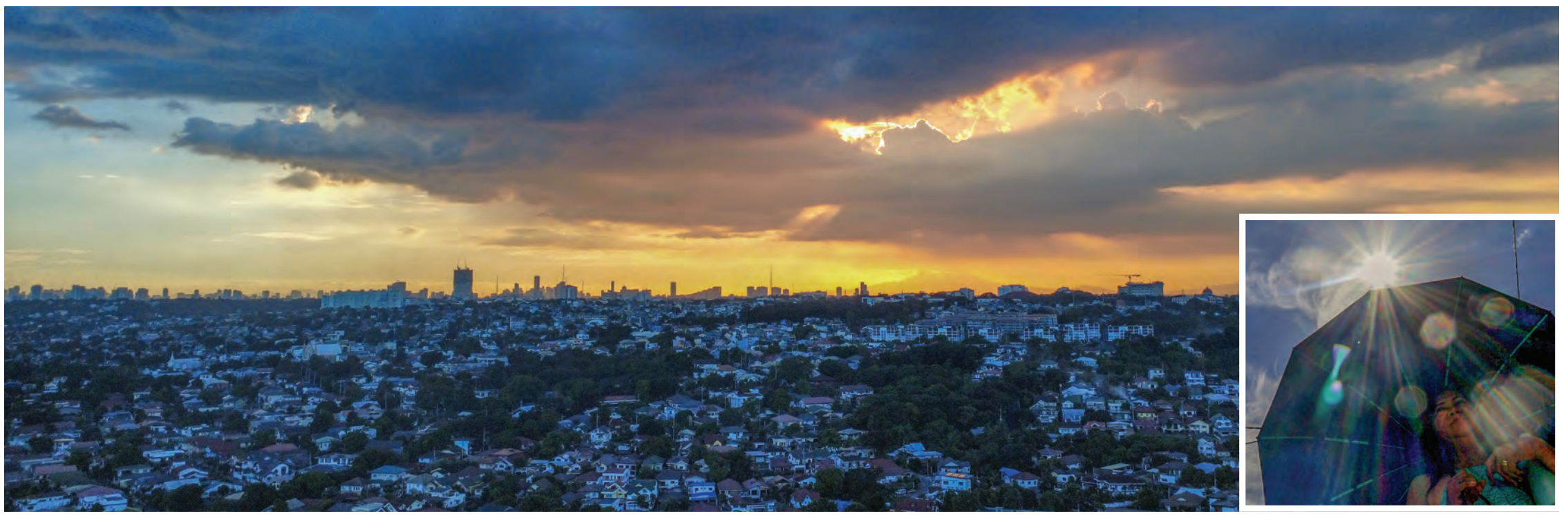
9 780116 505408

manilastandard.net @ManilaStandardPH @mnlstandardph @manilastandard @ManilaStandardYT

Missed your copy of Manila Standard? Call or text our Circulation Hotline at 0917-8848655 or email: circulation@manilastandard.net . For advertisement: email: advertise@manilastandard.net • 09173382170 / 85646229



RESPITE AFTER A SCORCHING DAY. The sun sets behind the city skyline on Monday, November 2, 2026, as dangerously high heat index levels were logged in nine areas across the country earlier in the day. The public is advised to bring an umbrella, stay hydrated, and take precautions against the effects of extreme heat. *(See story below)*. Edd Castro

Manila Standard

VOL. XL • NO. 259 • 3 SECTIONS 16 PAGES • P20 • TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026

MNLF not hiding Bato, 'not an ally'

Claims of sheltering solon 'unverified'

By Rex Espiritu, Joel E. Zurbano and Vince Lopez

THE Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has denied sheltering fugitive Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, saying there is no verified evidence that he belongs to the group or has an operational alliance with it.

PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. vowed to continue pursuing former BuCor chief Gerald Bantag after police failed to find him in a poultry farm in Barangay Pugol in Ifugao. Police received information that Bantag, wanted in connection with the 2022 murder of broadcaster Percival 'Percy Lapid' Mabasa, was hiding there and posing as a poultry worker, but he was not found.

"The claim that the MNLF may be protecting him is speculation, not a confirmed fact. Reports emphasize that the MNLF is fragmented and that it is uncertain whether the Misuari faction would—or could—shield him from arrest," the Front said Monday.

On Sunday, Dela Rosa's lawyer Israelito Torreon questioned the legality of PNP operations targeting people associated with the senator, saying police must not search private residences without a valid warrant or a legally

Next page

'PH experiencing slowflation amid slow growth, high inflation'

By Thony Rose Lesaca

THE Philippines has entered the "slowflation" environment where weak economic growth and moderately high inflation hurt household income and spending.

Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development senior research fellow Ser Percival Peña-Reyes said the Philippines is experiencing "slowflation" and not "stagflation" as other economists described.

"Perhaps the more appropriate term is slowflation—an economic condition where a country experiences weak or sluggish economic growth combined with moderately high inflation, although the economy continues to expand at a positive rate rather than contracting," Peña-Reyes said.

Stagflation is defined as the simultaneous occurrence of slow economic growth, high unemployment and elevated inflation.

Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) senior research fellow John Paolo Rivera said while there are stagflation signs, he would be "cautious about declaring full-blown stagflation."

Next page



MERRY CHRISTMAS? Parol makers assemble Christmas lanterns at a shop in Las Piñas City on November 2, 2026. As the holiday season draws near, Filipinos grapple with high inflation and a weaker peso even as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged the public not to panic. **Norman Cruz**

Gas prices up by P3.50/l, rollback for diesel (P1/l), kerosene (P1.90/l)

By Alena Mae S. Flores

CONSUMERS are facing a P3.50 per liter increase in gasoline prices effective Tuesday, reflecting movements in the world oil market.

The Department of Energy said diesel and kerosene prices will roll back by P1 and P1.90 per liter, respectively.

Fuel supply remains strong at 52.95 days, with gasoline stocks good for

Next page

ICC expects Rody to attend trial daily starting Nov. 30

By Gwyneth Nolasco

INTERNATIONAL Criminal Court (ICC) Trial Chamber III Presiding Judge Joanna Korner on Monday said former President Rodrigo Duterte is expected to attend on a "daily basis" the upcoming trial for his crimes against humanity case set to begin on November 30.

The Judge told Duterte's legal counsel Peter Haynes that the Chamber earlier agreed on Duterte's waiver of the right to appear before the court for its fifth status conference.

Next page

PAGASA sees 'dangerous' heat levels in 9 areas

By Gabriel Oliva and Rio N. Araja

THE Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) on Monday predicted dangerous heat index levels in at least nine areas, with temperatures reaching as high as 43 degrees Celsius.

PAGASA chief Dr. Nathaniel Servando confirmed yesterday that temperatures went up in most parts of Luzon due to cloudless skies.

Meanwhile, at least two tropical depressions were forecast to enter the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) this month.

Next page



POST-UNDAS. Sanitation personnel conduct a cleanup operation at the Bagbag Cemetery in Novaliches, Quezon City on Monday. **Quezon City LGU Facebook page**

40.7m visit cemeteries for Undas; PNP ready for holiday return rush

By Vince Lopez and Rex Espiritu

MORE than 40.7 million visits to cemeteries, memorial parks and columbaria nationwide were recorded from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2 as Filipinos observed Undas, prompting police to sustain security and crowd-control operations through the holiday return rush.

Philippine National Police chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said

Next page



EALA RISES TO NEW CAREER-HIGH NO. 17 SPORTS / A8

NBI TO PROBE PET CREMATORIUM MESS NEWS / A4

TRUMP'S PARTY TRIES TO STOP DEMOCRATS WORLD / A6



MNLF...
From A1

recognized exception.

In a Facebook post, Torreon stressed that mere association with the senator or unverified intelligence reports do not justify searches, and that consent to a warrantless search must be voluntary.

The lawyer urged police to exercise restraint and ensure that operations do not intimidate or harass private citizens merely because they know or are associated with Dela Rosa, emphasizing that law enforcement must respect constitutional rights and due process.

The MNLF acknowledged Dela Rosa's support for peacebuilding initiatives and programs benefiting former combatants and their children.

The group noted his political connections with MNLF figures, particularly through former President Rodrigo Duterte's relationship with former Front leader Nur Misuari but said these did not establish that it was protecting the senator.

It also cited his advocacy for the faster integration of qualified MNLF and Moro Islamic Liberation Front members into the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The MILF, the breakaway faction of the MNLF whose leaders are now top officials of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, has yet to issue its own statement on the fugitive senator as of press time.

The PNP is searching for Dela Rosa after the one-week surrender deadline set by Nartatez expired.

The senator went into hiding after the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against him over alleged crimes against humanity linked to Duterte's anti-drug campaign.

Authorities have offered a P50-million reward for information leading to Dela Rosa's arrest. Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla has described him as a priority target and said he should be considered armed and dangerous.

Remulla earlier claimed that Dela Rosa was hiding in Mindanao under the protection of a "powerful group" with armed personnel.

Remulla also alleged that Dela Rosa participated in a conspiracy that resulted in 6,000 to 30,000 deaths during the Duterte administration's drug war.

Senator Panfilo Lacson, meanwhile, urged law enforcers to keep sensitive operations confidential, saying information should be disclosed only when it serves a deliberate operational purpose.

"Sssshh. When pursuing a high-profile target or handling a sensitive live case, secrecy discipline is key unless disinformation is necessary to flush the quarry into the open," Lacson said in a post on X.

Lacson, a former PNP chief and Dela Rosa's former superior at the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, said authorities should withhold solid information until an operation is completed, unless releasing it could help draw a target into the open.

ICC...
From A1

"We've agreed exceptionally because this is not likely to be a particularly lengthy status conference that Mr. Duterte need not attend this morning," Korner said.

"But once the actual trial starts, we will expect, as we said, attendance on a daily basis," she added.

Duterte skipped three of five status conferences leading up to his trial.

On May 21, the defense notified the ICC Trial Chamber III that Duterte wished to waive his right to attend the first status conference scheduled on May 27, which the Trial Chamber granted.

The former President then requested to waive his right to attend the second status conference scheduled on June 23, which the Trial Chamber again granted.

For the fifth and final status conference scheduled on November 2, the former chief executive again requested to waive his right to attend, which the Trial Chamber granted.

Previously, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I also granted Duterte's request to waive his right to attend the confirmation of charges hearing from February 23 to 27.

Duterte faces three counts of alleged crimes against humanity of murder and attempted murder during the war on drugs campaign during his mayoral and presidential terms between Nov. 1, 2011, and Mar. 16, 2019.

He has been in ICC custody for at least a year following his arrest in the Philippines on Mar. 11, 2025, and subsequent transfer into the jurisdiction of the said court in The Hague, Netherlands.

PAGASA...
From A1

The state weather bureau said the danger-level heat index was expected in Coron, Palawan; San Jose, Occidental Mindoro; Legazpi City, Albay; Virac, Catanduanes; Juban, Sorsogon; Roxas City, Capiz; Catarman, Northern Samar; Dipolog, Zamboanga Del Norte; and Hinatuan, Surigao Del Sur.

These areas were predicted to experience peak temperatures of 42 degrees Celsius, with Catarman seething at 43 degrees Celsius.

PAGASA said under dangerous heat index levels (42 to 51 degrees Celsius), people may experience heat cramps and exhaustion, adding that prolonged exposure to high temperatures can lead to heat stroke.

Meanwhile, at least 60 other areas monitored nationwide, including the National Capital Region, were under "extreme caution," ranging from 33 to 41 degrees Celsius.

PAGASA has since warned the public of the symptoms of heat-related illnesses, including excessive sweating, fatigue, dizziness, fainting, weakening of the pulse, and vomiting.

It also gave tips for prevention such as limiting exposure to the sun, drinking eight to 10 glasses of water daily, using umbrellas, wearing clothes with sleeves, and doing heavy work during the cooler times of the day.

"It was quite too hot yesterday because it was cloudless due to the prevailing wind system, the weak northeasterlies, and the absence of a tropical cyclone in Luzon," Servando told the Standard.

"But actually, the impact of the El Nino is already here. The effects of El Nino are being felt now. There is already meteorological drought due to reduced (amount of) rainfall," he said.

Most parts of the country will experience hotter days starting February and onwards when the dry season sets in, he said.

He clarified however, that El Nino was not yet in its full-blown stage.

The severe impact of a very strong El Niño could be characterized by the significant lack of rainfall and extreme hot temperatures.

He said he is hoping that no tropical cyclones would enter the Philippine area of responsibility until December.

"Usually, tropical cyclones during El Nino are formed off the sea. They are already strong upon entering the PAR. They do not even make landfall," Servando said.

Christmas days will no longer be as cold as in the past Yuletide seasons because of the El Nino, he said.

If the depressions this month developed inside the PAR, they will be given the names "Samuel" and "Tomas," PAGASA said.

Weather specialist Daniel James Villamil said one of the possible tropical depressions is seen to recurve going up toward Japan or Korea.

The other scenario could be that one of the tropical cyclones would make landfall in the eastern sections of Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas, and eventually exit toward the West Philippine Sea.

Gas...
From A1

52.29 days, diesel for 56.86 days, and kerosene for 148.55 days.

An industry source said over the weekend that diesel prices softened amid an easing supply outlook, supported by stock releases and Chinese and Russian exports.

However, he said Asian gasoline balances remained tight despite the release of Chinese export quotas, as higher crude import costs weighed on regional refining economics.

"Oil rebounded as supply risks grew, with markets bracing for a potential escalation in the Iran war after the US midterm elections," the source said.

On Oct. 27, oil companies raised diesel prices by P1.20 per liter and kerosene by P0.50 per liter. Domestic pump prices of gasoline decreased by P0.30 per liter.

The 43rd price adjustment this year resulted in total net increases of P68.55 per liter for gasoline, P65.63 per liter for diesel, and P63.26 per liter for kerosene.

DOE data showed that gasoline prices ranged from P75.10 to P100.80 per liter, diesel from P89.90 to P102 per liter, and kerosene from P116 to P145.84 per liter in the National Capital Region from Oct. 27 to Nov. 2.

As this developed, Iran on Monday said it was ready to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within two days if the United States agreed to its conditions, shortening its previously proposed timeline of one week.

"The possibility of implementing this plan in two days is another indication of Iran's good-faith approach," Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said.

"We have stated that, if Iran's demands are met, it would be possible to restore security to the Strait of Hormuz and resume the negotiating process within a short period."

He said an exchange of messages with the United States through mediators was ongoing and that "everything depends" on Washington accepting Iran's demands.

"Only then can we discuss the subsequent stages," he said.

Since the Middle East war broke out in late February, Iran has claimed control over Hormuz, a vital energy shipping route.

It regularly targets vessels attempting to cross the strait without its authorization, while the United States has retaliated by imposing a naval blockade on Iranian ports.

In September, Iran initially proposed a seven-day plan, conveyed to the United States through Qatar, under which Tehran would reopen Hormuz on the sixth day after Washington met its demands.

These include ending the Middle East war on all fronts, unfreezing Iranian assets abroad, lifting sanctions on its oil sector, and ending the US naval blockade.

In an interview with Al Jazeera released on Sunday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Washington must accept a new route agreed upon by Iran and Oman for transit through the strait.

He also said the United States must lift sanctions imposed in recent months and reduce its troop presence in the region.

Since August, Washington has imposed a new series of sanctions as part of what it called the "economic asphyxiation" of Iran.

The United States and Israel have also intensified threats in recent days to resume attacks on Iran amid crucial elections in both countries.

On Saturday, US President Donald Trump said he still had to "take care" of one or two targets, including Mount Pickaxe in central Iran, a suspected nuclear site that Tehran denies is a nuclear facility.

"Any act of aggression against Iran, any military attack against Iran, by whatever means, will be met with a powerful, immediate and comprehensive response from us," Baqaei said during a Foreign Ministry briefing on Monday. **AFP**

40.7m...
From A1

40,740,246 visitors had been recorded at 5,311 sites as of 6 a.m. Monday, Nov. 2, including 1,695,440 during the latest monitoring period.

Police also confiscated 6,499 prohibited items, including 879 bladed weapons, 62 alcoholic drinks, 2,817 lighters, 1,739 cigarettes and vape products, 180 cooking materials and 397 flammable substances.

Nartatez said police remained deployed at cemeteries and other major convergence areas, with assistance desks and emergency response teams helping visitors, particularly children and senior citizens.

"We know that this day is important for every Filipino family. So, as you remember your loved ones, our police are here to help and ensure the safety of your visit. We are not just guarding security; we are also ready to assist anyone who needs it," he said.

Metro Manila generally peaceful

The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) reported a generally peaceful observance of All Saints' Day in Metro Manila, with personnel remaining on alert as visitors began returning home.

NCRPO chief Brig. Gen. Christopher Abrahano thanked the public for following security, traffic and cemetery regulations, saying their cooperation helped maintain peace and order.

He also warned visitors against criminals posing as religious ministers who offer unauthorized prayers or blessings in exchange for money.

"Do not let your guard down just because you are in a place of remembrance and prayer. Criminals can take advantage of even a moment of distraction. Stay alert, secure your belongings, and look after your family members," Abrahano said.

High security at transport terminals, roads

The PNP also heightened security at transport terminals and major roads as millions of Filipinos returned to their homes, schools and workplaces after the holiday.

Nartatez directed police regional offices to maintain visible patrols along highways, bus terminals, seaports, airports and transport interchanges to prevent crime and protect commuters and motorists.

"No destination is worth risking lives for. We urge motorists to follow traffic laws, avoid speeding, never drive under the influence of alcohol, refrain from using mobile phones while driving, and take adequate rest before long trips," he said.

The Philippine Marine Corps also deployed personnel to cemeteries in Manila, Malabon and Navotas from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 to provide security and medical assistance.

The 3rd Marine Rifle Battalion, under the Philippine Marine Ready Force-National Capital Region, coordinated with local governments, law enforcement agencies and emergency response teams to provide first aid, guide visitors and help manage crowds.

'PH...
From A1

Rivera said the economy is growing more slowly and inflation has remained elevated, but unemployment has not persistently increased.

Last month, Center for Financial and Monetary senior fellow David Fernandez said the country may have already crossed into stagflation, noting that growth forecasts for 2026 have gone down from more than 5 percent to around 3.2 percent.

A research paper from the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department (CPBRD), the think tank of the House of Representatives, explained that for a traditionally fast-growing developing economy, GDP growth below 4 percent combined with inflation above 7 percent represent an active stagflation episode.

"Recent macroeconomic data indicate that the growth rate of the Philippine economy is decreasing. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate has posed notable declines in three consecutive quarters; 3.9 percent in the third quarter of 2025, 3.0 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025 and 2.8 percent in the first quarter of 2026. These declines coincided with significant increases in the inflation rate and sustained increases in the unemployment rate. These, in turn, are symptomatic of a stagflation episode," the CPBRD said in the paper "Stagflation: Evidence from the Philippines" written by Dr. David Joseph Yap Jr.

The Department of Economy, Planning and Development, however, maintains that the country is not in full-blown stagflation because the labor market has proved resilient.

The Philippines, which sources most of its oil from abroad, has experienced one of the region's highest inflation rates this year, led by imported energy and oil price shocks from Middle East conflicts.

Elevated global oil prices, supply-side pressures and peso weakness likely pushed October inflation above September's 7.2 percent, according to analysts surveyed over the weekend.

Reyes Tacandong & Co. senior adviser Jonathan Ravelas, Union Bank of the Philippines chief economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion and Metrobank chief economist Nicholas Mapa all expect inflation to settle at 7.8 percent in October.

GDP grew by just 2.3 percent in the second quarter, slower than 2.8 percent in the first quarter and 5.4 percent a year ago. The International Monetary Fund slashed its 2026 growth forecast for the Philippines to 3.4 percent from its previous estimate of 3.9 percent. The economy grew 4.4 percent in 2025, 5.7 percent in 2024 and 5.6 percent in 2023.

Employment figures have also fluctuated in recent months. Philippine Statistics Authority data showed the unemployment rate climbed to 5.3 percent in August 2026 from 3.9 percent a year ago.

The weakness of the economy also translated into a volatile foreign exchange rate. The Philippine peso touched 64 per dollar for the first time on record last week, adding to inflationary pressure on imported goods.

Federation of Philippine Industries chairperson Elizabeth Lee said local manufacturers are already assuming an exchange rate of 65 per dollar in hedging their foreign-currency exposure. She said sharp peso swings threaten to raise the cost of imported inputs and further squeeze profit margins.

The Philippines has experienced stagflation episodes in the past decades. Inflation hit as high as 34.16 percent in 1974 because of global oil shocks, mounting foreign debt, political turmoil and structural economic weakness.

Inflation peaked at 62.80 percent in September 1984 amid political unrest and debt defaults. The economy also suffered severe contractions, culminating in the deep 1984-1985 recession, when GDP shrank by roughly 7.3 percent for two consecutive years.

In 1991, inflation surged to 19.26 percent, worsened by the 1990 Luzon earthquake, the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, coup attempts and a 9-percent import surcharge. In August 2008, inflation hit 12.5 percent because of the global food and oil crisis.

Inflation reached 8.1 percent in December 2022 and 8.7 percent in January 2023 as the economy slowly recovered from the pandemic. GDP posted a sharp 9.5-percent contraction in 2020 because of COVID-19.

The BSP has responded differently during these periods, reflecting changes to its mandate and the nature of each crisis. When stagflation hit in the 1980s, the then Central Bank of the Philippines issued "Jobo Bills," named after Governor Jose Fernandez Jr., which were high-yielding treasury bills with interest rates above 40 percent. It was to mop up excess peso liquidity and arrest hyperinflation, but it exacerbated the economic contraction.

Former BSP deputy governor Diwa Guinigundo said the peso's depreciation in recent weeks is a warning sign, but not a verdict on the Philippine economy.

"A flexible exchange rate can absorb external shocks, provided the country has sound institutions, credible policies and sufficient productive strength to adjust," he said in his column.

"The more durable defense is to make the economy more productive, its institutions more trustworthy, and its policies more credible," he added.

Manila Standard

BI arrests alleged leader of JP Dragon syndicate

By Vito Barcelo

THE Bureau of Immigration (BI) has arrested a 57-year-old Japanese national believed to be a leader of the notorious JP Dragon criminal syndicate in Japan.

The BI identified the Japanese national as Yamamoto Yoshitama, who was arrested in Cabanatuan City following a deportation order issued by the bureau in 2023.

Yamamoto is wanted in Japan for fraud, theft, and attempted theft under an arrest warrant issued by the Fukuoka Summary Court on December 27, 2022.

According to the BI, Yamamoto was reportedly among the leaders of JP Dragon, a Japan-based criminal syndicate composed largely of former yakuza members and allegedly operating in Metro Manila.

The group is linked to telephone fraud schemes targeting elderly Japanese citizens. Japanese investigators suspect that the syndicate defrauded around 250 victims of approximately ¥900 million since 2019.

Yamamoto is currently detained at the BI Warden's Facility pending deportation proceedings.

BI Commissioner Joel Anthony M. Viado said the agency would continue its operations against foreign fugitives and prevent the Philippines from becoming a safe haven for international criminals.

Yamamoto, 57, believed to have been the group's No. 2 figure, was arrested by police and immigration personnel in Nueva Ecija province, north of Manila. He is wanted under an arrest warrant issued by a court in Fukuoka for his alleged involvement in fraud and theft. **With Kyodo News**

DSWD sustains aid to families in Mayon unrest

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Social Welfare and Development in Bicol (DSWD-5) continues to provide humanitarian assistance to 525 families, or 1,729 individuals, in Albay displaced by the ongoing unrest of Mayon Volcano.

DSWD Bicol Disaster Response and Management Division chief Claudio Villareal on Monday said 517 families, or 1,714 individuals, are still staying in 11 evacuation centers, while eight families, or 15 individuals, are temporarily seeking shelter with relatives.

"Since Oct. 30, DSWD Bicol has provided assistance worth P3.47 million," Villareal said.

The assistance includes 768 drinking water supplies, 3,815 family food packs (FFPs), and 768 ready-to-eat food (RTEF) packs.

The agency also distributed eight information boards, eight signages, and eight gender-based violence referral pathways for evacuation centers.

In Tabaco City, DSWD Bicol provided 152 internally displaced families in four evacuation centers in the villages of Buang, Buhian, Mariroc, and San Antonio with one RTEF pack each and 6.6 liters of bottled water.

An additional 220 FFPs were distributed to evacuees in four evacuation centers in Tabaco City, serving families from the villages of Magapo, Buang, Mariroc (Nagsipit), Oson, and Buhian.

In Camalig, 167 FFPs were delivered to displaced families staying at Tagaytay Elementary School and the Camalig Bungkaras Evacuation Center.



REMEMBERING THE DISAPPEARED. Families of victims of enforced disappearances attend a Mass at the Claret School Chapel in UP Village, Quezon City, on Monday, to mark All Souls' Day and renew calls for justice and the return of their missing loved ones. Organized by Desaparecidos and human rights group KARAPATAN, the gathering features photographs of desaparecidos. Joshua Isaac Espanol

Pangilinan urges strict price freeze enforcement

By Ram Superable and Othel Campos

SENATOR Francis Pangilinan on Monday called on the government to strictly enforce price freezes in calamity-declared areas and intensify crackdowns on hoarders, profiteers, and cartels as the Philippines prepares for the impact of a strong El Niño on food production and costs.

In an official statement, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform chair urged the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, and Price Coordinating Council to strengthen market monitoring, maintain automatic price caps, and recommend price ceilings when legally necessary to shield consumers from unfair price hikes.

"The impending disaster that will further burden our countrymen, especially farmers and fishermen who also buy from the market, should not be turned into a source of profit. In times of crisis, consumers must be protected against exploitation," he said.

Under the amended Price Act, prices of basic necessities are automatically frozen at prevailing rates in regions declared under a state of calamity, unless the President issues a different order.

This mandatory price freeze remains in effect for the duration of the emergency, for up to 60 days.

For imported and deregulated basic goods such as kerosene and household liquefied petroleum gas, the freeze period is capped at 15 days, based on existing inventory and supply conditions.

"I call on implementing agencies, local price councils, and law enforcement authorities to gather evidence and pursue criminal and administrative cases, where warranted, against those responsible for illegal price manipulation. Enforcement must not end with frontline sellers. We must target the very top," he said.

Section 5 of the Price Act strictly prohibits hoarding, profiteering, and cartel operations involving essential goods and prime commodities.

Additionally, under Section 15 of the Price Act, individuals found guilty of illegal price manipulation face five to 15 years in prison and fines ranging from P5,000 to P2 million.

Section 16 sets penalties for violating price ceilings or automatic freezes at one to 10 years in prison, fines ranging from P5,000 to P1 million, or both.

Public officials who conspire in or knowingly conceal price control violations can be held principally liable under Section 19, which carries the penalty of permanent disqualification from public office.



ASEAN SUMMIT PREPARATIONS. Construction workers assemble an archway outside the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City as the complex undergoes beautification, venue preparations, and security improvements ahead of the arrival of foreign delegations and heads of state for the 49th ASEAN Summit. **Norman Cruz**



AID FOR MAYON EVACUEES. Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office 5 (Bicol Region) distributes 404 ready-to-eat food packs, 6.6 liters of distilled water, and 91 family food packs to internally displaced families from San Roque and Calbayog villages in Malilipot, Albay, both within Mayon Volcano's six-kilometer Permanent Danger Zone.

DepEd boosts 'Gulayan sa Paaralan' plan

By Gabriel Oliva

THE Department of Education (DepEd) said Monday it is strengthening the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP) to help mitigate the potential agricultural impacts of the looming "Super" El Niño, which is expected to hit the country in the latter part of 2026 until the first half of 2027.

In a statement, DepEd said it is moving toward climate-resilient farming approaches, including prioritizing short-cycle crops that require less water to grow and ensuring year-round vegetable production.

It added that the initiative aims to protect the continuity of learner nutrition and ensure that its school feeding program is not affected by extreme weather events.

"The adjustment addresses the immediate threat extreme weather and Super El Niño pose to agricultural yields, which directly impact School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) operations," DepEd said.

According to DepEd, school gardens in basic education schools across the country will shift toward planting drought-resistant vegetables, including munggo, okra, malunggay, saluyot, alugbati, and kamote.

"To combat prolonged dry spells, extreme heat, and water limitations threatening conventional planting cycles, the updated GPP framework directs schools to restructure their crop selection and soil management systems," it added.

The Education Department added that, to maintain garden output, schools are implementing water-saving measures, including organic mulching, rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and alternate-day watering schedules.

IN BRIEF

DAR distributes 849 titles to Pampanga farmers

THE Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has distributed 849 land titles to 688 agrarian reform beneficiaries in Pampanga, covering 656.4423 hectares of agricultural land.

The distribution on Oct. 29 included 426 regular emancipation patents and certificates of land ownership award, and 423 electronic titles under the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling Project.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III directed agency officials to expedite land title distribution and provide support services to qualified beneficiaries to improve their livelihoods.

Meanwhile, PelikulAgraryo 2026 recognized seven films produced by 137 students from four schools. Tarlac State University's "Sandigan" won Best Film in the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organization category.

Aurora State College of Technology's "Tubo" won Best Film in the Agrarian Reform Beneficiary category. Other award-winning entries came from Central Luzon State University and Wesleyan University-Philippines. Estrella said DAR continues to advance farmers' land rights and promote their stories through land distribution and youth engagement. **Rio N. Araja**

PAF council backs probe into deaths of 4 aviators

THE Philippine Air Force (PAF) Multi-Sector Governance Council (MSGC) has recognized the importance of a thorough, impartial, and fact-based investigation into the incident that claimed the lives of four PAF aviators.

In a statement, the council extended its condolences to the bereaved families and honored the aviators for their service, dedication, and commitment to the country.

The MSGC said the investigation should establish the circumstances surrounding the incident and provide clarity in accordance with applicable procedures.

It also urged the public to respect the investigation and consider the families of the fallen aviators as authorities work to establish the facts. **Rex Espiritu**

PNP steps up campaign vs. investment scams

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday intensified efforts to protect Filipinos from fraudulent investment schemes by strengthening police operations and public awareness campaigns following the arrest of a businesswoman accused of defrauding investors of P160 million.

The move follows President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to strengthen the government's campaign against criminal activities and protect the public from financial fraud.

PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. urged the public to exercise caution when considering investment offers promoted by popular social media personalities, stressing that online popularity and a legitimate business do not guarantee a safe investment.

"Not everything that we see on social media is true. We advise the public to be extra vigilant to avoid investment scams. Just because someone is popular on social media does not mean we should immediately believe them. Make sure their investment offers are legitimate," he said. **Vince Lopez**

Prosecution cautions against undue delay of impeachment

By Maricel V. Cruz

POSTPONING Vice President Sara Duterte's impeachment trial until 2027 could undermine the continuity of the proceedings and make it more difficult for the public to remember the evidence already presented by the House prosecution, raising concerns about fairness and the timely resolution of the still pending unexplained wealth charge.

Meanwhile, the Vice President and her husband, lawyer Manases Carpio, could face cross-examination by House prosecutors if they testify when the Senate impeachment trial resumes on Nov. 9.

House private prosecutor and legal spokesperson Benjamin Tolosa Jr. cautioned against an extended interruption between the prosecution's completed presentation and the defense's turn to present their case, saying that lengthy delays could weaken public understanding of the documentary evidence and testimonies presented over several months.

"And it wouldn't be fair either, because if there's an excessively long lull before a party makes its presentation, the public might already have forgotten what they heard earlier," Tolosa explained.

He was reacting to suggestions that the Senate prioritize deliberations on the proposed 2027 national budget and return to the impeachment case next year.

"But maybe that's not procedurally (correct because) that will be problematic," Tolosa cautioned.

The Senate impeachment court is scheduled to resume proceedings on Nov. 9, with the defense expected to begin presenting witnesses and documentary evidence after the House prosecution withdrew three impeachment articles on Oct. 13.

"It's better if the movement is continuous," Tolosa noted, emphasizing the importance of avoiding unnecessary interruptions once the defense presentation begins.

Meanwhile, the Senate is also preparing to deliberate on the proposed 2027 national budget, creating scheduling challenges for senator-judges who must perform both their legislative responsibilities and their duties as members of the impeachment court.

The House prosecution maintains that concentrating on Article II involving alleged unexplained wealth will help shorten the proceedings without depriving Duterte of the opportunity to present her defense.

"We're hoping that we'll be able to get a decision before the end of the year" Tolosa explained.

IN BRIEF

CIDG nabs 2 aliens for illegal detention

THE Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) on Monday reported that they have arrested a Taiwanese and a Malaysian for alleged illegal detention of workers in Manila.

The operation staged by a composite team of law enforcers led by the CIDG also resulted in the rescue of three victims, consisting of two women and a man.

The arrested Taiwanese was identified only as Pen, 32, while the Malaysian named Lee, 38, are facing charges of serious illegal detention.

The suspects allegedly recruit Filipino workers purportedly as "virtual assistants" positions with a monthly salary of $400 to $500, plus additional $100 incentive for perfect attendance. **Vince Lopez**

'BARMM polls create areas of improvement'

THE Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) and the government's peace mechanisms have identified best practices and areas for improvement following the first Bangsamoro Parliamentary Elections.

The assessment was conducted during a three-day workshop held Oct. 27 to 29 in General Santos City to evaluate the preparations and operations of the government's peace mechanisms for October 2026 elections.

The workshop focused on improving planning, administrative and logistical support, field communications and personnel preparations for future peace and development interventions.

Participants included representatives from the Government of the Philippines Peace Implementing Panel, OPAPRU's Political Concerns Office, the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, the Joint Peace and Security Committee, the Ad-Hoc Joint Action Group and the Joint Normalization Committee. **Rex Espiritu**

Solon: Avoid desecrating sacred tribal traditions

A LEADER of the House Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples has called on tour operators to respect local traditions, stressing that "these are not spectacles for enjoyment but rather sacred practices deeply rooted in faith and community."

A gentle reminder to our tour operators: please respect the traditions of Indigenous Peoples, and do not view them merely as opportunities for tourism," Solid North Party-list Rep. Ching Bernos said.

The remark came on the heels of reminders from Sagada officials and residents not to promote their long-standing tradition called Panag-apoy as a tourist attraction during the recently concluded observance of Undas in the country.

Some tour operators recalled tour packages offering sightseeing tours of the Panag-apoy, a Sagada tradition of honoring the dead by lighting saeng or pine fatwood. **Maricel V. Cruz**



MARGINAL FISHING. Local fishermen in Sasmuan, Pampanga still depend on the traditional tools of the trade such as small nets and traps. Revoli Cortez

NBI set to conduct full investigation into pet crematorium mess

By Gwyneth Nolasco and Rio N. Araja

THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is poised to conduct a comprehensive inquiry over alleged irregularities at involving a pet crematorium in Bacoor City, Cavite following discovery of animal remains believed dumped by the facility in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

NBI Director Melvin Matibag said they have received complaints against the Ahjay Paws Aftercare Pet Crematorium by pet owners who sought the services of the facility.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in Quezon City is calling on the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and other concerned government agencies to conduct a nationwide probe on the pet crematorium's operations.

A total of 29 dead dogs and cats, found inside sacks and plastic bags, were reportedly dumped at a vacant lot in Barangay Minuyan by unidentified individuals who rode a white van.

In a statement, Matibag said that he has mobilized a probe team, to be led by Environmental Crimes Division (EnCD), and regional offices in CALABARZON and Central Luzon to conduct the comprehensive investigation.

The investigation will focus on the documentation and consolidation of complaints for possible estafa under the Revised Penal Code for cases of payment collection on services not rendered, verification of permits, equipment, CCTV footage, and chain of custody of the animals' remains.

The bureau will coordinate with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and concerned local government units to inspect similar facilities, according to the recommendation of Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS).

According to Matibag, the bureau would use forensic examination and other scientific and evidence-based methods to determine whether the recovered remains belonged to the pets brought to the facility and whether the ashes returned to owners could be authenticated.

Matibag added that the incident does not only fall under failure of service, but is a grave betrayal of public trust.

Matibag urged the complainants to submit receipts, cremation certificates, and other relevant documents to the NBI headquarters to support the case build-up.

US envoy reaffirms 'ironclad' ties with PH on security, cooperation

By Charles Dantes

UNITED States Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Lipton has reaffirmed Washington's "ironclad" commitment to Philippine security, emphasizing the strength of bilateral defense alliance following US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth's visit to Cebu for the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus).

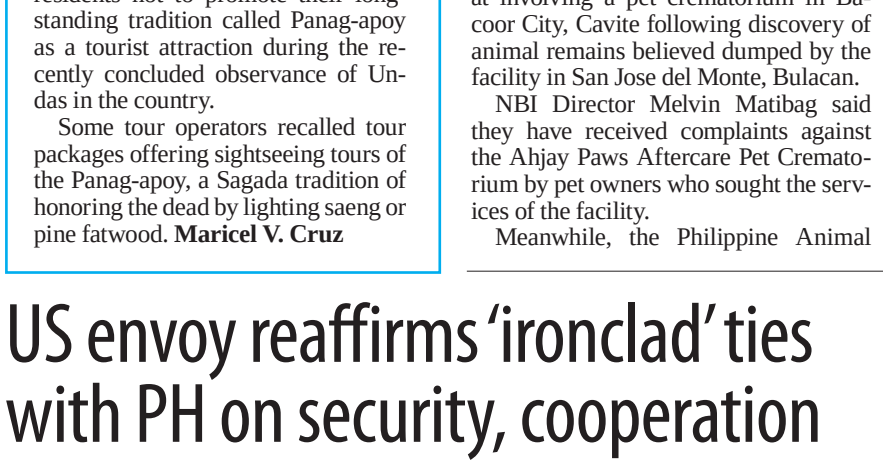
For his part, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said they expect to meet with Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) leaders in Manila this month, as the Philippines prepares to host major regional diplomatic gatherings.

In a statement, Lipton said Hegseth's visit demonstrated the Trump administration's commitment to strengthening alliances, deepening regional cooperation, and maintaining peace and security in the Indo-Pacific.

"Our commitment to Philippine security is ironclad," Lipton said, citing the growing partnership between the US and the Philippines under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

He said the two countries conduct hundreds of joint military exercises and training activities annually, supported by hundreds of millions of dollars in US security assistance.

Lipton also highlighted expanded maritime cooperative activities, disaster response support, public health assistance, and regular engagements between senior defense and security officials as key components of bilateral cooperation.



WHO CARES ABOUT EL NIÑO. Seemingly unmindful of the long dry spell associated with El Niño that is predicted to last up to the first months of 2027, these women of Bagabag, Nueva Ecija gingerly attend to their task of planting rice the old-fashioned way. **AFP**



CANDLES AND PRAYERS. All Souls' Day is all about candles and prayers for the departed like this one at the National Shrine of the Perpetual Help in Parañaque City. **Norman Cruz**

Gov't allots P17.8b for 2027 school feeding program

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE government has allocated ₱17.8 billion to provide nutritious meals to undernourished children in public schools and day care centers next year.

House Minority Leader and 4Ps party-list Rep. Marcelino Libanan disclosed this as the country marks the start of National Children's Month.

Under the proposed 2027 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the sum of ₱11.4 billion has been earmarked for the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP), while another ₱6.4 billion is allocated for the Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP), according to Libanan.

"As members of Congress, we have a duty to ensure that public funds are spent wisely and that people know where their money is going, especially when it comes to programs that directly affect social welfare," Libanan said.

He said Congress has a responsibility not only to scrutinize government spending but also to inform citizens how public funds are being used, particularly for programs that directly benefit vulnerable sectors.

The Philippines observes National Children's Month every November, highlighting the importance of protecting children's rights and promoting their health, nutrition and overall well-being.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted on November 20, 1989, recognizes every child's right to health, adequate nutrition, education and protection.

"We must treat proper nutrition as an essential investment in our children's future. A child who goes to school hungry faces greater difficulty concentrating, participating in class and keeping up with lessons," Libanan said.



Grinding Grains
Honor Blanco Cabie

Why the masses are watching Lacson's budget purge

WE ARE still physically rubbing the mud off our living room walls.

In recent months, consecutive typhoons did more than submerge our communities; they laid bare whatever illusions we had left about where our hard-earned tax money goes. We were told for years that billions were being spent on flood control.

But, when the skies opened, the dikes crumbled, the pumping stations fell silent, and we were left wading through chest-deep water, saving what little we could.

The revelations in the Senate Blue Ribbon hearings merely confirmed our deepest grief: we were drowning in the institutional vaccum of ghost flood control projects.

While ordinary citizens lost their livelihoods and families mourned drowned loved ones, a former public works official was casually testifying under oath that a culture of multi-million peso kickbacks is a standardized prerequisite for capital expenditure budgets.

Some individuals have finally been hauled off to jail, and bank accounts have been frozen, but the built-in venality appears entirely unbothered.

This is what makes the current state of the ₱7.2-trillion national budget so insolently abusive, if deeply humiliating.

Despite the public outrage, despite the bodies still being recovered from landslide zones, many legislators still possess the eye-popping courage to sneak their personal pet projects through the back door.

The executive's original spending plan was quietly hijacked in the lower chamber, ballooning with over 6,000 unvetted, undocumented infrastructure projects. While funding for actual calamity responses and public health vaccines was slashed, allocations for localized multi-purpose buildings incredibly multiplied overnight.

Enter Senator Panfilo "Ping" Lacson and Finance Chair JV Ejercito with a red flag and an ultimatum: "ALL MEANS ALL."

From the obscured viewpoint of the masses, we are watching this unfolding legislative civil war with an intensely observant eye of a wakened eagle.

Lacson has drawn a hard line, declaring that not even the highest-ranking dynastic names or close allies of the President will be spared from the financial chokehold.

The Senate's promise to livestream the traditionally secretive bicameral conference committee and bring in civil society watchdogs is a welcome step toward radical transparency.

> *The era of quiet backroom bargaining must end*

But we have seen this kabuki, this political farce, before.

The real test is whether Lacson will push this warning to its absolute legal and structural ends, or if the "gung-ho" swagger will soften when backroom political survival requires a compromise.

We are also watching the affected legislators in the House of Representatives and their powerful beneficiaries.

Stripped of their billions, how will they react now that their multi-billion peso playgrounds are on the chopping block?

Will they weaponize legislative gridlock, delay the budget, or feign tears of concern for "local development" to protect their allocations?

The era of quiet backroom bargaining must end.

If these lawmakers truly have nothing to hide, they should have no problem providing the GPS-enabled photos and technical justifications demanded of them.

If they cannot, they deserve the public shaming Lacson has threatened.

The masses are no longer just staying vigilant; we are drained and wiped out, we are watching, and we refuse to be swallowed by avarice again.

EDITORIAL

Navigating the new architecture of Indo-Pacific disincentive

THE architecture of Asia-Pacific security is undergoing a precision tuning, defined not by theoretical discourse, but by a calculated alignment of hard power and multilateral diplomacy.

This shift was crystallized at the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus in Cebu, where US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth articulated a regional doctrine characterized as strong, quiet, and clear.

For an audience of Southeast Asian counterparts historically wary of being caught in multipolar rivalry, this framework offers a data-driven shift: a posture engineered to be strong enough to deter coercion, quiet enough to avoid needless public pageantry, and clear enough to eliminate any miscalculation regarding American treaty commitments.

This approach represents a deliberate evolution from traditional containment toward a model of peace through strength, rooted in the cultivation of self-reliant partner nations.

At the core of this strategy is the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Philippines, which remains the basic bedrock of Washington's regional framework.

The Treaty between the Philippines and the United States is a bilateral security agreement that commits both nations to defend each other in the event of an external armed attack in the Pacific area, signed in Washington, D.C.

Hegseth's ongoing engagements with Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. underscore a transition from symbolic reassurances to deep tactical cohesion.

> ***The US posture is no longer defined by reactionary escalation, but by a steady, predictable commitment to absolute clarity***

By advancing maritime domain awareness and supporting Manila's Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept, the alliance is actively building tangible deterrence by denial.

The implementation of this strategy is unmistakable in the accelerated roll-out of Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement sites, a newly launched command-and-control modernization sprint, and augmented security cooperation funding.

These institutional mechanisms complement high-end capability deployments – like the Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System – and expansive joint exercises like Balikatan.

This is the practical manifestation of the maxim Hegseth shared alongside Teodoro in Manila: "We do not seek war; we seek peace. But those who long for peace must prepare for war."

Essentially, the diplomatic masterstroke of this doctrine lies in its expanding scope. In Cebu, Hegseth proposed a formal US-ASEAN Framework for Defense Cooperation to guide multilateral security initiatives over the critically important next several years.

By implanting bilateral operational advancements within a broader institutional dialogue, Washington honors ASEAN centrality while providing a stabilized security umbrella. For regional stakeholders, the analytical takeaway is plain.

The US posture is no longer defined by reactionary escalation, but by a steady, predictable commitment to absolute clarity – ensuring that the pursuit of peace remains backed by an undeniable readiness to thwart, if discourage, aggression.



Citizen Barok
Louis 'Barok' Biraogo

Manila's new property theory

(First of two parts)

CONSIDER a hypothetical case that isn't hypothetical at all.

You buy a truck. You depreciate it over five years. Book value hits zero. You've "recovered" your capital through accounting entries.

One day, a government agency knocks: "Nice truck. We'll take it now. You've already expensed it." You'd laugh. Then you'd call a lawyer. Then you'd realize the government has unlimited patience, and the truck is already gone.

This is the legal theory behind Section 6.10 of Joint Administrative Order 2026-01, issued by the Department of Energy and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

And it took the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines – representing nearly 700 companies and over 300,000 Filipino workers – to point out that the emperor's new property doctrine has no clothes.

The JAO requires existing contract holders who wish to join competitive bidding for areas they currently operate to "properly account for all assets, equipment and facilities… that have been cost recovered, amortized, or depreciated" and turn them over to the government at contract end.

Read that again. The trigger is not "government-owned." It is not "contractually required to revert." It is accounting.

In the government's newly discovered legal universe, a depreciation schedule is a conveyance instrument.

Your accountant has been quietly transferring your property rights to the State every time she books a monthly depreciation entry. Who knew?

The answer has a name: Semirara Mining and Power Corporation.

Semirara operates the country's largest coal mine under Coal Operating Contract 5, expiring July 2027.

It has paid ₱43.4 billion in government share and ₱3.7 billion in taxes from 2021 through the first half of 2026. It is, by any measure, a significant contributor to the public purse.

But the Department of Justice has opined that the 50-year contract cannot be renewed and must go through competitive bidding.

> *There is a difference between regulating the terms of a privilege and confiscating the physical assets a company purchased to exercise it*

The DOE, seizing the moment, designed a framework in which the highest financial bid is the sole ranking factor after a pass-or-fail eligibility stage.

And crucially, the incumbent must surrender its assets if it wants to participate.

Semirara's response was blunt: "We are the only company covered by this rule. This is unfair and basically bars us from bidding."

The company noted that PD 972—the Coal Development Act of 1976—provides that the operator may remove its assets within one year after contract termination.

The government's new rule effectively rewrites that statute through an administrative order.

Semirara also warned that the practical consequence could be zero coal output when a new operator takes over in July, because the winning bidder would need to procure hundreds of heavy equipment units, employ and train thousands of workers, and secure billions in financing—all by a deadline that assumes continuity rather than chaos.

The DOE's response? Energy Secretary Sharon Garin downplayed the impact: "Semirara is not substantial enough to affect our supply, but our coal is coming from Indonesia."

Let that sink in. The government's position is that the country's largest domestic coal producer is expendable because we can always import.

This is the same government that has spent years touting energy security.

Apparently, energy security means shipping coal from Indonesia while alienating the one company that actually mines it here.

The government will invoke the Regalian Doctrine – Article XII, Section 2 – which states that all minerals and other natural resources are owned by the State.

The Supreme Court upheld this in La Bugal-B'laan Tribal Association v. Ramos, affirming the State's "full control and supervision" over resource exploitation.

But the Regalian Doctrine does not say the State owns the trucks, excavators, conveyors, power plants, and processing facilities a private company bought with private money to extract those resources.

The distinction is not subtle. It is the difference between owning the coal in the ground and owning the shovel used to dig it out.

The Supreme Court has held that mining permits are privileges, not vested rights – that the State may alter, modify, or amend them when public interest requires.

True. But there is a difference between regulating the terms of a privilege and confiscating the physical assets a company purchased to exercise it.

The government's strongest precedents support its authority to regulate; they do not support its authority to appropriate. *(to be continued)*

India's royals find new power in their past

VADODARA, India – In a sprawling palace in western India, the "queen" or Maharani of Baroda welcomes guests with fragrant rose petals, presenting torchlit dances of Hindu myths.

Dressed in glittering finery, Radhikaraje Gaekwad is a queen in name only, a modern businesswoman presiding over a world her ancestors once ruled.

"The key has been that we have adapted," 48-year-old Gaekwad told AFP in her vast Lakshmi Vilas Palace, describing how India's former royals have found new roles, from cultural ambassadors to politics.

"My work has always been to try and bring in change for what I feel would be for the betterment of society," said Gaekwad, who works to preserve art accumulated by generations of rulers.

"A glimpse of what was left behind... can bring that sense of identity and pride back in their roots, and help them in the future."

Under British rule, more than 565 princely states enjoyed nominal autonomy across roughly 40 percent of the land. Baroda, today Vadodara in Gujarat state, was among the most powerful.

The maharajas joined democratic India after independence in 1947 and became ordinary citizens, but their enduring cultural influence is something politicians of all parties seek to harness.

"This cultural capital has been banked on by the descendants of the erstwhile maharajas to get into active politics," said historian Manu S. Pillai.

'Quest for heroes'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government has sought to draw on a royal past outside foreign control to reinforce its national narrative.

Modi's party includes elected lawmakers such as Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, of the Gwalior dynasty, and Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari, of Jaipur's royal family.

"There is a quest for heroes," Pillai added. "Nationalist history has become very popular and... the Hindu right is very keen to tap into cultural icons."

Modi last year laid the foundation stone for a $39 million "Museum of Royal Kingdoms" celebrating their history.

The site near Vadodara lies beside the world's tallest statue, a 182-meter (597-foot) monument to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whom Modi honored with its inauguration in 2018 for his role in bringing princely states into India.

Visitors were divided over the role of royals today.

"I hold the royal families in high regard," said Arti Shukla, visiting from Vadodara.

Nishant Kulkarni, a bank worker from Mumbai, was more cynical.

> *Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government has sought to draw on a royal past outside foreign control to reinforce its national narrative*

"I only came to see this massive statue," he said. "The royal families certainly played a role in the past, but there is no real need for their services anymore."

'Storytellers'

Beyond politics, many maharajahs see themselves as stewards of tradition, said Siddhaant Mohta, director of Sopaan, which organises cultural exhibitions in royal sites -- including in Vadodara's palace.

"The royal families are custodians of heritage," Mohta said, pointing to work to overhaul Vadodara's Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum, which houses more than 30 works by celebrated 19th-century painter Raja Ravi Varma.

A Varma work fetched $17.9 million at auction in Mumbai in April, an Indian record.

Deborah Swallow, former director of London's Courtauld Institute of Art, is advising on the project, praising the legacy of royal patronage that helped fund it.

"That tradition is being beautifully followed today," she said.

Others, such as Raseshwari Rajya Laxmi, Maharani of Jaisalmer, said their titles open doors -- explaining how her family has helped twin the historic walled city with Carcassonne in France.

"We are sharing ideas on promoting and preserving their culture," she said.

For Gaekwad, her work includes social entrepreneurship, promoting social inclusion through initiatives such as a transgender-run cafe, as well as supporting traditional crafts and customs.

Her father, Ranjitsinh Jhala, 87, took a different path.

Born into Wankaner's ruling family in 1939, before India's princes surrendered their powers, he was raised in a world where tiger hunting was a royal passion.

But he became a civil servant, drafted India's wildlife protection law, and helped turn vast tracts of princely hunting grounds into national parks.

"If that was what the princes left behind, it compensates far more than what they shot," he said.

Akshita Bhanj Deo, in her 30s, daughter of the 47th ruler of Odisha's Bhanja dynasty, represents a younger generation seeking modern meaning in historic titles. She has turned her palace into a hotel, and runs a foundation to support marginalized groups.

"A lot of erstwhile royal families see themselves in a space where they can actually make a sense of community happen," she said.

"We're just the bards and storytellers between the past and future." **AFP**

Manila Standard
Published Monday to Sunday by Philippine Manila Standard Publishing Inc. at 6/F Universal Re Building, 106 Paseo de Roxas, corner Perea St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Telephone numbers 8-5646225 and 8-5646229 (connecting all departments), (Editorial) 832-5554, (Advertising) 832-5550. P.O. Box 2933, Manila Central Post Office, Manila. Website: www.manilastandard.net

ManilaStandard ONLINE can be accessed at: manilastandard.net

MEMBER PPI Philippine Press Institute The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Former Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno *Board Member & Chief Legal Adviser*
Emil P. Jurado+ *Chairman Emeritus, Editorial Board*

ROLANDO G. ESTABILLO *Publisher*

Mario R. Policarpio Jr. *Head - Finance*
Baldwin R. Felipe *Head - Ad Solutions*
Joyce Pangco Pañares *Managing Editor*
Honor Blanco Cabie *Opinion Editor*
Feliciano T. Buscas Jr. *Head - IT-MIS*
Paula A. Reynoso *Head - Suppplements*
Virgilio DC Galvez *News Editor*
Aytch dela Cruz *Online Editor*
Edgar M. Valmorida *Circulation Manager*
Lino M. Santos *Chief Photographer*

IN BRIEF

Japan urges US: Enforce discipline

TOKYO – Japan urged the United States to enforce discipline among its troops after a Marine was arrested on suspicion of drunk driving during a curfew in the wake of another serviceman's arrest on a murder charge, the defense minister said on Monday.

US forces on the Japanese island of Okinawa were barred from drinking alcohol for two days early last month and faced a 30-day curfew after the murder of a woman allegedly committed by an American Marine.

The case has triggered outrage in Japan and reignited controversy over the heavy US military presence on the southern island.

A second Marine had been arrested over allegations he drove under the influence of alcohol, Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said.

The arrest took place on Saturday, according to media reports. **AFP**

Taliban concerned over US Afghan deportation

KABUL – Afghanistan's Taliban authorities voiced concern on Monday over reported plans by Washington to deport scores of Afghan immigrants to Pakistan with the aim of their eventual return to their home country.

More than 150 Afghans in the United States would be deported via Pakistan to Afghanistan, including relatives of those who assisted US forces before their 2021 withdrawal, according to US media reports and an advocacy group.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan expresses its serious concern over reports that the United States intends to deport some Afghan refugees to Pakistan who have not yet been able to obtain legal residency documents in that country," foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi said in a statement.

Advocacy groups have warned that the removal of former allies and their families could endanger their lives. **AFP**

Carney hails 'good conversation' with Trump

MONTREAL – Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Sunday (Monday, Manila time) said he had a "good conversation" with US President Donald Trump on the two countries' fraying trade ties, after Washington imposed wide-ranging tariffs on its northern neighbor.

Carney said on social media that the latest talks built on "recent constructive discussions on the outlines of a mutually beneficial trade deal."

"Our teams will now be working in the coming weeks to deliver that outcome," he said.

In his second term, Trump has upended global trade by imposing tariffs on friends and foes alike, with Canada -- one of the United States' biggest trading partners -- often in his crosshairs.

High-level trade talks between the two countries broke down in August, prompting Trump to impose a host of new levies -- some of which he has lifted ahead of crucial US midterm elections. **AFP**



DANCING WITH RESULTS? US President Donald Trump dances during a midterm campaign rally at Five Flags Center in Dubuque, Iowa on Monday, Manila time. Along with making lurid claims that Democrats will turn the country communist, Trump is dangling the promise of $5,000 payments to everyone in the country if his party wins. But polls show Americans have soured on Trump's wrecking-ball presidency. AFP

Trump's Republicans scramble to stop Democratic thumping



WIDESPREAD ANGER. A protester wearing a Marie-Antoinette costume holds a placard reading 'Give them brioche' as tear gas fills the air during a demonstration in Lyon, central-eastern France during the weekend, part of nationwide demonstrations over the rising cost of living and inequality organized by Yellow Vest movement, labor unions and high school and university students. **AFP**

WASHINGTON, DC – Republicans made a final push Sunday (Monday, Manila time) to prevent a predicted thumping in US midterm elections where Democrats are gunning to win Congress and impose a first political check on President Donald Trump's unprecedented pursuit of power.

Polls show Democrats are all but certain to take the majority from Republicans in the House of Representatives in Tuesday's vote and have a shot at winning the Senate.

But after a decade of Trump defying political gravity and two years of a second presidency in which he has ridden roughshod over every norm, Democrats remain nervous.

"Nauseously optimistic," Democratic Senator Raphael Warnock told CNN to describe the mood.

Those jitters increased Sunday over an ugly party rift in Michigan, a key battleground where a Democratic congresswoman defected to back Republican Mike Rogers against the Democratic candidate Abdul El-Sayed.

The consensus among analysts, however, is that Democrats are surging.

Trump headlined the Republicans' last-ditch charge, holding rallies for candidates in Iowa and Kansas -- states where ordinarily his party should be confident of victory and not require presidential boosts.

Along with making lurid claims that Democrats will turn the country communist, Trump is dangling the promise of $5,000 payments to everyone in the country if his party wins.

"We're going to win," he told the crowd in Iowa, painting Democrats as "extreme and dangerous radicals" who will "steal your wealth" and let in migrants to "ransack, rape and plunder." **AFP**

Cyber attacks hit Moscow, Kyiv after truce

KYIV – Russia said its emergency warnings app came under a "massive cyber-attack" on Monday, hours after Ukraine reported a hack in an apparent exchange of blows between the foes, as their longest truce came to an end.

Moscow's emergencies ministry said hackers posted "false information" on the app, which is designed to warn the public of incoming drone attacks and other threats.

Hours earlier, Ukraine said it suspected its air raid alert system had been compromised, after baseless alerts of a radiation threat appeared on the app.

The cyber attacks came as the longest truce of the war, limited to Ukraine's eastern Kherson region, ended on Sunday after Russia refused the offer of an extension, according to Kyiv.

Moscow did not immediately say who was behind the attack on its app, while Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications SPRAVDI blamed the hack it suffered on Russia.

The rare pause in fighting, brokered by US First Lady Melania Trump and which began early Tuesday, had enabled a humanitarian mission to the Russian-occupied city of Oleshky as the war grinds through its fifth year.

"The ceasefire, which was in effect from Oct. 27 to Nov. 1, has ended," Ukraine's Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets, said.

He called the temporary truce "an important step in our joint humanitarian efforts" with Russia.

US-mediated talks between Russia and Ukraine are set to resume this month, having been effectively frozen since the United States and Israel launched joint strikes on Iran in February.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday his country would stop hitting Russian oil refineries -- as US counterpart Donald Trump has demanded -- if Washington provided Kyiv with powerful Patriot interceptor missiles. **AFP**

Garment workers seeking higher pay clash with police

MIRPUR, Bangladesh – Thousands of Bangladeshi garment workers blocked a major highway and clashed with police on Monday, demanding a monthly minimum wage more than double current pay, as protests spread across industrial hubs.

Bangladesh is the world's second-biggest garment exporter behind China, manufacturing clothes for some of the largest international brands.

Hundreds of workers in Gazipur, north of the capital Dhaka, blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway, vandalising several vehicles, while large groups took to the streets in the Mirpur district, where police dispersed demonstrators with tear gas, AFP reporters saw.

The protests came despite the government's announcement on Sunday that it would establish a wage board to review the minimum wage in the vital garment industry, which employs millions of people and generates the bulk of Bangladesh's export earnings.

But labour leaders say workers' grievances extend beyond the formation of the board, citing inflation and rising household expenses.

Protesters demand a 30,000-taka monthly pay ($241), which is more than double their current pay.

Workers currently earn about 13,000 taka a month, according to Kalpona Akter of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman held an emergency cabinet meeting late Sunday.

"The prime minister... instructed us to ensure workers' rights and improve their living standards. He also instructed us to ensure that production and exports continue unhindered," Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters after the meeting. **AFP**

Iran warns new war could last longer after Trump threatens more strikes

TEHRAN – Iran has warned any renewed war with the United States could last longer than the previous round of fighting, after President Donald Trump said he still had to "take care" of more targets.

Diplomatic efforts to end the Middle East war have been punctuated by repeated threats from the US and Israel to resume bombardments as they hold crucial elections.

"A potential future war could last longer than previous conflict, and the American president would not be in a position to dictate the timing or the conditions of its conclusion," said army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia, according to Iranian state television.

In the most intense phase of the war, which began on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, Tehran retaliated with missile and drone attacks across the region. Iran-aligned armed groups joined the fighting in Lebanon and Yemen.

Akraminia's remarks followed Trump's suggestion that the US could swiftly strike its remaining targets in Iran.

"We still have to take care of, I would say one or two sites, but we can do that in 10 minutes," Trump told reporters.

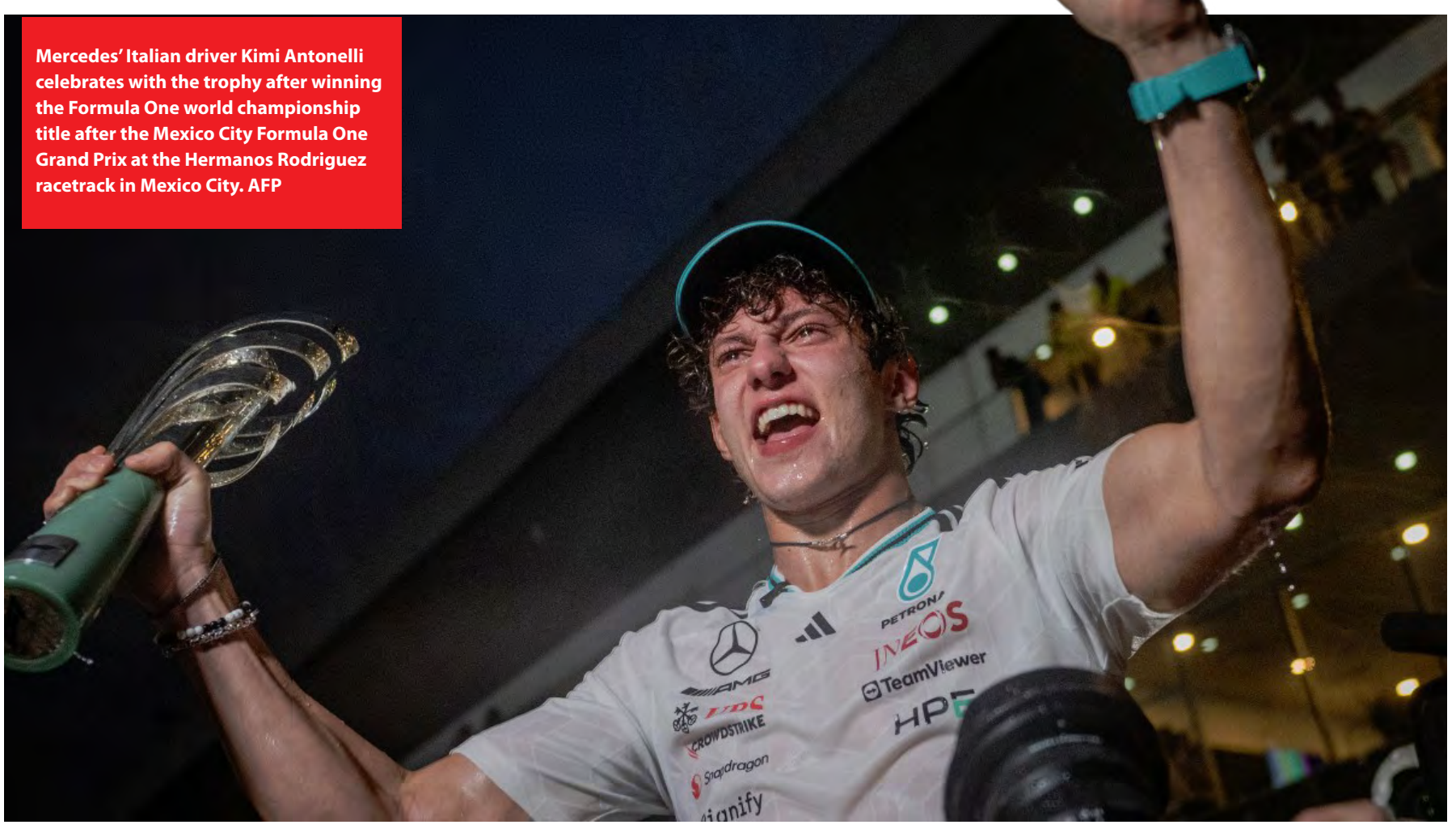
"You probably could look at Pickaxe Mountain, and you have to take care of that. We can do that all very quickly," he added, referring to a suspected underground nuclear complex.

US media reported that Trump had held a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday over whether and when to ramp up combat operations against Iran.

Axios quoted one US and one Israeli official saying the two leaders discussed the state of negotiations with the Islamic republic, with Netanyahu pressing the president to strike Iran immediately after Tuesday's US midterm elections and Trump eager to let negotiations play out. **AFP**



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS. A Purepecha Indigenous woman prepares an altar at the Santa Fe de la Laguna community in the shores of Lake Patzcuaro, state of Michoacan, Mexico, during the weekend, as part of the upcoming Day of the Dead celebrations that honor and remember deceased loved ones, viewing death not as a fearful end, but as a natural continuation of the cycle of life. **AFP**



Mercedes' Italian driver Kimi Antonelli celebrates with the trophy after winning the Formula One world championship title after the Mexico City Formula One Grand Prix at the Hermanos Rodriguez racetrack in Mexico City. AFP

'Grateful' Antonelli becomes youngest F1 world champion

MEXICO CITY — Kimi Antonelli became Formula One's youngest world champion and Italy's first since 1953 when he finished third behind multiple champions Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton in Sunday's thrilling and crash-hit Mexico City Grand Prix.

The 20-year-old Italian drove his Mercedes to a 16th podium finish of the season with a blend of audacity and professionalism that belied his age in a hotly contested race of two safety cars and a red flag stoppage.

"Thank you so much, we did it," he said tearfully on the team radio on his slow-down lap as his esteemed race engineer Peter Bonnington told him it was "a pleasure to be on the journey with you, but it's just the first chapter".

Antonelli soon regained his composure and after thanking his family and Mercedes he added: "We did it. I am so grateful for this moment - and it is one I will live forever. I'm speechless, just trying to process what has happened.

"It's been an incredible season and to share the podium with Max and Lewis is truly incredible. I felt more tense this weekend, but I am so happy we got it done."

At 20 years and 68 days old, he became the youngest champion by more than three years to four-time champion Sebastian Vettel and Italy's first since Alberto Ascari of Ferrari in 1953.

In a two-part race, divided by a 45-minute pause when Valtteri Bottas crashed heavily in his Cadillac, Red Bull's four-time champion came home 0.799 seconds ahead of seven-time champion Hamilton's Ferrari with Antonelli third 3.207 seconds adrift.

It was Verstappen's record-extending sixth win in Mexico, his third this year and the 74th of his career.

Charles Leclerc was fourth in the second Ferrari, after sparking race-long ill-feeling in his team with an opening lap tangle with team-mate Hamilton, who started on pole.

"I think we had the pace to win today, but it wasn't meant to be and we'll take it offline and figure out what we can do in the background," said a visibly irritated Hamilton.

"We have to hold some serious talks behind the scenes."

Outgoing world champion Lando Norris was fifth in his McLaren with Antonelli's Mercedes teammate George Russell, who needed to win the race to have any chance of stalling the Italian's sprint to the title, in sixth.

They were followed home by Oscar Piastri in the second McLaren, Alpine's Franco Colapinto, Liam Lawson in the Racing Bull and Pierre Gasly in the second Alpine.

"The first start made the race for me," said Verstappen who charged from fifth to second on the opening lap.

"We lacked some pace, but I hung in there and I was sweating at the end to keep Lewis behind."

Chaotic opening

Hamilton made a clean start from his record 105th pole position and held the lead down the 800-metre charge to Turn One as Russell struggled to resist Leclerc and a rampant Verstappen.

The Monegasque had clearly cast team loyalty aside and attacked again into Turn Four, running off-track to take the lead. A stunned Hamilton was then passed by Verstappen while Antonelli, from fifth passed Russell for fourth. **AFP**

Kings seek quarterfinal sweep of Beermen

By Jeremiah Sevilla

BARANGAY Ginebra goes for the jugular as it seeks to complete a sweep of San Miguel Beer in Game 3 of their PBA Season 50 Governors' Cup quarterfinal series on Tuesday at the City of Dasmariñas Arena in Cavite.

Holding a 2-0 lead, the Gin Kings aim to finish off the Beermen in their 7:30 p.m. tiff after the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters and Converge FiberXers break their 1-1 deadlock at 5:15 p.m.

Ginebra has dominated the first two games, keeping San Miguel below the 100-point mark after the Beermen averaged 121 points per game in the eliminations.

The Kings also caught fire from beyond the arc in their 104-95 Game 2 victory, knocking down 16 triples against San Miguel's five while dominating the boards, 48-30, and assists, 32-13.

Still, Ginebra coach Tim Cone knows better than to take SMB lightly, given the Leo Austria-mentored team's history of fighting back from seemingly insurmountable playoff deficits.

San Miguel, after all, pulled off its historic "Beeracle" comeback against Alaska in the 2026 Philippine Cup, rallying from a 0-3 deficit to lift the trophy.



Barangay Ginebra's RJ Abarrientos goes for a layup against San Miguel's June Mar Fajardo and CJ Perez in Game 2 of their PBA Season 50 Governors' Cup quarterfinal series. (**PBA Images**)

"We're not even gonna talk and think about that (sweep). We just play with what's right in front of us. We're not gonna worry about that," Cone said after Game 2, which extended his squad's winning streak to four games dating back to the eliminations.

"We're just gonna come out and play, hopefully like we did tonight. Just play with that kind of attitude and that aggressiveness and see what happens," he added.

Meanwhile, Converge coach Delta Pineda expects Rain or Shine mentor Yeng Guiao to make the necessary adjustments as the two teams resume their "Battle of Pampanga" series.

"Babalik po sigurado si Kuya Yeng niyan," Pineda said of his fellow Kapampangan tactician Guiao.

"We need to prepare more and expect 'yung comeback ng Rain or Shine. Doon ko po ire-ready 'yung mga anak ko," he added.

The FiberXers tied the series at 1-1 with a 130-125 victory in Game 2 behind Mikey Williams' clutch triple as they withstood another furious comeback attempt from the Elasto Painters.

Top guns, rising stars collide as Olivarez National Open fires off



Eric Olivarez

ERIC Olivarez and John Benedict Aguilar launch their respective bids for the crown Tuesday (Nov. 3), but a deep and competitive field promises to make the opening rounds of the Mayor Edwin Olivarez National Open Tennis Championships anything but routine at the Olivarez Sports Center and Parañaque indoor clay courts in Sucat.

Olivarez faces David Abordo, while Aguilar squares off with Calvin Chung as the top two seeds look to establish early momentum in the week-long P415,000 tournament featuring the country's leading campaigners and a promising crop of emerging talents.

But while the seeded players carry the weight of expectations, they can hardly afford to take their opening assignments lightly. The depth of the 32-player singles draw, coupled with the presence of seasoned campaigners and hungry newcomers, sets the stage for possible reversals and early-round surprises that could dramatically reshape the title chase.

Veterans Nilo Ledama, Vicente Anasta and Noel Damian are among those expected to provide stiff opposition, along with Eric Tangub, Loucas Fernandez and Elvin Geluz, all eager to make their presence felt in a field where experience, consistency and composure under pressure could prove decisive.

Beyond the competition, the annual championship underscores the Olivarez family's continuing commitment to Philippine tennis, providing a regular competitive platform where established players can sustain their edge while rising talents gain valuable exposure and experience against stronger opposition.

Sponsored by Mayor Edwin Olivarez and Rep. Eric Olivarez, the tournament forms part of the family's long-running effort to help develop the sport, nurture promising players and give both veteran and emerging campaigners opportunities to sharpen their skills and test themselves against the country's best.

The singles champion stands to pocket P100,000, while the runner-up receives P50,000. The prize money extends down to the qualifiers and Round of 16 losers, ensuring that more participants share in the rewards of competing in the event, supported by Dunlop, Philta, ICON Golf & Sports, Universal Tennis Rating and Palawan Group of Companies.

Also on tap is the men's doubles competition, where the winning tandem will take home P50,000. Headlining the doubles cast are the Olivarez-Ledama and Aguilar-Rolly Saga combinations, while Damian teams up with Brysl Libao and Geluz partners with Al-Zayeed Baid.

Sun Life's Bike and Run unites families through fitness

SUN Life is bonding families, fitness enthusiasts and sports communities together through its Bike and Run on Nov. 8 at the Ayala Vermosa Sports Hub in Imus, Cavite, promoting an active lifestyle through activities that people of all ages and fitness levels can enjoy.

Building on the success of its signature cycling events, Sun Life is taking its wellness advocacy a step further. The trusted financial institution is officially expanding its sports platform to include running, creating fresh, inclusive avenues for Filipinos to embrace active lifestyles and strengthen family bonds.

The newly minted Sun Life Bike and Run is designed to break down barriers to fitness, offering something for everyone—from seasoned endurance athletes to families taking their first steps toward wellness together.

True to its community-first spirit, the event features a diverse lineup of categories tailored to various fitness levels and interests, including the rigorous 60-km and 45-km bike rides for those seeking a serious endurance challenge, complemented by a 15-km ride for a shorter, accessible route.

Dedicated kids' and family rides are also crafted to introduce children to the joys of movement early on, encouraging parents and kids to build healthy habits side by side.

For runners and walkers, a brand-new 5-km run is also on tap, opening the festivities to participants on foot and welcoming those who may not own a bicycle but share a passion for staying active.

Registration is ongoing. Interested participants may sign up through Sunrise Events or visit Sun Life Cycle PH event information and registration details.

Race kits may be claimed on Nov. 5 and 6, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., at the second floor of One Bonifacio High Street in Bonifacio Global City.

For Sun Life, integrating running into an already established cycling program reflects a deeper mission: making holistic health accessible to all.

Chameleons brace for Flying Titans challenge

Games Tuesday
(Araneta Coliseum)
1 p.m. – Galeries Tower vs Akari
3:30 p.m. – Clearskiin vs AFP
(Spikers' Turf)
6 p.m. – Nxled vs Choco Mucho

NXLED guns for its fourth straight victory and a share of the lead with idle Creamline as the PVL All Filipino Conference Siklab Series resumes Tuesday at the Smart Araneta Coliseum, with the Chameleons bracing for a major test against a resurgent Choco Mucho side.

After a much-needed weekend break, the teams return to action facing a crucial stretch of the single-round robin eliminations, where every match carries added weight as the race for the semifinal spots intensifies.

Nxled has emerged as one of the early pacesetters, sweeping its first three assignments in varying fashion. It opened with a shutout victory over PLDT, survived a five-set thriller against Farm Fresh, then subdued Galeries Tower in four sets to preserve its unbeaten record.

But Choco Mucho looms as a tougher challenge in their 6 p.m. encounter, with the Flying Titans eager to build on their recovery from a five-set setback against Farm Fresh.

"I have shivers, as usual," said Nxled head coach Ettore Guidetti. "No, they are playing really good. This is another super high level and talented team. You know, there is (Sisi) Rondina, there is (Eya) Laure, there is a bunch of super very good players."

"So we will try to prepare the game at our best as usual. To study what they do, to perform at our best. And then, hopefully, we continue to block," he added.

Choco Mucho bounced back with a four-set triumph over Galeries Tower last Tuesday, keeping its semis campaign firmly on track and underscoring the increasingly competitive nature of the race.

Creamline currently leads the field with a 4-0 record, while Nxled is just behind at 3-0. Choco Mucho follows at 3-1, with Farm Fresh, Akari and PLDT all carrying identical 2-2 slates.



PBA'S BEST FOR 2ND STRAIGHT WEEK. NLEX's Robert Bolick has won the PBA Press Corps Player of the Week for the second straight time in the 50th Season Governors' Cup. Bolick, shown here being challenged by four Phoenix players, averaged 27 points, 5.0 rebounds, 4.5 assists, and 2.0 steals from October 27 to 31, while also shooting 9-of-17 from threes and fours for 53 percent to win the weekly honor given by sportswriters covering the PBA beat.

PH to host 1st ASTAF U-19 Sepak Takraw Championship

THE Philippines will host the inaugural ASTAF U-19 Asian Sepaktakraw Championship 2026, presented by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and hosted by the Pilipinas Sepaktakraw Association, Inc. (PSTAI), from November 26 to 30 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Coliseum and Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

Organized under the auspices of the Asian Sepaktakraw Federation (ASTAF), the event will mark ASTAF's first Asian youth championship and the Philippines' first time hosting it. So far, Bangladesh, Chinese Taipei, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Myanmar, Oman, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines have confirmed their participation, with the final field expected to reach 15 countries.

The opening ceremony will be held on November 26, while the medal and closing ceremonies are scheduled for November 30.

The competition will take place on two courts at the Rizal Memorial Sports Coliseum and an auxiliary court at Ninoy Aquino Stadium. The latter venue will also house two training courts. The championship aims to provide young athletes with an international platform while supporting sepak takraw's continued development across Asia.

According to Muhammad Fariq Abdul Halim, technical delegate of the championship and deputy president of the International Sepaktakraw Federation (ISTAF), the inaugural ASTAF U-19 Asian Sepaktakraw Championship 2026 represents an important investment in the future of the sport across Asia.

"For many years, our international competitions have largely focused on senior national teams," he explains.

"We believe the time has come to strengthen the foundation of our sport by giving younger athletes the opportunity to represent their countries, gain international experience and develop their potential from an early age.

"We recognise that youth development is still at different stages among our Member Federations, and encouraging participation in this inaugural Championship has not been without challenges. Nevertheless, the anticipated participation of around 15 countries is a very promising beginning and demonstrates the growing commitment towards grassroots and youth development in Asia." Looking ahead, he says, "Our vision is for every Member Federation to establish a strong pathway from grassroots participation to youth development and eventually to their senior national teams.

Eala takes career-high No. 17 ranking into Hong Kong Open

By Jeremiah Sevilla

FILIPINA tennis star Alexandra "Alex" Eala reached another milestone in her breakthrough season, rising to a new career-high No. 17 in the latest Women's Tennis Association (WTA) rankings released on Monday ahead of her Hong Kong Open 2026 campaign.

Eala climbed two spots with 2,289 points following her maiden quarterfinal run in the Asian hard-court swing at the WTA 500 Toray Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo, Japan last week.

The highest-ranked Southeast Asian female tennister surpassed her previous career-best No. 18, which she reached after a historic fourth-round finish at Wimbledon and a strong North American campaign highlighted by her WTA 500 Mubadala DC Open title last August.

Despite a shaky performance in the Asian season, Eala hovered around the No. 20 spot before rediscovering her rhythm in Tokyo, where she netted her first back-to-back wins of the swing at the expense of United Kingdom's Mika Stojsavljevic and Australia's Talia Gibson.



Alexandra Eala has a chance to break into the top 15 before the season ends as she heads into the WTA 250 Hong Kong Open as the No. 2 seed. **AFP**

The Filipina lefty's campaign ended in the quarterfinals after absorbing a tough defeat to Russia's Diana Shnaider in a grueling rematch of their Ningbo Open second-round duel.

Eala's rise to a new career-high was also aided by the expiration of ranking points from last year's WTA Finals, which saw USA's Amanda Anisimova drop from No. 17 to No. 22.

The Pinay ace now has a chance to break into the top 15 before the season ends as she heads into the WTA 250 Hong Kong Open as the No. 2 seed.

"I'm super proud of this whole year, even these last couple of weeks, how I've been, how I've been working, how I've been training," Eala said during the pre-tournament press conference.

"I'm coming into the last tournament of the season with no regrets. I think I've done everything that I could have possibly done," she added.

Eala kicks off her campaign against familiar rival Alycia Parks of the United States on Tuesday, with their Round of 32 match tentatively scheduled for 10 a.m.

The 25-year-old Parks also moved up the WTA rankings, surging from No. 65 to No. 59.

Eala aims to build on her 6-1, 4-6, 6-2 victory over Parks during the third round of the National Bank Open in August that evened out their head-to-head record at 1-1.

Parks won their first meeting, 0-6, 6-3, 6-2, in the opening round of the Australian Open last January.

Tokong after Siargao exit: Not a loss, but a lesson

SIARGAO—John Mark "Marama" Tokong was hoping to advance further at Cloud 9, but the Filipino veteran is taking his early exit from the World Surf League (WSL) Championship Tour Philippines Pro in stride.

The four-time Siargao International Surfing Cup champion admitted he had chances to advance but could not convert them, particularly when the wind picked up and the waves became harder to handle.

Tokong said he was happy with his performance in his earlier heat, when he felt relaxed and comfortable selecting the waves he wanted. However, the conditions changed in his succeeding heat, making it difficult for him to execute the moves he had planned.

"I was really happy with my performance in that heat. I felt relaxed and just focused on choosing the right waves. But the conditions yesterday and today were different. The wind picked up, and I tried to stay busy, catch more waves and go for aerials, but unfortunately, I couldn't land them," Tokong said.

Tokong particularly rued his opening wave, believing he could have put himself in a better position to advance had he landed his aerial and made it out of the barrel.

"If I had landed that aerial and made it out of the barrel on my first wave, I think it could have helped me move to the next round," he said.

Still, Tokong was thankful for the opportunity to compete against some of the world's best surfers. He said being able to watch them compete and learn from their performances was already a big experience for him.

"Everyone here is a champion. They're among the best athletes in the world. Just being able to surf against them, watch them compete and learn from them is already amazing. I've learned so much from this experience," he said.

The crowd's support also meant a lot to Tokong. He was surprised to see so many people at Cloud 9 cheering for him, including his family, friends and local supporters who stayed despite the scorching heat.

"I feel like I didn't really lose anything because of all the support from the community, my friends and my family. It's crazy to see so many people at Cloud 9 cheering for me. Even though it's so hot, they're still there. I've never experienced anything like this before. I'm really thankful to everyone," Tokong said.

Tokong also had words of encouragement for fellow Filipino surfer Mara Lopez, who competed in the event at just 15 years old.

The veteran believes the young La Union surfer has plenty of time to improve, but said she still needs to get used to the waves at Cloud 9, which are quite different from those in her hometown.

"I'm really proud of Mara. She's only 15, and she still has a lot of time to learn. She just needs to get used to surfing here at Cloud 9 because it's completely different from La Union. The waves here are powerful, and it's not easy," he said.

Tokong also stressed the importance of choosing the right waves, explaining that surfers must learn to read the conditions instead of concentrating only on their opponents.



John Mark "Marama" Tokong

"In surfing, you're not only competing against the other athletes. You're also competing against the waves. You have to choose the right ones. Sometimes, getting the right wave makes the difference in moving to the next round," he explained.

He also followed the performance of fellow Filipino Jayuard Alciso, recalling the strong wave the young surfer caught during his heat and the difficulty he encountered toward the end.

3 world chess tourneys set in November

A SLEW of Filipino Grandmaster aspirants shoot for the stars with three international tournaments lined up this month, starting with Tuesday's 7th ASEAN+ Individual Chess Championships at the AMORAP in Sinacaban, Misamis Occidental.

With direct GM, International Master, WGM and WIM titles on the line, expect the local chessers headed by IMs Jem Garcia, Pau Bersamina, Michael Concio, Jr., MJ Bacojo and Christian Gian Karlo Arca, FIDE Master Alekhine Nouri to take advantage of the chance of becoming a GM outright.

Olympiad veterans Ruelle Canino, Jan Jodilyn Fronda, Shania Mae Mendoza and Mhage Sebastian, for their part, lead the local charge in the women's side, where the champion automatically clinches the WGM title and the runner-up the WIM title in this event financed by host Gov. Henry Oaminal, Sr. and backed by the Philippine Sports Commission and WR Chess.

The Open section of the nine-round tournament drew a total of 39 participants from 24 countries, including four GMs in Nguyen Duc Hoa of Vietnam, Dashzegve Sharavdorj of Mongolia, Daniel Quizon and Darwin Laylo, 24 IMs including top seed Nguyen Quoc Hy of Vietnam and seven FMs.

Malaysia SEA Games sets 43 sports, 473 medal events

By Randy M. Caluag

THE Philippines and its Southeast Asian neighbors can now firm up their preparations for the 2027 Malaysia SEA Games after the Southeast Asian Games Federation finalized a program of 43 sports and 473 medal events.

The SEAG Executive Committee approved the competition program during its third meeting on over the weekend, completing the lineup for the 34th edition scheduled from September 18 to 29, 2027.

Five sports—padel, dancesport, teqball, ice hockey and kabaddi—secured inclusion following appeals, bringing the final roster to 43. No further additions are expected.

The Malaysia Games will offer 100 fewer medal events than the 2025 Thailand edition, with athletes from 11 Southeast Asian nations expected to compete across four host clusters: Kuala Lumpur, Sarawak, Penang and Johor.

Malaysian Olympic Committee deputy president Dato' Dr. Nur Azmi Ahmad, who chaired the meeting, said the approval gives member countries a clear basis for organizing their delegations.

"This approval of the final list of 473 events provides clarity to all 11 NOCs of the SEAGF member countries to plan and enhance their preparations for the 34th Malaysia SEA Games 2027, scheduled to take place from September 18 to 29, 2027, across four host clusters, namely Kuala Lumpur, Sarawak, Penang, and Johor," he said.

The program includes aquatics, archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, billiards and snooker, bowling, boxing, cricket, cycling, dancesport, equestrian, esports, fencing and football.



The 2027 Kuala Lumpur SEA Games mascot, Tuah (2027 KL SEA Games)

Also approved were golf, gymnastics, hockey, ice hockey, ice skating, judo, kabaddi, karate, lawn bowls, Muay Thai, netball, padel, pencak silat, petanque and rugby.

Completing the lineup are sailing, sepak takraw, shooting, squash, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, teqball, triathlon, volleyball, water skiing, weightlifting and wushu.

The final program followed discussions among the Malaysian Olympic Committee, the Malaysia SEA Games Organizing Committee and the SEAGF Executive Committee, in accordance with the federation's charter and regulations.

extrastory2000@gmail.com
RODERICK T. DELA CRUZ, *Editor*
ALENA MAE S. FLORES, *Asst. Editor*
Manila Standard

26.3%

Share of PH exports to China

29.5%

Share of PH imports from China

0.5%

Share of PH in China's global trade

Groups call on PH, China to tone down bickering

By Othel V. Campos

BUSINESS, labor, farmer, educator, overseas Filipino worker (OFW) and youth groups urged the Philippine and Chinese governments to tone down public exchanges and pursue diplomatic engagement amid heightened tensions between Manila and Beijing.

The 23 groups, including the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), issued a a joint statement calling for sobriety, restraint and statesmanship. They warned that inflammatory rhetoric and public recriminations could further strain bilateral relations and undermine economic confidence.

The signatories said the Philippines should pursue a foreign policy that protects national sovereignty while maintaining economic cooperation, as China and Hong Kong account for nearly 30 percent of the country's international trade.

Citing Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data for the first half of 2026, the groups said China and Hong Kong accounted for 26.3 percent of Philippine exports and 27 percent to 29.5 percent of imports in recent years. The Philippines represented only 0.3 percent to 0.5 percent of China's global trade.

"Constructive relations with China do not require abandoning Philippine sovereignty, overlooking legitimate concerns, or compromising an independent foreign policy. Effective diplomacy means defending national interests while avoiding unnecessary escalation," the statement said.

The groups said the two economies are interconnected through manufacturing, construction, infrastructure, agriculture, retail, energy, electric vehicles and renewable energy. China supplies essential goods, machinery, electronics, industrial inputs and clean-energy technologies that support local businesses, jobs and consumers, they added.

They also noted the contribution of Filipino workers in China, Hong Kong and Macao, saying their remittances support household consumption, education, housing, healthcare and small businesses.



FUTURE OF ENERGY. The Board of Investments (BOI) gives more than 200 Grade 12 students of Los Baños Senior High School a firsthand look into the future of renewable energy and emerging career opportunities through the Student-Industry Learning Immersion Program (SILIP) at the Makiling-Banahaw (Mak-Ban) Geothermal Power Plant on Oct. 20 to 21, 2026.

GMA asks NTC to delay analog TV shutdown in Mega Manila

By Darwin G. Amojelar

GMA Network Inc. has asked the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to extend the Nov. 22 deadline for shutting down analog television broadcasting, citing pending concerns over a government assistance program, deputy commissioner Alvin Blanco said.

Blanco said the request is anchored mainly on the assistance program under a joint memorandum circular (JMC) handled by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

The network also cited the pending implementation guidelines for the program as a reason to reconsider the digital TV transition deadline, he said.

The NTC will refer GMA Network's letter to the DICT, which needs to address the broadcaster's concerns, Blanco said.

"For now, unless we receive advice from the DICT to consider studying the possibility of an extension, the memorandum circular stands," Blanco said.

He said if the government grants an extension, the NTC would have to revisit the existing memorandum circular and follow the required procedures.

Under the JMC, the DICT, NTC, Presidential Communications Office and other relevant agencies will develop an assistance program to ensure no television households are disenfranchised during the analog shutdown.

NTC Memorandum Circular No. 005-11-2025, issued in November 2025, requires television stations in covered areas to migrate to the Integrated Services Digital Broadcasting-Terrestrial (ISDB-T) standard within 12 months of its effectivity, or by Nov. 22, 2026.

WHAT'S INSIDE?


BUSINESS CLASS
Rudy Romero

Bastardizing the economic document
B3



DOE defends coal bidding changes
B4

Japanese companies eye PH expansion, rooftop solar investments

THE Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) is facilitating the expansion plans by Japanese electronics makers Murata, ROHM and Nidec and exploring investments from a Japanese power utility in rooftop solar and other alternative energy projects in Philippine economic zones.

PEZA director-general Tereso Panga met the parent companies of locators Murata, ROHM and Nidec during an October investment mission to Kyoto and Osaka.

The talks covered potential expansions as Japanese companies adapt to rapid developments in digitalization, AI, energy transition and next-generation industries, including growing demand for physical and generative artificial intelligence (AI), smart factories and high-density data centers.

The Japanese power utility, which is considering entering the Philippine market for the first time, is looking at rooftop solar projects requiring at least 10 megawatts per site, along with other alternative power developments.

The company, which operates in power generation and distribution as well as gas and heat supply, is also in talks with 10 Japanese locators on initial embedded renewable energy projects it plans to register with PEZA.

Panga and Philippine Trade and Investment Center in Osaka commercial counsellor Michael Alfred Ignacio also met the Kansai Economic Federation and the Asia Pacific Institute of Research to explore cooperation in promoting the Philippines to businesses across the region, a major hub for electronics and semiconductor industries.

They also engaged the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which represents more than 30,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to encourage greater Japanese SME participation in the Philippine market. **Othel V. Campos**

SEC asks manufacturers to tap capital market for growth

By Jenniffer B. Austria

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is encouraging Filipino manufacturers to tap the capital market to finance growth and expansion plans.

SEC chairman Francisco Lim said companies could raise funds through securities-based crowdfunding, private placements and the Philippine Stock Exchange's small and medium enterprise board. More established businesses could consider initial public offerings, bond issuances and additional share offerings.

"Capital formation should not be one-size-fits-all," Lim said in his keynote address at the Federation of Philippine Industries Business Summit 2026 in Taguig City on Oct. 29.

He said the SEC was developing financing programs tailored to specific industries, including agribusiness, hospitals, real estate rental pools and the power sector.

Lim also cited regulatory reforms aimed at reducing the time and cost of doing business. As of Aug. 31, 2026, the SEC had 29,171 active registered manufacturing companies, up 1,331 from a year earlier.

The SEC has expanded its OneSEC ZERO business registration system to cover 100 industry classifications, including manufacturing, which allows qualified applicants to register a company in 1 day. Its eAMEND platform also allows companies to process 28 types of corporate amendments online.

Eligible micro, small and medium enterprises also receive a 20 percent discount on incorporation fees. The SEC said these discounts had reached about P174 million, while reductions in corporate-document fees had generated more than P325 million in savings for the public.

The commission is also pursuing a One Business Start Date framework that would allow enterprises to begin operations upon SEC registration or issuance of their primary license while completing other permits in parallel, subject to applicable requirements.



RESTORING WETLANDS. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) personnel and community volunteers install sandbags along Ungot Creek in Paraiso, Tarlac to create a small water reservoir that helps regulate water flow, mitigate flood risks and retain water for nearby vegetation. DENR Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna cites the importance of the restoration of critical wetlands, rivers and coral reefs in protecting communities against the very strong El Niño as the agency launches a nationwide ecosystem restoration program to mitigate the impacts of extreme dry heat.



WATER RESILIENCE. Manila Water Philippine Ventures (MWPV), the non-east zone subsidiary of Manila Water, continues to strengthen water supply resilience in North Luzon through proactive investments and operational measures undertaken aby its operating units, Calasiao Water in Pangasinan and Metro Ilagan Water in Isabela. PAGASA has identified both provinces as vulnerable to dry conditions and dry spells through the remainder of 2026, with the risk of drought persisting into the first quarter of 2027.

DOTr asks MRT-3 to deploy 3 more trains to ease holiday commuter rush

DEPARTMENT of Transportation Secretary Vince Dizon has ordered the deployment of three additional trains on the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) starting Monday to raise capacity and ease commuter congestion ahead of the holiday season.

The additional trains can carry 6,000 more passengers daily, on top of the line's current ridership of about 500,000, Dizon said.

"I am adding three trains to the MRT-3, starting today. I will coordinate with the MRT-3 management regarding the upcoming holiday season," Dizon said.

"However, this is still not enough. I will discuss further improvements with our Japanese partners," he said.

MRT-3 runs 16 to 19 train sets daily between North Avenue in Quezon City and Taft Avenue in Pasay City.

Dizon also inspected the upgraded Guadalupe Busway station, which he said is now more spacious and better lit, giving passengers a more comfortable waiting area. He said the new and improved stations show the administration's commitment to putting commuters first. **Darwin G. Amojelar**

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE POWER SUPPLY AGREEMENT (PSA) BETWEEN QUIRINO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (QUIRELCO) AND SUAL POWER, INC. (SPI) WITH PRAYERS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY OR INTERIM RELIEF AND CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

ERC CASE NO. 2026-169 RC

QUIRINO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (QUIRELCO) AND SUAL POWER, INC. (SPI),

Applicants.

Promulgated:
October 26, 2026

x--x

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on 21 October 2026, Quirino Electric Cooperative (QUIRELCO) and Sual Power, Inc. (SPI) filed a *Joint Application* dated 01 October 2026, seeking the Commission's approval of their Power Supply Agreement (PSA), with prayers for the issuance of provisional authority or interim relief and for motion for confidential treatment of information.

The docketed copy of the *Joint Application*, excluding its annexes, is attached as Annex "A" of the *Notice of Virtual Hearing*.

The Commission has set the instant *Joint Application* for hearing, pursuant to the pertinent rules of the Commission, as follows:

Date and Time	Platform	Activity
19 November 2026 (Thursday) at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 P.M.)	Microsoft Teams	Determination of compliance with jurisdictional requirements and Expository Presentation
26 November 2026 (Thursday) at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 P.M.)		Pre-Trial Conference and Presentation of Evidence

Accordingly, Applicants are hereby directed to mirror the virtual hearings, to be hosted by the Commission, at QUIRELCO's principal office at Aurora East, Diffun, Quirino as the designated venue for the conduct thereof and ensure that the same is open to the public. Moreover, Applicants shall guarantee that, during the conduct of the expository presentation, the participation of the public shall not be impaired.

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

Moreover, all persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the instant case may become a party by filing with the Commission via e-mail at docket@erc.ph, and copy furnishing the Legal Service through legal@erc.ph, a verified Petition to Intervene at least five (5) calendar days prior to the date of the initial virtual hearing. The verified Petition to Intervene must follow the requirements under Rule 7 of the 2026 Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Energy Regulatory Commission, indicating therein the docket number and title of the case, and state the following:

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

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

3) A statement of the relief desired.

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

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

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

3) The grounds relied upon.

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

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

FOR AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION:

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

LS: DPED / RCD

* Authority granted during Commission Meeting on 20 August 2025.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Exquadra Tower 1 Jade Drive, Ortigas Center,
Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE POWER SUPPLY AGREEMENT (PSA) BETWEEN QUIRINO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE AND SUAL POWER, INC. WITH PRAYERS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY OR INTERIM RELIEF AND CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

ERC CASE NO. 2026-169 **RC**

October 21, 2026

QUIRINO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (QUIRELCO) AND SUAL POWER, INC. (SPI),

Applicants.

x--x

JOINT APPLICATION

(With Prayers for the Issuance of Provisional Authority or Interim Relief and Confidential Treatment of Information)

Joint Applicants, **QUIRINO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (QUIRELCO)** and **SUAL POWER, INC. (SPI)**, through respective counsels, and unto this Honorable Commission, respectfully state that:

I
THE APPLICANTS

1. QUIRELCO is a non-stock, non-profit electric cooperative (EC), duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Philippines, with principal office address at Aurora East, Diffun, Quirino.

1.1 QUIRELCO is a holder of a franchise from the National Electrification Commission to operate an electric light and power distribution service. QUIRELCO currently serves the municipalities of Diffun, Cabarroguis, Saguday, Aglipay, Maddela and Nagtipunan, all in the Province of Quirino, and eighteen (18) barangays of the municipality of San Agustin in the Province of Isabela (Franchise Area).

1.2 QUIRELCO is duly represented herein by its Board President, Loreto T. Ignacio, and/or General Manager, Cesar P. Gulla.[1]

2. SPI is a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines with principal office address at 5th Floor, C5 Office Bldg. Complex, #100 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., C5 Road, Ugong, Pasig City.

2.1 SPI is the owner and operator of the 2 x 647.020 MW Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant (Power Plant) located at Brgy. Pangascasan, Sual, Pangasinan.

2.2 SPI is duly represented herein by its Authorized Representative, Ms. Elenita D. Go.[2]

(SPI and QUIRELCO are jointly referred hereinafter as "Joint Applicants".)

3. The Joint Application is filed pursuant to ERC *Resolution No. 7, Series of 2026* (**Amended CSP Guidelines**)[3] requiring distribution utilities (DUs) and generation companies (GENCOs) to jointly file an application for the approval of their PSA.

4. Joint Applicants may be served with orders, notices, and other processes of the Honorable Commission through undersigned counsels at the addresses given below.

II
NATURE AND TIMELINESS OF THE APPLICATION

5. This Joint Application seeks the Honorable Commission's approval of the PSA dated 09 September 2026 between Joint Applicants pursuant to Sections 25[4] and 45(b)[5] of Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the *Electric Power Industry Reform Act* of 2001 (**EPIRA**), Rules 5, Section 4(e)[6] and 11, Section 54 of its *Implementing Rules and Regulations* (**IRR**), Rule 20(B) of its *Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure*,[7] Article VII of the *Amended CSP Guidelines*,[8] and other pertinent rules and regulations.

6. Section 5.4. of the Department of Energy (DOE) Department Circular No. DC2023-06-0021, as amended by DOE Department Circular No. DC2025-10-0022 (DOE CSP Policy) provides that *"in case an EC is unable to complete the CSP one (1) year before said scheduled date as indicated in its PSPP, the NEA shall undertake or continue the CSP on behalf of the EC."*

7. Section 5.2 of the DOE CSP Policy further provides that *"ECs with limited capability to undertake CSP may request the NEA to provide the necessary assistance and resources to conduct the same x x x"*.

8. Article XIII, Sections 13.1 and 13.2 of the National Electrification Administration (NEA) Memorandum No. 2023-057 (**NEA 2023 CSP Guidelines**) reiterate the DOE CSP Policy and further provide that *"[i]n case an EC (or [a]ggregated ECs) requests the NEA['s] assistance xxx or is unable to complete its CSP one (1) year before the scheduled date as indicated in the PSPP, the NEA shall undertake the CSP on behalf of the EC. For this purpose, the NEA can mobilize its own manpower complement and structure, the manpower of the EC itself, as well as those of other ECs to undertake the CSP process, as necessary"*.

III
STATEMENT OF FACTS

The Conduct of Joint Competitive Selection Process (CSP)

9. Based on the latest Power Supply Procurement Plans (PSPP), several ECs[9] connected to the Luzon and Visayas Grid faced baseload power supply deficits that needed to be addressed through the timely conduct of CSPs to ensure sufficient and reliable power supply for their respective captive markets.

10. However, the CSPs intended to address the baseload supply deficits of the ECs, including QUIRELCO, were not completed within one (1) year prior to the expiration of their existing PSAs or prior to the increase in demand of the Luzon and Visayas ECs, as provided in their respective PSPPs.

11. Pursuant to the foregoing, QUIRELCO and other ECs were included in the Luzon and Visayas Electric Cooperatives Aggregation (LVECA) for NEA's conduct of Joint Competitive Selection Process (Joint CSP) for their aggregated baseload supply requirements.

12. On 03 February 2026, NEA issued Office Order No. 2026-043, Series of 2026 where NEA - Special Bids and Awards Committee (NEA-SBAC), Secretariat, and Technical Working Group (NEA-SBAC-TWG) for the Joint CSP for the Luzon and Visayas ECs were constituted.

13. The Joint CSP was structured into two (2) Lots: Lot 1, covering the Luzon Member ECs, and Lot 2, covering the Visayas Member ECs. For each Lot, the Bidder shall submit an offer and commit to supply a fixed percentage of the Aggregated Contract Capacity for such Lot (Offered Contract Capacity), which shall not be less than twenty percent (20%) nor more than fifty percent (50%) of the Aggregated Contract Capacity for any given year. The percentage proposed by the Bidder for a Lot shall remain fixed for the entire PSA Term and shall apply uniformly to all Member ECs within that Lot.

14. On 13 and 14 April 2026, NEA-SBAC-TWG presented the draft Terms of Reference (TOR), Invitation to Bid (ITB), and bidding documents to NEA-SBAC.

15. On 15 April 2026, or at least five (5) calendar days before the first publication of the ITB, NEA-SBAC informed DOE and the Honorable Commission of the conduct of the Joint CSP.

16. On even date, NEA issued the Certificate of Conformity No. NEA-RAO-COC-2026-02 that certified the respective contract quantities and cooperation periods covered by the Joint CSP were consistent with the latest posted PSPPs of each Member EC.

17. On 21 April 2026 and 28 April 2026, the ITB and TOR were published in The Manila Times Newspaper. The NEA-SBAC and Member ECs likewise caused their posting on the DOE CSP e-based portal, NEA website, and Member ECs' respective official websites and social media accounts.

18. On 06 May 2026, copies of the Invitation for CSP Observers were sent to DOE, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers of the Philippines and Nationwide Association of Consumers, Inc. A general invitation for CSP Observers was likewise posted on the NEA website.

19. On 14 May 2026, the Pre-Bid Conference took place with the participation of representatives from the NEA-SBAC-TWG, Secretariat, CSP Observers, and all interested bidders.

20. Following the Pre-Bid Conference, NEA released Bid Bulletin Nos. 01 to 04 that included the revised schedule of bidding activities, responses to concerns from prospective bidders, and clarifications on the final bidding procedures and related transaction documents.

21. The Final Transaction Documents was issued on 17 June 2026, which were subsequently amended on 25 June 2026, setting 10 July 2026 as the deadline for submission of bids and the date for the opening and evaluation thereof.

22. On 10 July 2026, the submission, opening, and evaluation of bids were conducted.[10]

23. For Lot 1, three (3) out of six (6) prospective bidders timely submitted their respective bids, namely, Mariveles Power Generation Corporation (MPGC), Therma Luzon, Inc. (TLI), and Sual Power, Inc. (SPI).

24. For Lot 2, six (6) out of ten (10) prospective bidders timely submitted their respective bids, namely, Malita Power, Inc. (MPI), Therma Visayas, Inc. (TVI), Energy Development Corporation (EDC), Cebu Energy Development Corporation (CEDC), Panay Energy Development Corporation (PEDC), and Palm Concepcion Power Corporation (PCPC).

25. Thereafter, the following GENCOs withdrew from the Joint CSP: GNPower Dinginin Energy Ltd. Co. (GNPD), GNPower Mariveles Energy Center Ltd. Co (GMEC), and PEDC for Lot 1; and FDC Misamis Power Corporation (FDCMPC), GN Power Kauswagan Ltd. Co. (GNPK), Therma South, Inc. (TSI), and Toledo Power Co. (TPC) for Lot 2.

Evaluation of Bids for Lot 1

26. Upon careful evaluation, NEA-SBAC determined that MPGC, TLI, and SPI for Lot 1 successfully passed the preliminary evaluation for their respective Eligibility Requirements, Technical Proposal, and Bid Security submissions.

27. After completing the preliminary evaluation, the Financial Proposals of MPGC, TLI, and SPI were subsequently opened and compared. These are summarized as follows:

RANK NO.	BIDDER	LCOE (PhP/kWh)	BID SECURITY AMOUNT (PhP)	OCC (in %)	REMARKS
1	SUAL POWER INC.	5.9078	1,400,000,000.00 Compliant	50%	Lowest Calculated Bid 1
2	THERMA LUZON, INC.	6.2659	2,859,000,000.00 Compliant	50%	Lowest Calculated Bid 2
3	MARIVELES POWER GENERATION CORPORATION	6.2952	1,405,000,000.00 Compliant	50%	N/A

28. Following the completion of the Post-Qualification Activities, the TWG submitted its Post-Qualification Report on 11 August 2026, that confirmed the genuineness, validity, and accurateness of the legal, technical, and financial documents of TLI and SPI for Lot 1.

29. Accordingly, the TWG recommended that NEA-SBAC declare TLI and SPI for Lot 1 as Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidders and that Notices of Award be issued in their favor.

30. On 12 August 2026, Bid Bulletin No. 05 was issued, announcing the revised schedule for the issuance of the Notice of Award to the Winning Bidders and signing of the PSAs.

31. On 17 August 2026, NEA-SBAC issued Resolution No. 13, Series of 2026, declaring, among others, that TLI and SPI for Lot 1 as Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidders.

32. In accordance with NEA Memorandum No. 2023-057, NEA-SBAC endorsed the aforementioned resolution to the NEA Office of the Administrator (Office of the Administrator) for the issuance of Notices of Award in favor of said bidders.

33. On 18 August 2026, the Notices of Award were issued and subsequently accepted by the Winning Bidders.[11]

34. From 24 August 2026 to 04 September 2026, duly authorized representatives of Member ECs negotiated and finalized their respective PSAs with the Winning Bidders.

35. On 04 September 2026, the negotiated and finalized PSAs were submitted to NEA-SBAC for evaluation and approval.

36. Through Resolution No. 14, Series of 2026, NEA-SBAC approved the negotiated PSAs and endorsed the same to the Office of the Administrator for the issuance of the corresponding Notices to Execute the Agreement.

37. On 08 September 2026, the Office of the Administrator issued Notices to Execute the Agreement, directing Luzon Member ECs to proceed with the execution and signing of their respective PSAs.

38. **On 09 September 2026, Joint Applicants executed the subject PSA.**

39. The procurement outcome assures compliance with EPIRA's principles of least-cost and transparency principles. Implementing the PSA will ensure a stable and least-cost power supply to QUIRELCO's franchise area, benefitting consumers through long-term price stability, reduced Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) exposure, improved supply reliability and reduced overall generation cost.

ABSTRACT OF THE PSA

40. Pursuant to the PSA, SPI shall supply power to QUIRELCO for the Agreement Term with a Contract Capacity of 3.50MW-8.00MW Baseload (Firm), as provided in Schedule 2 of the PSA.

41. The power supply will be sourced from SPI's 2 x 647.020 MW Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant (Power Plant) located at Brgy. Pangascasan, Sual, Pangasinan.

42. The following are the Salient Features of the PSA:

42.1 Sale and Purchase of Energy/Capacity: Subject to and in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, Seller shall make available and sell to Buyer, and Buyer shall purchase from the Seller for the consideration described in SECTION 11, the Contract Capacity and Associated Energy from and after the Delivery Date until the expiry of the Term, unless sooner terminated in accordance with this Agreement and upon approval by the ERC.

42.2 Contract Term: This Agreement shall take effect immediately from the Effective Date, and from such date shall remain in force and effect for fifteen (15) years from Delivery Date unless sooner terminated in accordance with this Agreement and upon approval by the ERC.

42.3 Delivery Date: The Seller shall commence delivery of the Contract Capacity provided in SCHEDULE 2 to Buyer on Delivery Date. The Delivery Date shall be the later of either: a.) 26 December 2026; or b) The next immediate 26th day of the month following the ERC's issuance of a Provisional Authority or Interim Relief to implement the Agreement, as applicable, or Final Authority to implement the Agreement, if neither Provisional Authority nor Interim Relief was issued.

42.4 Supply of Energy: Subject to the approval of the ERC, beginning on the Delivery Date and until the termination or expiration of this Agreement, Seller shall supply and deliver the Contract Capacity to the Buyer at the Delivery Point, as provided in SCHEDULE 2, and Buyer shall purchase the Contract Capacity and Associated Energy and pay Seller as provided in SCHEDULE 7. The Delivery Point shall be the point/s specified in SCHEDULE 3.

42.5 Seller's Outage Allowance: Seller is allowed a Scheduled Outage Allowance and Unscheduled Outage Allowance (taken together, the "Outage Allowance") not to exceed the number of days for each Year as set forth in SCHEDULE 6, during which times, reduced or no deliveries shall be available to Buyer, subject to ERC rules and regulations on reliability performance indices applicable for the Facility.

Scheduled Outages	0 days
Unscheduled Outages	0 days

42.6 Line Rental Cap: The Line Rental Cap is PhP0.2734/kWh and shall apply on a per Billing Period basis throughout the entire Term. For each Billing Period, the Buyer shall pay only the lower of: (a) the Actual Line Rental Charges incurred for the energy delivered during such Billing Period; or (b) Capped Line Rental Charges.

42.7 Replacement Power during Outages: The procurement of any Replacement Power shall be the responsibility of Seller, provided that the rates to be paid by Buyer for the procurement of Replacement Power shall be the lower between: i. the actual rate of the Replacement Power; or ii. the generation rate based on the approved tariff for this Agreement.

If Seller provides Replacement Power, Seller shall attach to the Seller Invoice the computation showing both the actual rate of the Replacement Power and the generation rate based on the approved tariff for this Agreement.

If the Seller is able to supply only a portion of the Contract Capacity, contrary to its committed capacities under this Agreement, and the Seller's Outage Allowance has already been exhausted, the Seller shall procure and provide Replacement Power for the deficient capacity at the generation rate equivalent to the Provisional or Final Approved Generation Rate, or the actual rate of the Replacement Power, whichever is lower.

42.8 Prompt Payment Discount: Seller shall extend a three percent (3%) discount based on the total Capital Recovery Fee, Fixed Operations and Maintenance Fee, and Variable Operations and Maintenance Fee for the Billing Period to Buyer as a Prompt Payment Discount if: a. Payment by Buyer is made in full or partial within fifteen (15) Days upon receipt of the Seller Invoice for a Billing Period (the "Prompt Payment Period"); and b. Buyer is up to date with all its payment obligations under this Agreement.

42.9 Contract Capacity:

TABLE I
(in MW)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2027	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
2028	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
2029	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
2030	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
2031	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
2032	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
2033	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
2034	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
2035	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
2036	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
2037	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
2038	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
2039	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
2040	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
2041	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00

42.10 Monthly Payment, Indexation, and Adjustment:

Total Generation Charge

$$\text{Total Generation Charge} = CRF_{CUFt} + FOMF_{CUFt} + VOMF_t + FC_t + VAT$$

A. Capital Recovery Fee ("CRF")

The CRF_{CUFt} shall be calculated as the product of the Capital Recovery Rate ("CRR_{CUFt}"), in PhP/kWh, and the Actual Energy Delivered during the Billing Period or the equivalent Associated Energy based on the 65% Monthly Minimum CUF, whichever is higher. The formula to calculate the CRF_{CUFt} shall be:

$$CRF_{CUFt} = CRR_{CUFt} \times max\,(AE_t, AED_t)$$

$$CRR_{CUFt} = \frac{CRR_{100\%CUF}}{CUF_t}$$

Where:

CRF_{CUFt}	Corresponding CRF_{CUF} to calculate the Total Generation Charge, expressed in PhP, for the Billing Period
CRR_{CUFt}	Rate Component to calculate CRF_{CUFt}, expressed in PhP/kWh, for the Billing Period
AE_t	Associated Energy based on the 65% Monthly Minimum CUF in kWh for the Bil1ing Period
AED_t	Actual Energy Delivered from the Facility during the Billing Period in kWh
$CRR_{100\%CUF}$	Corresponding CRR at 100% CUF, which is **PhP2.1500/kWh** For reference, the CRR_{CUF} from 65% to 100% is presented below.
CUF_t	Actual CUF for the Billing Period. The CUF shall be calculated in accordance with the formula below.
t	Billing Period

CUF	CRR Php/kWh
100%	2.1500
99%	2.1717
98%	2.1939
97%	2.2165
96%	2.2396
95%	2.2632
94%	2.2872
93%	2.3118
92%	2.3370
91%	2.3626
90%	2.3889
89%	2.4157
88%	2.4432
87%	2.4713
86%	2.5000
85%	2.5294
84%	2.5595
83%	2.5904
82%	2.6220
81%	2.6543
80%	2.6875
79%	2.7215
78%	2.7564
77%	2.7922
76%	2.8289
75%	2.8667
74%	2.9054
73%	2.9452
72%	2.9861
71%	3.0282
70%	3.0714
69%	3.1159
68%	3.1618
67%	3.2090
66%	3.2576
65%	3.3077

- The CUF_t shall be calculated in accordance with the formula below:

$$CUF_t = \frac{Q_t}{CC_t \times (H_T - H_O - H_{FM})}$$

Where:

CUF_t	As previously defined
Q_t	Energy delivered during the Billing Period or the equivalent associated energy based on the Monthly Minimum CUF, whichever is higher
CC_t	Contract Capacity for the Billing Period in kW as indicated in Schedule 2
H_T	Total number of hours in the Billing Period
H_O	Zero (0) for each Billing Period, as the Seller has no Outage Allowance
H_{FM}	The Equivalent Hours of Force Majeure in the Billing Period
t	As previously defined

- Formula to calculate the Q_t and AE_t for any billing period shall be:

$$Q_t = max\,(AE_t, TED_t)$$

$$AE_t = 65\% \times CC \times (H_T - H_O - H_{FM})$$

Where:

Q_t	As previously defined
AE_t	As previously defined
TED_t	Total Energy Delivered, which is Actual Energy Delivered from the Facility and the Replacement Power energy, during the Billing Period in kWh
CC	As previously defined
H_T	As previously defined
H_O	As previously defined
H_{FM}	As previously defined
t	As previously defined

- The formula to calculate the H_{FM} shall be:

$$H_{FM} = \sum_{i=1}^{y}\left(1 - \frac{\text{Seller Actual BCQ Declared, due to force majeure}}{\text{Buyer Day Ahead Nomination}}\right)$$

Where:

y	Total number of Hours in a Billing Period
Seller Actual BCQ Declared due to force majeure	The actual reconciled quantity of BCQ declared by the Seller to the Buyer for the relevant hour *i*, expressed in kW, which was affected by or reduced due to an event of force majeure for either the Buyer or the Seller, in accordance with the BCQ Nomination Protocol under the PSA
Buyer Day Ahead Nomination	The quantity of BCQ nominated by the Buyer for delivery for the relevant hour *i* in the Day-Ahead Nomination, expressed in kW, submitted in accordance with the BCQ Nomination Protocol under the PSA

B. Fixed Operation and Maintenance Fee ("FOMF")

The $FOMF_{CUFt}$ shall be calculated as the product of the Fixed Operation and Maintenance Rate ("$FOMR_{CUFt}$"), in PhP/kWh, and the actual energy delivered during the Billing Period or the equivalent associated energy based on the Monthly Minimum CUF, whichever is higher. The formula to calculate $FOMF_{CUFt}$ shall be:

$$FOMF_{CUFt} = FOMR_{CUFt} \times max\,(AE_t, AED_t)$$

$$FOMR_{CUFt} = \frac{FOMR_{100\%CUF}}{CUF_t}$$

Where:

$FOMF_{CUFt}$	Corresponding $FOMF_{CUF}$ to calculate the Total Generation Charge, expressed in PhP, for the Billing Period
$FOMR_{CUFt}$	Rate Component to calculate $FOMF_{CUFt}$, expressed in PhP/kWh, for the Billing Period.
AE_t	As previously defined
AED_t	As previously defined
$FOMR_{100\%CUF}$	Corresponding FOMR at 100% CUF, which is **PhP0.4500/kWh**. For reference, the $FOMR_{CUF}$ from 65% to 100% is presented below.

CUF	FOMR LOCAL Php/kWh
100%	0.4500
99%	0.4545
98%	0.4592
97%	0.4639
96%	0.4688
95%	0.4737
94%	0.4787
93%	0.4839
92%	0.4891
91%	0.4945
90%	0.5000
89%	0.5056
88%	0.5114
87%	0.5172
86%	0.5233
85%	0.5294
84%	0.5357
83%	0.5422
82%	0.5488
81%	0.5556
80%	0.5625
79%	0.5696
78%	0.5769
77%	0.5844
76%	0.5921
75%	0.6000
74%	0.6081
73%	0.6164
72%	0.6250
71%	0.6338
70%	0.6429
69%	0.6522
68%	0.6618
67%	0.6716
66%	0.6818
65%	0.6923

C. Variable Operations and Maintenance Fee ("VOMF")

The $VOMF_t$ shall be calculated as the product of the Variable Operation and Maintenance Rate ("VOMR"), in PhP/kWh, and the actual energy delivered for the Billing Period. The formula to calculate $VOMF_t$ shall be:

$$VOMF_t = VOMR_t \times AED_t$$

$VOMF_t$	Corresponding VOMF to calculate the Total Generation Charge, expressed in PhP, for the Billing Period
$VOMR_t$	Rate Component to calculate $VOMF_t$ which is **PhP0.2000/kWh**
AED_t	As previously defined

D. Fuel Cost ("FC")

The FC_t for the Billing Period shall be calculated as follows:

$$FC_t = \left(\frac{FP_t \times FCR_t}{1000}\right) \times AED_t$$

$$FP_t = (FCC_t \times FX_m) + NFCC_t + \text{Applicable Taxes}$$

Where:

FC_t	Corresponding FC to calculate the Total Generation Charge, expressed in PhP, for the Billing Period
FP_t	Applicable Fuel Price for the Billing Period, expressed in PhP/MT
FCC_t	Fuel Commodity Cost in USD/MT calculated using the formula below: $103.09 \times \left[\left(97.09\% \times \frac{NFI\,1_{3m\,avg}}{NFI\,1_0}\right) + 2.91\%\right]$
$NFI\,1_{3m\,avg}$	The average value for the three (3) months preceding the Billing Period for which the Invoice is being prepared of the Indonesian Coal Index 2 (5,800 GAR/ 5,500 NAR) as published by the Argus/Coalindo for Indonesian Coal Index Report, in USD/MT
$NFI\,1_0$	Value of Indonesian Coal Index 2 (5,800 GAR/ 5,500 NAR) for the month of May 2026, which is 100.09, in USD/MT
AED_t	As previously defined
$NFCC_t$	Weighted average of the actual Freight Cost, Marine Cargo Insurance, Letter of Credit Opening Charges, Disport Surveyor Fees, Wharfage, and Brokerage Fees, in PhP/MT. Demurrage costs arising from this Agreement shall be a pass-through cost subject to the following: • Any demurrage arising from the Seller's procurement of coal in excess of its requirements, including demurrage resulting from the use of a port or vessel as temporary storage for such excess coal, shall be solely for the account of the Seller and shall not be passed on to the Buyer. Provided, however, that this limitation shall not apply where such excess procurement or the resulting demurrage is attributable (i) to a directive of a relevant government agency, regulatory authority, or market operator, such as the Department of Energy, the Energy Regulatory Commission, the System Operator, or the Independent Electricity Market Operator of the Philippines; or (ii) to comply with applicable laws, regulations, or mandatory fuel inventory requirements, in which case the resulting demurrage cost shall be passed on to the Buyer or PhP200/MT, whichever is lower. • Demurrage costs arising from causes other than the Seller's excess procurement of coal, negligence, or fault, as stated above, shall be passed on to the Buyer, subject to a cap of PhP 200/MT or the actual demurrage cost, whichever is lower.
	• Any penalty, fine, surcharge, or similar charge imposed by the DOE or BOC arising from the failure to timely secure, submit, or comply with the requirements relating to the Certificate of Compliance for coal importation issued by the DOE shall be solely for the account of the Seller. Seller can only recover the NFCC items listed above and shall submit to the Buyer proof of actual costs in the form of official invoices and supporting documents. When applicable, Seller must disclose actual cost of NFCC in USD/MT and disclose the actual foreign exchange rate used to convert USD denominated costs into PHP.
FX_m	The monthly average of the PhP/USD exchange rate for the month (i.e., first until last day of the month) for which the invoice is being prepared, as published in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas website
Applicable taxes	Applicable taxes relating to FC for the Billing Period, in PhP/MT

In the event that the index (a) becomes unavailable, (b) is replaced by a new benchmark rate as determined by the relevant authorized entity, its successor-in-interest, or (c) ceases to exist, the Parties shall agree to adopt a new price index.

The FP_t to be billed by Seller shall be the lower between:

1. The sum of the (i) resulting value using the Fuel Commodity Cost Formula and (ii) the Non-Fuel Commodity Cost; or
2. The actual fuel price as billed by the fuel supplier/s (i.e., supported by actual invoices) including the Non-Fuel Commodity Cost for the relevant Billing Period.

FCR_t	Applicable Fuel Consumption Rate ("FCR") for the Billing Period, expressed in kg/kWh, shall be the lower between: (i) the guaranteed FCR_{CUFt}; or (ii) the actual plant FCR

If Buyer fails to utilize the Contract Capacity at the Monthly Minimum CUF, Seller may apply the higher of its actual plant FCR or the guaranteed consumption rate corresponding to the Minimum CUF for that Billing Period.

If the resulting CUF_t is a whole percentage number, the guaranteed FCR_{CUFt} shall be the corresponding FCR set forth in the table below for CUF levels from 65% to 100%.

If the resulting CUF_t is not a whole percentage number, the guaranteed FCR_{CUFt} shall be determined using the following formula:

$$FCR_{CUFt} = FCR_{CUF1} + \frac{(FCR_{CUF2} - FCR_{CUF1}) \times (CUF_t - CUF1)}{(CUF2 - CUF1)}$$

FCR_{CUFt}	guaranteed FCR corresponding to the Actual CUF for the Billing Period
CUF_t	as previously defined
FCR_{CUF2}	corresponding FCR for CUF2 set forth in the table below
FCR_{CUF1}	corresponding FCR for CUF1 set forth in the table below
CUF2	CUF increment of the nearest upper value, in %
CUF1	CUF increment of the nearest lower value, in %

Illustration: CUF_t 70.53%

CUF2	71%
CUF1	70%
FCR_{CUF2}	0.4810
FCR_{CUF1}	0.4818

The FCR at CUF levels from 65% to 100% are as follows:

CUF	FCR, kg/kWh
100%	0.4595
99%	0.4600
98%	0.4607
97%	0.4612
96%	0.4617
95%	0.4623
94%	0.4631
93%	0.4637
92%	0.4642
91%	0.4648
90%	0.4654
89%	0.4661
88%	0.4670
87%	0.4676
86%	0.4683
85%	0.4690
84%	0.4697
83%	0.4707
82%	0.4714
81%	0.4722
80%	0.4729
79%	0.4737
78%	0.4744
77%	0.4756
76%	0.4764
75%	0.4772
74%	0.4784
73%	0.4793
72%	0.4801
71%	0.4810
70%	0.4818
69%	0.4827
68%	0.4841
67%	0.4850
66%	0.4859
65%	0.4869

Note: For avoidance of doubt, the Buyer shall bear all other applicable costs, charges and taxes pursuant to Section 13.2 of this Agreement.

E. Value-added Tax ("VAT"), if any. VAT shall only be chargeable to the Buyer if prevailing laws expressly allow its passing on by the Seller.

Except for VAT, which shall be a pass-through component of the price, all other taxes pursuant to Section 13.1 and government dues, the WESM market fees, and ER 1-94 (Benefits to Host Community) shall be to the account of the Seller.

Replacement Power Charge

BUSINESS



STATISTICS ROLE. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas assistant governor Rogelio Mercado, Jr. (front row, fourth from left) with (from left) La Union Governor Mario Eduardo Ortega, BSP Department of Economic Statistics officer-in-charge Haydee Paulino and Philippine Statistics Authority assistant secretary Rosalinda Bautista attend the closing ceremony of the 37th National Statistics Month on Oct. 28, 2026. They are joined by the event's awardees, which the PSA recognized for their various contributions.



BUSINESS CLASS
Rudy Romero

Bastardizing the most important national economic document

THE recently-announced results of the Budget Watch Coalition's scrutiny of the proposed 2027 General Appropriations Act (GAA) are more than an exposition of the racidivistic greed of the 306-plus members of the House of Representatives. They represent fresh evidence of the bastardization of the nation's most important economic document by the lower house of Congress.

The Budget Watch Coalition's latest findings indicate that the representatives have not learned any lessons from the turmoil created by the discovery last year of massive corruption associated with the approval and implementation of Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) flood control projects. The lower house members appear to be as unchastened, as unrepentant and as greedy as ever.

> *The annual GAA bill, which the contains the executive department's National Expenditure Program (NEP) is by far the most important economic document issued by the government.*

Despite the representatives' solemn no-more-insertions promise, the coalition has identified over P1 billion worth of insertions, of which around P170 million relate to unprogrammed projects. And the lower house legislators are more brazen and reckless this time around. Some of the project coordinates are for locations in places like Benham Rise, the Celebes Sea, Algeria and Nigeria. The deceitfulness boggles the imagination.

The seemingly never-ending thievery by Congress is the perfect answer to the question why it is that after 80 years of democratic, self-government democracy, the Philippines remains an economically unstable Third World country. Bastardizing the executive department's proposed GAA is the surest path to this country's chromos economic instability and frustratingly slow development.

The annual GAA bill, which the contains the executive department's National Expenditure Program (NEP) is by far the most important economic document issued by the government in the course of a year.

The reason for this is that the GAA bill is the collective undertaking of the economic agencies of the government – led by the Department of Economic Planning and Development and the Department of Finance – and embodies all of the government's fiscal intentions and spending plans. All the government' planned undertakings during the year and the means by which it intended to pay for them – whether by revenue collection or by borrowing – are detailed in the GAA bill.

The cost of every NEP item – be it for education, health care, national defense, agriculture, or infrastructure – is matched by an equal domestically generated or foreign-sourced amount. It goes without saying that if an appropriation for a priority expenditure item is highjacked by budgetary insertion, that item is going to be underfunded or totally unfunded. To that extent the nation' economic development program is going to be detailed.

Like every ship, M/V Republic of the Philippines must have a rudder to guide its course. If its rudder malfunctions, the ship will be thrown off its course and reach its destination slowly and unsteadily.

Prevent this country from attaining full economic development with greater speed is what the members of Congress do every time they steal from the national coffers through insertions into the GAA or some other ingenious schemes of the congressional appropriations or finance committees.

For as long as the members of Congress are hindi mahihiya, the Philippines will remain a frustrated Third World country with a persistently unstable economy.

As for the Budget Watch Coalition, the Filipino people thank you for the excellent work you are doing. Keep it up.

(llagasjessa@yahoo.com)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH XCVII (97), MANDALUYONG CITY
(email address: metc2mdl097@judiciary.gov.ph
Phone (02) 8532-5001 or 909 / 0916-6200796)

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION
TO APPROVE THE HOLOGRAPHIC
WILL OF RAFAEL JUAN CANDELARIA, JR.

M-MND-24-02127-SP
FOR: Probate Allowance of Holographic Will

RAFAEL DAACO CANDELARIA, JR.
(a.k.a. "RAFAEL DAACO CANDELARIA",
"RAFAEL PALADIN DAACO") and
MA. CONCEPTION DAACO
CANDELARIA,
Petitioners.
x----------x

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters Testamentary having been issued to **RAFAEL DAACO CANDELARIA, JR.** and **MA. CONCEPCION DAACO CANDELARIA** as Join Executors of the Estate of the late **RAFAEL JUAN CANDELARIA, ,JR.,** notice is hereby given, pursuant to Rule 86 of the Rules of Court, requiring all persons having money claims against the decedent to file their claims with the Office of the Clerk of Court of the Metropolitan Trial Court Mandaluyong City Branch 97, within **six (6) months from the date of the first publication of this Notice.**

The claims required to be filed include all money claims arising from contract whether express or implied, whether due, not yet due, or contingent claims for funeral expenses and expenses of the last sickness of the decedent• and judgment for money against the decedent.

Each claim must be accompanied by the necessary vouchers and supporting documents and must comply with Section 9, Rule 86 of the Rules of Court. A copy of the claim and its attachments must likewise be served upon the Joint Executors.

Claims not filed within the foregoing period shall be **BARRED FOREVER** subject to the exceptions provided by the Rules of Court.

The Joint Executors are directed to cause this Notice to be published once a week for three (3) successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation and to cause its posting for the same period in the places prescribed by Section 3, Rule 86 of the Rules of Court.

Within ten (10) days after completion of the required publication and posting, the Joint Executors shall submit to the Court a printed copy of this Notice, together with the affidavit stating the dates of its first and last publication, the name of the newspaper in which it was published, and proof of the required posting.

WITNESS THE HONORABLE ANNA CARMI R. CALSADO-AMOROSO, Presiding Judge of this Court, this 26th day of August 2026 in Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) **CHRISTINE T. MISTICA**
Branch Clerk of Court

(MStandard-Oct. 27, Nov. 3 & 10, 2026)

If Seller provides Replacement Power, Seller shall attach to the Seller Invoice the computation showing both the actual rate of the Replacement Power and the generation rate based on the approved tariff for this Agreement.

In computing the actual rate of the Replacement Power, Seller shall declare whether the replacement energy was generated from a renewable energy source/s or from sources exempt from Value-Added Taxes and shall provide the invoice issued to it by the replacement power plant clearly showing the breakdown of the rate for the replacement energy delivered.

The generation rate based on this Agreement shall be computed in accordance with Schedule 7 as follows:

- The CRR_{CUF_t}, $FOMR_{CUF_t}$ and $VOMR_t$ shall be as previously defined above.
- Further, the Fuel Cost shall be calculated using a fuel rate based on the FP_t and FX_m as previously defined above and the Seller's Fuel Consumption Rate at the CUF level associated with the CRR_{CUF_t} and $FOMR_{CUF_t}$.
- In the event that the FP_t is unavailable due to the Facility being unable to utilize fuel and generate power for the supply under this Agreement, the fuel rate shall be based on the most recent 3-month average fuel cost, in PhP/kWh.

Thus, the Replacement Power cost shall be:

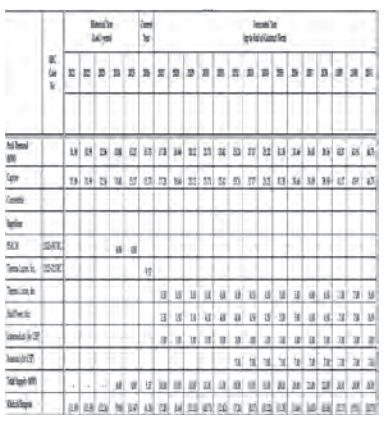
$$RP_t = [Min(RP_t, CP_t) \times RE_t] + VAT_t, if\ applicable$$

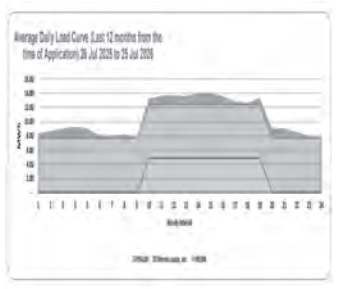
$$CP_t = [(CRR_{CUF_t} + FOMR_{CUF_t} + VOMR_t) + (\frac{FP_t \times FCR_{CUF_t} \times FX_m}{1000})]$$

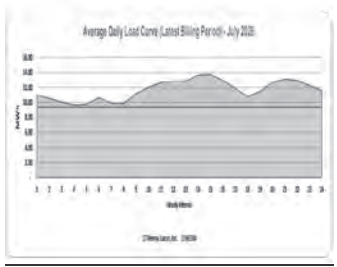
RP_t	Replacement Power cost for the Billing Period, in PhP
RP_t	Actual generation rate of the Replacement Power exclusive of VAT, in PhP/kWh
CP_t	Generation rate based on this Agreement exclusive of VAT, in PhP/kWh
RE_t	Replacement Power Energy supplied by the Seller to the Buyer for the Billing Period, in kWh
CRR_{CUF_t}	As previously defined
$FOMR_{CUF_t}$	As previously defined
$VOMR_t$	As previously defined
FP_t	As previously defined
FCR_{CUF_t}	As previously defined
FX_m	As previously defined
VAT_t	Applicable VAT for the Replacement Power Cost for the Billing Period, if any.

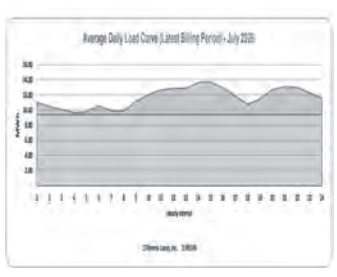
t	Billing Period

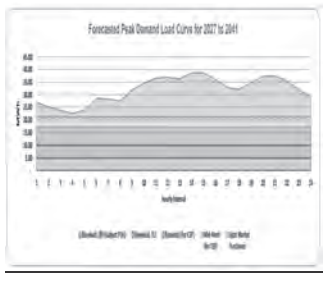
43. QUIRELCO's Supply and Demand Scenario (Yearly) and Average Daily Load Curve are as follows:











INDICATIVE RATE IMPACT

44. The indicative rate impact on QUIRELCO's overall generation rate with the additional supply from SPI shows a **decrease of about PhP0.2361/kWh**, *to wit:*

Simulation of Generation Mix Rate with SPI	
Generation rate with SPI	PhP5.7051/kWh
Generation rate without SPI	PhP5.9411/kWh
Rate Impact, Increase/(Decrease)	**PhP(0.2361)/kWh**

45. In *Alyansa Para sa Bagong Pilipinas, Inc. vs. Energy Regulatory Commission, et. al.,*[12] the Supreme Court held that the purpose of the CSP is to ensure transparency and competition in the procurement of power supply by distribution utilities (DUs) so as to provide the least-cost electricity to the consuming public. This was also adopted by the Honorable Commission and is provided under Article I, Section 1(c), (d), and (i) of its *Amended CSP Guidelines*.

46. Considering that the PSA is the result of a valid Joint CSP conducted by NEA, Joint Applicants respectfully submit that the rates in the PSA be approved for it will ultimately redound to the benefit of QUIRELCO's MCOs.

IV
PRE-FILING REQUIREMENTS
AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

47. In support of the Joint Application, the following documents are attached herein as annexes and made as integral part hereof:

ANNEXES	DOCUMENTS
"01"	PSA dated 09 September 2026
"02"[13]	SPI's Certification on Documents Previously Submitted invoking Section 24 of the ERC Resolution No. 07, Series of 2026: **ERC Case No. 2024-103 RC** • SPI's WESM Registration • Write-up on Shareholders' Agreement SPI • Write-up on the Non-applicability of BOI Registration • SPI's Environmental Compliance Certificate • Write-up on RE Developer • Write-up on RE Service Contract • Write-up on Water Permit • Documents Related to Fuel ***(Confidential)*** **ERC Case No. 2025-018 RC** • Certification on Non-Applicability of DWS Agreement • Certification on Non-Applicability of Transmission Wheeling Contract • Write-up on IPPA Agreement • Write-up on EPC Contract • Write-up on Project Feasibility Study • Write-up on Wholesale Aggregator Agreement **ERC Case No. 2026-057 RC** • Transmission Service Agreement **ERC Case No. 2026-063 RC** • SPI's Certification on Ultimate Parent Company **ERC Case No. 2026-121 RC** • SPI's Amended Articles of Incorporation, SPI's Amended By-Laws, and General Information Sheet for 2026 • Provisional Authority to Operate - 05 11 2026 Sual Power, Inc. (SPI) - 1,294.040 MW Sual CFTPP • SPI's Latest Audited Financial Statement • SPI's Write-up on the Non-Applicability of Rental Agreements • Operations and Maintenance Agreement ***(Confidential)***
"02A"	CDA Amended Articles of Cooperation and By-Laws
"02B"	NEA Certificate of Registration
"03"	Supply-Demand Scenario
"03A"	Details of Existing Suppliers
"03B"	Contract Utilization
"03C"	Average Daily Load Curves
"03D"	Distribution Development Plan
"03E"	Power Supply Procurement Plan
"04"	Matrix of Comparison of TOR and PSA
"05A"	Bid Forms ***(Confidential)***
"05B"	SPI's Generation Rate and Derivation ***(Confidential)***
"05C"	Sample Bill
"05D"	Rate Impact Analysis
"07"	WESM Registration
"11"	Estimation of Potential Reduction in Load
"D" and "E"	Board Resolution No. 122, Series of 2026
"D-1 and E-1"	SPI's Secretary's Certificate – Authority of Counsel to file the PSA and Authority of Affiant to Execute Verification and Certification Against Forum Shopping
"D-2"	SPI's Secretary's Certificate – Authority to Execute the PSA
"H"	Brief Description of the CSP Conducted
"I"	BAC/Joint BAC
"J"	CSP Observers
"K"	Invitation to Bid (ITB)
"L"	Certificate of Conformity from the NEA
"M"	Publication of the ITB
"N"	Posting of the ITB
"O"	Instruction to Bidders
"P"	Terms of Reference (TOR)
"Q" - Series	Pre-bid Conference
"R" - Series	Eligibility Requirements
"S" - Series	Submission of Bids
"T" - Series	Evaluation of Bids
"U" - Series	Award of Contract
"V" - Series	Execution of Contract
"W - Series	Protest Mechanism
"X"	Affidavit to Support Provisional Approval or Interim Relief

PRAYER FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

48. Pursuant to *Rule 4* of *ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure*, Joint Applicants may request that certain information not be disclosed and be treated as confidential.[14] Pursuant to this, SPI prays for the confidential treatment of the information contained in the **Annexes "02", "05A"** and **"05B".**

49. SPI treats the information contained in the above-mentioned documents, such as sources of funds/financial plans, certifications from bank/lending institutions, generation rate and derivation, cash flow, description of power plant, and fuel supply agreement, as **proprietary** in nature considering that it involves trade secrets reflecting investment and business calculations.

50. These documents are considered as trade secrets contemplated by law and jurisprudence. In the case of *Air Philippines Corporation vs. Pennswell, Inc.*[15], the Supreme Court defined a trade secret, as follows:

> A trade secret may consist of any formula, pattern, device, or compilation of information that: **(1) is used in one's business; and (2) gives the employer an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not possess the information.** Generally, a trade secret is a process or device intended for continuous use in the operation of the business, for example, a machine or formula, but **can be a price list or catalogue or specialized customer list.** It is indubitable that trade secrets constitute proprietary rights. The inventor, discoverer, or possessor of a trade secret or similar innovation has rights therein which may be treated as property, and ordinarily an injunction will be granted to prevent the disclosure of the trade secret by one who obtained the information "in confidence" or through a "confidential relationship". American jurisprudence has utilized the following factors to determine if an information is a trade secret, to wit:
>
> (1) the extent to which the information is known outside of the employer's business;
>
> (2) the extent to which the information is known by employees and others involved in the business;
>
> (3) the extent of measures taken by the employer to guard the secrecy of the information;
>
> (4) the value of the information to the employer and to competitors;
>
> (5) the amount of effort or money expended by the company in developing the information; and
>
> (6) the extent to which the information could be easily or readily obtained through an independent source.[16]

51. The foregoing documents were prepared and developed for the exclusive use of SPI and were designed for its specific use in its power generation business. If the information contained in these documents are disclosed to the public, SPI's competitors or other entities engaged in the power business they will gain undue advantage and could incorporate the said information in their operations. Consequently, the negotiating power of SPI with parties it plans to contract with or who it is currently doing business with will be undermined if it is compelled to disclose such information.

52. Accordingly, Joint Applicants hereby submit one (1) copy of the confidential documents *via:* in a sealed envelope, with the envelope and each page of the document stamped with the word *"Confidential."*[17]

PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY OR INTERIM RELIEF

53. Joint Applicants re-plead, by reference, all the foregoing allegations to support its prayer for Provisional Authority (PA) or Interim Relief (IR).

54. Joint Applicants pray for the issuance of a provisional authority or interim relief for the implementation of the PSA pending the issuance of a final decision pursuant to Section 1, Rule 14 of the *ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure*, which provides:

> Section 1. Provisional Authority or Interim Relief. - For applications or petitions covered by Section 1, Rule 6 of these Rules, the Commission may grant either a provisional authority or an interim relief, upon motion included in the application or petition and indicated in the caption thereof that such relief is requested.

55. QUIRELCO is currently procuring power under its recent EPSA that will expire on 25 November 2026.The necessity of the EPSA was due to global geopolitical developments, particularly the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States that continue to affect global fuel supply and energy prices, thus, expected to cause significant increases in electricity prices in WESM.

56. Without the approval of the PSA and upon expiry of the EPSA, QUIRELCO will be constrained to source its power supply from WESM that has an average rate of PhP8.2234/kWh based on its July 2026 Billing.

57. To mitigate exposure to WESM prices and possible supply interruptions, it is imperative that the PSA be implemented immediately.

58. The PSA was the product of a duly conducted and fully compliant CSP pursuant to *NEA Memorandum No. 2023-057, DOE Department Circular No. DC2023-06-0021*, and *ERC Resolution No. 16, Series of 2023*, as amended by *Resolution No. 07, Series of 2026*, ensuring that the resulting rates are transparent, least-cost, and beneficial to MCOs.

59. The Levelized Cost of Energy of PhP5.9078/kWh offered by SPI, stands as the first ranked lowest calculated bid among two (2) Winning Bidders, and falls within the declared ceiling price of PhP6.3000/kWh for Lot 1. This rate is reasonable and advantageous to consumers as it will reduce QUIRELCO's effective generation charge and stabilize its power supply portfolio.

60. The General Manager of QUIRELCO, Cesar P. Gulla, executed an Affidavit of Merit to further support the prayer for the issuance of PA or IR.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, premises considered, Joint Applicants, respectfully pray unto the Honorable Commission to:

1. **APPROVE** the **JOINT APPLICATION** and **PSA** including all the rates, fees, charges and tariff adjustment mechanisms set out therein, and authorizing QUIRELCO to charge and collect the fees therein from its customers reckoned from the commencement of the power supply by the Joint Applicants;

2. **ISSUE** a Provisional Authority or Interim Relief, as the case may be, authorizing the immediate implementation of the PSA; and

3. **TREAT** Annexes **"02", "05A", and "05B"** inclusive of their submarkings, and the information contained therein as confidential and **DIRECT** their non-disclosure to persons other than the necessary officers and staff of this Honorable Commission in accordance with *Section 2, Rule 4 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure.*

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

Pasig City 01 October 2026.

Guzman Ceniza Law Office
Counsel for QUIRELCO
6th Floor, Pacific Center Building,
#33 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines
0917-557-70-65
E-mail: gclawoffice@gclawoffice.com.ph
Website: www.gclawoffice.com.ph

[redacted]
CARL STEPHEN A. GUZMAN
Roll of Attorneys No. 58596
PTR No. 1895036/ 01-08-26/ San Juan City
IBP Lifetime Membership No. 013941/ 06-24-15/ RSM
MCLE Compliance No. VIII- 0011670/ 08 August 2024

[redacted]
BRIAN F. CENIZA
Roll of Attorneys No. 59273
PTR No. 4006810/ 01-09-26/ Pasig City
IBP No. 569620/ 12-23-25/ Pasig City
MCLE Compliance No. VIII – 0011677/ 08 August 2024

[redacted]
JASPER ADRIAN A. TUBAY
Roll of Attorneys No. 89441
PTR No. 4006811/ 01-09-26/ Pasig City
IBP No. 578373/ 12-30-25/ Tarlac
MCLE Compliance No. VIII -0026824/ 10 April 2025.

SUAL POWER INC. (SPI)[18]

By:

[redacted]
JUPITER M. GARAGUIO
5th Floor, C5 Office Building Complex
#100 E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., C5 Road, Bo. Ugong,
Pasig City 1604, Metro Manila
Telephone No. (02) 5317 1000/ jcgaraguio@sugcp.sunmiguel.com.ph
PTR No. 3977997 / 05 January 2026 / Pasig City
IBP Lifetime No. 06372 / Makati Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII – 0032570 valid until 14 April 2028
Roll No. 47112

[redacted]
AVELINO G. CEDO III
5th Floor, C5 Office Building Complex
#100 E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., C5 Road, Bo. Ugong,
Pasig City 1604, Metro Manila
Telephone No. (02) 5317 1000 / acedo@sugcp.sunmiguel.com.ph
PTR No. 3977996 / 05 January 2026 / Pasig City
IBP Lifetime No. 010380 / PPLM Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII - 0029077 valid until 14 April 2028
Roll No. 54500

[redacted]
JULIETA B. ESTAMO
5th Floor, C5 Office Building Complex,
#100 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., C5 Road, Bo. Ugong,
Pasig City 1604, Metro Manila
Telephone No. (02) 5317 1000 / jestamo@sugcp.sunmiguel.com.ph
PTR No. 3978000 / 05 January 2026 / Pasig City
IBP Invoice No. 536845 / 07 January 2026 /
Central Luzon Bulacan Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0016943 valid until 14 April 2028
Roll No. 39024

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION AGAINST FORUM SHOPPING

I, **CESAR P. GULLA**, of legal age, Filipino and with office address at Aurora East, Diffun, Quirino, after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, hereby depose and state, that:

1. I am the authorized representative of **QUIRINO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (QUIRELCO)**, co-Applicant in this case, as per Board Resolution No. 21 series of 2026;

2. I caused the preparation and filing of this *Joint Application with Prayer for Confidential Treatment of Information* and have read the contents thereof, and, based on my own personal knowledge, belief and on authentic records of QUIRELCO, all the allegations contained therein are true and correct. Furthermore, the *Joint Application* is not filed to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation; and that the factual allegations therein have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for discovery.

3. QUIRELCO has not commenced any other action or proceeding involving the same issue/s in the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals or any court, tribunal, or quasi-judicial agency and, to the best of my knowledge, no such other action or claim is pending therein; and

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my signature this October 12, 2026 in Diffun, Quirino.

[redacted]
CESAR P. GULLA
Affiant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 12 OCT 2026 in DIFFUN, QUIRINO. Affiant exhibited to me his LTO Driver's License ID number B07-91-000146, valid until November 10, 2033.

Doc. No. 307;
Page No. 79;
Book No. XII;
Series of 2026.

[redacted]
ATTY. HENRY D. PADILLA
Notary Public for Diffun, Quirino
Until December 31, 2027
Roll of Attorneys No. 69331
IBP O.R. No. 524187 / Pasig City
MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0029077 / 14 April 2028
PTR No. 0000000 / Diffun, Quirino

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORUM SHOPPING

I, **ELENITA D. GO**, Filipino, of legal age, and with office address at the 5th Floor, 100 Eulogio Rodriguez Jr. Avenue C5 Road (North Bound) Pasig City, after having been duly sworn to in accordance with law, hereby depose and state, that:

1. I am the authorized representative of Sual Power Inc. ("SPI") a co-applicant in the Joint Application for Approval of the Power Supply Agreement between Quirino Electric Cooperative ("QUIRELCO") and SPI;

2. I have caused the preparation and filing of the Joint Application and that I have read the contents thereof and aver that all the factual/legal allegations contained therein are true and correct based on my personal knowledge and/or on authentic documents/official records;

3. The Joint Application is not filed to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation and that the factual allegations therein have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likewise have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for discovery; and,

4. I hereby certify that SPI has not filed/commenced any action or proceeding arising from the same issues raised in the Joint Application before the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, or any other courts or tribunals or quasi-judicial bodies/agencies and to the best of my knowledge, no such other similar action or claim is pending therein. If ever there is a case pending before the said courts or tribunals involving the same issues, I undertake to inform the Honorable Energy Regulatory Commission of such fact within five (5) calendar days from knowledge thereof.

I am executing this undertaking in support of the Joint Application and the veracity of the allegations therein as well as for any other legal purpose this may serve.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this OCT - 1 2026 at Pasig City.

[redacted]
ELENITA D. GO
Affiant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this OCT - 1 2026 in Pasig City. Affiant personally appeared and exhibited to me her Philippine Passport No. P1876103B issued on June 7, 2019 at the DFA NCR East as her competent proof of identity and with affiant waiving the right to receive a duplicate and original electronic copy of the Verification and Certification of Non-Forum Shopping in effect waiving any objection to the completeness of the reproduction of the same.

Doc. No. 287;
Page No. 59;
Book No. X;
Series of 2026.

[redacted]
RUDICIA P. ESPIRITU
Notary Public for Pasig City
Until December 31, 2027
Roll No. 63991
IBP No. 524187 / Pasig City
MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0029077 / 14 April 2028
PTR No. 0000000 / Pasig City

1 A copy of the Board Resolution No. 122, Series of 2026 is attached herein as Annexes "D" and "E".
2 A copy of the Secretary's Certificate is attached herein as Annex "D-1" and "E-1".
3 *ERC Resolution No. 07, Series of 2026*, promulgated on 01 April 2026, entitled *"Amended Implementing Guidelines for the Procurement, Execution, and Evaluation of Power Supply Agreements Entered into by Distribution Utilities for the Supply of Electricity to their Captive Market."*
4 Section 25. Retail Rate. - The retail rates charged by distribution utilities for the supply of electricity in their captive market shall be subject to regulation by the ERC based on the principle of full recovery of prudent and reasonable economic costs incurred, or such other principles that will promote efficiency as may be determined by the ERC.
5 Distribution utilities may enter into bilateral power supply contracts subject to review by the ERC: xxx xxx.
6 Limits on Bilateral Supply Contracts by a Distribution Utility.
7 Resolution No. 01, Series of 2021.
8 Amended Implementing Guidelines for the Procurement, Execution, and Evaluation of Power Supply Agreements Entered into by Distribution Utilities for the Supply of Electricity to their Captive Market.
9 Luzon Visayas Electric Cooperatives Aggregation (LVECA) is composed of: **For Luzon Member ECs:** 1) Abra Electric Cooperative; 2) Aurora Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 3) Batangas II Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 4) Cagayan I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 5) Camarines Sur II Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 6) Camarines Sur III Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 7) First Laguna Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 8) La Union Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 9) Nueva Ecija I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 10) Nueva Vizcaya Electric Cooperative; 11) Pangasinan I Electric Cooperative; 12) Pampanga III Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 13) Quezon I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 14) Quezon II Electric Cooperative, Inc. 15) Quirino Electric Cooperative; 16) San Jose City Electric Cooperative; 17) Tarlac I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 18) Zambales I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; and 19) Zambales II Electric Cooperative, Inc.

For Visayas Member ECs: 1) Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 2) Cebu I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 3) Cebu II Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 4) Guimaras Electric Cooperative; 5) Iloilo I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 6) Iloilo II Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 7) Iloilo III Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 8) Negros Occidental Electric Cooperative; 9) Negros Oriental I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 10) Negros Oriental II Electric Cooperative.
"Collectively referred to as Member ECs."
10 The NEA-SBAC set a Reserve Bid Price of PhP6.3000/kWh for both Lots in the Transaction, which was disclosed to the bidders during the opening of bids.
11 The Notices of Award were accepted by SPI on 25 August 2026, TLI on 20 August 2026, MPI on 24 August 2026, PCPC on 25 August 2026, TVI on 20 August 2026, and EDC on 25 August 2026.
12 G.R. No. 227670, 03 May 2019.
13 *Annex 02 includes Annexes "0A", "07", "08", "09", "10", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20" and "21"in the Technical Pre-Filing Requirements.*
14 Section 1, Rule 4, *Rules of Practice and Procedure* of the Honorable Commission.
15 G.R. No. 172835, 13 December 2007.
16 *Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.
17 In line with the Honorable Commission's rules and regulations, soft copies of the documents covered by the prayer for confidential treatment were password-protected and submitted via electronic submission.
[redacted]

(MS-OCT. 27/NOV. 3, 2026)



EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR. From left, People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) past president Edgardo Soriano, Maribel Umali, PMAP vice president Jovie Monsalud, Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) president and CEO TG Limcaoco, BPI chief HR officer Gina Eala, PMAP president Engelbert Camasura, PMAP 50th Awards executive director and chairman Rene Gener, PMAP past president Lily Quintans, and Julie Miteria pose for a photo during the PMAP awarding ceremony. BPI was recognized by PMAP as the Employer of the Year for its outstanding people programs, leadership practices, and workplace culture.

DOE ready to defend coal bidding rules

By Alena Mae S. Flores

THE Department of Energy said Monday it is prepared to legally defend the changes it imposed for the upcoming coal bidding, which covers 10 coal blocks on Semirara Island in Antique province.

"That's why we were delayed — because we're really studying the legal, commercial, and energy security impact of this. We've been studying properly how to reconcile all the concerns," Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said.

Garin said the DOE is giving all interested bidders a fair chance to participate while maximizing the benefits to the country.

"It is not just about the contract itself or the government's share, but also making sure that we use all coal production domestically as much as possible. Because of the war, I would rather push that everything we produce or extract within Philippine jurisdiction is used domestically," the energy chief said.

She said the DOE aims to lower coal imports from Indonesia by utilizing domestic coal from Semirara, the country's largest coal reserve.

"So that we are no longer dependent on any decision of Indonesia, China, or any other country. We have our own security in that sense," Garin said.

She added that the coal bidding will push through unless halted by a court order.

"I'm not really familiar with what the actions will be, but it could be delayed if the court tells us to stop," Garin said.Garin clarified that current contract holder Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC), whose contract expires in July next year, is complying with its redundancy program based on its work plan.

SMPC has raised several concerns regarding the forthcoming bidding, including a DOE-Department of Environment and Natural Resources joint administrative order.

SMPC said the proposed bidding rules, specifically requiring the company to surrender assets such as trucks and heavy equipment as a condition for submitting a bid, violate standard protocols and sideline the firm from participating.

SMPC alleged that other interested bidders are not bound by these restrictions and are only required to offer the highest bid to take over the mine by July 2027. The company also warned that a winning bidder lacking mining experience could produce zero coal, leading to zero royalty payments for the government and defeating the DOE's goal of maximizing state revenues.

Hotel101-Madrid posted record revenue in October

By Jenniffer B. Austria

HOTEL101-MADRID, the 680-room hotel owned by DoubleDragon Corp.'s subsidiary Hotel101 Global Holdings Corp., generated a record 2.93 million euros (about P209 million) in revenue in October as occupancy reached 97.41 percent.

Hotel101 Global said the October sales represent the hotel's highest monthly revenue since opening in March 2026.

The Madrid property is the first Hotel101 outside the Philippines. It has 680 rooms, with an average of about 660 occupied daily in October.

Hotel101 Global said the results will support its international expansion plans, which include replicating its business model through joint ventures and eventually licensing agreements.

The company is targeting 1 million standardized hotel rooms across more than 100 countries.

Hotel101-Madrid is located in Valdebebas, near Madrid-Barajas International Airport and IFEMA, a major convention and exhibition center. It is also near Real Madrid's sports complex and the planned circuit for the Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix.

The hotel has recorded more than 95,500 guest arrivals from over 100 nationalities since opening in March.

Guests from Spain accounted for 39 percent of arrivals, followed by those from the United States at 7 percent and Portugal at 4 percent. China and Mexico accounted for 3 percent each.

Hotel101 unit owners collectively receive 30 percent of monthly gross room revenues, net of applicable taxes and statutory charges, distributed equally across all units, the company said.

IN BRIEF

Filipino agri-startups pitch high-value products in SG

FIVE young Filipino agripreneurs are turning locally sourced cacao, coconut, peanuts, crustaceans, and agricultural by-products into high-value items as they target opportunities in regional markets.

With support from the Department of Agriculture's Young Farmers Challenge, the enterprises showcased their products and business models at the Asia-Pacific Agrifood Innovation Summit 2026 in Singapore to connect with investors, industry players, and potential partners.

The startups joined the trade fair at the Suntec Convention Centre from Oct. 27 to 29 to highlight their product lines and explore opportunities for processing, product development, and regional market expansion.

The DA's Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service led the Philippine delegation in collaboration with the Philippine Agriculture Office in Bangkok.

Among the participating enterprises, L'Reinvente converts agricultural by-products into skincare products while providing livelihoods for farming communities. CHER Cacao Products Manufacturing, a youth-led bean-to-bar enterprise based in Negros Oriental, produces specialty items from local cacao.

Bluecrust Food Manufacturing produces value-added crustacean items, Aelius develops wellness products derived from coconut, and Y'Nut Food Products processes locally grown peanuts into commercial food products. **Othel V. Campos**

DOE plans floating solar auction to combat El Niño

THE Department of Energy is studying another Green Energy Auction for floating solar projects to help combat prolonged El Niño conditions.

"Floating solar… it will lessen the evaporation of water," Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said.

Floating solar, an emerging clean energy technology, utilizes bodies of water such as lakes, reservoirs, and dams for panel installations. It offers an opportunity to maximize land-use efficiency, reduce water evaporation, and improve panel performance through natural cooling.

The energy chief said the department is evaluating sites managed by the National Power Corp. and the National Irrigation Administration.

Under the Green Energy Auction 4 launched in 2025, the DOE secured 2,284 megawatts of floating solar projects in Laguna, Pampanga, and Negros.

The initiative comes as the agency assures the public that backup electricity systems are being deployed for critical facilities — including hospitals, water supply infrastructure, and food hubs — to prevent power disruptions caused by El Niño. **Alena Mae S. Flores**

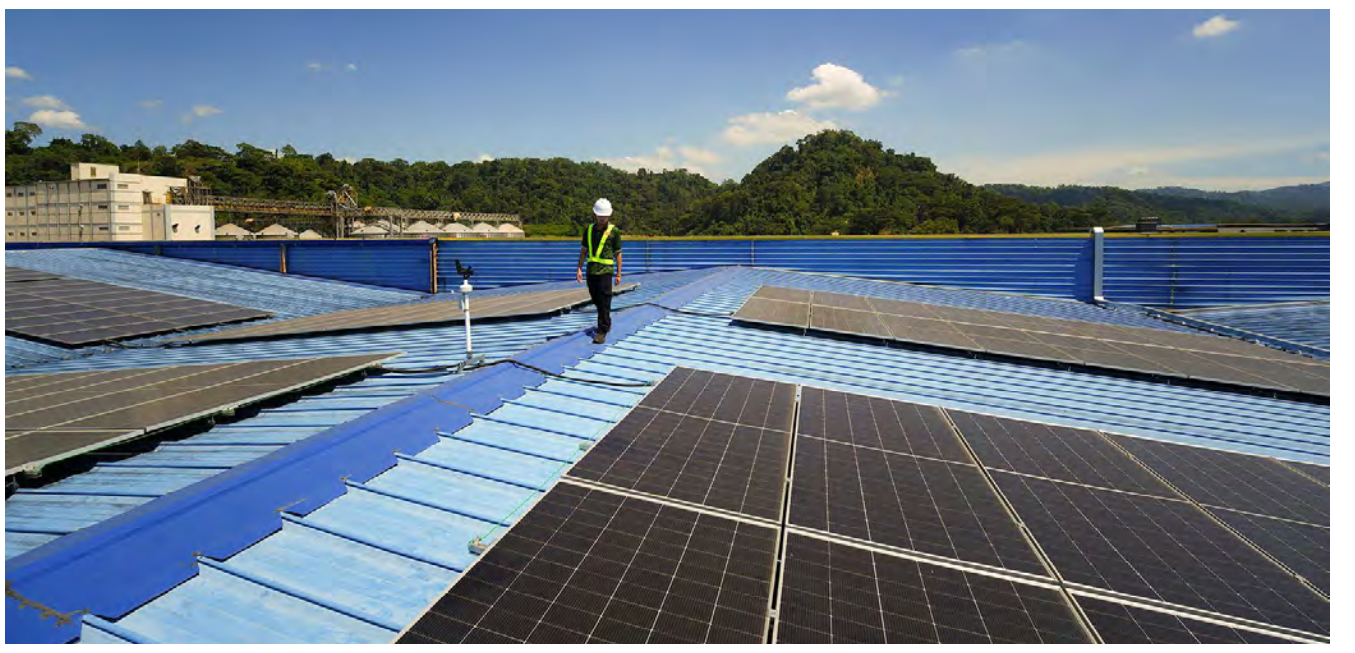
Bohol airport, local app tana! launch visitor guide

BOHOL-PANGLAO International Airport has partnered with tana!, a growing Bohol-based exploration app and editorial platform, to launch an interactive visitor discovery guide on the island.

The collaboration aims to help visitors experience Bohol through the lens of a local, offering curated routes, insider recommendations, and community-driven storytelling directly from the airport terminal.

Recognizing BPIA as the crucial first and last touchpoint for millions of tourists, the partnership leverages tana!'s hyper-local expertise to enrich the passenger journey. From community spaces and local eateries to hidden natural wonders, the app highlights everyday Bohol experiences to bridge the gap between typical tourist itineraries and authentic island life.

The rollout features scannable QR Discovery Guides, mini-zines, and a dedicated BPIA section in the tana! app featuring curated routes for arriving visitors. The digital hub provides content on route previews, practical local tips, and essential airport hacks, such as guides to 24-hour tourist SIM kiosks, transport options like the Grab booking booth, last-minute shopping at Nomad Express, and key terminal vantage points.



SOLAR ROOFTOP. Datian Subic Shoes Inc., the Philippine manufacturing arm of Taiwan's Datian Shoes, energizes a 3.06-megawatt-peak rooftop solar project across its two plants in Subic Bay. Developed, financed, and operated by Berde Renewables, the system is expected to reduce the factories' reliance on grid electricity by more than 40%with no upfront capital investment from Datian. The project is one of the largest rooftop solar installations by a manufacturer in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

Banks' assets exceeded P31t in September

By Thony Rose Lesaca

PHILIPPINE bank assets climbed 9.81 percent to P31.60 trillion in September 2026 from P28.78 trillion a year ago on steady loan and deposit growth, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) showed.

Universal and commercial banks held the largest share of assets at P29.42 trillion, up 9.34 percent from P26.90 trillion a year earlier.

Thrift bank assets increased 9.51 percent to P1.45 trillion in September from P1.32 trillion previously. Digital bank assets surged 129 percent to P326.46 billion from P142.54 billion.

Rural and cooperative banks' assets, however, fell 0.39 percent to P404.64 billion at end-September from P406.21 billion last year.

"The movement of accounts as of September 2026 largely reflects the reclassification of one rural bank to digital bank, effective July 18, 2026, pursuant to BSP Circular Letter No. CL-2026-035," the BSP said.

Michael Ricafort, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., attributed the growth in banking system assets to double-digit loan growth, partly led by reserve requirement ratio cuts over the past two years.

"[This] increased banks' loanable funds, as well as some frontloading of loans that also financed various purchases before borrowing costs and prices go up further," Ricafort said.

Tanduay unveils 20-year reserve rum in Germany

TANDUAY Distillers Inc. introduced its 20-year-old reserve rum and showcased its premium Philippine rums at Bar Convent Berlin in Germany as it seeks to expand its international market reach.

The company presented its product portfolio at the annual trade fair held at the Exhibition Centre Berlin, which gathers bar owners, bartenders, distributors, and industry professionals from roughly 90 countries.

"We are proud to share an expression that embodies the excellence of Philippine rum-making and Tanduay's expertise in rum production," Tanduay International business development manager Roy Kristoffer Sumang said.

"Beyond providing us an opportunity to introduce our premium rums to an international audience, the event gave us an important venue to connect with industry professionals and potential partners across Europe," he added.

The newly introduced Tanduay Reserve Rum 20 Years is produced from column-distilled rum derived from sugarcane molasses and aged for at least 20 years in ex-bourbon barrels. It features notes of caramel, ripe banana, vanilla, cocoa, and dried fruits, with a medium amber color and a long finish.

Tanduay research and development head Janno Gironella led a masterclass to introduce European visitors to the company's reserve rum portfolio and the distinct characteristics of Philippine rum. **Jenniffer B. Austria**

ALTA Restaurant plans more branches

ALTA Restaurant Tagaytay is marking its first anniversary, having grown from a home-kitchen operation into a 90-seat dining destination south of Manila, with plans to expand to coastal and capital locations.

The restaurant, which opened in 2025 and holds a 4.9 Google rating, plans to develop destination restaurants across premier tourist spots. Company executives said they are working on a coastal concept and a second branch in Manila, alongside upcoming menu additions.

ALTA is running an anniversary promotion through Nov. 8. A group of five that finishes the restaurant's Halo-Halo Dako — a giant dessert designed for five or more people — in five minutes receives the item for free.

"We have an anniversary promo challenge for five people to finish this huge halo-halo in just five minutes and it's theirs for free," co-founder Mikee Eusebio said.

Founders Grace Eusebio and her daughter Mikee began by selling home-cooked dishes to neighbors during pandemic community lockdowns. As demand grew, they opened a mall branch, which later closed due to property renovations.

They subsequently relocated to Tagaytay, securing a site featuring cool weather and views of the Taal ridge adjacent to established dining establishments.

"My mom and I were fully committed to making ALTA succeed," Mikee Eusebio said. "When we first opened, this location was empty — no parked cars, nothing. We were virtually unknown, positioned right next to established dining spots."



ALTA Restaurant Tagaytay marks its first anniversary as a dining destination south of Metro Manila. Seated from left are head of operations Liselle dela Cruz and co-founder and CEO Mikee Eusebio. Standing is executive chef and co-founder Grace Eusebio.

C1
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026
extrastory2000@gmail.com
RAY S. EÑANO, Editor
Manila Standard



Flood control barriers are an adaptation measure designed to manage alluvial flows in Antofagasta, in northern Chile. © UNDP

UN plots move to protect poor against El Niño

TWO UN agencies issued a powerful appeal last week for immediate assistance to help communities already being impacted by the strongest El Niño weather pattern on record.

"The current El Niño event could be unprecedented in strength—literally, off the monitoring charts that we have used for the past four decades—and will peak towards the end of 2026, but its impacts will be felt long after that," said Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

According to the latest Global Seasonal Climate Update from WMO, sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific—the epicenter of the extreme El Niño weather phenomenon—may rise to 3.8°C above average between November 2026 and January 2027.

While a Pacific Ocean surface temperature anomaly of 0.5°C above normal is enough to trigger an El Niño alert by WMO, Saulo highlighted concerns that the impact of an El Niño fueled by a 3.8°C gap has no precedent.

Previous El Niños linked to anomalies of 3°C have brought "very substantive impacts across the world," but "we are beyond that limit, out of our records, out of our statistics of what we can expect," the agency chief said.

"We are already witnessing extreme weather events and expect this to multiply and cascade as El Niño intensifies," Saulo noted.

"But a powerful El Niño does not have to be a recipe for humanitarian disaster. We have the science forecasts, the early warnings to save lives and protect livelihoods."

Echoing Saulo's appeal for prevention efforts to boost resilience among the world's most vulnerable communities, the UN's emergency relief chief, Tom Fletcher, described the new El Niño as a "behemoth…a wrecking ball that will likely tear through Latin America, eastern and southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific with extreme heat, droughts and floods."

The next two weeks will be critical to averting a worsening humanitarian crisis linked to El Niño, Fletcher said, adding that Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya urgently need funding and emergency supplies in place before heavy rains arrive.

In southern Africa, the priority is to deliver seeds and safeguard livestock, while Central America requires immediate support to protect livelihoods.

Across Asia and the Pacific, countries must brace for a range of climate shocks, including droughts, floods and cyclones.

"It would be an extraordinary failure to see this crisis coming, to hear the predictions from the experts, and yet still squander the opportunity to protect people in its path," Mr. Fletcher warned.**UN News**

DENR sets up more community water systems

FOR more than 1,000 households in Barangay Datal Anggas in Alabel, Sarangani province, getting enough water has long meant walking to wells and springs, carrying water home, and waiting in line when these sources ran low.

The problem becomes more difficult during dry seasons, when wells and streams dry up and the remaining water sources become inadequate for the community's drinking, sanitation and household needs.

As El Niño threatens to intensify dry conditions and strain water supplies across the country, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sought to address water security through the construction of community water supply systems in three sitios of Datal Anggas, providing residents with more reliable access to clean and potable water closer to their homes.

"Protecting our water resources means making sure clean and safe water reaches the communities that need it most," said DENR Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna.

Cuna said the project supports President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s directive to address water security amid the ongoing El Niño.

The President has directed government agencies to expedite water projects nationwide and prioritize communities at risk of severe water shortages to help mitigate the impacts of prolonged dry conditions and drought.

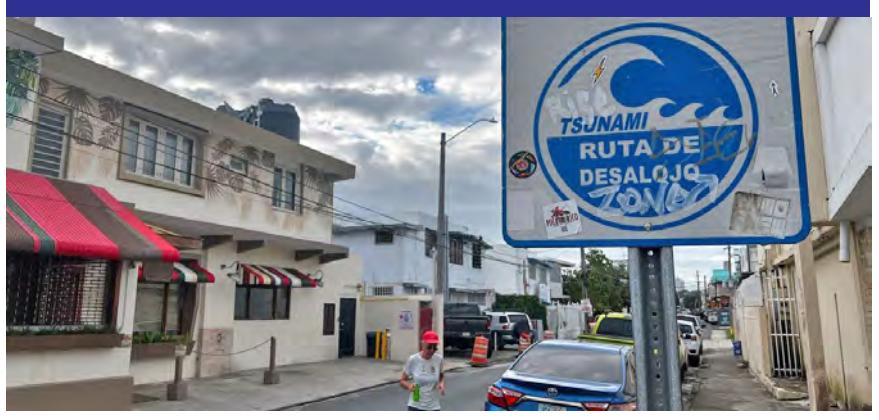
The DENR continues to pursue measures to maximize available water sources, develop additional supply and prepare contingency measures to help communities cope with prolonged dry conditions.

He said constructing community water supply systems forms part of the agency's mandate to manage the country's natural resources, with water being among the most important resources. **DENR News**



A mother from Barangay Datal Anggas in Alabel, Sarangani uses water from a communal tap outside her house for her laundry. A year ago, doing the laundry would require her to hike for an hour to do the laundry at a stream. **DENR**

Disasters cost staggering $228b in housing losses every year



A sign shows an evacuation route in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico.
UN News/Daniel Dickinson

First of 2 parts

$228 billion is a staggering amount of money to find, but that's exactly what communities around the world are faced with every year, to rebuild housing after disaster strikes.

Highlighting the need for greater investment in stronger homes and better preparedness, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that millions of homes are damaged or destroyed annually "displacing families and deepening poverty."

Marking the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, the UN chief stressed that "as climate and disaster risks multiply, building safer dwellings is the shared responsibility of governments, developers, engineers and communities".

Echoing that message, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction–UNDRR–noted that damage to housing alone accounts for 43 percent of the direct cost of cyclones, floods, tsunamis and earthquakes.

Spokesperson Jeanette Elsworth stressed that reducing the impacts of disaster depended on building resilient homes and households that had prepared for the worst.

"Among those people who had received an advance warning during a disaster, only 27 percent of those who had neither a household disaster plan nor confidence in their ability to protect themselves… were able to act on that warning," she said, citing data from the Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll 2026.

"By contrast, 83 percent of those who had both a plan and confidence in their ability to respond were able to take action."

Elsworth noted that progress in reducing disaster deaths over the last 11 years has not been matched by reductions in their economic impact.

All households should have access to risk information, early warning alerts and the resources they need to protect themselves, she maintained, in a call to put housing resilience at the center of disaster risk reduction efforts.

Safer and stronger

Governments, the private sector and community authorities could do this by "building in safer locations, enforcing resilient building standards, retrofitting existing homes and empowering households with the knowledge and tools they need to prepare for disasters," she said.

The UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) helped 1.4 million people in 2025 across 39 countries with disaster risk reduction programs, supporting nearly 1,200 communities.

Maria Moita, Director, Department of Humanitarian Response and Recovery at IOM, said that for many people, the end of a disaster is "only the beginning of a much longer struggle to return home, restore livelihoods and rebuild their lives."

The agency also helped extend early warning coverage to more than 1.2 million people. ***(To be continued)***
UN News

WMO: High carbon dioxide levels will impact for centuries

LEVELS of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other major greenhouse gases in the atmosphere caused by burning fossil fuels reached record highs in 2025, locking in more long-term global warming, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said last week.

The agency's latest Greenhouse Gas Bulletin indicates an average global concentration of CO2 at 426.8 parts per million (ppm) last year, or 153 percent of the 1750 pre-industrial baseline.

"Every additional part per million matters because it traps additional heat. In effect, we are supercharging the ocean and the atmosphere. That means that heat waves, tropical cyclones and rainstorms are intensifying faster than our historical baselines prepared us for," WMO Deputy Secretary-General Ko Barrett told journalists in Geneva.



Air pollution from power plants contributes to global warming. Unsplash/Maxim Tolchinskiy

Equally worrying, levels of methane and nitrous oxide—the second and third most important long-lived greenhouse gases caused by human activities—also hit a new peak in 2025.**UN News**

Colombia, PH set to feel drier conditions

Second of Three Parts

IN the Greater Horn of Africa, wetter-than-normal conditions could trigger flash flooding, spread water-borne diseases and disrupt schooling

In crisis and conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan and Chad, El Niño can be a direct threat to survival, worsening hunger and malnutrition among already vulnerable children

Every $1 invested in disaster risk reduction and prevention can save up to $15 in recovery costs, yet less than one percent of humanitarian funding currently goes to anticipatory action

The 2026-2027 El Niño is forecast to become one of the strongest on record, threatening to intensify drought, floods and other weather extremes across countries already grappling with food insecurity, displacement and economic pressures.

Children on the frontlines, again

El Niño can shift rainfall patterns thousands of kilometers from the tropical Pacific, leaving some regions facing drought and water shortages while others contend with heavier rains, flooding and heightened disease risks.

More than 347 million children in nearly 100 countries and territories could be exposed to unusually dry or wet conditions between October and December because of El Niño, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warns in a new analysis.



Two South Asian boys crouch amid rubble and sort water-damaged books and papers after a monsoon flood in Nuwakot, Nepal. © **UNICEF/Laxmi-Prasad-Ngakhusi**

"For children, El Niño is far more than a weather pattern. It can mean increased displacement, malnutrition, water shortages and disease outbreaks," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. "Children are also at risk of schools closing, while families could experience added financial hardship."

Already, 1.1 billion children–nearly half of the world's children–are already exposed to at least three overlapping climate-related hazards such as drought, extreme heat or floods.

In Papua New Guinea, impact is already here

Some of those consequences are already visible in Papua New Guinea, a mountainous Pacific island nation where remote terrain and difficult logistics have complicated responses to previous droughts. El Niño conditions have been present since mid-2026 and are forecast to peak between October and December.

In September, the Niño 3.4 index–a measure of sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific used to track El Niño–surpassed those recorded during every previous El Niño event, including 1997 and 2015.

The government, which declared the event in June, has established a dedicated task force and approved a $112 million supplementary budget.

(To be continued) **UN News**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026
lifeandshow.manilastandard@gmail.com
NICKIE WANG, *Editor*
ANGELICA VILLANUEVA, *Writer*
JASPER VALDEZ, *Writer*
Manila Standard



Veteran and younger comedians bring different references, styles and sensibilities into the same competition while learning to build on one another's material



From left: James Caraan, Chariz Solomon, Esnyr, Epy Quizon, Ethel Booba, Long Mejia, Candy Pangilinan, Pooh, Donna Cariaga and Charuth join showrunner Randolph Longjas (center left) and host Vice Ganda (center right) as different generations of comedians bring their own styles and references into one competition





Vice Ganda brings together performers from television, stand-up, and digital platforms for the latest season of 'Last One Laughing'

Filipino comedy across generations

Seasoned and new-gen comedians meet in a changing Filipino comedy scene

By Angelica Villanueva

FILIPINO comedy brings together different generations, but making the same joke land across age groups requires more than a good punchline. It takes an understanding of changing humor, cultural references, and the audiences who consume them.

The second season of *LOL: Last One Laughing Philippines* brings veteran comedians and younger digital creators into one competition, where they must make their fellow contestants laugh without breaking into laughter themselves. Beyond the challenge, the show puts different comedic styles and experiences in the same room.

Television host **Vice Ganda** sees the gathering as an opportunity to showcase Filipino humor and learn from performers whose careers developed in different eras.

"Our comedy is really distinct, it's unique, it's a mirror of our culture, of the kind of people that we have in the Philippines, everything that is happening in the Philippines, not just in the Philippines, but everything happening around the world," Vice Ganda said.

The cast includes seasoned comedians **Long Mejia, Epy Quizon, Candy Pangilinan, Ethel Booba and Pooh, alongside Donna Cariaga, Chariz Solomon, Esnyr, James Caraan,** and **Charuth**. Their backgrounds span television, live performance, and digital content, bringing different approaches to making audiences laugh.

For younger comedians, sharing the stage with established performers comes with its own challenges. Donna explained that respect for veteran comedians sometimes makes it difficult for newcomers to tease or poke fun at them.

"Of course, compared with us, who are new to comedy, there are Kuya Long, Kuya Epy, Ate Ethel, and Ate Candy. You can't just tease them or make fun of them so easily [because] there's respect and all that. But at the end of the day, we all have the same goal," Donna told Manila Standard Entertainment.

Meanwhile, stand-up comedian James Caraan described how the veteran performers helped create opportunities for their younger counterparts rather than treating them simply as competition.

"They weren't selfish during the game. They set you up so you could deliver the punchline," James shared.

He then described the contestants as a group of distinct personalities who learned to support one another's material.

"As Ate Candy mentioned earlier, we became like a family, with each of us bringing a different personality to the group. We build on one another's jokes instead of leaving anyone hanging. When someone delivers a punchline, the others play along and help keep the joke going until someone gets eliminated or breaks into laughter," he continued.

The exchange goes both ways. Vice Ganda explained that comedians from different generations must make an effort to understand one another's references, language, and sensibilities.

"We all need to immerse ourselves in and learn from every generation. We also have to make a conscious effort to keep up with Gen Z. We need to understand the terms they use, their sensitivities, and their sensibilities. They also need to make an effort to keep up with us. They need to broaden their knowledge of pop culture references, too," Vice Ganda explained.

For Esnyr, the youngest contestant in the lineup, the experience also offers a chance to learn from performers he watched on television growing up.

"As the youngest person here, I look up to them. Being here feels surreal because I get to share the room with some of the greatest comedians in the country. I'm really happy to be here with them. I'm here to experience this, and it's a learning experience for me," Esnyr shared.

The different generations also face the challenge of adjusting their material to changing audience expectations. Vice Ganda noted that jokes once accepted on mainstream television might require a different approach today, as performers become more conscious of how audiences respond to certain material.

Showrunner Randolph Longjas described the competition as an opportunity for comedians to contribute to and celebrate the country's comedy scene.

"It's an opportunity to contribute, not just to compete, but to contribute to and celebrate the kind of comedy we have as Filipinos," Randolph stated.

LOL: Last One Laughing Philippines Season 2 premiered exclusively on Prime Video on Oct. 30.

Buzzy docu tops Halloween box office

YOU Can See Everything, the documentary about jailed biotech fraudster **Elizabeth Holmes** that is generating major Oscars buzz, prevailed in a slow weekend at the Halloween box office in North America, industry estimates showed Sunday.

The three-hour A24 documentary, co-directed by comedian Nathan Fielder and Lance Oppenheim, earned $10.6 million in the United States and Canada, Exhibitor Relations said.

The film follows the Theranos founder and her family for a month before she began an 11-year prison sentence in 2023 for fraud and conspiracy after making lofty promises about innovations in medical testing that she failed to deliver.

The scandal fueled a media circus and was chronicled in a book, multiple podcasts, and the biographical miniseries *The Dropout*, starring **Amanda Seyfried**, who has sparked awards chatter with her surprise cameo in *You Can See Everything*.

The film has even entered the best picture Oscar conversation.

Clayface, a gory Batman villain origin story from Warner Bros. and DC Comics, finished a close second with $10.4 million.

Wildwood, a stop-motion animation tale from Laika Studios about a young girl who ventures into an enchanted forest to rescue her kidnapped brother, held third place with $7.5 million.

Fourth place went to Black Bear's *Wicker*, which earned $4.1 million.

The film stars **Olivia Colman** as a lonely fisherwoman and Alexander Skarsgard as her fantastical husband made out of wicker, whose housework and bedroom skills quickly become the talk of the town.

In fifth place, dropping a spot from last week, was Paramount's video game adaptation *Street Fighter*, which earned $3.2 million.

Rounding out the top 10 were *BTS World Tour - Sao Paulo (Live)* with $2.8 million, *Resident Evil* with $2.53 million, *Other Mommy* with $2.5 million, *The Only Living Pickpocket in New York* with $1.8 million, and *Heart of the Beast* with $1.6 million. **AFP**



The Elizabeth Holmes documentary earns $10.6 million in North America as awards attention builds around its account of the Theranos founder before her imprisonment



Sanya Lopez keeps her relationship largely private while sharing that persistence, mutual effort and everyday gestures have helped strengthen the connection

Sanya Lopez finds happiness in new romance



Shticks
Joseph Peter Gonzales

ACTRESS **Sanya Lopez** appears to be enjoying a happy chapter in her love life after revealing in a recent television interview that someone special has been making her heart smile.

"We met each other in Boracay through a common friend. Actually, during that time, I was experiencing a backache. I had an issue with my back then," she said.

Their first meeting eventually led to something more, with the mystery man making an effort to win her affection.

"He is very persistent to see me even if he comes from a very far place. He always visits me in the house, especially when I don't have work. He always brings flowers, which is so sweet," Sanya recalled.

Naturally, curiosity about the identity of her new beau has been growing. While she remains discreet about his identity, the actress offered one interesting clue.

"Well, all I can say is that he's half-Filipino and half-foreigner," she revealed.

Sanya also explained why she rarely posts about her relationship on social media. Although she prefers to keep her romance away from public scrutiny, she does not go out of her way to hide it.

"That's right! I don't flaunt it in my social media accounts, but whenever we are seen in public, I don't deny him. Actually, many tag me when they happen to see us in public together. Especially when we are in other countries for a vacation. People readily connect things. I just read in the comment section that it's him," she shared in Tagalog.

Asked to rate her present love life on a scale of one to 10, Sanya did not hesitate to give it a perfect score.

"Of course, it's a ten! In every relationship, it's vital that the two of you are happy. If ever there's something lacking, you should fill it together," she said.

She also considers their being of the same age an important factor in their relationship. Having been together for quite some time, Sanya feels comfortable expressing the qualities she believes make her a future wife.

"Yes! That's an important factor. We've been together for quite some time now and I can say that with him, I am able to express my being a wife material. We spoil each other. It's just not about the material things that he gives me. On my part, I show him my sweetness like, I cook for him.

"I give him the best that I can as a woman. As I've said, I show him my being a wife material. Well, it all leads there. Of course, men look for qualities of a future good wife. And that's what I'm doing," she ended.

Vince Maristela enjoys hosting break

GMA talent **Vince Maristela** is grateful that audiences are gradually taking notice of him as one of **Vice Ganda**'s co-hosts on *Gandang Gabi, Vice*.

"Honestly, I'm still new in the field of hosting. For me, it's a fresh opportunity to show the public another side of my personality," he said.

Having previously appeared in drama programs, Vince considers his hosting stint a welcome change from the emotionally demanding roles he has taken on.

"That's true! My initial programs with the Kapuso were all drama materials, where there were lots of crying scenes. With my stint in *GGV*, I feel refreshed. It's comedy, and it's something new to me. This is indeed a huge help in improving my craft further!" he shared.

Vince is particularly thankful to Vice Ganda for giving him the opportunity to join the show and explore another side of his talent.

"I'm really thankful that he gave me a chance to be part of the show. It's a big break for me. Meme makes me feel that I'm safe and just be myself.

"Actually, he told me that I can be a comedian. For me, it's a big booster to my self-confidence. And further inspires me to give my best," he said.

Antonio Ocampo: The quiet force behind the rise of OPM

PEOPLE



Seasoned music executive Antonio M. Ocampo (left) receives the Dangal ng Musikang Pilipino Lifetime Achievement Award from Viva Group chairman Vicente 'Boss Vic' del Rosario Jr.



Antonio Ocampo is recognized for his 57 years in the recording industry and contributions to the growth of Original Pilipino Music (OPM)

By Jasper Valdez

AFTER spending 57 years in the recording industry and receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award, veteran music executive **Antonio Ocampo** remains modest about his role in shaping Original Pilipino Music (OPM).

"*Wala naman akong kahindik-hindik na nagawa*. At all," said Ocampo, president and chief operating officer of Vicor Music and chief operating officer of Viva Records, during a recent interview.

"I was just a participant in the campaign for the improvement of OPM," he added, explaining that he never considered his contributions particularly remarkable.

Ocampo received the recognition at the Dangal ng Musikang Pilipino 2026 ceremony held on Oct. 14 at Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar in Quezon City. The award was presented by Viva Group chairman **Vicente "Boss Vic" del Rosario Jr.**, his longtime colleague in the music business.

Before becoming a recording executive, Ocampo worked as a professional photographer and entertainment journalist. He contributed to Weekly Nation, taught photography at the University of the Philippines (UP), and photographed album covers for several prominent entertainers, including the late **Pilita Corrales**.

"*Hindi pa ako* graduate, professional photographer *na ako*," he recalled, adding that he learned much of his craft from experienced photographers and journalists he met at the National Press Club.

One assignment took him and Corrales to Pagsanjan Falls, where they traveled through the rapids for a pictorial. Ocampo recalled worrying about his expensive camera as their boat maneuvered around rocks, while the singer appeared to enjoy the experience. It was among the assignments he remembered most clearly from his years behind the camera.

His connection with Vicor began through album-cover photography, which eventually expanded to other responsibilities. Del Rosario invited him to join the company permanently, although Ocampo initially hesitated because he was already earning well from his freelance work.

"*Sabi ko, 'Hindi mo ako kayang bayaran,'*" he recalled telling Del Rosario.

Ocampo eventually accepted the offer, moving from creative assignments into promotions and executive management. The position placed him directly in the recording business at a time when local labels were beginning to develop a stronger market for Filipino music.

He later worked closely with **Freddie Aguilar** during the release and international promotion of "Anak," which gained widespread radio exposure after its release shortly before Holy Week.

"*Walang nakakaalam*," he said when asked whether they expected the song to become an international success, although he recalled Del Rosario's confidence in its potential.

Ocampo remembered how a Japanese television crew filming a documentary in Manila repeatedly heard the song on the radio. Its inclusion in the documentary subsequently attracted interest from Japanese music companies, opening opportunities for Aguilar overseas.

His work also involved finding new performers. After hearing **Lolita Carbon** sing at the Red Cow folk house in Manila, Ocampo became convinced that she had the potential to succeed as a recording artist.

"*Pagkanta pa lang niya, sabi ko, 'Ito na yun,'*" he recalled.

He initially wanted Carbon to record as a solo artist, but she insisted on staying with her bandmates. Ocampo eventually agreed to take on the group, Asin, whose song "Masdan Mo ang Kapaligiran" left a strong impression on him.

Despite his experiences with successful artists, Ocampo considers leaving Vicor to establish his own company among the toughest decisions of his career. He had initially considered opening a printing press, drawing on his earlier experience in journalism, before deciding to remain in the recording business.

"*Ang* crossroad *ko talaga noon* was when I resigned from Vicor, *na hindi ko alam* where I'll go," he said.

He founded Ivory Records in 1983, initially building its catalog through licensed international recordings. The business later expanded into minus-one and karaoke tapes, which became an important source of growth as demand increased.

"*Basta walang lugi, kahit* break-even *lang*, go," he said of his approach to developing the business.

Having witnessed the industry's transition from physical records and cassette tapes to digital streaming, Ocampo believes Filipino music has achieved something earlier recording executives could only hope for. He recalled a time when foreign recordings dominated local radio and record companies had to campaign for greater exposure for Filipino songs.

"It took so many, many years to arrive at this point," he said. "And I can confidently say that that dream has come true."

"We have conquered the Philippines with OPM. Maybe tomorrow the world," he added. "You can always dream."

Game-changing mission to put young athletes on the map

WHILE big-league sports entrepreneurs chase television rights, arena crowds, and multimillion-peso endorsements, **Miggy Al-Alawy** is building his business from the ground up, giving young Filipino athletes the professional treatment usually reserved for elite competitors.

At the inaugural HTG Sports Showcase Game at MRB Gymnasium in Quezon City on Oct. 4, 2026, teams from San Beda, Jubilee Christian Academy, Apex Hoopers, and Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation competed in various age-group divisions. The event had the trappings of a major sporting production, complete with photographers, statistical crews, and livestream coverage.

For Al-Alawy, founder of HTG Sports, the attention to detail was deliberate. He wants grassroots competitions to receive the same level of organization, media exposure, and respect enjoyed by established sporting events.

His journey into sports entrepreneurship began with a bicycle. What started as childhood fun eventually developed into a passion for basketball, volleyball, badminton, and triathlons.

The idea for HTG Sports, however, came after a conversation with his best friend about the financial and logistical challenges of supporting her son's basketball ambitions. Curious about the difficulties facing young athletes, Al-Alawy spent months attending community tournaments and talking to people involved in grassroots sports.

He found a thriving community held back by inadequate facilities, limited media coverage, and a lack of professional support for athletes, coaches, referees, and event personnel.

"I saw a clear need for better event production, greater platform exposure across multiple sports, and most importantly, a more professional treatment of grassroots athletes and the entire community behind them," he says.

Running HTG Sports means juggling business negotiations, partnerships, venue management, and content production. Among its collaborators are Chronos Athletic, Anytime Fitness, Fresh Q Enterprises, and R3R Modern Shades.

The inaugural showcase also benefited from the production expertise of Amavita Events, led by **Cinderella Gomez**, whose team handled the event's staging and coordination.

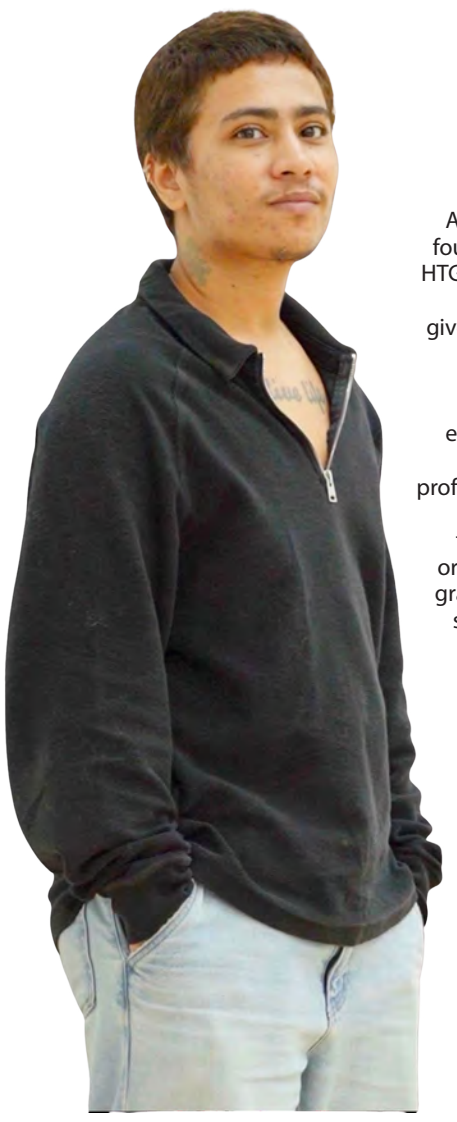
Building a venture from scratch comes with its share of pressure, but Al-Alawy believes knowing when to step back is just as important as staying focused.

"I've learned that discipline doesn't mean forcing yourself to keep going when you're exhausted," he says. "Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is stop, rest, talk to your family, and reset."

His commitment to the venture extends even to his leisure time. When watching sporting events abroad or simply enjoying a game, he finds himself studying camera angles, venue acoustics, officials, and audience engagement.

HTG Sports also has a broader social and business ambition. Al-Alawy wants the organization to create opportunities for everyone involved in local sports, from student-athletes seeking scholarship opportunities to young coaches, referees, photographers, and production crews looking for professional experience.

Over the next five years, the plan is to expand into structured multisport leagues and talent showcases nationwide, covering both male and female divisions.



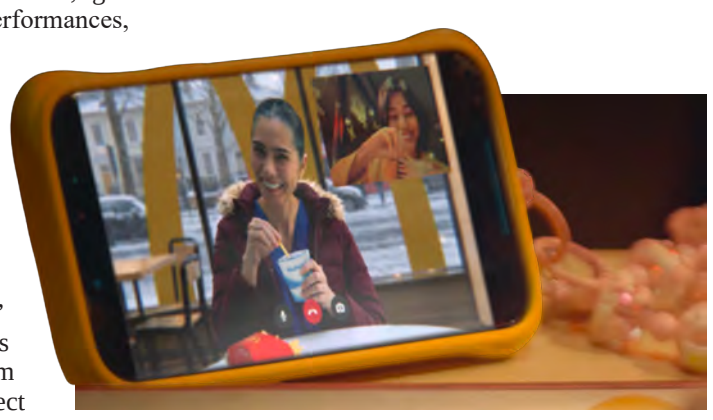
Miggy Al-Alawy, founder of HTG Sports, aims to give young Filipino athletes greater exposure and professional support through organized grassroots sporting events

Inviting Filipinos to pause and cherish the little moments of Christmas



The holiday campaign encourages Filipinos to pause from the Christmas rush and enjoy everyday moments with loved ones

CHRISTMAS in the Philippines comes with a familiar frenzy of family reunions, gift shopping, office parties, school performances, and traffic jams. But amid the glittering decorations and packed holiday schedules, McDonald's Philippines is reminding Filipinos that some of the season's most memorable moments happen in the simplest ways.



The campaign celebrates the small moments of connection that make the Christmas season meaningful

Through its latest holiday campaign, "McDo Muna," the fast-food chain encourages Filipinos to take a breather from Christmas preparations, reconnect with loved ones, and enjoy the little moments in between major celebrations.

Whether it is sharing a laugh during Christmas party rehearsals, grabbing a quick meal after shopping, or catching up with friends after an office gathering, the campaign celebrates the unexpected pauses that make the holidays meaningful.

"Christmas is filled with grand celebrations and traditions, but some of its most meaningful moments happen in the small, everyday pauses," said **Yves O. Nacpil**, marketing director of McDonald's Philippines.

He cited after-party conversations with friends, spontaneous stops during family shopping trips, and quick breaks with officemates as examples of seemingly ordinary encounters that deepen people's appreciation of the season.

"'McDo Muna' is our way of inviting Filipinos to make room for these moments and show how McDonald's can be part of the small pauses with loved ones that make the season feel special," Nacpil added.

With much of the holiday excitement revolving around preparing for Noche Buena, family reunions, and workplace celebrations, the campaign makes a case for enjoying the journey instead of waiting for the big day.

McDonald's brings this message to life through a series of heartwarming films featuring relatable Filipino experiences, capturing moments of warmth and togetherness amid the sights, sounds, and nonstop activities of the Christmas season.

The company is also preparing to introduce a special holiday menu and promotional deals, giving customers additional reasons to drop by with family and friends.

"We hope the McDo Muna invitation inspires Filipinos to appreciate the moments during this holiday season that might otherwise pass them by," Nacpil said. He added that the company is preparing experiences and offerings that encourage customers to pause, reconnect, and enjoy the festivities.

A Christmas gathering does not always require a grand occasion or an elaborate plan. Sometimes, a quick stop for a favorite McDonald's meal, a conversation over fries, or an impromptu get-together can become a holiday memory worth keeping.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026
lifeandshow.manilastandard@gmail.com
NICKIE WANG, *Editor*
ANGELICA VILLANUEVA, *Writer*
JASPER VALDEZ, *Writer*
Manila Standard



Mingyu of Seventeen wears a Calvin Klein sweatshirt and relaxed-fit jeans in a campaign image for the brand's Fall 2026 collection

Asian stars give American minimalism a fresh edge

By Nickie Wang

CALVIN Klein is giving its signature minimalism a star-powered makeover by enlisting some of Asia's biggest entertainment names to showcase its Fall 2026 collection while taking its fashion vision to the New York runway.

Leading the campaign lineup is **Mingyu** of **Seventeen**, who headlines the brand's Fall 2026 outerwear campaign across Asia. The singer pairs contemporary outerwear with relaxed denim and seasonal layers to add youthful appeal to Calvin Klein's clean-cut aesthetic.

Among the featured looks are the faux leather puffer jacket paired with '90s straight-clayton black wool jeans, the unisex sheer hooded puffer jacket styled with a garment-dye boxy crewneck and baggy tidal jeans, and the plaid padded shirt worn with '90s straight stone ocean jeans.

Thai actors **Ling Ling Kwong** and **Sea Tawinan** also join the Asian campaign.

Ling Ling wears the top-down jacket with a white baby tee and wide-leg jeans, while another look pairs the cropped denim utility jacket with the long run black woven label tank and '90s straight jean. She also wears a white cardigan over CK Black pieces, teamed with the new High Rise Flare.

Sea, meanwhile, pairs the quilted mock-neck down puffer jacket with baggy jeans, combining sculptural volume with a relaxed silhouette.

Meanwhile, Calvin Klein brought its minimalist philosophy to New York for the Spring 2027 runway show of Calvin Klein Collection, presented by Creative Director **Veronica Leoni** at Terminal Warehouse.

Leoni revisited the house's foundational wardrobe pieces, including coats, shirts, tailored trousers, pencil skirts, and slip dresses, giving them longer, narrower proportions and cinched waists.

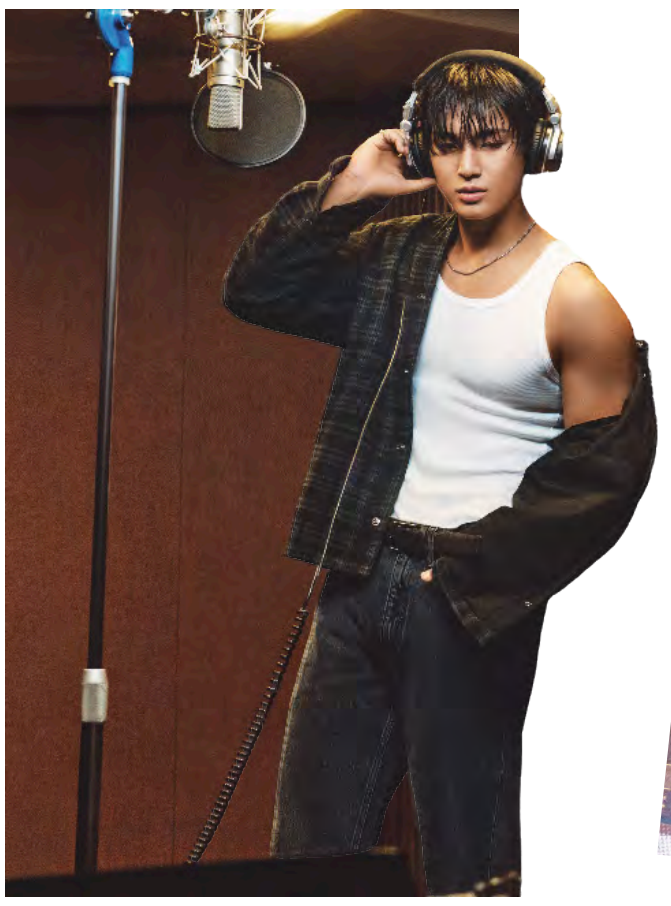
"American Minimalism was a discipline of removal: take away everything that does not carry the work until only what is necessary remains," Leoni said.

"Calvin drew from that and turned it toward the body. I turn it toward the woman inside it. My minimalism begins there, in the relation between design and a body, with nothing in between. Take everything away. What is left is desire."

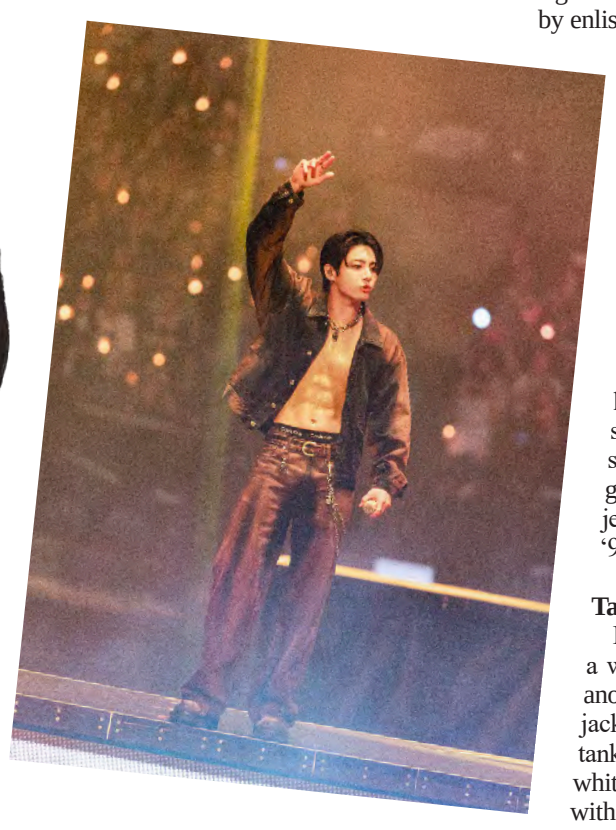
The collection featured crisp cotton and lightweight wool tailoring, silk knit tops, color-blocked baseball shirts, denim, leather, and laser-cut suede. Its palette ranged from whites and blacks to scarlet, bright yellow, royal blue, cherry, and light citron, with a check pattern inspired by American artist **Georgia O'Keeffe**'s wardrobe.

Adding another entertainment name to its roster, Calvin Klein also dressed global ambassador **Jung Kook** of **BTS** in a custom look for the group's *BTS World Tour 'ARIRANG'* performance at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles.

The singer wore a washed-denim trucker jacket and high-rise baggy jeans with hand-sprayed charcoal-to-tobacco gradient finishing.



The brand's latest collection revisits foundational wardrobe pieces with a focus on the relationship between design and the body



Calvin Klein dresses global ambassador Jungkook for BTS' 'ARIRANG' world tour in Los Angeles, California

Get ready for winter and holiday travels

And dressing for the season starts with the right layers

By Angelica Villanueva

FOR Filipinos used to sunshine and warm weather, preparing for a winter trip involves more than packing a coat. Choosing the right base layers, finding enough insulation, and keeping luggage manageable are all part of dressing for temperatures rarely experienced at home.

Uniqlo Philippines is offering a guide for travelers who need help planning their cold-weather wardrobe, with its Travel Essentials page bringing destination-specific outfit recommendations, layering advice, and product options into one online resource.

The principle begins with the base layer. Heattech is the first layer, worn under other clothes to keep the body warm. Travelers heading to colder places have two options: Extra Warm Cashmere Blend, which offers about 1.5 times the warmth of regular Heattech, and Ultra Warm, which provides about 2.25 times the warmth.

The next layer adds insulation. Fleece options include the Fleece Full-Zip Jacket, with its clean silhouette, and the Fluffy Yarn Fleece Full-Zip Jacket, which features long-pile fleece. For changeable outdoor conditions, the Windproof Fleece Full-Zip Hoodie includes a windproof film and a water-repellent finish to help protect against cold air and light rain.

An outer layer completes the combination. The Pufftech Parka uses lightweight insulation to trap air and retain warmth. Its water-repellent finish offers added protection against light rain, while its packable construction suits travelers working with limited luggage space.

The same principle applies to the lower half. Warm Lined Pants have a brushed interior, while Warm Stretch Pants combine a brushed lining with stretch. Heattech leggings or tights provide another layer when temperatures call for additional coverage.

Uniqlo's Travel Essentials page brings these choices together in an outfit-planning tool. Users enter a destination and month of travel, browse recommended pieces, and check the selected outfit's warmth level against the expected weather. The page also displays the total price and provides a link for saving the combination.

Rather than treating winter clothing as a collection of bulky garments, layering gives travelers a way to adjust their outfits to the conditions they expect to encounter.



The global apparel brand offers a Travel Essentials guide for winter travelers, featuring destination-specific outfit recommendations and layering advice



The pop-up event features a diverse lineup of brands and generate



Some featured pieces at The Closet Between Worlds pop-up event at The Art District in Escolta, Manila



The Closet Between Worlds showcases next-generation Filipino fashion designers and creative entrepreneur

Eyes On: The Closet Between Worlds pop-up in Escolta

MORE than 230 fashion enthusiasts visited The Art District in Escolta, Manila, for the first-ever *The Closet Between Worlds*, a pop-up introducing next-generation style innovators and creative entrepreneurs to the Philippine fashion scene.

Organized by De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) Fashion Design and Merchandising (FDM) Program Business Track students, the event championed Filipino craftsmanship while connecting young designers with potential customers and patrons.

The showcase featured a diverse lineup of brands, including *Akata* for ergonomic ready-to-wear, *Arìque* for minimalist womenswear, *Club Cie* for elevated essentials, *Diwa* for romantic ensembles, *Dust Bunny* for intimate outerwear, and *FlipThread* for reversible smart-casual apparel.

Other participating labels included *Isa.Yo* for adaptable Gen Z fashion, *Jazie Deshawn* for Y2K- and vintage-inspired designs, *Lilly of the Valley* for children's clothing, *Malaya* for everyday wear, *Metamorphosis* for athleisure, *Saint Leov* for contemporary menswear, and *Yugto* for outdoor streetwear. *Fluffé* presented lifestyle products for pets.

Accessories came from *Grasya*, which featured handmade macramé and beaded pieces; *Moreya*, which transformed traditional Filipino objects into bags and footwear; and *Shuthelah*, which showcased statement shoes inspired by Philippine history and architecture.

The event also featured service-based brands: *Clommu*, a clothing consignment and circular fashion workshop platform; *Leather Maven*, specializing in leather restoration; and *Realo*, which provided crochet equipment, materials, and skill-building.

Three student brands handled the event's operations: *CuHaus* for pop-up and experiential shopping arrangements, *Lilo Morii* for social media marketing, and *Untitled* for website management and digital curation.

Special awards recognized outstanding participants. **Korinne Lim** of *Lilly of the Valley* won Best in Visual Merchandising, Best in Sponsorship, and the Vaseline Special Award. She also shared the Best Brand Potential distinction with **Asher Ibana** of *Realo* and **Patricia Tionloc** of *Arìque*. **Jazie Dialani** of *Jazie Deshawn* received Best in Customer Service.

The pop-up generated P458,000 in sales from onsite purchases and orders through its official website. Top sellers included Lim, Dialani, Ibana, Trinity Gemora of *Moreya*, **Louis Nieto** of *Saint Leov*, and **Cassie Macahilig** of *Club Cie*.