



THE MARCH CONTINUES. Participants wave rainbow and Pride flags as they march during the ‘Lovelaban Pride PH Festival 2026’ at the University of the Philippines Diliman in Quezon City on Saturday, June 27, 2026. Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte joined the biggest Pride month celebration of the year, underscoring the commitment of the city to become a safe space for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Edd Castro

PBBM: Protect children from violence, negligence

‘Safety protocols must be strictly observed inside, outside schools’

By Charles Dantes

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Saturday appealed for a nationwide effort to protect Filipino children following a series of deadly and violent incidents involving students, saying schools must remain places of learning rather than fear.

In his BBM Vlog, the President cited several recent incidents that have shaken the nation, including a deadly school shooting in Tacloban City that left three people dead as well as two separate stabbing inci-

dents inside schools in Cavite that occurred within a week. “Today, I speak not only as President but also as a father, as a fellow Filipino, and as someone deeply concerned about the safety of our

children,” Mr. Marcos said in Filipino. “We must protect our youth. Protect them from violence. Protect them from negligence. Protect them from danger. And protect them from the silent struggles and burdens many of them carry,” he added. He said initial reports indicate the Cavite incidents may have been linked to bullying, although investigations are still ongoing. The President also referred to the recent deaths of two student-athletes who drowned during a team-building activity, describing the

tragedy as heartbreaking and one that sparked grief and anger among their families and the public. However, the chief executive said that protecting children cannot be the responsibility of the government alone. He called on parents to remain actively involved in their children’s lives, urged teachers to continue serving not only as educators but also as mentors, and asked schools to strictly enforce safety protocols during classes, field trips, training camps, and other school activities.

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VP defense team agrees ‘in principle’ to open sealed BIR box—Adiong

By Maricel Cruz and Charles Dantes

THE defense team of Vice President Sara Duterte has agreed “in principle” to open the sealed Bureau of Internal Revenue, likely in a separate executive session before it is unsealed and pre-marked, House prosecution panel spokesman Zia Alonto Adiong of Lanao del Sur said on Saturday. Alonto Adiong said while the defense’s decision was a welcome development, he questioned why the position surfaced only after the conclusion of the pre-trial conference, where Duterte’s legal team had opposed even the marking of the sealed box. “If this was going to be the defense’s position all along, why wait until after the pre-trial conference to say so? If they were prepared to agree in principle to the opening of the BIR box, why oppose even the simple marking of the sealed box during the hearing?” he said. Manila Standard sought confirmation from Michael Poa, spokesperson for the

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Rody’s counsel to ICC: Reject ‘late’ prosecution request

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‘White Ribbon March to remain non-political, non-partisan, peaceful’

By Rex Espiritu

TODAY’S “White Ribbon March” is expected to be peaceful, the Philippine National Police said, as organizers reminded participants to keep the event “non-political” and “non-partisan.” “The situation is expected to be peaceful. We have not monitored any security threats regarding the rally,” National Capital Region Police Office spokesperson Maj. Hazel Asilo told ABS-CBN News. In a social media post, the organizers of the movement said: “The White Ribbon March is a citizens’ movement. It does not promote, endorse, or oppose any political party, candidate, or individual.” “Participants are reminded that any act of violence, intimidation, disruption, or conduct contrary to the Constitution and the Rule of Law is strictly prohibited.”

Turn to A4

‘Pantukan shooting suspect was victim’s ex-girlfriend’

By Cherrie Anne E. Villahermosa

THE principal suspect in the Davao de Oro shooting that left a fresh college graduate wounded was his ex-girlfriend, Pantukan chief of police Maj. Irish Parangan said. Parangan told Manila Standard the suspect, identified as Roanna Taoy Colongan, 25, of Purok 5, Cadena, Barangay Tagdangua, was the mastermind of the murder attempt. Aside from Colongan, two other suspects were arrested – Franklin Taganait and Raymond Diez Garcia. “It was a personal grudge. They had a love quarrel,” he said. He said Colongan planned the attack with a fourth suspect, Alvin, who is now the subject of a manhunt operation. The 29-year-old victim had just attended his graduation rites at the Kolehiyo ng Pantukan on Thursday when the suspects opened fire.

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PANTUKAN ATTACK. Screenshots from a video posted online by Radyo Primera 103.1 FM show a gunshot victim (right) being taken to a hospital for urgent medical attention on June 25, 2026 after armed assailants fired at a minivan he was boarding following his graduation rites at the nearby Kolehiyo ng Pantukan in Davao de Oro.

Venezuela earthquakes kill nearly 1,000 as tens of thousands missing

THE death toll from twin earthquakes in Venezuela rose to 920, with tens of thousands reported missing as international rescue teams boosted a desperate and slow-moving search for survivors. Caracas residents jeered interim leader Delcy Rodriguez during her visit to a devastated neighborhood, as fury over the perceived lack of an official response mounted. United Nations aid chief Tom Fletcher told Agence France Presse that more than 50,000 people were missing after two powerful earth-

quakes struck within a minute of each other on Wednesday evening, flattening buildings in the north of the country. The coastal area of La Guaira, near the capital Caracas, was the worst hit, with one building after another crumpled by the magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 quakes. Access to the disaster zone was restricted from 8:00 pm on Friday (0000 GMT Saturday), Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello announced in a televised address.

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RACE AGAINST TIME. Venezuelan Civil Protection members and firefighters rescue 21-year-old Patrick Vargas from the rubble of a collapsed building in Catia La Mar, La Guaira, Venezuela following two powerful earthquakes earlier this week. AFP



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Three Filipino archbishops get pallium from Pope

By Vito Barcelo

THREE Filipino archbishops will receive the pallium from Pope Leo XIV during a solemn liturgy at St. Peter's Basilica on June 29, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said.

The pallium, made of white wool with six black silk crosses and secured by pins symbolizing Christ's crucifixion, is placed over the shoulders of metropolitan archbishops. It represents their pastoral responsibility and unity with the pope.

The recipients are Archbishop Alberto Uy of Cebu, Archbishop Charlie Inzon of Cotabato, and Archbishop David William Antonio of Nueva Segovia. The woolen vestment is conferred on newly appointed metropolitan archbishops as a sign of their ecclesiastical authority and communion with the pope.

Pope Leo XIV will preside over the Mass and formally bless and impose the pallia, which are traditionally worn during liturgical celebrations within an archbishop's ecclesiastical province.

Archbishop Uy, 59, was appointed to Cebu in July 2025 and installed in September. Archbishop Inzon, 60, assumed leadership of Cotabato in September 2025 and was installed in December. Archbishop Antonio, 62, was appointed to Nueva Segovia in November 2025 and installed in January 2026.

Ahead of the ceremony, Uy asked for prayers for safe travel and strength in their ministry, saying the archbishops seek to remain faithful shepherds of the Church.

Traditionally, the wool is taken from lambs blessed on the feast of St. Agnes, and the finished vestments are kept near the tomb of St. Peter before being blessed during the June 29 celebration.

The annual rite in Rome brings together newly appointed metropolitan archbishops from around the world for the conferral of one of the Church's principal symbols of pastoral office.

HONORED.

The Apostolic Catholic Church, led by Patriarch John Almario, honors outstanding personalities from the public service, interfaith, socio-civic, media, and private sectors during the Gawad San Juan Florentino 2026 at The Manila Hotel on Friday. Among the awardees are Public Attorney's Office Chief Public Attorney Dr. Persida V. Rueda-Acosta and former senator and The Manila Hotel president Joey Lina.

Norman Cruz



By Charles Dantes

PRESIDENT Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. will make an official visit to Canada from July 1 to 4 as Manila and Ottawa seek to expand cooperation in trade, defense, and regional security.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced Friday that he will host President Marcos in Vancouver, where the two leaders are expected to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations and advance negotiations on key trade agreements.

The visit comes as Canada and the Philippines deepen ties across a range of sectors, including commerce, defense, energy, critical minerals, food security, tourism, and cultural exchanges.

Carney said the leaders will explore opportunities to accel-

erate negotiations on a Canada-Philippines Free Trade Agreement and a broader Canada-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement, both targeted for completion this year during the Philippines' chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The two countries are also expected to discuss expanding cooperation on maritime security and defense, building on agreements signed over the past year that allow their armed forces to train and operate together.

“The relationship between

Canada and the Philippines is strengthened by the deep ties between our citizens,” Carney said in a statement.

“With the Filipino Canadian diaspora nearly one million strong, Canada and the Philippines are building our partnership so it is stronger and more expansive, reflecting the depth of our shared values,” he added.

Mr. Marcos' trip will be the first visit by a Philippine head of state to Canada in 11 years. He and Carney last met during the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2025.

Nearly one million Canadians are of Filipino descent, making the Filipino community one of Canada's largest and fastest-growing immigrant populations. Canada has also expanded its presence in

the Philippines by opening offices for Export Development Canada and its Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Program, reflecting Ottawa's broader engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

Bilateral merchandise trade reached \$3.4 billion in 2025, making the Philippines Canada's sixth-largest export market within ASEAN, according to the Canadian government. Defense cooperation has also advanced in recent months, with Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. becoming the first Philippine defense chief to visit Ottawa earlier this month, when the two countries signed a Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement and a Statement of Intent on Strengthening Defence Cooperation.

PROTECTORS.
President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. commends the Presidential Security Command (PSC) for its steadfast service in protecting the First Family and safeguarding the country's democratic institutions during the PSC's 128th anniversary celebration at Malacañang Park in Manila on Friday. PCO.

Marcos to visit Canada for trade, security talks

PH joins US-led AI program, backs secure supply chains

By Charles Dantes

THE Philippines has joined nearly three dozen countries in endorsing a United States-led initiative promoting artificial intelligence innovation and strengthening the security of global technology supply chains, underscoring Manila's growing role in emerging digital and semiconductor ecosystems.

The endorsement came during the 2026 Pax Silica Summit, a US-led forum on artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, and critical supply chains. The summit concluded Friday with the signing of the Joint Statement on AI Opportunity by 36 economies, including the Philippines.

The statement commits participating countries to a pro-growth and pro-innovation approach to AI regulation while strengthening supply chains that support the development of artificial intelligence technologies. The Philippines joined the United States, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and other partners in

signing the statement.

The agreement seeks to foster cooperation between governments and the private sector to support builders, startups, developers, and technology companies while ensuring the resilience of global AI supply chains.

The Philippines is also among the signatories to the broader Pax Silica Declaration, a partnership launched by the US Department of State to strengthen economic security cooperation among trusted allies and partners. The initiative focuses on critical minerals, energy inputs, advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and technology infrastructure.

Following the summit, Pax Silica expanded to 24 signatories after 10 new partners joined the declaration, with the Philippines remaining among its original members.

The US Department of State described Pax Silica as a “positive-sum partnership” designed to help participating countries remain competitive and prosperous amid growing global competition in advanced technologies.

IN BRIEF

Manila to require CCTVs in barangays

ALL chairpersons in Manila's 896 barangays will be required to install closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras to help curb crime and support the city's tourism efforts.

Speaking before the Manila City Hall Press Club on Friday, Manila First District Councilor Rosalino “Jhun” P. Ibay Jr. announced the approval of an ordinance mandating the installation of CCTV cameras in every barangay.

“Let us make Manila safe again. When a community is peaceful, more investors are encouraged to put up businesses,” said Ibay, the ordinance's principal author.

Ordinance No. 9152 requires every barangay to install at least 10 CCTV cameras annually within its jurisdiction. The Manila Police District will assist barangays in placing the cameras in strategic areas where crimes are commonly committed. **Pot Chavez**

HB: Benefits for women in informal sector

HOUSE Senior Deputy Minority Leader Leila de Lima has filed a measure seeking to amend Republic Act No. 11210 to expand maternity benefits for women workers in the informal economy.

House Bill 9904, or the “Maternity Benefit for Women in the Informal Economy Act,” seeks to provide non-members of the Social Security System (SSS) with a one-time maternity cash benefit for every delivery equivalent to 44 days of the prevailing daily minimum wage in the mother's region of residence. The measure fully adopts Senate Bill 1579 authored by Sen. Risa Hontiveros.

“This bill would further strengthen the State's constitutional mandate to protect the right to health and promote decent working conditions for all working women in the country,” De Lima said. “By providing optimal maternal healthcare in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, we are not only protecting mothers' rights but also ensuring the survival and development of Filipino children.” **Maricel V. Cruz**

Initial phase of Clean Philippines completed

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), together with national agencies, the World Bank Group, and local government units, has completed the initial phase of the Pre-Appraisal Mission for the Clean Philippines Vertical Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA).

The Clean Philippines project aims to reduce plastic waste and improve solid waste management in the National Capital Region. During the wrap-up meeting, officials highlighted the importance of close collaboration among national and local government agencies in improving waste management.

The program adopts an integrated approach to strengthen institutions, improve solid waste management services, establish centralized Materials Recovery Facilities, implement performance-based grants, and encourage greater community and stakeholder participation. **Joel E. Zurbano**

Duterte camp asks ICC to reject plea for arrest items

By Ratziel San Juan

THE legal counsel of former President Rodrigo Duterte has asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) Trial Chamber III to reject the prosecution's request for the Registry to make available items obtained during the former chief executive's arrest in the Philippines.

"The prosecution's request to inspect (redacted) is made too late. Such requests are usually made within days of the arrival of the suspect in custody, or at the earliest opportunity," read the filing by Duterte's lead counsel, Peter Haynes.

"The Prosecution had notice of the (redacted) in the Registry's possession on March 14, 2025. Ordinarily, it would be obliged to

investigate such allegedly highly relevant material by the time of the confirmation hearing. In fact, it did not even seek to take possession of the items until after the confirmation proceedings," it added.

In another response to the prosecution's second request for materials from the Registry, the defense opposed the prosecution's request for access to "all keys" in the Registry's custody as "insufficiently

reasoned... neither necessary nor proportionate, and should be rejected."

"A request by the prosecution to access materials held by the Registry must be relevant and sufficiently reasoned. Reasonable grounds must exist to believe that the proposed search is likely to yield evidence necessary to the investigation and that the measure sought is both necessary and proportionate to the pursuit of a legitimate aim," the document read.

"Conversely, the defense submits that the prosecution's request to access 'all keys in the Registry's custody' is insufficiently substantiated and should be rejected. The request is, in substance, a fishing expedition. The prosecution advances no evidential basis connecting the keys either to the

commission or furtherance of the alleged crimes or to any assets that may be relevant to the investigation," it added.

Duterte's legal team likewise asked Trial Chamber III to require that any additional prosecution requests for access to materials in the Registry's custody be submitted on or before June 30.

The ICC earlier issued rules governing the conduct of proceedings in Duterte's crimes against humanity case, with trial set to begin on Nov. 30. The rules cover the reading of charges, trial briefs, opening statements, presentation of evidence, witness examination, protective measures, closed sessions, public versions of filings, transcript redactions, and email decisions. The prosecution must submit its detailed trial brief, witness list, and evidence by Aug. 31.

CATTLE CARAVAN. A white bull pulls a cattle caravan loaded with brooms and other household items along a street in Quezon City on Saturday. Once a common sight in communities across the country, the mobile store continues to serve neighborhoods by offering affordable goods despite the rise of modern retail and online shopping. **Manny Palmero**



'Ateneo tragedy not covered by Anti-Hazing Law'

By Pot Chavez

THE tragic incident involving the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) in Dipaculao, Aurora does not fall under the Anti-Hazing Law, according to former FEU Institute of Law dean Mel Sta. Maria.

In a social media post, he said the incident may or may not constitute criminal negligence.

"In my opinion, based on the law itself, the death of the two members of the Ateneo basketball team during a training event does not fall under the Anti-Hazing Law of the

Philippines," the post read.

Sta. Maria cited the definition of hazing under the Anti-Hazing Law, as amended by Republic Act No. 11053, explaining that the beach training was not an "initiation." He also noted that the basketball team is not an "organization" under the law, adding that requiring someone to stand knee-deep in seawater does not amount to inflicting suffering, harm, or injury.

His statement came after authorities recommended filing charges for alleged violations of the Anti-Hazing Act against re-

signed Ateneo Blue Eagles men's basketball head coach Tab Baldwin and 10 others over a team-building activity in Aurora that claimed the lives of student-athletes Rene Batteredbonia and Divine Adili.

The Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group referred the recommendation to the Department of Justice, which will first evaluate the evidence before deciding whether to proceed with a preliminary investigation.

Justice spokesperson Polo Martinez said the referral covers alleged

violations of Republic Act No. 11053 and other offenses that the evidence may support, including homicide and/or reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, if appropriate. He said the DOJ would first determine whether the evidence is complete and sufficient before either ordering further case build-up with the CIDG or docketing the case for preliminary investigation. Those named in the CIDG recommendation include Baldwin, members of the Ateneo coaching staff, student managers, a physical therapist, and two utility-ball boys.

Comelec holds poll simulation in Tawi-Tawi

By Vito Barcelo

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) on Saturday conducted a simulated voting exercise at Siyola Primary School in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, as part of its preparations for the Sept. 14, 2026 Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) parliamentary elections.

The simulation began with the opening of polling precincts and the casting of test ballots, allowing election officials to assess the readiness of personnel, equipment, and election procedures ahead of the historic regional polls, according to Comelec Chairman George Garcia.

He said the exercise is designed to test the entire electoral process, including voter verification, ballot feeding, vote counting, the electronic transmission of results, and the canvassing of votes under actual polling conditions.

Election officials also evaluated the performance of Automated Counting Machines (ACMs), contingency measures, and communication systems to help identify and address potential technical or operational issues before election day.

The Sept. 14, 2026 BARMM parliamentary elections will be the first regular parliamentary polls in the Bangsamoro region, marking a major milestone in the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the region's transition to a fully elected parliamentary government.

Comelec earlier said it is fully prepared for the elections and has been conducting simulation exercises, stakeholder consultations, and technical testing in different areas to ensure a credible, orderly, and peaceful electoral process. Garcia said the results of the mock election will be used to further improve election operations and strengthen the reliability of the automated election system before Bangsamoro voters elect their representatives in September.

IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIAN skincare brand Aesop is hosting its annual worldwide Pride Month initiative, "Queer Library," in the Philippines from June 26 to June 28.

The library is located at SM Aura in Taguig, where visitors can receive a free book by an LGBTQIA+ Filipino author without making a purchase.

Carrying the theme "Body of Work," the 2026 edition of Queer Library explores the human body, self-expression, and their con-

Queer Library returns to PH with free LGBTQIA+ books

nection with society's perceptions. Aesop said queer-centered writing challenges assumptions and gives visibility to stories and bodies often subjected to prejudice.

The collection features 29 English and Filipino titles from local publishers. Featured authors include National Artist for Film and Broadcast Arts Ricky Lee, Rolando B. Tolentino, Chuckberry Pascual, and Segundo Matias Jr., among others. **Gabriel Oliva**

BOC vows stronger action on alleged Subic e-waste shipments

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) has vowed to intensify coordinated government action to address concerns over alleged electronic waste (e-waste) shipments in Subic through lawful and environmentally compliant measures.

The agency said it is working closely with relevant government agencies and environmental stakeholders to ensure all actions comply with existing laws and regulations while clarifying institutional roles as judicial

proceedings continue.

Customs Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno said the bureau continues to pursue appropriate legal remedies through the Office of the Solicitor General, noting that details of the case remain limited because it is sub judice.

Nepomuceno said the agency is focused on strengthening coordination and ensuring all concerned parties operate within a unified legal and regulatory framework while the case is being resolved. **Vito Barcelo**

Dy urges ISU law graduates to uphold principles, serve others

SPEAKER Faustino Dy III urged law graduates to uphold their principles and place service to others above personal success, saying the legal profession fulfills its highest purpose when it advances justice and improves people's lives.

In a video message played Friday during the graduation rites of the Isabela State University College of Law Class of 2026, Dy said success in the legal profession is measured not by personal achievement but by a commitment to

serving others. He urged graduates to remain steadfast in principle even when tempted to take the easy way out and to remember that the profession's highest purpose is service to others.

The House leader also called on the graduates to remain faithful to the truth even when doing so is difficult. He said their graduation marks not the end of a journey but the beginning of a greater calling. **Maricel V. Cruz**



WELLNESS KEYNOTE. Akbayan Rep. and human rights lawyer Chel Diokno delivers the keynote address at the BPI MS Insurance Freelancer Wellness Summit in Makati City on Saturday, sharing insights on leadership, advocacy, and purpose-driven careers before joining company officials and employees for a ceremonial photo. **Manny Palmero**

Lebanon, Israel, US sign trilateral framework pact

LEBANON, Israel and the United States on Friday (Saturday, Manila time) signed a trilateral framework agreement aimed at paving the way for a peace deal between the two long-time Middle East adversaries.

The agreement – which includes a pilot effort in which Lebanese soldiers take control of two areas occupied by Israel, as well as a process aimed at disarming Hezbollah – is the result of five rounds of talks in the US capital. The deal “begins to put in place a framework for lasting peace and security,” US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said at the signing ceremony, noting: “It’s the beginning of the beginning. There’s a lot of work ahead.” Lebanon’s ambassador to Washington, Nada Hamadeh Moawad, said the accord “is a first step on the road to restoring Lebanese sovereignty

and territorial integrity, securing a permanent and final cessation of hostilities (and) enabling our people to go back to their land.” And Israel’s US envoy, Yechiel Leiter, said that under the deal, “Iran is out, Hezbollah is out, and the road to peace between Israel and Lebanon is in.” Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the broader Middle East war on March 2 with rocket fire aimed at Israel to avenge the killing of Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in US-Israeli strikes. Israel responded with heavy airstrikes and a ground invasion, and its troops

continue to occupy swaths of southern Lebanon, where they have been carrying out extensive demolition of homes and other buildings. According to the agreement, whose text was released late Friday by the State Department, Israel and Lebanon “declare their intent to conclusively end the conflict, address its underlying causes, and to therewith formally conclude any state of war between them.” It also establishes a process by which the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) would restore “sovereign authority over all Lebanese territory,” pending the “verified disarmament of non-state armed groups,” particularly Hezbollah. That in turn would allow the Israeli Defense Forces to “progressively redeploy out of the Lebanese territory,” the agreement states. Despite the deal, Israel and its bitter enemy Hezbollah – which is part of the Lebanese government but also

maintains a powerful armed wing outside state control – made clear that major differences remain. Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem said earlier Friday that Israel has “no option but to withdraw completely from every inch of our Lebanese land,” and that its forces “must leave unconditionally.” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu however said in a pre-recorded video shared with Israeli media shortly after the framework agreement was announced that Israel has no plans to exit Lebanon until Hezbollah gives up its weapons.

Iran is out, Hezbollah is out, and the road to peace between Israel and Lebanon is in.

– Israel’s US envoy
Yechiel Leiter

Prior to the release of the text, Netanyahu said his country’s military would allow the Lebanese army to take control of territory in “two pilot areas” – one south of Lebanon’s Litani River and another north of it. According to the text, “the LAF will assume full and effective security responsibility in these zones, internationally supported reconstruction efforts will begin, and Lebanese civilians will be able to safely return to these areas.” Rubio meanwhile said in a statement that the agreement establishes a “clear and structured process” to disarm Hezbollah and its infrastructure, as well as a US-facilitated military working group to help implement the deal. Washington’s top diplomat also said the United States would commit \$100 million in humanitarian assistance in coordination with the United Nations, and would reimburse Lebanon’s army for \$30 million as it seeks to “improve the capability and capacity” of those forces. The United Nations chief of humanitarian affairs, Tom Fletcher, hailed the agreement and called the signing in Washington “a moment of hope and opportunity.” **AFP**



PROTEST. Hezbollah supporters block the old airport road in the southern suburbs of Beirut, with burning tires to protest against the trilateral agreement that was signed between the US, Israel and Lebanon on Saturday, June 27, 2026. **AFP**

Should we fear an AI bubble bust?

RECENT swings in tech stocks are reviving fears of an AI bubble – and some experts warn that if it pops, the fallout could be bigger than anything Wall Street has ever seen. “There are many indications that we are in a bubble,” said Itay Goldstein, a finance professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. “It seems likely that there is overpricing,” he added. The numbers back him up. The five biggest companies on Wall Street – all tech giants – are worth a combined \$18 trillion, almost the size of China’s entire economy. Big tech has been pouring money into AI and now investors are getting nervous: will any of it actually pay off? Six months ago, these same companies were buying back their own shares – a move that signals excess cash and drives up the stock price. Now they’re taking on debt to fund their AI buildup in a significant reversal. “The amount of debt that’s being taken on is still relatively modest,” said Brent Fredberg, director of investments at Brandes Investment Partners. But a rise in interest rates – recently

floated by the US Federal Reserve – could make that borrowing a lot more painful. Fresh off its blockbuster IPO, space and AI giant SpaceX announced this week it plans to issue \$25 billion in bonds, raising new doubts about its financial health. The news sent its share price lower. Analysts also warn of “circular financing” – where big tech companies invest in AI startups, which then use that money to buy big tech’s own products and services. “This can lead to problems down the road,” Fredberg said, calling out a potential house of cards. Tech stocks took a beating this week, reigniting old fears about an AI meltdown. But not everyone is sounding the alarm. Some say the recent selloff is just a breather after a long run-up and not the start of a real crash. “The recent volatility reflects a valuation test, profit-taking and flow-driven positioning amid higher rates – not a fundamental break,” wrote Christian Stocker, a director at UniCredit, in a recent note. **AFP**

Swiss glaciers facing drastic loss from heatwave – expert

SWISS glaciers are set to lose an enormous amount of ice due to the heatwave battering Europe, the head of Glacier Monitoring in Switzerland (GLAMOS) told Agence France Presse. The snow and ice accumulated last winter by Switzerland’s glaciers is expected to have all melted away by Monday, marking the alarming second-earliest arrival on record of the tipping point known as glacier loss day. All further melting between now and October will see the size of glaciers in the Swiss Alps shrink. In data going back to 2000, the only time that the tipping point arrived even earlier was in 2022, when it came on June 26. The grim scenario is driven by the current heatwave, as well as the one in May – both coming on the back of

another winter with poor snowfall. “We’re just seeing enormous ablation, ice melt rates and snow melt rates all over the Alps,” GLAMOS network chief Matthias Huss told AFP on Friday, as multiple Swiss weather stations registered new all-time records. “We are three months too early compared to a healthy state.” This century, the tipping point, on average, has been reached in mid-August – itself already bad news for the nation’s glaciers, which are shrinking at a staggering rate. Much of the water that flows into the Rhine and the Rhone, two of Europe’s major rivers, comes from the Alpine glaciers. Huss said he had just returned from the Rhone Glacier, and in the 10 days since his previous visit, “there was one

meter of ice melted in the vertical direction – one meter of melting within just the last 10 days”. “It’s very impressive to see, and this is just the effect of the heatwave.” But, said Huss, “one heatwave alone is not a big problem for glaciers.” “The problem is rather that we have very high temperatures that last for a very long time. “The more days that are added that are very high temperatures, not even mattering whether it’s 35C or 40C, this is just very bad for the glaciers.” Huss said the “very bad state of the glaciers at the moment” was down to a “combination of bad circumstances”, including less snowfall, and the arrival of dust from the Sahara Desert in March. **AFP**

Pantukan....

From A1

The victim has since recovered from his wounds and has positively identi-

fied the gunman through a police lineup. For his part, PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio C. Nartatez Jr. commended the police for their prompt and coordinated response while assur-

ing the public that the remaining suspect will be relentlessly pursued. “We will not stop until we hold accountable all those who are involved in this crime,” Nartatez said.

PBBM....

From A1

The President also emphasized the need to restore values that promote respect for life, good conduct, and responsible behavior among young people. “The true strength of our nation depends on the safety, welfare, and dreams of the next generation,” Mr. Marcos said. Earlier, Interior Secretary Jonvic

Remulla pushed for amendments to Republic Act No. 9344 or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, saying the law should place greater emphasis on an offender’s intent and level of discernment rather than age alone. Malacañang and the Philippine National Police earlier backed calls to amend the law and lower the age of criminal liability from 15 to 12 years old. Remulla likewise called for a more comprehensive law that would hold negligent firearm owners criminally

liable when their registered weapons are used in crimes. The PNP said it will also conduct a comprehensive review of firearms regulations after investigators discovered a possible serial number cloning of one of the guns used in the recent school shooting in Tacloban City. Two ninth graders – alias Nash, 14, and alias Rod, 15, opened fire inside the San Jose National High School in Tacloban City, killing three students and wounding 20 others on Monday, June 22.

White....

From A1

The PNP will deploy 9,553 personnel across Metro Manila for the White Ribbon March which will begin with a Holy Mass at EDSA Shrine at 12 noon, followed by a march toward the People Power Monument where a program will run until 5 p.m. Organizers said they are expecting around 10,000 participants to join the event. In an interview with dzBB, White Rib-

bon March convenor Bishop Efraim Tendaro said the rally aims to renew the call on all Filipinos to unite against corruption. “Our call is for the Ombudsman, who really has the power to investigate, (to have) no discrimination (in investigating), and I hope the Senate and Congress will unite,” Tendaro said. Taumbayan Ayaw sa Magnanakaw at Abusado Network Alliance (Tama Na) convenor David San Juan said the protest is open to everyone and will assert the advocacy against political dynasties and corruption.

Venezuela....

From A1

A rescue team from Chile arrived at one residential complex in La Guaira made up of four tall buildings housing hundreds of apartments that had largely been reduced to rubble. “Unfortunately, the collapse is total, and there is little chance of finding survivors. Efforts are now focused on recovering the bodies of the deceased,” team leader Nadiomar Polanco said at

the site, which resembles many others in the city. Elsewhere, family members, neighbors and volunteers used their bare hands to try to dig out survivors, bemoaning the lack of heavy machinery or official help to save those trapped alive. “I am looking for my little Gael... he was only five months old,” said an anguished Marjosly Salazar, 40, whose 16-year-old daughter died in the quake. The baby and Salazar’s cousin are both missing. **AFP**

VP....

From A1

Vice President’s defense team, as to the details disclosed by Alonto Adiong, but has yet to receive a comment as of press time. Poa earlier confirmed the defense has filed its comment electronically by the end of office hours Friday, but did not give details. “The Defense confirms that we have filed our Comment to the Prosecution’s Manifestation/Motion before the Impeachment Court. In keeping with the

Senate Rules on Impeachment, we will refrain from discussing the merits of our filing in public,” Poa said in a statement Friday. Alonto Adiong said the defense’s recent pleading confirms the dispute has moved away from whether the BIR box should be opened and now centers only on how the process should be conducted. “For us, the question is straightforward. Is another executive session necessary simply to unseal and pre-mark the box, or will it add another procedural step before the pre-trial order can be issued and the trial can formally begin?

That is now for the Impeachment Court to determine.” “Opening and pre-marking documents do not automatically make them evidence. Those issues will still be decided by the Impeachment Court during the trial. Our concern has always been moving the process forward efficiently while fully respecting due process,” Alonto Adiong added. Senate Secretary and impeachment Clerk of Court Renato Bantug on Friday said unsealing the BIR box has been deferred to allow the defense time to file its comment.



Bohol’s purple gold seeks global protection

AS THE world develops an appetite for all things ube - from ice cream and pastries to lattes and specialty desserts - the Philippines is moving to secure its claim over one of its most prized agricultural products: the Bohol Ubi Kinampay.

The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) recently welcomed the application for geographical indication (GI) registration of the famed purple yam, a move that could elevate the crop from a local delicacy into a globally recognized premium agricultural brand.

Filed by the Provincial Government of Bohol through the Bohol Economic Development and Investment Promotion Office (BEDIPO), the application seeks legal recognition of the unique qualities and

reputation of the Bohol Ubi Kinampay, whose distinct characteristics are shaped by the province’s soil, climate and traditional farming methods.

For IPOPHL, the application is a strategic opportunity to capture greater value from the rapidly expanding global market for ube products.

“The world is now in the middle of a ‘purple gold rush,’ and GI protection can help the Philippines stake its claim in the growing global demand by strengthening its market identity and position,” IPOPHL director general Teodoro C. Pascua said.

Known for its naturally vibrant violet flesh, earthy aroma and rich flavor, Bohol Ubi Kinampay has long been regarded as the “queen of Philippine yams.” Its popularity has surged in recent years as purple yam emerged as an international

food trend, particularly in North America and other markets with large Filipino communities.

The growing demand has opened opportunities for farmers and food processors but has also increased the risk of imitation and false origin claims.

A geographical indication registration would provide legal protection against unauthorized use of the name “Bohol Ubi Kinampay,” ensuring that only products originating from the province and meeting established standards can carry the designation.

“As ube becomes more global, we must make sure the roots of Philippine varieties are not lost. GI protection helps ensure that the true heart of the Bohol Ubi Kinampay - its soil, story, and people - remain Boholano and Filipino,” Pascua said.

Coconut oil manufacturer expands premium products

FOR more than five decades, family-owned Tropicana Food Products Inc. has quietly built a global business around one of the Philippines’ most abundant agricultural resources—the coconut, transforming itself from a traditional oil mill into one of the country’s pioneers in value-added coconut products.

Founded in 1975 by Sing Tiu and his two sisters, the family enterprise began as a traditional coconut oil mill before moving into higher-value processing and product development that would later position it in export markets across North America, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

The Tiu family is among the long-established business families in the Philippines, with ties across the agribusiness sector, including a familial connection to Agriculture secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. through first-cousin relations. For Tropicana, however, the focus remains firmly on building its own niche in the global coconut value chain.

“We started as an oil mill company and then afterwards transitioned into more high-value coconut products such as coconut cream powder,” said Sterling Alvin Tiu, chief executive officer of Tropicana Food Products and second-generation leader of the business.

Pioneer in VCO

A major turning point came in 1985 when the company entered virgin coconut oil (VCO) production, helping shape what would become a fast-growing segment of the Philippine coconut industry.

“Since then, we have diversified into premium coconut products, such as virgin coconut oil, starting in 1985,” Tiu said. “We are the pioneers in the production of virgin coconut oil in the Philippines.”

Today, Tropicana is a major supplier of virgin coconut oil used by multiple brands in the domestic market, while also developing its own consumer lines.

Under its Coconut King and Nature’s Gift brands, Tropicana produces a wide range of coconut-based products, including extra virgin coconut oil, organic coconut cooking oil, and organic MCT oil, alongside personal care and wellness products.

The company has positioned itself in the premium segment through multiple international certifications.

“We are the first and only USDA Organic, EU Organic and JAS Organic-certified coconut cooking oil in Philippine supermarkets. Our MCT oil is the only organic-certified MCT oil in the Philippines,” Tiu said.

MCT oil, derived from coconut oil, is marketed as a functional food product that is rapidly converted into energy by the body.

“MCT means medium-chain triglyceride. It is more easily digestible by the body and gets converted into energy

quickly,” Tiu explained. “It serves as an alternative source of fuel for the brain.”

Tropicana’s products are exported to the United States, Canada, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and South Korea, with additional reach in Australia and Europe. It is the only Philippine brand offered on Alibaba in China. The company said its products meet stringent international standards demanded by premium markets.

Sourcing from farmers

Despite its scale in processing, Tropicana does not own coconut plantations.

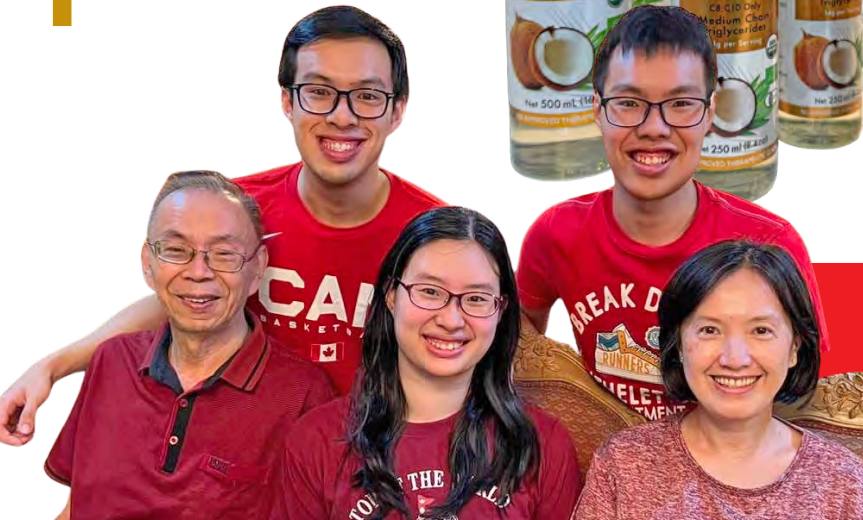
“A common misconception is that we own lots of coconut trees or farmland, but that’s not true. We don’t have our own farm or land. We rely on farmers’ produce that comes all the way from Quezon and Bicol through consolidators,” Tiu said.

The company’s integrated plant in San Pablo City facility spans around eight to nine hectares and houses multiple production lines for food,



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Tropicana founder Sing Tiu (bottom left) and company chief executive officer Sterling Tiu (upper left) with the rest of the Tiu family.

BUSINESS

wellness, and personal care products.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, exports accounted for the bulk of the company’s revenue base. However, global logistics disruptions prompted a strategic pivot toward the domestic market. Tropicana has since strengthened distribution of its retail brands in selected supermarkets and online platforms, although it has remained selective about large retail chains due to high listing fees.

Expanding into wellness

More than a decade ago, the company expanded into coconut-based personal care and wellness products under the Nature’s Gift brand.

The line features lotions, handmade pure virgin coconut oil (VCO) soap, VCO and kojic acid soap, mouth fresheners, and lip and skin balms, all made from cold-pressed coconut oil. Fragrance-free, eco-friendly, and cruelty-free, the products underscore the company’s commitment to natural and sustainable personal care solutions.

Tropicana is banking on its pioneering position in the virgin coconut oil industry and its expanding portfolio of premium, value-added products to drive long-term growth and strengthen its presence in both domestic and international markets. **Othel V. Campos**

PLDT Global eyes rising demand from GCCs, IT-BPM firms

PLDT Global Corp. is stepping up its support for the Philippines’ fast-growing global capability center (GCC) and information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) sectors as demand for secure and scalable digital infrastructure continues to rise.

The international arm of the PLDT Group said multinational companies expanding in the Philippines and local firms moving into higher-value services are driving demand for high-capacity connectivity, secure data environments, and digital platforms that can support global operations.

“The continued growth of GCCs and the IT-BPM sector reflects how critical strong, future-ready digital infrastructure has become,” said PLDT Global president and CEO Albert V. Villa-Real.

“As enterprises expand globally and embrace more sophisticated digital operations, they need resilient and scalable networks they can rely on. Our role is to provide that foundation—enabling businesses to operate seamlessly across borders and scale with confidence,” he added.

Working with PLDT Enterprise, Smart Communications Inc., VITRO, and ePLDT, PLDT Global offers end-to-end digital solutions that support companies from market entry to regional and global expansion.

The company highlighted its participation in industry events such as CXAP Contact Islands 2026 and the GC3 PHx Philippine Summit, where stakeholders underscored the need for resilient and scalable infrastructure to support enterprise growth and strengthen the country’s position as a destination for GCC and IT-BPM investments.

PLDT Global said GCCs in the Philippines are increasingly evolving into innovation-driven hubs that require high-performance infrastructure for real-time collaboration, data security, and operational resilience.

The PLDT Group’s investments in international connectivity, global points of presence, and hyperscale-ready data centers are helping enterprises integrate their Philippine operations into global networks.



PLDT Global president and CEO Albert V. Villa-Real

Likhang Filipino brings Philippine craftsmanship to Fifth Avenue

PHILIPPINE furniture and home decor brands are strengthening their foothold in the US market through the Likhang Filipino exhibition at the

Philippine Center on Fifth Avenue in New York City, where a curated collection of locally made products is on display until Sept. 30, 2026.

Mounted by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), the showcase features furniture, lighting, and decor from 11 Philippine manufacturers and exporters, presenting contemporary Filipino craftsmanship through a blend of elegant, rustic and modern designs.

Since opening on May 4, the exhibition has drawn hundreds of visitors from the design, architecture, and trade communities, providing Philippine brands with a platform to connect with buyers, build partnerships, and raise their international profile.

“Bringing Likhang Filipino to New York is a strategic move to establish our foothold in the

US market, complementing our participation in the world’s largest home furnishings trade show, the High Point Market in North Carolina,” CITEM executive director Leah Pulido-Ocampo said.

The initiative has also opened opportunities for collaboration between Philippine manufacturers and the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA), further expanding the industry’s global network.

Following the current exhibit, CITEM will launch a Christmas holiday edition of Likhang Filipino in October as part of its plan to bring more Philippine design showcases to international markets.

The Likhang Filipino Exhibition Halls, an Office of the President project managed and operated by CITEM, highlight the Philippines’ growing reputation as a source of finely crafted, design-driven, and globally competitive products.



How a young 'probinsiyaano' became 'El Presidente' of PH basketball

By Red Caluag

A YOUNG boy from Maasin, Southern Leyte, once picked up a basketball with nothing but a dream. More than five decades later, Ramon Fernandez stood among the immortals of Philippine sports.

The four-time Philippine Basketball Association Most Valuable Player and record 19-time champion was formally inducted into the 2026 Philippine Sports Hall of Fame, an honor he described as the pinnacle of a lifetime devoted to basketball.

"To be enshrined in the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame is something I never imagined when I first picked up a basketball as a young boy from Maasin, Southern Leyte, carrying nothing more than a dream and a love for the game," Fernandez said.

"For any athlete, this is the summit. To stand here tonight among the greatest names in Philippine sports is both humbling and deeply meaningful."

For millions of Filipino basketball fans, Fernandez hardly needs an introduction.

Known by generations as "The Franchise," "El Presidente," and "Don Ramon," he built a career unmatched in Philippine basketball history.

The University of San Carlos standout began his senior career with the San Miguel Braves in the MCAA in 1972 before embarking on an extraordinary two-decade journey in the PBA. Wearing the iconic Nos. 10 and 19, Fernandez suited up for Toyota, Manila Beer, Tanduay, Purefoods



Ramon Fernandez (center), known to generations of Filipino basketball fans as 'The Franchise,' 'El Presidente,' and 'Don Ramon,' built one of the most illustrious careers in Philippine basketball history. The newly inducted Philippine Sports Hall of Famer is joined by his wife, Karla Kintanar-Fernandez. **Photos from PSC**

and San Miguel Beer, collecting a record 19 championships, four MVP awards and countless individual honors that cemented his place among the league's all-time greats.

Yet as he accepted his Hall of Fame plaque, Fernandez made it clear that the recognition was never about statistics.

"This recognition is not simply about championships, trophies, records, or awards," he said. "It is a reminder that the years of hard work, sacrifice, discipline, perseverance, and service to the game truly mattered."

The journey, he emphasized, was never his alone. "No athlete reaches this stage alone," Fernandez said. "I share this honor with the coaches who guided me, the teammates who battled beside me, the opponents who challenged me, the fans who supported me, and the many friends and family members who stood by me throughout my journey."

His deepest gratitude, however, was reserved for his wife, Karla.

"Most especially, I dedicate this recognition to my wife, Karla, my number one supporter, who is here with me tonight. Thank you for your unwavering love, encouragement and faith in me." Whatever legacy he leaves behind, Fernandez said, has become richer because they shared the journey together.

Retirement from basketball never meant stepping away from sports.

When he was appointed commissioner of the Philippine Sports Commission from 2016 to 2022, Fernandez found another way to serve the athletes he once represented on the court. Working alongside then PSC chairman William

Ramirez, he championed grassroots sports development, athlete welfare, and programs that helped nurture the next generation of champions.

His advocacy extended beyond basketball, supporting athletes from emerging sports who would later achieve international success, including Olympic skateboarder Margielyn Didal and world champion karatekas Junna Tsukii and Jamie Lim.

To young athletes chasing their own dreams, Fernandez offered a lesson forged through decades of excellence.

"Talent may open the door. But character, discipline, humility and consistency will determine how far you go. Respect the game. Respect the people who help you. Never stop learning and never take shortcuts."

"Excellence is not built in one great performance. It is built in the choices you make every single day."

Then came the words that best summed up his remarkable journey.

"If my story proves anything," he said, "it is that a young probinsiyaano can dream big, work hard, honor God, stay the course, and make it."

For Ramon Fernandez, the boy who once dreamed with a basketball in his hands, the Hall of Fame is more than a fitting ending to an extraordinary career.

Dumapong's Hall of Fame honor lifts PH para sports

By Alona Cochon

THERE was a time when Adeline Dumapong walked out of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) in tears.

She had sought support as a national athlete, only to be told that assistance for someone like her should come not from the country's highest sports body, but from the Department of Social Welfare. The words cut deeply, leaving a wound that stayed with her long after she left the building.

Years later, she returned—not to ask for help, but to receive one of Philippine sports' highest honors.

Standing before sports leaders, fellow athletes, family, and friends during the 2026 Philippine Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony, Dumapong reflected on that painful chapter with grace and quiet strength.

"Many years ago, I left the PSC lobby in tears after being told that I should not be asking support from the Sports Commission and that I should instead seek assistance from the Department of Social Welfare," she recalled.

"The wound cut deep, but tonight, standing before you as a Hall of Fame inductee, I am reminded that progress is possible. The very institution that once made me feel unseen is now honoring me with one of its highest recognitions."

The moment represented more than redemption.

It celebrated a career that transformed Philippine para sports.

A pioneering powerlifter, Dumapong etched her name in history when she captured the bronze medal in the women's up to 44-kilogram division at the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games, becoming the first Filipino athlete to win a Paralympic medal. Her achievement remains one of the defining moments in Philippine sports history and paved the way for future generations of Filipino para-athletes.

Her success was no one-time feat.

Dumapong represented the Philippines in four Paralympic Games—Sydney in 2000, Athens in 2004, Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012—competing against the world's best despite limited resources and opportunities

during much of her career.

She also became one of the country's most decorated para-athletes in international competition, winning medals in the Asian Para Games, ASEAN Para Games, Far East and South



Adeline Dumapong is the first para-athlete ever inducted into the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame.

Pacific Games for the Disabled (FESPIC Games) and numerous international powerlifting championships. Throughout her career, she consistently proved that Filipino athletes with disabilities could excel on the world stage.

Now, another barrier has fallen.

Dumapong became the first para-athlete ever inducted into the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame, a distinction she considers not merely a personal achievement but a landmark victory for the entire Paralympic movement.

"I am proud to be the first para-athlete to receive this distinction, and that makes this recognition especially meaningful to me," she said.

"More than a personal milestone, I see it as a sign of progress for the Paralympic movement in the Philippines—an acknowledgment that para sports belongs in spaces such as this and deserves recognition alongside the nation's greatest sporting achievements."

For Dumapong, the recognition carries the weight of decades of struggle—not only her own but also those of athletes with disabilities who competed long before para sports received national attention.

Growing up in an institution for children with disabilities, she witnessed firsthand the sacrifices made by pioneers whose names were never recorded in history books.

"Tonight, I remember the pioneers and advocates who came before me, whose names were never recorded and may have already been forgotten," she said. "Their sacrifices helped build the foundation upon which para-athletes like me were able to stand. Para sa inyo din po ito."

10K runners celebrate inclusion at Pride Run Manila

MORE than 10,000 runners painted the SM Mall of Asia Complex with color, energy and pride as the Pride Run 2026 Manila staged its biggest edition yet, celebrating inclusivity, equality and diversity through sport.

The country's premier LGBTQIA+ running event drew participants from all walks of life, reaffirming its growing status as one of the nation's most meaningful road races.

"We're happy to continue being allies of the LGBTQIA+ community, and you can see it with the strong turnout that we've had for this year," said RUNRIO president Rio de la Cruz.

As part of its continued commitment to the community, RUNRIO donated P500,000 to advocacy partner PANTAY, supporting the organization's initiatives to promote equal access to sexual healthcare, strengthen HIV awareness, and champion a more inclusive society.

On the course, Jonathan Caraang emerged as one of the day's standout performers after ruling the 16-kilometer non-binary division with a winning time of 1 hour, 12 minutes and 46 seconds. Prince March Son Petalana settled for second in 1:18:26, while Jay-r Cuevas completed the podium in 1:18:29.

In the traditional 16K divisions, Mark Anthony Oximar captured the men's title after clocking 57:44, narrowly edging Neil Maramba (57:46), with Aldrin Serrano finishing third in 1:03:41.

Jeziel Roque dominated the women's race in 1:28:36, holding off Danella Bianca Bona (1:28:51) and Sandra Bunda (1:30:47).

The 10K non-binary division belonged to Jesmar Ignacio, who crossed the finish line in 43:02, comfortably ahead of Martin Felisilda (48:02) and Blair Divina (49:10).

Renz Mirasol ruled the men's 10K in 35:09, followed by Jay Fernandez (36:25) and Caesar Benson (38:53), while Melody Lantad topped the women's field in 46:27, finishing ahead of Jodee Guinever Gilfole (49:02) and Sophia Vasquez (51:43).

John Christopher Agra claimed the non-binary 5K crown in 21:15, with Wilmar Pajanustan (23:29) and Carlo Cabanlit (27:23) placing second and third, respectively.

King Agas sprinted to victory in the men's 5K in 16:34, just two seconds ahead of Mark Angelo Biagtan (16:36), while Peter Glenn Rapiz placed third in 18:43.



It was a show of force by members and supporters of LGBTQIA+ during the Manila Pride Run 2026.

Animals, not just humans, get aid after earthquake in Mindanao

COINS.PH partnered with Angat Pinas, Inc. to provide earthquake relief for humans and animals in Mindanao.

Digital wallet and cryptocurrency platform Coins.ph has deployed a 3 million donation to Angat Pinas, Inc. to sustain critical, localized relief operations in southern Mindanao following the powerful magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck the region on June 8.

While traditional emergency distributions focus heavily on human infrastructure, this collaborative initiative consciously includes provisions for affected animals, ensuring a comprehensive recovery framework for stricken communities.

Overcoming Logistical Bottlenecks in Sarangani

The decision by Coins.ph to route its disaster relief funding through Angat Pinas, Inc. stems from the non-government organization's (NGO) capability to navigate severe logistical bottlenecks to access isolated areas. Among the municipalities in Sarangani, the coastal town of Glan was one of the worst-hit areas.

Unlike the urban infrastructure damage seen in nearby General Santos City, Glan suffered a devastating mountain landslide triggered by the initial tremor. Reports indicate that at least 18 people were killed in Glan alone when soil and debris buried residential areas at the foot of the mountain. The municipality continues to deal with severe ground fissures, widespread road damage, and a highly unstable terrain exacerbated by persistent aftershocks—including a powerful magnitude 5.5 aftershock that jolted the area late Monday night, triggering further ground instability.

Furthermore, the disaster caused the collapse of key bridge infrastructure connecting Glan to main logistics routes, entirely cutting off land access. Operating from their station in GenSan, the Angat Pinas, Inc. team underwent a grueling transit route to deliver aid under the threat of active tremors—driving over an hour to the nearest operational port before enduring a two-hour boat ride across rough waters to reach the isolated coastal communities of Glan.

Sustainable Water Solutions and Animal Welfare

Beyond geographical isolation, Glan is facing a critical, compounding water shortage. The magnitude 7.8 earthquake severely fractured main municipal water pipelines and triggered widespread power outages, completely knocking local water systems offline. Because commercial bottled water inventories were entirely exhausted even in neighboring GenSan, traditional relief pipelines immediately collapsed under the weight of a broken supply chain.

To resolve this shortage systematically, Angat Pinas, Inc. utilized the Coins.ph funding to transport industrial water filtration systems directly to Glan via their maritime route. By deploying these filtration units on-site, the team can sustainably process and purify local water sources, establishing a continuous, self-sufficient supply of clean drinking water for both the displaced residents and their animals.

The active pipeline directly addresses the expanding crisis inside crowded municipal evacuation centers, where hundreds of displaced families were sheltered in tents.

In the wake of the disaster, local response teams reportedly observed disoriented pets wandering through the mountain landslide debris in search of their families, while other animals were successfully extricated after being trapped under collapsed walls.

Addressing Critical Provisions Within Evacuation Camps

As these displaced families fill evacuation spaces, many pet owners have chosen to pri-



Displaced dogs from GenSan, Kiamba, Malungon, and other parts of Sarangani find safety at a temporary evacuation center following the recent magnitude 7.8 earthquake.



A rescued dog with facial injuries.

oritize the safety of their animals over personal property, bringing their dogs and cats into the temporary camps. This rapid crowding has created an urgent need for dedicated animal provisions.

To expand the reach of their interventions and safely manage the influx of displaced pets, Angat Pinas, Inc. has partnered with A Heart for Paws, a local animal welfare organization based in GenSan. This collaboration ensures that rescued, injured, or separated dogs and cats receive specialized care, shelter management, and veterinary oversight.

The Coins.ph funding directly backs this collaborative framework by delivering emergency pet food to evacuation centers and supporting local shelter operations, ensuring that companion animals are sustained alongside the communities sheltering within the camps.

"As communities recover, we must also remember the dogs and cats affected alongside them," said Portia Carlos, government relations head at Coins.ph. "Their needs are often overlooked in times of crisis, and we hope to help ensure they are not forgotten."

"We thank Coins.ph for their generosity and trust," said Raffy Magno, executive director of Angat Pinas, Inc. "Partnerships like this strengthen our shared commitment to ensuring that no community is left behind in times of crisis."

The emergency distribution pipeline remains active alongside local responders, community volunteers, and animal welfare advocates in Sarangani. Coins.ph urges its users and the broader corporate sector to support holistic relief mobilization that considers the interconnectedness of human and community welfare during natural calamities.



Volunteers prepare commercial pet food inside a temporary evacuation shelter.



Representatives from Angat Pinas, Inc. and local animal welfare group A Heart for Paws stand alongside columns of commercial dog and cat food purchased through a donation from digital wallet platform Coins.ph to aid earthquake-stricken communities.

The Impact of Relocation on Your Dog

Last of two parts

By Mariana Burgos

A Proactive Approach

Mitigating the negative impacts of relocation requires proactive planning and preparation. This includes:

- Creating a Disaster Plan:** As the article by ABS-CBN emphasizes, a comprehensive disaster plan is crucial. This plan should include identifying pet-friendly accommodations, preparing a go-bag with essential supplies, and establishing a communication plan.
- Training and Socialization:** Well-trained, socialized dogs handle relocation stress better. Training aids adaptation and obedience. Socialization reduces anxiety by exposing them to various people, animals, and situations.
- Desensitization:** Desensitization, gradually exposing dogs to stressors like car rides or noises, builds resilience. This process reduces anxiety, making relocation less traumatic.

- Building a Go-Bag:** A pet go-bag must contain essential items: food, water, meds, leash, collar, ID, records, and comfort items like a toy or blanket.
- Familiarizing with the New Environment:** Introduce your dog to the new environment beforehand. This helps them acclimatize and reduces their anxiety levels.
- Seeking Professional Support**
 - It is important to recognize that relocation can be a traumatic experience for dogs. If your dog is exhibiting signs of severe distress, seeking professional help is crucial.
 - Veterinary Care:** Veterinarians can assess your dog's physical and emotional health and provide appropriate treatment.
 - Certified Professional Dog Trainers (CPDTs):** CPDTs can help address behavioral issues that may arise as a result of relocation. They can provide guidance on training, socialization, and behavior modification techniques.
 - Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists (CAABs):**

- CAABs are specialists in animal behavior and can provide in-depth assessments and treatment plans for complex behavioral problems.**
- Post-Relocation**
 - Once the immediate crisis has passed and you have settled into a new environment, the focus should shift to helping your dog recover and reintegrate.
 - Establishing a Routine:** Re-establishing a consistent routine can help dogs regain a sense of normalcy. This includes regular feeding times, walks, and playtime.
 - Providing a Safe Space:** Create a safe and comfortable space for your dog, such as a crate or bed, where they can retreat and feel secure.
 - Gradual Reintroduction:** Reintroduce your dog to the new environment gradually after separation. Let them explore at their pace. Avoid forcing them into anxiety-inducing situations.
 - Positive Reinforcement:** Reward desired behaviors with praise and treats. Build positive associations with the new environment

- through reinforcement.
- Patience and Understanding:** Recovery requires patience. Allow your dog to adjust at their own pace. As "Pet Disaster Preparedness Tips" by PetMD, notes, give them time to heal and regain confidence. Understanding is key.
- Relocation during disasters present significant practical and emotional challenges for dogs. However, by taking proactive approaches, including creating a comprehensive disaster plan, providing adequate preparation, and seeking professional support when needed, pet owners can significantly mitigate the negative impacts and ensure the well-being of their canine companions during these challenging times.
- About the Author:** Mariana Burgos is a freelance artist, writer, and tutor. She has been a solo parent for 19 years now because she is the wife of Jonas Burgos, a Filipino desaparecido. She and her daughter are animal lovers and are active in advocating not only human rights but the rights of animals as well.

ON THE ROAD

RENTAPASADA gives Filipino drivers a more accessible path to ride-hailing income

FOR drivers facing high vehicle costs, fuel expenses, and uncertain boundary arrangements, VinFast and Green GSM's drive-to-earn program offers a more straightforward way to start earning.

For many Filipino drivers, entering ride-hailing is not just a matter of getting behind the wheel. The cost of buying a vehicle, meeting bank requirements, daily boundary arrangements, and fuel expenses can make it difficult to start, even for those who already have the skill and willingness to drive.

That is the gap RENTAPASADA aims to address.

Developed by VinFast Philippines and Green GSM, RENTAPASADA is a drive-to-earn rental program designed to give qualified Filipino drivers access to a VinFast electric vehicle, the Green GSM platform, and a clearer system for earning through ride-hailing.

Instead of requiring drivers to purchase a vehicle right away, the program gives them a rental-based entry point. Through RENTAPASADA, qualified drivers can use a VinFast EV, accept trips through the Green GSM app, and earn from completed rides within a defined operating structure.

Here's what that can look like for Filipinos looking to earn through ride-hailing.

It lowers the barrier to getting started. One of the biggest challenges for aspiring ride-hailing drivers is the upfront cost of entering the business. Buying a car usually means preparing a large down payment, going through bank approval, and taking on a long-term financial commitment before any income is generated.

RENTAPASADA offers a different starting point. Under the program, qualified drivers can begin the application process with a PHP 5,000 security deposit or initial registration payment, subject to Green GSM's assessment and approval. Once approved, they can access a VinFast EV without needing to purchase one.

Drivers are also required to meet program requirements, including a professional driver's license, NBI or police clearance, medical certificate, drug test, and TIN.

For drivers who have the skill and willingness to work but may not have the capital to purchase a vehicle outright, this creates a more practical entry point into ride-hailing.

It gives drivers access to a vehicle and a platform

A car alone does not create income. Drivers also need access to passengers, a platform, and a system that allows them to operate consistently.

RENTAPASADA connects participating



drivers to the Green GSM platform, where they can accept trips and earn from completed rides. The program also provides access to VinFast electric vehicles such as the Herio Green and Limo Green, built for daily transport operations.

By combining vehicle access with platform access, RENTAPASADA gives drivers a more direct path from application to earning.

It creates a more structured alternative to boundary-style driving

Many drivers are familiar with boundary arrangements, where they pay a daily amount to use a vehicle and keep what remains after expenses. The challenge is that fuel, maintenance, and other operating costs can quickly reduce take-home income.

RENTAPASADA follows a daily rental model, but within a more predictable cost structure. For the Herio Green, the rental fee is PHP 1,050 per day, with a total daily deduction of P1,300 when the daily deposit component is included. For the Limo Green, the rental fee is P1,350 per day, with a total daily deduction of P1,650.

This allows drivers to better plan daily income and expenses, with clear visibility on what they need to cover and what they can take home.

It comes with charging support built into the model

For drivers, the value of an EV is not just in the vehicle itself. It is also in the support system that helps them operate it every day.

This is why RENTAPASADA is backed by the combined ecosystem of VinFast, Green GSM, and V-Green. The program connects drivers not only to a VinFast electric vehicle and the Green GSM platform, but also to a growing charging network.

Participating drivers benefit from free charging from March 13, 2026 to March 31, 2029, helping drivers to focus on completed trips, service quality, and take-home income instead of worrying about fuel expenses.

As more drivers join the platform, V-Green's charging network continues to grow alongside the ecosystem, supporting the day-to-day needs of EV drivers and helping make electric ride-hailing more practical at scale. For RENTAPASADA drivers, the goal is clear: access to the vehicle, access to the platform, and access to the charging support needed to keep earning.

It helps reduce some of the biggest operating pressures

Beyond charging, Green GSM also covers key requirements such as LTO registration, inspection fees, road maintenance fees, PAMI, vehicle insurance and CTPL, periodic maintenance, and GPS installation. They will also assist drivers with the TNVS registration/application process, while the required license or accreditation must still be secured under the driver's name, subject to proper approval.

This matters because ride-hailing is not only about having a car. It also involves paperwork, compliance, maintenance, and operating requirements that can be difficult for individual drivers to manage on their own. By covering selected requirements and providing application support, RENTAPASADA helps make the operating model more organized and easier to understand.

Drivers, however, still cover certain operating costs, including toll fees, parking fees, traffic violation penalties, repair costs,

and TNVS registration/application fees.

It gives drivers a chance to keep more of what they earn

Under the program, drivers can receive 90 percent of trip earnings in the first year, and 85 percent in the second and third year, subject to applicable government fees and taxes. This revenue-sharing structure is designed to help drivers retain a larger portion of their completed trip earnings while operating under the Green GSM platform.

Of course, actual income will still depend on several factors, including trip volume, operating hours, route distance, demand, acceptance rate, completion rate, and service quality. Drivers are also expected to meet operating targets, including 250 trips per month, at least 90 percent acceptance rate, and at least 90 percent completion rate.

But the goal of RENTAPASADA is to give drivers a better system to work with: a vehicle, a platform, operating support, charging support, and a clearer way to plan their earnings.

It opens a practical path for drivers who want to move forward

At its core, RENTAPASADA is not just about putting more electric vehicles on the road. It is about giving Filipino drivers another way to participate in the ride-hailing economy.

For existing drivers, aspiring TNVS partners, and small operators, the program offers a lower-barrier way to start earning without the upfront cost of ownership.

For drivers who want to start, drivers who want structure, and drivers looking for a more practical way to earn, RENTAPASADA presents a new way forward.

Ford Philippines elevates ownership experience with new learning center



The new 1,500-square-meter facility strengthens dealer personnel upskilling, supports electric vehicle (EV) readiness, and reinforces Ford's commitment to treating customers like family

FORD Philippines has officially opened the doors of the newly-constructed Ford Learning Center in Calamba, Laguna which will serve as the central hub for technical and non-technical training among Ford dealer personnel nationwide.

The Ford Learning Center is a 1,500-square-meter training facility that houses seven (7) mechanical bays including a dedicated electric vehicle (EV) bay, four (4) classrooms, dedicated Ford showroom, meeting rooms, office spaces, and a cafeteria.

Replacing its previous 110-square-meter training area in Don Bosco Technical Institute of Makati, the new facility significantly expands Ford's training capacity and elevates the delivery of training programs and learning modules with state-of-the-art tools, equipment, and globally-aligned processes. With a leveled-up training experience among front-line dealership and technical teams, Ford ensures that every customer interaction – whether purchasing a vehicle, seeking technical support, or contacting customer service—is seamless, professional, and reassuring.

"The opening of the Learning Center is not just about opening a new building; it is about building the future of Ford in the Philippines. It represents our strong commitment to this market—to our customers, our partners, and our people," says Pedro Simoes, managing

director, Ford Philippines. "At Ford, we believe that great vehicles are only part of the ownership journey. What truly makes the difference is the experience—how we support, serve, and care for our customers every day."

"As vehicle technologies rapidly evolve—from advanced connectivity to sophisticated safety features and electrified systems—our dealership teams must be equipped with the highest level of technical mastery, product knowledge, and customer-handling skills. We are confident that this Ford Learning Center can help standardize, elevate, and future-proof our operational capabilities," adds Pushparaj Muthusamy, director, Ford Customer Service Division, Ford Philippines.

Mechanical Bay

The mechanical bay is a 451-square-meter workshop area, enabling multiple simultaneous hands-on training sessions. It provides real-world training for technicians and non-technicians, and mirrors a working Ford dealer by offering a controlled environment for diagnostics, repairs, and certifications on both internal combustion engines (ICE) and electric vehicles (EV). The multiple conventional bays are equipped with two-post and four-post lifts, enabling comprehensive hands-on training across all vehicle types.

Dedicated Showroom and Multiple Classrooms

The Learning Center boasts of a 195-square-meter reception and showroom space that can accommodate a Ford vehicle display, allowing immersive product trainings and walkarounds for dealer sales personnel and service advisors. It also has four (4) modern classrooms with flexible configuration that has a combined capacity of over 100 participants per session.

Support and Meeting Rooms
The meeting rooms can accommodate participants ranging from 2 to 7 people, supporting coaching, assessments, and small group learning. The Learning Center is also home to a 72-seat work cafeteria, creating a central hub for interaction and knowledge sharing and a 24-seat extension office for employees.

Modernizing After-Sales
The Learning Center forms part of Ford's commitment to modernize the after-sales experience of its customers, coming from the opening of the Ford Parts Distribution Center in Laguna in 2024, enhancing parts availability and accessibility. Customers can also enjoy a wide range of service offerings that include Online Service Booking, Mobile Service Vehicle, Express Service, Service Price Calculator, and Pickup and Delivery, improving ease of service, convenience and peace of mind.



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



The winning three-course menu: Mango Cannoli, Pan-Seared Rib Eye Steak with Adobo sa Itum Sauce, and Grilled Prawn with Orange Emulsion

Manila Standard’s Clash of Kawali serves Father’s Day flavors

By Bernadette Araño
Photos by Prince Neoford Villacarlos

FOOD became both tribute and craft at Manila Standard’s Clash of Kawali: Culinary Masters Father’s Day Edition, where the winning team impressed judges with a menu rooted in memory, technique, and distinctly Filipino flavors.

Adding to the challenge, participating chefs worked with a limited set of ingredients from a market basket, requiring them to create dishes based on what was available. The format tested not only their technical skills, but also their ability to adapt, improvise, and bring out strong flavors under pressure.

The champions from Kingsford Hotel served Grilled Prawn with Orange Emulsion, Pan-Seared Rib Eye Steak with Adobo sa Itum Sauce, and Mango Cannoli, a three-course lineup that placed familiar tastes in a more refined setting.

Chef Frederick Ollet said their appetizer drew inspiration from his father’s favorite pulutan.

“Yung appetizer namin ay favorite na pulutan ng tatay ko, so parang kinilaw pero gagawin ko po siyang hindi ordinaryong kinilaw,” Ollet said.

That idea shaped the opening dish. The grilled prawn carried the smoky depth of fire, while the orange emulsion gave it a bright and polished finish. It recalled the freshness of kinilaw without simply recreating it. Instead, the team transformed a familiar Filipino favorite into a dish fit for competition.

The main course gave the menu its strongest statement. The Pan-Seared Rib Eye Steak with Adobo sa Itum Sauce combined the richness of a well-seared cut of beef with the deep, savory character of a Filipino sauce. The rib eye brought weight and indulgence, while the adobo sa itum added identity and depth.

The meal ended with Mango Cannoli, a crisp and bright dessert that softened the richness of the earlier courses. Its tropical sweetness gave the menu a festive close while keeping the flavors familiar and accessible.

For team member Juvane Jones Montejo, the win was the result of steady preparation.

“Sobrang saya na nanalo kami kasi syempre bihira lang ‘tong ganitong competition tapos nanalo pa. Practice lang ta-

laga araw-araw habang palapit nang palapit yung competition.”

Other teams also brought ambitious menus to the competition.

The first runner-up presented Poached Ulang and Clams with Romesco Sauce, Fresh Mandarin Salad, Orange Vinaigrette, and Garlic Fishbone Tuile. For the main course, the team served Butter-Basted Ribeye Steak with Brown Sauce. Their dessert was Ube Crème Pannacotta with Coconut Crème Anglaise.

The second runner-up offered a Filipino-inspired set composed of Crunchy Shrimp Sisig, Seared Ribeye with Chimichurri and Beef Jus, and Sapin-Sapin Cheesecake Parfaits.

The third runner-up completed the roster with Dumpling, Seafood Paksiw and Cheesecake in Sugar Dome.

Still, the strength of the competition went beyond the announcement of winners. It was seen in how each team approached the same challenge with different ideas, turning a limited basket of ingredients into dishes shaped by technique, creativity, and personal memory.

More than a culinary contest, Clash of Kawali became a showcase of how food can honor tradition while making room for new ideas. In marking Father’s Day through flavor and technique, the event celebrated not only the cooks behind the plates, but also the people and memories that continue to shape Filipino cooking.



Manila Standard’s Clash of Kawali: Culinary Masters Father’s Day Edition grand winners Chef Frederick Ollet and Juvane Jones Montejo

Moments in flux: Immersive dining at Shido

SHIDO, which means “starting in motion,” reflects a philosophy rooted in evolution—where Japanese cuisine, culture, and hospitality are continually reinterpreted while remaining true to their origins.

Through seasonal menus, immersive dining experiences, and meaningful moments of connection, Shido offers guests a dynamic way to experience Japan.

“Manila’s dining scene continues to evolve, with guests increasingly seeking experiences that go beyond the meal itself,” said Jonathan Reynolds, General Manager of Makati Shangri-La.

“Shido was created as a place where guests can experience Japan through its cuisine, culture, and hospitality. For us, Japan in Motion is about creating new reasons to discover and re-discover Japan with every visit,” he added.

From the precision of the Sushi Counter and the artistry of Robatayaki to the energy of Teppanyaki, the discovery-driven Japanese Bar, and the warmth of Main Dining, Shido brings together multiple expressions of Japanese hospitality under one roof.

Leading Shido is Chef Daisuke Nishimura, whose culinary journey has taken him across Hong Kong, Bali, and Thailand. As Executive Japanese Chef of Makati Shangri-La, Manila, Chef Daisuke brings together authentic and innovative flair to create menus that evolve with the seasons while remaining true to Japanese culinary traditions.

Shido’s lunch set menu includes the grilled eel rice bowl set (unadon teishoku), 10 kinds of

nigiri sushi (tokujo nigiri sushi gozen), and the oumi beef striploin set (oumi gyū teppanyaki gozen), among others.

Diners will be spoiled for sashimi choices, which include local yellowfin tuna, bluefin tuna belly, snapper, striped jack, Norwegian salmon, squid, and Hokkaido scallop.

The Robatayaki station, on the other hand, features satsumaimo butter (Japanese Beniharu sweet potato with butter), Torimomo Kobujime Mentaiko (Marinated konbu seaweed with chicken thigh and mentaiko), Kaki garlic butter foil yaki (Hiroshima oyster garlic butter), and Hotate Shoga Shoyu Foil Yaki (Hokkaido scallop with broccoli, shiitake mushroom ginger soy), among others.

For dinner, diners may choose from a la carte options or from three set menus, including the 8-course set menu that includes Sesame tofu, Uzaku, Saba Mat-

sumae sushi, and Ankimo toast; Steamed clear soup Shingendori chicken ball, Lapu-Lapu, prawn, scallop, and mushrooms; 4 kinds of sashimi; Burikama saikyo yaki with ponzu sauce; Chawanmushi crab meat sauce; Australian wagyu Sanchoku beef tempura, Shishito pepper, and Myoga ginger; Waterfall somen; and Wasabi Parfait.

To cap off the culinary journey, Shido offers a variety of dessert options, such as the Japanese chestnut mont blanc, soufflé cheesecake with seasonal fruit sauce, wasabi par-sion fruit coulis, and yuzu calamansi baba, among others.



Kawaguchicko



Waterfall Somen Noodle



Burikama Saikyo Yaki



Chef Daisuke Nishimura

Seo In-guk, Park Ji-hyun find comfort in life's struggles through 'See You At Work Tomorrow!'

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In-guk stars as the emotionally guarded Kang Si-woo in the grounded romance series 'See You At Work Tomorrow!'

By Angelica Villanueva

SEO In-guk and Park Ji-hyun hope viewers find comfort in their upcoming romance series *See You At Work Tomorrow!*

In an email interview with *Manila Standard Entertainment*, the actors said that its story reflects the quiet struggles many adults carry while trying to navigate work, relationships, and everyday life.

The story follows Kang Si-woo and Cha Ji-yoon as two emotionally guarded colleagues whose relationship develops as they confront personal hardships and workplace challenges. Instead of leaning on familiar office romance tropes, both said the series takes a more grounded look at adulthood.

"I think everyone carries pain and struggles within them. How we embrace those things and continue living our lives

is something we all have to figure out," In-guk said.

He said he hopes viewers can "find some guidance and grow together with the characters" as they watch Si-woo and Ji-yoon work through their personal struggles.

Ji-hyun echoed the sentiment, saying adulthood does not always become easier with age.

"We may all be adults, but life can still feel overwhelming. I hope that as viewers watch the characters go through trial and error, conflicts, and the process of resolving them, the emotions they feel along the way can offer them even a little comfort in their everyday lives," the actress shared.

In-guk also described the romance at the heart of the series as one of its defining qualities. After appearing in several romantic comedies, he said *See You At Work Tomorrow!* gave him a chance to explore a

relationship that feels closer to real life.

"I thought of it as a more mature and realistic romance. I have done many romantic comedies before, but with this project, I wanted to portray a love story that felt more real and more like the kind of romance adults could experience," he explained.

While the emotional journey of Kang Si-woo drove much of the story, Seo said the role proved demanding in an unexpected way.

"Rather than there being a scene that was emotionally difficult to portray as Kang Si-woo, I think the bigger challenge was using professional workplace terminology. Presentation scenes in particular had a lot of technical terms, so it took quite some time to memorize them," In-guk added.

Based on a Kakao Webtoon, *See You At Work Tomorrow!* is now available for streaming on Prime Video.



Park Ji-hyun plays the role of Cha Ji-yoon, a professional finding comfort amidst adult struggles

SHOWBIZ

In his actor era

Cup of Joe's Gian Bernardino expands artistry through film

Cup of Joe frontman Gian Bernardino describes joining Viva Artists Agency as an opportunity to expand his artistry through acting



By Angelica Villanueva

CUP of Joe frontman Gian Bernardino is stepping into his actor era, but he wants fans to know one thing clearly. He is not leaving the band behind.

Gian has signed a solo artist management contract with Viva Artists Agency and a movie contract with Viva Films, opening a new lane in a career largely defined by music, sold-out shows, and the success of Cup of Joe's songs.

At the press conference, the singer said acting was not a random turn. Before he found his place as a performer and songwriter, he already imagined himself on screen.

"First love *ko talaga ang* film in its essence. Even before I discovered *na gusto ko rin maging* performer, *gusto ko muna maging artista*," Gian shared.

The singer said the dream started when he was growing up in Qatar as the son of an overseas Filipino worker. Television became his escape while he adjusted to life away from the Philippines. At one point, he even wanted to join *Goin' Bulilit* and later secretly auditioned online for *Pinoy Big Brother*.

Years later, the timing now feels right. Gian said Cup of Joe has already reached major milestones in music, giving him space to explore another side of himself.

"I entered film to expand my artistry, but at the same time, I treat every aspect of the art that I make as an extension of myself," he told *Manila Standard Entertainment*.

For him, acting is not a side distraction. He said he wants to approach it with the same seriousness he gives to music, songwriting, and directing.

"I wanna live for the arts. I won't treat it as a distraction. I'll treat it as something that would make me a better artist," Gian added.

Cup of Joe has been on a steady rise since forming in Baguio in 2018. The band's hit "Multo" has passed 600 million Spotify streams, while its recent *SANDALI: The Cup of Joe Fest* drew more than 20,000 fans to the Philippine Sports Stadium in Bulacan.

Gian has also had earlier acting credits, including *Quarantings: The Series*, the short films *Kubli*, and *Microplastics*, and music video appearances. He also directed Cup of Joe's "Sandali" music video.



The OPM singer assures fans that Cup of Joe remains his priority



Viva Group of Companies chairman and CEO Vicente 'Boss Vic' del Rosario Jr. welcomes Cup of Joe frontman Gian Bernardino to Viva Artists Agency

With acting now becoming more formal under Viva, Gian said the challenge will be balancing schedules. Cup of Joe still has projects and tour commitments lined up, but he said having music and film under one company helps keep plans transparent.

"It's gonna be hectic but not a conflict," he said.

He also pushed back against fears over his solo move.

"*Huwag kayong kabahan*. This is just an expansion of my artistry," he assured.

For now, Gian said that Cup of Joe remains his priority. But he hopes the new chapter will eventually allow him to make his mark in acting, and later, perhaps, behind the camera.

"It's just the beginning of a bigger thing for me," Gian stated.

By Jasper Valdez

STREAMING this July is not only about catching up on long-running shows or revisiting familiar franchises. Several titles offer viewers a new entry point, from teen comedy and crime drama to documentaries based on real events.

For viewers looking for something that does not require homework, here are five titles to check out across major streaming services.

"Elle"

Premiere date: July 1 (Prime Video)

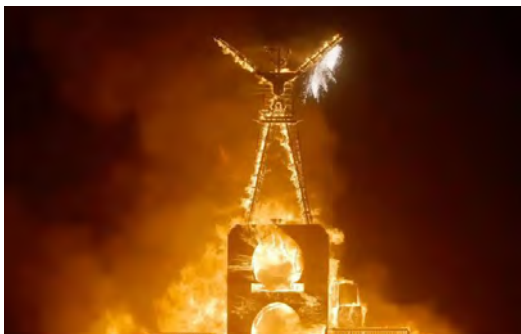
Elle goes back to the teenage years of Elle Woods, before the character became the Harvard Law student known from *Legally Blonde*. The series stars Lexi Minnetree as the young Elle and follows her life in the 1990s, with fashion, school life, friendship, and identity shaping her early years.



"The Man Will Burn"

Premiere date: July 9 (HBO Max)

The four-part HBO documentary series examines the festival's recent years, including cancellations, floods, controversies, and its ties to tech culture. It traces how a desert gathering became both a cultural event and a source of debate.

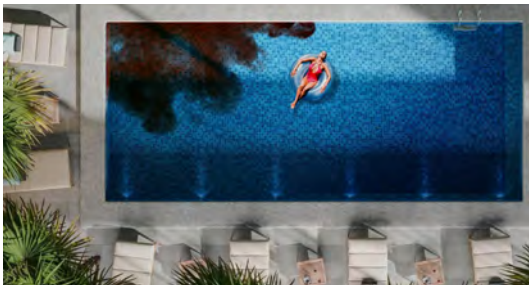


"The Paradise Murders"

Premiere date: July 10 (Netflix)

The Paradise Murders follows married couple

Five series to add on your watchlist this July



Emma and Jake during their stay at a five-star resort, where they meet fellow guests Sarah and Tom. The trip turns deadly after Sarah is found dead, pushing Emma to look deeper into the people around them. What begins as a resort getaway becomes a mystery involving secrets within the hotel and its guests.

"Shipwrecked: Nightmare at Sea"

Premiere date: July 10 (Netflix)

Shipwrecked: Nightmare at Sea looks back at the 2012 shipwreck of a luxury cruise liner, using never-before-seen footage and accounts from survivors. The documentary follows how a



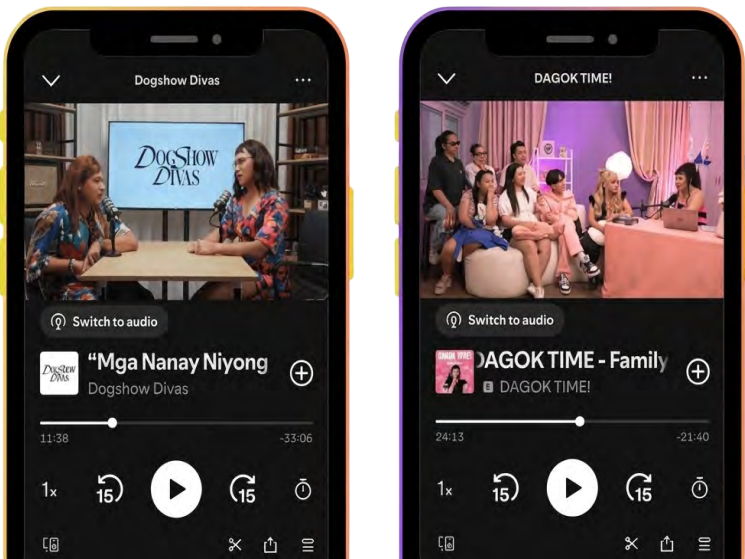
dream trip at sea turned into a disaster that made headlines around the world.

"Lucky"

Premiere date: July 15: Apple TV

Lucky stars Anya Taylor-Joy as a young woman who left behind a life of crime but is forced to face her past when trouble catches up with her. The limited crime drama follows her attempt to stay ahead of the danger while dealing with the choices she thought she had escaped. Taylor-Joy is joined by Annette Bening, Timothy Olyphant, Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, and Drew Starkey.





Filipino LGBTQIA+ creators are finding more listeners through podcasts that open space for personal stories, representation, and community

Three ways LGBTQIA+ creators are finding audiences on Spotify

By Angelica Villanueva

MORE Filipinos are listening to locally produced LGBTQIA+ podcasts on Spotify, with consumption of these shows rising by more than 20%, according to the streaming platform.

The growth points to a rising appetite for content centered on representation, identity and shared experiences. Here are three ways LGBTQIA+ creators are building communities on the platform:

Creating space for stories often left out of mainstream conversations

Baus Rufo and **Macoy Dubs**, hosts of the comedy podcast *Dogshow Divas*, have gained a following through candid discussions and humor drawn from everyday life. The show was recognized among Spotify Wrapped 2025's Top New Group Podcasts.

For Baus, podcasting offers creators greater freedom to tell stories in their own voice.

"Because podcasting provides creators full power and control over their voice, this medium continues to be vital for us queer people who aren't always recognized by traditional institutions," he said.

Building connections through relatable experiences

Sophie Prime, host of *DAGOK TIME!*, has attracted listeners with conversations ranging from internet culture to personal confessions. The podcast earned a place among Spotify Wrapped 2025's Top New Solo Podcasts, while Sophie was selected for Spotify's RADAR Creators Philippines program.

Sophie said representation remains important for many listeners.

"*Marami pa ring mga tao ang naghahanap ng representation at ng mga kwentong makaka-relate sila*," she said, adding that helping even one person feel less alone is already meaningful.

Expanding visibility across podcasts and music

Spotify said it continues to support creators through features such as video podcasts and interactive polls designed to encourage audience engagement.

The company is also highlighting LGBTQIA+ voices in music through its "Bahaghari" playlist, which features artists including **Marina Summers**, **Sassa Gurl**, **SHNTI**, and **geiko**.

"What we're seeing from creators like Baus, Macoy, and Sophie reflects a broader shift in how people want to connect," said **Carl Zuzarte**, Spotify's head of podcast for Southeast Asia.

By Jasper Valdez

FOR many college students, the first job used to feel like the next clear step after graduation. Finish the course, send out applications, take an entry-level post, then learn the rest along the way.

But for students preparing to enter the workforce, the usual starting point is beginning to shift.

Artificial intelligence is changing the kind of work available to new graduates, including the tasks often given to beginners. The shift is already being felt in the workplace, where employees are being asked to adjust not only to new tools but also to new skills and expectations.

The timing adds another layer of pressure: the job market may change before students even graduate.

This is the concern behind the growing push for career-ready education. At Mapúa Malayan Digital College, the response has been to place career preparation and AI fluency within its online programs, particularly for students aiming for work in technology and business.

MMDC said a significant part of its student population is made up of working students who are personally investing in their education. College, in that case, is not only about earning a diploma. It is also tied to keeping a job, qualifying for better roles, or shifting into fields with stronger demand.

Through its collaboration with Arizona State University, MMDC students gain access to international academic content, ASU



Young Filipinos are being encouraged to build digital confidence before graduation as AI reshapes the path to first jobs

microcredentials, and masterclasses with ASU faculty. The school said these are designed to help students build communication skills, workplace confidence, and exposure to global learning standards.

The school's business and information technology programs point to the kinds of skills now being pushed closer to the start of a career. MMDC offers AI-focused specializations, including AI for business strategy and operations, and AI-powered product development. Other areas include data analytics, software development, network and cybersecurity, marketing management, operations management, and human resources

management.

Students and professionals not taking a full degree can also look at certification programs in virtual assistance, digital marketing, content creation, data analytics, AI for personal productivity, and English language training.

The larger point is not that every student has to become a tech worker. It is that the workplace is asking for more than basic familiarity with digital tools.

Young Filipinos entering college now may find that the first job is no longer a simple starting point. It may already require the kind of adaptability that workers used to build years into their careers.



Working students and future professionals face a job market where adaptability, technical skills, and career-ready training are becoming harder to separate from college education



Filipino families are treating emergency funds as a basic form of protection as health costs, food prices, and household bills leave little room for savings

By Jasper Valdez

THE Filipino dream used to sound bigger: a house, a stable job, a car, maybe a business that could support the family.

These goals still matter, but the dream has become more basic for families trying to keep up with daily costs: having enough money for a hospital bill, a job loss, a family emergency, or months when rent, food, transport, and utilities leave little room for savings.

A recent study commissioned

by EastWest Ageas and conducted by NielsenIQ found that 8 in 10 Filipinos are worried about securing their financial future. It also found that many Filipinos only have about P50,000 in emergency funds.

That cushion can shrink quickly once the cost involves health.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that household out-of-pocket payments accounted for 42.7 percent of the country's current health expenditure in 2024. A

Why financial security has become the new Filipino dream



Many households now measure stability by whether they can handle illness, job loss, debt, and daily expenses without being pushed back financially

health emergency can still leave families looking for cash to cover costs that are not fully paid for. Food costs are another reason

saving has become harder to sustain. PSA data showed that food inflation averaged 4.5 percent in 2024. While lower than the 8.0

percent recorded in 2023, that still meant families were dealing with higher prices, not a return to old ones.

The effect is felt in small but regular decisions: what to buy at the market, what to cut from the grocery list, and how much can still be set aside after the bills are paid.

Beyond prices, family obligations also shape how savings are used.

A young worker may be saving for personal plans while also helping at home. A parent may want to build an emergency fund but gets pulled back by school fees, medicine, bills, or debt.

Even with regular income, one crisis can still make a family feel close to starting over.

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies has also pointed to the risk of health shocks, noting that even with PhilHealth, coverage gaps and out-of-pocket costs can leave households vulnerable.

The first step is not always a grand financial plan. It is knowing where the money will come from if someone gets sick, loses work, or needs help at home.

The goal is no longer only to move up, but to avoid being pushed back by one emergency. For families trying to build savings little by little, that is already a serious measure of security.

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HOSPITALITY



The property's dining concepts will bring Filipino culinary traditions together with Mandarin Oriental's international hospitality experience

Hotel101-Davao is set to open on July 30 with 519 rooms, adding a major hospitality property to the Mindanao market



HOTEL101-Davao is set to begin operations on July 30, becoming the largest hotel in the Mindanao region with 519 rooms. Located on a 5,384-square-meter property along Eco West Drive in Davao City, the hotel is a short walk from SM City Davao. Its facilities include an all-day dining restaurant, a fitness gym, swimming pool, function and conference rooms, and a helipad.

Hotel101-Davao is part of the growing portfolio of Hotel101 Global, the hospitality arm of DoubleDragon Corporation, which continues to expand both in the Philippines and overseas. The company's long-term goal is to grow the Hotel101 brand to 1 million rooms across 100 countries through its standardized hospitality model. In the Philippines, Hotel101-Manila and Hotel101-Fort continue operations, while new properties are being developed in Cebu and Davao. Hotel101 has also expanded overseas, opening Hotel101-Madrid in March 2026, its first property outside the Philippines. Another international property, Hotel101-Niseko, is scheduled to open in December 2026. The expansion forms part of DoubleDragon's broader strategy to increase recurring revenues from its property portfolio, which includes community malls, industrial warehouses, office spaces, and hospitality assets. Hotel101 made history in 2025 as the first Filipino hotel brand with a subsidiary listed on the U.S. Nasdaq. In 2026, the company further expanded its international footprint with the launch of overseas operations.



Mandarin Oriental Makati prepares for its late 2026 comeback to the city's central business district

Makati welcomes return of iconic luxury hotel

By Nickie Wang

THE city of Makati, much like its ever-evolving skyline, continues to transform, and the return of Mandarin Oriental comes at a fitting time as the country's business capital enters a new chapter.



The new hotel reflects Filipino character while meeting global luxury standards

redevelopment of key areas in Makati, particularly around Ayala Triangle Gardens. Once known mainly as a green space within the central business district, the area has grown into a lifestyle hub with restaurants, retail spaces, residences, and public events.

The new Mandarin Oriental Makati, Manila will rise above Ayala Triangle Gardens, placing the hotel at the center of one of the city's busiest districts.

Developed by Ayala Land in partnership with Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, the hotel will feature 275 rooms and suites designed with natural materials and Filipino craftsmanship. The interiors will incorporate timber finishes, woven textures, and locally crafted details.

The project points to a wider shift in luxury hospitality, where local identity plays a growing role in defining world-class experiences

Paloma Urquijo Zobel de Ayala, creative director of Ayala Land, said the hotel was designed to showcase Filipino character while maintaining international luxury standards. The hotel will also feature five restaurant and bar concepts serving Chinese, Filipino, and international cuisine, underscoring the growing role of food in shaping hospitality experiences. **Franck Droin**, general manager of Mandarin Oriental Makati, Manila, said the dining concepts aim to showcase Filipino culinary traditions alongside the brand's global expertise. An 800-square-meter spa and



wellness floor will offer traditional treatments, fitness facilities, yoga spaces, and a 25-meter outdoor pool overlooking Ayala Triangle Gardens. The property will also target the meetings and events market through its 740-square-meter Grand Hall, which can accommodate up to 1,000 guests for weddings, corporate functions, and other events.

Daimon Brewery's maximalist luxury hotel rises in Kansai

AFTER trying sake everywhere from hushed izakayas to neon-lit bars, I'm endlessly fascinated by this chameleonic beverage that reveals new dimensions with every sip. Yet the full journey, from rice to fermentation to glass, remains a mystery to most. That's why Daimon Brewery's bold new venture captivates me. Its 15-suite luxury hotel project offers travelers something rare: the chance to live inside the story of sake itself. This isn't just accommodation; it's an invitation to understand Japan's iconic libation through seven generations of mastery. With international demand surging and the global market projected to reach \$16 billion by 2035, Japanese breweries are innovating to stay relevant. Yet few have dared to reimagine the very experience of sake itself, until now. Daimon Brewery, a 200-year-old institution in Osaka Prefecture, is answering that question with audacity. By transforming its historic grounds into a luxury hotel, it offers travelers a singular proposition: immerse yourself completely in the world of sake, from brewing rituals to culinary pairings, all within a setting that feels

Daimon Noren is being developed as a 15-suite stay that places guests inside the heritage, rituals, and future of Japanese sake



Dee-tails Ardee de los Angeles

both deeply Japanese and exhilaratingly modern. This is not just a stay; it is the definitive Japanese destination for the discerning global traveler seeking authenticity wrapped in extravagance. In a world where luxury hospitality often defaults to minimalist beige and hushed tranquility, Daimon Brewery is taking a radically different path. As the Osaka-based sake maker prepares to celebrate its bicentennial, it has thrown the rulebook out the window. Instead of another traditional ryokan, Daimon is partnering with culinary genius Chef Gaggan Anand and design visionary Bill Bensley to create a 15-suite maximalist luxury hotel in Kansai. This is not merely a hotel; it is a sensory revolution rooted in two



Daimon Brewery traces two centuries of sake-making as it prepares to turn its historic Kansai grounds into a luxury hospitality destination



Daimon Brewery highlights its craft sake tradition as the planned hotel builds on seven generations of brewing and Japanese hospitality

centuries of craftsmanship. Set at the foot of the Ikoma Mountain Range, the project transforms the historic brewery grounds into a destination that bridges heritage with audacious creativity. For 200 years and seven generations, Daimon has crafted award-winning sake using pure mountain water and the meticulous Ginjo method. It was one of Japan's earliest craft sake exporters, yet it recognized that, to survive and thrive in a shifting market, it needed to evolve beyond the bottle. "We're not building another minimalist retreat," says Fergus Fung, chairman of Daimon



Daimon Brewery traces two centuries of sake-making as it prepares to turn its historic Kansai grounds into a luxury hospitality destination

International Limited. The choice of partners reflects this ambition. Enter Bill Bensley, the legendary architect known for narrative-driven, richly layered designs that burst with color and imagination. His vision for Daimon is "maximalist in every sense," celebrating contrast while keeping the spirit of heritage alive. Complementing this visual feast is Chef Gaggan Anand, whose Bangkok flagship has been crowned No. 1 in Asia's 50 Best Restaurants. Famous for his progressive Indian cuisine fused with Japanese precision, he promises guests an escape from the tyranny of choice. His concept is simple: indulge in sake, smoke, and sounds; rejuvenate in gardens and onsen; and forget time exists. This ambitious pivot is also a strategic masterstroke. As managing director Marcus Consolini notes, while the domestic sake market faces headwinds, the global market is booming toward a \$16 billion future by 2035. By expanding into high-end hospitality, Daimon positions itself not just as a producer but as a global lifestyle beacon. This is a daring bet on experiential travel, where the boundary between guest and brewer dissolves. The project is currently in its design phase, with construction slated for 2027 and a completion target of 2028 to 2029. Daimon Brewery is proving that luxury doesn't have to whisper. It can roar with flavor, color, and history, and the world is listening.