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FINALS-BOUND. Alexandra Eala celebrates after beating Greece's Maria Sakkari in their women's singles semi-final match at the Hong Kong Tennis Open in Hong Kong on Saturday, November 7, 2026. **AFP**

Eala stuns ex-World No. 3 Sakkari, barges into HK Open finale

FILIPINA tennis sensation Alexandra "Alex" Eala overcame former World No. 3 Maria Sakkari of Greece in a thrilling three-set, rain-delayed battle on Saturday to advance to the championship match of the Prudential Hong Kong Tennis Open.

The 21-year-old Eala displayed tremendous composure and fighting spirit to prevail over the Greek veteran 10 years her senior, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4, in their semifinal showdown at the Victoria Park Tennis Stadium.

Eala weathered Sakkari's challenge in a fiercely contested encounter, taking the opening set before the Greek bounced back to force a deciding third set.

But the Filipina ace held her ground in the crucial moments, producing the shots that mattered to close out the match and book her place in the final against American Claire Liu.

"I tried every point to stay there and step up myself. There was a lot of patience and it gave me time to really focus on the next points. I'm really happy that I was able to come out of that a better player," said Eala after the match.

The no. 17 Eala will now battle Liu for the singles' crown after the latter defeated Russian qualifier Alexandra Shubladze in the other semifinal, 7-5, 6-4.

The championship appearance gives the Mubadala Open champion Eala another opportunity to win on the WTA Tour as she seeks to cap her season with a title.

"The ability and the conscious choice to stay there and be positive was a really big point of my match today and my mentality. So bring that from the whole, I guess, not just Washington, but everything that I've learned this year to try to cap it off with a good match, win or lose. I'm really happy.

Turn to A4

Prosecution, defense both claim upper hand

VP's lawyer: Prosecution failed to establish case
Ridon, Tolosa: Defense can't dispute bank records

By Charles Dantes and Maricel Cruz

BOTH the prosecution and defense teams have claimed to have the upper hand in the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte ahead of the resumption of the proceedings tomorrow (Monday).

Duterte's camp claimed the prosecution failed to properly establish its case against the Vice President.

"The prosecution had its chance. It failed. On Monday, the Vice President begins her defense," said Duterte's spokesperson Salvador Paolo Panelo Jr.

House prosecutor Terry Ridon, for his part, said he does not believe the defense team will be able to dispute the bank balances presented earlier before the Senate impeachment court

After reviewing the list of witnesses submitted by the defense team, Ridon said their testimonies would not change the figures reflected in the bank records, particularly those bearing the Vice President's own declarations and signatures.

For Panelo, due process and fairness must prevail in the impeachment proceedings, saying an accused should not be condemned before being heard and that allegations must be supported by clear and convincing evidence presented before the court.

Duterte's defense presentation will focus on Article II of the impeachment complaint, the only remaining charge after the House prosecution panel withdrew three of the original four articles in October.

Article II involves allegations that Duterte accumulated at least P817.87 million in unexplained wealth and failed to properly declare assets and business interests in her statements of assets, liabilities, and net worth.

Ridon, however, noted that many of the documents presented by the prosecution were also identified as common exhibits by both sides, leaving little room for the defense to question their authenticity.

He said the defense appears to be hinging its argument on the premise that the vice president was unaware of the contents of the bank accounts.

Turn to A4

No Pax Silica deal during ASEAN meet in Manila this month — envoy

By Charles Dantes

WASHINGTON has no plans to announce the proposed Pax Silica Economic Security Zone during or after the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Leaders' Summit in Manila later this month, United States Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Lipton on Saturday said.

In a statement, the ambassador said they would make decisions on the proposed economic security initiative in full consultation with the Philippine government at the appropriate time.

"No such announcement on the Pax Silica Economic Security Zone was ever planned. Decisions will be made in full consultation with the government of

Turn to A4

ICC prosecution seeks testimony of former DDS cop in Rody's trial

By Gwyneth Nolasco

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has requested Trial Chamber III to admit recorded statements of an ex-Davao City police officer and alleged member of the Davao Death Squad (DDS), saying the evidence is "of particular importance" and shall be used in the crimes against humanity case of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

In a public redacted motion, Acting Prosecutor Mame Mandiaye Niang requested Trial Chamber III to admit 45 transcribed interview statements and 61 associated items from wit-

Turn to A4



JUBILANT LIGHTS. Solaire Resort Quezon City welcomes the festive season with its annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. From left: Solaire Resort Quezon City Vice President for Resort Operations Neil Reyes, Bloomberry Resort Hotels President and Chief Operating Officer Gregory Hawkins, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, PAGCOR Assistant Vice President for Gaming Licensing and Development Vina Oca, and Solaire Resort Quezon City Chief Operating Officer Damian Quayle.



ARTISTIC WELCOME. **Replicas of artworks by renowned Filipino visual artists, including this 'The Many Colors of San Francisco' by modernist Anita Magsaysay-Ho, are displayed along J.W. Diokno Boulevard in Pasay City as part of preparations for the ASEAN Summit 2026. Edd Castro**

Manila Standard journalist chosen for Australia fellowship

MANILA Standard foreign affairs reporter Katrina Manubay was selected as one of 13 fellows from several countries for the Southeast Asia Maritime Media Fellowship (SEA MMF) in Sydney and Canberra, Australia.

Manubay was joined by three other reporters from the Philippines, alongside nine journalists from Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The fellowship, held from November 1 to 6, was organized by the Blue Security consortium, led by the La Trobe Centre for Global Security, with support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

During the fellowship, the Southeast



Katrina Manubay

Asian journalists visited Australia's national offices, including Fleet Base East, the Royal Australian Navy's primary fleet base on the east coast.

Turn to A4

Meghan Markle's father arrested in US for child abuse photos

MIAMI – Thomas Markle, the estranged father of Prince Harry's wife, Meghan Markle, was arrested in Florida on Friday over alleged possession of images of child sexual abuse, officials said.

Markle, 82, is charged with one count of "possession of child pornography," US Attorney Bill Essayli said in a statement.

Pictures of child sex abuse have also allegedly been found at Markle's former home in the Philippines and at a storage unit he rented in Mexico.

The British tabloid The Sun reported last month that Markle's son, Thomas Markle Jr, had discovered the child sex

Turn to A4

Trump names hardliner Miller chief of staff after midterms rout
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Defense chief pays tribute to Filipino, American veterans
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Her next step: No woman walks through cancer alone
GOODLIFE / C2

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Comelec set to resume voter registration next week

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) is set to resume nationwide voter registration for the May 2028 National and Local Elections (NLE) next week.

In a social media post, the poll body announced that it will hold a Special Register Anywhere Program (SRAP) at Luneta/Rizal Park in Ermita, Manila, on Tuesday.

"Voter registration for the 2028 national and local elections is reopening! Now is the time to register and get ready for the upcoming elections," the Comelec said.

"The public is invited to visit and take advantage of the services available for voter registration and the issuance of Voter's Certificates."

Registration will run from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Applications that may be filed include registration for first-time voters; transfer of registration records (local to local); reactivation of registration records; change of name or correction of entries; inclusion or reinstatement of registration records; and transfer from a foreign service post to a local jurisdiction.

Applications for record updates will also be accepted from persons with disabilities (PWDs), senior citizens, Indigenous Peoples (IPs), indigenous cultural communities (ICCs), and other members of vulnerable sectors.

The commission said those unable to visit Luneta may file their applications at the Office of the Election Officer (OEO) covering their area of residence.

"Please bring a valid government-issued ID along with a photocopy," it said.

The Comelec, meanwhile, said the following documents will not be accepted as valid identification for voter registration: barangay identification or certification, community tax certificate (cedula), Philippine National Police (PNP) clearance, and company ID.

"Participate in the resumption of voter registration. Take this opportunity to register, update your voter registration records, and prepare for the 2028 National and Local Elections," the poll body added.

Meanwhile, the commission also announced that there will be no voter registration in Batanes and Naga City, as the province and the city will hold a special election and a plebiscite, respectively, later this month.

The poll body aims to register about 3 million voters over the nine-month registration period, which will end on July 30, 2027.



CREATIVE RESILIENCE IN PAPER. Paper sculptures by University of the Cordilleras and University of the Philippines Baguio Fine Arts students highlight the ReKusikos Contemporary Art Exhibit, part of the Ibagiw Creative Festival in Baguio City. Made from recycled materials, the works showcase the students' creativity and commitment to sustainable art. Conrad Rotor

IN BRIEF

Bam pushes measure providing free meals to schoolchildren

THE proposed measure providing free and nutritious meals to Kindergarten to Grade 3 students in public schools has moved closer to becoming law after its approval by the bicameral conference committee.

Senator Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, who led the Senate contingent as chairperson of the Committee on Basic Education, described the final version of the National Children's Nutrition Program Act, or Libreng Pagkain sa Paaralan, as a significant step toward addressing malnutrition and the education crisis. The measure will be transmitted to Malacañang for the President's approval once ratified by both the Senate and House of Representatives.

If enacted, the measure will provide free, nutritious meals to all public school students from Kindergarten through Grade 3. It will also cover nutritionally deficient students in Grades 4 to 6. Aquino said the consolidated version extends the school feeding program from 120 days to the entire academic year. **Joel E. Zurbano**

Acidre urges support for regional universities in global education push

THE Philippines must ensure that regional colleges and universities are not left behind in its push to expand international higher education opportunities.

Thus said House Committee on Higher and Technical Education chairperson and TINGOG Party-list Rep. Jude Acidre, who called for stronger institutional support to make global academic partnerships accessible beyond major cities.

"Transnational higher education should not become an opportunity concentrated in a small number of already established universities. It should contribute to raising institutional quality across the Philippine higher education system," Acidre said at the launch of the Philippines' National Strategy for Transnational Higher Education during the ASEAN-UK Higher Education Week 2026.

Maricel V. Cruz

Mandaue City steps up campaign against cervical cancer

MANDAUE CITY—As cervical cancer cases in Central Visayas climbed nearly five-fold in four years, Mandaue City is intensifying its campaign against the disease through school-based HPV vaccination and efforts to address misconceptions about the vaccine.

Local government and health officials gathered at bai Hotel on November 7 for a media forum launching the city's campaign to eliminate cervical cancer through prevention. Department of Health (DOH) Central Visayas data showed that suspected or confirmed cases in the region rose from 51 in 2021 to 241 in 2024, while deaths increased from 45 to 163 over the same period.

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among Filipino women, with 7,200 to 7,829 new cases and 3,389 deaths recorded annually nationwide. Nearly all cases are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV), which can be prevented through vaccination, screening, and timely treatment.

Minerva Newman

Beijing thanks Philippine authorities for repatriating 115 Chinese nationals

By Charles Dantes

BEIJING on Saturday expressed gratitude to Philippine law enforcement authorities for their assistance in repatriating more than 100 Chinese nationals suspected of involvement in illegal gambling and fraud.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila said Friday's joint operation demonstrated the continuing cooperation between the two countries in pursuing individuals involved in gambling-related crimes and fraud.

The operation involved the repatriation of 115 Chinese nationals arrested during separate enforcement operations against suspected illegal Philippine offshore gaming operator (POGO) activities in Zamboanga Sibugay and Cubao, Quezon City, in October.

"This marks another major achievement in our joint efforts to combat transnational crime. China appreciates the assistance provided by relevant Philippine law enforcement authorities," the embassy said.

The Bureau of Immigration said 62 of the deportees were arrested in Zamboanga Sibugay on October 2, while 53 others were apprehended in Cubao on October 12. They were flown to China aboard a chartered China Southern Airlines flight following the issuance of summary deportation orders by the BI Board of Commissioners.

"China's resolve to combat transnational crimes, including gambling and fraud, remains unwavering," the embassy said.

"We stand ready to continue close cooperation with Philippine law enforcement authorities and take all necessary measures to safeguard orderly personnel exchanges and economic and trade cooperation between the two countries," it concluded.



SCREEN-FREE SATURDAY. Children and parents enjoy games, puppet shows, storytelling and other activities during the Quezon City Public Library Pop-Up Fair at Quezon Memorial Circle, promoting learning, social interaction and family bonding without gadgets. **Joy Belmonte Facebook Page**

MIAA transfers control of CCTV cameras to firm

By Joel E. Zurbano

THE Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) transferred operational control of over 2,100 CCTV cameras at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) to New NAIA Infra Corp. (NNIC).

The transfer of operational control forms part of the transition of airport operations and maintenance responsibilities to NNIC, the private concessionaire, pursuant to the Public-Private Partnership Concession Agreement.

Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon, MIAA Senior Assistant General Manager Ma. Lourdes Reyes, and NNIC executive assistant to the president and chief executive officer Cesar Chiong witnessed the turnover.

Dizon recently scolded MIAA officials for delaying the transfer of CCTV control to the private operator, stressing that the delay had exceeded a year, particularly following a theft incident in which the footage was inaccessible.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) chief gave MIAA officials until the end of November to complete the turnover, warning that those who failed to comply would be fired.

Sen. Raffy Tulfo earlier raised concerns about airport security in Manila, citing the incident involving French national Anthony Boukhors, who was robbed of luxury watches at NAIA Terminal 1.

The senator said all CCTV cameras must be fully operational before the holiday season to strengthen airport security. He also called for the adequate deployment of authorities throughout airport premises to ensure prompt responses to incidents and prevent criminals from taking advantage of the expected influx of travelers.

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Teodoro honors Filipino and American war veterans

By Vince Lopez

DEPARTMENT of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. on Saturday paid tribute to Filipino and American veterans for their sacrifices and service in defense of their respective countries, emphasizing the responsibility of present generations to preserve the freedoms and shared values they fought for.

Speaking at the commemoration of US Veterans Day 2026, Teodoro said veterans deserve recognition not only for their ultimate sacrifices but also for the personal opportunities they set aside when they entered the profession of arms.

"When they chose or found themselves at the crossroads of serving their countries in the profession of arms, they removed other options in their lives: the chance to perhaps chase a dream, the chance to have higher education, the chance to have a family, or the chance to continue caring for their families," he said.

He emphasized that those who made the ultimate sacrifice must be remembered, while those who continue to live among us must be honored through genuine care and recognition of their service.

Teodoro also highlighted the role of veterans in shaping the histories of both countries, particularly through their shared fight for common values and efforts to repel aggression.

"These veterans, being protagonists in both our countries' histories, in a common fight for shared values, in a common fight to repel aggression, serve as inspirations to the continuing fight for active preservation of the freedoms that we enjoy, and to build the patrimony that both our countries' future generations deserve," he said.

The Defense chief also stressed that honoring veterans must go beyond commemorative ceremonies, emphasizing that present generations have a continuing responsibility to ensure that their sacrifices are not wasted.

"However, the greater sacrifice is to continue and not waste the sacrifice they made. That is the ultimate duty that we owe those… who chose an option or found themselves in a situation where we are living today because of them," Teodoro said.

His message underscored the enduring significance of the Philippines-US partnership, built on a shared history of service, sacrifice and commitment to defending freedom.



HONORING VETERANS. Defense Secretary Gilberto C. Teodoro Jr. pays tribute to Filipino and American veterans during the 2026 United States Veterans Day commemoration at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, honoring their sacrifices and service in defending freedom and shared values. Department of National Defense Facebook Page

Catholic bishop urges lay organizations to work together

By Vito Barcelo

AN official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has urged lay organizations to set aside rivalry and self-interest, saying they must work together to strengthen the Church's mission and bring the Gospel closer to communities.

Bishop Severo Caermare of Dipolog, chairman of the CBCP's Episcopal Commission on the Laity, made the appeal during the opening of the first National Layko Assembly in Cebu City.

Caermare said the Church's call for synodality, or walking together, requires lay organizations and movements to collaborate rather than focus solely on their individual identities, programs and activities.

He warned that groups risk becoming isolated when they prioritize protecting their own interests instead of working toward a common mission. He stressed that lay members are not competitors but partners entrusted with serving the Church.

The bishop said routine meetings and organizational activities should not be mistaken for meaningful participation in the Church's mission, which requires active engagement in communities and society.

He cited weakening family ties, corruption, poverty, political divisions and declining religious participation as challenges that demand a united response. He urged lay leaders to strengthen communication, find creative ways to spread the Gospel and deepen their involvement in society.

The assembly gathered 208 delegates from 58 lay organizations and movements nationwide under the theme, "One Laiko, One Mission, One Church: Gathering, Connecting, Moving Forward in Synodality."

BCDA signs three lease deals for major tourism projects

By Dexter See

BAGUIO CITY — The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) has signed three lease agreements for leisure, recreation and tourism developments in Clark, Pampanga, and Camp John Hay, Baguio City, bringing additional investments, jobs and economic activity to the areas.

"Through these lease agreements, we are opening more opportunities for private sector partners to invest in BCDA properties and develop facilities that respond to the needs of visitors, businesses, and surrounding communities. These projects will help generate economic activity, create jobs, expand leisure and tourism offerings, and make productive use of our properties," BCDA president and CEO Joshua M. Bingcang said.

The first contract, with Grace Farm Nature Resort Corp., covers a 15-year lease for a leisure and recreational development in Clark, Pampanga. Under the agreement, Grace Farm committed to investing at least P50 million in the development, construction, improvement and enhancement of the project within the initial lease period.

"We are committed to developing and managing our resort with dedication, professionalism, and respect for the standards and vision of BCDA. More than building a successful resort, we hope to create a place where people can relax, enjoy nature, and make lasting memories," Grace Farm Nature Resort Corp. Director Daniel S. Chung said. "We also hope this project will contribute to local tourism, create opportunities for employment, and bring positive benefits to the surrounding community."

The second agreement covers a 500-square-meter development in Camp John Hay, which BCDA leased to Anrey Inc. for the establishment of a Sizzling Plate restaurant. The Baguio-based restaurant brand, which has served the local dining scene for 47 years, plans to bring its offerings to Camp John Hay. Anrey has committed to investing at least P15 million in the development of the leased property within one year of signing the contract.

The third lease agreement, with Zoo and Theme Park Services Inc., covers the development of an integrated educational family adventure park in Camp John Hay. The project will feature a nature adventure park and other facilities under its approved development plan.

The company has committed to investing at least P20 million in the development of the leased property within 10 years of signing the contract. The project will also follow green development principles, including measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, water and power consumption, and waste generation.

"We hope that through this initiative, we can contribute to the growth of tourism in Camp John Hay, create opportunities for the community, and further enhance its appeal as a destination for both local and international visitors," Zoo and Theme Park Services Inc. Business Development Head Ren Christopher A. Siccion said.

Through the lease agreements, BCDA maximizes the use of its properties while creating opportunities for communities to benefit from their economic potential.



ANTI-SMUGGLING OPERATIONS. The Naval Command Western Mindanao seizes 2,581 master cases of suspected smuggled cigarettes and motorized vessels worth P397.81 million in three maritime operations off Sulu from Oct. 29 to Nov. 1, bringing its total apprehensions to 76, valued at approximately P4.5 billion. **NCWM Facebook Page**

IN BRIEF

Tropical depression develops outside PAR, says PAGASA

THE Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) on Saturday reported that a low-pressure area outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) had developed into a tropical depression.

In its 24-hour tropical cyclone formation outlook issued at 10 a.m., PAGASA said the weather disturbance was moving west-northwestward at 30 kilometers per hour.

It was last spotted 2,400 kilometers east of extreme northern Luzon.

The tropical depression had maximum sustained winds of 65 kph and gusts of up to 80 kph.

PAGASA advised the public to continue monitoring its weather updates. **Gabriel Oliva**

Minority lawmaker seeks hike in monthly PERA to P8,000

A HOUSE minority lawmaker has pushed for the passage of a measure seeking to increase the monthly Personnel Economic Relief Allowance (PERA) of government employees from P2,000 to P8,000 to help them cope with rising prices of basic goods and transportation.

Akbayan Party-list Rep. Chel Diokno said the proposed House Bill 3874 would provide much-needed relief to public servants amid the rising cost of living. He noted that PERA was last adjusted in 2009 under Joint Resolution No. 4 of Congress.

Diokno said government employees, particularly those in lower salary grades, need at least P8,000 to recover the allowance's lost purchasing power and help cover daily expenses and family needs.

The measure covers national and local government personnel, whether appointive or elective, and regular, contractual or casual employees covered by Republic Act No. 6758. It also includes military and uniformed personnel, except those stationed abroad who already receive overseas allowances.

Diokno filed the bill with fellow Akbayan Party-list Reps. Perci Cendaña and Dadah Ismula, and Dinagat Islands Rep. Kaka Bag-ao as co-authors. **Maricel V. Cruz**

DepEd reports it saved P1.4b in recent laptop procurement

THE Department of Education (DepEd) said it saved more than P1.4 billion after procuring 231,725 laptops for public school teachers through what it described as a landmark open and competitive bidding process.

The procurement covers 169,008 macOS-based and 62,717 Windows-based laptops under 78 contracts. MacBook Neo units cost between P41,200 and P42,700, below Apple's P49,990 retail price for the base model, while Windows-based units cost between P41,000 and P42,200. Both are within DepEd's budget ceiling of P42,718 per unit.

DepEd said the package also includes a five-year warranty, preinstalled productivity tools, free nationwide delivery and training for recipients, with an estimated commercial value of more than P70,000 per unit. Education Secretary Sonny Angara said the competitive bidding helped save taxpayers money while securing extended warranty coverage for teachers.

Laptop distribution is scheduled to begin on Nov. 9, with suppliers given until March next year to deliver all units. DepEd will issue distribution guidelines prioritizing schools and teachers that have not yet received government-provided laptops.

First-time recipients who serve as education technology champions, helping fellow teachers integrate technology into basic education classrooms, will also be prioritized. **Gabriel Oliva**

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WORLD

‘Mass disobedience’ pushed as France faces new protests

PARIS – French unions and student groups took to the streets for another day of protests on Saturday, while the Yellow Vests movement plans a separate rally in central Paris despite a ban by authorities.

The demonstrations follow weeks of youth-led unrest and nationwide strikes that drew hundreds of thousands of workers protesting over the rising cost of living.

They come less than six months before voters elect a new head of state to replace centrist President Emmanuel Macron, with the far right leading in the opinion polls.

Student groups and trade unions have called for an authorized march in central Paris “against the high cost of living and in support of young people.”

Yellow Vests activists, however, have refused to join, instead calling for a separate rally at Place de la Concorde, near the lower house of parliament and presidential palace, despite a ban by authorities.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said 70,000 police officers and security forces would be deployed across the country.

“If there are any rioters or looters... we’ll be ready and waiting for them,” he said.

The demonstrations have been largely peaceful, but there have at times been clashes with police or vandalism on their sidelines, including on October 17, when France saw its worst rioting in years.

On Thursday, hundreds of thousands of striking workers took to the streets across France in mostly orderly protests, although clashes between demonstrators and police broke out in several cities.

The Yellow Vests movement, which staged street protests eight years ago against Macron’s government over planned fuel-tax hikes, has called for its banned rally to go ahead.

“We are calling for mass disobedience,” said Benjamin Ball, a member of its coordinating committee.

Authorities are determined to prevent a repeat of the rioting and looting that marred the October 17 demonstrations, although the interior ministry said Thursday’s protests had “generally gone well” despite 642 arrests.

The police response has faced criticism for being heavy-handed, with dozens of internal investigations launched into allegations of brutality against demonstrators.

Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu has said he will discuss wages and purchasing power with representatives of trade unions and employers’ organizations on Monday.

“The only thing that will bring the protests to an end is a response to the demands that have been put forward for several weeks by workers, civil servants, young people and pensioners,” an inter-union coalition said on Friday.

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.

With the European Union’s second-largest economy under pressure to rein in debt, the government has limited scope to appease protesters. **AFP**



KEEPSAKE. A woman takes pictures next to decorations at Central Park in New Delhi ahead of Diwali celebrations, the Hindu festival of lights, today (Sunday). AFP

Malaysian king flags delay in Najib’s release

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysia’s king said Saturday that the attorney general risked denying a royal order by delaying ex-prime minister Najib Razak’s release from prison, adding there was no ambiguity to the pardon he was granted.

The 73-year-old Najib was jailed for his role in one of the largest-ever global plunders of a sovereign wealth fund, the now-defunct 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

But King Sultan Ibrahim granted him a conditional pardon in September, allowing him to serve out the rest of his sentence at home provided he pay a $12 million fine.

On Friday, the country’s attorney general blocked the former prime minister’s transfer to house arrest after the fine was paid, saying his office needed more clarification on the pardon.

The king said Saturday there was nothing to clarify, calling the pardon “clear, evident and without any ambiguity.”

“There should be no confusion in interpretation,” King Ibrahim said in a statement, adding it was not tied to any other cases against the former leader.

“Given that all conditions in the conditional pardon order have been fulfilled, any argument questioning the order leads towards denying the order of His Majesty the King.”

Najib’s lawyers thanked the monarch on Saturday, saying there was “no basis” for authorities to keep Razak in prison “a moment longer.”

“They must transfer him immediately to his residence at Jalan Langgak Duta to serve his house arrest, as His Majesty has ordered,” lawyer Farhan Shafee said in a statement.

The attorney general’s office issued its own statement shortly afterwards, denying it was challenging the king’s authority while giving no indication if it intended to immediately release Najib.

“This step is not aimed at delaying or denying the implementation of the Conditional Pardon Order, but to avoid any conflict in the implementation of the orders in force and to ensure no sentence is implemented unlawfully,” it said. **AFP**

Trump names hardliner Miller chief of staff after polls rout

WASHINGTON – US President Donald Trump on Friday (Saturday, Manila time) named Stephen Miller, architect of his hardline immigration policy, as his new chief of staff, signaling a bare-knuckle fightback after Republicans were hammered in the midterms.

Ultra-loyalist Miller, 41, will replace Susie Wiles, who becomes the first major White House casualty from the Democratic landslide earlier this week.

Democrats pledged they would fight “every step of the way” against Miller, who became synonymous with scenes of masked immigration agents committing violence after he backed federal agents who shot and killed two Americans.

“I wanted to make a change,” Trump told reporters at the White House when asked why he named Miller to replace Wiles.

“Sometimes in life you have to make moves.”

Trump’s move was particularly startling as he had repeatedly insisted before the midterms that there was “zero chance” of replacing Wiles.

A White House official told AFP that Wiles had resigned on Thursday night.

But naming the combative Miller was the clearest possible signal from Trump that the gloves are now off after his brief conciliatory gestures to Democrats in the wake of the Republican midterms collapse.

“He’s a great fighter,” Trump said later at the airport in West Palm Beach, Florida, where he was accompanied by Miller. “He’s been with me right from the beginning...and he’s very loyal.”

Miller has been one of Trump’s closest aides for decades, pushing nativist policies that gelled with Trump’s “America First” agenda.

At Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort home on Friday night, Miller addressed a crowd of party faithful to lavish Trump with praise, pledging his undying loyalty.

“It is the honor of my life to be President Trump’s chief of staff,” Miller said in a video posted to the president’s Truth Social account.

As Trump’s deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security advisor, he was the brains behind the mass deportation program that defined the first year of the president’s second term.

But he faced widespread criticism after the deadly shootings of two protesters by immigration agents in Minneapolis in January -- incidents that sparked mass demonstrations.

“Stephen Miller is the architect of the most barbaric, inhumane policies of this administration. Trump couldn’t have made a worse choice,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer posted on X.

“Our Democratic majorities will fight him every step of the way.”

In a post on Truth Social earlier announcing Miller’s appointment, Trump described him as “one of my most trusted advisors.”

Trump said Wiles had “done an outstanding job” and would be “moving over to the Trump Political Operation. I want to thank her for her service as Chief of Staff – She has done a great job!” **AFP**

Manila...

From A1

They also participated in a roundtable at La Trobe University, where they shared their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on reporting maritime issues.

La Trobe Centre for Global Security Director Dr. Bec Strating said the fellowship aims to provide a platform for concerns about maritime issues shared by countries in the region.

The fellows also had the opportunity to attend a master class centered on Southeast Asia and Australia in the maritime Indo-Pacific, led by international scholars in maritime and defense studies.

Meghan...

From A1

abuse images while going through boxes found in his father’s former home in Cebu.

“Mr. Markle is accused of possessing child sexual abuse material, including photographs depicting himself with minor girls,” Essayli said. “These allegations are extremely serious, and we will prosecute Mr. Markle to the fullest extent of federal law.”

Markle was taken into custody by FBI agents early Friday at the retirement home where he lives in Lakeland, Florida.

The Justice Department said Markle allegedly “kept child sexual abuse material (CSAM), including sexually explicit photographs of himself with prepubescent girls, in two Los Angeles-area storage units he rented for nearly two decades.”

“Inside the units, agents seized approximately 78 items, including slides, film negatives, and books that contained suspected CSAM,” it said.

Markle could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted of possession of child sex abuse material.

Meghan Markle said last month that she was “deeply distressed” by accusations that her father possessed images of child sexual abuse.

She said she had blocked contact between him and her children over previous “troubling and disturbing” allegations.

Harry, the second son of King Charles III and estranged brother of heir to the throne Prince William, married Meghan, an American former actress, at Windsor Castle in May 2018.

The couple left Britain and quit royal duties in 2020 but made an unexpected return with their two children to live in the United Kingdom in August. **AFP**

No...

From A1

the Philippines at the appropriate time,” Lipton said.

“As stated previously and as part of this process, we expect rigorous discussions on impacts to all stakeholders,” he added.

The envoy also said Washington expected rigorous discussions on the initiative’s potential impact on all stakeholders as part of the consultation process.

The Philippines joined the US-led Pax Silica initiative in April, becoming its 13th signatory.

Under the initiative, the two countries announced plans to establish a 4,000-acre industrial hub in the Luzon Economic Corridor to strengthen supply chains for critical minerals, semiconductors, electronics and other strategic industries.

The proposed hub is envisioned as an investment and advanced manufacturing center that would attract private-sector investments, strengthen industrial capabilities and support the development of technology-related industries.

Meanwhile, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said the Philippines is 90 to 95 percent ready to host the 49th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits on Nov. 15-17, with preparations nearing completion ahead of the arrival of world leaders.

Eala...

From A1

So I’m gonna try to be positive going into the final,” Eala added.

Eala entered the semifinals after beating Croatia’s Antonia Ruzic, 7-6 (7), 7-5, in the quarterfinals. She also defeated Czech Tereza Valentova, 6-4, 7-6 (7), and Australian Emerson Jones, 6-4, 6-3, in the earlier rounds.

Meanwhile, Liu produced a clinical performance on Centre Court to defeat rising Russian qualifier Shubladze 7–5, 6–4 to book her place in the Sunday championship match.

The 26-year-old world No. 102 dictated the pace from the very first ball, weathering an aggressive baseline assault from her 21-year-old opponent. The victory extends an immaculate week for Liu, who has steamrolled through the draw without dropping a single set.

With the victory, Liu continues an absolute tear through Hong Kong. Before halting Shubladze’s fairytale qualifier run, the American dismantled Tatiana Prozorova, Zeynep Sönmez, and eighth seed Katie Boulter, all in straight sets.

ICC...

From A1

ness P-0002.

The prosecution said P-0002 provided evidence on “Mr. Duterte’s individual criminal responsibility and mens rea” or criminal intent, including “contextual elements of crimes against humanity during the mayoral period” of the Duterte patriarch.

P-0002 also accounted for the DDS’s origins, structure and purpose and elaborated on “the scope of the Common Plan in Davao City and the role of co-perpetrators during the mayoral period.”

“In relation to the contextual elements of crimes against humanity, P-0002’s evidence is relevant to the widespread nature of the attack, targeting of alleged criminals, and the DDS’s modus operandi in Davao City during the charged period,” the prosecution wrote.

The prosecution noted the evidence of the witness supported the existence of a policy to target alleged criminals in Davao City through “(i) the provision of financial incentives; (ii) the use of State and civilian forces; and (iii) the dissemination of this policy by Mr. Duterte to the perpetrators.”

Prosecution...

From A1

In the case of her Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALNs), House prosecution spokesperson Benjamin Tolosa Jr. Duterte could not simply disclaim responsibility for their contents because she personally signed the documents and attested to their truthfulness under oath.

“It wasn’t the staff or the employee who prepared these documents—the documents intended for the public official. Ultimately, the person who signed the SALN was the public official—in this case, the Vice President herself,” Tolosa said.

The defense team has already submitted an initial list of 25 intended witnesses, including corporate representatives, local government officials, and bank executives who are expected to testify on matters involving Duterte’s business interests, properties, income, and financial records.

Former University of St. La Salle College of Law dean Ralph Sarmiento, initially listed as the defense’s first witness to discuss constitutional principles relevant to the case, has since declined the invitation.

The Senate impeachment court is scheduled to resume hearings tomorrow, November 9, with Duterte’s defense expected to begin presenting its evidence.

OTHEL V. CAMPOS, *Issue Editor / email: extrastory2000@gmail.com*

Leading audit firm names new chairman, country managing partner


Sabado

SGV & Co., the country's largest professional services firm, has appointed Michael C. Sabado as chairman and country managing partner, succeeding Rossana A. Fajardo effective November 3, 2026.

Sabado, an Assurance partner who joined SGV in 1993, brings more than three decades of professional experience in client service, business advisory, operational leadership and talent development.

In his previous role as client relationship leader for core accounts, Sabado led initiatives to strengthen strategic client partnerships, deepen collaboration across the firm's service lines and support sustainable growth across key markets and industries.

He also co-headed SGV's Japan Business Services (JBS), which assists Japanese investors and multinational organizations operating in the Philippines. His work with JBS helped strengthen the firm's relationships with Japanese companies, one of the country's important investment communities.

As an adviser to major local and multinational organizations, Sabado has handled a broad range of business, financial reporting, governance, and growth-related matters. His industry experience covers automotive, real estate, manufacturing, insurance, construction, airlines, renewable energy and hospitality.

In his new position, Sabado will lead SGV's efforts to strengthen client relationships, encourage greater collaboration among its service lines and accelerate the development of its professionals. He will also oversee initiatives to reinforce the firm's standing as one of the most trusted professional services providers in the country.

Talent development and leadership succession are among Sabado's priorities. Throughout his career, he has advocated the attraction, development, and retention of skilled professionals, while promoting a workplace culture built on respect, openness, integrity, accountability, and collaboration.

Sabado holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree, major in Accounting, from San Beda University and is a certified public accountant. His appointment places a longtime SGV partner with extensive experience in client relations and business advisory at the helm of the firm.

BUSINESS

Korean appliance maker rolls out smarter products

As Filipino households prepare for another bout of El Niño, appliance manufacturers are emphasizing energy and water efficiency, as consumers weigh not only the purchase price of household equipment but also its impact on monthly utility bills.

LG Electronics Philippines is positioning its next generation of home appliances around smarter technologies and improved operating efficiency, with a new lineup of washing machines, refrigerators and cooking appliances scheduled to reach stores in 2027.

At its first Home Solutions Dealer Summit on November 4 at Solaire North, the company previewed products featuring artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted laundry functions, inverter technologies, heat pump drying and upgraded refrigeration systems. The innovations are aimed at making household routines more convenient while helping consumers manage resource consumption.

The timing is significant as the country faces the prospect of prolonged dry conditions, which could put additional pressure on water availability and household electricity consumption. Laundry, food storage and meal preparation are among the everyday activities where more efficient appliances could help families manage operating expenses.

LG Home Solutions product director Changhee Doh said the company is incorporating inverter technology across much of its Philippine product portfolio as consumer familiarity with the technology grows.

"Most of our products in the Philippines are already using inverter technology or inverter compressors. The market is already aware of inverter technology, and we are continuing to build on that awareness by bringing more innovations into our home solutions lineup," Doh said.

Smarter laundry

Laundry is one area where the pressure on household resources becomes particularly apparent. Washing machines consume both water and electricity, and their operating costs can accumulate with frequent use, especially in larger households.

LG's new lineup includes a 25/20-kilogram WashTower all-in-one stacked washer-dryer, which combines washing and drying functions in a single unit. The company also presented new front-load and top-load washing machines equipped with AI Wash technology, which adjusts washing operations according to laundry requirements.



LG Home Solutions product director Changhee Doh

Another addition is the 10-kg Dual Inverter Heat Pump Dryer with AI Dry. Unlike conventional electric resistance dryers, heat pump systems recycle heat during the drying process, potentially reducing electricity consumption.

The AI-enabled laundry features are designed to make washing and drying more responsive to household needs, while inverter technology helps regulate appliance operation. These functions could appeal to households looking to manage utility expenses, although actual water and electricity savings will depend on the model, settings and frequency of use.

AI-powered

Refrigeration is another major consideration for households managing electricity expenses because refrigerators operate continuously. As temperatures rise, keeping food fresh while controlling power consumption becomes an increasingly important concern.

LG showcased its 20.5-cubic-foot Fit & Max French Door Refrigerator with Drawer and Craft Ice Maker, featuring a new LCD temperature control panel, alongside new side-by-side refrigerator models.

The company is also preparing to introduce its InstaView and Door-in-Door refrigerator models in the Philippines, expanding its food-cooling portfolio with features designed to improve access to stored items and household convenience.

Doh said LG is integrating its AI inverter technology into refrigeration products to make cooling more responsive to how households use their appliances.

"Our unique AI inverter technology analyzes users' habits and usage patterns to optimize the refrigerator's temperature. By understanding how consumers use their refrigerators, the technology can adjust cooling operations to better respond to their needs while supporting energy efficiency," he said.

The company is bringing these features together under its broader energy-saving strategy, with inverter compressors and intelligent temperature management playing a central role in its refrigeration lineup.

For consumers, efficient refrigeration can also help protect food purchases by maintaining appropriate storage conditions and reducing spoilage. This becomes particularly relevant when prolonged dry conditions affect agricultural production and food supply, potentially adding pressure on household budgets.

LG's cooking appliance lineup also featured the NeoChef Smart Inverter Convection Oven, which offers additional cooking functions and flexibility in meal preparation. Its inclusion reflects the company's effort to extend inverter-based technologies across more household applications.

Taken together, the products demonstrate LG's push to combine intelligent controls, inverter systems and convenience features across its major home appliance categories. The challenge, however, is translating these technologies into measurable savings that consumers can factor into their purchasing decisions.

Closer to consumers

Doh said the company's first Home Solutions Dealer Summit was designed to give retail partners a closer look at upcoming products and strengthen their ability to explain the technologies to Filipino consumers.

"Our dealer partners play an important role in helping Filipino consumers discover technologies that can make everyday life easier. Through our first Home Solutions Dealer Summit, we want to give them a closer look at what's coming, strengthen their understanding of our products, and work together to bring meaningful innovations closer to more households across the country," he said.

Doh said the dealer network remains an important link between product development and household purchasing decisions. Familiarity with the latest technologies allows retail partners to explain product differences and help consumers assess which features suit their needs and budgets. **Othel V. Campos**


Enchanted Kingdom chairman and president Cesar Mario Mamon (left) and CCEAP Stakeholder Relations director Marc Cruz Cox (right).

Sustainable partnership promotes PET bottle recovery

COCA-COLA Europacific Aboitiz Philippines (CCEAP) and Enchanted Kingdom have installed plastic bottle collection bins and recycled-plastic benches at three locations in the theme park as part of efforts to promote responsible waste disposal and recycling.

The facilities are located at Victoria Park, Agila the EKsperience: Saribuhay, and Spaceport under Tapon to Ipon, the Coca-Cola system's nationwide program for recovering and recycling clear PET bottles of any brand.

Signage beside the bins informs parkgoers about PET bottle recyclability and encourages proper waste segregation. The benches are made from recycled plastic.

"At Coca-Cola, we believe that creating a positive impact starts with working together towards a shared goal. Through our collection bins, guests can take simple everyday actions, such as properly segregating used PET bottles, and contribute to a collective objective of recovering and recycling more PET plastic bottles," said CCEAP stakeholder relations director Marc Cruz Cox.

The initiative builds on more than 14 years of partnership between CCEAP, the bottling partner and official distributor of Coca-Cola products in the Philippines, and Enchanted Kingdom, which has included park attractions, seasonal activities and beverage promotions.

Enchanted Kingdom chairman and president Cesar Mario Mamon said the launch coincided with Fiesta ng Saribuhay, the park's 31st anniversary celebration, which highlights its sustainability and environmental responsibility efforts.

"We at Enchanted Kingdom are proud to celebrate another enchanting milestone in our enduring partnership with Coca-Cola in creating more magical moments for our guests. The start of our Tapon to Ipon partnership is especially meaningful as it coincides with Fiesta ng Saribuhay, EK's 31st anniversary celebration, which highlights our commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility," he said.

Three mobile learning hubs for deployment across the country

ISUZU Philippines Corp. (IPC) turned over three customized Isuzu NLR77H Shuttle units to Univet Nutrition and Animal Healthcare Company Inc. (UNAHCO) to bring agricultural training closer to livestock and poultry raisers across the country.

IPC, together with dealer partner Industrial & Transport Equipment Inc. (INTECO) and Isuzu INTECO Quezon Avenue, delivered the vehicles for UNAHCO's SEMINAR on WHEELS program, which provides farm management training, product demonstrations, and technical information to rural communities.

UNAHCO provides animal nutrition, veterinary health and farm management solutions. The mobile learning hubs will serve hog raisers, aspiring livestock entrepreneurs, feed store owners and agrivet dealers, particularly in areas with limited access to technical training.

"Through UNAHCO's SEMINAR on WHEELS initiative, these customized Isuzu NLR77H Shuttles become platforms for learning, helping bring valuable agricultural knowledge directly to livestock raisers and farming communities," said IPC division head for sales Mario Ojales.

Built by Almazora Motors Corp., each unit has 23 side-facing seats, audio-visual equipment, and HDMI connectivity for presentations and interactive discussions. The shuttles also feature mini refrigerators and dash cameras.

Powered by Isuzu's 3.0-liter 4JH1-TC diesel engine, the NLR77H is designed for provincial and long-distance travel. Its durability and fuel efficiency will support the program's regular deployments to remote farming communities.

Training topics include swine management, biosecurity, water medication, farm operations, animal health, and profitability. UNAHCO aims to help farmers adopt more efficient practices and improve livestock productivity.

The three shuttles will operate across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, expanding access to agricultural education and technical expertise. IPC said the partnership supports its efforts to use reliable mobility solutions to strengthen local communities and the agricultural sector.



Drive smarter as fuel prices rise: Green GSM's '5 Ready' commitment



GREEN GSM has launched its rental program in the Philippines, an EV rental program for TNVS drivers with a path to vehicle ownership after 5 years, built around its "5 Ready" commitment: Vehicle Ready, Energy Ready, Platform Ready, Support Ready, and Earnings Ready.

The program helps drivers overcome barriers to switching to electric vehicles, connect with passengers, and build more stable earnings amid fluctuating fuel prices.

Fuel Prices Squeeze TNVS Earnings

Continued fuel price fluctuations are making it increasingly difficult for TNVS drivers in the Philippines to manage their earnings. During the week of October 6–12, 2026, gasoline prices rose by up to PHP 1.93 per liter, with common pump prices in Metro Manila ranging from about PHP 89 to PHP 100 per liter, while diesel prices fell by PHP 1.30 per liter but remained high at around PHP 94 per liter, according to the Department of Energy.

For TNVS drivers, every fuel price adjustment directly affects how much they take home after a day on the road.

Against this backdrop, electric vehicles (EVs) offer TNVS drivers a way to manage operating costs, thanks to their lower energy costs compared with gasoline-powered vehicles. However, the upfront cost, access to charging, and ability to assess earning potential when switching to a new type of vehicle remain key considerations for many drivers.

The rental program was designed with these considerations in mind. Through a vehicle rental model, the program gives drivers access to a new VinFast EV without requiring a large upfront investment to purchase a vehicle.

Drivers can choose from three models suited to ride-hailing operations on the Green GSM platform: the VinFast VF 5, Herio Green, and Limo Green. The program offers an entry cost starting at PHP 5,000 and daily rental rates starting at PHP 1,040. After five years, drivers have a path to owning the vehicle, giving them a basis for planning their work over the longer term.

Each model serves a different need. The VF 5 and Herio Green are five-seater vehicles suited to everyday trips, while the seven-seater Limo Green offers more space for passengers. Whichever model they choose, they can access a vehicle that is built for ride-hailing work, with estimated operating costs up to 30% lower than those of comparable gasoline-powered vehicles when driving 3,000 kilometers per month over five years.

This approach is suited to drivers who are considering switching vehicles but want to avoid putting too much pressure on their finances upfront. Experienced TNVS drivers can lower their operating costs by switching to an EV, while licensed drivers without a vehicle of their own gain another way to get started.

What the "5 Ready" Commitment Covers

Vehicle access (Vehicle Ready) is one of the five pillars of Green GSM's "5 Ready" commitment to its driver partners. Through the rental program, drivers can also connect with passengers through the Green GSM platform (Platform Ready). They also get access to the V-Green charging network and free charging until March 31, 2029, subject to the applicable terms and conditions (Energy Ready).

On earnings (Earnings Ready), the program offers a revenue-sharing rate of up to 90%, with potential monthly earnings of up to PHP 90,000, depending on operating performance and applicable conditions. Green GSM also supports drivers throughout the onboarding process, from providing guidance on documentation, registration, permits, and insurance to offering training, helping them get started more smoothly (Support Ready).

With the rental program, TNVS drivers can protect their take-home earnings from fuel price swings while working toward owning their vehicle.



Ford brings together over 50 Ford owners from Ford owner communities to showcase Ford Family Guarantee suite of services and offerings, free vehicle inspection, tour of Parts Distribution Center and Learning Center

Ford PH launches first-ever service fest for customers

FORD Philippines recently conducted its first-ever Ford Service Fest, a one-day service and ownership festival that gathered over 50 Ford owners at the Ford Learning Center in Calamba, Laguna to showcase its suite of aftersales and service offerings under Ford Family Guarantee.

Providing customers a closer look at the services, expertise, and world-class facilities that support their Ford ownership experience, the event combined interactive learning sessions, facility tours, test drives, and vehicle maintenance activities. It also presented owners an opportunity to connect with fellow members of the Ford community as well as interact with Ford dealers for better understanding and appreciation of Ford aftersales offerings.

The Ford Service Fest reinforces Ford Family Guarantee, Ford Philippines' signature aftersales program, centered on three pillars: seamless convenience, service affordability, and uncompromised quality. Through hands-on experiences and workshop sessions, the event demonstrated how Ford Family Guarantee builds long-term trust and confidence among customers by making the ownership experience easy, convenient and worry-free.

"The Ford Service Fest brings the Ford Family Guarantee to life by giving our owner communities a firsthand look at the people, facilities, and services that support them throughout their ownership journey. This gathering reinforces our commitment to making every Ford owner feel supported and part of a family that looks after them—not just when they purchase a vehicle, but for every journey that follows," says Pushparaj Muthusamy, director, Ford Customer Service Division, Ford Philippines.

Making aftersales services more accessible

The Ford Service Fest was designed as an interactive event where participants explored six (6) stations. The stations featured talks hosted by Ford dealer groups, an exclusive tour of the Ford Learning Center and Parts Distribution Center, a session on car care tips by Ford technical experts, and test drives of selected Ford vehicles.

A Ford dealer representative showcases the benefits of Mobile Service.

The dealer-led sessions introduced Club members to key aftersales offerings, including Express Service, Mobile Service, pickup and delivery, online service booking, genuine Ford parts and accessories, warranty coverage, and Scheduled Service Plan (SSP) as well as SSP Plus (SSP+) packages. These discussions helped owners better understand the services available to support their vehicles, from routine maintenance to longer-term service planning.

Throughout the event, free quick inspections and a showcase of Ford's Mobile Service Vehicle (MSV) provided additional opportunities for owners to learn about convenient vehicle care options. The MSV brings Ford service capabilities right at the comfort of the customer's preferred location, allowing access to the expertise of Ford-trained technicians using Ford genuine parts and quality tools outside a Ford dealership.



Over 50 Ford Club members and owners gather at the Ford Learning Center to attend the first-ever Ford Service Fest, a one-day immersive experience of Ford's aftersales and service offerings that aim to make the ownership experience easy, affordable and worry-free.

Showcasing investments and expertise behind Ford service

The Ford Service Fest also offered members a closer look at the facilities and people that support Ford's aftersales operations.

During the Ford Parts Distribution Center tour, participants learned more about how genuine Ford parts and accessories are managed and distributed to help support consistent parts availability across the dealer network. With a bigger parts distribution center, Ford is doing daily delivery to its Ford dealerships in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao – translating to faster repairs, shorter waiting times, and greater vehicle uptime for customers.

Ford owners in a safety briefing before the tour at Ford's massive Parts Distribution Center.

The Ford Learning Center, meanwhile, serves as a central hub for technical and non-technical training for dealer personnel nationwide. By investing in continuous training and skills development, Ford aims to ensure that its dealer teams are equipped with the knowledge and expertise needed to deliver professional and dependable service.

These experiences brought the Ford Family Guarantee's commitment to uncompromised quality closer to owners, highlighting the role of genuine parts, trained personnel, and dedicated facilities in maintaining vehicle performance and supporting peace of mind throughout the ownership.

Hyundai, Fairthron expand SM Fairview–SM North MPUV fleet

HARIPHIL Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the official distributor of Hyundai Truck & Bus (HTB) in the Philippines, has joined Fairthron Transport Service Cooperative in marking the inauguration of 10 additional Hyundai Class 3 Modern Public Utility Vehicles (MPUVs) on October 26, 2026.

Held at the Greater Lagro Barangay Hall in Quezon City, the event marks another milestone in the cooperative's fleet expansion. The new additional units serve more commuters along the SM Fairview–SM North route under the Public Transport Modernization Program (PTMP).



The milestone event brought together key representatives from the transport sector, government, and industry partners, including Angelito Roque, Chairman of Fairthron Transport Service Cooperative; Atty. Zona Russet Tamayo, LTFRB-NCR Regional Director; Edmond Cadavola, Chairman of Pandacan Transport; Ferdinand Lupangosy, Chairman of Sandigan Transport; Kap. Leo Garra, Punong Barangay; and HARI representatives Timothy Magisa, Assistant Vice President for the National sales division, and Vanessa Estrella, assistant manager for sales. As the official distributor of Hyundai Truck & Bus in the Philippines, HARI joined these stakeholders in demonstrating collective support for public transport modernization and stronger mobility services for Filipino commuters.



Fairthron Transport began operating Hyundai Class 3 MPUVs in 2022 with an initial fleet of 15 units. The latest addition brings its fleet to 25 Hyundai Class 3 MPUVs, strengthening the cooperative's commitment to modern and reliable public transportation services.

"The addition of these units underscores the continued partnership between HARI and Fairthron Transport Service Cooperative in advancing public transport modernization," said Maria Fe Perez-Agudo, vice chairman, president, and chief executive officer of HARI.

"Fairthron's continued investment reflects its commitment to serving commuters along the SM Fairview-SM North route. At HARI, we recognize the importance of providing transport cooperatives with dependable mobility solutions that support their operational growth and contribute to a more efficient, accessible, and modern public transportation system in the Philippines." Perez-Agudo concluded.

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Want to meet TWICE's Nayeon?

Here's how to score a ticket on her Manila fan event

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NOVEMBER 8, 2026 | B3



TWICE member Nayeon is set to meet Filipino ONCEs at CHAGEE's first Philippine flagship store at Bonifacio High Street in Taguig

By Angelica Villanueva

FILIPINO ONCEs hoping to see **TWICE** member **Nayeon** in person have two ways to get a chance at meeting the K-pop star when she returns to Manila this November.

Nayeon is scheduled to attend an exclusive meet-and-greet on Nov. 14 at CHAGEE's first Philippine flagship store at Bonifacio High Street in Taguig City. The appearance follows the store's opening on Nov. 13.

Fans hoping to secure a spot have until Nov. 11 to join the brand's Gift-with-Purchase raffle. Through the CHAGEE app, customers can purchase qualifying Nayeon photocard bundles, with each eligible transaction providing a raffle entry for a chance to win admission.

The promotion offers 120 VIP tickets and 440 general admission tickets. Buyers must also complete the raffle opt-in form provided in their order details. Purchasing a bundle does not automatically guarantee entry.

Those who prefer to show their dance skills have another opportunity through the Nayeon Dance Challenge, which runs until Nov. 10.

Participants must post a video on Instagram or TikTok dancing to any of Nayeon's officially released solo tracks, tag @chagee.ph and include the hashtags #CHAGEEPH, #CHAGEEPHxNAYEON and #NAYEONDanceChallenge. They must also complete the official entry form to qualify. Five winners will each receive a VIP ticket, with the winners selected through an electronic draw.

Nayeon, whose solo career includes the hit single "POP!" and the mini-album *NA*, last visited the Philippines with TWICE for the group's *This Is For* world tour stop at the Philippine Arena in 2025.

For CHAGEE Philippines general manager **Christopher "Sonny" Tiong**, the fan event is also a way to recognize the support the brand has received from local customers.

"We'd like to think of this Meet & Greet as our early Christmas gift for the Pinoy ONCEs," Tiong said.

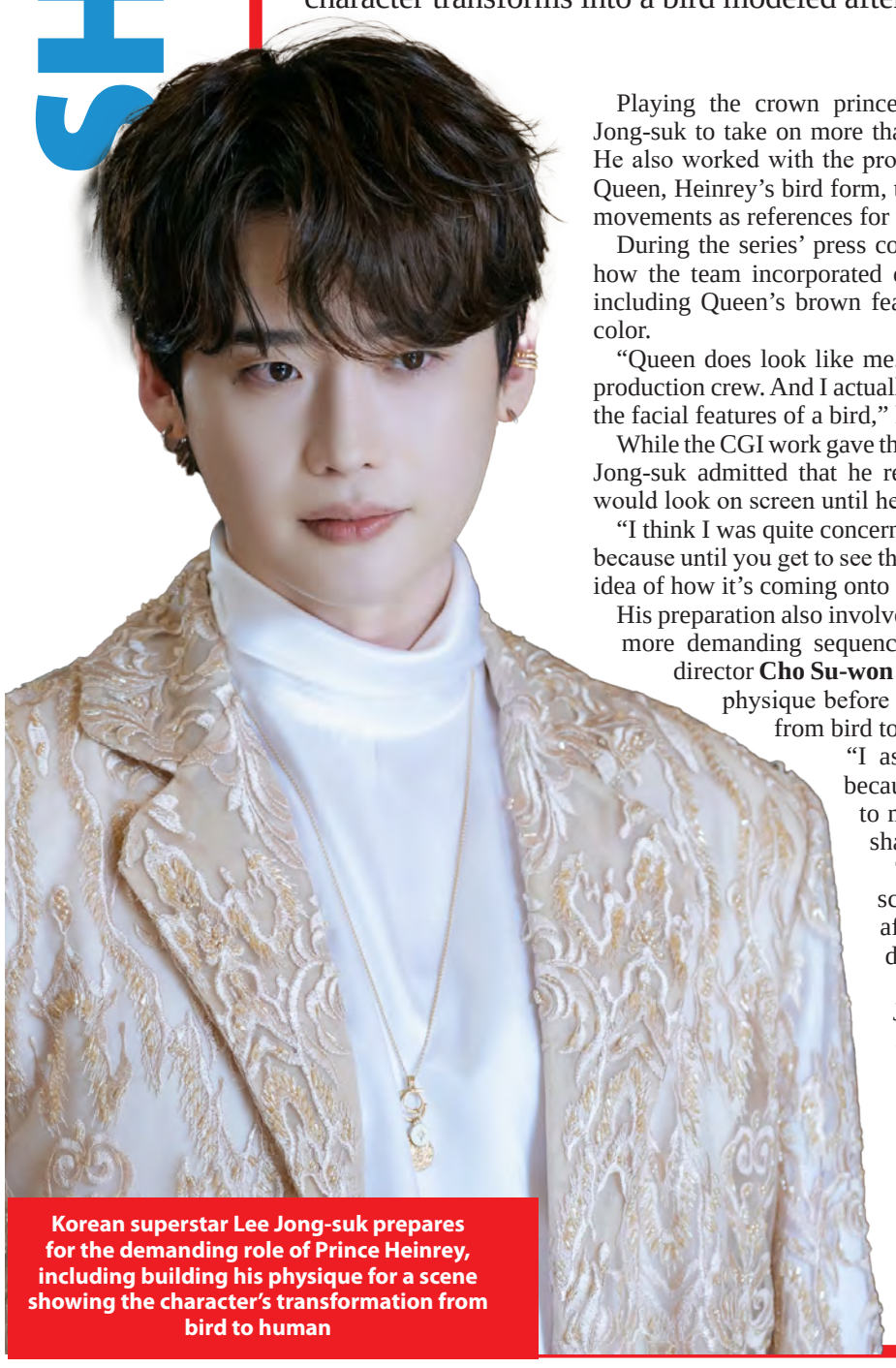
The tea brand, which entered the Philippine market in August 2025, has since opened 28 tea houses in Manila. Its Bonifacio High Street location marks its first Philippine flagship store.

SHOWBIZ

Lee Jong-suk is no ordinary prince in 'The Remarried Empress'

By Angelica Villanueva

A PRINCE with a secret identity as a bird has given Korean superstar **Lee Jong-suk** another reason to draw attention in his latest Korean drama. The actor's portrayal of Prince Heinrey in Disney+'s *The Remarried Empress* has become a talking point, particularly because his character transforms into a bird modeled after his own features.



Korean superstar Lee Jong-suk prepares for the demanding role of Prince Heinrey, including building his physique for a scene showing the character's transformation from bird to human

Playing the crown prince of the Western Kingdom required Jong-suk to take on more than the usual demands of a royal role. He also worked with the production's visual effects team to bring Queen, Heinrey's bird form, to life, using his physical features and movements as references for the CGI character.

During the series' press conference in Seoul, the actor revealed how the team incorporated details connecting the two identities, including Queen's brown feathers, which match the prince's hair color.

"Queen does look like me. And we did talk about this with the production crew. And I actually do look like a bird, sort of. I do have the facial features of a bird," he said.

While the CGI work gave the character a recognizable appearance, Jong-suk admitted that he remained anxious about how the bird would look on screen until he saw the finished result.

"I think I was quite concerned all throughout. I was quite anxious because until you get to see the final result, you don't really have the idea of how it's coming onto the screen," he added.

His preparation also involved getting ready for one of the drama's more demanding sequences. Jong-suk revealed that he asked director **Cho Su-won** for an additional month to work on his physique before filming Heinrey's first transformation from bird to human.

"I asked Director Cho one more month because I needed to sort of build my body to make sure that I look compelling," he shared.

The actor also admitted that the scene, in which Heinrey appears naked after transforming, was particularly daunting.

Beyond the physical preparation, Jong-suk had to meet the expectations attached to Heinrey, who is described in the original story as a prince capable of winning people over with a single glance.

"There's a lot of explanation about this character being someone who is just incredibly charming with a single eye contact. He's going to win everybody's hearts over. And so those descriptions were what really weighed on me," he explained.



Korean stars Shin Min-a (left) and Lee Jong-suk portray Empress Navier and Prince Heinrey, respectively, in Disney+'s fantasy romance series 'The Remarried Empress'



Lee Jong-suk plays Prince Heinrey, the crown prince of the Western Kingdom, who possesses the unusual ability to transform into a bird named Queen

Based on a popular web novel and webtoon, *The Remarried Empress* follows Empress Navier (**Shin Min-a**), whose marriage to Emperor Sovieshu (**Ju Ji-hoon**) falls apart when he becomes involved with Rashta (**Lee Se-young**). After receiving a divorce notice, Navier agrees to the separation on the condition that she be allowed to marry Heinrey.

The 10-episode fantasy romance also features elaborate costumes, CGI and European palace locations, with filming taking place in Germany and the Czech Republic.

The Remarried Empress is now streaming on Disney+.

Double the romance

Seven queer series giving fans more love teams to root for

By Angelica Villanueva

WHY limit yourself to just one love story when you could have so many more? Fans of boys' love (BL) and girls' love (GL) are in for a treat because GMMTV is teaming up multiple onscreen couples in its upcoming series, offering both beloved love teams and exciting new pairings.

From fantasy stories featuring four couples to school dramas with several romantic storylines, here are seven GMMTV productions that give viewers more than one love story to follow.

'The HALO'



Four BL pairings come together in this fantasy series starring **Gemini Norawit** and **Fourth Nattawat** (GeminiFourth), **Pond Naravit** and **Phuwin Tangsakyuen** (PondPhuwin), **Perth Tanapon** and **Santa Pongsapak** (PerthSanta), and **William Jakrapatr** and **Est Supha** (WilliamEst). The story follows four angels who are cursed and later meet four humans with special abilities. Their meeting leads to unexpected romances and a chance to break the curse.

'Boys 4 Moms'

Tay Tawan and **New Thitipoom** (TayNew) reunite with **Force Jiratchapong** and **Book Kasidet** (ForceBook), **Jimmy Jitaraphol** and **Sea Tawinan** (JimmySea), and **Junior Panachai** and **Mark Jiruntanin** (JuniorMark). The romantic comedy follows four longtime friends who regularly gather on Sundays, where conversations about their love lives become part of their moms' get-togethers.



'A Season to Remember'



Earth Pirapat and **Mix Sahaphap** (EarthMix), **Boun Noppanut** and **Prem Warut** (BounPrem), and **First Kanaphan** and **Khaotung Thanawat** (FirstKhaotung) are headlining this period drama, which follows three brothers from the Trivatsarakul family as they navigate three unexpected love stories. Each relationship unfolds around a different season, bringing together romance, family ties and complicated feelings.

'The Spooky Love Tale'



Mark Pakin and **Ohm Thipakorn** (MarkOhm) join **Sing Harit** and **Chimon Wachirawit** (SingChimon) in this romantic comedy with supernatural elements. The series follows two sets of characters as frightening encounters gradually develop into romantic relationships, mixing mysterious happenings with comedy.

'Be Mine'

GMMTV also expands its GL offerings with this project featuring **Emi Thasorn** and **Bonnie Pattraphus** (EmiBonnie), **Kapook Ploynira** and **Ciize Rutricha** (KapookCiize), **Acare** and **Sangt**, and **Yoghurt Yosita** and **Pang Supsima** (YoghurtPang). The series explores different forms of love and relationships through several romantic storylines, bringing four pairings together in one production.



'The Gentlemen's Blood'



Surf Patchara and **Java Bhobdhama** (SurfJava), **Chokun Puttipong** and **Aston Ratiphat** (ChokunAston), and **Taas Tanyongmas** and **Mac Nattapat** (TaasMac) star in this school-set BL drama. Set at Atthawit, an exclusive school, the story explores the lives of students who face a system that favors the wealthy and puts scholarship students at a disadvantage.

'I Wanna Hold Your Hand'

LYKN members **Nut Thanat** and **Hong Pichetpong** star alongside **Luke Peemsan** and **Mick Metas** (LukeMick) in this upcoming BL drama. The narrative centers around Grandpa Thun, who confides in his family about his attraction to men and his desire to reunite with a man he once cherished. With their assistance, he embarks on a journey to locate his lost love, exploring themes of family, acceptance, and love that transcend generations.



Sunday Manila Standard

GOLF & LEISURE

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RANDY M. CALUAG, *Issue Editor*

Vice Pro golf ball builds appeal with distance, control and feel

By Randy Caluag

WHAT makes a golf ball a go-to choice on the fairway?

For the Vice Pro, Philippine distributor ZeVista Golf points to a combination golfers seek throughout a round: distance off the tee, control around the greens and a responsive feel at impact.

Priced at P2,990 per dozen, the Vice Pro brings those qualities together in a three-piece ball designed for players seeking balanced performance from tee to green.

Its cast urethane cover and compression rating of 90 make it an option for golfers with medium swing speeds who want distance without sacrificing short-game spin.

According to Philippine distributor, ZeVista, the Pro's appeal lies in its ability to address different demands during a round. Lower spin with woods and long irons is intended to support distance, while greater spin on chips and pitches helps players control shots near the pin.

The cover also delivers a smooth feel and clear feedback at impact—qualities that can help golfers judge touch shots around the putting surface.

That versatility is central to the Pro's positioning as an everyday playing option. It combines the distance needed on longer holes with the short-game response required when attacking greens or recovering from missed approaches.

Sitting between the firmer Vice Pro Plus and the softer Vice Pro Air, the Pro occupies the middle ground in the brand's premium lineup. ZeVista says it can also suit slower swingers seeking more control and faster swingers who prefer a softer feel.

Available finishes include White, Neon Lime, Drip Red Blue and Tracer Red Blue, offering a choice between a traditional appearance and more distinctive designs.

Players who favor an even softer ball can consider the Vice Pro Air, also priced at P2,990 per dozen. Designed for lower to medium swing speeds, it features a compression rating of 75, with a higher launch and lower spin intended to help golfers gain distance.

The Vice Tour provides a more affordable alternative at P2,090 per dozen. Its three-piece construction and durable Surlyn cover are designed to balance distance, responsive feel and greenside control.

Vice Golf lists the Tour at 85 compression, aimed primarily at players with average swing speeds, although the manufacturer says it can also accommodate faster swingers.

The lineup is available through ZeVista Golf, which offers bulk orders and golf ball customization. For more information, visit *www.zevistagolf.com*.



Entrepreneur and golf content creator Malvin Castro is among the golfers who use Vice golf balls, adding a familiar name from the local golf community to the brand's users.



Berjaya–Malaysia Friendship Open tees off Nov. 28

AROUND 288 golfers from diplomatic, government and business circles are expected to gather for the Berjaya–Malaysia Friendship Open on November 28 at Pradera Verde Golf and Country Club in Lubao, Pampanga, combining competition with fundraising for community programs.

The 2026 tournament aims to build on last year's edition, which raised approximately P1.5 million for outreach activities. This year's proceeds will support charitable and community initiatives under the Embassy of Malaysia and the Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry Philippines Inc. (MCCI).

Steven Khaw, chairman of Malaysia Friendship Golf and MCCI, said the tournament's purpose extends beyond the fairways.

"This tournament is more than a golf event. This is a platform for friendship, partnership, and meaningful community impact," Khaw said during a press conference.

Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines Dato' Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino highlighted the event's contribution to community recovery while pointing to its potential to draw overseas golfers to Philippine courses.

The gathering will bring together participants from different sectors, providing opportunities to strengthen ties and develop partnerships while supporting a shared charitable cause.



Golf Girl Games duo joins 2nd Vineyard Cup

PHOEBE Joy Carles and Madison Pool of Golf Girl Games will bring an international presence to the second Vineyard Cup: Golf World Creators Series, set for December 3 to 6 at Vineyard Golf Club Philippines.

The two will join Filipino personalities for a four-day gathering combining golf competition and content creation, organizers announced.

Their participation adds to an event that brings together players and creators, giving participants an opportunity to share the fairways with personalities from the golf community.

Organizers have opened registration for the tournament and are encouraging interested golfers to sign up with a playing partner. Slots are limited.

The upcoming edition puts the spotlight on golf's growing connection with digital content, with Carles and Pool joining the local field as international guest players.

For registration and inquiries, contact +63 927 706 9900 or email inquiry@vineyardgolfclubph.com.

Sun Life champions active living through inaugural Bike and Run

TAKING its advocacy for healthier, more active lifestyles beyond the cycling community, Sun Life is bringing together cyclists, runners, young athletes and families for its inaugural Sun Life Bike & Run on Sunday (Nov. 8) at the Ayala Vermosa Sports Hub in Imus, Cavite.

More than just a sporting event, the gathering underscores Sun Life's commitment to making health and wellness more accessible and engaging for Filipinos, encouraging individuals and families to embrace physical activity not simply as a fitness goal, but as a way of life.

Building on the success of its annual cycling event, Sun Life is expanding its sports platform to include running, opening the door to a wider community of participants with different interests, abilities and fitness levels. The move reflects the company's belief that the journey toward better health can take many forms – and that everyone should have an opportunity to be part of it.

The inaugural event will offer a variety of activities designed to accommodate both seasoned enthusiasts and those just beginning their fitness journey. Cycling participants can choose from 60-km and 45-km rides for a more demanding test of endurance, or take on the shorter 15-km route.

Younger participants will also have their moment on the road through dedicated kids' rides, while a family ride will give parents and children an opportunity to share the experience of cycling. Meanwhile, a 5-km run will welcome runners and those who prefer to take their fitness goals one step at a time.

By bringing these activities together under one event, Sun Life hopes to create an inclusive sporting environment where competition and personal achievement go hand in hand with enjoyment, camaraderie and family bonding.

The addition of running is particularly significant as it broadens the event's reach beyond cycling enthusiasts. While cycling remains a popular way to pursue fitness, explore the outdoors and connect with like-minded individuals, running offers a more accessible entry point for people who may not own a bicycle or have experience in organized sporting events.

Together, the two disciplines create more opportunities for Filipinos to discover an activity they enjoy, challenge themselves at their own pace and make movement a regular part of their daily routines.



Cycling and running enthusiasts gear up for another round of fitness, fun and camaraderie at the Sun Life Bike & Run 2026.

Equally important is the event's emphasis on family participation. Through the kids' rides and family ride, Sun Life is highlighting how healthy habits can begin at home, with parents and children learning to appreciate the benefits of physical activity through shared experiences.

Such activities offer more than a day of outdoor fun. They can help young people develop an early appreciation for fitness, while allowing families to spend meaningful time together away from their usual routines and digital distractions. By making exercise enjoyable and communal, the event reinforces the idea that living healthier does not have to be a solitary pursuit or an intimidating undertaking.

The broader message is that wellness is built through everyday choices. Whether it means cycling a longer distance, completing a first 5-km run, joining a family ride or simply taking the first step toward becoming more active, every effort counts.

For Sun Life, the inaugural Bike & Run represents another step in its continuing efforts to encourage Filipinos to take a more proactive role in their health and well-being. It also reflects a wider understanding of wellness – one that goes beyond physical fitness to encompass meaningful connections, community engagement and the shared pursuit of a healthier lifestyle.

As more people look for opportunities to stay active and connect with others, events such as this can help turn individual fitness aspirations into a collective movement. By bringing together people of different ages and abilities, Sun Life hopes to demonstrate that the road to better health is one best traveled together.

LOVE does not stop at the family table. It can travel from one household to another or from one grocery aisle to a wider community when people come together around a shared purpose.

JOYCE PANGCO PAÑARES, *Issue Editor / email: joyce.panares@gmail.com*

'Share-the-Love with Heart Mate' returns for another shared act of giving

With the Christmas holidays coming up, the spirit of giving takes on even greater meaning. With this, Jolly Heart Mate Canola Oil brings back its "Share-the-Love with Heart Mate" campaign, giving consumers another simple way to extend that spirit of love and care to a wider community. Running until December 31, 2026, P5 from every participating Jolly Heart Mate Canola Oil product purchased at Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Easymart, Shopwise and The Marketplace nationwide will be donated to Philippine General Hospital Medical Foundation, Inc.

"Share-the-Love with Heart Mate" is rooted in a simple idea: meaningful community support does not always have to begin with a grand gesture. Sometimes, it starts with something families are already doing — buying groceries for the people they love.

The first "Share-the-Love with Heart Mate" campaign ran from July 15 to October 15, 2025, and raised P1,227,450 for PGH Medical Foundation, Inc., surpassing its initial P1-million pledge. The donation helped support the hospital's medical needs, including the purchase of an ultrasound system for the Newborn Medicine Department, helping provide essential care for newborn patients.



Jolly Heart Mate Canola Oil brings back its 'Share-the-Love with Heart Mate' campaign with the Philippine General Hospital Medical Foundation Inc. as beneficiary

For Fly Ace Corporation VP for Marketing Abigail Ng-Reyes, the campaign is about extending the same love Filipinos already practice at home to people and families beyond their own.

"Love often begins with the people closest to us — our families, our homes, our everyday routines. With 'Share-the-Love with Heart Mate,' we want to show that this same spirit of care can reach further. When shoppers choose Heart Mate as part of their regular grocery trip, they become part of something bigger: a community coming together to support fellow Filipinos who need help," she said.

"The response to last year's initiative showed us what can happen when many people make one simple choice together. For this year, we're grateful to have more retail partners helping us bring that opportunity to more communities," Ng-Reyes added.

With Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Easymart, Shopwise and The Marketplace supporting the campaign, more families can turn their Jolly Heart Mate Canola Oil purchases into meaningful contributions to the wider community.

"We are proud that through Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Easymart, Shopwise and The Marketplace, we can be part of a meaningful initiative that brings together health, wellness and community care. As retailers, we are part of the everyday lives of Filipino families, and 'Share-the-Love with Heart Mate' gives us an opportunity to make those everyday grocery choices mean even more. It is our privilege to help make giving back more accessible to the communities we serve," said Kerwin Legarde, Group General Manager of Robinsons Supermarket.

Dr. Telesforo E. Gana Jr., chairman and president of the PGH Medical Foundation Inc, thanked Fly Ace Corporation and Robinsons Retail Holdings Inc. for their generosity.

"We are especially thankful to see the campaign return for a second year, giving us another opportunity to bring meaningful support to the patients and families we serve," Gana said.

(For more information, follow @jollyheartmatecanolaoil on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Jolly Heart Mate Canola Oil is available in leading groceries and supermarkets nationwide, and online via Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop, and www.AceMarket.ph. To learn more about the brand and its products, visit www.flyacecorp.com)



With zero cholesterol, the lowest saturated fat content among vegetable oils, and Omega-3 and 6, Heart Mate supports heart-healthy everyday cooking while helping families care for the people they love

MyBox: The absolute peak of your Pizza Hut solo cravings

WE HAVE all been trapped in that doomscrolling loop where we are mindlessly swiping through our feed and the algo suddenly decides to spam every single comfort food imaginable right onto our screens. First, you see a video of a pizza with an insane cheese pull, and then a close-up image of some creamy pasta, and then a clip of a steaming basket of wings. And immediately the food noise kicks in, and your brain decides it absolutely needs all of it, like, yesterday!



MyBox Pasta

Pizza Hut looked at our collective crash-out and decided to cook up something crazy. Instead of having to order separate full-sized meals just to satisfy your random cravings, now you can enjoy all your favorites together in a single, zero-compromise package with the new Pizza Hut MyBox.

MyBox Pasta (P279)

Craving spaghetti and pasta? Tear into a personal Pan Pizza in your favorite classic flavor (Cheese Lovers, Hawaiian Supreme, or Pepperoni Lovers) and pair it with a generous serving of savory Spaghetti Bolognese or creamy Carbonara. Enjoy the perfect contrast of gooey cheese and rich noodles and round out your feast with a warm bowl of Mushroom Soup, crispy Tater Tots, and an ice-cold Pepsi.

MyBox Rice (P299)

Can't go on without rice? Lock in your choice of a classic Cheese Lovers, Hawaiian Supreme, or Pepperoni Lovers personal Pan Pizza, and pair it with two pieces of crispy WingStreet in whatever flavor you feel like vibing with today. Mix that crunch with a hot scoop of plain rice and complete your whole savory layout with a cozy bowl of Mushroom Soup and a refreshing Pepsi to keep your energy high.



MyBox Ultimate

MyBox Ultimate (P349)

If you're feeling hungry-hungry, grab the MyBox Ultimate. Go all-out and treat yourself to the ultimate solo indulgence with your personal pan pizza in classic Cheese Lovers, Hawaiian Supreme, or Pepperoni Lovers, and pack your box with a serving of rich Spaghetti Bolognese or creamy Carbonara alongside three pieces of WingStreet in your favorite flavor. Wash down that intense flavor explosion with a soothing bowl of Mushroom Soup and a cold Pepsi to complete your feast.

(Get your very own Pizza Hut MyBox anytime, anywhere by visiting your nearest Pizza Hut store for take-out orders. You can also order for delivery by calling the (02) 8911-1111 hotline, by logging on to www.pizzahut.com.ph, by downloading the Pizza Hut mobile app, available for Android and iOS devices, or by ordering through Pizza Hut's official delivery partners GrabFood and foodpanda)



Five Mushroom Pizza has a mushroom cream base, seared portobello and roasted shimeji and finished with crispy oyster mushrooms on top

It's mushrooms all the way at Sicilian Roast

SICILIAN Roast is introducing the Five Mushroom Pizza this November, built almost entirely from mushrooms and available until December 31 across all four Metro Manila branches.

The classic Italian mushroom pizza, pizza ai funghi, usually starts with tomato sauce. This one starts with a mushroom cream made from button mushrooms and porcini, with fior di latte.

The pizza is topped with seared portobello and roasted shimeji, and finished with crispy oyster mushrooms, porcini dust and salsa verde.

"With that much mushroom and cream, you want something fresh at the end," said Executive Chef Matt Navarro. "The salsa verde adds a bit of brightness to balance out all that richness."

"This one became a staff favorite pretty quickly," said CEO Lorenzo Vega. "I'm all about the crispy oyster mushrooms on top."

The Five Mushroom Pizza is available for dine-in and delivery alongside the regular menu at all four Sicilian Roast branches in Legazpi Village, Makati; Santolan Town Plaza by Rockwell, San Juan; The Arton Strip by Rockwell, Quezon City; and Molito Lifestyle Center, Alabang.

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VIRGILIO DC GALVEZ, *Editor*
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Girls took the mic — and leaders listened

GIRLS did not just attend the Girls Summit 2026. They led it.

As the world marked the International Day of the Girl, girls from across the Philippines stood before mayors, officials, and development partners with one clear message: keep us safe, hear us, and let us lead.

Organized by Plan International Pilipinas and the Quezon City Government, the summit — themed "Stand with Girls: Building the Future Girls Want" — turned the usual program upside down. Young people set the agenda, asked the hard questions, and offered the solutions.



Girls Summit 2026 Media briefing panel members (from left to right): Janete Oviedo, Gender and Development Council Office Head of Quezon City Government; Bea Vicente, Youth Advocate and Sangguniang Kabataan; Twyla Raros David, Country Program Manager for Gender and Child Rights of Plan International Pilipinas; Cathy Seco, Program Director of Plan International Pilipinas; Nimisha Jain, Country Manager of Beiersdorf Philippines; and Alisandrea Coloma, Sr. Manager for Sustainability and Corporate PR of Watsons Philippines

At the center was the Girls' Agenda, written by girls themselves. It calls for four things: safety from violence, access to health and support, climate-ready communities, and real chances to learn and earn.

"Girls are not merely beneficiaries of development. They are leaders, innovators, advocates, and changemakers," said Cathy Seco, Program Director at Plan International Pilipinas. "They already know what kind of future they want. Our role is to listen, support, and act alongside them."



Keynote address of Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte at the Girls Summit 2026

The panels went straight to real life: mental health in schools, online abuse, climate and health, child marriage, and safer school buildings.

The numbers explain why. Seven in 10 Filipino girls have faced online harassment. In 2024, over 1.7 million CyberTipline reports came from the Philippines. Globally, 76% of girls surveyed said climate disasters made it harder to access health services.

But the summit was not about fear. It was about action.

"A city is only as strong as the safety it gives its girls," said Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte.

Sangguniang Kabataan member Bea Marie A. Vicente, 22, of Navotas, put it simply: "When girls are safe, we can reach our full potential."

From classrooms to boardrooms, the message was the same: the future girls want starts now — and they are ready to build it.



Plan International Pilipinas and QC Government convene over 400 youth leaders, NGOs, government officials and private sector for Girls Summit 2026

Your pharmacist is now your ally in staying healthy

FOR most Filipinos, the pharmacy is where you go for medicine, vitamins, or a quick restock of essentials.

But now? It can be where you go to stay healthy before you get sick.

This World Pharmacy Week, with the theme "Empowering pharmacists for healthier futures," we're seeing a big shift. Pharmacists are no longer just the people behind the counter. They're becoming trusted partners in preventive health.

From dispensing to protecting

Today, trained and certified pharmacists in major pharmacies can now give select adult vaccines.

That's a game-changer. It means more places to get protected — and less hassle for you.

Health that fits your day

Let's be honest: life is busy. Work, traffic, errands. Preventive health often gets pushed to "next time."

That's where your neighborhood pharmacy helps. It's in the mall you already visit. It's near your office. It's on your way home.

While doing your errands, you can now ask about health screenings, or get vaccinated against flu, pneumonia, and even HPV. No long lines. No whole-day appointment.

And it works. Around the world, pharmacist-led vaccination has helped more people get protected, especially in communities.

So next time you drop by your pharmacy, don't just think of it as a store. Think of it as a first step.

Your pharmacist is ready to help you stay ahead — not just get better.

Learn more about prevention here: *http://guardagainsthpv.ph/hpv-prevention*



TRUSTED PARTNERS. Pharmacists are no longer just the people behind the counter, they are trusted partners in health.



BRACHYTHERAPY TEAM. Dr. Manuel Francisco Roxas, 2nd from left, HCCH President and CEO, and Dr. Maria Carissa Alejandro, 3rd from left, HCCH Chief Operating Officer with the team of Gynecologic Oncology & Radiation Oncology specialists during the Blessing of the Brachytherapy unit at HCCH

Her next step: No woman walks through cancer alone

EVERY woman's cancer journey is different. Different fears, different decisions, different next steps.

That's the heart of "Her Next Step," the new women's health campaign from Healthway Cancer Care Hospital (HCCH) — the country's first specialty cancer hospital.

Built on the promise "Every Stage, A Stronger You," the initiative makes sure no woman has to walk this path alone — from screening to diagnosis, treatment, and life after cancer.

A more precise treatment

HCCH unveiled its new Brachytherapy unit, an advanced form of radiation therapy for gynecologic cancers like cervical, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar cancers.

Instead of treating from outside, it places a tiny radiation source directly at the tumor. That means more precision, less damage to healthy tissue, and shorter sessions — usually just 10 to 20 minutes. Many patients can even go home the same day.

Protecting the future, too

Cancer care isn't just about treating the disease. It's also about the life after it.

Through a new partnership with GenPrime Fertility Manila, HCCH now connects patients to fertility preservation before treatment begins — giving women the chance to protect their dream of having a family someday.

"When someone is diagnosed, our priority is the best care. But caring also means looking beyond cancer, to the future they hope to have," said Dr. Manuel Roxas, HCCH President and CEO.

Care for every stage

The campaign also expands HCCH's Women's Health Services — from screening and HPV vaccination, to diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and survivorship support.

"In every diagnosis, there's a woman. Behind every woman is a family, and behind every family is a story, a hope, and a future," said Dr. Ronald Augustine O. Campos, Head of HCCH Gynecologic Oncology.

Because her next step matters — and she shouldn't take it alone.

For consultations, contact Women's Health Clinic at (02) 7777 4724 or (0917) 128 3527.

JASPER VALDEZ, *Issue Editor*
ANGELICA VILLANUEVA, *Writer*

Off the racetrack

Angelo Salubre connects with young Filipino dreamers

A CHILDHOOD fascination with Lightning McQueen from the animated film Cars sparked **Fgani Angelo Salubre's** interest in racing. Years later, the Davao-born driver is competing internationally and sharing his experiences with Filipino children who have dreams of their own.

At 24, Salubre has already made his mark in European motorsport, securing a Pro-Am class victory in the GT Cup Open Europe at Portimão, Portugal, in April.

His journey took him from Davao to Singapore and Milan, Italy, where his childhood interest developed into a competitive racing career.

Recently, Salubre visited World Vision-supported communities in Manila and Davao, meeting children, listening to their aspirations and encouraging them to pursue their interests while continuing their education.

At the ING Learning Center in Manila, he joined Grade 3 and Grade 4 students in games and coloring activities. The children drew their dream cars and shared their ambitions.

One student, **Elmcqueen**, proudly showed Salubre his drawing.

"My car is green because it's my favorite color. When I grow up, I want to drive a fast car like you!" the student said.

The learning center, a partnership between World Vision and ING Philippines, helps selected students strengthen their learning and numerical comprehension skills.

It operates under World Vision's Manila Area Development Program, which supports 1,278 children and 1,276 families through education, livelihood and child welfare initiatives.

Salubre also met community volunteers, including **Salvacion "Bhabes" Race**, who has served as a volunteer teacher for nearly two decades.

Despite challenges faced by families, including fires and flooding, Salubre observed the children's enthusiasm for learning.

"Pursue your studies. Enjoy every day going to school," he told them.

His visit to Davao, where his racing journey began, also reinforced his desire to support Filipino children through his international platform.

"I want to support World Vision because I was just like them. I dreamt big, I worked hard, and I had faith," he said.

Salubre hopes his racing career can also help bring attention to children's education, welfare and opportunities.

"I can be the voice of children on the world stage. I meet people from different countries, and being able to be their voice and their representative is very powerful," he said.



Fgani Angelo Salubre turns his international racing experience into encouragement for students in Manila, urging them to stay in school while pursuing their ambitions



Using his growing motorsport career, Fgani Angelo Salubre draws attention to education and opportunities for Filipino children in the communities he visits

Young Filipinos find new ways to read



National Book Development Board data show young adults continuing to embrace printed books even as online fiction platforms become part of their reading habits



Digital books give young readers another way to access stories as cost, availability and changing media habits shape how Filipinos read

By Jasper Valdez

A BOOK recommendation can now appear between videos on TikTok, while an interesting story might be just a few taps away on Wattpad. For young Filipinos, discovering their next read no longer means having to visit a bookstore or browse library shelves, as online communities and social media increasingly provide other ways to explore literature.

This changing relationship with books comes into focus during Philippine Book Development Month this November, when reading advocates and literary organizations are encouraging more Filipinos to develop the habit despite the growing competition from digital entertainment.

Figures from the 2023 National Readership Survey, commissioned by the National Book Development Board (NBDB) and conducted by Social Weather Stations (SWS), show that 55 percent of Filipinos ages 18 to 24 had read at least one non-school book in the previous year, compared with 42 percent of adults overall.

Among young adult respondents who read non-school books, 29 percent identified online fiction platforms such as Wattpad among their preferred reading materials. Printed books remained the leading choice for the age group at 71 percent, suggesting that digital and traditional reading formats continue to have their respective audiences.

Beyond online recommendations, reading communities are creating opportunities for people to enjoy books together.

In Davao City, Silent Book Club Davao organizes gatherings where participants bring their chosen books, read quietly for an hour, and exchange recommendations afterward. Unlike traditional book clubs, members are not required to read the same title or participate in discussions.

These gatherings offer an alternative to conventional book clubs, allowing participants to read at their own pace while meeting others with similar interests. They also provide a setting where reading can become part of a regular social activity without the pressure of completing an assigned book.

However, encouraging more people to read also means addressing the difficulties of obtaining books. The NBDB has identified limited access, affordability, and lack of awareness about public libraries as obstacles to developing reading habits.

To help address these concerns, the agency continues to expand its Book Nook initiative, which provides access to Filipino-authored books in public spaces. Its 133rd reading hub opened at the National Museum of the Philippines–Ilocos in March, offering free reading materials and borrowing opportunities.

Efforts to strengthen reading communities have also continued nationwide. In October, the National Alliance of Reading Advocates Conference (NARACon) gathered around 100 educators, librarians, book club organizers, and community representatives to discuss initiatives that could encourage more Filipinos to read.

With November also marking Library and Information Services Month, these activities highlight the different ways reading can become part of everyday life.

For young Filipinos discovering stories through their phones, joining reading groups, or borrowing books from community spaces, the opportunities to develop a reading habit are no longer limited to conventional bookstores and libraries. What remains important is having access to books that genuinely interest them.



Reading groups and community initiatives are creating more spaces for young Filipinos to discover books outside traditional bookstores and libraries



Professional makeup artist Christian Ray stresses proper skin preparation, shade selection and targeted coverage for a finish that allows natural texture to remain visible

Beyond filters

Embracing real skin

By Angelica Villanueva



Christian Ray recommends concentrating concealer on areas that need correction rather than covering the entire complexion with heavy layers of product

PORES, acne marks and uneven skin texture are part of having real skin, yet many makeup tutorials still promote the look of a flawless, poreless complexion. For those who want to cover blemishes without piling on layers of foundation, knowing where and how to apply concealer makes a difference.

Professional makeup artist **Christian Ray** shared this approach during a recent GRWM Cosmetics masterclass, demonstrating how the right product, shade, and application technique can provide coverage while allowing the skin's natural texture to show through.

"Less is more is, it's not about applying less amount of product. It's about focusing the product on the areas that need it," Ray explained.

The lesson was put into practice with the brand's new Blur Matte Full Cover Pot Concealer, a cream-based formula designed for targeted coverage. Unlike liquid concealers that spread more easily, the product has a higher pigment concentration and melts with the warmth of the skin, offering a soft matte finish with a skin-like appearance.

The formulation combines kaolin to absorb excess oil with glycerin, panthenol and sodium hyaluronate to help retain moisture. According to the brand, it was developed with oily, acne-prone, dry and combination skin in mind, addressing the difficulty of finding coverage that does not leave the complexion looking overly dry or heavy.

The product comes in 55 shades, including four brighteners and a sage green-beige corrector. These options allow users to address different concerns, from dark circles and discoloration to redness, while choosing shades suited to their skin tone and undertone.

Ray also explained the difference between correcting and concealing. Color correctors neutralize unwanted tones, while concealers cover imperfections. Using a shade that is too light to conceal dark circles, he cautioned, could leave a gray cast.

He also stressed the importance of skin preparation and allowing products to set before applying another layer.

"If your base is not good, no matter how good your eyeshadow is, how good your brows are, it won't look good," he said.

For makeup users accustomed to filtered beauty images, good coverage does not mean hiding every mark or texture. Understanding the skin's needs and applying makeup only where it is needed can help create a more natural-looking finish.

PETS

DESIREE CARLOS, *Editor / email: daycarlos28@yahoo.com*



Two cats trying to bite a squash fruit. *(Photo from iStock royalty-free images.)*

By Mariana Burgos

CATS may be small, but their nutritional needs are anything but simple. When people hear the word "superfood," they often think of trendy human ingredients, yet many of the same ideas apply to feline health in a carefully measured, cat-appropriate way. The best superfood for felines are not exotic miracle cures; they are nutrient-dense food that can support hydration, digestion, skin and coat health, immune function, and overall vitality.

The Best Superfood to Keep Your Cat Thriving

The key is balance. Cats are obligate carnivores which means their bodies are built to thrive on animal-based nutrition first, with certain plant- and supplement-based ingredients playing a supportive role rather than a starring one.

One of the most widely recommended feline superfood is pumpkin. According to the article "7 Superfoods for Cats and Their Health Benefits" by the Cats.com team, pumpkin is valued because it can help with both constipation and loose stools thanks to its fiber content. That makes it especially useful for cats with sensitive digestion. Pumpkin is not a complete meal on its own, of course, but a spoonful of plain, cooked pumpkin can be a simple way to add gentle digestive support. Its appeal lies in its practicality: it is affordable, easy to find, and easy to mix into food when a veterinarian agrees it is appropriate.



A cat eats his meal with some hard-boiled eggs. *(Photo from iStock royalty-free images.*

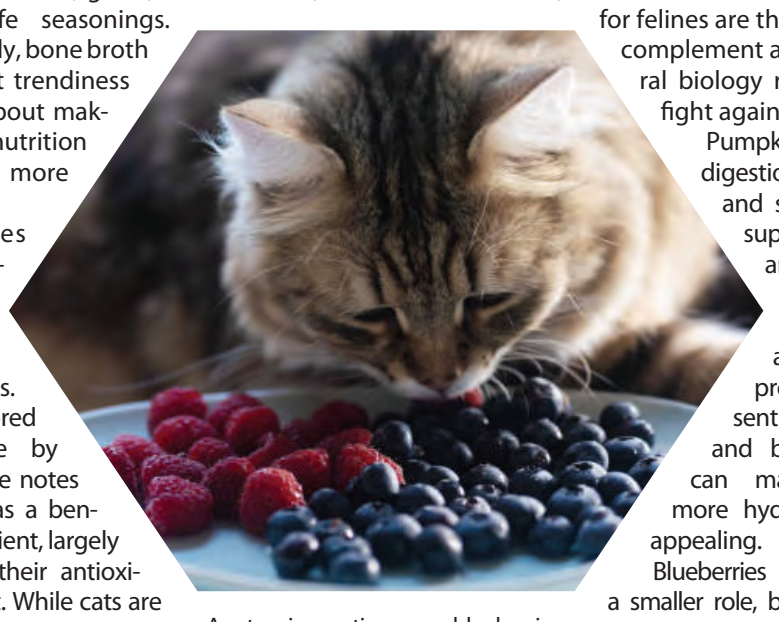
Small, oily fish also deserve a place on the feline superfood list. In the same Cats.com article, the authors highlight fish such as sardines and mackerel for their omega-3 fatty acids, which can support the skin, coat, and inflammatory balance. These fats are particularly valuable for cats with dryness, dull fur, or ongoing inflammatory issues. Fish should be fed in moderation and prepared safely, because overly salty, seasoned, or raw fish can cause problems. Still, when handled properly, oily fish offer a powerful nutritional boost that fits well with a cat's carnivorous design.

Lean meats remain the foundation of any cat's diet, but they also qualify as superfood in the practical sense because of how densely they deliver protein and essential amino acids. According to the article "7 Superfoods for Cats and Their Health Benefits" by the Cats.com team, meats such as chicken, turkey, and other lean animal proteins provide the building blocks cats need for muscle maintenance, energy, and repair. This is not a flashy category, but it is arguably the most important one. Cats do not just benefit from protein; they depend on it. The value of lean meats is that they are biologically appropriate, highly digestible, and naturally rich in the nutrients felines use every day.

Eggs are another noteworthy option. Cats.com includes eggs among their top superfood, and for good reason: they offer highly digestible protein plus several vitamins and minerals in a compact package. Cooked eggs can be a smart occasional addition for cats that tolerate them well. They are particularly useful when a cat needs a little variety in a meal plan without straying far from familiar, species-appropriate nutrition. Like all supplementary foods, eggs should be served plain and in modest amounts, not as a replacement for a complete diet.

Bone broth has become increasingly popular, and it earns attention because of hydration and palatability. According to "Superfoods for Cats: Small Ingredients, Big Benefits" by the Adored Beast Apothecary blog, bone broth is one of the standout ingredients for supporting cats in a simple but meaningful way. Broth can encourage drinking, soften meals for older cats, and add flavor for picky eaters. Since cats often do not drink as much as they should, a safe, cat-friendly broth can be an elegant solution.

The important caution is to avoid broths that contain onion, garlic, excessive salt, or other unsafe seasonings. Used properly, bone broth is less about trendiness and more about making feline nutrition easier and more appealing.



A cat enjoys eating some blueberries. *(Photo from iStock royalty-free images.*

Blueberries are a surprising but useful superfood in tiny amounts. The Adored Beast article by the same title notes blueberries as a beneficial ingredient, largely because of their antioxidant content. While cats are not fruit-eaters by nature, a small quantity of plain blueberries can serve as an occasional supplement rather than a dietary staple. Their role is modest, but antioxidants can help support cellular health.

For cat owners who enjoy exploring safe functional food, blueberries offer a simple example of how a small ingredient can bring added value.

The Furry Friends article "Superfoods for Felines" by Furry Friends also points to salmon as an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, reinforcing the importance of fatty fish in feline wellness. The article emphasizes the broad support salmon can offer for skin, coat, and general health. That perspective aligns with the larger picture: the best superfood for cats tend to be food that provide concentrated nutrition without unnecessary fillers. Salmon fits that description well when served in a safe, appropriate form.

In the end, the most effective superfood for felines are the ones that complement a cat's natural biology rather than fight against it.

Pumpkin can help digestion, oily fish and salmon can support skin and coat health, lean meats and eggs provide essential protein, and bone broth can make meals more hydrating and appealing.

Blueberries may play a smaller role, but they still contribute antioxidant value in careful amounts.

As the articles by Cats.com, Adored Beast Apothecary, and Furry Friends all suggest, the smartest approach is not to chase novelty but to use nutrient-rich food thoughtfully.

A cat's health is built on consistency, safety, and species-appropriate nutrition, and the best superfood are simply the ones that help those fundamentals work even better.

About the Author: Mariana Burgos is a freelance artist, writer, and tutor. She has been a solo parent for 19 years now because she is the wife of Jonas Burgos, a Filipino desaparecido. She and her daughter are animal lovers and are active in advocating not only human rights but the rights of animals as well.

Compassion in Action: Encouraging Children to be Kind to Animals

AN ANNIVERSARY celebration was turned into a day of helping animals and children and families of Marikina City.

In a meaningful celebration of courage, kindness, and community service, three organizations joined hands to bring joy, educational resources, and essential services to children and their families during the 5th Anniversary of the Marikeños Courageous Warriors on October 25, 2026, at the City Multipurpose Building in Marikina City.

The organizations are Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary (PCGA) 124th Squadron, Tails, Trees and Seas Organization Inc. (TTSOI), and the Save Animals of Love and Light (Save ALL).

The gathering celebrated the strength and resilience of children and families facing different health challenges. More than an anniversary celebration, the event became an opportunity for organizations and volunteers to demonstrate that compassion goes beyond words—it is expressed through meaningful actions, generosity, and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Among the highlights of the celebration was the distribution of the storybook Desiree Carlos: Ang Journalist na Tagapagligtas ng mga Strays, written and illustrated by Lalaine D. Manaog-Danao, Executive Director of TTSOI and also a member of the PCGA 124th Squadron. The books were donated to the children as part of the continuing advocacy of the participating organizations to promote compassion, respect, and responsible care for animals through children's literature. The storybook features the inspiring work of Desiree Carlos, founder and president of Save ALL, whose dedication to rescuing and protecting stray animals serves as an example of how one person's compassion can inspire others to take action. Through storytelling, the organizations hope to encourage children to recognize the value of every living being and understand that kindness should extend not only to people but also to animals and the environment. Chocolate and candy bags prepared by Save ALL were also distributed to the children, adding sweetness to an already memorable celebration.

At the PCGA 124th Squadron booth, children and families received various gifts and essential items, including stuffed toys, milk, bread, bags, wipes, and other donations. These contributions reflected the generosity of individuals and organizations who came together to make the anniversary celebration more meaningful.

For children and families who face daily challenges brought about by different illnesses and health conditions, these simple yet thoughtful gifts represented something more profound: the assurance that they are remembered, valued, and supported by a caring community.



Lalaine D. Manaog-Danao, TTSOI Executive director and author, with the officers of the PCGA 124th Squadron, during the 5th Anniversary celebration of the Marikeños Courageous Warriors in Marikina City.



Auxiliary Commodore Dr. Nnicolle Lourdes Dela Cruz, a very active and dedicated leader of the PCGA 124th Squadron, is committed to service, compassion, and community outreach.

The Philippine Coast Guard Dental Station NCR- Central Luzon also provided dental services to the children under the leadership of LCDR Justin N. Eustaquio (PCG). The initiative highlighted the importance of oral health and preventive care, particularly among children who may have limited access to regular dental services.

The partnership demonstrated that caring for children requires a holistic approach—one that recognizes the importance of education, physical health, emotional well-being, and social inclusion.

For the participating organizations, children remain at the heart of their shared mission. Through education, they seek to nurture compassionate and responsible individuals. Through healthcare services, they help promote healthier communities. Through book giving and storytelling, they inspire young minds to develop empathy and respect for all living beings.



The PCGA 124th Squadron booth filled with gifts, goodies, and essential items for the Marikeños Courageous Warriors. This is a heartfelt expression of love, generosity, and service to the community.

The PCGA 124th Squadron, led by Aux Commodore Dr. Nnicolle Lourdes Dela Cruz of the PCGA 124th Squadron, continues to support initiatives that bring meaningful services to communities. As a physician, Commodore Dela Cruz recognizes the importance of programs that address the needs of children, especially those who are navigating different medical conditions alongside their families.

The anniversary celebration provided an opportunity to bring together people from different sectors, united by a common purpose: to make children feel that they are not alone in their journey.

The Marikeños Courageous Warriors and their families face different challenges, but the celebration was filled with smiles, laughter, and excitement. The children received numerous gifts and enjoyed the activities prepared for them, creating moments of happiness that extended beyond the occasion.

For Save ALL, TTSOI, and the PCGA 124th Squadron, the partnership represents a continuing commitment to service and compassion. The organizations believe that teaching children to care for animals is also an important part of teaching them to care for one another. A child who learns to respect a stray dog, protect a vulnerable animal, or show kindness to a living creature is also learning valuable lessons about empathy, responsibility, and humanity.