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BRAZIL'S LULA CLINCHES COME-FROM-BEHIND WIN
WORLD / A6

PESO NEARS P64-$1 LEVEL DUE TO FOREIGN PRESSURES
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EALA ENTERS ROUND 2 IN TORAY PAN PACIFIC
SPORTS / A8

DepEd issues El Niño guidelines for public schools

By Gabriel Oliva

THE Department of Education (DepEd) has released guidelines to help schools prepare for the effects of a "very strong" El Niño expected to hit
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Manila Standard

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Diesel prices up at P1.20/l, gas lower by P0.30/l

CONSUMERS can expect mixed fuel price adjustments effective 6 a.m. today amid ongoing developments in the Middle East that are affecting global oil supply and prices, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).
Next page

Dizon swaps posts with Lopez

Palace: DPWH, DOTr heads switched to hasten improvements, reforms

RELIABLE IRRIGATION. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. inaugurates the Alfonso Lista Pump Irrigation System (ALPIS) to expand access to reliable irrigation. At the same time, the President emphasized the continued expansion of solar-powered irrigation systems, which now number 3,000 nationwide, to help meet the water needs of agriculture. Once ALPIS is fully utilized, it is expected that the irrigation coverage will expand to 2,300 hectares, rice production will increase from 900 to 26,000 metric tons, and the combined net income of farmers will increase from P16 million to P159 million. It will also be possible to grow up to two crops per year from the previous one. PCO

DOTr Sec. Vince Lopez

By Charles Dantes, Darwin Amojelar and Pot Chavez

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has reassigned Secretary Vince Dizon back to the Department of Transportation and appointed Giovanni "Banoy" Lopez to replace him at the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Malacañang on Monday said returning Dizon to his old role at the DOTr and swapping posts with Lopez after a year at DPWH was aimed at accelerating transportation improvements and institutionalizing reforms in public works.

Presidential Communications Office Acting Secretary Lino Cayetano said the President wanted to place the right officials in positions where they could best serve the public.

"The President doesn't make decisions based on politics. The President makes decisions on what is best for the Filipino people," Cayetano said during a press briefing.

The reshuffle came after Mr. Marcos earlier assured reporters during a press briefing in Singapore last month that he would retain Dizon as DPWH head when asked about the possibility of his return to the DOTr.
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DPWH Sec. Giovanni Lopez

OMB to form team to study SC ruling on national budget

By Pot Chavez and Jimbo Gulle

OMBUDSMAN Jesus Crispin Remulla will form a team to study the Supreme Court's ruling on unconstitutional budget provisions and monitor the national budget process, as civil society groups flagged more than P1 trillion in suspected pork barrel allocations in the proposed 2027 spending plan.

Remulla said the Office of the Ombudsman would examine the ruling, which declared congressional increases in the 2024 and 2025 national budgets unconstitutional and invalidated two provisions of the 2026 General Appropriations Act.

The anti-corruption office's new budget watch will track the process and assess whether wrongdoing or bad-faith manipulation of public funds warrants accountability.

He acknowledged Congress' authority to amend the President's proposal but said scrutiny was needed because changes could be difficult to follow.
Next page

Armed clash with Bato possible—NBI

By Gwyneth Nolasco, Ram Superable, and Joel Zurbano

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag said yesterday the bureau will conduct operations to arrest Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa and noted the possibility of an encounter because he had not surrendered all of his firearms and has friends helping him.

Philippine National Police (PNP) spokesperson, Colonel Allen Rae Co, also said on Monday that authorities had received no communication or indication that Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa intends to surrender.

Dela Rosa's lawyer, on the other hand, warned that the P50-million bounty for the fugitive senator's capture may encourage vigilante hunting.

"So the possibility of an encounter, nandodoon yan. Hindi naman po natin inaalis yan. Lahat naman po ng law enforcement, there's a possibility of an encounter," Matibag said in an interview.
Next page

MARITIME EXERCISE. Ships from the Philippines, the US, and Japan conclude their 22nd Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MMCA) in the West Philippine Sea on Oct. 24, following six days of joint maritime exercises. The activity, held from Oct. 19 to 24, involved Philippine, Japanese and American naval and coast guard assets. **Armed Forces of the Philippines**

UNDAS PREPS. Relatives begin cleaning up the tombs of departed loved ones in Manila South Cemetery before the crowds pour in on All Souls Day on November 2. **Norman Cruz**

'VP Sara's husband Mans Carpio behind cyberlibel case vs. Lustre'

By Pot Chavez and Maricel V. Cruz

HUMAN rights lawyer Dino de Leon shared on social media a copy of a document identifying lawyer Mans Carpio, husband of Vice President Sara Duterte, as the complainant in the cyber-libel case against journalist Philip Lustre.

Meanwhile, Bicol Saro Rep. Terry Ridon said he would coordinate with
Next page

'PH is world's bullying capital since 2018'

By Gabriel Oliva

THE Philippines has been the world's bullying capital since 2018, according to Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) Executive Director Dr. Karol Mark Yee.

During a roundtable discussion with members of the media in Davao City, the EDCOM 2 official cited their Year 2 report wherein the Commission
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Impeachment trial could end next month — Barbers

By Maricel V. Cruz, Ram Superable, and Joel E. Zurbano

A TRIAL spokesperson for the prosecution in Vice President Sara Duterte's impeachment trial expects the proceedings to conclude toward the end of next month.

Former Surigao del Norte representative and governor Ace Barbers, an impeachment adviser for the prosecution, said the defense had initially
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Dizon...

From A1

Asked why the President ordered the reshuffle with less than 20 months remaining in his term, Cayetano said the decision was based on the needs of the two departments rather than the performance of the officials involved.

He described Dizon and Lopez, who previously headed the DOTr from February to August 2025, as two of the administration's high-performing Cabinet members who focused on their work rather than politics.

The President selected them after identifying the missions he wanted each department to accomplish, he added.

'Reforms need to be institutionalized'

Cayetano said the DPWH had reached a stage where reforms introduced following the flood control scandal needed to be institutionalized, while the transportation department required faster interventions to address commuters' daily difficulties.

Lopez, a lawyer and certified public accountant, was considered well suited to ensure that changes at the DPWH would become permanent systems and procedures rather than measures limited to the current administration, Cayetano said.

The reforms include making project information accessible to the public through a transparency portal, completing stalled infrastructure projects and promoting younger engineers.

"We want to make sure that the reforms are far-reaching and long-lasting," Cayetano said, explaining the administration's goal of preventing the recurrence of longstanding corruption and irregularities at the public works department.

Lopez expressed his gratitude to the President and the officials and employees of the DOTr for their support during his tenure as head of the agency.

"With Secretary Dizon's return to the DOTr, I am confident that the interests and welfare of commuters during their daily travels will continue to be addressed and prioritized," he said in a statement.

Dizon was reassigned to the DOTr to accelerate improvements in public transportation, shorten queues at the Land Transportation Office and eliminate fixers who illegally facilitate transactions for a fee, the Palace said.

He was also tasked with speeding up major mass transportation projects to reduce travel time for workers and students.

Cayetano said the administration wanted commuters to spend less time on the road and more time with their families.

No link to flood control probes

Cayetano also dismissed suggestions that the reassignment was connected to investigations into alleged irregularities in flood control projects, including allegations involving projects in Taguig City.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson had warned Dizon in September about possible criminal liability if he covered up irregularities in flood control projects.

Cayetano did not address the specific allegations in detail but maintained that Mr. Marcos was pursuing long-term institutional reforms.

He also rejected concerns about possible political considerations arising from Dizon's previous work with Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, the PCO acting secretary's brother, in Taguig.

Gabriela party-list Rep. Sarah Elago likened their exchange of positions to a game of musical chairs, saying the reshuffle was disappointing because it would not address corruption and misgovernance under the current administration.

Marcos prerogative

Meanwhile, Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla said Mr. Marcos had the prerogative to appoint officials in the executive department and expressed respect for the President's decision.

"It is the prerogative of the President to put people in their proper places, so I respect the decision of the President," Remulla said.

The Office of the Ombudsman is an independent constitutional body established under Article XI of the 1987 Constitution and Republic Act No. 6770.

Senator Joseph Victor 'JV' Ejercito said the reassignments would not affect the agencies' proposed 2027 budgets despite the ongoing Senate deliberations.

Ejercito, chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, expressed confidence in a smooth transition, citing his familiarity with both officials.

Like Remulla, Senator Lacson said the leadership swap was the President's prerogative and should not disrupt the agencies' operations.

Malacañang is also confident that Dizon and Lopez can defend their respective departments' budget for 2027 after switching roles.

"The two are hitting the ground running, and they're working closely together, so I don't see any problem for them," Cayetano said.

Transport group welcomes Dizon

Transport group Manibela welcomed the reappointment of Dizon to the Transportation portfolio, expressing support for programs that would benefit the public and private transportation sectors.

In a statement, Manibela chairman Mar Valbuena also thanked outgoing DOTr acting secretary Lopez for his service.

He emphasized that the group would remain a firm critic of government policies deemed unfavorable to commuters and transport workers.

Before becoming transportation secretary, Lopez served as DOTr senior undersecretary for administration, finance and procurement from February to August 2025.

He also served as executive director of the Land Transportation Office in 2022 and officer-in-charge executive director of the Toll Regulatory Board in 2021.

In the same year, Lopez served as undersecretary for finance and chief of staff to then-Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade.

NBI...

From A1

"But as much as possible, we want to get him na yung pinaka-less na violence na may mangyayari," he added.

Matibag also said that the possible locations of dela Rosa were sent to the bureau after the announcement by Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Jonvic Remulla regarding a P50 million bounty for his capture.

NBI to conduct operations

The NBI will conduct operations in the coming days or week.

"I just want to tell the public that when we do the enforcement, isipin ninyo baka sabihin nag-enforce doon tas walang nahuli. Talaga pong ganoon. Parte po ng law enforcement at paghahabol sa isang fugitive na kapag pinuntahan mo yung isang lugar maaring wala doon," the NBI chief said.

Co said PNP chief General Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr.'s appeal for the senator to surrender aims to protect all parties involved, particularly the police, the senator, and the public, from potentially dangerous encounters.

"Wala pa pong feelers as of now kaya ito ipinapawagan ng ating chief PNP ay para rin proteksyunan, to protect all parties involved, all parties concerned, ang ating kapulisan, ang senador but of course most importantly yung public to avoid any potential dangerous encounters," the PNP spokesperson said.

Attorney Israelito Torreon said authorities should produce a legitimate arrest warrant issued specifically by a Philippine court, while simultaneously dismissing claims that the former police chief is asking for mercy.

"The Philippines has its own law on crimes against humanity: Republic Act No. 9851. Our courts have jurisdiction over those crimes. If the government truly believes my client committed them, let it file the case here, before a Philippine judge who will examine the evidence. It has not done so. Instead, it has put a price on a senator's head for the benefit of a foreign court," he said.

Bounty part of operational strategy

Meanwhile, Malacañang said Monday that the P50-million bounty for the arrest of Dela Rosa was part of an operational strategy by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), not a specific order from President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said DILG Secretary Jonvic Remulla and the PNP leadership were responsible for the operation against Dela Rosa, adding that the bounty could be considered an appropriate use of confidential and intelligence funds allocated for law enforcement agencies.

"It is not a case where the President would specifically say to offer a P50-million bounty. It does not come directly from the President because this is a strategy and an operation of Secretary Jonvic Remulla and the PNP leadership," Castro explained.

"If these are their methods of using intelligence funds, then they are appropriate, provided they can establish that the operation is being carried out and produces results," she said.

Castro did not say whether Marcos had explicitly approved the P50-million bounty or whether similar rewards would be offered for other fugitives.

On the PNP's one-week deadline for Dela Rosa to surrender, Castro said authorities would continue operations if the senator failed to comply.

Castro also cited Remulla's statement that there would be "no mercy," adding that authorities must enforce the law and arrest those wanted by the law.

The senator escaped from the Senate on May 14, three days after the International Criminal Court (ICC) made an arrest warrant public.

The warrant was in connection on his alleged involvement in the war on drugs campaign under the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte. He is also charged as one of the co-perpetrators in the crimes against humanity case filed against Duterte.

OMB...

From A1

"The President submits the proposed bill to Congress, but the process then takes place within Congress, where it is difficult to track developments because lawmakers have their own timelines, especially those who want to skim funds by adding or removing items," Remulla said.

"There is no doubt that the proposed budget is not perfect when submitted, which is why there is a period for amendments. But when the process is abused in bad faith and people start playing around with public funds, that is a different matter," he added.

Remulla also criticized placing priority government projects under unprogrammed appropriations while inserting flood-control projects into the regular budget.

"The serious problem arises when they 'game' the system by placing essential government projects, including flood control, under unprogrammed appropriations. That is clearly wrong," he said.

In a 121-page decision by Senior Associate Justice Marvic M.V.F. Leonen, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress could not increase the President's proposed total appropriations, whether programmed or unprogrammed.

It struck down increases that allowed a combined P480.24 billion to be released without sufficient safeguards and said the doctrine of operative fact did not shield those responsible from possible criminal, civil or administrative liability.

Ruling intensifies budget scrutiny

The high court's ruling intensified scrutiny of the 2027 proposal, which is currently going through Congress.

At a Senate finance committee consultation on Monday, People's Budget Coalition co-convenor Adolfo Jose Montesa said the group found more than P1 trillion in potential red flags: P210 billion in patronage-driven assistance, P695 billion in politicized infrastructure and P112 billion in unprogrammed appropriations.

Montesa said the House raised funding for assistance programs from P72 billion in the National Expenditure Program to P137 billion in its appropriations bill. These include crisis, medical, livelihood and aid programs for farmers and fisherfolk.

The coalition warned that lawmakers' guarantee and referral letters could influence distribution and favor selected beneficiaries.

It proposed redirecting the increases to rules-based programs such as tertiary education subsidies and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program and barring legislators and their staff from issuing endorsements for social assistance.

Public finance specialist Zy-Za Suzara cited P499 billion in excess 2022 revenues that became unprogrammed appropriations in the 2024 and 2025 budgets.

'VP...

From A1

fellow lawmakers on a possible joint resolution expressing concern over what he described as attacks on press freedom, following the filing of cases against journalists and media organizations.

Initially, police did not disclose the complainant's identity in Lustre's case, author of the book "Kill, Kill, Kill: Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines" that documented former President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly war on drugs.

Meanwhile, Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla on Monday said the Department of Justice (DOJ) should look into the arrest of Lustre Jr. based on a warrant of arrest for a cyber libel case issued by a Davao City court.

Remulla cited multiple inconsistencies leading to Lustre's arrest. "There is a modus in the filing of the case such as giving the prosecutor the wrong address, and sometimes, the prosecutor will just have to rely on the complainant for much of the information. That should not happen," he said.

Remulla also noted that the prosecutor has a duty to conduct due diligence.

Lustre Jr. was released on Monday after posting a P48,000-bail.

Ridon said some lawmakers, including Rep. Antonio Tinio, had expressed alarm over the cases involving Lustre and broadcasters from GMA Network. He said the proposed joint resolution would convey the lawmakers' concerns over the implications of these cases for press freedom.

Ridon, a member of the House prosecution panel in the impeachment trial against the Vice President, cited Lustre's arrest on a cyber libel complaint and the separate libel case filed by Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte against certain broadcasters as examples of cases that, in his view, raise concerns about the freedom of journalists to report and express their observations.

Ridon said the cases against media practitioners must be viewed in the context of the public's right to a free press, stressing that journalists should be able to report on matters of public interest without undue pressure.

Red line must be drawn

"But I think a red line needs to be drawn regarding the filing of cases against those who are simply telling the truth, sharing their observations, or expressing views—all in the exercise of freedom of expression," Ridon said.

He also cited the closure of ABS-CBN and the filing of cases against online news site Rappler during the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte, warning against the recurrence of actions that could constrain the work of media organizations.

"As a part of Congress, we will not allow this," Ridon said, reiterating the House prosecution panel's commitment to supporting journalists and media organizations facing legal challenges.

He said the complaint against Lustre and a similar case filed by Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte against certain broadcasters are "an attack of the Dutertes against press freedom."

Ridon added that the proposed joint resolution would also draw attention to the differing implementation of arrest orders in the cases involving Lustre and Vice President Sara Duterte, whose grave threat case remains pending before a Quezon City regional trial court.

He said the Philippine National Police should explain the apparent disparity in the handling of the two cases, saying the journalist's arrest "reflects the manner by which the Philippine National Police has been implementing arrest orders on different personalities."

"The double standard on the non-arrest of the Vice President is clearly at play in the arrest of Philip Lustre," he said.

He said there are question as to why the police arrested the journalist and why the PNP did not arrest the Vice President for a grave threat case pending with a Quezon City regional trial court, where she had posted bail.

'PH:...

From A1

found that the Philippines recorded the highest cases of bullying for the last three rounds of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

He added that the EDCOM 2 also discovered that the bullying situation in the country has been the same since 2003, through a study being conducted by the Commission in the last weeks and months.

According to Yee, it is important to acknowledge that there is a lack of action taken against bullying, as children are afraid and vulnerable to it, prompting them to resort to violence.

He also said there is a need for people who will listen to children, citing the need for teachers, their parents, and people who will respond to their situation with regard to bullying.

The Executive Director said that there are instances wherein students report bullying to officials, but action takes more than a year, or does not happen at all due to the processing of papers.

Yee said the EDCOM 2 is looking into strengthening values education for students, as it is part of the formation of children's character to be respectful, have conscience, understand their fellow students, and to communicate should conflicts arise.

DepEd...

From A1

the country in the latter part of 2026 through the first half of 2027.

DepEd Memorandum No. 64, s. 2026, otherwise known as the Anticipatory Action, Preparedness, and Protective Measures for the 2026–2027 Super El Niño, contains general provisions aimed at keeping schools, students, and staff safe throughout the weather phenomenon.

Under the memorandum, DepEd offices, schools, and learning centers are required to undertake protective actions before anticipated conditions escalate.

"The anticipated El Niño poses interconnected risks to the basic education sector, particularly through prolonged heat exposure, water scarcity, disruptions to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, increased fire hazards, potential food and energy supply constraints, and adverse effects on learner and personnel health and well-being," the memorandum read.

The policy will employ the 4H framework, which outlines four levels of localized adjustments during climate disruptions: Hayo, Hinay, Hinga, and Hinto.

Under Hayo, which covers manageable conditions, face-to-face classes continue on campus, with measures such as scheduled water breaks, moving outdoor activities to early morning or shaded areas, and allowing flexible or physical education attire.

When conditions worsen and heat stress develops, Hinay calls for modified class days supported by home-based or hybrid learning.

At the Hinga level, which signifies extreme heat caution or water supply loss, academic demands are substantially reduced to prioritize well-being. Schools may use supplementary learning packets, short literacy and numeracy activities, and educational resources broadcast through DepEd TV and radio.

Diesel...

From A1

The DOE said diesel prices will increase by P1.20 per liter, while kerosene prices will rise by P0.50 per liter.

Gasoline prices, meanwhile, will decrease by P0.30 per liter.

"These changes are based on movements in the global oil market, amid ongoing developments in the Middle East that are affecting global supply and prices," the DOE said.

The department said it continues to take measures to bolster the country's oil supply and safeguard public welfare. **Darwin Amojelar**

Impeachment...

From A1

requested 30 trial days to present its evidence before prosecutors withdrew three of the four impeachment articles against Duterte.

However, Barbers said the defense had requested only eight trial days for the remaining charge involving the alleged unexplained wealth of Duterte and her husband, Manases Carpio.

If the defense sticks to that timeline, its presentation of evidence could be completed within two weeks from Nov. 9, when the trial resumes after the Senate and House of Representatives' All Saints' Day break.

"They were asking for 30 trial days, but for this article, specifically Article II on unexplained wealth, as far as I know, they requested only eight trial days," Barbers said during the Saturday News Forum at Dapo Restaurant in Quezon City.

He noted that the Senate impeachment court had been holding hearings from Monday to Friday before the recess, but said the defense could still use the full 30 days it had requested.

After the defense concludes its presentation, it will formally offer its evidence, giving the prosecution an opportunity to comment, Barbers said.

The prosecution withdrew the articles concerning alleged grave threats, misuse of confidential funds and bribery, opting to focus on unexplained wealth. In approving the withdrawal, impeachment court presiding officer Sen. Francis Escudero said the defense should limit its presentation to the remaining charge.

IN BRIEF

NTF-ELCAC urges UN probe on civilian killings

THE National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) has renewed its call for an independent international investigation into 99 reported civilian killings attributed to the New People's Army (NPA), challenging the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to address the allegations.

In a statement, the task force said the toll rose from 98 to 99 following the reported killing of Junard Mansalon, 42, of Sitio Namutang, Barangay Makilignit, Isabela, Negros Occidental, on Oct. 16. It attributed the killing to the NPA's Leonardo Panaligan Command, although the allegation has not been independently established.

NTF-ELCAC said it had documented 99 alleged killings and summary executions from 2021 to October 2026. It also cited reports that NPA units claimed responsibility for killing three civilians in Cauayan and Binalbagan, Negros Occidental, in October, allegedly accusing them of offenses including serving as government intelligence assets. **Rex Espiritu**

BI nabs three jobseekers bound for Europe

THREE male jobseekers who were promised monthly salaries of P200,000 to work as soldiers or border guards in Europe were intercepted by immigration authorities in Davao City, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) said Monday.

The men, aged 25, 50 and 51, were stopped before their scheduled departure from Davao International Airport on Oct. 17 after officers found inconsistencies in their travel plans. They initially claimed they were going to Thailand to participate in or coach a Muay Thai tournament but later admitted they intended to work in Eastern Europe.

The men said two recruiters, identified as "Alexander" and "Oleg," arranged their recruitment and paid their travel expenses. Some said they had met the recruiters through Facebook and Telegram. **Vito Barcelo**

DILG earns fifth straight accounting award, eyes Platinum Hall of Fame

THE Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Monday earned its fifth consecutive Outstanding Accounting Office award for fiscal year 2025, marking another milestone in its delivery of accurate, timely and reliable financial reports.

The Association of Government Accountants of the Philippines (AGAP) Inc. conferred the award in recognition of the DILG's adherence to standards of transparency, accountability and responsible public financial management.

DILG Assistant Secretary for Finance and Comptrollership Ester A. Aldana, Financial Management Service Director Sara Jane Cerezo, and Accounting Division Chief Nelia D. Flores received the award during AGAP's annual national convention at the SMX Convention Center in SM City Clark, Mabalacat City, Pampanga. **Vince Lopez**

VISIT AND SUPPORT PLEDGE. Philippine Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Arthur Cordura visits the wakes of four pilots killed in an SF-260 aircraft accident during a training flight in Batangas on Oct. 23, offering condolences and assuring their families of continued support.

DFA slams Remulla over visa plan

By Katrina Manubay

THE Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Monday strongly objected to Ombudsman Jesus Crispin "Boying" Remulla's call to outsource visa processing, defending its authority to issue Philippine visas.

In a statement, the department rejected Remulla's claim that it had turned the process into a business, saying his remarks unfairly malign the reputation of the Philippine Foreign Service.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) strongly objects to the recent public remarks of Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla calling for the removal of the Department's visa-issuance functions and alleging that the DFA has turned Philippine visa issuance into a business," the statement read.

"Ombudsman Remulla's remarks undermine the institutional integrity of the Department and unfairly malign the reputation of the Philippine Foreign Service and its personnel," it added.

The DFA also cited domestic and international laws to emphasize that its authority to issue visas is grounded in law. It stressed that the exercise of official judgment under applicable Philippine laws, rules, and regulations cannot be reduced to the administrative receipt and processing of documents.

Under Section 21(3), Chapter 7 (The Foreign Service), Title I, Book IV of Executive Order No. 292, or the Administrative Code of 1987, the DFA, through Philippine embassies and consulates abroad, is authorized to issue visas to foreign nationals seeking to travel to the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) provides for the issuance of visas or appropriate travel documents as a consular function, while Articles 3 and 70 recognize the exercise of consular functions by diplomatic missions.

"Contrary to the characterization of visa processing as a merely clerical function, the issuance of visas involves the substantive assessment of applications and verification of documents. These responsibilities require the exercise of official judgment pursuant to applicable Philippine laws, rules, and regulations and cannot be reduced to just the administrative receipt and processing of documents," the DFA added.

CEMETERY WALK. Tour guide Stephen Go shares the history and heritage of the Manila Chinese Cemetery during a guided Cemetery Walks heritage tour in Manila. **Richmond Chi**

VP approval, trust ratings rise slightly

By Katrina Manubay

VICE President Sara Duterte's approval and trust ratings rose in the third quarter, reaching 29 percent and 27 percent, respectively, but about five in 10 Filipinos remain dissatisfied with and distrustful of her performance, according to a survey by PUBLiCUS Asia Inc.

In the latest Pahayag poll, Duterte's approval and trust ratings were reported to have risen by one percentage point from the second quarter, when they stood at 28 percent and 26 percent, respectively.

Among the leading positive influences on public assessments of her performance, assistance provided by the Office of the Vice President (OVP) during calamities (12 percent) and the vice president's perceived presence and visibility (9 percent) continue to stand out.

Across major areas, these influences are more pronounced in Mindanao, where 21 percent cited the OVP's assistance during calamities.

Additionally, the testimonies of three OVP and Department of Education (DepEd) officials linking Army Colonel Lachica to the use of confidential funds (8 percent) have also generated positive responses from some voters.

Sandigan allows 2 DOH officials to testify in Duque, Lao graft

By Maricel V. Cruz

TWO Department of Health (DOH) officials were allowed by the Sandiganbayan Fifth Division to testify in the graft case against former Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and former Budget Undersecretary Lloyd Christopher Lao.

The case involves the alleged illegal transfer of P41 billion in DOH funds to the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two DOH officials are Dawnavi Lacsado and Abegail Conchada, administrative officers of the department's procurement unit.

According to the anti-graft court, their testimonies could help establish the respective roles of the officials in the DOH's procurement operations and the work of the COVAC Secretariat during the pandemic.

The court added that their testimonies would also help clarify the extent of their involvement in procurement-related activities, as well as the limits of their knowledge of the policy decisions involved in the controversy.

ALBAY BRIDGE. Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon inspects the Kilicao-Binitayan Bridge on Oct. 26, announcing the first two lanes will open before the weekend and the remaining two by Nov. 12, improving access and providing a safer evacuation route for nearby communities in Albay.

Gibo hits 'inhuman' posts on fatal crash

By Rex Espiritu

DEFENSE Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. on Monday condemned sarcastic and insensitive remarks about the Philippine Air Force (PAF) aircraft accident in Batangas that killed four pilots.

"It is saddening that sarcastic and inhuman comments are still being made. This is truly unacceptable and an insult to the sacrifices of our Armed Forces," Teodoro told reporters on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of the 13th Association of Asia-Pacific Peace Operations Training Centers Annual General Meeting in Makati City.

Teodoro criticized comments questioning how two aircraft could collide despite the vastness of the sky, saying these reflected a lack of understanding of military aviation.

"Some people are acting as if they know better, saying that the sky is so vast, yet the aircraft still collided. This only shows ignorance," he said.

The defense chief said the two SF-260 aircraft were conducting military training, which includes formation flying to develop pilots' tactical skills and reduce radar visibility.

"First of all, that is military training. Formation flying is a tactical skill for military aviators. The formation is made tighter. One benefit of a tight formation is that it reduces the radar target's size," he said.

Teodoro said military flying is inherently dangerous, particularly in tactical environments and at high speeds.

Fight vs. corruption collective effort—OMB

By Rex Espiritu

OMBUDSMAN Jesus Crispin Remulla has affirmed his commitment to stand alongside the Filipino people in fighting for their rights, urging citizens to speak up against abuses of authority and help hold government officials accountable.

Speaking before business leaders and industry representatives during a town hall meeting at the Casino Español de Cebu on Oct. 22, Remulla emphasized that the fight against corruption and abuse of power must be a collective effort between the government and the people it serves.

"We try to make accountability something felt by the people who matter, and the people who matter is the Filipino people. We are Filipinos so we have to put our country in order, and fight for our rights," Remulla said.

The Ombudsman stressed that Filipinos should not have to accept abuses committed by those entrusted with public office, emphasizing that citizens have a vital role in demanding accountability and protecting their rights.

"If we accede to the antics of many people in government who have a wrong idea of how to exercise power and responsibility, then things will never improve," he said.

Remulla urged the public to openly communicate their experiences and report problems encountered in dealing with government offices, stressing that information from citizens is essential in identifying abuses and addressing weaknesses in public service.

"We have to fight back by being open or by openly communicating to us what is happening on the ground," he said.

He emphasized that the Office of the Ombudsman is an institution through which Filipinos can seek accountability when public officials misuse their authority.

For Remulla, standing with the people means ensuring that their concerns are heard, that abuses are addressed, and that government systems are improved to prevent the same problems from recurring.

Drawing from his decades of experience in public service, Remulla acknowledged having witnessed how the misuse of government authority can affect ordinary Filipinos.

"I could see people enjoying power too much, enjoying it too much or exercising it with abuse, committing abuse of authority," he recalled.

He said his experience across different levels of government has given him an understanding of how bureaucratic processes and abuses of power affect citizens.

Remulla also emphasized that the Ombudsman's role goes beyond prosecuting erring officials. It includes addressing government practices that allow abuses to persist and ensuring that public institutions function in the interest of the people.

"It's really making government work better," he said.

'DON'T GHOST US.' Members of Community Organizers Multiversity (COM) wear Halloween-inspired costumes as they tout placards screaming the message, 'DHSUD, Huwag Mo Kaming I-Ghost!' during a protest demo in front of the housing agency on Monday Oct. 26, 2026. The protesters deplore alleged government failure to provide concrete answers and solution their long-standing land and housing concerns. Manny Palmero

PUP student regent sacked for non-enrolment

By Maryl De Mesa

THE Polytechnic University of the Philippines' (PUP) student regent was placed under preventive suspension from his post after admitting that he was not enrolled for the current school year.

The 26th Congress of Alyansa ng Nagkakaisang Konseho (ANAK) of the PUP held its third special meeting to discuss allegations that student regent John Paul Azusano was not enrolled for the first semester of school year 2026-2027.

During the meeting, Azusano disclosed that he was not able to enroll on time because he was busy attending to his responsibilities as the current president of the Central Student Council and newly elected student regent.

"I already expected that it wouldn't be easy. And as a student leader, you have to sacrifice—to choose between your studies and your desire to genuinely serve the students," he said.

He also said he was aware that he must be a full-time student of PUP to be able to run for positions in the student council and the ANAK PUP.

Azusano added that he was willing to step down from his position to honor the rules and regulations of the school.

Following the motion of the PUP College of Law Student Council president Russel Toribio, ANAK PUP placed Azusano in preventive suspension, pending completion of an inquiry by a fact-finding committee.

In the same meeting, the Council appointed Public Administration student council president Cherry Ubani as officer-in-charge of the Office of the Student Regent and ANAK PUP.

EDUCATORS' AWARDS. The Department of Education confers the 14th Ambassador Cabangun Chua Gintong Parangal awards to 18 outstanding teachers, school administrators, and non-teaching staff from across the country for their service integrity and hard work. Education Secretary Sonny Angara says genuine public service goes beyond fulfilling administrative requirements, and urges educators and personnel to remain grounded in their purpose. **DepEd photo**

Bill requires school CCTVs, security framework

By Maricel V. Cruz

A BILL filed at the House of Representatives requires closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems and comprehensive security plans across all educational institutions to strengthen security systems in schools nationwide.

Under the proposed House Bill 11575, or the "Campus Security Act," all levels of public and private schools must install CCTVs in strategic areas and adopt security protocols to shield students and personnel from danger and violence.

Quezon City 5th District Rep. Patrick Michael Vargas filed the bill following recent Department of Education (DepEd) reports revealing that less than half of public schools possess functional CCTVs and dedicated security guards.

This supports findings from the 2024 Philippines Global School-based Student Health Survey, which reported that 35.3 percent of students aged 13 to 17 experienced physical fights and 30.2 percent suffered from bullying on school campuses.

"A significant portion of our children's time is spent in school, away from the protection and guidance of us parents. During those times, we need to ensure that they are kept safe so that they can focus on their education," Vargas said.

"Reports of school violence and bullying occurring in various schools across the country are concerning. We must take steps to ensure that students and school personnel are always safe on their respective campuses," he added.

He said the measure mandates schools to formulate safety protocols governing access control, visitor management, and emergencies.

A review of the plans will be done every three years to ensure they are updated, he said.

CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY. Ilagan City in Isabela bags the Most Child-Friendly City at the regional level, and will represent Region 2 in the national competition with the Presidential Award at stake. 'This recognition is for all Ilagueños, for our parents, teachers, community workers, and especially for the children of Ilagan. We are not working to be child-friendly just to win awards. We do it because every child deserves a safe home, good health, quality education, and the freedom to dream big,' says Vice Mayor Jayve Diaz. **Jessica M. Bacud**

Urban poor groups demand 'decisive' action from DHSUD

By Teddy Brul

URBAN poor groups staged a protest outside the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) on Monday, accusing the agency of failing to resolve long-standing land and housing concerns despite four years of consultations.

Around 500 leaders and members of the Urban Poor Action Committee (UPAC) from Metro Manila, Rizal and Bulacan called for direct dialogue with DHSUD Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling and other officials authorized to make decisions.

Wearing white ghost costumes and carrying placards bearing the message "DHSUD, Huwag Mo Kaming I-Ghost," the protesters used the popular term "ghosting" to describe what they said was the government's failure to provide concrete answers and action on their concerns.

UPAC demanded faster implementation of presidential proclamations reserving land for socialized housing, the issuance of land titles to qualified occupants, and adequate funding to complete the process.

The group also criticized the government's Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino Program (4PH), saying its current scheme remains unaffordable for many of the poorest families.

IN BRIEF

Ensure passenger safety, transport operators told

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Monday reminded public utility vehicle (PUV) operators and drivers, particularly those plying provincial routes, to always ensure the roadworthiness of their vehicles.

The reminder came in light of the expected exodus of passengers for the observance of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, as millions of Filipinos hit the road for the traditional Undas homecoming over the long holiday break.

Acting LTFRB chairman Greg Pua Jr. said ensuring that their vehicles are properly maintained is an obligation for each operator based on the conditions stipulated in their Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) and other authority to operate.

"Always remember that your passengers pay not only for them to reach their destinations but also for the trust and confidence that they will travel safely and comfortably," Pua said. **Rio N. Araja**

18 DepEd personnel bag Gintong Parangal awards

THE Department of Education (DepEd) has awarded 18 teachers, school administrators, and non-teaching staff from basic education schools nationwide for their integrity and hard work.

In a statement, the department said the awardees were conferred the 14th Ambassador Cabangon Chua Gintong Parangal para sa Edukasyon trophies.

"The honorees are eight teachers, five school and division leaders, and five members of the administrative staff who keep schools running," DepEd said.

According to the department, the awardees hail from different parts of the country, from Cagayan to Kidapawan. **Gabriel Oliva**

PBBM told to back up Teodoro on WPS issue

A GROUP of law professors urges President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to exercise "decisive leadership" in defending Philippine sovereignty against persistent Chinese hostility.

In a statement, 33 law professors from UA&P Law said defending the Republic is a constitutional duty.

"Sovereignty is not negotiable. The rule of law is not optional. And the defense of the Republic must never be subordinated to fear of foreign displeasure," the group stressed.

They advised the President to unequivocally support Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. in confronting Chinese coercion and strengthening national defense. Pot Chavez

Further, they seek the establishment of meaningful consequences for continued Chinese hostility, noting that diplomatic protests cannot be the country's only response when unlawful conduct persists.

They also urge the investigation and prosecution of Filipinos who commit crimes in the service of a foreign power.

"Authorities must investigate credible evidence of espionage, sedition, unlawful disclosure of national defense information, and other offenses involving the advancement of Chinese propaganda or disinformation, particularly where these undermine military morale, compromise defense operations, or prejudice Philippine national security," the statement reads.

Manila Standard

Grinding Grains
Honor Blanco Cabie

Translating the soul of an archipelago

WE ARE a nation of nearly 200 languages, but our literary landscape often feels centered on a singular voice.

While Tagalog of Metro Manila and nearby provinces serves as the constitutional basis for our national language, the splendid wealth of our archipelago's imagination remains largely decentralized and out of reach for many.

Major regional tongues like Ilokano, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Waray are not mere dialects; they are the basic pillars of our collective identity.

In our shared journey to build a unified Filipino consciousness, we have a unique opportunity to ensure that the true soul of our multi-ethnic heritage is made accessible to all through the power of inclusive translation.

This literary bridge is especially vital in the digital age.

Today's younger generations are passionately tech-savvy, navigating global cyberspace with ease.

They are deeply curious about the world but frequently find themselves detached or disconnetec from the specific nuances of their own roots.

Priceless cultural anchors risk being obscured by linguistic barriers that the youth cannot easily cross.

Instance, the sweeping stanzas of the Panay-Bukidnon epic Hinilawod, or the heroic pre-colonial world views embedded in the Ilokano Biag ni Lam-ang, contain essential, if rudimentary, wisdom about environmental stewardship and community buoyancy.

If these corel texts are not readily accessible in English or a universally understood Filipino, they risk fading from the awareness of a generation that primarily reads on digital screens.

Translating marginalized literatures is a collegial act of cultural preservation.

Wider dissemination does not dilute regional heritage. Instead, it celebrates it as a national treasure. By translating these works into English and a broader Filipino vernacular, we grant regional narratives a healthy digital footprint and a global stage.

This process allows a tech-savvy student in Manila, a young professional in Cebu, or a third-generation Ilokano in Hawaii, California, Colorado or Ontario and Alberta in Canada to engage with the complex textures of their ancestry.

Translation democratizes our literature, transforming localized memories into a shared national inheritance that protects the distinct identity of regional communities.

Fulfilling this vision requires a synchronized, well-funded effort that empowers our state cultural institutions to lead the charge.

Government agencies like the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino and the National Book Development Board have already laid essential groundwork for language preservation, but they need expanded resources to accelerate this crucial process.

> *Translating marginalized literatures is a collegial act of cultural preservation*

Rather than focusing primarily on translating centralized texts outward, our national strategy should actively embrace a two-way literary expressway.

By establishing healthy, state-sponsored grants specifically designated for translating regional masterworks into English and widely spoken languages, the government can facilitate widespread digital distribution.

True diversity or open-mindedness means recognizing that a genuinely national Filipino language must be a living arras that actively weaves in the vocabulary, syntax, and literary genius of all its regions.

By treating our multilingual literature as vital national infrastructure, our cultural agencies can successfully bridge the gap between our rich past and our digital future.

Our tech-savvy youth are eager for meaningful content that speaks to their identity.

Together, by speeding up the translation of our regional roots, we can give them the words to fully understand where they came from.

From Carnegie to Claude: AI wealth could reshape philanthropy

WASHINGTON, DC – A wave of American wealth created by artificial intelligence companies could produce some of the largest charitable sums since the era of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, raising questions about where the money goes.

Anthropic, the maker of the Claude chatbot, has said it would commit 5 percent of its shares to a new Anthropic Public Benefit Fund, a stake that could be worth around $100 billion if the company reaches the $2 trillion valuation investors are eyeing for a stock market debut expected as early as November.

Combined with pledges by its seven cofounders to give away 80 percent of their equity and a program matching employees' donations, Anthropic says roughly a fifth of its shares will be dedicated to public-benefit purposes.

"This might be one of the biggest stories in corporate philanthropy ever," said Michael Moody, a professor of philanthropic studies at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

The OpenAI Foundation, the nonprofit that controls ChatGPT maker OpenAI, holds a 26 percent stake in the company that was valued at about $130 billion when it was restructured a year ago, more than the endowment of the Gates Foundation.

Nan Ransohoff of payments firm Stripe has described the moment as a "third wave" of American philanthropy, after the industrial fortunes of the late 19th century and the internet billionaires of recent decades.

'Dies disgraced'

Carnegie argued in his 1889 essay "The Gospel of Wealth" that "the man who dies thus rich dies disgraced," and by his death had given away the bulk of his fortune, about $350 million.

Carnegie transferred what remained into a trust, which has continued to make grants for more than a century.

Rockefeller's money built universities and funded medical research and public health campaigns around the world.

Railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt gave comparatively little, apart from the $1 million that founded the university bearing his name.

Anthropic is setting up its fund as a limited liability company that it wholly owns, rather than as a nonprofit foundation, which must pay out a minimum share of its assets each year and file public tax returns.

"The trade-off is that decision-making stays with the company and transparency is voluntary," said Sarah Wolfolds, who studies nonprofit organizations at Cornell University's SC Johnson College of Business.

Anthropic has said the fund's equity will not be used for lobbying or political giving and that it will report on its activities.

'Where the money is'

Many Anthropic founders and staff have close ties to effective altruism, a movement that favors causes such as AI safety and global health because of their measurable impact.

> *Research on cash transfers is encouraging, but 'the harder challenge may be identifying who has been affected by AI'*

"Nonprofits tend to reorient their programs toward where the money is," Wolfolds said, warning that other causes can become neglected.

Moody said the philanthropic world would be "looking closely at which causes they support," including whether research funding is limited to AI.

Laura McGarry, of fundraising consultancy Graham-Pelton, said the charities best placed to benefit are those that already have relationships with the newly wealthy.

"It's really about values alignment," she said, adding that charities that court the newly rich only after their big payday risk looking transactional.

Effective altruism has shaped some donors' giving but has not "dramatically upset the apple cart," she said.

Anthropic has said the fund could make payments directly to groups affected by AI's impact on jobs, without giving details.

Research on cash transfers is encouraging, Wolfolds said, but "the harder challenge may be identifying who has been affected by AI."

Such payments should complement, not replace, unemployment insurance and retraining programs, she said.

One child, one share

Elon Musk, the world's richest person, whose SpaceX owns rival AI developer xAI, criticized Anthropic's approach.

"I recommend giving the shares directly to the public," he wrote on X.

As an alternative, Musk pledged one of his SpaceX shares to every American child next year, a gift worth about $10.5 billion.

US President Donald Trump praised the move as fitting the philosophy behind his "Trump Accounts," government-backed investment accounts for children born between 2025 and 2028. Billionaires Michael and Susan Dell have pledged billions to the program. **AFP**

EDITORIAL

Unmasking Beijing's geopolitical blackmail

THE Chinese Embassy in Manila has dropped all pretenses of diplomatic propriety, shifting from maritime bully to graft-monger.

Following reports that Beijing plans to sanction Filipino lawmakers for defending our sovereignty, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. delivered a blunt, necessary counterpunch.

These threatened sanctions – targeting trade, tourism, and consular ties – are not a sign of strength, but a desperate, deliberate sideshow.

As Teodoro aggressively put it, Beijing can do whatever it wants, but no amount of economic coercion changes the central, unyielding reality: China has zero legal rights in the West Philippine Sea, Ayungin Shoal, or Bajo de Masinloc.

Beijing's escalating hostility exposes its profound legal bankruptcy.

By weaponizing its state apparatus against elected lawmakers, China is attempting to hollow out Philippine democracy from the inside out.

This psychological warfare is designed to manufacture fear and force a submissive foreign policy. However, Teodoro's defiance rightly shifts the spotlight back to the facts that Beijing systematically avoids.

Chief among these is the historic 2016 Arbitral Ruling issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

> ***We must present a cast-iron, united front that transforms Beijing's bullying into a stimulus for deeper domestic resilience***

This landmark decision overwhelmingly invalidated China's expansive "nine-dash line" and explicitly ruled that Beijing had violated the Philippines' sovereign rights within its 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone.

China refuses to answer these binding legal truths because it cannot.

We must also fiercely back Teodoro's demand for the Chinese Embassy to name the Filipino politicians it claims are dealing with Beijing.

By using its official Facebook page to broadcast vague, toxic insinuations, the embassy is actively engaging in overt political destabilization and violating Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which strictly forbids interference in an internal system.

If Beijing has names, it must disclose them immediately; if it cannot, it stands exposed as a double-dealing actor weaponizing misinformation to divide our nation.

Filipinos cannot afford to be passive spectators to this creeping subversion. Supporting Secretary Teodoro and our lawmakers is a matter of national survival.

We must present a cast-iron, united front that transforms Beijing's bullying into a stimulus for deeper domestic resilience.

The 2016 Arbitral Ruling is our legal anchor.

Our democratic institutions are our shield.

We must make it unmistakably clear to China's ravenous diplomats that the Philippines will never be intimidated into surrendering its sovereign inheritance.

Citizen Barok
Louis 'Barok' Biraogo

Will the crooks finally pay the price?

THERE is something deliciously inconvenient about an Ombudsman who reminds government officials that their desks are not private tollbooths, their signatures are not merchandise, and their offices are not kingdoms where businessmen must pay tribute before a permit is released.

Enter Ombudsman Jesus Crispin "Boying" Remulla, who has declared war on bureaucratic extortion through an Investors' Window for businesses facing alleged shakedowns, abuse of authority, and unreasonable permit delays.

He has warned that officials who ignore notices from the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) could face preventive suspension.

He has also announced plans to remove one or two mayors in Cavite.

Suddenly, the prospect of accountability has become considerably less theoretical—and potentially more uncomfortable for those accustomed to treating public office as a private franchise.

The Philippines does not lack anti-corruption laws.

Republic Act 11032, the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act, targets red tape and prohibited practices.

Republic Act 3019, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, provides additional grounds for pursuing specified abuses of public office. What has too often been missing is the political will to turn these legal instruments into consequences that corrupt officials cannot simply ignore.

Every entrepreneur knows the peculiar economics of government delay. An application is complete, fees have been paid, and requirements supposedly satisfied.

Yet the permit remains trapped somewhere between a clerk's desk and an official's unexplained reluctance to sign. Come back tomorrow, the applicant is told.

Tomorrow becomes next week, next week becomes next month, and the business bleeds money while someone else controls the clock.

Not every delay is corruption. Some applications are defective; some inspections uncover legitimate safety violations; some offices are understaffed or poorly managed.

But deliberately withholding a lawful service to extract money is not mere inefficiency. It is the conversion of public authority into private profit.

Remulla's initiative deserves credit for recognizing that problem.

His promise of preventive suspension, however, must be understood within the law. Section 24 of Republic Act 6770, the Ombudsman Act of 1989, requires strong evidence of guilt and at least one statutory circumstance before preventive suspension may be ordered.

An ARTA notice may contribute to the evidence, but it does not automatically justify suspension in every case.

> *The public needs case files, not a preview of political funerals*

A licensing officer who demands a bribe is not equivalent to one who refuses to approve a restaurant that genuinely fails fire-safety requirements.

The first deserves investigation; the second must not be punished for protecting the public.

Speed matters. So does due process. The strongest enforcement action is one that survives judicial scrutiny.

Then there is Cavite, where Remulla says one or two mayors will be removed.

His familiarity with the province is no small detail. He served as Cavite governor from 2016 to 2019 and previously represented the province in Congress.

His brother, Jonvic Remulla, is now interior and local government secretary, while his son, Francisco Gabriel "Abeng" Remulla, is Cavite's governor.

These family and political connections do not prove favoritism or wrongdoing. They do, however, make transparency and impartiality especially important.

If Remulla has evidence of misconduct, he should follow it wherever it leads.

But under the Local Government Code and the applicable rules governing the Ombudsman's powers, an elected mayor cannot be removed simply because an official announces an intention to do so.

Investigation, proper proceedings, evidence, and legally authorized sanctions must do the work. The public needs case files, not a preview of political funerals.

Remulla's political history also invites scrutiny.

Senator Imee Marcos previously questioned his appointment in terms of alleged political maneuvering against Vice President Sara Duterte.

That allegation is not proof that the Ombudsman is acting as anyone's political instrument.

But the best answer to suspicions of selective justice is not another declaration of independence. It is a record of impartial enforcement: allies and adversaries investigated under the same standards, credible complaints pursued without political favoritism, and decisions explained through evidence.

Nor should the Investors' Window become a VIP entrance reserved for large corporations with lawyers and influential friends.

Small entrepreneurs, market vendors, neighborhood restaurants, and first-time business owners deserve access too. Complaints should be tracked, timelines disclosed, and anonymized results published.

The government should also digitize permit applications, publish clear requirements, and require written explanations for denials. Punishing corruption is necessary; redesigning systems to make corruption harder is better.

The objective is not to make government approve everything. It is to make officials approve what the law requires, reject what legitimate standards prohibit, explain their decisions, and never sell the answer.

Remulla has identified an enemy that thrives between public authority and private desperation.

Now he must demonstrate that the Investors' Window is more than a promising announcement. If crooked officials are implicated, pursue them. If powerful allies are implicated, pursue them too. If the evidence clears a respondent, acknowledge that result.

The Ombudsman's authority will not be measured by how many mayors he threatens to remove, but by how many defensible decisions he delivers—and whether the law is applied without fear or favor.

Open the window, Mr. Ombudsman.

Let the complaints come in. Follow the evidence, resist political pressure, and make accountability real.

The Philippines has never suffered from a shortage of officials promising to clean house. It has suffered from the astonishing durability of the dirt.

Manila Standard

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Brazil's Lula clinches poll victory

BRASILIA – Brazil's leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva pulled off a dramatic comeback on Sunday as he clinched a re-election victory, but his rival Flavio Bolsonaro refused to accept the loss and said he would seek to annul the vote.

With Lula's victory, Brazil staved off a conservative wave that has seen numerous countries -- such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru -- all shift right, backed by US President Donald Trump.

The leftist icon, who turns 81 on Tuesday, defied projections to win an unprecedented fourth term.

According to official results, he won 51.8 percent of the votes to 48.2 percent for Flavio Bolsonaro, with Lula pulling around 4.4 million more votes.

The senator is the son of former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, who is serving a 27-year jail term for attempting a coup after his loss to Lula in the country's last election in 2022.

Sunday's vote was marked by confusion after a Supreme Court ruling extended voting by two hours as some polling stations had already closed.

The move came at the request of Lula who complained that buses had been pulled from circulation in various cities, barring citizens from voting.

Flavio Bolsonaro also requested an extension in some regions due to heavy rains, but he described the decision as "unacceptable" and a "dirty trick"

"It is impossible to recognize the results. I am going to request the annulment of these elections," he said, stone-faced, in a brief speech in Brasilia.

No candidate who lost the first round has gone on to win the second in Brazil since 1989, the first direct election after the end of the country's military dictatorship.

"People went to vote because we managed to convince them that voting was very important for ensuring democracy in the country," Lula said in his first comments after the win.

Fireworks and vuvuzelas rang out in Rio de Janeiro, while thousands of people dressed in red, the color of Lula's Workers' Party, streamed into the streets of Sao Paulo to celebrate. **AFP**

LULA'S FIGHT BACK. A couple kisses during celebrations by supporters of Brazil's President and presidential candidate Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva following the results of the presidential runoff election in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Monday (Manila time). Lula da Silva pulled off a dramatic comeback as he clinched election victory against right-wing senator Flavio Bolsonaro, who trounced him in the first round. AFP

Saudi coalition says intercepted missile after Houthis hit airport

RIYADH – The Saudi-led military coalition said Monday it intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthis, after the Iran-backed group claimed a new attack on the international airport in Riyadh.

The operation came a day after explosions rattled the Saudi capital and authorities sent text messages to residents warning them of a "hostile aerial threat" targeting the city.

The Houthis have carried out waves of strikes on the King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, including an attack this month that killed 13 people and wounded more than 300, the deadliest in the kingdom in more than a decade.

Coalition spokesman Turki Al-Malki said air defences "intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile" fired by the Houthis toward Riyadh, and destroyed two ballistic missile launchers in Yemen's capital Sanaa.

"We continue the process of dismantling the ballistic missile network of the terrorist Houthi militia," Al-Malki wrote on X. **AFP**

China's Xi kicks off key CPP meeting on governance

BEIJING – China's President Xi Jinping opened a key meeting of Communist Party elites in Beijing on Monday, state media said, which observers will be closely watching for clues as to the country's direction and future leadership.

Roughly 300 members of the ruling Communist Party's Central Committee in attendance at the meeting, called the fifth plenum, will be looking to tighten discipline within their ranks, according to state media.

That includes measures to reduce corruption and make cadres more effective and loyal.

Xi opened the session on Monday, presenting a draft decision by the Central Committee that "sets out strategic plans for strengthening full and rigorous Party self-governance", state news agency Xinhua reported.

Few details from the closed-door gathering, held under tight security, will be made known until it concludes on Thursday, but the timing of the meeting is crucial.

The fifth plenum comes ahead of a major party congress next year, where 73-year-old Xi is almost certain to secure a historic fourth term and oversee a leadership reshuffle.

Previous plenums have represented key moments for Xi to cement his authority.

The Chinese leader has waged a 14-year campaign against corruption that has purged thousands of officials, including dozens of the Central Committee.

Yet he remains frustrated with cadres he deems are not implementing his orders.

State media published an article ahead of the plenum, based on a speech Xi gave in January in which he railed against "two-faced" officials who appear to comply with central directives but "inwardly resist", pursue "individualism" and are "politically opportunistic". **AFP**

Machado returns from exile to happy crowds in Venezuela

CARACAS – Maria Corina Machado, Venezuela's opposition leader and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, made a surprise return home on Sunday after nearly a year in exile, drawing jubilant crowds in a direct challenge to the US-backed interim government.

Thousands of people lined highways, toll plazas and city streets waving Venezuelan flags and chanting "Liberty!" as Machado entered Caracas in a convoy of cars and motorbikes.

Wearing her trademark white T-shirt and blue jeans, she leaned through the sunroof of a vehicle to wave to the crowds and shake hands with her supporters.

In Guacara earlier, AFP witnessed Machado singing the national anthem as supporters packed out a plaza, waving flags and cheering her return.

A woman shouted "Maria, if you come back, my daughter has to come back!" referring to one of the millions of Venezuelans who have fled repression and a moribund economy.

Her return puts Venezuela's most influential opposition figure back at the center of the country's tumultuous politics.

Machado slipped out of the country last December to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, after spending nearly a year in hiding.

Since then the 59-year-old had made at least seven unsuccessful attempts to return to Venezuela, according to sources in her party. **AFP**

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ORIENTAL MINDORO
Capitol Complex, Calapan City 5200, Oriental Mindoro
PROCUREMENT DIVISION
Bids and Awards Committee
For Infrastructure

NOTICE OF AWARD

September 21, 2026

MR. GEEFY P. EVANGELISTA
Authorized Managing Officer
RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS, INC.
Suite B 3rd Floor Sentro Kapitolyo Bldg.,
59 West Capitol Drive Corner Stella Mariz Street Kapitolyo Pasig City

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to **BAC Resolution No. 048 Series of 2026**, we are happy to notify you that the contract for the **Construction of Calapan City Active Transport and Side Walk at New Capitol Complex, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro (Source (Aggregates): Tigkan, Naujan; Type of Structure: Active Transport and Side Walk; Work Description; Replacement/Concreting of shoulder as Bike Lanes(C5 Road), Construction of Drainage Canal (New Capitol), Concreting of Bike Lanes(New Capitol), Concreting of Sidewalks(New Capitol), Construction of Plant Boxes (New Capitol), Stamp Concrete Topping of Side walks (New Capitol), Polyurethane Floor Coating of Bike Lanes, Slope Protection (New Capitol))** is hereby awarded to your firm as the Bidder with the **Single Calculated Responsive Bid** at a contract price equivalent to **SEVENTY THREE MILLION ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN THOUSAND SIXTY NINE PESOS AND 20/100 ONLY (Php 73,115,069.20).**

Item No.	Description	Quantity/Unit		Unit Cost	Total Cost
A.1.1 (10)	Provision of Living Quarters for the Engineer (Rental basis)	5.20	month	11,340.00	58,968.00
B.5	Project Billboard/ Sign Board	1.00	ea	5,073.03	5,073.03
B.7 (1)	Occupational Safety and Health Program	5.20	mo.	51,147.92	265,969.18
B9	Mobilization/ Demobilization	1.00	l.s	76,938.86	76,938.86
101(3)b3	Removal of Actual Structures/ObstrutEion (PCCP-0.23M THK) (Unreinforced)	2,110.50	sq.m.	175.76	370,941.48
102(2)	Roadway Excavation (Surplus Common)	930.00	cu.m	181.98	169,241.40
103(1)a	Structure Excavation (Common soil)	3,019.67	cu.m	312.41	943,375.10
105(1)a	Subgrade Preparation (Common Material)	3,720.00	sq.m.	20.30	75,516.00
200(1)	Aggregate Subbase Course	347.20	cu.m	832.02	288,877.34
311(1)a	PCCP - 150mm thk (Unreinforced)	3,720.00	sq m.	913.52	3,398,294.40
404(1)a	Reinforcing Steel Bars, Grade 40	215,947.27	kg	78.86	17,029,601.71
405(1)a3	Structural Concrete Class A, 28 days	1,690.67	cu.m.	7,518.58	14,216,657.36
503(1)	Metal Frames & Grating	542.00	set	1,423.31	771,434.02
506(1)	Stone Masonry	388.79	cu.m.	4,326.54	1,682,115.49
605	Standard Road Signs	91.00	ea.	10,866.53	989,036.23
SPL	Polyurethane Floor Coating, Red (with Surface Correction)	10,976.00	sq.m.	1,179.00	12,940,704.00
804(4)	Gravel Fill	1,714.86	cu.m.	1,260.78	2,162,061.19
807(2)	Softscape	1.00	l.s.	1,093,158.72	1,093,158.72
807(7)	Garden Soil	208.34	cu.m.	1,438.71	299,740.84
900(1)c2	Structural Concrete for Slab on Fill (Class A, 28 days)	1,090.37	cu.m.	6,418.32	6,998,343.58
1021(2)	Stamped Concrete	5,523.68	sq.m.	1,410.51	7,791,205.68
1027(1)	Cement Plaster Finish	2,292.32	sq.m.	147.14	337,291.96
1046(2)a1	100mm CHB Non Load Bearing Wall (including Reinforcing Steel)	1,409.04	sq.m.	816.53	1,150,523.43
				Total Php 73,115,069.20	

The project shall be completed within **One Hundred Fifty Six (156) calendar days**, in accordance with the approved plans, specifications, and program of work.

You are therefore, required within ten (10) days from the receipt of this Notice of Award, to formally enter into a contract with the Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro.

You are also required to submit the **Performance Security** in any of the following forms and amount stipulated in the hereunder schedule. Failure to enter into said contract or provide the Performance Security shall constitute sufficient ground for cancellation of this award and forfeiture of your Bid Security.

PERFORMANCE SECURITY	
Form of Performance Security	Amount of Performance Security (Equal to Percentage of the Total Contract Price)
1. Cash or cashier's/manager's check issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank.	Ten percent (10%)
2. Bank draft/guarantee or irrevocable letter of credit issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank: Provided, however, that it shall be confirmed or authenticated by a Universal or Commercial Bank, if issued by a foreign bank.	
3. Surety bond callable upon demand issued by a surety or insurance company duly certified by the Insurance Commission as authorized to issue such security	Thirty percent (30%)

Please signify your acceptance of Award by affixing your signature below.

Very truly yours,

By Authority of the Governor:

EnP JOSE MARIA S. DALUPAN
Executive Assistant IV

CONFORME:

RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS, INC.

By:

MR. GEEFY P. EVANGELISTA
Authorized Managing Officer

Date: September 21, 2026

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ORIENTAL MINDORO
Provincial Capitol Complex, Calapan 5200, Oriental Mindoro
PROCUREMENT DIVISION
Bids and Awards Committee
for Infrastructure

BAC RESOLUTION DECLARING SINGLE CALCULATED RESPONSIVE BID (SCRB) AND RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AWARD OF THE CONTRACT (INFRASTRUCTURE)

Resolution No. 048, Series of 2026

WHEREAS, there is an infrastructure project funded through the **DoTR GAA 2026** to be undertaken by the Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro for the **Construction of Calapan City ActiveTransport and Side Walk at New Capitol Complex, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro (Source(Aggregates): Tigkan, Naujan; Type of Structure: Active Transport and Side Walk; Work Description: Replacement/Concreting of Shoulder as Bike Lane(C5 Road) Construction of Drainage Canal (New Capitol) Concreting of Bike Lanes (New Capitol) Concreting of Side Walks (New Capitol) Construction of Plant Boxes(New Capitol) Stamp Concrete Topping of Side Walks (New Capitol) Polyurethane Floor Coating of Bike Lanes Slope Protection (New Capitol).**

WHEREAS, the Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro thru its Bids and Awards Committee advertised the Notice of Invitation to Bid (IB No. CW-2026-057) in PhilGEPS Website on **August 10, 2025** and posted in the Provincial Capitol Complex, Bulletin Board, Camilmil, Calapan City on even date for the **Construction of Calapan City ActiveTransport and Side Walk at New Capitol Complex, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro (Source(Aggregates): Tigkan, Naujan; Type of Structure: Active Transport and Side Walk; Work Description: Replacement/Concreting of Shoulder as Bike Lane(C5 Road) Construction of Drainage Canal (New Capitol) Concreting of Bike Lanes (New Capitol) Concreting of Side Walks (New Capitol) Construction of Plant Boxes(New Capitol) Stamp Concrete Topping of Side Walks (New Capitol) Polyurethane Floor Coating of Bike Lanes Slope Protection (New Capitol).**

WHEREAS, in response to the said advertisement, **one (1) prospective bidder/contractor** submitted application for eligibility and purchased bid documents;

1. **RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC**

WHEREAS, the opening of bid was held at BAC Office, Provincial Capitol Complex, Calapan City on **September 07, 2026**, the bids were received until **8:30 am** and opened thereafter in accordance with the provisions of **R.A. 12009** otherwise known as "**Government Procurement Reform Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations**";

WHEREAS, during the opening of Bid on **September 07, 2026** eligibility check was conducted to one bidder/contractor mentioned above and were found eligible by the BAC;

WHEREAS, the bid proposals submitted by **RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.** was examined and found substantially complied with the technical and financial proposals, thereby making the bid proposals passed the preliminary examination of bid as the bid price read out as:

Bidder/Contractor	Bid Price As Read	Approved Budget for the Contract	% Variance from ABC
RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.	73,115,069.20	73,205,842.26	0.12%

WHEREAS, the detailed evaluation of bids conducted on **September 07, 2026** found out that bid price of **RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.** is deemed the most advantageous to the government and no minor arithmetic correction has been made and therefore, found to be the **Single Calculated Bid**;

Bidder/Contractor	Single Calculated Responsive Bid	Approved Budget for the Contract	% Variance from ABC
RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.	73,115,069.20	73,205,842.26	0.12%

WHEREAS, upon careful examination, validation and verification of eligibility, technical, financial requirements submitted by **RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.** with **Single Calculated Bid**, its bid passed the post qualification process conducted on **September 16, 2026** thereby making its bid found to be responsive;

NOW, THEREFORE, We the Members of the Bids and Awards Committee, in our meeting on **September 18, 2026** hereby **RESOLVE**, as it is hereby **RESOLVED:**

a) To declare **RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.** with business address at **Suite B 3rd Floor setro Kapitlyo Bldg. # 59 West Capitol Drive corner Stella Mariz Street Kapitolyo Pasig City** as the bidder with **Single Calculated Responsive Bid.**

b) To recommend that Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro represented by the Provincial Governor enter into a contract with **RHODIUM 688 BUILDERS INC.** for the **Construction of Calapan City ActiveTransport and Side Walk at New Capitol Complex, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro (Source(Aggregates): Tigkan, Naujan; Type of Structure: Active Transport and Side Walk; Work Description: Replacement/Concreting of Shoulder as Bike Lane(C5 Road) Construction of Drainage Canal (New Capitol) Concreting of Bike Lanes (New Capitol) Concreting of Side Walks (New Capitol) Construction of Plant Boxes(New Capitol) Stamp Concrete Topping of Side Walks (New Capitol) Polyurethane Floor Coating of Bike Lanes Slope Protection (New Capitol)** at a contract price equivalent to **SEVENTY THREE MILLION ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN THOUSAND SIXTY NINE PESOS AND 20/100 ONLY (Php 73,115,069.20).**

c) To recommend to **HUMERLITO A. DOLOR**, Provincial Governor of Oriental Mindoro the approval of award and of contract to the bidder with Single Calculated Responsive Bid.

APPROVED:

JUNIELO P. ALCURAN
BAC Member

VINSCENT B. DAHOL
BAC Member

REYWEL M. DELA ROCA
BAC Member

ROMEO L. PANER
BAC Vice Chairperson

RECOMMENDING APPROVAL:

ATTY. EARL LISORIO R. TURANO II
BAC Chairperson

APPROVED:

HUMERLITO A. DOLOR, MPA, PH.D.
Provincial Governor

Career Opportunity in **BRIGHTCUPS CORPORATION**

Position Title: GENERAL MANAGER

Job Description:

- GRADUATE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WHICH OVERSEEING THE OVERALL OPERATION OF THE COMPANY

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

- PRIMARILY CONCERN WITH RESOUTCE ALLOCATION, DETERMINING HOW RESOURCE WILL BE UTILIZED TO ACHIEVE THE COMPANY OBJECTIVE

Applications may be sent to:
BRIGHTCUPS CORPORATION
brightcupscorp18@yahoo.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: **BRIGHTCUPS CORPORATION** Complete Address: **KM 26 FIBERTEX COMPOUND BRGY DOLORES TAYTYA RIZAL** Nature of Business: **MANUFACTURER OF PAPER CUPS & BOWLS**	**Name of Foreigner: WEI LIN** Address: **Unit 171 The Mariden Tower1 27th Street Corner 9th Avenue BGC, Taguig City Philippines** Nationality: **CHINESE** Intended Period of Employment: **Three (3) years**

BRIGHTCUPS CORPORATION hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the **Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.**

amazon

Career Opportunity in **Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI)**

Position title: Accounting Assistant II

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:
- Working on complex vendor inquiries and resolving the queries in a time bound manner
- Meet or exceed applicable metrics of the process assigned.
- Working on underlying issues and fixing the root cause/s
- Manage vendor queries via inbound email and outbound calls.
- Maintain customer relationships by responding timely and accurately to both internal (company) and external (vendor directly) questions and requests for information.

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

- Minimum of 2 years graduate certificate.
- Amicable to take Inbound and Outbound calls and if necessary work overtime.
- Proficient in the European language.
- For non-native speakers - he/she must hold relevant certification in the language that is required to be used as a mode of communication with the customers. Or equivalent experience in using the language in a day-to-day manner.
- For native speakers - he/ she will be required to go through English assessment test during the interview process.

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

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

Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPI). hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the **Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region** located at **967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila**.

Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired for, may file an objection at **Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila** after this publication

Please inform Department of Labor and Employment – NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.

Career Opportunity in: **WESTSIDE WORLD RESORTS MANAGEMENT, INC.**
(Formerly: Brightleisure Management, Inc.)

Position Title: **Sous Chef**
(1 Vacancy)

Job Description:

The **Sous Chef** is responsible for supporting the Chef de Cuisine in overseeing daily kitchen operations across assigned outlets within the Integrated Resort. This role ensures the efficient preparation and execution of high-quality dishes in accordance with established menus, recipes, and sanitation standards. The Sous Chef supervises kitchen staff, maintains food quality and consistency, and supports smooth culinary operations for restaurant, banquet, and gaming-related food service requirements while upholding the resort's culinary standards and reputation.

Qualifications:

- At least college level, Relevant operational experience may be considered in lieu of formal academic qualifications. Basic English (speaking).
- 8–10+ years (minimum 4 years as Sous Chef or higher).
- Familiar with the labor market in the Philippines.
- Expertise in authentic Chinese roasting (duck, pigeon, char siu, chicken) and preparation/barbecuing of suckling pig.
- Passion for food, creativity, and delivering exceptional guest experiences.
- Knowledge in food safety and hygiene standards.

Applications may be sent to:
Karen Ramos
careers@newportworldresorts.com

Company/Employer:	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position: **Sous Chef**
Name: **Westside World Resorts Management, Inc.** (Formerly: Brightlesure Management, Inc.) Address: **10/F, NECC Bldg., Newport Blvd. Newport City, Brgy. 183, Pasay City, 1309** Nature of Business: **Management Service**	Name: **Chen, Rongsong** Addresses: **9/F, NECC Building, Newport Blvd. Newport City, Brgy. 183, Pasay City, 1309** Nationality: **Chinese** Intended period of employment: **Two (2) yrs.**

Westside World Resorts Management, Inc. (Formerly: **Brightleisure Management, Inc.**) hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, ad qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has no intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the **Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE Central), Bureau of Local Employment (BLE)** – 3/F, DOLE Central Bldg., Gen. Luna cor. Muralla Streets., Intramuros, Manila.

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

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

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

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

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Apo showdown sets stage for fierce golf finale

DAVAO CITY—One last tournament. One final push. And a season's worth of ambition hanging in the balance.

The Ladies Philippine Golf Tour's 2026 campaign reaches its peak Tuesday (Oct. 27) as the ICTSI Apo Golf Classic blasts off at Apo Golf and Country Club, where the battle for the P1.25-million championship will be matched by an equally compelling fight for the coveted Order of Merit crown.

For Yvon Bisera, it is a chance to erase the sting of recent setbacks and validate a season of hard work with the biggest prize of all. For Tiffany Lee and Harmie Constantino, it is one final opportunity to strengthen their respective title bids, while Chanelle Avaricio hopes to cap another consistent campaign with a late surge that could give her a backdoor shot at the season honors.

With the campaign down to its final regular-tour stop, the Apo championship promises a high-stakes showdown where fortunes could shift, contenders could rise and the OOM race could be decided in dramatic fashion.

The stakes extend beyond the leading protagonists. The 24-player field is out to seize its share of the spotlight, build momentum and gain a timely confidence boost ahead of next month's Match Play Championship at Anvaya Cove Golf Club in Bataan, the tour's season-ending special event.

But the spotlight will fall squarely on Bisera, Lee, Constantino, and Avaricio, whose contrasting campaigns have set up a compelling battle of nerve, skill and resolve.

And Apo is hardly a venue for the fainthearted.

Its tight fairways, strategically placed hazards, thick rough and undulating surfaces demand more than raw power. Precision off the tee, accuracy into the greens, sound course management and a steady putting touch will be essential, with even the slightest lapse capable of turning a promising round into a costly struggle.

Following the South Pacific leg, Bisera continues to lead the OOM standings with P620,400, followed by Lee with P583,350. Rounding out the top five are Constantino with P537,100, Avaricio with P504,850, and reigning OOM titlist Sarah Ababa with P418,950.

Bisera knows better than most what it takes to win this season. She surged to the top of the OOM standings with contrasting victories at the opening leg at Lakewood and the Pradera Verde championship, only to see her momentum checked by runner-up finishes at Summit Point and Pueblo de Oro, followed by a fourth-place effort at South Pacific Golf Club, her home course.

Now, she gets another shot at redemption – and at turning a season of sustained excellence into an OOM breakthrough.

Receiving Copy

08 OCT 2026
2:47pm

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
COMPANY REGISTRATION AND MONITORING DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:

AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC. SEC CRMD Case No: 26-3744 (REV
SEC Registration No. 012210

PETITION FOR REVIVAL OF CORPORATE EXISTENCE

PETITIONER, through the undersigned directors and officers unto the Honorable Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") *En Banc*, most respectfully states that:

1. This is a Petition for Revival of ***AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.***'s corporate existence under Section 11 of Republic Act No. 11232, otherwise known as the Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines ("RCC");

2. ***AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.***, the original Corporation, was a domestic stock corporation duly organized with the Commission on January 4, 1957, with Company Registration No. **012210** as stated in its Certificate of Incorporation *(Annex "A")*, and with principal address in Manila, Philippines. Its primary purpose was to acquire, hold and dispose of by purchase, sale, exchange, mortgage, lease or otherwise, conditionally or absolutely, real estate or any interest therein; deposit or invest its fund in any banking institutions, building and loan associations, or real estate corporations and to withdraw or dispose of any deposits or investments so made; engage in the business of financing, underwriting, promoting managing, administering or assisting in any operation or business whose underlying securities or assets consist chiefly of real property or any interest therein; and promote finance underwrite contract for, manage, or administer, alone or jointly with others, any building operations, mortgage bond issues, subdivisions, real estate developments or any other transactions involving rights to real estate or any interest therein

3. Petitioner ***AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.***, represented by President Alberto V. Hidalgo, most respectfully manifests that:

a. Petitioner is a duly registered corporation under the Philippine Laws, with SEC Registration No. 012210 and with principal office address at Manila, Philippines. Copies of the (original) Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws are hereto attached as *Annexes "A" and "A-1)*.

b. Petitioner's corporate term, per its Articles of Incorporation, expired on January 30, 2007.

c. Upon recommendation of the former legal counsel, the Expired Corporation who was then managed by the second generation of Hidalgo siblings, applied for re-registration and the same was granted by the Commission on December 04, 2009 under SEC Registration No. CS200918540, using the same name AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.*(Annex "B")*.

d. That in 2017, the new Company with SEC Registration no. CS200918540, amended its Corporate name and purpose to ARLAC CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, INC., then subsequently amended to HRBO REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORP. on February 8, 2017. *(Annexes "C" and "C-1")*

e. Petitioner now prays for the revival of the corporate term of the original Corporation ***AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.***, pursuant to Section 11 of Republic Act No 11232 (Revised Corporation Code) and SEC MC No. 23, series of 2019.

4. The revival of corporate term of AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC. has been approved by stockholders owning at least 55% of the outstanding capital stock of the new Company.

5. The reconciliation of the changes in the composition of the stockholders are as follows:

Stockholders as of date of expiration of term (January 30, 2007)

Name	Citizenship	Shares Subscribed	Amount	Paid-Up
Alberto V. Hidalgo	Filipino	558	55,800.00	55,800.00
Cecilia H. Ocampo	Filipino	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Raul V. Hidalgo	Filipino	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Alfonso V. Hidalgo	American	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Manuel V. Hidalgo	American	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Carmela H. Luangdilok	American	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Ramon M. Hidalgo	Filipino	667	66,700.00	66,700.00
Angelina H. Roco	Filipino	667	66,700.00	66,700.00
Lourdes M. Hidalgo	Filipino	667	66,700.00	66,700.00
Patricia M. Hidalgo	American	666	66,600.00	66,600.00
Maria Anna H. Laurel	American	666	66,600.00	66,600.00
Ma. Luisa H. TinioBayot	Filipino	1,667	166,700.00	166,700.00
David H. Tinio	Filipino	1,667	166,700.00	166,700.00
TOTAL		**10,000**	**1,000,00.00**	**1,000,000.00**

Stockholders as of date of approval of the Resolution to file the Petition

Name	Citizenship	Shares Subscribed	Amount	Paid-Up
Alberto V. Hidalgo	Filipino	558	55,800.00	55,800.00
Estate of Cecilia H. Ocampo	Filipino	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Estate of Raul V. Hidalgo	Filipino	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Alfonso V. Hidalgo	American	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Manuel V. Hidalgo	American	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Carmela H. Luangdilok	American	555	55,500.00	55,500.00
Ramon M. Hidalgo	Filipino	667	66,700.00	66,700.00
Angelina H. Roco	Filipino	667	66,700.00	66,700.00
Lourdes M. Hidalgo	Filipino	667	66,700.00	66,700.00
Patricia M. Hidalgo	American	666	66,600.00	66,600.00
Maria Anna H. Laurel	American	666	66,600.00	66,600.00
Ma. Luisa H. TinioBayot	Filipino	1,667	166,700.00	166,700.00
David H. Tinio	Filipino	1,667	166,700.00	166,700.00
TOTAL		**10,000**	**1,000,00.00**	**1,000,000.00**

6. That two of the former stockholders are deceased, the Death Certificates of Cecilia H. Ocampo and Raul V. Hidalgo are submitted herein as supporting evidence. *(Annexes "D" and "E")*.

7. The following are the duly elected Directors/Officers of the Petitioner and have authorized the filing of this Petition:

Alberto V. Hidalgo	Chairman & President
Ramon M. Hidalgo	Corporate Secretary/Treasurer
Angelina H. Roco	Director
Ma. Luisa H. Tinio Bayot	Vice President

8. Petitioner attached to the instant Petition its Revived Articles of Incorporation *("Annex F")*, to reflect all the amendments and corrections to the Amended Articles of Incorporation.

9. On February 26, 2026, the majority of the Board of Directors, constituting a quorum, during a special meeting held at the principal office, approved the revival of Petitioner's corporate existence for a term of One Hundred Ninety-Nine (199) years *(Annex "G")*;

10. Thereafter, on the same date, a special stockholders' meeting duly called for the purpose and held at the principal office, approved the said revival by a majority vote (55%) of the outstanding capital stock of the Petitioner *(Annex "G")*.

11. In support of the instant Petition, the following additional documents are submitted:

a. Secretary's Certificate indicating the list of Stockholders and Officers as of the date of expiration of term *(Annex "H")*
b. Notarized list of Stockholders as of the date of approval of the revival*(Annex "I")*
c. Petitioner's Audited Financial Statements as of December 31, 2006 *(Annex "J")*
d. Petitioner's Audited Financial Statements as of December 31, 2025*(Annex "K")*
e. Resolutions from the re-registered corporation's Board and Stockholders indicating its consent to the Petitioner's use of its corporate name *(Annexes"L" and "L-1")*

12. As of the date of filing of the Petition for Revival, no action or proceeding has been filed, or is pending before any court or tribunal involving an intra-corporate dispute or claim by any person or group against the directors, officers, or stockholders of the Corporation.

13. The revival of the Petitioner's corporate term shall not cause damage, loss, or injury to any third person or government agency.

14. The existing Corporation **HRBO Realty and Development Corp.**, through its Board of Directors, has given consent to the Petitioner to use the corporate name **AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.** and undertakes to voluntarily dissolve the corporation after the issuance of the Petitioner's Certificate of Revival.

15. The granting of the Petition by the Commission is in line with the Commission's mandate of increasing the Philippine economy's competitiveness and improving the ease of doing business in the country, through the creation of a more competitive corporate sector, as it adopts international best practices and standards tailored to address the needs and realities of the Philippine corporate setting, and introduces new concepts and mechanisms to help the Philippines keep up with the changing times.

16. The undersigned have caused the preparation of the foregoing Petition and read all the allegations in the Petition. We attest that the factual allegations herein are true and correct based on personal knowledge and authentic records.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, it is most respectfully prayed unto this Honorable Office of the Company Registration and Monitoring Department (CRMD) that the corporate existence of the Petitioner be REVIVED for a term of ONE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE (199) YEARS.

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

Mandaluyong City, _____ 2026

Respectfully submitted.

AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC.
TIN: 000-910-790-000

By:

ALBERTO V. HIDALGO
Chairman & President
TIN 118 285 063

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this 27 MAR 2026 in MANDALUYONG CITY. Affiant exhibiting to me his competent ID (TIN) as stated below his name, and I hereby certify I am fully satisfied that he voluntarily executed the foregoing Petition, by himself and on behalf of the other stockholders, and that they understood all the allegations herein.

Page No.: 54
Doc. No.: 24
Book No.: II
Series of 2026.

ATTY. JOSEPHINE C. LAFIGUERA - ILAS
NOTARY PUBLIC - CITY OF MANDALUYONG
APPT. NO. 0644-25 UNTIL 12-31-2026
QUAD ALPHA CENTRUM, 125 PIONEER STREET
MANDALUYONG CITY 1550
PTR NO. 6046671 / MANDALUYONG CITY / 01-09-2026
IBP NO. 585377 / 01-04-2026 / RSM CHAPTER
MCLE COMPLIANCE NO. VIII-0016124 / 11-20-2024
ROLL NO. 44784

DOCUMENTARY STAMP TAX PAID
27 MAR 2026

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MANDALUYONG CITY) S.S

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION AGAINST FORUM SHOPPING

I, **ALBERTO V. HIDALGO**, of legal age, Filipino and with address at 9Kaliraya St., SMH, Quezon Cityon oath, state that:

1. I am the President of Aurora Hidalgo & Sons, Inc. duly authorized to execute this Verification pursuant to my authority as evidenced by the attached Director's Certificate dated February 26. 2026.

2. I have caused the preparation of the foregoing Petition and read all the allegations in the Petition. I attest that the factual allegations therein are true and correct based on my own knowledge and on authentic documents.

3. That I have not commenced any action or filed any petition involving the same subject matter or issued in any court, tribunal or agency; to the best of my knowledge, no such action is pending therein; (*if there is such other pending action, a complete statement of its present status;)* and if I should learn that the same or similar action has been filed or is pending, I shall report that fact within five (5) days from such knowledge to the Company Registration and Monitoring Department (CRMD).

ALBERTO V. HIDALGO
Chairman & President
TIN 118 285 063

MANDALUYONG CITY 26 FEB 2026
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me in _____, this ____day of ___, 2026 affiant exhibiting to me his Tax Identification Number 118 285 063.

NOTARY PUBLIC

Doc.No.130
Page No.47
Book No.II
Series of 2026.

ATTY. JOSEPHINE C. LAFIGUERA - ILAS
NOTARY PUBLIC - CITY OF MANDALUYONG
APPT. NO. 0644-25 UNTIL 12-31-2026
QUAD ALPHA CENTRUM, 125 PIONEER STREET
MANDALUYONG CITY 1550
PTR NO. 6046671 / MANDALUYONG CITY / 01-09-2026
IBP NO. 585377 / 01-04-2026 / RSM CHAPTER
MCLE COMPLIANCE NO. VIII-0016124 / 11-20-2024
ROLL NO. 44784

DOCUMENTARY STAMP TAX PAID
26 FEB 2026

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MANDALUYONG CITY) S.S

DIRECTORS CERTIFICATE

We, of legal age, Filipinos and with business address at 9 Kaliraya St., SMH, Quezon City under oath state that:

1. We constitute the majority of the members of the Board of Directors and Stockholders of AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC. (the "Corporation"), a corporation duly organized and existing under Philippine laws with office address at 9 Kaliraya St., SMH, Quezon City.

2. At the special meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 26, 2026, at the principal office, and subsequently ratified by the majority of the Stockholders in a meeting held on same date February 26, 2026, at which meeting a quorum was present, in person or by proxy, the following resolutions were unanimously approved:

WHEREAS, the Corporation's term has expired on January 30, 2007;

WHEREAS, the Corporationdesires to continue its existence beyond its term for another 199 years;

WHEREAS, the Corporation has no intention to violate the law and any rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission;

WHEREAS, the Corporation is willing to pay the penalties and any lawful fees that will be assessed by the Commission due to failure of the Corporation to file its annual reports;

After some discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously approved;

RESOLVED as it hereby resolved that a Petition for Revival of Corporate Existence be filed with Commission;

RESOLVED further that the President, Alberto V. Hidalgo is hereby authorized to sign and execute the Petition for Revival of Corporate Existence and to file the same with the Commission.

3. The foregoing resolution is in accordance with the records of the corporation, has not been amended and/or revised and continues to be in full force and effect as of date hereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we set our hands this 26 FEB 2026 in MANDALUYONG CITY City.

ALBERTO V. HIDALGO
Chairman/President
Director
TIN 118 285 063

RAMON M. HIDALGO
Corporate Secretary/Treasurer
Director
TIN 162 179 494

ANGELINA H. ROCO
Director
TIN 110 454 208

MA. LUISA H. TINIO BAYOT
Vice President/Director
TIN 151 995 703

DAVID H. TINIO
Stockholder
TIN 100 272 645

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this 26 FEB 2026 in MANDALUYONG CITY. Affiants exhibiting to me their competent ID (TIN) as stated under their names above, and I hereby certify I am fully satisfied that they voluntarily executed the foregoing Petition and they understood all the allegations herein.

NOTARY PUBLIC

Doc.No. 229
Page No. 47
Book No. II
Series of 2026.

DOCUMENTARY STAMP TAX PAID
26 FEB 2026

ATTY. JOSEPHINE C. LAFIGUERA - ILAS
NOTARY PUBLIC - CITY OF MANDALUYONG
APPT. NO. 0644-25 UNTIL 12-31-2026
QUAD ALPHA CENTRUM, 125 PIONEER STREET
MANDALUYONG CITY 1550
PTR NO. 6046671 / MANDALUYONG CITY / 01-09-2026
IBP NO. 585377 / 01-04-2026 / RSM CHAPTER
MCLE COMPLIANCE NO. VIII-0016124 / 11-20-2024
ROLL NO. 44784

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
City of MANDALUYONG CITY) S.S

SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATE

I, **RAMON M. HIDALGO**, of legal age, a resident of No. 9 Kaliraya St., SMH, Quezon City, being duly sworn, depose and state that;

1. I am duly elected and qualified Corporate Secretary of AURORA HIDALGO & SONS, INC. (the Corporation), a corporation duly organized and existing under by virtue of the Republic of the Philippines, with principal office at 9 Kaliraya St., SMH, Quezon City.

2. To the best of my knowledge, no action or proceeding has been filed or is pending before any Court involving an intra-corporate dispute and/or claim by any person or group against the Board of Directors, individual directors and/or major corporate officers of the Corporation as its duly elected and/or appointed directors or officers or vice versa.

3. Further, no intra-corporate issue involving third party is pending, may it be Criminal, Civil or Administrative in nature

4. I certify that the latest due Audited Financial Statements and latest due Income Tax Return were submitted and received by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), respectively.

MANDALUYONG CITY this FEB 20 2026, 202[illegible]

RAMON M. HIDALGO
Corporate Secretary

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN to before the City of MANDALUYONG CITY this FEB 20 2026 affiant exhibiting to me his Tax Identification Number 162 179 494.

NOTARY PUBLIC

Doc No. 15
Page No. 3
Book No. I
Series of 2026.

IRIS MARIE U. CARPIO
NOTARY PUBLIC
ROLL NO. 51029
MANDALUYONG CITY METRO MANILA

Affixed Documentary Stamps
No. 0534686
Date: FEB 20 2026
Php 30.00

ATTY. IRIS MARIE U. CARPIO
NOTARY PUBLIC - CITY OF MANDALUYONG
APPT. NO. 0374-26 / UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2027
QUAD ALPHA CENTRUM, 125 PIONEER STREET
MANDALUYONG CITY 1550
PTR NO. 8035246/ MANDALUYONG CITY / 01-06-2026
IBP NO. 590814 / 01-07-2026 / QC CHAPTER
MCLE COMPLIANCE NO. VIII-0015359 / 04-14-2028
ROLL NO. 51029 (2005)

GRUESOME INJURY. Jalen Williams of the Oklahoma City Thunder gives a thumbs-up to the crowd, while being carted off after an injury during the second half against the LA Clippers at Paycom Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Thunder beat the Clippers, 108-101, but the victory was marred by the injury to Williams, who grotesquely snapped his ankle on a drive to the rim. AFP

6 emerging sports get POC nod

By Randy M. Caluag

THE Philippine Olympic Committee has elevated six National Sports Associations to regular membership, giving them full voting rights and a stronger voice in shaping the country's international sports campaigns.

The elevation of floorball, sport climbing, lacrosse, mixed martial arts, teqball and kabaddi was approved during the POC's fourth General Assembly.

The move expands the POC's regular membership and strengthens the six associations' participation in the national sports system as they develop athletes for major international competitions.

Under POC president Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, the organization has sought to strengthen established sports while opening more opportunities for emerging disciplines to contribute to Team Philippines' campaigns.

Sport climbing and lacrosse offer avenues toward the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, while the other newly elevated associations can help widen Philippine participation in regional and continental competitions.

Regular membership gives the six sports bodies a direct role in POC decision-making, including voting on matters affecting the organization and its member associations.

POC president Abraham 'Bambol' Tolentino **POC**

Eala overpowers British wildcard Stojsavljevic, storms into Round 2

By Jeremiah Sevilla

FILIPINA pride Alexandra "Alex" Eala made short work of British wildcard Mika Stojsavljevic, 6-1, 6-2, to zoom into the second round of the Toray Pan Pacific Open Tennis 2026 on Monday at the Ariake Coliseum in Tokyo, Japan.

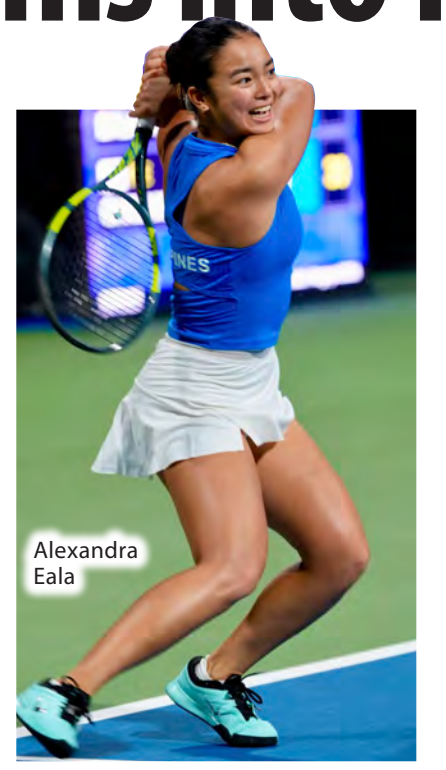
Eala capitalized on the 41 unforced errors of the inexperienced teenager Stojsavljevic while keeping her blunders to just 11 to breeze through her first-round assignment in the WTA 500 tournament.

"I think it was super important to be focused especially in the first round and try to keep the intensity up," said Eala, who climbed back to No. 19 in the latest WTA rankings released ahead of her match against her No. 411 foe.

Eala moved on to the Round of 16, where she is set to tangle with Australia's No. 38 Talia Gibson for a third career meeting.

Gibson beat fellow Aussie No. 75 Daria Kasatskina, 6-0, 7-5, in the opening round.

Eala also bounced back from a 5-7, 4-6 loss to Russia's No. 13 Diana Shnaider in the second round of the Ningbo Open last week in China.



Alexandra Eala

The 21-year-old Filipina ace likewise regained her winning form in Japan after a disappointing semifinal exit in the 20th Asian Games last month.

Eala got off to a smooth start in her fourth tournament in the Asian swing, grabbing a 5-0 lead over the error-prone Stojsavljevic before wrapping up the opening set in just 39 minutes.

The 17-year-old Stojsavljevic, a former US Open girls' champion like Eala, showed some fight in the second set and kept within striking distance, 2-3, through well-placed winners.

However, the young Brit's miscues kept piling up as the Pinay netter ran away with the opening victory in one hour and 15 minutes.

Orca powers Junior Altas

By Dennis Abrina

BRIAN Orca Jr. delivered clutch back-to-back baskets in overtime to secure a hard-fought 101-95 victory for Perpetual Help over Arellano University in the NCAA Season 102 Juniors Basketball Tournament at the FilOil EcoOil Centre in San Juan City on Monday.

Orca, a transfer from UE, anchored the paint with a stellar double-double of 14 points, 14 rebounds, 2 assists, and 2 blocks.

Louie Rosales paced the offensive attack with a game-high 26 points—including six crucial points in overtime—alongside 4 rebounds, 2 assists, and 4 blocks.

Best Player of the Game Sizco Roquid added 23 points, 6 rebounds, 5 assists, and 2 steals, while Lord Dulanas chipped in another double-double with 17 points, 10 rebounds, 2 assists, and 2 steals.

"We rely on the system of our coaches, we trust each other so we won," Roquid said in a post-game interview.

With the win, the Junior Altas bounced back from a loss and solidified its grip on the top spot in Group B with an 8-2 record, while the Legarda-based Braves slipped to 5-5.

Junior Altas Brian Orca **Dennis Abrina**

Wangkay smashes PH records ahead of Youth Olympics

FILIPINO sprint sensation Pi Durden Wangkay is hitting his stride ahead of the 2026 Youth Olympic Games after rewriting the national under-18 and under-20 records in the mens' 100-meter and 200-meter sprints.

Wangkay, 17, clocked 21.40 seconds in the 200m event of the Philippine Athletics, Inc. (PATAFA) Weekly Relay Series Finals over the weekend, setting new records in both age groups.

The De La Salle Zobel standout also shattered his previous national U18 mark of 21.75 seconds, which he established while winning the gold medal in the 200m run at the 2025 Asian Youth Games in Manama, Bahrain.

Wangkay likewise reset the national U18 and U20 records in the 100m, posting 10.44 seconds to eclipse the previous U20 record of 10.56 seconds set by National University's Marc Eddie Marcos last September 12.

Pi Durden Wangkay (middle) pulls ahead of his rivals in the mens' 100-meter event at the PATAFA Weekly Relay Series Finals. **Philippine Athletics, Inc.**

Under coach Jonah Genilza, Wangkay's record-setting performances came as he gears up for his Youth Olympic Games debut in Dakar, Senegal slated from October 31 to November 13.

Wangkay will represent the Philippines in the 200m race at the YOG, where he will be part of the country's nine-member delegation competing in six sports.

Meanwhile, fellow rising track and field stars Ivan Cabanda and Jecel Vivas also delivered record-setting performances ahead of their stint at the Southeast Asian U20 Athletics Championships in Thailand on November 6 to 8.

Cabanda clocked 14.03 seconds in the men's 110m hurdles on September 12 to establish a new national U20 record, erasing the previous mark of 14.74 seconds set by Patrick Unso at the National Open on May 21, 2010.

The 18-year-old trackster out of UST followed up his record run with a victory in the PATAFA Weekly Relay Finals.

Vivas, for her part, improved her own national U20 record in the women's 100m hurdles, hitting 14.19 seconds during the finals.

The 19-year-old pride of Far Eastern University shaved 0.20 seconds off her previous record of 14.39, which she tallied at the UAAP Season 88 Athletics Championships last year. **Jeremiah Sevilla**

Quiban, Shin spice up wide-open ICTSI Apo title chase

DAVAO CITY—Justin Quiban's return and Micah Shin's entry have added star power and fresh intrigue to an already loaded field, setting the stage for a wide-open title chase in the ICTSI Apo Golf Classic, the final leg of the Philippine Golf Tour season.

The P2.5-million championship reels off Tuesday (Oct. 27) at the Apo Golf and Country Club here, where four days of exacting golf could produce another nerve-wracking finish in a season marked by dramatic rallies, late collapses and unpredictable outcomes.

With the season's final trophy and the coveted Order of Merit crown both up for grabs, the stakes could hardly be higher. A formidable cast of contenders is primed to make one last push for glory, with no clear favorite emerging on a demanding layout that rewards precision, patience and sound course management.

Focus will also be placed on retaining the coveted Top 40 Tour cards, setting up a fierce battle in the lower half of the rankings.

Fresh from snapping a two-year title drought with his victory at South Pacific, Clyde Mondilla heads into the final leg brimming with confidence. But Sean Ramos, who came tantalizingly close to forcing a playoff last week, is eager to settle unfinished business, while Keanu Jahns and Angelo Que hope to carry over the momentum of their blistering final-round charges that nearly turned the South Pacific finale on its head.

Justin Quiban

Que, however, has more than another championship in his sights. The two-leg winner is also locked in a compelling duel with Jeffren Lumbo for the season-long Order of Merit title, with the race now reaching its decisive stage.

Que leads the standings with P1.36 million in earnings and is one tournament away from securing a rare back-to-back OOM crown. Lumbo, despite going winless this season, remains firmly in contention with P1.18 million, his consistent finishes – including runner-up efforts in Negros Occidental and Iloilo – keeping him within striking distance.

With the final leg of the 10-stage circuit organized by Pilipinas Golf Tournaments, Inc. offering the last opportunity to alter the standings, every shot could carry consequences beyond the tournament leaderboard.

Fidel Concepcion, meanwhile, won't be around to defend his crown, having traveled to Australia for a vacation after placing 21st at South Pacific.

Yet the addition of Quiban and Shin makes an already formidable field even more difficult to read.

DTI assures consumers of stable prices

By Othel V. Campos

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) assured consumers that prices of 190 basic necessities and prime commodities (BNPCs) under its supervision will remain unchanged through Dec. 31, 2026, while manufacturers and retailers have committed to maintain adequate supplies nationwide.

Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque said the assurance covers the food and non-food products in the DTI's official Suggested Retail Price (SRP) bulletin.

"There will be no price increase for basic necessities and prime commodities under DTI's supervision until December 31, 2026. We assure the public that manufacturers and retailers have guaranteed enough supply for these listed products. There is no need for panic buying or hoarding," she said.

It maded the assurance amid concerns over the potential impact of El Niño on the prices and availability of essential goods.

The 190 products, or stock-keeping units (SKUs), make up the DTI's official BNPC monitoring list, which serves as the reference for retailers and consumers. The price commitment applies only to products on that list and does not cover goods outside the agency's mandate.

The latest SRP bulletin is posted in supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide and is available on the DTI's website and social media channels.

The DTI said it is coordinating with manufacturers and retailers to monitor inventories, maintain regular deliveries and ensure sufficient stocks of covered products.

It urged consumers to check the official BNPC list when shopping and to report suspected price violations or supply problems involving monitored products.

Peso nears 64-per-dollar level on foreign pressures

By Jenniffer B. Austria and Thony Rose Lesaca

THE Philippine peso slumped to a new all-time low of 63.95 against the US dollar Monday, nearly breaching the 64-per-dollar mark amid persistent external pressures, data from the Bankers Association of the Philippines showed.

The peso opened stronger at 63.535 against the green back from Friday's finish. Despite this, the currency weakened further by 33.5 centavos from its previous record low of 63.615, as it reached and closed at its new intraday low of 63.95 per dollar.

A trader said the peso reached new lows amid expectations of a Fed rate hike being delivered this week as well as the impact of local economic challenges on the currency.

"The risk to 64 remains intact should the Fed adopt a more hawkish tone from their September meeting," the trader said.

Meanwhile, Philippine Institute for Development Studies senior research fellow John Paolo Rivera said the slump still reflected persistent dollar demand, elevated oil prices, global uncertainty and pressures from the widening balance of payment deficit.

"Its weakness despite the [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas'] tighter policy stance suggests that external pressures continue to outweigh the support from higher interest rates," he said.

Rivera said while monetary tightening can help stabilize expectations and moderate depreciation, it still cannot fully offset such pressures.

"[The] concern is not simply reaching 64 but the inflationary consequences of sustained peso weakness," said Rivera.

The peso closed at a record low of 63.95 against the US dollar on Monday, while Philippine stocks fell as rising oil prices and concerns over infrastructure spending weighed on investor sentiment.

The peso opened at 63.53 per dollar before sliding to 63.95, below its previous close of 63.615.

63.95
Forex rate on Monday

63.61
Forex rate on Friday

5,641.18
PSE index closing

COCONUT REVIVAL. Finance Secretary Frederick Go (center) and Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque (second from left) meet with key officials from Century Pacific Food Inc. and Bain & Company to discuss how coco levy funds can boost coconut production, help the Philippines regain its position as the world's second-largest coconut producer and improve farmers' livelihoods. Discussions covered supporting the country's goal of planting 100 million coconut trees by 2028 and improving yields through better farming practices and fertilization, helping farmers produce and earn more from the same land.

BIR suspends mandatory online display of registration seal badge

By Thony Rose Lesaca

THE Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) on Monday suspended the mandatory online display of the BIR Registration Seal Badge for online businesses, lifting the Oct. 31 compliance deadline until further notice.

Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Charlito Martin Mendoza formalized the suspension under Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 113-2026, following concerns raised by online sellers, content creators and other taxpayers over data privacy, technical issues and the scope of the requirement.

"We have heard the concerns of online sellers, content creators and other taxpayers regarding data privacy, technical issues and the scope of the BIR Registration Seal Badge requirement," Mendoza said.

"In response, I have directed the suspension of the October 31, 2026 compliance deadline and the mandatory online posting of the BIR Registration Seal Badge until further notice,"he said.

Taxpayers who already have a badge may keep displaying it on their online platforms voluntarily, and no penalties will be imposed solely for non-display during the suspension, according to the circular.

The BIR introduced the seal badge in RMC No. 38-2026 on April 29 as an alternative to posting the full certificate of registration (COR) online, as required under Revenue Regulations Nos. 7-2024 and 15-2024. Those rules were issued under the Ease of Paying Taxes Act. The badge requirement was later supplemented by RMC Nos. 64-2026 and 99-2026.

"We recognize that protecting personal information online presents different and more complex challenges than displaying a COR at a physical business establishment," Mendoza said.

The BIR said the suspension will give it time to address the privacy and technical concerns and review the requirement's implementation. The bureau said it will work with the National Privacy Commission and consult affected taxpayers and stakeholders.

DOE eyes $5b in US funding for nuclear program

By Alena Mae S. Flores

THE Department of Energy (DOE) is exploring nuclear funding options from US agencies, including up to $5 billion in debt financing from the US International Development Finance Corp. (DFC) over 25 years for private companies.

DOE Undersecretary Giovanni Bacordo said the department explored "potential funding instruments" during a recent Advanced Civil Nuclear Energy Reverse Trade Mission to the United States, which is crucial to implementing the country's nuclear program.

"We engaged with EXIM, or the Export-Import Bank of the U.S., regarding their engineering multiplier program, which can assist with feasibility and design services. We also met with the U.S. International Development Finance Corp., and they mentioned potential debt support that could reach up to $5 billion for up to 25 years," Bacordo said.

"We are also continuously coordinating with the Asian Development Bank to ensure that our project structures offer credit enhancements to be truly bankable," he said.

The trade mission visited the Idaho National Laboratory, where the DOE examined advanced reactors, Bacordo said.

"Micro-modular reactors could potentially be ready for early deployment around 2028, while small modular reactors, or SMRs, are targeted for about 2030. But let me be clear: these timelines require further validation alongside demonstration, licensing, and delivery progress. When it comes to regulation, early preparation is critical," Bacordo said.

He said the exchange cited the need to fully operationalize the Philippine Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (PhilATOM).

Energy Secretary Sharon Garin met with U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright to discuss cooperation on nuclear energy, liquefied natural gas, coal, geothermal, the implementation of the 123 Agreement, strategic petroleum reserves and hydrogen, Bacordo said.

Manila Standard

TRBank
A Rural Bank
31st Floor Units 3101-3108, Raffles Corporate Center, F. Ortigas Jr. Road
(Formerly Emerald Ave.), Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Balance Sheet
(Head Office and Branches)
As of September 30, 2026

ASSETS	Account Code	Amount: Current Quarter	Amount: Previous Quarter
Cash and Cash Items	108000000000000000	27,810,999.64	27,301,336.49
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	105150000000000000	14,151,664.30	16,616,641.23
Due from Other Banks	105200000000000000	679,157,645.38	628,106,498.99
Financial Assets at Fair Value through Profit or Loss	112000000000000000		
Available-for-Sale Financial Assets-Net	195200000000000000		
Held-to-Maturity (HTM) Financial Assets-Net	195250000000000000	318,141,913.93	338,215,852.37
Unquoted Debt Securities Classified as Loans-Net	195300000000000000		
Investments in Non-Marketable Equity Security-Net	195350000000000000		
Loans and Receivables - Net	195400000000000000	3,996,665,105.64	3,886,068,197.82
Loans to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	140050000000000000		
Interbank Loans Receivable	195401000000000000		
Loans and Receivables - Others	140150500000000000	4,029,135,122.59	3,926,135,705.11
Loans and Receivables Arising from RA/CA/PR/SLB	195402000000000000		
General Loan Loss Provision	175150000000000000	32,470,016.95	40,067,507.29
Other Financial Assets	148000000000000000	574,621,737.29	615,539,701.57
Equity Investment in Subsidiaries, Associates and Joint Ventures-Net	195452500000000000		
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixture and Equipment-Net	195500500000000000	57,097,409.79	55,051,295.49
Real and Other Properties Acquired-Net	195501000000000000	461,583,335.08	431,285,584.04
Non-Current Assets Held for Sale	150150000000000000		
Other Assets-Net	152000000000000000	108,152,461.39	103,137,947.33
Net Due from Head Office/Branches/Agencies, if any (Philippine branch of a foreign bank)	155250000000000000		
TOTAL ASSETS	100000000000000000	6,237,382,272.44	6,101,323,055.33
LIABILITIES			
Financial Liabilities at Fair Value through Profit or Loss	208000000000000000		
Deposit Liabilities	215000000000000000	4,877,168,734.86	4,716,448,643.00
Due to Other Banks	220050000000000000		
Bills Payable	220100000000000000	427,273,669.37	486,704,652.90
a) BSP (Rediscounting and Other Advances)	220100001500000000		
b) Interbank Loans Payable	220100002000000000	427,273,669.37	486,704,652.90
c) Other Deposit Substitute	220100002500000000		
d) Others	220100003000000000		
Bonds Payable-Net	295201500000000000		
Unsecured Subordinated Debt-Net	295202000000000000		
Redeemable Preferred Shares	220250000000000000		
Special Time Deposit	220300000000000000		
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	230350000000000000		
Other Financial Liabilities	240050000000000000	43,544,509.22	42,995,251.80
Other Liabilities	240100000000000000	160,941,278.23	150,362,937.68
Net Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies (Philippine branch of a foreign bank)	230850000000000000		
TOTAL LIABILITIES	200000000000000000	5,508,928,191.68	5,396,511,485.38
Stockholders' Equity			
Capital Stock	335050000000000000	392,836,020.28	379,784,761.16
Other Capital Accounts	335100000000000000	53,326,453.36	42,735,201.67
Retained Earnings	315000000000000000	282,291,607.12	282,291,607.12
Assigned Capital	325200000000000000		
TOTAL STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	300000000000000000	728,454,080.76	704,811,569.95
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	905000000000000000	6,237,382,272.44	6,101,323,055.33
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS			
Guarantees Issued	405000000000000000	0.00	0.00
Financial Standby Letters of Credit	410050000000000000	0.00	0.00
Performance Standby Letters of Credit	410100000000000000	0.00	0.00
Commercial Letters of Credit	415000000000000000	0.00	0.00
Trade Related Guarantees	420000000000000000	0.00	0.00
Commitments	425000000000000000	0.00	0.00
Spot Foreign Exchange Contracts	430000000000000000	0.00	0.00
Securities Held Under Custodianship by Bank Proper	495220000000000000	0.00	0.00
Trust Department Accounts	495250000000000000	0.00	0.00
a) Trust and Other Fiduciary Accounts	495250500000000000	0.00	0.00
b) Agency Accounts	495251000000000000	0.00	0.00
c) Advisory/Consultancy	495251500000000000	0.00	0.00
Derivatives	435000000000000000	0.00	0.00
Others	440000000000000000	33,803.00	6,650.00
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	400000000000000000	33,803.00	6,650.00
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION			
Gross total loan portfolio (TLP)	499020000000000000	4,100,673,230.26	3,988,383,835.80
Specific allowance for credit losses on the TLP	499300000000000000	71,538,107.67	62,248,130.69
Non-Performing Loans (NPLs)			
a. Gross NPLs	499100500000000000	258,177,505.97	219,092,898.39
b. Ratio of gross NPLs to gross TLP (%)	499150500000000000	6.30	5.49
c. Net NPLs	499101000000000000	217,426,241.19	175,783,943.15
d. Ratio of Net NPLs to gross TLP (%)	499151000000000000	5.30	4.41
e. Ratio of total allowance for credit losses to gross NPLs (%)	499151500000000000	46.70	40.27
f. Ratio of specific allowance for credit losses on the gross TLP to gross NPLs (%)	499152000000000000	27.71	28.41
Classified Loans & Other Risk Assets, gross of allowance for credit losses	499200000000000000	**1,443,501,978.40**	1,277,747,045.41
DOSRI Loans and receivables, gross allowance of credit losses	499400000000000000	468,247.65	390,454.63
Ratio of DOSRI loans and receivables, gross of allowance for credit losses, to gross TLP (%)	499480000000000000	0.01	0.01
Gross non-performing DOSRI loans and receivables	499500000000000000	0.00	0.00
Ratio of gross non-performing DOSRI loans and receivables to TLP (%)	499550000000000000	0.00	0.00
Percent Compliance with Magna Carta (%)			
a. 8% for Micro and Small Enterprises	499050500000000000	22.67	24.32
b. 2% for Medium Enterprises	499051000000000000	22.83	23.98
Return on Equity (ROE) (%)	499350000000000000	11.68	14.77
Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) on Solo Basis, as prescribed under existing regulations			
a. Total CAR (%)	499650500500000000	10.74	10.74
b. Tier 1 Ratio (%)	499650501000000000	10.25	10.12
c. Common Tier 1 Ratio (%) 1/	499650501500000000	10.25	10.12
Deferred Charges not yet Written Down	499700000000000000		0.00
Unbooked Allowance for Credit Losses on Financial Instruments Received	499750000000000000	0.00	0.00

1/ Common Equity Tier 1 is only applicable to all Universal and Commercial Banks and their subsidiary banks.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(As of September 30, 2026)

Philip Lynch
Chairman of the Board

Alan Roy V. Torio
President / CEO

Robert B. Jordan Jr.
Director

Atty. Ray Anthony Fajarito
Director

Chito Francisco R. Dizon
Director

Sarah Wang
Director

Ulyses Simoun K. Ty
Director

Josefa Elvira E. Ditching-Lorico
Director

Maria Bernadette T. Ratcliffe
Independent Director

Josefa Elvira D. Lorico
Independent Director

Alan Roy V. Torio
President/CEO

Michael A. Bautista
CBBO

Francis DL. Samson
COO

Raquel A. Sese
CRRO

Manny M. Vidal
Chief Finance Officer

Reynerio A. Janer
IAD

Ms. Evelyn C. Bulan
Chief Compliance Officer

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Pasig City

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

ERC CASE NO. 2026-169 RC

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

Promulgated:
October 26, 2026

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3) A statement of the relief desired.

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

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

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

3) The grounds relied upon.

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

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

FOR AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION:

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

LS: DPED / RCD

[*] Authority granted during Commission Meeting on 20 August 2025.

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

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

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

October 21, 2026

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

JOINT APPLICATION

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

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

I
THE APPLICANTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II
NATURE AND TIMELINESS OF THE APPLICATION

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

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

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

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

III
STATEMENT OF FACTS

The Conduct of Joint Competitive Selection Process (CSP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Evaluation of Bids for Lot 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABSTRACT OF THE PSA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scheduled Outages	0 days
Unscheduled Outages	0 days

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

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

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

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

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

42.9 Contract Capacity:

TABLE 1
(in MW)

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

42.10 Monthly Payment, Indexation, and Adjustment:

Total Generation Charge

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

A. Capital Recovery Fee ("CRF")

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

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

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

Where:

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

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

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

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

Where:

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

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

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

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

Where:

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

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

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

Where:

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

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

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

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

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

Where:

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

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

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

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

$$VOMF_t = VOMR_t \times AED_t$$

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

D. Fuel Cost ("FC")

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

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

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

Where:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Illustration: CUF_t 70.53%

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

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

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

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

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

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

Replacement Power Charge

Cirtek Holdings selling unit to India's Sancode

By Jenniffer B. Austria

CIRTEK Holdings Philippines Corp. will sell its entire stake in Cirtek Electronics Corp. to India-based Sancode Semi Private Ltd. for $20.2 million as it seeks to reduce debt and fund its remaining operations.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Monday, CHPC said its board had approved the sale of 155.51 million common shares, representing 100 percent of Cirtek Electronics' outstanding capital stock.

The transaction will be paid in two tranches, with $11.32 million due at closing and the remaining $8.88 million payable within one year. The shares covering the second payment will be held in escrow until full payment is completed.

CHPC said it would use part of the proceeds to partially repay bank loans, with the remainder funding working capital for Cirtek Advanced Technologies and Solutions Inc., its core remaining operating subsidiary.

Cirtek Electronics represents 28.24 percent of CHPC's consolidated total assets and contributed 49.97 percent of consolidated revenues in 2025.

Meanwhile, the sale is expected to bring additional investment into Cirtek Electronics. Sancode intends to spend $2 million on capital expenditures to upgrade equipment and expand production capacity, while setting aside $2.8 million for an employee benefit plan to retain existing workers.

"This transaction represents an important milestone in CHPC's continuing effort to unlock value from its investments while strengthening our financial position," CHPC executive vice president and chief financial officer Brian Gregory Liu said.

Liu said the sale would allow the company to reduce debt, improve liquidity and focus resources on growth opportunities.

CATSI president Mark Wong said the additional working capital would help the unit support operations, pursue expansion plans and improve efficiency.

CHPC has been unable to pay dividends or redeem preferred shares since March 2025 due to a lack of unappropriated retained earnings.

Career Opportunity in: **WESTSIDE WORLD RESORTS MANAGEMENT, INC.** **(Formerly: Brightleisure Management, Inc.)**

Position Title: **Senior Vice President Business Development - Premium** **(1 Vacancy)**

Job Description:

The SVP for Local Business Development leads the largest segments of Business Development which comprises Rolling, NCR, Regional, Frontier & Premium Asia. This position is responsible for driving growth, identifying new opportunities, building relationships, and executing strategic goals to support the vision & goals of the Company.

This role requires extensive leadership & management skills to manage complex projects and initiatives. Also requires one to have in-depth knowledge of the different market trends to manage the multiple segments with variable needs and approaches. The role involves identifying and pursuing opportunities and ensuring the casino's long-term financial success. The role also requires the development and implementation of succession planning strategies.

Qualifications:

- A strong educational background is generally expected, often including a bachelor's degree and potentially an MBA and a specialized knowledge in finance, marketing, hospitality and any related field.
- Minimum of 15 years experience in Casino Marketing role and or as a VP of Business Development and ideally with a proven track record of success in business development or leadership, are highly valued.

Applications may be sent to:
Karen Ramos
careers@newportworldresorts.com

Company/Employer:	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position: **Senior Vice President Business Development - Premium**
Name: **Westside World Resorts Management, Inc.** (Formerly: Brightlesure Management, Inc.)	Name: **Sathasivam, Ravinder**
Address: **10/F, NECC Bldg., Newport Blvd. Newport City, Brgy. 183, Pasay City, 1309**	Addresses: **9/F, NECC Building, Newport Blvd. Newport City, Brgy. 183, Pasay City, 1309**
Nature of Business: **Management Service**	Nationality: **Australian**
	Intended period of employment: **Two (2) yrs.**

Westside World Resorts Management, Inc. (Formerly: **Brightleisure Management, Inc.**) hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, ad qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has no intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the **Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE Central), Bureau of Local Employment (BLE)** – 3/F, DOLE Central Bldg., Gen. Luna cor. Muralla Streets., Intramuros, Manila.

HARBOR STAR
SHIPPING SERVICES, INC.

DNV ISO 9001 · ISO 14001 · ISO 45001
ISU MEMBER

NOTICE OF SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

A **Special Meeting of the Stockholders of Harbor Star Shipping Services, inc. ("HSSSI")** will be held and conducted virtually via the Zoom online meeting platform on **Wednesday, 25 November 2026, at 2:00 pm** for the following purposes:

1. Call to Order
2. Certification of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on 8 July 2026
4. Management Report
5. Dispose and/or sell all of the Corporation's shareholdings in its wholly-owned subsidiaries, Harbor Star Energy Corporation ("HSEC"), including HSEC's subsidiaries ASTRONERGY Development Gensan, Inc. ("ADGI"), ASTRONERGY Development F1, Inc. ("ADF1"), and ASTRONERGY Development F2, Inc. ("ADF2"), and Harbor Star Construction Corporation ("HSCC") (collectively, the Non-Core Assets")
   - 5.1 Authorize the Corporation to appoint Asian Appraisal Company, Inc., or any independent third-party appraiser, to value the Non-Core Assets to establish fair consideration for the transaction;
   - 5.2 Delegate to the Board of Directors and Management the determination of the terms and conditions of the sale of the Non-Core Assets; and
   - 5.3 Authorize the Board of Directors and Management to negotiate, conclude and execute the Definitive Agreements for the sale of the Non-Core Assets, subject to compliance with contractual obligations and applicable regulatory requirements.
6. Other Matters
7. Adjournment

The Board of Directors has fixed 30 October 2026 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to be notified, participate, and vote at the Special Stockholders' Meeting ("Stockholders of Record").

Stockholders of Record may only attend/participate via proxy, remote communication or vote in absentia, subject to validation procedures.1 Only validated stockholders will be provided access to the Zoom meeting platform and can cast their votes in absentia on or before 20 November 2026 via the Corporation's secure online voting facility.

Stockholders who wish to participate in the meeting via the Zoom online meeting platform and to vote in absentia should notify the Office of the Corporate Secretary through a Letter of Intent to be sent via e-mail to ssm-2026@harborstar.com.ph or fill up the registration form at www.harborstar.com.ph/ssm2026registrationform on or before 16 November 2026.

HSSSI is not soliciting proxies. Stockholders who are unable to join the meeting but wish to vote on items in the agenda by proxy must submit their duly accomplished proxy forms via email to ssm-2026@harborstar.com.ph on or before 16 November 2026.

Stockholders may send their queries and comments to the Management Report and other items in the Agenda to ssm-2026@harborstar.com.ph on or before 20 November 2026.

The Definitive Information Statement containing the attendance and voting procedures, along with the Notice, Agenda, Proxy, Management Report, SEC Form 17-A, SEC Form 17-Q and other information related to the Special Stockholders' Meeting can be accessed at http://www.harborstar.com.ph/investors/pse_disclosures.

Very truly yours,

(SGD)
CHARLENE O. ANG
Corporate Secretary

[1] For the detailed registration and voting procedures, please visit http://www.harborstar.com.ph/ and refer to the "Guidelines for Participation via Remote Communication and Voting in Absentia and through Proxy".

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

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

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

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

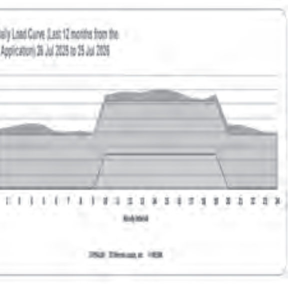
Thus, the Replacement Power cost shall be:

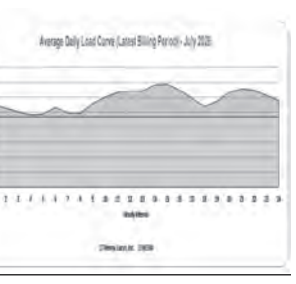
$$RP_t = [Min(RP_r, CP_r) \times RE_t] + VAT_t, if\ applicable$$
$$CP_r = [(CRR_{CUFt} + FOMR_{CUFt} + VOMR_t) + (\frac{FP_t \times FCR_{CUFt} \times FX_m}{1000})]$$

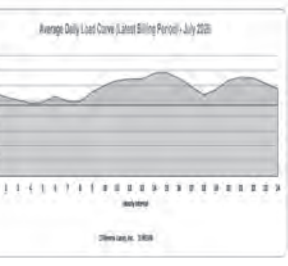
RP_t	Replacement Power cost for the Billing Period, in PhP
RP_r	Actual generation rate of the Replacement Power exclusive of VAT, in PhP/kWh
CP_r	Generation rate based on this Agreement exclusive of VAT, in PhP/kWh
RE_t	Replacement Power Energy supplied by the Seller to the Buyer for the Billing Period,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

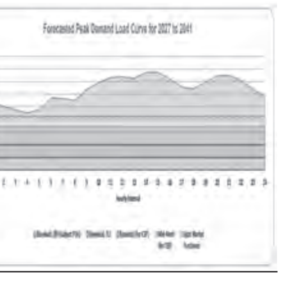
t	Billing Period

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









INDICATIVE RATE IMPACT

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

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

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

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

IV
PRE-FILING REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

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

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

PRAYER FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY OR INTERIM RELIEF

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRAYER

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

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

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

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

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

Pasig City 01 October 2026.

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Central Luzon Bulacan Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0016943 valid until 14 April 2028
Roll No. 39024

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION AGAINST FORUM SHOPPING

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

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

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

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

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

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

[redacted]
CESAR P. GULLA
Affiant

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

[redacted]
ATTY. DENVER D. PADDING
NOTARY PUBLIC

Doc. No. 327;
Page No. 42;
Book No. VII;
Series of 2026.

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORUM SHOPPING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[redacted]
ELENITA D. GO
Affiant

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

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

[redacted]
JUDICIA P. ESPIRITU
NOTARY PUBLIC
ROLL NO. 53391
PASIG CITY, PHILIPPINES

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

For Visayas Member ECs: 1) Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 2) Cebu I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 3) Cebu II Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 4) Guimaras Electric Cooperative; 5) Iloilo I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 6) Iloilo II Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 7) Iloilo III Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 8) Negros Occidental Electric Cooperative; 9) Negros Oriental I Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 10) Negros Oriental II Electric Cooperative.
"Collectively referred to as Member ECs."
10 The NEA-SBAC set a Reserve Bid Price of PhP6.3000/kWh for both Lots in the Transaction, which was disclosed to the bidders during the opening of bids.
11 The Notices of Award were accepted by SPI on 25 August 2026, TLI on 20 August 2026, MPI on 24 August 2026, PCPC on 25 August 2026, TVI on 20 August 2026, and EDC on 25 August 2026.
12 G.R. No. 227670, 03 May 2019.
13 *Annex 02 includes Annexes "06", "07", "08", "09", "10", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20" and "21" in the Technical Pre-Filing Requirements.*
14 Section 1, Rule 4, *Rules of Practice and Procedure* of the Honorable Commission.
15 G.R. No. 172835, 13 December 2007.
16 *Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.
17 In line with the Honorable Commission's rules and regulations, soft copies of the documents covered by the prayer for confidential treatment were password-protected and submitted *via* electronic submission.

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2026
extrastory2000@gmail.com
RODERICK T. DELA[illegible]Z, Editor
ALENA MAE S. FLO[illegible]st. Editor
Mani Sta

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE. The Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) recognizes Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV) for consistently meeting high standards of corporate governance, awarding the company four Golden Arrows at the 2026 Golden Arrow Awards held at Makati Shangri-La. Receiving the awards are (from left) AboitizPower corporate secretarial and legal manager Kat Arsua, AP corporate secretary Ranulfo Javelosa III, AEV chief legal and compliance officer Connie Chu, Union Bank of the Philippines (UBP) corporate governance and RPT advisory unit head Jessa Cedeño-Buyco, UBP financial crimes risk advisory and regulatory compliance head Cyril Arnesto, AEV vice-president for governance and compliance Mailene De La Torre and AEV assistant vice president for governance and board learning Sam Santos.

Mitsubishi PH to pursue P7-b hybrid EV plant

By Othel V. Campos

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines Corp. (MMPC) is moving forward with a P7-billion investment to produce hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) locally as it prepares to join the government's Electric Vehicle Incentive Strategy (EVIS).

MMPC said it is coordinating with government agencies and industry stakeholders while it waits for the EVIS implementing rules and regulations (IRR), which will set the framework for formal applications.

"Because the details of the EVIS have not been announced yet, we are carefully studying the investment requirements and the conditions needed to ensure the long-term viability of HEV production in the Philippines," said MMPC president and chief executive Ritsu Imaeda.

He said the company's preparations go well beyond government requirements and cover the manufacturing, supply-chain and after-sales capabilities needed to sustain local HEV production.

"This includes assessing the market, our manpower requirements, the availability of parts and suppliers, after-sales service capabilities, and the broader ecosystem needed to support local manufacturing," Imaeda said.

MMPC said it should understand the government's expectations under the IRR to prepare fully to meet them.

The company already builds the Mirage and L300 locally, giving it an established manufacturing base for electrified vehicle production.

The HEV investment is also expected to strengthen the domestic automotive supply chain by creating opportunities for local parts suppliers and related services.

MMPC said its EVIS participation is part of an existing plan to strengthen its Philippine operations and manufacturing capabilities as the automotive industry shifts toward electrified mobility.

BankCom raising at least P5 from bond offering

By Jenniffer B. Austria

BANK of Commerce (BankCom), the financial arm of conglomerate San Miguel Corp, is raising at least P5 billion through the issuance of fixed-rate bonds.

BankCom said it has started selling dual-tranche bonds: Series E fixed rate bonds due 2028 and Series F fixed rate bonds due 2029.

The offer runs until Nov. 4, and the bonds are scheduled to list on the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. on Nov. 11.

The bonds will be the fourth tranche under the bank's updated P80 billion bond program.

The Series E bonds have a tenor of 1.5 years and carry a fixed annual interest rate of 6.9882 percent. The Series F bonds have a tenor of 3 years and carry a fixed annual interest rate of 7.6563 percent.

Interest will be paid quarterly. The minimum investment is P100,000, with additional investments in increments of P50,000.

BankCom said it will use the proceeds for balance sheet management, diversification of funding sources and general corporate purposes.

ING Bank N.V., Manila Branch; Philippine Commercial Capital Inc.; Security Bank Capital Investment Corp.; and Standard Chartered Bank were appointed joint lead arrangers and joint bookrunners for the offering. BankCom will also act as a selling agent alongside the four firms.

BankCom reported net income of P2.11 billion in the first half of 2026, up 13 percent from the same period last year.

It posted a return on equity of 11.56 percent and a return on assets of 1.47 percent, which it attributed to strong core banking performance and foreign exchange gains from client-related transactions.

Airlines asked to adjust for ASEAN Summit

By Darwin G. Amojelar

THE Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) has ordered airlines to prepare for possible flight schedule changes and airport operational adjustments during the 49th ASEAN Summit on Nov. 16 to 18, 2026, as delegates arrive and security tightens.

CAB, in an advisory, urged airlines to review their scheduled operations and coordinate with airport authorities so that any flight changes are necessary and cause passengers minimal inconvenience.

Airlines should notify affected passengers of cancellations or adjustments as early as possible through all available channels, the CAB said.

It asked airlines to strictly comply with the Air Passenger Bill of Rights (APBR), particularly its provisions on the rights and entitlements of affected passengers, in addition to any goodwill assistance they offer.

It also directed airlines to deploy enough personnel to assist passengers affected by flight and operational changes promptly.

The CAB urged passengers to check their flight status regularly and monitor official government and airline advisories. It advised them to coordinate directly with their airlines on alternative travel arrangements in case of disruptions.

It also reminded travelers to leave enough time to reach the airport because of possible traffic congestion, road closures and enhanced security protocols during the summit.

ENERGY TRANSITION. Far Eastern University's (FEU) Manila campus completes its transition to renewable electricity across all eligible electricity accounts, marking a new milestone in the University's commitment to sustainability. Its learning, teaching, research and administrative spaces are now supported by clean energy. The transition is implemented across the campus through the Department of Energy's Green Energy Option Program, which allows eligible electricity consumers to choose renewable energy as their power source.

IN BRIEF

BPI readies P5-b sustainability bonds

BANK of the Philippine Islands (BPI) plans to raise at least P5 billion from sustainability bonds to finance or refinance eligible green and social projects.

BPI will offer peso-denominated, fixed-rate BPI Sustainable Impact Building Our Legacy (SIBOL) bonds due 2028, with an option to increase the issue size, the bank said in a statement to the stock exchange on Monday.

The bonds have a tenor of 1 year and 9 months and are the third tranche under BPI's P200-billion bond and commercial paper program.

The public offer will run from Nov. 23 to Dec. 4. Issuance and listing on the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. are scheduled for Dec. 16.

The Securities and Exchange Commission authorized the bonds to carry the "ASEAN Sustainability Bond" label on Oct. 20. **Jenniffer B. Austria**

ERC drafts 5-year roadmap to full competition

THE Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) has issued a draft five-year roadmap that would let all eligible end-users choose their electricity suppliers by 2031.

The working draft for October 2026 lowers the eligibility threshold in stages from 100 kW, with each annual step subject to a formal readiness gate.

"This roadmap charts the Commission's course for the next five years, from 100 kW to full retail competition by 2031. It is built on one lesson from both domestic and international experience: retail choice succeeds only when the metering, data, and consumer protection infrastructure that supports it is ready before the threshold falls. Each step in this roadmap is therefore paired with the enabling reforms that make it safe, and each annual transition is subject to a formal readiness gate," the ERC said.

Retail competition has expanded from the largest industrial users to mid-sized commercial establishments, the ERC said. On June 26, the eligibility threshold fell from 500 kW to 100 kW, opening the market to an estimated 12,000 additional end-users.

In 2027, the first year of the roadmap, the threshold will drop to 50 kW. The ERC will adopt a national Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) roll-out plan and strengthen policies and consumer protection for small contestable customers. **Alena Mae S. Flores**

LandBank provides P11.68-b loan for Citicore solar projects

STATE-OWNED Land Bank of the Philippines said Monday it is providing P11.68 billion in financing for five renewable energy projects of Citicore Renewable Energy Corporation (CREC) in Batangas to support the country's clean energy transition.

The projects consist of three 100-megawatt-peak (MWp) solar facilities integrated with battery energy storage systems and two 300-MWp solar facilities. They are expected to add 900 MWp of solar capacity and 120 megawatt-hours of energy storage to the country's power infrastructure.

The financing is part of a P35.014-billion syndicated facility shared equally among LANDBANK, the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), the bank said.

"Projects of this scale are an important part of our growth plans as we develop the second and third gigawatts of our five-gigawatt pipeline. We appreciate LANDBANK's continued support, alongside BPI and DBP, as we continue to build out our portfolio and bring more projects online," said CREC president and chief executive Oliver Tan.

The five projects are expected to generate about 1,300 gigawatt-hours of renewable electricity a year, enough to power around 550,000 households and avoid an estimated 850,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. **Thony Rose Lesaca**

ABS-CBN's troubles: A case of mismanagement?

BUSINESS CLASS
Rudy Romero

"How did a company as profitable, as well-positioned and as highly regarded as ABS-CBN get to this?

IN EVERY industry, there are corporate stars, and in this country, the brightest star in the Philippine broadcast industry firmament, arguably is ABS-CBN. For many decades, the company, owned and controlled by the family of the brothers Eugenio Lopez Sr. and Fernando Lopez seemed to have it all — glitz, glamour and gold. It was No.1 in revenues and ratings, it had an impressive headquarters and it had the majority of the most sought-after programs and entertainment personalities. It seemed like ABS-CBN was destined to remain as the Philippine broadcast industry's leader.

Then, things happened that had the effect of shaking ABS-CBN's position in the Philippine broadcast industry and placing its financial stability in question.

The first of these negative developments — and the shocker for most Filipinos — was the rejection by Congress of ABS-CBN's application for the renewal of its operating franchise. Everything but the proverbial kitchen sink was thrown at the broadcast industry giant in the course of the hearings in the legislature, particularly in the House of Representatives, where the two-fisted attack was led by party-list Representative Rodante Marcoleta.

ABS-CBN was subjected to intense grilling over all its major policies — particularly those on labor and tax compliance —and the legislators went as far as questioning the citizenship of the company's former chief executive officer CEO Eugenio Lopez Jr. Notwithstanding the fact that ABS-CBN's lawyers provided clearly satisfactory answers to the queries of Rep. Marcoleta and his franchises committee colleague, Congress denied the company's application for the renewal of its franchise.

A greater blow to the existence and prospects of ABS-CBN was unimaginable. All the magnificent and profitable things that it used to produce under its expiring 50-year franchise ABS-CBN would no longer be able to produce. A frantic effort to put together a viable alternative operational plan began. Things would no longer be the same without a new franchise, and ABS-CBN management knew it.

Some perceptive observers of the Congressional hearings have expressed the view that ABS-CBN management botched the company's quest for a franchise renewal. They have said that ABS-CBN management, and especially its franchise-renewal team, was overconfident and failed to prepare adequately for all the possible difficult Congressional questions. The view is not without some validity. Most Filipinos believed that a business institution as influential and as resource-rich as ABS-CBN would not drop the ball in Congress. But it did.

Another development that has hurt ABS-CBN's reputation and business standing has been the well-publicized intra-corporate quarrel between two groups of owners of Lopez Holdings Inc. (LHI), the holding company that owns ABS-CBN.

Two members of the LHI board of directors, Federico Lopez and his brother Benjamin, have been taken to court by the other five directors, who have charged Federico and Benjamin Lopez with refusing to approve more LHI funding for ABS-CBN and for failing to properly inform their fellow-directors of the sale of LHI's interest in the Malampaya natural gas facility. It appears that ABS-CBN's continuing operating losses and ABS-CBN management's misuse of company finances were the reasons for the two directors' disinclination to agree to additional funding for ABS CBN . In recent days the two fractions have appeared to be headed for an amicable settlement of their dispute. Most Filipinos hope that the amicable settlement will materialize, because intra-corporate squabbles involving family members are always ugly spectacles and because ABS-CBN has become a beloved national institution.

Still, a thought continues to nag. How did a company as profitable, as well-positioned and as highly regarded as ABS-CBN get to this? The people of this country fully expected the broadcast giant to be able to weather any storm, whether economic or political or legal, considering that its two former chief executive officers, Eugenio Lopez Jr. and Gabriel Lopez, were graduates of one of the best business schools in the world, Harvard Business School, and its other key officers were all well-educated business professionals.

Harvard Business School remains one of the finest business schools in the world, but in reviewing the decline in ABS-CBN's fortunes in recent years, it is very difficult to avoid a confrontation with the word 'mismanagement'. ABS-CBN does not deserve to be in the situation that it is in today. With sustained good management, that situation could have been prevented.

(llagasjessa@yahoo.com)

Progress on biodiversity targets lags—UN

A Southeast Asian woman sits in a wooden boat beside a floating tomato garden on Inle Lake, holding green tomatoes with a woven basket full of them. UNDP Myanmar

FEWER than half of the national targets set to protect the world's plants, animals and ecosystems are on track, the UN warns in a new report, days before countries gather in Yerevan, Armenia, for the COP17 biodiversity conference.

The landmark deal struck in Montreal in 2022—the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework—set out a vision of "living in harmony with nature" by 2050, with urgent action needed by 2030.

The new report suggests the world is falling behind.

"Biodiversity underpins life on Earth," UN Secretary-General António Guterres wrote in the report. "Safeguarding biological diversity is essential to the health of our planet, the resilience of our economies and the wellbeing of all people."

One of the deal's flagship goals was to protect at least 30 percent of the world's land, inland waters, coasts and oceans by 2030.

Yet even if current commitments are met, only 26 percent of land and 12 percent of the ocean would be protected by that deadline, the report finds.

Progress is also lagging on money, skills, cooperation and data, as well as on economic incentives that reward protecting nature rather than destroying it.

"This bad news means that the war on nature has not yet ended," Guterres said at the report's launch in Yerevan.

He warned that the world is still caught in three interlinked crises: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

There has been some progress since 2022, however.

Nearly 90 percent of countries that are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have set national targets, and more than half have drawn up their own plans to deliver them.

More than 70 percent have measured and reported on their results.

Indigenous Peoples, local communities, regional and city authorities, charities and businesses have also made some 5,000 commitments—though the report warns of a serious gap between ambition and action.

Closing that gap will require money and expertise for developing countries on a far bigger scale, the report says.

Governments need to scrap subsidies that harm nature, strengthen social protection, redirect spending towards protecting nature and work with businesses on strong disclosure rules.

Better coordination is also needed between governments, business, civil society, young people, women and Indigenous Peoples to strengthen accountability, enforcement and cooperation.

"Biodiversity must be part of every decision being made—across policies, regulations and budgets," Guterres said.

"Nature won't thrive on good intentions." **UN News**

Govt' steps up forest protection to safeguard water amid El Niño

FORESTS help keep water flowing to communities, particularly during prolonged dry spells. As El Niño occurs every five to seven years, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is expanding forest protection patrols and accelerating targeted reforestation across critical watersheds nationwide to help forests retain water, regulate stream flow, reduce soil erosion and recharge depleted aquifers.

The effort combines the restoration of degraded and fire-damaged areas with measures to keep newly planted trees alive and to protect existing forests. The DENR is mobilizing local communities, civil society organizations, Indigenous Cultural Communities and field personnel to maintain forest cover and strengthen the natural systems that support water security.

About100 participants from partner agencies, organizations, barangay officials, and Aurora State College of Technology students plant 3,000 Bungalon (Avicennia marina) seedlings in support of mangrove conservation and coastal ecosystem restoration at Sitio Disugon, Barangay Tinib, Casiguran, Aurora.

"Forests are our most powerful natural infrastructure for water retention," DENR Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna said, underscoring the importance of protecting and restoring watersheds as a safeguard against drought.

He said the DENR is working with local communities, Indigenous Cultural Communities, civil society groups and other partners to protect forest cover and ensure that newly planted trees survive the dry conditions.

"While watershed restoration and forest protection efforts are not immediate solutions to the ongoing El Niño episode, such are critical long-term measures to strengthen ecosystems, improve water security and help communities better withstand potential droughts and prolonged dry conditions," he added.

The environment chief noted that these efforts build resilience to El Niño, a climate phenomenon that occurs every two to seven years without a regular cycle and can lead to prolonged dry spells, reduced water supply and drought. **DENR News**

Colombia, PH set to feel drier conditions

First of 3 parts

ACROSS Papua New Guinea, water sources are drying up, crops are failing and food prices are rising months before the worst agricultural impacts are expected.

Behind those warning signs is an El Niño whose Pacific Ocean temperatures have already surpassed the equivalent measurements during the historic 1997 and 2015 events–part of an unfolding climate pattern being dubbed a "Super El Niño" by some climate watchers.

Fast facts

More than 347 million children in nearly 100 countries and territories are expected to experience unusually wet or dry conditions between October and December 2026 due to El Niño, increasing the risk of extreme floods and droughts with potentially devastating consequences, according to latest UNICEF data.

Here are highlights of the risks facing children:

As extreme weather events become more widespread, youngsters could face increased risks of family separation, violence, exploitation and child marriage

Colombia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines are among those expected to experience drier conditions that could likely to lead to drought and water scarcity, increasing displacement and worsening acute malnutrition

(To be continued) **UN News**

China has been hit hard by climate change, including extreme weather events. © **WMO/Yan Zhang**

Clean water finally reaches Indigenous People of Zamboanga del Norte

DENR's water impoundment projects now bring clean water directly to Subanen families of Barangay Sipakong, Bacungan, Zamboanga del Norte.

SOMETIMES, the value of water is best understood not by the number of liters it holds, but by the number of footsteps it saves.

For the Subanen families of Barangay Sipakong, Bacungan, Zamboanga del Norte, water once came with a long walk. The Subanen people are among the Lumad or Indigenous People of the Zamboanga Peninsula whose daily struggles with limited or unreliable water supply are further aggravated by the threats of Super El Niño.

Residents had to walk uphill for around 500 meters to reach springs and other sources of flowing water, a journey that took approximately 30 to 45 minutes from the nearest road, depending on the location of their homes.

After this, they then had to carry heavy pails or water containers along rough paths on the way back. For young people, fetching water meant time spent walking instead of playing, studying or helping at home. For families, it was another daily task made harder by distance.

A 50-cubic-meter Small Water Impounding System (SWIS) established by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region IX in the barangay in 2025 now directly serves around 70 to 80 households and farmlands, providing water for domestic and agricultural needs.

The project reflects President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to address water scarcity and ensure water security, particularly in areas with limited or unreliable water supply.

With the ongoing El Niño, President Marcos has directed government agencies to expedite water projects across the country and prioritize areas that may be severely affected by this weather pattern.

DENR's approach is anticipating water shortages rather than responding to them. The department continues to pursue measures to maximize available water sources, develop additional supply and prepare contingency measures to help communities cope with prolonged dry conditions.

DENR Secretary Juan Miguel T. Cuna has emphasized the need for practical water interventions that help communities become more resilient. In Sipakong, that approach is evident in a simple yet important way—storing water closer to the people who need it while protecting the watershed that supplies it.

For Barangay Kagawad Ramon Dampayla, the difference is simple: the water source is now nearby.

"Before, we had to go far just to fetch water. Now, we have a water source nearby," he said.**DENR News**

Building trust, sustaining value

By Owen Cammayo

A BUSINESS can measure growth in sales, earnings and the number of people it serves. Whether that growth lasts also depends on how it treats the people and resources that make it possible.

Customers expect dependable services. Employees need safe workplaces and opportunities to develop. Suppliers need fair terms. Communities expect businesses to consider their impact on livelihoods and the environment. Investors need confidence that management is preparing for the future.

Decisions about energy, water, employment, procurement and investment give sustainability its practical meaning. They affect both business performance and people's lives.

As SM marks 68 years this October, I have been reflecting on how founding values endure. Trust and integrity were central to Henry Sy Sr.'s approach to business. Each generation must apply them to new responsibilities.

For any company, that means asking difficult questions. Can operations withstand disruption? Are resources being used responsibly? Are employees prepared for technological change? Can people access the services they need?

Strategic communication brings the experiences behind those questions into business decisions.

Employees may spot problems before they appear in management reports. Suppliers may identify requirements that smaller enterprises struggle to meet. Customers may encounter barriers a company has overlooked. Communities can explain how operations affect daily life.

Those perspectives matter when they reach people who can act. A feedback channel achieves little if concerns are collected but never addressed. Listening requires someone to assess the issue, take responsibility and explain the response.

Consider a company introducing stricter environmental requirements for suppliers. Smaller enterprises may need time, guidance or financing to comply. Early dialogue can help management pursue its environmental goals while keeping capable suppliers involved.

Likewise, explaining a new system to employees may reveal training needs before implementation. Consulting a community may identify effects on water access or local livelihoods that require changes to a project.

Stakeholder interests will sometimes conflict. Reducing resource use may require substantial upfront investment. Improving efficiency may alter jobs or supplier arrangements. Management must weigh those consequences. Communication helps explain the choices, acknowledge the trade-offs and clarify what support can be provided.

Promises require equal care. A sustainability commitment should explain what will change, who is responsible and how progress will be assessed. Communicators must work with those responsible for delivery so that claims reflect what the business can substantiate.

Reporting should account for results, setbacks and unfinished work. Consistent measures and plain explanations allow stakeholders to judge progress.

The value builds over time. Suppliers can plan and invest. Employees develop useful skills. Responsible resource use reduces waste and can limit disruption. Clear reporting helps investors assess performance and risk.

These outcomes strengthen a company's ability to keep serving people and investing for the future. Trust grows when stakeholders experience fair treatment, follow-through and honest explanations.

> *"A feedback channel achieves little if concerns are collected but never addressed.*

For communicators, this demands business knowledge and judgment: understanding what a commitment requires, recognizing whose perspective is missing and raising concerns while decisions can still change.

An anniversary offers a chance to recognize what has helped a business endure and ask what must improve for it to remain useful to the next generation.

I think strategic communication helps sustain value when it helps a business listen carefully, act responsibly and account for its decisions, giving people reason to trust its future.

The author is a social and sustainable development advocate and vice president and head of Corporate Communications for SM Investments Corp., the parent company of the SM Group.

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Alden Richards makes a defiant case for being good and kind

Very Wang
Nickie Wang

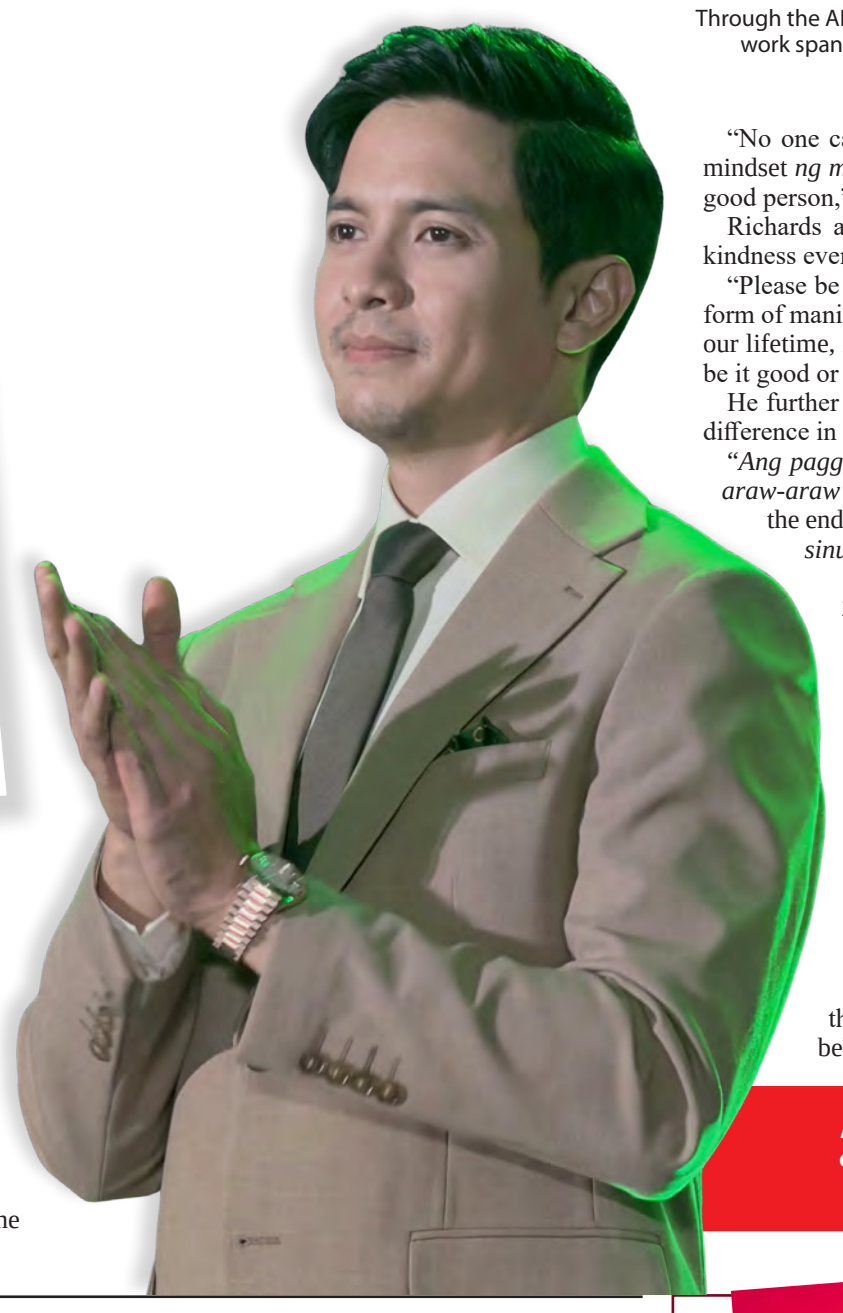
Through the AR Foundation, Alden Richards (center) helps recognize 20 Filipinos whose work spans disaster response, education, healthcare, livelihood, and animal welfare

AMID the cacophony of social media, actor **Alden Richards** delivered a powerful message about kindness by reminding Filipinos that being a good person is something no one can take away.

Beyond selecting the honorees, Alden Richards helps bring their stories to a wider audience through short films documenting their service to their communities

Speaking at the Hero For All 2026 awards ceremony on Sunday, the 34-year-old actor and producer urged the honorees to take pride in their goodness and continue making a difference in their communities, regardless of what others might say.

"I really do believe that if there's one thing I'm proud of, *sabihin ninyo nang mayabang ako, pero alam ko* at the end of the day, I am a good person," he said.



"No one can take that away, and I'm sure *gusto ko ganun din yung maging* mindset *ng mga* heroes *natin na* you can be proud to tell the world that you're a good person," he added.

Richards also encouraged the awardees to keep doing good, believing that kindness eventually finds its way back to those who give it.

"Please be proud of that fact. Keep on throwing it… at the universe *kasi* it's a form of manifestation that if you always do good, good will come back to you. In our lifetime, in our daily lives, I do believe that we always get what we deserve, be it good or bad," Richards explained.

He further reminded the audience that kindness costs nothing but can make a difference in a world that often seems short on it.

"*Ang paggawa po ng mabuti at pagpili sa paggawa ng mabuti ay libre po sa araw-araw na ginawa ng Diyos*. Be good, so the world could be a little good at the end of the day. If there's one thing *na hindi mananakaw sa inyo ng kahit sinuman, 'yun po 'yung kabutihan ng puso*," he exclaimed.

Through the AR Foundation, Richards helped select and honor 20 unsung Filipino heroes from different parts of the country. The awardees came from various walks of life, united by their contributions to their respective communities.

The Hero For All 2026 initiative, spearheaded by Casino Plus in partnership with the AR Foundation, recognized individuals whose acts of service have changed lives without seeking fame or public recognition. Their efforts ranged from saving lives and responding to disasters to supporting education, healthcare, livelihood programs, and animal welfare.

Richards has been involved in the campaign since its conceptualization. Aside from serving as one of the jurors who selected the honorees, he personally visited some of the recipients and helped develop a series of short vertical films documenting their stories.

Produced with the involvement of Myriad Entertainment Corp., the films feature Richards as host, introducing viewers to the people behind the extraordinary acts of service.

At the Hero For All 2026 ceremony, Alden Richards encourages honorees to remain proud of the good they do regardless of criticism or public opinion

Elizabeth Holmes docu gives 'Clayface' a run for its money

Elizabeth Holmes becomes the subject of a three-hour documentary following her family life in the month before she begins serving an 11-year prison sentence

A BUZZY new documentary about jailed tech CEO **Elizabeth Holmes** gave *Clayface*, a gory Batman villain origin story, a run for its money at the domestic box office this weekend, industry estimates showed Sunday.

Clayface, from Warner Bros. and DC Comics, debuted in first place with $24 million in the United States and Canada, but A24's *You Can See Everything* was not far behind with $20 million, according to Exhibitor Relations.

That represents the second-biggest weekend ever for a documentary, after *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), and an "extremely rare" 28-percent increase from its debut the previous week.

The three-hour documentary, co-directed by comedian **Nathan Fielder** and **Lance Oppenheim**, follows Holmes and her family at home in 2023 during the month before she began an 11-year prison sentence.

The Batman villain origin story opens with $24 million in the United States and Canada, narrowly holding off the strong second-week performance of 'You Can See Everything'

Holmes was convicted of defrauding investors in her medical testing company Theranos after making lofty promises she could not deliver.

The scandal fueled a media frenzy and was chronicled in a book, multiple podcasts, and the biographical miniseries *The Dropout*, starring **Amanda Seyfried**, who has sparked awards buzz with her surprise cameo in *You Can See Everything*.

The film has now earned an estimated $45 million at the domestic box office, with some analysts predicting it could become the first documentary nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars.

Third place went to Fathom Events' animated film *Wildwood*, which debuted with $11 million after more than a decade in production. Made by the stop-motion animation studio behind the 2009 hit *Coraline*, the film follows a young girl who ventures into an enchanted forest after her brother is whisked away by crows.

In fourth place was Paramount's *Street Fighter*, which fell from the top spot last week to earn $8.6 million. Based on the beloved Capcom video game, the film follows super-powered martial artists competing in a global tournament who uncover and battle a sinister conspiracy.

Fifth place went to Black Bear's *Wicker*, which debuted with $5.8 million. The film stars **Olivia Colman** as a lonely fisherwoman and **Alexander Skarsgard** as her fantastical husband made of wicker, whose housework and bedroom skills quickly become the talk of the town.

Rounding out the top 10 were *Other Mommy* with $3.9 million, *Sense and Sensibility* with $3.4 million, *Whalefall* with $3.2 million, *Verity* with $3.1 million, and *Resident Evil* with $3 million. **AFP**

More than a decade after Genesis first writes the song, Walking with Genesis releases 'Palimos ng Pag-ibig,' drawing from feelings she once kept unspoken

Alt pop-rock band turns unrequited love into new single

A FIRST love that went unspoken has inspired **Walking with Genesis**'s new single, "Palimos ng Pag-ibig," written in 2013 but released more than a decade later.

The track by the Filipino alternative pop-rock band is now streaming on major platforms, distributed by Flamingo Music in cooperation with Curve Entertainment.

Lead vocalist **Genesis** said writing the song was her way of expressing feelings she could not confess at the time.

"*Sa pagsulat ng kanta ko na lang nilalabas yung* feelings *ko sa kanya noon*," she said.

The release follows the band's 2025 comeback single, "When See," which Genesis wrote for her current partner.

Formed in 2012, Walking with Genesis began as a group of friends who walked long distances to rehearsals because they had little money to spare.

"*Nilalakad lang namin kahit malayo,* at least *masaya kaming makatugtog*," said rhythm guitarist and vocalist **Franz**.

The band's name came from a joke the friends made during one trip home, when they realized they were literally walking with Genesis.

Despite lineup changes and other challenges, the members continued making music. Their songs draw from alternative, pop-rock, and punk-rock influences, exploring love, joy, pain, and loneliness.

"If you listen to our songs, you'll catch different emotions, from love and joy to pain and loneliness," lead guitarist **Bhogz** stated.

"Palimos ng Pag-ibig" also comes with an official music video filmed at a high school in Guiguinto, Bulacan. Featuring **Boss Yang, Armando,** and **Asian Pakboi**, the video was conceptualized by Franz.

The band, known for its spontaneous live performances, says seeing audiences sing along to its songs remains one of its greatest rewards.

For Genesis and her bandmates, success means staying together and continuing to make music they love.

"*Sulit na ang lahat kung patuloy kaming magkakasama, gumagawa ng* music, *at masaya sa ginagawa namin*," Genesis said.

ABS-CBN bags Golden Arrow Award for corporate governance

ABS-CBN Corporation has received 7th ACGS Golden Arrow Award from the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD), recognizing the media company's corporate governance practices.

The company earned the distinction based on the results of the 2025 ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS) and Corporate Governance Scorecard (CGS) assessments.

The Golden Arrow Award is given to companies that score at least 75 points in the ACGS assessment and demonstrate compliance with the Philippine Code of Corporate Governance and internationally recommended governance practices.

The assessment examines how companies protect shareholders' rights, promote fair treatment, manage stakeholder relations, and disclose information transparently. It also evaluates sustainability, resilience, board oversight, and accountability to shareholders.

Mike Villanueva, ABS-CBN's chief risk management officer, chief compliance officer, and head of the ABS-CBN Shared Service Center, accepted the award on behalf of the company, alongside Treasury and Investor Relations team members **Cindy Estojero, Melanie Teodoro,** and **Marvin Payumo**.

The ICD, a non-stock, nonprofit national association of corporate directors and stakeholders, said the ACGS aims to raise corporate governance standards in the Philippines and make well-governed publicly listed companies and insurance firms more attractive to investors.

The recognition adds to ABS-CBN's record of corporate governance awards, underscoring the company's continued participation in an assessment that measures transparency, accountability, and responsible corporate leadership.

ABS-CBN is recognized with a Golden Arrow Award for demonstrating exemplary corporate governance practices

Shticks
Joseph Peter Gonzales

Atasha Muhlach open to joining beauty pageants

ATASHA Muhlach is keeping her options open when it comes to joining beauty pageants and possibly following in the footsteps of her mother, **Charlene Gonzalez**.

In a recent television appearance, the young actress expressed her willingness to try pageantry, saying, "Why not? I'm not going to close my doors to anything, so we'll see."

Pageant followers will remember that Charlene represented the Philippines at the 43rd Miss Universe pageant, held in the country in 1994. Her witty response during the interview portion remains one of the most memorable moments in local pageant history. Asked how many islands the Philippines has, she quipped, "High tide or low tide?"

If asked the same question today, perhaps Atasha would come up with her own clever answer: "Right side or left side?"

Atasha also talked about growing up as the daughter of showbiz stars Charlene and **Aga Muhlach**. She and her twin brother, **Andres**, are often regarded as showbiz royalty because of their famous parents.

"Actually, I think for me and Andres, we both agree on this that we never really saw them as artists or superstars. We saw them as parents in our home. They're so grounded. They're so normal, really," she shared.

"They're very supportive and encouraging as parents. Honestly, I'm just very, very lucky to get whatever traits that they may have because they're both incredible people."

Atasha currently headlines *Bongga Ka 'Day! The Annie Batungbakal Musical*, which runs until the end of October at the Newport Performing Arts Theater in Resorts World Manila.

The charming newcomer suffered a foot sprain shortly before the musical's opening night but refused to let the injury stop her from giving her best onstage.

"Prayers, of course, and knowing that I have a big team of people who were there supporting me, and they got my back, and I also got their back as well," she said.

Jillian Ward returns after mental health break

After taking a few months off to focus on her well-being, **Jillian Ward** is ready to return to the spotlight.

"Yes!" she said. "I really allotted time for myself to rest and take a break. I didn't allow stress and pressure to affect me, which would lead to burnout."

For her comeback project, the Star of the New Gen will top-bill *Behind Closed Doors*, a Prime Video original series that will reunite her with **Marian Rivera**.

"I'm very excited about the project because I will be with Ms. Marian Rivera. The last time that we worked together was in *Super Ma'm* in 2017. Hope the public will support our offering!" she said.

Jillian is also preparing for her maiden concert, scheduled for Dec. 8.

"That's right! Finally, it will push through. Actually, I'm happy because I was given more time to rehearse. I can say that I'm more prepared this time," she shared.

The actress added that her break gave her time for self-reflection and allowed her to recharge before taking on new challenges.

"So, now, I'm back with a vengeance!" she declared.

Atasha Muhlach expresses her openness to joining beauty pageants, following in the footsteps of her mother, Charlene Gonzalez

Filipinos continue to spend on premium home products despite economic pressures

Focus Global Inc. founder, chairman and president Stephen Sy discusses consumer demand for premium home products as the company marks its 35th anniversary

By Angelica Villanueva

A WEAKER peso has made imported home products more expensive, but it has not stopped some Filipino consumers from spending on technology, kitchen equipment, and other premium products for the home.

The media company receives its seventh Golden Arrow Award for its corporate governance practices

Focus Global Inc. founder, chairman and president Stephen Sy (second from left) with his family at the distributor's anniversary celebration

For **Stephen Sy**, founder, chairman, and president of Focus Global Inc., the continued demand is a sign of how consumers prioritize products they believe offer better technology, design, and quality.

"One thing which I noticed doing very well or really well is, like, if you're talking about the house, for the house, technology is doing very well. People are a lot more health-conscious now, so they would want to be able to exercise," Sy said in an interview.

The demand has surprised Sy, particularly given the current economic environment, with the peso losing value against the US dollar and euro. Focus Global imports many of the products it distributes in those currencies while selling them locally in pesos, putting pressure on its costs.

"So our cost goes up. So we can't hold it for long. We can hold it when we have the stock. We bought it at lower exchange rates. But the new income, we can't hold it," he explained.

Still, Sy believes the company's market remains willing to pay for products with features and designs they consider superior.

"But the one thing I told you about tech this year, because it's really a little more expensive than the other brands. But the technology and the design are really much, much better. And people are willing to pay more," he shared.

The company, which marks its 35th anniversary this year, caters largely to an affluent segment. Sy noted that while these consumers are not completely insulated from economic pressures, they continue to make purchases when they see value in a product.

"They can be affected a little bit, but if they want it, they'll buy it. Right? They still will buy it," he said.

Focus Global has seen similar changes in consumer behavior before. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when restaurants closed and families spent more time at home, demand for kitchen equipment rose sharply.

KitchenAid products became particularly difficult to keep in stock. The company normally relied on sea freight from the United States, but the long lead time made it difficult to respond to the sudden increase in demand.

"What we did was, we did air. We never ship by air. We have to bring the price up to half-weight. Actually, we increased it by maybe 7 percent, 6-7 percent. Just to cover the increased cost of the shipping," Sy shared.

The company maintained air freight for about six months to keep products moving into the country.

The experience also pushed Focus Global to strengthen its e-commerce operations as consumers became less inclined to visit physical stores.

Sy also noted that more than half of sales in some segments come from online channels, while air purifier brand Levoit generates about 90 percent of its sales online.

Physical stores remain part of the business, particularly for consumers who want to see products before buying. At the same time, the company has expanded its digital presence and adapted its retail strategy to changing shopping habits.

For Sy, the company's ability to respond to these changes is closely tied to how it chooses the brands it represents.

"We're choosy. We're picky. But then, when we find a good one, we really work on it," he said.

He cited Sub-Zero and Tempur as two of Focus Global's significant achievements over the past 35 years, pointing to the company's efforts to establish the brands among Filipino consumers.

"We were able to really market Tempur well. If people want a nice, comfortable bed, it's Tempur. And then, one thing about Tempur is we brought that in, there's no competition. Nobody has this. Nowadays, there's a copy. But still, when people say Tempur is Tempur, there's no competition," he said.

Focus Global began in 1991 with 20 employees and has since grown to nearly 600 full-time employees. Its portfolio now includes more than 30 brands, with operations in the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Despite receiving approaches from potential brand partners almost every month, Sy remains selective. He considers whether a brand fits the company's portfolio, whether the team has the capability to support it, and whether an exclusive partnership makes sense.

"Branding is very important. So we spend a really lot of time and money on branding. So, because of that, we need exclusivity," he said.

As consumer preferences continue to change, Sy sees agility as essential to keeping the business relevant.

"We need to be really agile and shift to the market needs that we can see," Sy stated.

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New and cozy **dining spots,** retail spaces at **NAIA Terminal 2**

PASSENGERS departing from Ninoy Aquino International Airport's (NAIA) Terminal 2 now have more places to grab a meal, sip coffee, or shop for last-minute gifts before boarding, as five new dining and retail establishments open at the terminal's North Wing departure area.

The new outlets, formally launched at the airside section, bring familiar food brands and a travel retail store to two levels. Kenny Rogers Roasters and Seattle's Best Coffee occupy the second floor, while Paris Baguette, General's Lechon, and Travel Hub are located on the mezzanine level.

One of the new area's attractions is its cozy mezzanine dining space, where large glass windows overlook the passenger waiting area below. Travelers can enjoy a meal or coffee while watching the activity downstairs, with a flight information display nearby to help them keep track of departures.

Travel Hub caters to those looking for last-minute purchases, stocking Filipino pasalubong, gifts, snacks, and personal essentials. The store gives passengers a convenient stop to pick up souvenirs for family and friends before heading to their gates.

The expansion marks a notable improvement for Terminal 2's North Wing departure airside, which had limited dining options when New NAIA Infra Corp. (NNIC) took over airport operations in September 2024.

Some establishments had already begun serving passengers before the formal launch. Together, the outlets form part of the Food. Fly. Fun. concept, which aims to give travelers more dining and shopping choices in an area where options were previously scarce after security screening.

The new establishments are part of NNIC's broader effort to improve passenger facilities at the country's main gateway. The airport operator has introduced upgrades to terminal facilities, boarding areas, transport access, and wayfinding while working to expand flight-handling capacity and improve on-time performance.

System-wide on-time performance reached 81.09 percent from Jan. 1 to Oct. 13, up from 77.72 percent during the same period last year.

The improvements come as NAIA continues to accommodate passenger volumes that exceed its original annual design capacity of 35 million. The airport served a record 52 million passengers in 2025, which further reinforces the need for expanded facilities and more efficient operations while keeping the gateway running.

NNIC operates NAIA under a public-private partnership agreement aimed at modernizing the Philippines' main international gateway.

The space is part of efforts to expand dining options in the terminal's departure area.

National Book Store's Superbranch at Festival Mall in Alabang features themed sections for books, learning materials and creative activities, alongside spaces designed for customers to browse and spend time in the store

NOW & NEXT

National Book Store rethinks bookstore experience for a new generation

By Jasper Valdez

AFTER more than eight decades of selling books and school supplies, National Book Store (NBS) is rethinking how its stores should serve customers, acknowledging that its traditional retail setup no longer fully matches the way people shop and spend their time.

"Our store network, unfortunately, was built for a different era. And then suddenly, the store network doesn't match what is needed today," NBS president and CEO **Adrian Ramos** told *Manila Standard Lifestyle*.

The company is now introducing larger, more interactive spaces while experimenting with new ways to make books accessible. Two of its latest developments are the National Book Store Superbranch at Festival Mall in Alabang, Muntinlupa, and The Book Drop, a 24-hour book vending machine at NBS Park in Mandaluyong.

Adrian said the changes followed years of planning, smaller trials, and research into retail concepts in other markets. The pandemic also forced the company to reassess its operations.

"Coming out of the pandemic, it took us a little bit of time to get our bearings and what to do next," he shared.

The Festival Mall location, the company's second Superbranch after SM Mall of Asia, brings several of its offerings together in an approximately 1,100-square-meter space.

Instead of arranging merchandise solely by product type, the store features themed sections designed around customers' interests. These include areas for books, children's learning and play, creative activities, and organization, alongside a café and dedicated workshop space.

The Superbranch also houses Seoulful Stories, a Korean literature section developed with the Korean Cultural Center in the Philippines, featuring translated Korean novels, manhwa, and self-help books.

Adrian explained that the company wants customers to have reasons to visit beyond purchasing books or supplies.

"It's really meant to be less transactional and more experiential so that people will really want to experience those moments inside our store," he said.

Part of that approach involves encouraging hands-on activities at a time when digital technology occupies much of people's daily lives.

"We all have our digital footprint. We all rely on digital technology. And that's never going to go away," Adrian said, emphasizing the importance of balancing screen-based activities with physical experiences, particularly for children.

The company is updating its retail spaces to better reflect how customers shop and engage with books today

Toby's Estate complements the bookstore's expanded retail concept with a café where customers can enjoy coffee while browsing books and other offerings

The same thinking extends to NBS Park, where the company recently introduced The Book Drop, a cashless vending machine that allows customers to purchase books at any hour.

Unlike the Superbranch, which encourages visitors to spend time browsing, the machine offers a quicker way to buy selected titles. Its initial collection focuses on cozy fiction, with plans to change the theme every month or two depending on customer feedback.

Beside the machine is an open-shelf library where visitors can read the same titles before deciding whether to purchase them.

"So you can try it first, and then if you want, you can buy it from the vending machine," Adrian explained.

He clarified that The Book Drop was developed specifically for NBS Park, which brings together food, art, and recreational activities. There are no definite plans yet to introduce more machines elsewhere.

Beyond these two developments, NBS is preparing additional Superbranches, including one at Gateway Mall 2 in Cubao, while continuing to renovate existing locations.

For Adrian, the changes are part of a wider effort to update the company's retail network without abandoning the books, school supplies, and other products that generations of Filipinos have associated with National Book Store.

"We're really aggressively working on rebuilding our store network to better serve all of you in this day and age, in this time, and for the future," he said.

Lingerie brand gets intimate with Filipino shoppers

By Nickie Wang

INTERNATIONAL intimate apparel brand AIMER has arrived at Rustan's to give Filipino shoppers access to its range of underwear, sleepwear, and casual clothing for men and women.

Founded in 1993, the brand makes its Philippine retail debut at the luxury department store with a collection built around comfort, functionality, and contemporary design.

The selection includes wireless and soft-wire bras, seamless briefs, and shaping garments, with features such as breathable fabrics, cooling materials, and flexible construction. Some pieces are designed to remain discreet under clothing, while others feature details that allow intimate apparel to double as part of an outfit.

AIMER also brings its sleepwear collection to Rustan's, featuring sleep dresses, coordinated sets, and loungewear made from materials such as modal, cotton, ribbed modal, and milk-protein fiber.

The brand's offerings range from everyday underwear to sleepwear and clothing suited for lounging

Its Sleeping Beauty collection pairs relaxed silhouettes with French embroidered lace, removable soft cups, and versatile pieces that can also be worn as homewear or casual outerwear.

The brand extends its range to everyday clothing with the Yue Cotton Loungewear Set, available in coordinated styles for men and women. Made from 100 percent cotton using 80S high-count yarn, the set features a relaxed T-shirt and shorts that can be worn for sleeping, lounging at home, or casual outings.

AIMER collection focuses on comfort, functionality and contemporary design

Men's offerings include boxer briefs and casual pieces designed for comfort and ease of movement, incorporating breathable, stretchable fabrics and seamless construction.

Over the years, AIMER has expanded beyond traditional intimate apparel into lifestyle categories, exploring designs that blur the line between underwear and outerwear. Among its innovations is The Cover Star Bra, developed with outerwear-ready standards.

The company's philosophy brings together quality, fashion, health, technology, and art under its mission, "More Beauty More Love."

AIMER is available at Rustan's branches in Makati, Shangri-La, Alabang, Gateway and Cebu, as well as online at Rustans.com. Shoppers may also contact a Personal Shopper at 0917-111-1952 for assistance.

The intimate wear brand offers intimate apparel, sleepwear and casual clothing for men and women