specialist I

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- Acting as regional subject matter expert for reduction in force/role elimination across 25+ countries within the EMEA region.
- Owning regulatory termination compliance for Romania, including the reporting obligations to Romanian authorities via the online employment registry (REBES).
- Running country-specific audits and ensuring the country-specific regulatory nuances are met.
- Coordinating with external outplacement vendors and leading process and documentation optimization across the EMEA region.
- Calculating country-specific severance and settlement amounts and preparing termination, settlement and mutual-separation documentation in line with each country's legal requirements.

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

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Law, Business Administration, or a related field; or 3+ years of relevant HR operations experience.
- Experience in HR operations or employee exits/offboarding, including working with HR processes, case/ticketing systems, and trackers.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, Outlook) and comfort working with HR systems and document-generation tools.

Applications may be sent to:
Name of Company HR: Ivanka Patricia Quinial
Email address: https://www.amazon.jobs/en/search

| Company/ Employer | Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position |
|---|---|
| Company Name: Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)<br>Complete address: Unit No. 2C, Flr. no. 4th, One E-Com Bldg., Ocean Drive, Mall of Asia Complex St., Zone 10, Barangay 076, District 1, Pasay City, Metro Manila, NCR, 1300<br>Nature of business: AOSPI is a corporation organized under Philippine laws. It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) under SEC Certificate of Registration No. CS201722700. It is authorized to provide support services, including but not limited to remote technical support services, IT development, customer support, customer care services, business process outsourcing, back-office support (including but not limited to systems, hardware, software, financial operations, vendor management, and human resources relating to the back-office), and other activities necessary or useful thereto, as well as marketing support activities, without engaging in retail trade, the practice of a profession, or acting as an Internet Service Provider. | Name: Mihai-Andrei Raileanu<br>Address: Pasig City Nationality:<br>Nationality: Rumanian<br>Intended period of employment: two (2) years |

Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc. (AOSPI), 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 (DOLE) Central Office, DOLE Building, Muralla Wing corner, General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines.

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 at the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Central Office, DOLE Building, Muralla Wing corner, General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform the Department of Labor and Employment – NCR if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.

Career Opportunities in COLAS RAIL PHILIPPINES, INC.

Deputy T&C Manager

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Assists the Testing and Commissioning Manager in overseeing, coordinating, and supervising testing and commissioning activities to ensure compliance with project specifications, quality standards, safety regulations, and project timelines. Facilitates coordination among project teams, monitors progress, resolves technical issues, and ensures the timely completion and handover of commissioned systems.

QUALIFICATION:

- Bachelor degree in engineering, construction management, transportation or a related field.
- 3–5 years of experience in railway operations, construction, training development, or a related role.
- Strong knowledge of project coordination, documentation, and compliance procedures

Application may be sent to
colasrail.philippines@colasrail.com

| Company/ Employer | Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position |
|---|---|
| Company Name: Colas Rail Philippines, Inc.<br>Complete Address: Level 6 Ayala Triangle Gardens Tower 2, Paseo De Roxas cor. Makati Avenue Bel-Air 1209 City of Makati NCR, Fourth District Philippines<br>Nature Of Business: Construction of roads, highways, bridges and railways. | Name: Muthusamy Muthu Krishnan<br>Address: Quezon City<br>Nationality: Indian<br>Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) years |

COLAS RAIL PHILIPPINES, INC. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment – Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Building, Muralla Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines.

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 fi le an objection at Department of Labor and Employment – Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Building, Muralla Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform the Department of Labor and Employment – NCR, if you have any information on criminal off enses committed by the foreign national.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **SANSURE BIOTECH (PHILIPPINES) INC. with Sec Number: 2022040050879-54,** a corporation duly organized and existing under and in accordance with laws of the Republic of the Philippines with formally close and terminate its operation effective **March 20, 2027.**

All persons having claims against Corporation are requested to present the same at its principal office located at **UNIT 1205 THE FINANCE CENTRE 26TH STREET CORNER 9TH AVENUE BRGY. FORT BONIFACIO, BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY, TAGUIG CTY FOURTH DISTRICT NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION (NCR) 1634,** for immediate settlement.

This announcement serves as notice to all concerned and of the legal dissolution of a foresaid corporation. This notice has been published in compliance with SEC MC NO. 05 Series of 2022

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **GOLDEN AXIS SOLUTIONS CORPORATION. with Sec Number: 2026010233223-01,** a corporation duly organized and existing under and in accordance with laws of the Republic of the Philippines with formally close and terminate its operation effective March 20, 2027.

All persons having claims against Corporation are requested to present the same at its principal office located at **UNIT 1403 MEDICAL PLAZA MAKATI AMORSOLO ST. LEGASPI VILLAGE SAN LORENZO , CITY OF MAKATI, FOURTH DISTRICT, NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION (NCR), 1223,** for immediate settlement.

This announcement serves as notice to all concerned and of the legal dissolution of a foresaid corporation. This notice has been published in compliance with SEC MC NO. 05 Series of 2022

NOTICE OF SELF -ADJUDICATION OF BANK ACCOUNTS AND DEPOSITS

Notice is hereby given that JESICA FRANCISCO DE JONG as the designated beneficiary under Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), East West Banking Corporation(Eastwest) and DBS Bank in Hongkong covering the life of WOUTER DE JONG who died on 24 January 2026 has executed an affidavit of Self adjudication of Bank accounts and deposits.

The affidavit was subscribed and sworn to before Notary Public ATTY. JOSEPH NICO P. RAMARAMA in Mandaluyong City on October 28, 2026 and entered as Doc. No 204; Page No. 41; Book No. 17; Series or 2026.
This notice is published in compliance with the depositors documentary requirements.

(MS-OCT. 30/NOV. 6/13, 2026)

Career Opportunities in CBD PROPERTY CONSULTANCY CORP.

Position Title : GENERAL MANAGER - CORPORATE OPERATIONS (1 Vacancy)

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Oversee the overall daily operations of the company, including administration, personnel supervision, business development, and coordination of property sales, leasing and marketing.
- Apply professional hotel and hospitality management practices to strengthen corporate operations, client service standards, staff performance, and property or serviced-accommodation management coordination.
- Develop and implement business strategies, manage international client relationships, and coordinate with duly licensed Philippine real estate professionals on regulated brokerage activities.

QUALIFICATION:

- College Diploma in Hotel Management / Hospitality Management, or a related college-level qualification.
- At least five (5) years of relevant management experience; extensive overseas hotel or hospitality management experience is highly preferred.
- Proficient in English and Chinese (Mandarin), with strong managerial, operational and cross-cultural communication skills.
- Willing to be assigned in Taguig City, Metro Manila.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SENT TO: MS. NOLGINA D. TEMPLANZA
EMAIL ADDRESS: cbdpropertycorp1020@gmail.com

| Company/ Employer | Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position |
|---|---|
| CBD PROPERTY CONSULTANCY CORP.<br>U-3009 High Street South Corporate Plaza Tower 1, 26th St. Cor. 9th Ave. BGC Taguig City<br>Nature Of Business: Real Estate Activities / Property Consultancy | Name: LIU, SHILIN<br>Address: Unit 515, Burgundy McKinleyPlace 1, Pacific Ave., Asia World City,Parañaque City.<br>Nationality: CHINESE<br>Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) years |

CBD PROPERTY CONSULTANCY CORP., hereby declares that the above-named of 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-NCR OFFICE, located at 6TH Floor, Banco Filipino Condominium, Solana St. Intramuros Manila.

Career Opportunity in Hitachi Asia Ltd.

Position title: Project Manager

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- Monitor the progress of the project and ensure the project is on schedule and with the budget
- Serves as the point of contact for Hitachi's parent company in Japan to local engineers in the Philippines
- Meet the team members to identify and resolve issue
- Manage customer satisfaction

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

- Manage customer satisfaction
- Meet with the team members to identify and resolve issue

Applications may be sent to:
Name of Company HR: Marichris Lim
Email address: marichris.lim.vn@hitachi.com

| Company/ Employer | Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position |
|---|---|
| Company Name:<br>Hitachi Asia Ltd.<br>Complete address:<br>Unit 8, 11/F Zuellig Bldg., Corner Makati Avenue & Paseo De Roxas Makati City<br>Nature of business: a corporation organized under the laws of Singapore. It is licensed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) under SEC License No. AFO93-00026 dated 12 August 1996 to engage in the business of importation, exportation and whole sale distribution of products and equipment for power generation, electric power transmission, substation, industrial plant, oil and gas, transportation, and other similar projects, products and equipment for electrical, electronics, electromechanical industries, automotive and high functional materials, digital media and consumer goods, components and devices, construction machinery and information technology solutions. | Name: Hirofumi Tanikawa<br>Address: Makati City<br>Nationality: Japanese<br>Intended period of employment: three (3) year/s |

Hitachi Asia Ltd. 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 located at DOLE Building, Muralla Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines.

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 located at DOLE Building, Muralla Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines. after this publication. Please inform Department of Labor and Employment - NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national

# Antique hosts final leg of PSC Indigenous People's Games

ALL is set for this year's final regional leg of the Philippine Sports Commission-Indigenous Peoples (PSC-IP) Games on November 7 and 8.

Hosted by the provincial government of Antique, headed by Governor Paolo Everardo S. Javier, the two-day event will feature traditional games, with municipalities joining the Visayas leg competition.

All the games will be held at the Binirayan Sports Complex in San Jose, Antique.

PSC Commissioner Matthew "Fritz" Gaston lauded the Antique LGU for partnering with the PSC on the event that is also supported by Rep. Antonio "AA" Legarda, a known sports patron.

Cebuana Lhuillier and Pocari Sweat are also supporting this event held in cooperation with the National Commission on Indigenous People.

The games were last hosted by Camarines Sur, featuribg various traditional sporting events such as Pana, Tubigan, Bunong Braso, Burutungan nin Lubid, Santaren, Kadang-Kadang sa Bagol/Bao, Guruyudan sa Palapa and Tatsian sa Pili.

# FEU, La Salle try to capitalize on semifinal bonus

**Matches Friday**
(Rizal Memorial Stadium)
4:30 p.m. – FEU vs Ateneo (women's)
7 p.m. – DLSU vs UP (women's)

FAR Eastern University and De La Salle University have earned the advantage heading into the UAAP Season 89 Collegiate Women's Football Final Four, but the defending champions and perennial contenders know they must make the most of their positions if they hope to move one step closer to another championship showdown.

Armed with the top two seeds, FEU and La Salle look to capitalize on their twice-to-beat bonus when they face Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines, respectively, today (Friday) at Rizal Memorial Stadium.

FEU and La Salle, who have contested the last five finals, take on their respective rivals at 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. The Blue Eagles and Fighting Maroons, meanwhile, are out to force rubber matches and prevent a sixth consecutive championship showdown between the Lady Tamaraws and Lady Booters.

Top-seeded FEU (27 points) aims to take another step toward securing a fifth consecutive title as the Final Four begins.

Bannered by league-leading scorer Judie Arevalo (eight goals), alongside Jelani Pabuaya and Julia Sacmar (four goals each), the Lady Tamaraws are eyeing a season sweep of the Blue Eagles, having previously defeated Ateneo, 3-2, on October 3 and 4-1 on October 24.

While the odds are stacked in their favor, the defending champions know they cannot afford to be complacent, as semifinal action presents an entirely different challenge from the elimination round.

"So again, if we're going to play against Ateneo, we have to prepare well," said FEU coach Let Dimzon. "We have to look sa weakness and lapses ng Ateneo. We need to improve 'yung selection passes, and mostly, nagiging problem is the individual marking in the defending side — mostly doon talaga kami mag-fo-focus."




Shown here are (from left) WSL president Andrew Stark, presidential son Vinny Marcos and PSC chairman Patrick Gregorio.

# World Surf League, PSC join hands to develop PH surfers

SIARGAO—The World Surf League (WSL) wants to make sure Filipino surfers get more than just the opportunity to compete against the world's best, with its partnership with the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) expected to help push the sport's development in the country.

WSL president Andrew Stark said bringing the Championship Tour to Cloud 9 was also an opportunity to expose young Filipino surfers to the international competition and give local talents a closer look at what it takes to compete at the highest level.

The league worked with the PSC, headed by chairman Patrick "Pato" Gregorio, to bring the Philippines Pro to Siargao, bringing the Championship Tour to Philippine shores for the first time.

Stark welcomed the support extended by the government sports agency and said the league was pleased with the reception it received from the local community.

"It's incredible. It's a beautiful place and, you know, we feel very welcome here. We've got a fantastic partnership with the Philippine Sports Commission," Stark said.

The WSL also brought local youngsters into the event through its Rising Tides program, where children had the chance to surf with professional athletes, meet the competitors and learn from experienced surfers.

It also worked with the Siargao Island Surfing Association on the board caddy program, giving junior surfers a chance to assist competitors with their boards and experience the competition up close.

"We really want to make sure we're giving back to the kids," Stark said.

Stark was also impressed with the showing of Filipino wildcards John Mark "Marama" Tokong, Jayuard Alciso, Noah Arkfeld and Mara Lopez who faced an international field packed with world champions and established Championship Tour campaigners.

He particularly praised Tokong, whose familiarity with Cloud 9 and ability in the water made him a tough competitor even for the visiting stars.

"Marama particularly, he is incredible out here. I mean, all the world tour surfers, the world champions, they were scared of him. Like, wow, this guy is unbelievable. He's very talented," Stark said.

While both Filipino bets eventually saw their campaigns end, Stark said their participation gave them valuable exposure.

Their appearances in the Championship Tour were carried to an international audience through the WSL's broadcasts and digital platforms.

"For those Filipino wildcards, it's life-changing for them. They've now been broadcast to the world and their social media followings will go through the roof and they're all over the mainstream media globally," Stark said.

Stark believes the exposure could help Tokong, Alciso, Arkfeld and Lopez attract more attention, while also inspiring other Filipino surfers to work toward competing internationally.

The Philippines Pro has also provided a boost to Siargao's tourism campaign.

Athletes competing in the event have been sharing their experiences on the island through social media, giving their followers a glimpse of Cloud 9, its resorts, restaurants and other local attractions.

# SportsPlus Foundation champions inclusive sports

EVERY athlete deserves the opportunity to train, compete, and pursue their dreams. But for athletes with disabilities, access to appropriate sports equipment and training resources can make a meaningful difference in their journey.

Recognizing the importance of inclusive sports, SportsPlus Foundation, the social development arm of SportsPlus PH, has partnered with Special Olympics Pilipinas to help address the equipment needs of athletes with disabilities.

Special Olympics Pilipinas is part of the global Special Olympics movement, which uses the power of sports to promote inclusion and create opportunities for people with disabilities to develop their skills, build confidence, and experience the benefits of participation in sports.

Through this partnership, SportsPlus Foundation provided equipment for various sports such as basketball, football, and badminton, among others, that meets athletes' actual training and competition requirements on October 22 in Sta. Elena, Marikina.




SportsPlus Foundation, led by SportsPlus Head of Brand Marketing Paul Macalindong, extends a hand to Special Olympics Pilipinas.

By coordinating closely with Special Olympics Pilipinas, the initiative ensures the support is appropriate, relevant, and aligned with the intended beneficiaries' needs.

For SportsPlus Foundation, supporting athletes with disabilities is part of a broader commitment to building communities where opportunities are more accessible, and every individual can participate and thrive.

"It is our privilege to turn over this equipment to Special Olympics Pilipinas as part of SportsPlus Foundation's efforts to promote inclusive sports and expand opportunities for Filipino athletes of all abilities," said SportsPlus Head of Brand Marketing Paul Macalindong.

# The first moves



The Designated Kit Man
Erel Cabatbat

SAW a recent posting by Domingo Subo, the current general secretary of Iloilo Guimaras Regional Football Association (IGRFA), on the newly elected officials of the Iloilo Guimaras Regional Football Association.

While it may appear that it is just a normal election, one name on the list, however, stands out: Jefferson Cheng.

Ninong Jeff, as The Designated Kit Man fondly calls the former team manager of the Philippine Women's National Football Team and a literal godfather of Philippine football, was elected as a member of the executive committee of the IGRFA representing Barotac Nuevo. Former PFF president Nonong Araneta remains the IGRFA chief.

This is the kind of news that most local football fans badly need to hear. For one, it gives so much hope not only for Barotac Nuevo, which has been a traditional football hotbed in the country for several decades, but also for the entire football community in the country.

Second, the possibility for either Sir Nonong and Ninong Jeff to run for the PFF presidency remains an option. Which means that the IGRFA has two potential bets for the PFF elections next year.

Third, Ninong Jeff himself. No further explanation needed here unless you're living under a rock for the last decade. He has the passion, the vision and the resources to make our national teams, all national teams including the youth squads, relevant. More importantly, our national teams need not worry about plane tickets and accommodation while competing in international tournaments.

Based on the PFF Statutes as shared by a good friend, the following are the mandatory qualifications for someone who is interested in running for president of the federation:

1. Must be a Filipino citizen.

2. The candidate must have been active in association football as a player or official within the PFF or one of its member organizations for at least one year during the five years immediately preceding the election.

3. The candidate must have resided within the territory of the Philippines for at least one year immediately preceding the election.

4. The candidate must not previously have been found guilty of a criminal offence involving moral turpitude. Please remember this provision; it will come in handy in succeeding columns.

Judging from these requirements, Ninong Jeff ticks all boxes.

In another feel-good development, former Philippine Men's National Football Team Manager and PFF official Freddy Gonzalez has secured another unanimous affirmation of his bid to own Finn Harps Football Club.

In a short message to The Designated Kit Man, Freddy relayed the good news.

"Yes, it is done. The second vote went through at 99% (in favor)," he shared.

Local media in Donegal have also confirmed the latest news on Gonzalez's bid to become the sole owner of the team that is competing in the First Division of the League of Ireland.

"We are full steam ahead. Long-form legal documents are being prepared and after they are signed by December 1, the end of the season, it will be official in the eyes of the Union of European Football Associations and the Football Association of Ireland," Gonzalez said.

The work, however, doesn't end there. Gonzalez made it clear that it is just the start.

"My team here has been preparing since July. So in the next couple of weeks, we will be announcing re-signings, new staff, a new kit sponsor and new sponsors. New players will also be announced from December 1 onwards. Our preseason testing starts December 20 and our preseason officially starts on December 27," Gonzalez added.

Congratulations are indeed due to Freddy's way and as early as now, here's hoping that some Filipino players would be given the opportunity to try out for Harps soon.

Speaking of opportunity, defending champions San Beda Red Lions have the chance to enter the quarterfinals of the men's basketball tournament of Season 102 of the NCAA hassle-free.

They only need to win their two remaining games in the elimination round. Which is easier said than done, considering that they need to beat Lyceum University and College of St. Benilde.

There are many scenarios for the Red Lions just in case they win the game against the Pirates and lose their last game against the Blazers. Losing both matches means a harder route to the finals or even an outright elimination in the ultra-tight and highly competitive Group A.

The Red Lions must win their last two games. Period.

First thing first, though, and a must: beat the Pirates and the Blazers next.

Stay safe. Stay happy peeps!

*For comments or questions, you can reach The Designated Kit Man at erel_cabatbat@yahoo.com or follow his account on X (formerly Twitter): @erelcabatbat*

# WIM San Diego stuns WGM from Mongolia

FILIPINA Marie Antoinette San Diego got all the luck in her mammoth 68-move win over Mongolian Woman Grandmaster Altan-Ulzii Enkhtuul to stay at joint second after four rounds in the women's section of the 7th ASEAN+ Individual Chess Championships at the Amorap in Misamis Occidental Thursday.

Losing on time, position and material, San Diego unleashed all her bags of tactical tricks in forcing her higher-rated foe to lose her composure and a rook to steal the win in their razor-sharp Catalan showdown.

"Na-blunder niya rook niya sa dulo," said the 27-year-old Woman International Master from Dasmariñas, referring to the former Mongolian national champion.

The result pushed San Diego tied for No. 2 with Indian Woman FIDE Master Shree Reddy Keerti with 3.5 points apiece and half a point behind solo leader in another Indian, WIM Bordoloi Pratitee.

Keerti turned back Filipina WIM Kylen Joy Mordido in 39 moves of a Sicilian while Pratitee bounced Vietnamese GM Nguyen Thi Mai Hung in 41 moves of a French Defense in this weeklong event bankrolled by host Gov. Henry Oaminal, Sr. and backed by the PSC and WR Chess.

Enkhtuul was the second WGM caught by San Diego after she pulled the rug from under WGM Janelle Mae Frayna in the opening round last Tuesday.

Also knocking on the leader's door were Filipinas WIM Ruelle Canino and Woman FIDE Master Shania Mae Mendoza, who have three points each.

Canino made short work of Singaporean WFM Fang Kun in 20 moves of a Slav while Mendoza survived the 18-year-old Ericka Ordizo's upset try with a 63-move triumph of a Queen's Gambit game.

FM Alekhine Nouri continued to be the best-performing Filipino in the Open section thus far after agreeing to a quick, 14-move split with Thai IM Prin Laohawirapap in their Four Knights encounter.

Also in prime position for a podium finish were GM Darwin Laylo and IMs Pau Bersamina and Michael Concio, Jr., who each have two points.




Converge's Juan Gomez de Liaño blocks the layup attempt of Rain or Shine's Felix Pangilinan-Lemetti during Game 3 of their PBA Season 50 Governors' Cup quarterfinal series. PBA Images

# FiberXers seek 1st-ever semis seat since joining PBA in 2022

**By Jeremiah Sevilla**

CONVERGE takes a shot at a historic breakthrough against Rain or Shine even as Barangay Ginebra also aims to close out San Miguel in Game 4 of their PBA Season 50 Governors' Cup quarterfinal series on Friday at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

The FiberXers, who squandered a huge lead in a heartbreaking 120-124 defeat in the series opener, bounced back with back-to-back victories to seize a 2-1 lead in their best-of-five showdown with the Elasto Painters.

With momentum firmly on its side, Converge seeks to clinch its first-ever semifinal berth since joining the PBA in 2022 when it tackles ROS at 7:30 p.m., following the 5:15 p.m. clash between Ginebra and San Miguel.

The FiberXers have reached the playoffs six times but have yet to break through to the final four after falling short against San Miguel, Rain or Shine, and Ginebra in their previous quarterfinal appearances.

This time, coach Delta Pineda's charges are determined to rewrite franchise history after following a 130-125 escape in Game 2 with a convincing 105-89 victory in Game 3.

Pineda, however, cautioned his players against complacency, expecting a stronger fightback from fellow Kapampangan mentor Yeng Guiao and his Elasto Painters.

"We still need to prepare, hindi pa tapos ang laban. Expect more from Rain or Shine in the next game po," Pineda said.

Converge has the firepower to finish the job, with rookie standout Juan Gomez de Liaño, import Cameron Clark, Justine Baltazar, Justin Arana, and Alec Stockton leading the charge while veteran Calvin Abueva provides spark off the bench.

But ROS won't go down without a fight as Adrian Nocum, Aaron Fuller, Caelan Tiongson, and the rest of Guiao's hard-fighting crew look to force a deciding Game 5.

The FiberXers have two chances to secure the breakthrough, but a win on Friday would spare them another do-or-die encounter and set up a semifinal showdown with the NLEX Road Warriors.

Meanwhile, Ginebra targets to lock in a semifinal duel with TNT as it tries to finish off a resurgent San Miguel side that put their series at 1-2 with a 101-98 win in Game 3.

The Gin Kings rallied from a 15-point deficit but came up short, leaving coach Tim Cone hoping that his squad can deliver a more consistent performance to finally eliminate the Beermen.



Olcen Racela **Dennis Abrina**

# Altas try to arrest skid against Stags

**By Dennis Abrina**

THE Perpetual Help Altas look to get back on track when they take on the winless San Sebastian College Golden Stags on Friday as the NCAA Season 102 men's basketball elimination round enters its final stretch at the FilOil Playtime Centre in San Juan City.

Game time is set at 3 p.m., with head coach Olsen Racela hoping to steer the Altas back to winning form following a heartbreaking 89-92 overtime defeat to the Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals on October 30.

Carrying a 3-8 win-loss record, Perpetual currently occupies fourth place in Group B and needs a strong finish to improve its position heading into the quarterfinals. The Las Piñas-based squad is also looking to snap its losing streak after absorbing an 84-77 setback against the Letran Knights.

The Altas will be seeking a repeat of their September 21 triumph over San Sebastian, when they posted an 86-74 victory.

Racela will bank on the efforts of JM Tulabut, LA Casinillo, Mark Gojo Cruz, Angelo Gelsano, Jim Corpuz, Aries Borja, Jericho Cristino, Shawn Orgo, Kenji Duremdes, Rey Allen Maglupay, Jan Roluna and Kurt Velasquez to deliver the much-needed victory.

# 7Eleven Cliqq is top PH continental team in Asia

**By Randy M. Caluag**

7ELEVEN Cliqq Road Bike Philippines finished as the highest-ranked Philippine Continental team in the 2026 UCI Asia Tour standings, placing 22nd among 44 Continental squads after a season highlighted by national championship victories and strong international performances.

Under sports director Ric Rodriguez, the Road Bikers collected 233 UCI points during the ranking period from January 20 to October 18, ahead of fellow Philippine teams Victoria Sports Pro Cycling and Go For Gold.

Victoria Sports placed 26th with 218 points, while Go For Gold ended its final season in 37th with 40.

Mauritian Daniel Yon Hin led 7Eleven's point producers with 90 from his podium finishes at the Mauritius national championships.

Ronnilan Quita followed with 53 points, earning 50 from his national championship victory and three from the Tour of Thailand.

French rider Antoine Huby contributed 46 points, highlighted by his runner-up finish overall and Stage 3 victory at the Tour of Mauritius, along with a 23rd-place overall finish at Le Tour de Langkawi.




The 7ELEVEN Cliqq Road Bike Philippines team during the Tour of Luzon early this year. **7Eleven C-RBP**

Irish reinforcement Cormac McGeough added 16 points through his ninth-place finish at the China Xizang Trans-Himalaya, while Jonel Carcueva, who has since moved to Standard Insurance, supplied 15 from his fourth-place effort at the national championships.

Founded by Engr. Bong Sual and owned by Vic Paterno, the team also campaigned in Indonesia, Morocco and China.

One of its strongest results came at the UCI 2.1 Trans-Himalaya in August, when McGeough finished just 59 seconds behind overall champion Raman Tsishkou of Li Ning Star.

Five of the squad's six riders completed the demanding five-day race, which took the field through elevations of 3,000 to 4,000 meters above sea level.

Joining McGeough at the finish were Quita, Jaypee Olarte, Denmark's Daniel Guld and Yon Hin. Mervin Corpuz was forced to abandon after a major crash during the opening stage.

Rodriguez commended his riders for embracing the challenge despite the team receiving a last-minute invitation.

The squad also posted encouraging results at the Taiwan KOM Challenge, where Corpuz claimed the top spot in the individual time trial.

Quita finished sixth in the time trial and ninth in the road race, clocking 4:50:31.40 in the latter. He also received the Friendship Award.

"Maraming maraming salamat po sa buong suportang binibigay ninyo sa amin," Quita said, thanking Paterno, Sual, Rodriguez, and his teammates.

# Ex-champ Que has high hopes a Filipino can win 108th Open



Angelo Que

CARMONA—With the Philippines' finest out in full force starting next week, Angelo Que believes that the country has a very good chance at wresting the Philippine Open and taking Asia's oldest national title back to local soil.

"We are well-represented here and every Filipino in the field would want that title to come back home, so to speak," Que said during practice Thursday for the $1 million (around P64 million) championship presented by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) that gets going in exactly a week.

Clyde Mondilla was the last Filipino to win the Open, doing it in 2019 at The Country Club before COVID-19 shuttered all of sports in the world the following year, which led to a four-year hiatus for the event, before Julien Sale of France won the revival last year when the Masters of Manila Southwoods started hosting again.

The top 12 players in the local Philippine Golf Tour's Order of Merit race, which was topped by Que for the second straight year, will be present for the 72-hole championship as the future of local pro golf—its present as well as its very recent past—will all be represented next week.

Young guns like Aidric Chan, Carl Corpus and Sean Ramos have all made the main draw, and Miguel Tabuena is entered and regarded as one of the country's brightest hopes together with Que, a fellow former champion.

Que won this event back in 2008 at Wack Wack East and at 47, is giving himself an even chance to become a two-time champ by winning on a layout he calls home.

"We have the players who have the game to win here," Que went on. "But you know, most of the foreigners also have the games to win here, too."

Pavit Tangkamolprasert of Thailand and Australian Travis Smyth, running 1-2 in the Asian Tour OOM race, banner the foreign field that will also have Indian star Anirban Lahiri and multiple International Series leg winner John Catlin of the United States.

Ramos was in Que's practice round flight as he was trying to get pointers from his mentor on how to play the Masters when the pressure is at its highest.

"I'm really very excited for next week," Ramos, who won an Asian Development Tour event in Egypt last month, said as he makes an Open appearance for the second straight year.

# Visitor arrivals top 5m—DOT

**By Othel V. Campos**

INTERNATIONAL visitor arrivals in the Philippines reached 5 million as of Nov. 4, 2026, putting the country on track to meet its 6.4-million target and possibly post 3-percent growth to about 6.7 million by year-end, Department of Tourism Secretary Ma. Bernardita Angara-Mathay said Thursday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 40th Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) Conference and 60th anniversary celebration in Manila, Angara-Mathay said the DOT expects stronger fourth-quarter travel demand to offset higher fuel prices, airfares and other travel costs.

"Despite the fuel, the airfare, the cost, we maintained it. And we'll go up by 3 percent, I think," she said.

She attributed the improved outlook to a pickup in daily arrivals, which rose to about 26,000 in October from an average of 12,000 to 13,000 in previous months, based on the department's monitoring dashboard.

The fourth quarter typically brings stronger travel demand, particularly to beach destinations. International events, including ASEAN-related activities expected to draw about 10,000 delegates and their accompanying family members this month, should also boost arrivals, she said.

She also cited a recovery in Chinese tourist arrivals, which are nearing 500,000 after the introduction of a 14-day visa-free entry arrangement covering Manila and Cebu.

The DOT is also pushing to extend the arrangement, which expires in December or January, citing data showing a direct link between visa-free entry and higher Chinese arrivals. Angara-Mathay said the department has submitted a position paper in support of the extension.

She acknowledged security concerns over the entry of Chinese nationals but said stronger monitoring, rather than scrapping the policy, should address them.

"You don't throw the baby with the bathwater," she said, noting that Chinese tourists tend to spend more and stay longer.

The DOT also wants to expand visa-free entry to other gateways, particularly beach destinations, although securing an extension for Manila and Cebu remains the immediate priority.

**5m**
Arrivals as of Nov. 4

**6.4m**
Visitor arrivals target

**26,000**
Daily arrivals in October

# Metrobank's 9-month profit reached P36.3b

**By Jenniffer B. Austria**

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank) reported a net income of P36.3 billion in the first nine months of 2026 on the back of a double-digit loan growth, wider lending margins and higher fee income.

Net interest income rose 11.9 percent to P102.7 billion, while net interest margin improved to 3.9 percent from 3.7 percent a year earlier. Net income eased from a record P37.3 billion a year ago.

"The resiliency and strength of the bank come from the bank's robust fundamentals and prudent approach in managing its core businesses. With the economic landscape still uncertain, we will continue to invest in our capabilities to better serve our customers, while managing risks prudently," Metrobank president Fabian Dee said Thursday in a statement to the stock exchange.

"We are making sure that we will sustain our ability to create long-term value to all our stakeholders," he said.

Gross loans grew 13 percent from a year ago. Institutional loans rose 14.2 percent on sustained investment spending and higher working capital needs among corporate borrowers. Consumer loans increased 8.9 percent, supported by credit card and mortgage lending.

Total deposits reached P2.5 trillion, led by growth in low-cost current and savings accounts, which made up 61.2 percent of the deposit base. The loan-to-deposit ratio stood at 83.8 percent.

Fee and trust income climbed 6.7 percent to P14.9 billion, helping offset the effect of volatile market conditions on trading income. Operating expenses totaled P64.8 billion as the bank continued to invest in personnel and technology.

# Bank loans rose faster in September

**By Darwin G. Amojelar**

OUTSTANDING loans of universal and commercial banks rose 11.4 percent year-on-year in September, up from 11 percent in August, as businesses and consumers sustained credit demand, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said Thursday.

Data from the BSP showed that loans to resident borrowers, which make up the bulk of total bank lending, grew 11.7 percent.

Loans for business activities of resident enterprises rose 11 percent, led by lending to electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply; manufacturing; real estate activities; transportation and storage; wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; and financial and insurance activities.

Consumer loans to residents climbed 16.2 percent, supported partly by continued expansion in credit card and motor vehicle loans.

The BSP said it monitors bank lending because it is a key monetary policy transmission channel.

"Looking ahead, the BSP will continue to ensure that bank lending conditions remain consistent with its price and financial stability objectives," it said.

Meanwhile, ,oney supply grew 9.3 percent year-on-year to P20.7 trillion in September as private and public sector borrowing remained strong, preliminary BSP data showed.

Domestic liquidity, also known as M3, expanded as borrowing by the private and public sectors rose 12 percent during the month. Lending to businesses and households increased 12.4 percent, contributing to the growth.

The national government's financing activities, including debt issuances and withdrawals of deposits from the BSP and banks, also supported the expansion.




**FREE RIDES.** The Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Transportation (DOTr) and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) join forces to provide free jeepney rides in select parts of Metro Manila as the country ramps up preparations for the 49th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and Related Meetings. The initiative is expected to deliver material benefits to Filipino commuters while serving as a platform to feature Philippine destinations. The free rides begin on Nov. 5, following the ceremonial signing of a tripartite agreement and will run for 10 days until Nov. 14, 2026. A total of 30 modern jeepneys will be deployed to serve two major routes: SM Fairview to Buendia (North Route) and Sucat to Baclaran (South Route), with 15 vehicles assigned to each route.

# Maynilad sees no water interruptions in first half of 2027 despite El Niño

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. expects no water service interruptions in its concession area in the first half of 2027 despite the El Niño event, as it diversifies its water sources and reduces losses in its distribution network.

Maynilad chief operating officer Christopher Jaime Lichauco said at a media briefing on Thursday that the company has reduced its dependence on Angat Dam by developing alternative sources, including water treatment plants, deep wells and recycled wastewater.

Maynilad said it also cut its non-revenue water (NRW) level to 29.3 percent, the lowest in its history. NRW refers to treated water lost through leaks, pilferage and other distribution system inefficiencies.

The company targets an average NRW level of 25 percent in 2027 and 20 percent by 2030.

Lichauco said the Angat Dam water level has recovered to 208.7 meters, close to the normal operating range of 210 to 212 meters, following heavy rains in August and subsequent rainfall in the watershed.

The improved reservoir level, combined with additional water sources, should allow the company to maintain supply without interruptions in the first half of 2027, he said.

Maynilad is also preparing additional sources over the next 3 months, including a modular treatment plant in Molino, a new water facility in Pasay and additional deep wells in its concession area. It is upgrading its treatment plants to make them more resilient to the possible effects of El Niño.

Maynilad chief finance officer Ricardo de los Reyes said the company expects capital expenditure disbursements of about P27.5 billion in 2027, focused on water security and reducing NRW. **Jenniffer B. Austria**




**FGI MILESTONE.** **Focus Global Inc. (FGI) celebrates 35 years as a leading force in consumer goods and home furnishings in the Philippines. Leading the occasion at Marquis Events Place in Taguig City are FGI co-founder, chairman and president Stephen Sy and co-founder, vice-chairman and executive vice president Loli Sy. The event treated 300 guests and company employees to surprise performances by Jose Mari Chan and Erik Santos.**

## IN BRIEF

### NAIA handled 1.29m passengers during Undas

THE Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) handled nearly 1.3 million passengers during the nine-day Undas travel period, exceeding its projection as traffic grew 4.4 percent from a year ago.

New NAIA Infra Corp. (NNIC), the airport operator, said passenger volume reached 1,291,885 from Oct. 27 to Nov. 4, 2026, compared with 1,237,475 in the same period last year.

The count was 3.4 percent above NNIC's conservative projection of 1.25 million passengers for the holiday period. NNIC had expected traffic to rise 1 percent from the same period in 2025.

International traffic increased 3.94 percent to 649,691 from 625,056 a year earlier, while domestic traffic rose 4.86 percent to 642,194 from 612,419.

Oct. 30 was the busiest day, with 153,901 passengers passing through the airport, above the projected daily volume of 149,216.

To manage the higher volume, NNIC strengthened coordination with airlines, ground handlers, transport providers and government agencies. It also deployed additional personnel and enhanced security and passenger assistance services.

**Darwin G. Amojelar**

### Ayala Land's income eased 18% in 9 months

AYALA Land Inc. (ALI) reported an 18.1-percent decline in net income to P17.5 billion in the first nine months of 2026 as the property developer faced headwinds despite growth in its leasing and hospitality businesses.

Revenues fell 10.3 percent to P109.2 billion from P121.8 billion in the same period last year. Third-quarter net income declined 16.5 percent to P6 billion from P7.2 billion a year ago, while revenues dropped 11.8 percent to P34.2 billion from P38.76 billion.

"Despite headwinds, Ayala Land achieved steady income in the third quarter of 2026. Our continuous goal is to build a more resilient ALI with more diversified revenue streams, focusing on our recurring income base," said ALI president and chief executive Anna Ma. Margarita Bautista-Dy.

"We remain committed in executing our strategies of further growing our leasing business, staying disciplined in the residential segment, and strengthening the balance sheet while sustaining returns," she said. **Jenniffer B. Austria**

### Chinabank's 9-month income grew 12%

CHINA Banking Corp. (Chinabank), the country's fourth largest private universal bank, said Thursday it posted a consolidated net income of P22.6 billion in the first nine months of 2026, up 12 percent from a year ago as growth in its core businesses and a wider net interest margin lifted earnings.

Return on equity stood at 15.6 percent and return on assets at 1.6 percent. Net interest margin improved to 4.73 percent, pushing net interest income up 14 percent to P60.7 billion.

Asset quality held steady. The non-performing loan (NPL) ratio remained at 1.5 percent, and the bank set aside P1.9 billion for impairment and credit losses. NPL coverage was 102 percent.

Operating expenses rose 13 percent to P28.6 billion as the bank invested in digital transformation and business expansion. The cost-to-income ratio was 49 percent.

Chinabank said total assets grew 12 percent year-on-year to P1.9 trillion as of September 2026. Net loans jumped 19 percent to P1.2 trillion. Total deposits increased 9 percent to P1.5 trillion. Low-cost checking and savings accounts (CASA) climbed 19 percent to P751 billion, lifting the CASA ratio to 49 percent.

# Solar-battery systems to cut diesel costs in off-grid areas, APVIA says

**By Alena Mae S. Flores**

REPLACING diesel power plants in the Philippines' off-grid missionary areas with solar and battery storage can lower electricity bills and ease a fast-growing government subsidy burden, the Asian Photovoltaic Industry Association (APVIA) said in a report.

APVIA presented the report at a technical workshop with the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Power Corp. (NPC) and the Philippine Solar and Storage Energy Alliance. It said retiring diesel plants in missionary areas and installing solar paired with battery storage would remove recurring fuel costs from monthly consumer bills.

APVIA said that under the current setup in missionary areas, "every household pays for island diesel."

All grid-connected consumers pay the Universal Charge for Missionary Electrification (UCME), a monthly line item that funds power generation in remote areas and islands unconnected to the main grid. Most of the charge covers diesel fuel.

The report said the UCME rose to P0.3397 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) from P0.2763 per kWh starting with the October billing period, an increase of about 23 percent. A household consuming 200 kWh a month now contributes about P67.94 monthly, or roughly P815 annually, to missionary electrification.

APVIA attributed the high costs to diesel generation expenses. The DOE said generating power on NPC-served islands costs an average of about P18 per kWh, compared with P5 to P8 per kWh on the main grids. On remote islands that require imported fuel shipments, costs reach as high as P62 per kWh.

Subsidy requirements are climbing rapidly, the group said. The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) authorized P30.77 billion in missionary electrification subsidies for 2026, up from about P7 billion in 2020.

NPC has asked the ERC to approve P44.2 billion for 2027, equivalent to P0.4405 per kWh. That would raise a 200-kWh household's monthly contribution to about P88.

Manila Standard

Republic of the Philippines
**ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**
Pasig City

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2026**

**ERC CASE NO. 2026-131 RC**

**CENTRAL PANGASINAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CENPELCO),**
*Applicant.*
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

**Promulgated:**
October 19, 2026

## NOTICE OF VIRTUAL HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on 09 September 2026, Applicant Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENPELCO) filed, through the Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS) portal, an *Application*, dated 10 August 2026, seeking the Commission's approval of its Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) plan for the year 2026.

The docketed copy of the *Application*, excluding its annexes, is attached as Annex "A" hereof.

The Commission has set the instant *Application* for hearing for determination of compliance with the jurisdictional requirements, expository presentation, and Pre-trial Conference[1] on **23 NOVEMBER 2026 (Monday)** at **two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.)** via **Microsoft Teams** as the online platform for the conduct thereof, pursuant to the pertinent rules of the Commission.

Accordingly, Applicant is hereby directed to mirror the virtual hearing, to be hosted by the Commission, at **Applicant CENPELCO's Principal Office at Padilla Street, San Carlos City, Pangasinan** as the designated venue for the conduct thereof and ensure that the same is open to the public. Moreover, Applicant shall guarantee that, during the conduct of the expository presentation, the participation of the public shall not be impaired.

Any interested stakeholder may submit its comments and/or clarifications at least **one (1) calendar day** prior to the scheduled virtual hearing, via e-mail at docket@erc.ph, copy furnished the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph. The Commission shall give priority to the stakeholders who have duly submitted their respective comments and/or clarifications, to discuss the same and propound questions during the course of the expository presentation.

Moreover, any person who has an interest in the subject matter of the instant case may become a party by filing with the Commission via e-mail at docket@erc.ph, a verified Petition to Intervene at least **five (5) calendar days** prior to the date of the virtual hearing. The verified Petition to Intervene must follow the requirements under Rule 9 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure, indicating therein the docket number and title of the case, and state the following:

1) The petitioner's name, mailing address, and e-mail address;

2) The nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and

3) A statement of the relief desired.

Likewise, all other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the case may file through e-mail at docket@erc.ph, copy furnish the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph, their Opposition or Comment thereon at least five (5) calendar days prior to the virtual hearing and subject to the requirements under Rule 9 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure. No particular form of Opposition or Comment is required, but the document, letter, or writing should contain the following:

1) The name, mailing address, and e-mail address of the person;

2) A concise statement of the Opposition or Comment; and

3) The grounds relied upon.

All interested parties filing their Petition to Intervene, Opposition or Comment are required to submit the hard copies thereof through personal service, registered mail or ordinary mail/private courier, **within five (5) working days** from the date that the same were electronically submitted, as reflected in the acknowledgement receipt e-mail sent by the Commission.

Any of the persons mentioned in the preceding paragraphs may access the copy of the *Application* on the Commission's official website at www.erc.gov.ph.

Finally, all interested persons may be allowed to join the scheduled virtual hearing by providing the Commission, through legal.virtualhearings@erc.ph, their respective e-mail addresses, indicating therein the case number of the instant *Application*. The Commission will send the access link/s to the aforementioned hearing platform within five (5) working days prior to the scheduled hearing.

**WITNESS,** the Honorable Chairperson and CEO **FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN** and the Honorable Commissioners **FLORESINDA G. BALDO-DIGAL, MARKO ROMEO L. FUENTES, AMANTE A. LIBERATO** and **PARIS G. REAL**, Energy Regulatory Commission in Pasig City.

FOR AND BY AUTHORITY
OF THE COMMISSION:

Maria Corazon C. Gines

**ATTY. MARIA CORAZON C. GINES**[2]
*Director III, Legal Service*

LS: NRG/JGGW

[1] Summary Proceedings pursuant to the Commission's Resolution No. 16, Series of 2025.

[2] Authority granted per Office Order No. 71, Series of 2025 dated 20 August 2025, with the subject "Approving/Signing Authorities for Consumer Complaints Cases and Interlocutory Orders".

**ANNEX "A"**

Republic of the Philippines
**ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**
Pasig City

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2026**

**ERC CASE NO.** 2026-131 **RC**

September 09, 2026

**CENTRAL PANGASINAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE., INC., (CENPELCO),**
Applicant.
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

## APPLICATION

**APPLICANT, CENTRAL PANGASINAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., (CENPELCO),** through counsel, unto this Honorable Commission, most respectfully alleges, that:

### THE APPLICANT

1. CENPELCO is a non-stock, non-profit electric cooperative, duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Philippines, with principal office at Padilla Street, San Carlos City, Pangasinan.

2. CENPELCO is a holder of a franchise from the National Electrification Commission to operate an electric light and power distribution service in San Carlos City and certain municipalities of the Province of Pangasinan, namely: Aguilar, Alcala, Basita, Bautista, Bayambang, Binmaley, Bugallon, Labrador, Lingayen, Malasiqui, Mangaldan, Mangatarem, Sual, and Urbiztondo.

### LEGAL BASES FOR THE APPLICATION

3. CENPELCO seeks approval and authority from this Honorable Commission to implement its Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) Plan for the year 2026 pursuant to Republic Act No. 9136, ERC Resolution No. 26, Series of 2009 and other laws and rules, and in line with its legal mandate to provide safe, quality, efficient and reliable electric service to the consumers in its franchise area,

### THE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROJECTS

4. The projects under CENPELCO's CAPEX Plan for the year 2026, are summarized hereunder, as follows:

| No. | Proposed Projects | Project Type | Project Cost (Php) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Construction of Power House, Installation of Medium Voltage Switch Gear (MVSG) at 20 MVA Binmaley Substation and Construction of Tie Lines for Two (2) Additional Feeder lines | Safety | 33,145,722.00 |
| 2 | Replacement of deteriorated 69 kV Lightning Arrester in Labrador and Bautista Substation | Safety | 200,000.00 |
| 3 | Installation of Intermediate poles and Installation of Guy Assembly for Strengthening Distribution System | Safety | 18,172,621.00 |
| 4 | Replacement of Dilapidated Poles | Safety | 26,757,035.00 |
| 5 | Replacement of Defective of 69 kV Air Break Switch at San Carlos Facing Malasiqui 69 kV lines and Lingayen Facing Binmaley 69 kV lines | Safety | 1,200,000.00 |
| 6 | Procurement of 48 units of Automatic Circuit Recloser, Vacuum, 3 Phase, 15 kV, 630 A | Safety | 36,000,000.00 |
| 7 | Installation of additional 30MVA Power Transformer in San Carlos including Primary Protection and Secondary Protection in San Carlos Substation. | Capacity | 85,346,056.00 |
| 8 | Uprating and installation of New 30 MVA in Mangatarem Substation | Capacity | 92,186,245.00 |
| 9 | Construction of new 15 MVA Substation at Basista | Capacity | 76,626,119.00 |
| 10 | Uprating and Installation of New 30 MVA Substation at Mangaldan | Capacity | 84,683,994.00 |
| 11 | Replacement of Overloaded Distribution Transformers | Capacity | 24,797,100.00 |
| 12 | Requisition of Distribution Transformers, Service Drops and Metering Equipment for New Customer Connections | Capacity | 48,496,130.00 |
| 13 | Procurement and installation of 12 units of Automatic Voltage Regulator 333 KVA | Power Quality | 25,800,000.00 |
| 14 | Construction of 9.28 kms 69 kV lines from Basista to Urbiztondo | Reliability | 70,851,201.00 |
| 15 | Replacement of Old Mechanical Meter | System Loss Reduction | 20,060,000.00 |
| 16 | Installation of Feeder Metering | System Loss Reduction | 22,854,814.00 |
| 17 | Procurement of Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Pilot Project | System Loss Reduction | 13,629,412.00 |
| 18 | Acquisition of SCADA System for CENPELCO's thirteen (13) Substations in San Carlos City, Malasiqui, Bayambang, Alcala, Bautista, Mangaldan, Bugallon, Labrador, Mangatarem, Urbiztondo, Lingayen, Binmaley, and Sual including planned implementation of proposed two (2) Substations in Basista, and Aguilar. | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 119,562,984.00 |
| 19 | Procurement of Buffer Stock for Contingency / Emergency / Calamities | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 137,036,832.00 |
| 20 | Procurement of, 4 units of Manlift, 3 units of MPV (Multi-Purpose Vehicle), 4 Units Boom truck (3-5 tons), and 11 units of AUV (Asian Utility Vehicle) | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 77,551,000.00 |
| 21 | Procurement of Testing and Measuring Equipment | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 13,690,000.00 |
| **Total Project Cost (Php)** | | | **1,028,647,265.00** |

### THE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLAN

5. The proposed projects are discussed in detail in CENPELCO's Capital Expenditure Plan for the year 2026 with technical and financial analysis and supporting data presented in ERC-prescribed templates

### FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUATION

6. **Financing Plan.** CENPELCO's CAPEX projects for the year 2026 amounting to One Billion Twenty-Eight Million Six Hundred Forty-Seven Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-Five Pesos only (₱1,028,647,265.00) will be financed partly through the cooperative's Reinvestment Fund for Sustainable Capital Expenditures (RFSC), and partly with funds to be acquired through loans from the National Electrification Administration (NEA), banks, or other financial institutions, as shown in the Table below, to wit:

| Proposed Projects | | Project Cost and Source of Fund | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | Title | Type | 2026 | Source of Fund |
| 1 | Construction of Power House, Installation of Medium Voltage Switch Gear (MVSG) at 20 MVA Binmaley Substation and Construction of Tie Lines for Two (2) Additional Feeder lines | Safety | 33,145,722.00 | **RFSC** |
| 2 | Replacement of deteriorated 69 kV Lightning Arrester in Labrador and Bautista Substation | Safety | 200,000.00 | **RFSC** |
| 3 | Installation of Intermediate poles and Installation of Guy Assembly for Strengthening Distribution System | Safety | 18,172,621.00 | **RFSC** |
| 4 | Replacement of Dilapidated Poles | Safety | 26,757,035.00 | **RFSC** |
| 5 | Replacement of Defective of 69 kV Air Break Switch at San Carlos Facing Malasiqui 69 kV lines and Lingayen Facing Binmaley 69 kV lines | Safety | 1,200,000.00 | **RFSC** |
| 6 | Procurement of 48 units of Automatic Circuit Recloser, Vacuum, 3 Phase, 15 kV, 630 A | Safety | 36,000,000.00 | **RFSC** |
| 7 | Installation of additional 30MVA Power Transformer in San Carlos including Primary Protection and Secondary Protection in San Carlos Substation. | Capacity | 85,346,056.00 | **BANK** |
| 8 | Uprating and installation of New 30 MVA in Mangatarem Substation | Capacity | 92,186,245.00 | **BANK** |
| 9 | Construction of new 15 MVA Substation at Basista | Capacity | 76,626,119.00 | **BANK** |
| 10 | Uprating and Installation of New 30 MVA Substation at Mangaldan | Capacity | 84,683,994.00 | **BANK** |
| 11 | Replacement of Overloaded Distribution Transformers | Capacity | 24,797,100.00 | **RFSC** |
| 12 | Requisition of Distribution Transformers, Service Drops and Metering Equipment for New Customer Connections | Capacity | 48,496,130.00 | **RFSC** |
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| 15 | Replacement of Old Mechanical Meter | System Loss Reduction | 20,060,000.00 | **RFSC** |
| 16 | Installation of Feeder Metering | System Loss Reduction | 22,854,814.00 | **RFSC** |
| 17 | Procurement of Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Pilot Project | System Loss Reduction | 13,629,412.00 | **RFSC** |
| 18 | Acquisition of SCADA System for CENPELCO's thirteen (13) Substations in San Carlos City, Malasiqui, Bayambang, Alcala, Bautista, Mangaldan, Bugallon, Labrador, Mangatarem, Urbiztondo, Lingayen, Binmaley, and Sual including planned implementation of proposed two (2) Substations in Basista, and Aguilar. | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 119,562,984.00 | **NEA** |
| 19 | Procurement of Buffer Stock for Contingency / Emergency / Calamities | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 137,036,832.00 | **RFSC** |
| 20 | Procurement of, 4 units of Manlift, 3 units of MPV (Multi-Purpose Vehicle), 4 Units Boom truck (3-5 tons), and 11 units of AUV (Asian Utility Vehicle) | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 77,551,000.00 | **BANK** |
| 21 | Procurement of Testing and Measuring Equipment | Customer Service Efficiency Assessment | 13,690,000.00 | **RFSC** |
| **Total cost (Php)** | | | **1,028,647,265.00** | |

### INDICATIVE RATE IMPACT

7. The CAPEX Plan was envisioned to bring the most value to CENPELCO's member-consumer-owners at the most reasonable and justifiable electricity rates, such that implementing the projects will have a reasonable rate impact per kWh, as shown in the Table below, wit:

**A. Rate Impact Analysis with Availment of Loan**

| | 2026 |
|---|---|
| Forecasted / Actual Energy Sales, kWh | 697,529,405 |
| RFSC Rate, PhP/KWh | 0.4456 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Fund Beginning balance**, PhP, excess/(shortfall) | **620,209** |

**FUND INFLOWS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Forecasted / Actual RFSC Collection, PhP | 310,819,103 |
| | 50% income on leased properties, PhP | 15,944,646 |
| | Loan proceeds from financial institutions for the subject application, PhP | 606,807,599 |
| | Note: indicate the amount for the subject case | |
| | **Total Fund Inflows**, PhP | **933,571,348** |
| **Available Fund for Disbursement**, PhP | | **934,191,557** |

# Century Pacific's net income fell 11% to P5.2b in 9 months

**By Jenniffer B. Austria**

CENTURY Pacific Food Inc. (CNPF) reported an 11 percent decline in net income to P5.2 billion in the first nine months of 2026, as P1.2 billion in earthquake-related losses and higher finance costs weighed on earnings.

Excluding the one-time losses, core net income grew 10 percent, while revenues rose 14 percent to P70.5 billion.

The company's branded business grew 12 percent in the nine-month period, driven by contributions from its marine, meat, milk, coconut, and emerging product lines.

Sales from its original equipment manufacturing export business rose 21 percent on the back of long-term contracts and demand in key markets.

In June, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck General Santos, affecting several of the company's key production facilities. Operations fully resumed by the start of the third quarter, with no permanent impairment to facilities.



Chad Manapat, CNPF chief financial officer

The company recognized P1.2 billion in earthquake-related losses during the nine-month period. CNPF said damaged assets and inventory were covered by insurance, with recoveries expected in future periods.

Higher effective tax rates following the expiration of tax incentives, alongside increased finance costs, also weighed on earnings.

"Our goal is to keep our double-digit growth trajectory intact for our top line, with core bottom-line growth trailing," said Chad Manapat, CNPF chief financial officer. "This is anchored on our disciplined focus on delivering value to consumers through our portfolio of pantry essentials, with relevant promotions and innovations, and keeping a tight grip on costs."

"As 2027 approaches, we plan to build on this year's progress," Manapat added. "With additional capacity coming online and continued investments in our brands and operations, we remain cautiously optimistic about our growth prospects."

For 2026, CNPF allocated about P8 billion for capital expenditures, of which 5 billion pesos had been spent as of end-September. The investments are mainly intended to expand coconut facilities and add production capacity for its fast-growing businesses.

# PSEi rebounds to 5,700 level as peso gains against dollar

PHILIPPINE stocks rebounded to the 5,700 level Thursday as improved global sentiment encouraged investors to buy local shares.

The peso also recovered, closing at 62.97 to the U.S. dollar from 63.525 on Wednesday.

The Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 1.46 percent, or 83.22 points, to close at 5,778.14, while the broader all shares index gained 1.39 percent, or 44.32 points, to 3,229.47.

COL Financial Group research analyst Denise Joaquin said the market benefited from easing U.S. Treasury yields following the Democratic Party's gains in the U.S. midterm elections, which raised expectations of fiscal gridlock and reduced government spending.

"Oil prices also plunged amid growing hopes of a de-escalation in the U.S.-Iran conflict, while the peso strengthened to a two-week high of 62.94 pesos to the U.S. dollar," Joaquin said. "The improved risk appetite spurred buying across index heavyweights."

The market advanced despite domestic inflation accelerating to a 44-month high of 7.8 percent in October 2026 from 7.2 percent in September.

"The local market extended its rally today fueled mainly by the drop in global oil prices," Philstocks Financial Inc. said. "This comes as the Democratic Party takes over the U.S. Congress following their big win in the midterm elections. A Democratic-leaning Congress is expected to challenge U.S. military policy regarding Iran."

Holding firms led sectoral gains, rising 4.14 percent, followed by mining and oil, which advanced 4.06 percent. Industrial stocks climbed 2.51 percent, while property shares added 2 percent. Services inched up 0.12 percent.

Advancers outpaced decliners, 122 to 74, while 56 stocks were unchanged.

Tech firms tumbled Thursday as investors contemplated the outlook for the AI boom after Democrats swept the US midterms, partly on the back of growing anger over the rapid building of data centres across the country.

However, broader markets mostly rallied and oil plunged after President Donald Trump's Republicans were dealt a historic defeat that was blamed on high prices, tariffs and the Iran war.

The result stoked hopes he will look to wind down the Middle East conflict, which would help temper inflation and even soften his stance on trade.

But AI-linked firms came under the cosh amid fears for planned data centre construction projects as well as renewed scrutiny from newly installed Democrats on Capitol Hill.

The sector had already been in the crosshairs of investors owing to questions about the vast sums pumped into new facilities, R&D and chip development, and when any companies would see a profit.

Charu Chanana at Saxo Markets said the vote was accelerating a reassessment of AI that was already under way.

**Jenniffer B. Austria with AFP**

**FUND OUTFLOWS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | CAPEX payment for the subject case, PhP<br>- total cost incurred / total cost to be incurred)<br>*Note: indicate the recommended amount for the subject case* | 1,028,647,265 |
| | Annual loan amortization payment for the subject case, PhP (if applicable)<br>*Note: indicate the recommended amount for the subject case* | 161,692,681 |
| | Annual loan amortization for previous approved application/s, PhP (if applicable)<br>*ERC Case No. 2012-029 RC 5,470,779*<br>*ERC Case No. 2016-002 RC 28,668,606* | 34,139,385 |
| | Projected ERC permit fees for the subject case, PhP<br>-- 0.75% of the subject Application | 7,714,854 |
| | **Total Fund Outflows**, PhP | **1,539,945,997** |
| **Fund Ending Balance**, PhP, excess/(shortfall) | | **-605,754,440** |
| Excess/(shortfall) on RFSC, PhP/kWh | | **-0.8684** |

**B. Rate Impact Analysis Without Availment of Loan**

| | **2026** |
|---|---|
| Forecasted / Actual Energy Sales, kWh | 697,529,405 |
| RFSC Rate, PhP/KWh | 0.4456 |
| **Fund Beginning balance**, PhP, excess/(shortfall) | **620,209** |

**FUND INFLOWS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Forecasted / Actual RFSC Collection, PhP | 310,819,103 |
| | 50% income on leased properties, PhP | 15,944,646 |
| | Loan proceeds from financial institutions for the subject application, PhP<br>Note: indicate the amount for the subject case | |
| | **Total Fund Inflows**, PhP | **326,763,749** |
| **Available Fund for Disbursement**, PhP | | **327,383,958** |

**FUND OUTFLOWS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | CAPEX payment for the subject case, PhP<br>- total cost incurred / total cost to be incurred)<br>*Note: indicate the recommended amount for the subject case* | 1,028,647,265 |
| | Annual loan amortization payment for the subject case, PhP (if applicable)<br>*Note: indicate the recommended amount for the subject case* | |
| | Annual loan amortization for previous approved application/s, PhP (if applicable)<br>*ERC Case No. 2012-029 RC 5,470,779*<br>*ERC Case No. 2016-002 RC 28,668,606* | 34,139,385 |
| | Projected ERC permit fees for the subject case, PhP<br>-- 0.75% of the subject Application | 7,714,854 |
| | **Total Fund Outflows**, PhP | **1,285,012,386** |
| **Fund Ending Balance**, PhP, excess/(shortfall) | | **-957,628,428** |
| Excess/(shortfall) on RFSC, PhP/kWh | | **-1.3729** |

8. As shown in the above Indicative Rate Impact, there would be a shortfall of **₱0.8684/kWh** on CENPELCO's existing RFSC rate in case the proposed projects are implemented with funding partly sourced from the RFSC and partly with funds to be acquired through loans from the NEA, banks, and other financial institutions. This shortfall of **₱0.8684/kWh** would be the projected increase in RFSC rate of CENPELCO if the proposed CAPEX projects are implemented.

**SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTARY AND PRE-FILING REQUIREMENTS**

9. Finally, in compliance with the documentary as well as pre-filing requirements for the instant application, CENPELCO is submitting herewith the following documents, which are being made integral parts hereof as follows, to wit:

| Annex Markings | Documents |
|---|---|
| "A" | CENPELCO's Capital Expenditure Plan for Year 2026 |
| "B" | Affidavit of Posting of Notice to the Consumers |
| "B-1" | Notice to the Consumers |
| "C" | Affidavit of Undertaking that the corresponding application for approval of concerned agencies shall be filed, when required |
| "D" series | Proof of furnishing of copies of the Application to the Offices of the Mayor and Sangguniang Panlungsod of San Carlos City and Governor and Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Pangasinan |
| "E" series | Proof of publication of the Application in a newspaper of general circulation in CENPELCO's franchise area or where it principally operates. |

**PRAYER**

**WHEREFORE**, premises considered, Applicant **Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc., (CENPELCO)** respectfully prays of this Honorable Commission that after due notice and hearing, its Capital Expenditure Plan for the year 2026 be confirmed and approved accordingly.

Other kinds of relief, just and equitable under the premises are likewise being prayed for.

Pasig City, Metro Manila, 10 August 2026.

**DECHAVEZ LERIOS-AMBOY AND EVANGELISTA LAW OFFICES[1]**
Counsel for the Applicant
**Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc., (CENPELCO)**
Unit 2008, Tycoon Centre
Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605
Tel. No. 79101587
E-mail: powerlawfirm@gmail.com; dlaelaw@powerlawfirm.net

By:

**JOSEPH FERDINAND M. DECHAVEZ, ESQ**
Roll of Attorneys No. 38015
PTR No. 3985840, 07 January 2026, Pasig City
IBP Lifetime Membership No. 04968, Rizal Chapter
MCLE Exemption Certificate No. VIII-Acad004390, 2/26/25
Valid Until 14 April 2028; CP No. 09178541331
Email Address: jfmdechavez@gmail.com

[redacted]

**MARIE ANN CLAIRE D. MARQUEDA**
Roll of Attorneys No. 79269
PTR No. 8355206, 08 January 2026, Quezon City
IBP No. 587192, 05 January 2026, Quezon City Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0040569; valid until 14 April 2028
E-mail: macmarqueda@powerlawfirm.net

**VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORUM SHOPPING**

I, **ENGR. RODRIGO F. CORPUZ**, of legal age, Filipino and with office address at Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENPELCO) at Padilla Street, San Carlos City, Pangasinan, after being sworn to according to law, depose and state that:

1. I am the General Manager and authorized representative of CENPELCO in the instant application, as evidenced by the Board Resolution attached hereto;

2. I have caused the preparation of the instant Application and read the contents thereof, and I attest that the allegations therein are true and correct based on my personal knowledge as well as based on authentic documents; I also attest that the Application is not filed to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation;

3. I attest further that the factual allegations in the Application have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likewise have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for discovery;

4. I attest furthermore that CENPELCO has not commenced or filed any claim involving the same issues herein with any other Court, Tribunal or Quasi-Judicial Agency or, I am not aware of any such other case or claim pending before any other court, tribunal or quasi-judicial agency; and

5. Should I hereinafter learn that the same or a similar action or claim has been filed or is pending in the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals or any court, tribunal, or quasi-judicial agency, the cooperative shall report said fact within five (5) days from discovery thereof to this Honorable Commission.

[redacted]
ENGR. RODRIGO F. CORPUZ
Declarant

**SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO,** before me in [redacted] this 10th day of August 2026 by Declarant who exhibited to me his competent proof of identity, to wit: Driver's License ID with No. [redacted], with validity until 15 January 2034.

Doc. No. 112;
Page No. 96;
Book No. XLIII;
Series of 2026.

[redacted]
ATTY. [redacted] LOMBOY
Notary Public
NOTARY PUBLIC
VALID UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2026
ROLL NO. 5[illegible]
IBP NO. INV. [illegible] 2025
PTR NO. [illegible] 01-02-2026
NEW COMMERCIAL COMPLEX
SAN CARLOS CITY, PANGASINAN

[1]Pursuant to Office of the Court Administrator Circular No. 56-2015, hereunder are the MCLE Compliance Numbers of the undersigned Firm's named partners, to wit:

| Partners | MCLE Compliance | Validity |
|---|---|---|
| Joseph Ferdinand M. Dechavez | MCLE Exemption Certificate No. VIII-Acad004390 | 14 April 2028 |
| Ditas A. Lerios-Amboy | MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0042308 | 14 April 2028 |
| Nelson V. Evangelista | MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0041847 | 14 April 2028 |

M. Standard – Oct. 30 & Nov. 6, 2026

**ARANETA PROPERTIES INCORPORATED**
**21st Floor BDO Towers Valero, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City Phone: (02)-8848-1501 to 04**

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS**

**TO OUR STOCKHOLDERS**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of **Araneta Properties Incorporated** (the "Company") will be conducted virtually through videoconference on **December 7, 2026** at **10:30 in the morning**. The meeting may be accessed through this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zAXm4aJtQq-A5ffVSAZOkw
Information about said virtual meeting can be accessed at the link provided on ARA's website at https://aranetaproperties.com with the following agenda:

1. Call to order;
2. Proof of notice and due calling of meeting; Determination of a quorum;
3. Approval of Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on December 15, 2025;
4. Report of the President;
5. Presentation and approval of the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2025;
6. Ratification of the acts of the Board of Directors and Officers;
7. Election of members of the Board of Directors;
8. Appointment of External Auditors;
9. Amendment of the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation;
10. Amendment of the Corporation's By-Laws
11. Other Matters;
12. Adjournment.

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on 3 September 2026 are entitled to notice of, and to vote at this meeting.

Due to the new normal after the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Corporation's By-Laws, the Corporation will dispense with the physical attendance of stockholders at the meeting. Thus, the stockholders may attend only by remote communication or appoint the Chairman as proxy. In accordance with Article II, Section 3 of the Corporation's By-Laws, the meeting of the stockholders shall be held by means of video conferencing, or similar communication equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other, and such participation shall constitute presence at the meeting.

Proxies must be filed with and received by the Office of the Corporate Secretary at the 8th Floor Chatham House Building, Valero corner Rufino Sts. Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines, or sent to corpsecara@aranetaproperties.com not later than 27 November 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Validation of proxies shall be made on 1 December 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at the 8th Floor Chatham House Building, Valero corner Rufino Sts. Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines.

***Participation by Remote Communication***

The 2026 Annual Stockholders' Meeting will be conducted by remote communication via Zoom. The stockholders may attend and participate in the meeting by following the instructions below:

1. Stockholders should notify the Corporation by sending an email to corpsecara@aranetaproperties.com on or before November 27, 2026.
2. All successfully registered stockholders will receive an invitation by email containing the link to the meeting, together with the password and the meeting procedures.
3. Stockholders who have notified the Corporation within the given date and were registered will be included in the determination of the existence of a quorum. Stockholders casting their votes in absentia shall also be deemed present for purposes of determining the existence of a quorum.
4. The meeting shall be recorded in audio and video formats, and copies thereof shall be retained by the Corporation.

**ANTIPOLO RETREADERS CORPORATION**
Sumulong Highway, Barangay Mambugan, Antipolo City, Rizal

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

**TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS AND CONCERNED PARTIES:**

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the stockholders of **ANTIPOLO RETREADERS CORPORATION**, with registered office at Sumulong Highway, Barangay Mambugan, Antipolo City, Rizal, will be held on **NOVEMBER 25, 2026 at 3:00 PM**, at **office address Sumulong Highway Mambugan Antipolo City**, to consider and vote upon the proposed voluntary dissolution of the Corporation in accordance with the Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 11232) and the applicable rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and consider the following matters:

1. Approval of the voluntary dissolution of Antipolo Retreaders Corporation;
2. Authorization of the President and/or other designated corporate representative to prepare, sign, execute, and file the necessary documents and applications with the SEC and other concerned government agencies;
3. Settlement of the Corporation's outstanding obligations and liabilities, if any, in accordance with applicable laws; and
4. Other matters relevant and necessary to complete the Corporation's dissolution.

All stockholders are hereby requested to attend the meeting and participate in the deliberation and voting on the proposed dissolution.

This notice is issued by the President of the Corporation for publication and for the information of all concerned, in connection with the Corporation's proposed voluntary dissolution.

Issued this **3rd** day of **November, 2026**, in Antipolo City, Rizal, Philippines.

Respectfully,

**ALFREDO V. PAMINTUAN**
President
**ANTIPOLO RETREADERS CORPORATION**

Manila Standard

Republic of the Philippines
**ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**
Pasig City

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR CONFIRMATION AND APPROVAL OF EMERGENCY CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROJECT, NAMELY: PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW 10 MVA POWER TRANSFORMER IN REPLACEMENT OF THE DAMAGED 5 MVA POWER TRANSFORMER AT TALOBATIB SUBSTATION**

**ERC CASE NO. 2026-133 RC**

**CAMARINES NORTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CANORECO),**
*Applicants.*
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

**Promulgated:**
October 26, 2026

**NOTICE OF VIRTUAL HEARING**

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on 14 September 2026, Applicant Camarines Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CANORECO) filed, through the Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS) portal, an *Application*, dated 10 June 2026, seeking the Commission's confirmation and approval of Emergency Capital Expenditure Project, namely: purchase and installation of new 10 MVA power transformer in replacement of the damaged 5 MVA power transformer at Talobatib Substation.

The docketed copy of the *Application*, excluding its annexes, is attached as Annex "A" hereof.

The Commission has set the instant *Application* for hearing for determination of compliance with the jurisdictional requirements, expository presentation, and Pre-trial Conference[1] on **24 November 2026 (Tuesday)** at **two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.)** via **Microsoft Teams** as the online platform for the conduct thereof, pursuant to the pertinent rules of the Commission.

Accordingly, Applicant is hereby directed to mirror the virtual hearings, to be hosted by the Commission, at **Applicant CANORECO's Principal Office at J.P. Rizal St., Brgy. 1 Daet, Camarines Norte**, as the designated venue for the conduct thereof and ensure that the same is open to the public. Moreover, Applicant shall guarantee that, during the conduct of the expository presentation, the participation of the public shall not be impaired.

Any interested stakeholder may submit its comments and/or clarifications at least **one (1) calendar day** prior to the scheduled initial virtual hearing, via e-mail at docket@erc.ph, copy furnished the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph. The Commission shall give priority to the stakeholders who have duly submitted their respective comments and/or clarifications, to discuss the same and propound questions during the course of the expository presentation.

Moreover, any person who has an interest in the subject matter of the instant case may become a party upon compliance with Section 2 of Rule 4[2] of *ERC Resolution No. 31, Series of 2026* or the *2026 Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Energy Regulatory Commission* (2026 RPP) and thereafter filing a verified Petition to Intervene at least **five (5) calendar days** prior to the date of the initial virtual hearing, via e-mail at docket@erc.ph. The verified Petition to Intervene must follow the requirements under Section 1 of Rule 7 of the 2026 RPP, indicating therein and stating the following:

1) Applicable docket number and title of the proceeding;

2) Petitioner-intervenor's name, address, and e-mail address;

3) Nature of interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and

4) A statement of the relief desired.

A Petition to Intervene filed by an organization, association, or entity shall be accompanied by a Special Power of Attorney, Board or Sanggunian Resolution, a Secretary's Certificate, or any competent proof of authority, authorizing the signatory thereto to file the same and represent the organization, association, or entity in the proceedings before the Commission.

Likewise, all other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the case may file through e-mail at docket@erc.ph, copy furnish the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph, their Opposition or Comment thereon at least five (5) calendar days prior to the initial virtual hearing and subject to the requirements under Section 5 of Rule 7 of the 2026 RPP. No particular form of Opposition or Comment is required, but the document, letter, or writing should contain the following:

1) The name, address, and e-mail address of the person;

2) A concise statement of the Opposition or Comment; and

3) The grounds relied upon.

Any of the persons mentioned in the preceding paragraphs may access the copy of the *Application* on the Commission's official website at www.erc.gov.ph.

(*Remainder of page intentionally left blank*)

Finally, all interested persons may be allowed to join the scheduled virtual hearing by providing the Commission, through legal.virtualhearings@erc.ph, their respective e-mail addresses, indicating therein the case number of the instant *Application*. The Commission will send the access link/s to the aforementioned hearing platform within five (5) working days prior to the scheduled hearings.

**WITNESS,** the Honorable Chairperson and CEO **FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN** and the Honorable Commissioners **FLORESINDA G. BALDO-DIGAL, MARKO ROMEO L. FUENTES, AMANTE A. LIBERATO** and **PARIS G. REAL**, Energy Regulatory Commission in Pasig City.

FOR AND BY AUTHORITY
OF THE COMMISSION:

**ATTY. MARIA CORAZON C. GINES**[3]
*Director III, Legal Service*

LS: KAOF/JGGW

1 Rule 20, Section 1 of ERC Resolution No. 31, Series of 2026 or the 2026 Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Energy Regulatory Commission (2026 RPP)

2 Section 2. Registration Process. - Any person listed in the immediately preceding provision shall submit a Request for E-mail Registration (RER) through the Commission's online digital platform.

The RER shall be accompanied by a certification or authorization containing the following:
(1) designated e-mail address to be used;
(2) two (2) designated mobile numbers that the Commission's personnel can contact during working hours;
(3) names of the two (2) dedicated liaison officers authorized to manage and operate the designated mobile numbers and e-mail address; and
(4) copies of the company-issued identification cards (IDs) and/or government-issued IDs of the liaison officers who will handle the designated mobile numbers.

In case of natural persons representing themselves, the RER need not be accompanied by a certification or authorization.

3 Authority granted per Office Order No. 71, Series of 2025 dated 20 August 2025, with the subject "Approving/Signing Authorities for Consumer Complaints Cases and Interlocutory Orders".

Republic of the Philippines
**ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**
Pacific Center Building
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR CONFIRMATION AND APPROVAL OF EMERGENCY CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROJECT, NAMELY: PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW 10 MVA POWER TRANSFORMER IN REPLACEMENT OF THE DAMAGED 5 MVA POWER TRANSFORMER AT TALOBATIB SUBSTATION

ERC Case No. 2026-133 RC

CAMARINES NORTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CANORECO),
Applicant.
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

September 14, 2026

# APPLICATION

**APPLICANT CAMARINES NORTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CANORECO),** through counsel and unto this Honorable Commission, most respectfully alleges that:

## THE APPLICANT

1. CANORECO is a non-stock, non-profit electric cooperative, duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of the Philippines, with principal office at J.P. Rizal St., Brgy. 1, Daet, Camarines Norte;

2. It holds an exclusive franchise from the National Electrification Commission, to operate an electric light and power distribution service in the following municipalities of the province of Camarines Norte, namely: Basud, Daet, Labo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, San Vicente, Talisay, Jose Panganiban, Vinzons, Paracale, Capalonga, Sta. Elena and Mercedes.

## LEGAL BASES FOR THE APPLICATION

3. CANORECO submits for the Honorable Commission's confirmation and approval, its Emergency Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) Project, to wit: Purchase and installation of new 10 MVA power transformer in replacement of the damaged 5 MVA power transformer at its Talobatib Substation, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9136 otherwise known as the *Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001* or the "EPIRA", ERC Resolution 26, Series of 2009 and other pertinent rules, and in line with its mandate to maintain safe, reliable, secure and efficient operation of its power system;

4. On the other hand, the accompanying Application for Authority to Secure Loan is being filed pursuant to Section 20 (e) and (g) of Commonwealth Act No. 146 otherwise known as the "*Public Service Act*", which requires every public service to secure the approval and authorization of the Commission for issuance of any bonds or other evidence of indebtedness payable in more than one year.

## STATEMENT OF FACTS

5. The Talobatib 5 MVA Substation situated in Sitio Mineral, Brgy. Talobatib, Labo, supplies the thirty-seven (37) barangays of the municipality of Labo, seven (7) barangays in Paracale and three (3) barangays in Vinzons. The big loads being served by the substation are from department stores and small mining operations in Brgys. Benit, Napaod and Dalas, Labo.

6. On 19 June 2020, at around 7:45 A.M., the 5 MVA power transformer of Talobatib Substation was burnt due to a fire incident that started inside the Medium Voltage Switchgear (MVSG). The lightning arrester inside the MVSG blasted due to a possible short-circuit brought about by small spacing in the old set up of switchgear. Heavy smoke and fire spread out immediately reaching the XLPE power cable and the location of the power transformer.

7. Aside from the power transformer, medium voltage switchgear and XLPE power cable, other equipment such as the SF6 Circuit Breaker, Recloser and By-pass Switches were also damaged but not totally burnt. The Disconnect Switch, Current and Potential Transformers are also counted as part of the damaged equipment as they were exposed to high temperature during the fire incident and became brittle. As a result of the foregoing, the Talobatib 5 MVA Substation was almost totally damaged. Hence, the testing of equipment was no longer conducted.

8. As a temporary solution, CANORECO immediately restored power in the affected areas by distributing the loads of Talobatib Substation to the nearby substations, to wit: 15% of the load was connected to Malatap Substation, 20% was connected to Tawig Substation and the remaining 65% was connected to Calintaan Substation. This had to be done while the emergency purchase of a replacement unit was being processed.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

9. The project subject of the instant application is the emergency "Purchase and Installation of a New 10 MVA Power Transformer In Replacement of the Damaged 5 MVA Power Transformer at Talobatib Substation".

10. The project includes the supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of materials and equipment needed for the substation. The immediate installation of the substation from the metering point up to the power take-off will be on a per-phase basis. The first phase (Phase 1) is for an interim connection to immediately restore the operation of Talobatib Substation. The second phase (Phase 2) is the final connection configuration of the new Talobatib Substation.

## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

11. As of April 2020, Talobatib Substation was at percent loading of 83.6%. With the incident that happened on 19 June 2020, CANORECO deemed it most appropriate to procure a brand new unit of power transformer, with higher capacity, to achieve the benefits stated hereunder, to wit:

a. There will be sufficient capacity of power supply in the area to cater the increasing demand in the future;
b. Substation load management and load equalization among substations especially during period of maintenance, will be achieved;
c. The system capacity due to overloading will be corrected and improved;
d. Customer satisfaction and economic development will be improved upon having a reliable power supply; and
e. Loss of revenue will be avoided and customers will be encouraged to pay on time.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

12. The construction and installation of the new 10 MVA Power Transformer, protection equipment and other accessories were commenced on 12 October 2020. The energization or interim connection to immediately restore the operation of Talobatib Substation (Phase 1) was done on 13 November 2020; and the final connection configuration of the new Talobatib Substation or project completion (Phase 2) has been completed.

## PROJECT COST

13. The Project cost is in the total amount of Forty Million Pesos (PhP40,000,000.00) which covers the supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of the substation equipment (Phase 1) and the supply, delivery, installation of the MV Switchgear, construction of medium voltage switch room, civil works and steel works (Phase 2) for the uprating of Talobatib Substation from 5 MVA to 10 MVA.

## PROJECT FINANCING

14. To fund the project, CANORECO secured a loan from the Rural Electrification Financing Corp. (REFC) in the amount of Forty Million Pesos (PhP40,000.00) at an interest rate of 6.5% per annum, payable in fifteen (15) years. Securing long-term loan was a financial strategy to minimize the cash flow that will eventually be part of the cost of service to the member-consumer-owners.

## INDICATIVE RATE IMPACT

15. Based on CANORECO's annual cash flow cost, which reflects a positive result for the first year of implementation and a negative result for the second year, the total cost per kWh needed /shortfall is PhP0.0636. The net negative result for the second year of implementation indicates a shortfall, needing additional revenue requirement of PhP0.2962 per kWh. Shown in the Table below is the annual rate impact of the implementation of the project, to wit:

| PARTICULARS | Year 2020 | Year 2021 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Actual Energy Sales, KWH | 186,436,854.86 | 192,923,000.00 | 379,359,854.86 |
| Existing RFSC, Rate, PhP KWh | 0.4268 | 0.4268 | 0.4268 |
| Beginning Balance, PHP, excess/ (shortfall) | 23,223,267.60 | 33,020,720.67 | 56,243,988.27 |
| | | | |
| **FUND INFLOWS** | | | |
| Actual RFSC Collection, PhP | 66,147,720.83 | 78,222,559.58 | 144,370,280.41 |
| 50% Income on leased properties, PhP | 3,387,834.76 | 3,557,226.50 | 6,945,061.26 |
| Government Subsidy, PhP | - | - | - |
| Proposed Loan Proceeds From Financial Ins. | 40,000,000.00 | | 40,000,000.00 |
| Approved Financial Proceeds from Financial Ins. | 133,248,000.00 | - | 133,248,000.00 |
| Proposed Loan Proceeds From Financial Ins. | - | - | - |
| **Total Fund Inflows, PhP** | 266,006,823.19 | 114,800,506.75 | 380,807,329.94 |
| ***Available Fund for Disbursement*** | | | |
| | | | |
| **FUND OUTFLOWS** | | | |
| Proposed CapEx Requirement (Total cost incurred/ cost to be incurred) | 64,400,000.00 | - | 64,400,000.00 |
| Approved CAPEX Requirement (Approved total cost incurred) | 129,146,937.60 | - | 129,146,937.60 |
| Proposed CapEx Requirement (Total cost incurred/ cost to be incurred) | - | 132,789,568.10 | 132,789,568.10 |
| Proposed Annual Amortization | 997,083.33 | 3,988,333.32 | 4,985,416.65 |
| Approved Annual Amortization | 36,680,617.59 | 35,164,076.36 | 71,844,693.95 |
| Proposed Annual Amortization | - | - | - |
| Other Fees relative to CAPEX Application | - | - | - |
| Proposed ERC Permit Fees | 300,000.00 | - | 300,000.00 |
| Approved ERC Permit Fees | 1,461,464.00 | | 1,461,464.00 |
| Proposed ERC Permit Fees | - | - | - |
| **Total Fund Outflows, PhP** | 232,986,102.52 | 171,941,977.78 | 404,928,080.30 |
| Ending Balance, PhP, excess/(shortfall) | 33,020,720.67 | (57,141,471.03) | (24,120,750.36) |
| ***Rate Impact on RFSC, PhP/KWh, excess/ (shortfall)*** | 0.1771 | (0.2962) | (0.0636) |

## SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTARY AND PRE-FILING REQUIREMENTS

16. Finally, in compliance with the documentary requirements under ERC Resolution No. 26, Series of 2009 and pre-filing requirements under the Revised ERC Rules of Practice and Procedure, CANORECO is submitting herewith the following documents to form integral parts of this Application as follows, to wit:

| Annex Markings | Description of Documents |
|---|---|
| "A" | Write Up on the Emergency CAPEX Project |
| "B" series | Proof of furnishing of copies of the Application to the Offices of the Mayor and Sangguniang Bayan of Daet and the Offices of the Governor and Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Camarines Norte. |
| "C" series | Proof of publication of the Application in a newspaper in circulation in CANORECO's franchise area or where it principally operates. |

## PRAYER

**WHEREFORE**, premises considered, CANORECO respectfully prays of this Honorable Commission that after due notice and hearing, the Purchase and Installation of New 10 MVA Power Transformer in Replacement of the Damaged 5 MVA Power Transformer at Talobatib Substation, be approved and authorized accordingly.

Other reliefs, just and equitable in the premises are likewise prayed for.

Pasig City, Metro Manila, 10 June 2026.

**JEREMIAH D. FRANCISCO**
**Counsel for Applicant CANORECO**
Unit 1602 High Street South Corporate Plaza Tower 2,
26th St., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Roll of Attorneys No. 62302
PTR No. 3986950, dated 13 January 2026
IBP Lifetime Member No. 018969, RSM, 14 February 2018
MCLE Compliance No. VIII 0040630, 03 September 2025
E-mail: jdfrancisco115@gmail.com
Cellphone Number

## VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORUM SHOPPING

I, Zandro R. Gestiada, of legal age, Filipino, married and with office address at the Camarines Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CANORECO), J.P. Rizal St., Brgy. 1, Daet, Camarines Norte, after being sworn to according to law, depose and state that:

1. I am the General Manager and authorized representative of the CANORECO in the instant application, as evidenced by the Board Resolution attached hereto;

2. I caused the preparation of said Application and read the contents thereof, and I attest that the allegations therein are true and correct based on my personal knowledge as well as on authentic documents; and that the Application is not filed to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation;

3. I attest further that the factual allegations in the Application have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likewise have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for discovery;

4. I attest furthermore, that CANORECO has not commenced or filed any claim involving the same issues herein with any Court, Tribunal or Quasi-Judicial Agency or, I am not aware of any such other case or claim pending before any court, tribunal or quasi-judicial agency; and should I hereinafter learn that the same or a similar action or claim has been filed or is pending in the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals or any court, tribunal, or quasi-judicial agency, the cooperative shall report said fact within five (5) days from discovery thereof, to this Honorable Commission.

Further, Affiant sayeth naught.

**ZANDRO R. GESTIADA**
Affiant

**SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN** to before me in DAET, CAMARINES NORTE this 3rd day of JUNE 2026 by Zandro R. Gestiada who exhibited to me his SSS ID bearing No. [illegible]

Doc. No. 289;
Page No. 59;
Book No. XXXVIII
Series of 2026.

Notary Public
ATTY. ROLDAN F. QUINONES, CPA, MBA, CESE
NOTARY PUBLIC
CAMARINES NORTE
ATTORI
NOTARIAL C...
VALID UNTI 12/31/2027
PTR NO. 303 956; 01/05/26
IBP OR NO. 58 328; 01/05/2026
MCLE COMPLIANCE NO. VIII-00000107
VALID UNTIL 04/14/28



M. Standard – Oct. 30 & Nov. 6, 2026

# DOTr eyes EDSA Busway-style system to ease LRT-2 congestion

TRANSPORTATION Secretary Vince Dizon is planning to replicate the EDSA Busway system along the Antipolo-to-Legarda route in Manila to ease overcrowding at the Light Rail Transit Line 2 (LRT-2), particularly during morning rush hours.







**The Department of Transportation (DOTr) eyes an EDSA Busway-style system to help ease passenger congestion along the Light Rail Transit Line 2 (LRT-2), with buses being deployed as an alternative transport option.**

Dizon said the Department of Transportation (DOTr), in coordination with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), would initially deploy 20 buses for a trial run to accommodate passengers who cannot be served by the railway system.

The proposed bus service will run from Antipolo to Cubao, with the route extending to Legarda in Manila.

Dizon said the initiative aims to address the daily passenger overflow at LRT-2's Masinag station, where around 4,000 commuters cannot be accommodated between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m.

Commuters currently wait between 30 and 45 minutes just to board a train during the peak period.

Data from the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) showed that average daily ridership exceeded 200,000 passengers from August to October 2026, up from the average of 159,615 recorded in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Total passenger traffic also rose to 48.32 million in the first nine months of 2026, from 42.04 million during the same period last year.

"Only 10 trains are operational—that is the maximum," Dizon said, citing maintenance funding constraints and the need to replace railway components that have been in service for 27 to 35 years.

Dizon said the government would need to wait another three to four years for new train units to arrive, but funding for their procurement has yet to be secured.

In the meantime, the DOTr is working with MMDA to implement the bus service as an alternative for commuters traveling from Antipolo to Manila.

Dizon said each bus could accommodate between 45 and 70 passengers during rush hours, including standing passengers.

The proposed Antipolo-to-Legarda trip is estimated to take between 1.5 and two hours, although the DOTr will evaluate the route alignment and travel time during the trial run.

Based on the bus operator's initial estimate, the fare from Antipolo to Legarda would be P80, or P55 for students after the standard discount and about P66 for regular passengers.

Dizon said the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) would study the time-and-motion for the route.

Following the initial discussions, the DOTr will also work with transport advocacy group Move As One, public utility vehicle (PUV) operators, local government units and other stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive plan.

Dizon said that the congestion problem cannot be addressed overnight but said the government was exploring ways to make travel from Antipolo to Manila faster and more predictable.

He expressed hope that providing additional road-based transport options would help reduce passenger demand on LRT-2.

Meanwhile, Dizon said the government was also considering a public-private partnership (PPP) arrangement for the railway system, covering train procurement, operations and maintenance.

Under the proposed arrangement, the government would retain control over fare-setting, while the private sector would handle operations and maintenance, including the procurement and upkeep of trains.

He said private sector participation could help improve railway service delivery. **Darwin G. Amojelar**




## AirAsia PH posts 1,000% surge in Manila-Almaty passenger traffic

AIRASIA Philippines reported a sharp increase in Filipino travelers flying to emerging international destinations in 2026, led by a 1,000 perrcet surge in passenger traffic between Manila and Almaty, Kazakhstan, through its Fly-Thru service.

Based on the airline's passenger flown data comparing 2025 and 2026, Manila-Almaty traffic posted the highest growth among its Fly-Thru destinations.

Other routes also recorded significant increases, including Manila-Phnom Penh in Cambodia, which grew by 705 percent, Manila-Penang in Malaysia by 50 percent t, and Manila-New Delhi in India by 43 percent.

AirAsia Philippines President and General Manager Anna Victoria Lu said the figures reflect growing interest among Filipinos in exploring destinations beyond traditional holiday spots.

"It's exciting to see more Filipinos becoming open to exploring destinations they may not have considered before. Travel is not just about visiting the usual holiday spots anymore, it's about discovering new places, experiencing different cultures, and making more meaningful memories," Lu said.

She cited the strong growth in Almaty as an example of changing travel preferences among Filipino passengers.

Through its Fly-Thru service, AirAsia allows passengers to connect to multiple destinations through a single booking, eliminating the need to purchase separate tickets for connecting flights.

Lu said the airline aims to make international travel more accessible and convenient by offering connections to more destinations at competitive fares.

From Manila, passengers can access destinations including Almaty, Jaipur, New Delhi, Penang, the Maldives, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Shenzhen, Yangon, Sarawak, Sabah and Colombo in Sri Lanka.

From Cebu, Fly-Thru connections cover destinations such as Penang, Bali, Siem Reap, Hanoi, Da Nang, Singapore, Phuket, Jakarta, Colombo and Phnom Penh.

The airline uses Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu and Bangkok as major connecting hubs for its Fly-Thru network, allowing Filipino travelers to reach destinations beyond its direct flight routes through a single booking.

## PPA logs 16% drop in Undas passenger traffic

PASSENGER traffic at ports managed by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) declined by 16 percent during the 2026 Undas break, as shorter holidays and higher ferry fares may have discouraged travelers from taking trips.

Initial PPA data showed that 1.36 million passengers traveled through its ports from Oct. 27 to Nov. 2, down from 1.62 million recorded during the same period last year.

PPA General Manager Jay Santiago said several major ports experienced a significant decline in passenger volume, including those that typically see heavy traffic during peak travel periods.

At Batangas Port, passenger traffic on Oct. 31 reached only around 7,000 to 8,000, compared with the usual 17,000 to 21,000 passengers daily during peak seasons.

Santiago attributed the decline partly to the shorter Undas holiday break, which ran from Saturday to Monday, as well as an estimated 10 percent to 15 percent increase in ferry fares.

He also said that some travelers may have postponed their trips to take advantage of the longer break from Nov. 14 to 18, which coincides with the ASEAN Summit.

Among the ports recording lower passenger volumes was the Port Management Office (PMO) Panay/Guimaras, which remained the busiest in terms of passenger traffic. It handled 244,331 passengers during the period, down 25% from 326,440 last year.

PMO MarQuez, which oversees the newly opened and expanded Port of Lucena, recorded 43,211 passengers, lower than the 52,931 passengers in 2025.

Despite the lower passenger volume, the PPA continued implementing measures to make sea travel more affordable and comfortable during the holiday period.

## Commuter group backs Dizon's move to lift motorcycle taxi rider cap

THE Coalition of Filipino Commuters has expressed support for Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon's move to remove the cap on motorcycle taxi riders, saying the policy should be based on actual commuter demand rather than outdated limits.

In a statement, the group said the existing restrictions, which were established before the pandemic, no longer reflect current public transport conditions, particularly in Metro Manila where commuters continue to face limited transport options and severe congestion.

"For many commuters, motorcycle taxis are no longer just an alternative. They are how people get to work and school on time, filling the gaps left by congestion, limited public transport, and poor connectivity," the coalition said.

Citing Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) transport studies, the group noted that Metro Manila generates an estimated 16 million trips daily, arguing that limiting motorcycle taxi services could further strain the already overstretched transport system.

It said restricting the number of riders could reduce service availability, lengthen waiting times and leave commuters with fewer mobility options.

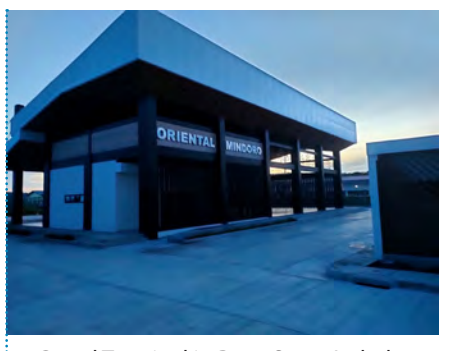
The coalition, however, emphasized that passenger safety, rider accountability, insurance coverage and service reliability should remain key considerations in regulating the industry.

It said regulations should improve safety and accountability without unnecessarily restricting access to motorcycle taxi services.

The group also called on regulators to consider the livelihoods of thousands of motorcycle taxi riders and their families, noting that the platforms provide an important source of income.




Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon




Grand Terminal in Brgy. Santa Isabel Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro

## Oriental Mindoro bids out transport terminal project

THE provincial government of Oriental Mindoro is seeking private sector partners for the operation and maintenance of its P56-million transport terminal in Calapan City under a five-year public-private partnership (PPP) contract.

The Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro (PGOM), through its Pre-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee, said the project would be awarded through competitive public bidding in accordance with Republic Act No. 11966, or the PPP Code of the Philippines.

The private partner will be responsible for financing the operationalization, maintenance and efficiency enhancements of the government-owned transport terminal located in Barangay Sta. Isabel, Calapan City.

Under the proposed lease arrangement, the winning bidder will pay lease rentals to the provincial government, which will also receive a share of the project's revenues based on an 80-20 sharing ratio.

The five-year PPP contract will cover financing, terminal operations, lease payments and liabilities for liquidated damages.

The project involves the development of a passenger terminal complex featuring a main terminal building with a waiting area, administrative office, toilets, and utility, storage and electrical rooms.

It will also include a covered waiting shed, 12 parking bays for PUV types 1 and 2, eight bays for PUV types 3 and 4, and 12 parking slots for private vehicles.

Other facilities include six rentable stalls, a dedicated driver's lounge, concrete roads, drainage canals, landscaping and signage.

The provincial government said the project aims to provide efficient and accessible mobility solutions to support the delivery of essential administrative, economic and social services to residents of Oriental Mindoro.

The proposed infrastructure is also intended to address current transportation requirements while accommodating future growth through inclusive and sustainable facilities.

The bidding is open to eligible local and foreign parties, subject to the qualification requirements under the Philippine Constitution, PPP Code and its implementing rules and regulations.

The Instructions to Bidders will be published on Nov. 27, 2026, while the qualification and bidding documents will be available from Nov. 27 to Dec. 11, 2026. Prospective bidders will be required to pay a non-refundable participation fee of P50,000.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2026
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NICKIE WANG, *Editor*
ANGELICA VILLANUEVA, *Writer*
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Manila Standard



# India's most expensive film sets ambitious sights on global box office

WITH a reported $420-million budget and more than a decade in the making, *Ramayana: Rise of a Legend* brings together Indian stars and Hollywood award-winning talent in what its makers are calling India's first truly global film release.

"People from all over the world came in to work on this project," actor **Ranbir Kapoor** told *AFP* in London ahead of its release. "So we really had the platform to really express (ourselves) in the best way possible."

Kapoor plays Rama, who battles demon king Ravana, portrayed by **Yash**, to rescue his kidnapped wife Sita, played by **Sai Pallavi**. The story draws from the ancient Sanskrit epic central to Hindu tradition.



Ranbir Kapoor takes on Rama in a $420-million adaptation of the ancient Sanskrit epic backed by international visual effects teams and an English-language version for overseas audiences

The film is packed with computer-generated effects, from flying elephants to giant demons. Producer **Namit Malhotra**'s visual effects company, DNEG, has won eight Academy Awards for films, including *Inception* and *Dune*. The score comes from Oscar-winning composers **Hans Zimmer** and **A.R. Rahman**.

Planned as a two-part production, *Ramayana* is being positioned as a major international release for Indian cinema, which has yet to win an Oscar in the leading film categories.

Malhotra called it the largest production in Indian cinema, comparing its scale to *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

India produces around 2,000 films annually, with its international audience growing through diaspora networks and streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. An English-language version and Hollywood-level effects are expected to help *Ramayana* reach viewers beyond India.

Produced by Prime Focus Studios and Yash's Monster Mind Creations, the film skips traditional Bollywood song-and-dance sequences but retains melodrama, romance, and action. Its English version runs nearly three hours.

Despite its international ambitions, Malhotra said the production remained faithful to its Indian origins. Yash, who also co-produced the film, described it as a meeting of Eastern and Western filmmaking.

Shot entirely in Hindi, the film was adapted for international audiences through a separate English-language version featuring dialogue recorded by the cast and voice artists. Visual effects teams worked across Mumbai, London, and Vancouver. **AFP**



Dingdong Dantes (left) and Marian Rivera play estranged parents who confront their past while helping their daughter hold on to happy memories amid a rare illness

# Five reasons to watch Dingdong Dantes and Marian Rivera's 'Remember'

By Nickie Wang

**DINGDONG Dantes** and **Marian Rivera** reunite on the big screen in *Remember*, following the success of Rewind, their previous film together, which remains one of the highest-grossing Filipino films of all time.

This time, Dingdong and Marian take on a family drama about love and second chances, filmed in Quebec, Canada.

Directed by **Mae Cruz-Alviar,** the film follows an estranged couple forced to confront their past when their daughter, played by **Zia Grace**, is diagnosed with a rare genetic illness that affects her memory. As they try to give her happy memories, they must also decide whether their relationship deserves another chance.

Here are five reasons to watch *Remember*, which opens in cinemas nationwide on Nov. 11.

**1. Another onscreen reunion after 'Rewind'**

Dingdong and Marian return as onscreen partners after *Rewind,* the blockbuster that became one of the highest-grossing Filipino films of all time. Their reunion in *Remember* gives audiences another chance to see their chemistry, this time in a story that tests the limits of love and commitment.

**2. They draw out the best in each other**

Dingdong credited Marian's portrayal of Ria for inspiring him to elevate his performance as Joseph.

"*Kakaiba talaga yung portrayal ni* Marian *dito. Kahit araw-araw ko na siyang nakikita, pero noong nag-roll na yung* camera *ni* Direk Mae*, talagang ibang tao yung nakita ko," he said. "Yung performance kasi ni* Marian gave me more reason to step up as Joseph."

Marian, meanwhile, said Dingdong's openness as an actor allowed her to explore Ria's emotions without hesitation.

"*Hindi ako natakot na magbigay ng iba't ibang klaseng emosyon na nasasakyan niya at ino-open niya, niyayakap niya, kaya naging madali sa akin na hubugin yung* character *ni* Ria," she said.

**3. Cruz-Alviar directs another family drama**

The film reunites the stars with director Cruz-Alviar, known for the blockbuster *Rewind*. Cruz-Alviar praised Dingdong and Marian for their passion and dedication to their craft, guiding them through a story built around family ties and complicated relationships.

**4. The story puts love and second chances to the test**

When their daughter's condition threatens to take away her memories, the estranged couple must set aside their differences and create happy experiences for her. Their journey forces them to confront past mistakes and consider whether they can rebuild the love they once shared.

**5. It carries a message of hope for families**

Marian said the film aims to give Filipino audiences hope and comfort as they face difficult and uncertain times. Through its story of a family dealing with illness and the possibility of loss, *Remember* explores the value of time, forgiveness, and the memories people create together.

The film also stars **Joross Gamboa, Kyle Echarri,** and **Ana Abad Santos**. It is a collaboration among ABS-CBN Studios, Star Cinema, APT Entertainment, AgostoDos Pictures, and Regal Entertainment.

*Remember* opens in Philippine cinemas on Nov. 11, followed by screenings in the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Australia, and New Zealand on Nov. 12, and in the United States, Canada, and Guam on Nov. 13. It will also screen soon in Malaysia and Singapore.

# Disney's biggest fan celebration heads to Singapore in 2027

DISNEY has announced the first programming details for *D23 Asia: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event*, a three-day convention featuring film and TV presentations, celebrity appearances, character meet-and-greets, panels, and merchandise.

The event will run from June 25 to 27, 2027, at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, with programming drawn from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, Disney+, and Hulu. Three evening presentations will take place on the Premiere Stage.

"Anyone who has experienced *D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event* knows how unforgettable it is, to step into the many worlds of Disney together with a community of fans that shares your passion," said **Carol Choi**, executive vice president of The Walt Disney Company Asia Pacific and incoming APAC president.



Mickey Mouse fronts a three-day gathering at Marina Bay Sands featuring studio presentations, character encounters, live performances, panels and exclusive merchandise for fans across Asia

"D23 Asia celebrates storytelling, creativity, and fandom in a way no other event can. We're bringing that spirit to Singapore and creating an ultimate fan event specifically for Asia, where fans can discover new worlds, foster new connections, and share the joy of great storytelling," she added.

The evening program opens on June 25 with the Studio Showcase, which will feature announcements, footage, and celebrity appearances tied to Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and other studio properties. The following night, the Disney+ Showcase will present upcoming Korean and Japanese series, along with new and returning international titles, with appearances by Asian creators and celebrities.

The event will close on June 27 with Disney Hits LIVE! at D23 Asia, a concert featuring songs from Disney and Pixar films, performed by Broadway stars with a live band and large-scale animation.

The convention floor will feature more than 15 experiences inspired by Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, Disney+, and Hulu. The Storytellers Stage will host panels and discussions with creators and performers involved in Disney films, series, and other productions, while Talent Central will have character meet-and-greets and special talent appearances. The Spotlight Stage will feature live entertainment, interactive activities, and fan programming throughout the three days.

The event will also have several retail areas selling collectibles, apparel, accessories, and other merchandise. The D23 Marketplace will serve as the main shopping area, with products based on Disney stories and characters.

Tickets to *D23 Asia: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event* will go on sale in late November. Visit D23Asia.com for more information.

NICKIE WANG, *Editor*
ANGELICA VILLANUEVA, *Writer*
JASPER VALDEZ, *Writer*

Manila Standard



**Pageant Concept**
**Eton Concepcion**



THE countdown to Miss Universe 2026 has begun as host country Puerto Rico raises the curtain on the opening of the much-awaited 75th Miss Universe pageant, with more than 120 contestants, including the Philippines' **Beatrice Rebecca Millan-Windorski**, vying for the world's most coveted beauty title.

**Miss Universe Philippines 2026 Bea Millan-Windorski aims to extend her advocacy work beyond the environment to include displaced communities and underserved populations**

# Bea Millan Windorski sets sights on fifth Miss Universe crown for PH

A welcome cultural event and public appearance are set at Bahia de Aguadilla on Thursday, kicking off the two-week "Diamond Anniversary" edition of the pageant.

The 24-year-old, 5-foot-11 Windorski, born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, to Filipino maternal and Polish-German paternal immigrants, holds a degree in history and international relations. She is widely predicted to be among the top contenders for the crown.

Before her departure for Puerto Rico, Windorski met with members of the media and well-wishers, including Miss Universe Philippines queens, during a sendoff held at Lime Resorts Manila. The event was organized by the MUP organization, led by Miss Universe president **Jonas A. Gafud**, MUPH executive vice president **Voltaire Tayag**, MUPH national director **Ara Arida**, and MUPH vice chairperson and chief creative officer **Paolo Arevalo**.

Wearing an archival **Rajo Laurel** creation titled "Tuguegarao" from the 2018 Archipelago Mapa collection, Windorski was radiant and exuded grace and confidence.

"I'm really proud to represent what it means to be a global citizen as a Filipina, as someone who had the opportunity to experience two different cultures and also to live across three different countries and over a dozen cities. I'm excited to continue my advocacy work. I really hope that throughout my six months as Miss Universe Philippines, I've been able to live up to my province and be a servant for all," Windorski, who is from San Juan, La Union, expressed during the sendoff.

"God willing, if I go to Miss Universe and am able to clinch the fifth crown for the Philippines, I'm excited to extend my work beyond just the environment but also to existing displaced communities, as I have done for refugee students, and to be a conduit of change for our most underserved communities and voiceless. It will be an honor to bring our flag to the international stage," she added.

The Miss Universe 2026 grand finale will be held at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot in San Juan on Nov. 25 (Manila time).

# Julia Montes takes on executive producer role in 'Sigabo'

**By Angelica Villanueva**

**JULIA Montes** is expanding her work behind the camera as executive producer of the television series *Sigabo*, adding production responsibilities to her acting career and role as CEO of wellness company Swiss Proli.

The actress revealed that her involvement in the series began when her partner, actor **Coco Martin**, surprised her by presenting her name for the project. What started as an unexpected opportunity eventually led to discussions about how she could contribute to the production.

"*Sa Sigabo, naging* super hands-on *ako kasi ang daming bago, ang daming* lesson, and *ang daming nangyari. Pero nung nag-start na yung* show, ongoing *ngayon. Ang dami pang pinag-aaralan kasi bago pa lang kami sa industriya*," Julia shared during a sideline interview at the launch of Swiss Proli Cell White Plus.

The actress credited the production staff for helping her understand the work involved in bringing a television show to audiences.

"*Kung tutuusin po, dapat ang mas ma-appreciate natin, 'yung lahat ng tao* behind. *Kasi iba ang trabaho,*" she said, pointing out that actors finish their scenes while production personnel continue working to keep the show running.

Coco has also offered advice as Julia navigates her responsibilities as executive producer. Among the lessons they have discussed is the importance of making time for their relationship despite their shared work commitments.

"*Marami siyang naging* advice *sa akin, pero ang naging* rule *kasi naming dalawa* is *huwag naming pababayaan or kakalimutan yung oras namin sa isa't isa*," Julia told *Manila Standard Entertainment*.

She added that they deliberately set aside time together without discussing work, since their professional responsibilities often dominate their conversations.

Her executive producer role reflects another side of Julia's career, which now includes overseeing business operations as CEO of Swiss Proli, a Filipino wellness brand she co-founded with chemist **Pinky Tobiano**.

Julia described her transition into entrepreneurship as a learning experience, particularly because she initially had little knowledge of the business world. She credited Pinky and the team for guiding her through product development, research and development, planning, and meetings.

"Currently, as of now, even though I'm part of this family, being a CEO, I still have a lot to learn," she said.

At the launch of Cell White Plus, the company's latest product, Julia explained that her involvement goes beyond endorsing a brand. She has invested in the business and participated in its development from the beginning.

"Maybe, we see artists that we really do endorse. But this time, it's not just to endorse. We really invest," she explained.

The product is part of Swiss Proli's lineup of wellness gummies. According to Pinky, Cell White Plus combines apple stem cell extract, glutathione, hyaluronic acid, hydrolyzed marine collagen, and vitamin C. The company describes the formulation as an addition to its existing products for weight management and sleep.

Julia said the business aims to offer products that fit into the daily routines of Filipinos while encouraging them to pay attention to their well-being.

For her, taking on these responsibilities means learning from the people around her while remaining committed to the work.

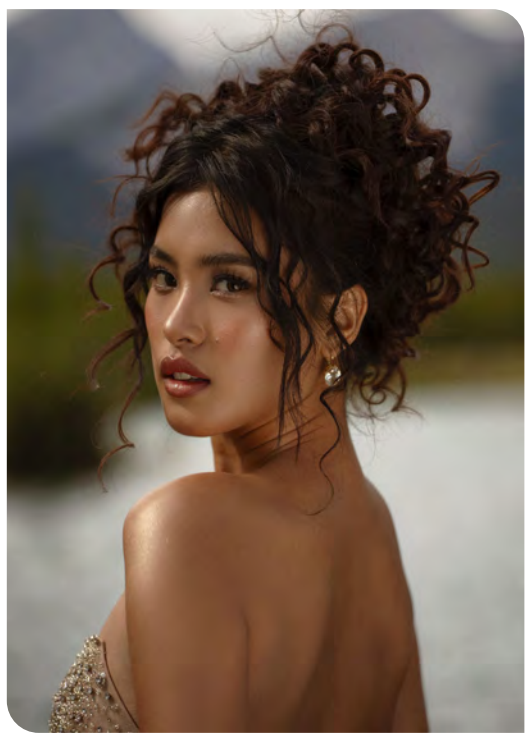
She acknowledged that managing a production and running a business come with challenges, but she remains grateful for the people who have guided and supported her.

"*Importante rin na inaalagaan natin ang sarili para hindi rin tayo ma-*burnout, *makapagbigay tayo ng* love *sa mga* loved ones *natin,*" she stated.



Julia Montes credits Coco Martin and the production staff for their support and guidance as she navigates her new responsibilities

# GMANetwork.com Awards returns for second year with new category









From left: Shuvee Etrata, Ashley Ortega, AZ Martinez, and Sofia Pablo are among the nominees in the Rising Kapuso Female Star of the Year category of the GMANetwork.com Award

THE GMANetwork.com Awards returns for its second year, giving Kapuso fans in the Philippines and abroad the chance to vote for their favorite artists and television programs.

Following its inaugural edition in 2025, the 2026 awards will feature interactive polls covering nine categories: Rising Kapuso Male and Female Star of the Year, Kapuso Male and Female Teen Star of the Year, Kapuso Couple of the Year, Kapuso Love Team of the Year, Kapuso Daytime Series of the Year, Kapuso Primetime Series of the Year, Kontrabida of the Year, and Comedian of the Year.

A new category, Kapuso Host of the Year, has also been added to this year's awards.

Voting runs until Dec. 28 through *www.GMANetwork.com/Polls*. Winners will be announced during the 2027 Kapuso New Year Countdown Special on Dec. 31.

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Manila Standard



# Korean noodle obsession takes three years to cook up, now in the Philippines



Local personalities take part in its introduction to Filipino consumers




The brand's executives frame the rollout around convenience and distinct flavor profiles, with more variants already planned

**By Nickie Wang**

ARIH, a modern noodle brand developed in collaboration with the K-pop supergroup **BTS**, officially entered the Philippine market on Oct. 27 with a launch event at Glorietta Activity Center. The event drew BTS fans and celebrities, including **Chanty Videla, Ysabel Ortega, Isabel Oli, Arci Muñoz,** and **Shaira Diaz**.

During the event, host **Sam Oh** revealed that the BTS members were personally involved in various stages of the product's development, from choosing flavors and noodle thickness to determining how well the noodles would absorb the sauce.

The three-year process involved extensive flavor testing, ingredient sourcing, and packaging development to bring the group's ideas to life.

One of the biggest challenges, Oh explained, was translating the flavors imagined by the members into actual products. The development team tested countless ingredient combinations to achieve the desired taste and texture, adjusting everything from the sauce's consistency to the noodles' ability to absorb it.

Even the packaging underwent an extensive development process. The team reportedly spent three days at a printing facility checking and adjusting colors to achieve the look envisioned for the brand.

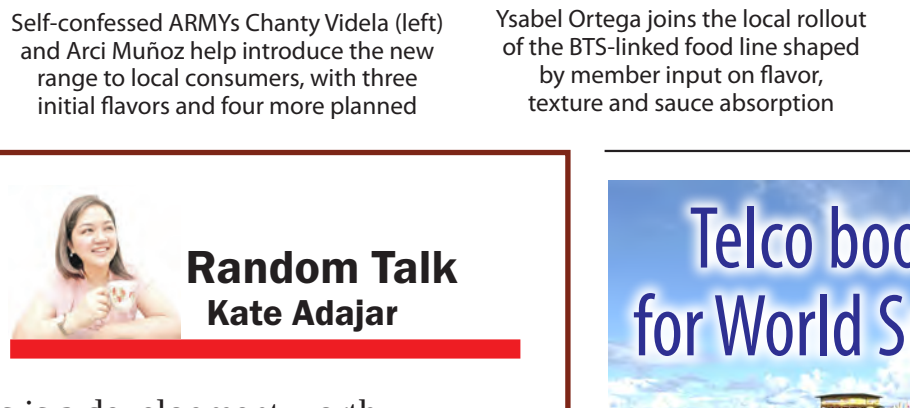
The result is a lineup of three Korean-inspired flavors: Soy Sauce Butter, which combines savory soy sauce with buttery notes and a hint of sweetness; Truffle Bulgogi, which delivers a rich savory taste with a subtle umami finish; and Black Pepper Tteokbokki, which pairs sweet and savory notes with a bold kick of black pepper.

"Inspired by the members of BTS, ARIH takes traditional Korean flavors and global creativity together for a modern experience that's a gourmet experience at home," said **Suzie Le**e, chief business manager of Nextrade Philippines.

**Edward Co**, business officer at Nextrade Philippines, described the Philippine launch as an important milestone for the brand, adding that the company hopes to establish ARIH among Filipino consumers through its combination of flavor, convenience, and modern dining.

"Its flavor has a personality of its own, and we can't wait for you to discover which one best suits your taste," a brand executive said.

The company also announced plans to expand the product lineup with four additional flavors: Vongole, Spicy Seaweed, Gochujang Butter, and K-Super Spicy Seaweed.



Self-confessed ARMYs Chanty Videla (left) and Arci Muñoz help introduce the new range to local consumers, with three initial flavors and four more planned



Ysabel Ortega joins the local rollout of the BTS-linked food line shaped by member input on flavor, texture and sauce absorption



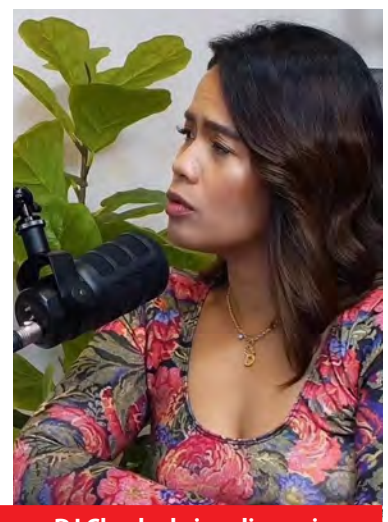
**Random Talk**
**Kate Adajar**

IT is encouraging to see how conversations about mental health are gradually becoming part of our everyday discourse. What was once considered uncomfortable, private, or even taboo is now finding its way into podcasts, interviews, social media platforms, and mainstream conversations. And I think this is a development worth recognizing these days.

# Maxine Giron: Helping transform stigma into open conversations



Licensed clinical psychologist Maxine Giron uses public platforms to explain emotional patterns, personal boundaries and when professional care is needed



DJ Chacha bring discussions on stress, anxiety, addiction and depression to the spotligjt through her 'From the Heart' podcast

For years, people who sought psychiatric or psychological help were often subjected to judgment. Depression was dismissed as sadness, anxiety as excessive worrying, and emotional struggles as a lack of faith or resilience. Some were told to simply pray harder, think positively, or get over whatever was bothering them. Seeking professional help could even invite unnecessary questions about and judgment on one's mental stability.

Thankfully, things are beginning to change.

Among the professionals contributing to this shift is licensed clinical psychologist **Maxine Giron**, whose growing presence in digital media has helped bring psychological concepts closer to ordinary audiences. These audiences express their appreciation for her through comments, with many saying they now understand the value of therapy.

With her clinical background, training in forensic psychology, and professional experience that includes working in a prison in the US with individuals serving life sentences, Maxine brings a perspective informed by both education and practice. What makes her participation particularly valuable is her willingness to take these conversations beyond the clinical setting and into platforms where people can learn, reflect, and perhaps recognize their own struggles.

Her podcast appearances cover a wide range of subjects.

On *Adulting with Joyce Pring*, in the episode "Healing Your 'Inner Child' Is Impossible Until You Learn THIS," she discusses childhood wounds and how early experiences can influence our emotional responses and relationships as adults. On *The Sexytime Podcast* with sisters Belle and Ava Daza, in the episode "Love, Baggage, & Everything In Between," the conversation explores emotional baggage in romantic relationships.

Her appearance on **Sam YG** and **DJ Chacha**'s *Lecheng Pag-ibig 'To* podcast, Episode 333, titled "Mental Health Issues Decoded," further contributes to making psychological concerns easier to digest.

Meanwhile, on **Rica Peralejo-Bonifacio**'s *Life Loading Podcast*, she discusses anxiety and stress, including the importance of recognizing our emotional capacity, setting boundaries, and avoiding the romanticization of overwork. Her appearance on DJ Chacha's *From the Heart*, Episode 66, "Why Do We Get Stressed So Easily? How to Stay Calm When Life Gets Overwhelming," also explores stress management and emotional regulation.

Another noteworthy discussion is her guesting on DJ Chacha's Episode 51, "Anger, Anxiety, Addiction and Depression: The Hidden Connection." The episode examines how childhood experiences and family dynamics influence adult behavior, how addiction may serve as a coping mechanism for underlying pain, and why understanding unhealthy patterns is important to recovery. It also touches on anxiety, trauma, parenting, and the importance of rest.

Taken together, these conversations demonstrate that mental health is not limited to diagnosing depression or anxiety. It also involves understanding our relationships, recognizing unhealthy coping mechanisms, establishing boundaries, and learning how to respond to life's challenges.

The growing interest in Maxine's work, including the reported surge in inquiries about her professional services and the difficulty some people experience in securing appointments, also points to a bigger concern. That is the reality that we need more qualified mental health practitioners who can meet the growing demand.

I also appreciate how Maxine has openly acknowledged feeling overwhelmed by the sudden increase in attention surrounding her work through a video she posted. Despite her professional background, she recognizes the importance of protecting her own mental well-being, managing her capacity, and establishing boundaries. It is a timely reminder that mental health professionals are human, too. Knowing how to help others does not make anyone immune to stress.

One message from Maxine's discussions that particularly stands out is the idea that a breakdown can become an opportunity for a breakthrough. It should not mean romanticizing suffering, but rather recognizing that difficult moments can prompt us to acknowledge what needs attention and when we need help.

The pandemic reminded us just how vulnerable our mental well-being can be. Isolation, financial uncertainty, disrupted routines, and separation from loved ones took an emotional toll on countless individuals. Its effects also reinforced the importance of accessible mental health services and supportive communities.

We have made progress, but the work is far from over. Depression, anxiety, addiction, and self-harming behaviors deserve serious attention, not judgment or dismissal.

I hope conversations like these continue, and that more qualified professionals find opportunities to educate the public through accessible platforms. We should be just as willing to seek help for our minds as we are for our bodies.

More importantly, asking for help is not an admission of failure. It is an acknowledgment that our well-being matters and that we do not have to figure everything out alone.

As I end this, I guess the greatest measure of progress is not simply how openly we talk about mental health, but how much more willing we become to understand, support, and help one another.

It is important to note, though, that when people come to us for help, especially when it comes to mental health, we can offer a listening ear but should exercise restraint in giving advice. We need to direct them to the right individuals who are trained to guide them. As Maxine cited in an example, if we see someone lose consciousness and we don't know how to perform CPR, we cannot just rely on our instincts and attempt it because we could do more harm. In all instances, we need to seek help from someone properly equipped to do the work.

*For your random thoughts, e-mail the author at randomrepublika@gmail.com.*

# Telco boosts Siargao 5G for World Surf League event



The telco stengthens mobile capacity around Cloud 9 in General Luna to heavier demand from athletes, media, residents and visitors

SMART Communications Inc., the wireless arm of PLDT Inc., is expanding its 5G coverage and capacity in key areas of Siargao Island ahead of the World Surf League (WSL) Championship Tour event at Cloud 9 in General Luna.

Running until Nov. 10, the competition marks the Philippines' first time hosting a stop on the prestigious WSL Championship Tour, drawing world-class surfers and an international audience to the island.

As the event's official telecommunications partner, Smart is enhancing its existing 5G coverage in General Luna, including Cloud 9, as well as Siargao Airport, Siargao Seaport, and other strategic locations. The upgrades aim to meet higher demand for mobile connectivity among athletes, media practitioners, content creators, spectators, residents, and local businesses.

"Siargao is an important tourism destination, and we are committed to supporting its continued growth through reliable connectivity. By further enhancing our 5G network in key areas, we are building on our established presence on the island to support the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors who drive its local economy," said **Lloyd R. Manaloto**, Smart first vice president and officer-in-charge.

He added that the WSL partnership would help deliver digital services to athletes, visitors, and local communities as Siargao welcomes the international surfing community.

Reliable mobile connectivity also supports everyday activities, from digital payments and accommodation bookings to transport arrangements, remote work, and real-time communication. Local businesses can use it to process transactions and reach customers.

Visitors attending the competition can use select Smart Unli 5G offers, which include unlimited 5G data and non-stop 4G data, starting at P90 for three days.

Smart Postpaid subscribers can also use the Smart Device Link feature to share their mobile number and plan with a smartwatch, allowing calls, texts and mobile data access even when their iPhone is not nearby.

Subscribers who avail of select offers at designated Smart booths and partner stores in Siargao may also receive freebies.

The network upgrades form part of Smart's continuing investment in mobile connectivity nationwide. The company has received recognition from global network intelligence firm Ookla for Best Mobile Latency and Best Mobile Video Experience.

Smart said it would continue strengthening its network in Siargao to support residents, businesses, and visitors during the WSL Championship Tour and beyond.



Key areas in General Luna receive added network capacity as international surfing brings more visitors and digital activity to the island