



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

OVER 36K PDLs
FREED ON LEGAL AID

NEWS / A3

NETANYAHU, RIVAL CLAIM
WIN AFTER TIGHT POLLS

WORLD / A6

TRB APPROVES NEW
CAVITEX R1 TOLL HIKE

BUSINESS / B1

‘Don’t panic over peso slump’

PBBM: Forex reserves healthy, gov’t addressing food inflation

Manila
Standard

VOL. XL • NO. 254 • 3 SECTIONS 22 PAGES • P20 • THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026

By Charles Dantes, Thony Rose Lesaca and Joel Zurbano

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged Filipinos not to panic over the peso’s depreciation and the rising prices of basic goods, saying the government has the resources to defend the currency and is working to bring down food costs.

This as the peso recovered by 14.5 centavos to close at 64.025 against the US dollar on Wednesday, a day after it breached the 64-per-dollar level, Bankers Association of the Philippines data showed.

“Do not take it with alarm. Don’t panic,” Mr. Marcos told reporters at the sideline of his visit at the New Bilibid Prison

Next page



Hegseth pushes US-ASEAN defense framework

By Rex Espiritu

US DEFENSE Secretary Pete Hegseth proposed the creation of an ambitious new US-ASEAN defense framework on Wednesday, telling the bloc’s leaders it could help them navigate “critically important” years ahead.

The United States has been seeking

to boost its regional defense partnerships in recent years, citing the need to uphold what it calls a “free and open Indo-Pacific” as China has increasingly flexed its muscles in the region.

Hegseth, speaking before a meeting with defense chiefs from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Cebu, praised what he called

‘Errors in gov’t spending not automatically impeach ground’

By Charles Dantes, Pot Chavez and Vito Barcelo

MALACAÑANG on Wednesday defended President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. against calls to hold him accountable for past national budgets, saying errors in government spending do not automatically constitute an impeachable offense.

Meanwhile, Associate Justice Rodil Zalameda, touted as a leading candidate for Chief Justice, said public officials involved in unconstitutional

increases in unprogrammed appropriations should be presumed to have acted in good faith unless proven otherwise.

In another development, Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David urged the Senate to delete questionable insertions in the House-approved P7.2-trillion proposed national budget for 2027, citing nearly 7,000 infrastructure projects worth P190 billion that allegedly lack publicly available supporting documents.

In an interview with Bombo Radyo Cagayan de Oro, Palace Press Officer

Next page



IN HIS IMAGE. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. checks out his portrait being drawn by a person deprived of liberty at the New Bilibid Prison which he visited in commemoration of the 32nd National Correctional Consciousness Week. Story on A2. PCO

Sen. Bato urges SC to rule vs. P50m bounty

By Pot Chavez and Vince Lopez

SENATOR Ronald dela Rosa filed a manifestation before the Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday, seeking to prevent the government from disbursing the P50-million bounty for his arrest and designation as “armed and dangerous.”

In May, the High Court denied Dela Rosa’s plea for a TRO and/or a status quo ante order (SQAQO).

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said it has deployed tracker teams, including the Special Action Force, to track down and arrest the senator.

Lawyer Israelito Torreon filed the manifestation electronically on behalf of his client, reiterating the urgent plea for the resolution of his motion for reconsideration.

In the 15-page manifestation, Dela Rosa asked for a temporary restraint

Next page



PIG PEN PROTEST. Bulacan backyard hog raisers join members of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) and National Federation of Hog Farmers (NatFed) in dramatizing their demands for government support in a pig pen. The groups have called for the immediate restoration of pork tariffs and the temporary suspension of hog imports. Manny Palmero

DOLE to firms: Do rest breaks, hydration during extreme heat

By Vito Barcelo and Gabriel Oliva

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has ordered employers to enforce rest and hydration breaks when the heat index reaches 33 degrees Celsius and suspend work when extreme heat poses an immediate danger to workers.

Labor Advisory No. 20, Series

Tagle: Homily comes from faith, not AI prompts

By Vito Barcelo and Hannah Franchezka Boragay

DEAN of the College of Cardinals Luis Antonio Tagle on Wednesday warned priests not to outsource their souls to AI.

Amid the growing use of artificial intelligence to write homilies and recollections in Catholic parishes, Tagle said a homily must come from personal faith, not prompts.

During the Diocese of Legazpi’s Diamond Jubilee Mass, Tagle said preaching must come from a priest’s personal reflection on the Word of God,

as opposed to relying solely on computer-generated content.

While acknowledging that technology can greatly assist people in carrying out their mission, he stressed that it cannot replace human beings.

He added that a homily should ex-

Next page

“Errors...

From A1

Claire Castro said Marcos signed the General Appropriations Act (GAA) as part of his constitutional duties, adding that officials should not be held liable for expenditures made in good faith, particularly when public funds reached their intended beneficiaries.

“What we need to identify are those who squander and steal public funds,” Castro said.

She argued that the Supreme Court decision did not determine the liability of any specific official or identify individuals who should be held accountable.

The Supreme Court (SC) has declared the 2024 and 2025 national budgets unconstitutional because of congressional increases in appropriations that exceeded the amounts recommended by the President.

The SC also invalidated certain provisions on unprogrammed appropriations in the 2026 budget.

The High Court clarified that unprogrammed appropriations are not unconstitutional per se, but must comply with safeguards governing government spending, fiscal discipline and congressional oversight.

It also faulted the congressional bicameral conference committee for failing to provide adequate records explaining budget item changes and supporting documents for its amendments.

The Palace official stressed that Marcos would continue pursuing investigations into alleged corruption and misuse of public funds, which the administration began addressing in 2025.

Castro said the President wanted investigations to continue beyond his term and urged future administrations not to shield allies or relatives implicated in alleged irregularities.

“The President will not stop as long as there are people clearly abusing public funds,” she said.

She added that officials should not cover up anomalies involving political allies or family members.

On reports that the Makabayan bloc in Congress could pursue a complaint against President Marcos, Castro said complainants must present solid evidence and supporting documents rather than rely solely on interpretations of the SC ruling.

President prepared to face allegations

She said the President was prepared to face allegations supported by sufficient evidence, while emphasizing that the filing of a complaint alone does not establish liability.

Under the 1987 Constitution, the President may be impeached for culpable violation of the Constitution, treason, bribery, graft and corruption, other high crimes, or betrayal of public trust.

The House of Representatives has the exclusive power to initiate impeachment cases, while the Senate has the sole power to try and decide them.

Zalameda clarified that the SC did not rule on their possible liability because the issue was not raised before it.

He issued the observation during his interview Monday before the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC), which has concluded its public interviews of candidates for chief justice ahead of the mandatory retirement of Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo on Nov. 6.

“When you say it is constitutional, I don’t think the public officers may be held liable for such an act, for an act which is declared constitutional,” Zalameda said.

“Aside from that, there is presumption of regularity on the part of these public officials and all their acts are considered valid until such acts are declared invalid,” he added.

Hegseth...

From A1

bitious... We propose that we work together to develop a US-ASEAN Framework for Defence Cooperation,” Hegseth said, without offering details.

US ready to begin project

He added that the United States was ready to begin the project as Singapore assumes the chairmanship of the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM)-Plus next year.

The grouping includes the bloc’s 11 member states, as well as representatives from the United States, Japan, China, Australia and other countries.

Hegseth also called for strengthening

‘Cyberlibel case vs. Lustre justified’

By Gwyneth Nolasco and Ratziel San Juan

THE camp of Atty. Manases “Mans” Carpio, the husband of Vice President Sara Duterte, on Wednesday defended the filing of the cyberlibel case against veteran journalist Philip Lustre Jr.

Carpio’s spokesperson Atty. Neil Abayon, in a statement, said it is only right for his client to file a case as long as the aggrieved party believes their rights were violated.

According to Abayon, the warrant was dated October 2, meaning if it was “rushed” as alleged by critics, then it

would not make sense for the warrant to have been served as late as October 24.

“It would also be nice if the respondent could address their own admission of his “backroom moves” with the judge in the posting of bail. From what I know, it is illegal and unethical for one party to have backroom moves with the

judge,” Abayon said in Filipino.

“If he did not post anything malicious and baseless, he would not be sued in the first place. So he should not play victim,” he added.

Meanwhile, Lustre sought to transfer his case from Davao City to Metro Manila.

Lustre’s counsel Atty. Dino de Leon said they are filing pre-arraignment remedies, which include the motion for reinvestigation, motion to quash, and the request to transfer venue due to safety concerns in Davao City.

“Of course we do not feel safe in Davao City, considering the known proclivity of the Duterte family for violence,” de Leon

said in a news conference.

“I don’t think that we will feel safe as the accused and as the lawyers traveling all the way to Davao City,” he added.

The lawyer said his 72-year-old client will experience difficulties attending the court proceedings in Davao City.

Lustre was arrested upon attending a public news forum in Quezon City on October 24, after a Davao court issued an arrest warrant for cyberlibel. He then posted bail amounting to P48,000.

The journalist authored the book “Kill, Kill, Kill: Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines” that discussed former President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs.

‘Don’t panic...

From A1

Reservation in Muntinlupa City when asked about the peso’s continued slump and the elevated inflation.

“Our foreign exchange reserves are healthy. And that is what we are getting to defend the peso,” he added.

The President assured the public that the government would continue using available measures to prevent further declines in the peso’s value as he acknowledged as well concerns over the rising prices of basic commodities, saying inflation is largely driven by supply-side pressures that cannot be addressed through monetary policy alone.

He added the country has limited control over global oil prices even as it takes steps to address food inflation.

“It’s basically oil (that) we can do nothing about. Food, we can (address),” Mr. Marcos said.

Still, Amalgamated Supermarkets Association executive director Steven Cua said the government must step up and stop the peso from declining further.

“A lot of our items are imported – if not finished products, its raw materi-

als. The government should step in. The Central Bank should step in. They should come up with steps to make sure it doesn’t go that direction at the rate it’s going right now,” Tan said.

The Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX) also called on the government to protect the economy from inflation, saying the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas cannot carry the fight alone.

“The BSP is acting on the monetary side. Government must match that resolve through better spending, stronger supply systems and early preparation to protect those who need help most and make sure today’s response to inflation does not become tomorrow’s fiscal problem,” FINEX said in a statement.

“The impact of inflation is already being felt by Filipino families. Headline inflation reached 7.2 percent in September, while food and non-alcoholic beverages rose 6.7 percent, housing and utilities 8.4 percent, and transport 14.6 percent. For the bottom 30 percent of income households, inflation was already 8.0 percent in June,” the group added.

FINEX said families are spending more on basic necessities, leaving less for education, healthcare and savings, with households that have the least room

to adjust bearing the greatest pressure.

Higher oil prices can increase transportation and production costs, while a weaker peso makes imports priced in dollars, including petroleum products, more expensive.

The local currency opened stronger at 64.08 against the greenback yesterday, before hitting an intraday low of 64.18 per dollar.

As this developed, former Central Bank of the Philippines Governor Jose Cuisia Jr. attributed the peso’s weakness to a strong dollar and expectations of a Federal Reserve interest rate hike.

He said the other factors include the country’s large trade and budget deficits, as well as weak foreign investments.

When asked if the peso could reach the 65-per-dollar level, Cuisia said he would have considered it unlikely but such outlook has changed, especially as the currency has already breached 64 per dollar.

“The Fed is going to make a decision this week. If they increase, there’s going to be greater pressure on the peso. And even 65 [is] very easy to break. We’re already at 64,” said Cuisia.

“Now, it’s likely, although I’m not saying it will, but we’re very close to it,” he added.

DOLE...

From A1

lowing employees who suffer work-related heat illnesses, such as heat stroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion, to qualify for compensation.

The guidelines under Labor Advisory No. 19, signed by Tolentino, clarify which heat-related conditions may be covered by the Employees’ Compensation Program (ECP) during El Niño and other periods of extreme heat.

At a heat index of 27 to 32 degrees Celsius, employers must provide safe drinking water, shaded or ventilated rest areas, regular hydration reminders, and training on heat stress symptoms and first aid, according to the latest advisory.

When the heat index reaches 33 to 41 degrees Celsius, employers must enforce regular rest and hydration breaks, establish cooling areas, provide appropriate protective equipment, and ensure trained first-aiders equipped with rapid-cooling packs are available.

At danger levels of 42 to 51 degrees Celsius, employers should adopt flexible work arrangements to limit workers’ exposure.

At 52 degrees Celsius or higher, they must reassess work activities and stop,

reschedule or relocate tasks if risks cannot be adequately controlled or pose an immediate threat.

DOLE also requires employers to document workplace hazards, risk assessments and control measures in consultation with worker representatives.

Employers must incorporate heat stress prevention into occupational safety and health programs, emergency response procedures and business continuity plans, the advisory said.

No need to hoard water

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) meanwhile assured the public that there is no need to hoard water as the country faces the looming effects of Super El Niño.

DOST Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said water supplies were currently sufficient, with dams holding enough water to meet demand for the next several months.

Speaking at a press conference in Angeles, Pampanga, Solidum said the public, especially those living near dams, should not worry about water shortages.

“But in case there are places that really have no water, then that’s the time you actually use it,” Solidum said.

He advised the public to collect rain-

water for household needs, including washing cars and watering plants.

“Why store drinking water when there is still a supply? The government’s priority is to provide drinking water,” he added.

Dam water levels mix

Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, which supplies water to much of the National Capital Region (NCR), stood at 208.94 meters as of Wednesday, down from 209.03 meters on Tuesday. Its level was 1.06 meters below its normal level of 210 meters.

As of 8 a.m. on Oct. 28, water levels at other dams were:

- Ipo — 100.60 meters, down from 100.84 meters
- La Mesa — 79.35 meters, up from 79.31 meters
- Ambuklao — 751.64 meters, down from 751.70 meters
- Binga — 574.68 meters, down from 574.74 meters
- San Roque — 281.63 meters, up from 281.62 meters
- Pantabangan — 210.21 meters, up from 210.17 meters
- Magat — 190.11 meters, down from 190.31 meters
- Caliraya — 286.56 meters, down from 286.64 meters

Tagle:...

From A1

press a genuine understanding of the Gospel and a sincere desire to lead the faithful closer to God.

The cardinal found that AI cannot replace a priest’s personal discern-

ment, conscience, and lived relationship with God.

“While these tools can make work easier, they should not replace the sincerity, empathy, and personal understanding that make human communication meaningful,” Tagle said.

He also implored priests and parishes to prioritize what might be described

as “angelic intelligence,” or wisdom guided by love, humility, prayer, and compassion — over unquestioning dependence on AI.

Meanwhile, more than 6,000 Catholic devotees on Wednesday gathered at Saint Gregory the Great Cathedral in Legazpi City, Albay, as the local diocese celebrated its 75th anniversary

with the historic Pontifical Coronation of the venerated image of Nuestra Señora de Salvación.

Tagle presided over the celebration, which was highlighted by the Pontifical Coronation of Nuestra Señora de Salvación, Patroness of the Diocese of Legazpi and Heavenly Queen of Albay, together with the image of the Infant Jesus.

challenges to the rights of smaller and archipelagic states.

He emphasized that ASEAN must uphold mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the rejection of the threat or use of force.

First, Teodoro called for stronger ASEAN unity, saying member states should not allow their differences, including disputes in the South China Sea, to divide the bloc. He said such differences should be resolved through peaceful and legal means.

He also welcomed efforts by Cambodia and Thailand to maintain their ceasefire and pursue a peaceful, lasting solution to their situation.

The Philippines, he said, would continue participating in the process

agreed upon by their leaders, including through the ASEAN Observer Team, while respecting the sensitivities of those concerned.

Second, he stressed the need to deepen practical defense cooperation to build trust among regional defense establishments and deliver concrete benefits to their peoples.

Teodoro cited cooperation through the ADMM and ADMM-Plus on maritime security, the protection of critical underwater infrastructure, and people-to-people exchanges.

He also called for greater cooperation on food and energy security amid supply chain disruptions and the threat of a “super El Niño,” which could affect food, water, electricity and connectivity across Southeast Asia. **With AFP**

‘Over 36,000 PDLs freed under legal aid’

By Charles Dantes

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Wednesday that his administration has freed 36,842 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) since July 2022 through legal assistance and correctional reforms, stressing that qualified prisoners should not remain behind bars because of delayed paperwork or lack of access to lawyers.

Speaking during the 32nd National Correctional Consciousness Week at New Bilibid Prison, Marcos said the government was working to expedite the release of inmates who had completed their sentences or otherwise qualified for release, while expanding rehabilitation programs to prepare them for reintegration into society.

“Every person who has made a mistake and faced accountability should also be given the opportunity to change and start anew,” Mr. Marcos said.

He said some inmates needed only legal assistance to resolve documentation issues that prevented their release.

“Completing a sentence should mean going home to your family, not waiting for delayed paperwork,” the President said.

President Marcos recounted how his wife, lawyer Liza Araneta-Marcos, had brought her law students to prisons in Ilocos to help inmates review their cases and identify those eligible for release.

The experience prompted him to pursue similar initiatives nationwide after taking office in 2022, he said.

Mr. Marcos said he directed the Department of Justice to provide legal assistance to inmates who should no longer be detained and to speed up the processing of qualified cases.

Aplasca files counter-affidavit in assault case

By Pot Chavez

FORMER Senate sergeant-at-arms Mao Aplasca filed his counter-affidavit on Wednesday before the Department of Justice (DOJ) in connection with a direct assault charge stemming from the shooting incident at the Senate in May.

“He submitted his counter-affidavit today, and the PNP-CIDG, as complainant, was given until November 6 to file a reply-affidavit,” Justice spokesperson Atty. Polo Martinez told reporters.

“They don’t have to, but they can, and if they do file their reply-affidavit, then the respondents, Mao Aplasca as well as two other respondents who are part of the OSAA, will also have the chance to file their rejoinder-affidavits in response to any new allegations in the reply,” he added.

The former official personally appeared before the Justice Department for the third hearing of the preliminary investigation but refused to comment on the case.

Martinez explained that if the reply-affidavit is not filed by November 6, the case will be submitted for resolution.



TEACHING POSTS. A teacher assists pupils at a school in Sulu. The Department of Education announced on Oct. 28 more than 3,627 teaching and teaching-related positions for the newly established Schools Division Office of Sulu.

Jinggoy disputes claims on P7.4b budget initiatives

By Joel Zurbano

SUSPENDED Sen. Jinggoy Estrada has disputed former Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan’s testimony that he had at least P7.4 billion in congressional initiatives in the 2025 national budget.

In a statement, Estrada cited Senate records that he said showed no official insertions or amendments linked to him in the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) budget.

He cited a March letter from the Senate’s Legislative Budget Research and Monitoring Office (LBRMO) to the Ombudsman stating that “there are no legislative records or official documents indicating any official insertions or amendments made by a senator, specifically Senator Jinggoy Estrada, in the 2025 (national budget)

related to the DPWH.”

Estrada also noted that Sen. Panfilo Lacson had cited the LBRMO’s findings in a privilege speech.

He maintained that the General Appropriations Act was the product of both chambers of Congress and presidential approval, in accordance with the constitutional process.

The statement followed Bonoan’s testimony before the Sandiganbayan Fifth Division on Tuesday during the resumption of Estrada’s bail hearing in a plunder case involving alleged kickbacks from flood control projects.

Bonoan, a state witness in the case, testified that Estrada had at least P7.4 billion in congressional initiatives in the 2025 budget.

The prosecution also cited a separate P475-million initiative allegedly ar-

anged by the senator in coordination with a congressman.

Bernardo was scheduled to testify at the hearing on Oct. 28.

Bonoan further testified that Estrada requested about P1 billion under the Senate Leadership Fund for 2025.

He said the late former DPWH Undersecretary Maria Catalina Cabral recommended an initial P500 million, which was included in the department’s proposed budget.

Bonoan said DPWH Undersecretary Roberto Bernardo later sought another P500 million for Estrada after the senator became Senate President Pro Tempore.

Bonoan said he asked Cabral to review the request, and she recommended the additional funding. The prosecution said P700 million of the P1-billion request was approved.



DIOCESE OF LEGAZPI. Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, dean of the College of Cardinals, leads the pontifical coronation of the venerated image of Nuestra Señora de Salvación, patroness of the Diocese of Legazpi and heavenly queen of Albay, and the image of the Infant Jesus at St. Gregory the Great Cathedral on Oct. 28. The images are enshrined at the Diocesan Shrine and Parish of Our Lady of Salvation in Joroan, Tiwi.



GRASSROOTS GRANTS. Japan’s Ambassador to the Philippines, Kitagawa Katsuro, signs three grant contracts under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects program. Before the signing, he met with representatives of the recipient organizations to discuss their projects and the needs of the communities.

Filipinos favor US, Japan as key partners

By Othel V. Campos

THE United States and Japan strengthened their positions as the Philippines’ preferred economic partners, with both countries gaining in the latest Pulse Asia survey commissioned by the Stratbase Group.

The US topped the list at 73% of the 2,400 respondents, up from 71% in July, while Japan ranked second at 62%, up 10 percentage points from 52%.

Canada followed at 35%, up seven points, while Australia placed fourth at 30%, down five points. South Korea ranked fifth at 21%, up one point.

Stratbase Group president and CEO Victor Andres Manhit said the stronger preference for the US and Japan reflected growing recognition of their roles in the Philippines’ economic and strategic interests.

“Filipinos increasingly recognize that

our economic security is closely tied to the partnerships we build with trusted countries. The growing preference for the United States and Japan reflects confidence in partners that can help the Philippines expand investments, strengthen critical infrastructure and secure our place in emerging technology supply chains,” he said.

The Sept. 17 to 23 survey comes as the Marcos administration advances the Luzon Economic Corridor, a trilateral initiative with the US and Japan focused on infrastructure, clean energy, semiconductor manufacturing, logistics and digital connectivity.

The United Kingdom ranked sixth at 20%, down six points, followed by the European Union and China at 14% each. The EU gained one point, while China fell three points. Taiwan rose three points to 11%, while India remained at 2%.

IN BRIEF

Ombudsman fines Cebu mayor over night market

THE Office of the Ombudsman has ordered Cebu City Mayor Nestor Dionson Archival Sr. to pay a fine equivalent to one month’s basic salary after finding him administratively liable for Simple Neglect of Duty over alleged irregularities in the operation of the 2025 Colon Street Night Market.

In a 21-page decision, the Ombudsman found that Archival failed to ensure compliance with operational requirements, particularly coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways and the issuance of permits before operations began. The case stemmed from a complaint by Pastor Jun Alcover Jr., who questioned the management of the market by a private organizer.

The complaint alleged that the organizer was authorized to screen vendors, set stall rental rates, collect fees and retain the proceeds. It also questioned the lack of consultation with the Garbo Asenso Sumbanan Alyansa sa Gugma Board, a body created under a city ordinance to oversee informal trading, and claimed that more than 600 sellers were allowed despite a permit covering only about 100 vendors.**Rex Espiritu**

Gov’t repatriates 422 Pinoys from Saudi Arabia

THE government has repatriated 422 Filipinos, including 414 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and eight dependents, from Saudi Arabia amid security tensions in the kingdom, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) said.

The repatriation was carried out through 11 flights as of Oct. 26, according to the agency’s latest assistance monitoring report. The DMW said 4,049 OFWs had received government assistance, with a total of 5,496 services provided to Filipinos affected by the security situation.

Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac made the remarks during a solidarity and services mission in Al Khobar, attended by about 100 Filipino community leaders who discussed the government’s response and raised concerns.

Financial assistance accounted for most of the services, with 3,977 instances recorded. The government also provided food assistance 628 times, land transportation assistance 231 times, shelter assistance 228 times and medical assistance 10 times. **Vito Barcelo**

DOLE cuts processing time for alien work papers

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has shortened the processing time for Alien Employment Permits (AEPs) from 15 to 10 working days to help foreign nationals secure the documents needed to obtain working visas from the Bureau of Immigration.

Under Department Order No. 248-C, Series of 2026, signed by Labor Secretary Francis N. Tolentino, the new rules also allow a one-time 10-working-day extension, subject to a maximum processing period of 20 working days.

The order seeks to simplify applications by reducing documentary requirements and streamlining frontline services for foreign workers and their employers while maintaining compliance with Philippine labor laws. Applicants no longer need to submit certain permits and authorizations from other government agencies, although compliance with the respective agencies’ laws and regulations remains mandatory. **Vito Barcelo**

IN BRIEF

RTC clears 5 ex-rebels of insurgency charges

A REGIONAL Trial Court in Gin-gooog City, Misamis Oriental, has dismissed rebellion cases against five former members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) following their grant of amnesty, the National Amnesty Commission (NAC) said.

In a statement, the NAC said the court issued its decision on Oct. 16, marking a major step toward the former rebels' reintegration into mainstream society.

The acquittal followed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s grant of amnesty on Sept. 24, 2025, and the subsequent awarding of Certificates of Amnesty to 19 communist insurgents, as well as one member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The awarding ceremony was held last March 2 in Cagayan de Oro City under the NAC's aftercare initiative, the Balik Karapatan: Rights Restoration Program. **Rex Espiritu**

Magnitude 5.5 quake jolts parts of Mindanao

A MAGNITUDE 5.5 earthquake was shook several parts of Mindanao on Wednesday morning, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

In an advisory, Phivolcs said the movement of tectonic plates was recorded nine kilometers with a depth of 10 km (km) southwest of Balut Island in the municipality of Sarangani.

"This is an aftershock of the 2026 June Mw7.8 Offshore Sarangani and Mw6.5 Offshore Davao Occidental earthquake," the advisory read.

Because of the seismic activity, Phivolcs said multiple areas including Sarangani, Davao Occidental and Alabel, Sarangani experienced Intensity IV tremor. **Gabriel Oliva**

RTC sends smuggler to four years in prison

A REGIONAL Trial Court (RTC) has sentenced a man to four years in prison for a foiled attempt to smuggle some P6.76 million worth of imported cigarettes in Sarangani province, according to the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

The RTC Branch 47 in Alabel, Sarangani, handed down the decision last Oct. 21, finding the accused guilty of violating the Customs Modernization and Tariff Law.

The case stemmed from a joint checkpoint operation conducted by the Philippine National Police on Jan. 23, 2025, in Barangay Katuabo, Kiamba, Sarangani.

The raiders seized 7,350 reams of New Berlin cigarettes and 1,250 reams of King Perfect cigarettes during the operation. **Vito Barcelo**



KEEPING HERITAGE ALIVE. Apart from relief missions during emergencies, the Department of Social Welfare and Development also provides financial assistance to promote livelihood projects such as this time-honored paper mache enterprise in Paete, Laguna which is also home to traditional wood carving by home-grown craftsmen. **DSWD photo**

Gov't enhances processing of 2017 Marawi siege compensation claims

By Rex Espiritu

THE government has launched a digital system to streamline compensation claims for victims of the 2017 Marawi siege, as international partners turned over a new peace and mediation center to the Bangsamoro government.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) said the Claims Processing Information System (CPIS) was launched by the national and Bangsamoro governments, led by the Marawi Compensation

Board (MCB), to improve the submission, verification, evaluation and monitoring of claims.

The launch coincided with the turnover of the Peace and Mediation Center to the Ministry of Public Order and Safety

(MPOS) on Oct. 19 at the Mindanao State University campus in Marawi City. The facility was built under the European Union-funded support to the Bangsamoro Transition (SUBATRA) Program, with logistical and management support from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

The CPIS was developed under SUB-ATRA to support the implementation of Republic Act No. 11696, or the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act of 2022.

The digital platform includes workflow management, integrated records, audit trails and claims-status tracking, which the government said would improve transparency, accountability and

efficiency in processing compensation claims.

"Every claim represents a personal experience of loss and the hope that the government will fulfill its commitment and support," OPAPRU Undersecretary Noel Barracerros said.

The 2017 conflict displaced more than 350,000 people and damaged nearly 6,000 homes and infrastructure across 24 barangays, according to OPAPRU.

The MCB has resolved more than 5,800 claims and awarded P6.5 billion to over 3,800 qualified claimants. Nearly 14,500 applications have been filed, while around 7,000 structures have been inspected.



BALANGA SCHOOL AMONG WORLD'S TOP 10. Pusong Pinoy Party-list Rep. Jett Nisay drums up support for the Cabog-Cabog Integrated School in Balanga City which made it to the Top 10 finalists in the Environmental Action category of the World's Best School 2026 competition. Votes can be cast through the competition's online portal at applications.worldsbestschool.org/public-vote-26. **Butch Gunio**

PAO keeps tab of PDLs' rights to speedy trial

By Rio N. Araja

THE Public Attorney's Office ensures that prisoners or persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) who have not been arraigned within the prescribe period are protected under Republic Act 8493 or the Speedy Trial Act.

PAO deputy chief Ana Lisa Soriano said even cases requiring the release of minors are being considered under Republic Act 9344 or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006.

She said PAO has never been remiss in informing the PDLs about their right to avail themselves of free legal assistance.

If a detainee already has a private counsel, the lawyer is informed about the circumstances that may warrant immediate action, otherwise, a PAO lawyer is notified, Soriano said.

The procedures are provided under Section 2, Article 6, Chapter XI of the 2021 Revised PAO Operations Manual, she pointed out.

PAO chief Persida Rueda-Acosta said the agency has assisted almost 508,000 PDLs through jail visitation activities from January to September 2026, providing legal aid and medical, dental and optical services as part of the program to decongest jail facilities across the country.

"During jail visitations, our public defenders interview detainees to identify those without legal counsel, those who may have been detained beyond the maximum imposable penalty for their alleged offenses, and those whose preventive imprisonment have reached the minimum imposable principal penalty," she said.

Under Article 29 of the Revised Penal Code, a PDL who has already met the applicable requirements may seek release on reduced bail or on their own recognizance through the appropriate motion.

From January to September, a total of 57,284 PDLs were released on various legal grounds, said PAO-National Capital Region director Revelyn Ramos-Dacpano.

At least 2,140 PDLs were released on recognizance after serving the minimum sentence, while 7,134 were released following the provisional dismissal of their cases, she said.

"Another 1,932 were released because their preventive imprisonment equaled the maximum imposable penalty, although their cases remained pending," she added.

PAF probes midair crash of two planes; rest of fleet grounded

By Rex Espiritu

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) is looking at multiple possible causes of the Oct. 23 midair collision between two SF-260 aircraft in Batangas that killed four pilots, saying the planes' age alone does not determine their operational capability.

Meanwhile, the remaining 15 SF-260 aircraft were grounded pending completion of the investigation.

"We cannot look at just one angle

because we do not know what we might have overlooked. Everything is being looked at," PAF spokesman Col. Alvin Capinguian told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Capinguian also said the aircraft's operational capability was being assessed based on operating hours, not chronological age.

He added that both planes remained within their airframe operating-hour limits and had several years of service life remaining.

The collision occurred at about 3:51 p.m. during a training flight at Fernando Air Base in Lipa City, Batangas. Both aircraft crashed within the base, killing 1Lt. Angeleo Adrian Penaflor, 1Lt. Raymart Cabangala, 1Lt. Ma. Melvin Acebuque and Maj. David Joshua Rojo.

Capinguian said investigators secured the crash site and collected debris. The probe covered planning, logistics, flight execution, weather conditions and other aspects of the

operation.

Capinguian said the findings would guide subsequent corrective measures.

He ruled out suspending formation flying, describing it as a core competency and required skill for military pilots.

"It's like saying that because someone was hit by a bullet, we should stop firearm training. It is a core competency and required skill of the PAF, which is why we must continue practicing it," he said.



WHERE GAS PUMPS DON'T EXIST. The Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources deliver fuel to Filipino fishing boats playing their trade in the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc through the government's Kadiwa ng Bagong Bayaning Mangingisda Program. The fishermen welcome the assistance, saying the fuel subsidy would allow them to remain longer at sea while reducing the cost of their fishing expeditions. **PCG photo**

Free fuel for Pinoy fishermen at WPS

By Rex Espiritu

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) delivered on Tuesday fuel to some 40 to 50 Filipino fishing boats operating near Bajo de Masinloc at the disputed West Philippine Sea to help reduce fishermen's operating costs amid high fuel prices.

The Oct. 27 mission was conducted under the government's Kadiwa ng Bagong Bayaning Mangingisda (KBBM) Program using BFAR vessel MV Mamalakaya, with support from PCG vessel BRP Malapascua and aerial surveillance by PCG Islander 251.

According to the PCG spokesman for the West Philippine Sea Rear Admiral Jay Tarriela, the fishing boats operating in the traditional fishing ground approached MV Mamalakaya and lined up to receive fuel when the vessel arrived.

Fishermen interviewed during the ac-

tivity welcomed the assistance, saying the fuel support would allow them to remain longer at sea while reducing the cost of their fishing trips.

The KBBM Program aims to support Filipino fishermen by purchasing their fresh catch directly at sea and providing fuel and ice to help lower operational expenses and sustain fishing activities in the West Philippine Sea.

PCG commandant Adm. Rommel Supangan ordered the deployment of the Coast Guard's surface and air assets to secure the mission. He also commended the crews of BRP Malapascua, the PCG Islander 251, and MV Mamalakaya for completing the hassle-free operation.

During its flight, the PCG aircraft monitored China Coast Guard and People's Liberation Army Navy vessels near Bajo de Masinloc, as well as a Chinese research vessel operating near the shoal. The PCG said it continues to monitor and document Chinese presence in the area.



Grinding Grains
Honor Blanco Cabie

The price of over-reliance

A TECHNICAL integration is currently pressuring the Philippine energy landscape, carrying profound functional impacts for both corporate boardrooms and everyday households.

Recent briefings from Energy Secretary Sharon Garin have crystallized a naked truth: the intersection of fiscal volatility, geopolitical risk, and climate-induced generation shortfalls is driving domestic utility costs upward.

For corporate executives managing multi-million peso budgets in urban financial hubs, to family households managing daily expenditures from Batanes down to Tawi-Tawi, this triple threat presents an immediate financial problems.

The primary driver of this demand-pull inflation is the severe depreciation of the local currency.

The Philippine peso recently breached the ₱64-per-dollar threshold in intraday trading, exposing the country's vulnerability to global exchange fluctuations.

Because the Philippines relies on imports to cover the vast majority of its crude oil and roughly two-thirds of its coal consumption, domestic energy procurement is deeply linked to the US dollar.

The Department of Energy notes that a weakening peso inflates landing costs for essential commodities like coal, diesel, and liquefied natural gas.

For businesses, this forex slide passes directly through to the wholesale electricity market, elevating per-kilowatt-hour charges and threatening corporate margins.

For ordinary consumers, these dollar-denominated supply contracts translate directly into higher monthly power distributor bills.

Compounding this currency pressure is global supply risk stemming from continued geopolitical instability in the Middle East.

While regional flashpoints feel distant, globalized supply chains ensure that volatility in oil-exporting regions produces immediate financial consequences at local fuel pumps.

To cushion this impact, the DOE has prescribed tactical price hikes, capping adjustments to ₱1.20 per liter for diesel and ₱0.50 per liter for kerosene in late October 2026.

For logistics-heavy enterprises and mass transport sectors, these fluctuating pump prices introduce extreme budgetary forecasting uncertainty.

For families in remote provinces where maritime transportation dictates the availability of basic goods, elevated fuel costs trigger a predictable domino effect across the broader consumer price index.

Simultaneously, climate risks are com-

pounding these structural vulnerabilities through the prolonged effects of El Niño.

According to national energy data, coal-fired power plants still dominate the Philippine generation mix at roughly 62 percent, while cheaper domestic hydro-electric sources provide a crucial buffer during normal weather cycles.

However, extended dry spells have severely diminished hydro-reservoir capacities.

“
Until real energy independence is achieved, the cost of doing business and the cost of daily survival will remain tied to global disruptions beyond our borders

When these low-cost generation assets go offline, grid operators are forced to deploy more expensive, fossil-fuel-reliant thermal plants to prevent power outages.

This shift in the generation mix forces power distributors to absorb higher generation charges, which are ultimately passed through to the end consumer.

The systemic nature of this crisis means that financial outcomes are linked from the boardroom to the living room. High electricity prices – already among the highest in the ASEAN region – threaten the competitiveness of local industries, increase production overheads, and potentially constrain job creation.

For the everyday citizen, particularly in off-grid or rural areas, these increments demand immediate cuts to non-essential household spending, directly impacting quality of life.

The current situation highlights a long-term vulnerability: a deep structural dependence on external fossil fuels.

While temporary mitigation strategies – such as the DOE and Energy Regulatory Commission exploring staggered price structures – provide near-term relief, they do not resolve the core problem.

Navigating this volatile environment requires a faster transition toward domestic, renewable energy installations to protect the Philippine economy from international market shocks.

Until real energy independence is achieved, the cost of doing business and the cost of daily survival will remain tied to global disruptions beyond our borders.

Rubio joins Trump on campaign trail days before US midterms

CORPUS CHGRISTI, Texas – US Secretary of State Marco Rubio made a rare appearance Tuesday (Wednesday, Manila time) alongside President Donald Trump on the midterms campaign trail, visiting an oil tanker filled with Venezuelan crude just days before the crucial vote.

Rubio and Vice President JD Vance are widely viewed as top contenders to carry the Republican Party into its post-Trump era in the 2028 election.

But while Vance has been crisscrossing the country in recent weeks to rally support ahead of the November 3 polls, it is very unusual for the top US diplomat to engage in such domestic political trips.

On Tuesday, Trump called Rubio on stage at his campaign rally in Corpus Christi, Texas, remarking: “He’s so popular.”

“We love Marco,” he added, beckoning Rubio to join him at the podium as the crowd chanted Rubio’s name.

A State Department official said Rubio was travelling with Trump in his capacity as National Security Advisor. He is the first person to hold both key foreign policy jobs since Henry Kissinger.

“He needs time with the President on all kinds of issues. The president will be on the go, so being on the plane with him gives (Rubio) a chance to talk to him about these items,” the US official added on condition of anonymity.

While the official did not elaborate on the nature of these issues, their comments come against the backdrop of wars in the Middle East and Ukraine -- as well as elections in Israel and the upcoming vote in the United States.

Rubio, who made a run for president in the 2016 election, has yet to say if he would throw his hat in the ring again in 2028.

Trump remains a dominant figure in the Republican party, and the 80-year-old has yet to endorse a successor.

Until now, Rubio, the first Hispanic and first fluent Spanish speaker to be the top US diplomat, has steered clear of the campaign trail.

He has instead focused on a series of international trips -- including visits to Uzbekistan and India last week.

“
Until now, Rubio, the first Hispanic and first fluent Spanish speaker to be the top US diplomat, has steered clear of the campaign trail

He is also set to host a meeting of G20 foreign ministers in Atlanta, Georgia, on Friday and Saturday.

Venezuelan oil

Trump and Rubio's showcasing of an oil tanker carrying one million barrels of Venezuelan crude comes as affordability remains a top worry for American households grappling with steeper costs of gasoline and other goods.

The oil, Trump said, is set to be processed at Texas refineries.

Relations between Washington and Caracas have warmed after the United States toppled longtime leader Nicolas Maduro in a military operation in January.

Maduro's vice president Delcy Rodriguez took power after his ouster, and

EDITORIAL

Samar’s overcrowded hospitals: An accident waiting to happen?

THE overcrowding crisis in Samar’s government hospitals is no longer a matter of isolated complaints. It is a documented public health concern that demands urgent national government intervention.

Reports published earlier this week exposed the alarming conditions at Calbayog District Hospital and Samar Provincial Hospital, where patients have been accommodated in crowded corridors because existing facilities can no longer adequately meet demand.

The October 26 news report highlighted official hospital reports dated October 19, which revealed patient populations exceeding twice the authorized bed capacities of both institutions.

At Calbayog District Hospital, 181 patients were confined despite an authorized capacity of only 75 beds.

The hospital also recorded 58 new admissions and 238 outpatient consultations that day. At Samar Provincial Hospital in Catbalogan City, officials reported accommodating approximately 200 to 250 patients despite an authorized capacity of only 100 beds.

These figures came from the hospitals’ own assessments of their operations and needs.

What makes the situation even more disturbing is that Samar’s hospital overcrowding is not a new problem.

As early as October 2025, reports had already documented severe congestion at Samar Provincial Hospital, where more than 200 patients were being accommodated in a facility with an

authorized capacity of only 100 beds.

A year later, the latest official hospital reports reveal that overcrowding persists, with patients still occupying hospital corridors and medical personnel struggling to cope with demand.

How many more warnings must be issued before decisive intervention comes? Must patients die because of overcrowding before the Department of Health treats the situation with the urgency it deserves?

“
Every delay prolongs the difficulties faced by patients and the medical personnel caring for them

The DOH cannot afford to wait for a tragedy before taking concrete steps to address conditions that may compromise patient safety and the timely delivery of medical care.

A subsequent news report detailed Samar Governor Sharee Ann Tan’s formal appeal to Health Secretary Dr. Edwin Mercado for urgent assistance. The governor’s intervention brought the hospitals’ documented needs di-



Duty Calls
Florencio Fianza

It’s getting to be hopeless

IT IS so unbelievable that after what the country is still going thru over the past year due to the flood control scandal, the proposed 2027 national budget is still full of hundreds of billions of pesos of unprogrammed expenditures.

Hasn’t the House of Representatives learned any lesson from the scandal and at least try showing the people that they can be capable of having a pork barrel free budget for once in the lives?

No wonder that in a recent survey, people are feeling totally helpless in stopping the rampant corruption going on in our government.

Although the Palace promised to study the submitted 2027 budget to conform to the Supreme Court decision declaring the 2024, 2025 and 2026 budgets unconstitutional, it is doubtful if this will amount to anything.

All that is left is now is to rely on the pledge of the Senate to do away with the unprogrammed expenditures.

And what is the possibility of that really happening? Very low but let’s hope that it will succeed. There are still a few stout hearted men in that chamber who might be able to swing things.

Unfortunately however, just in many previous national budgets, enterprising people in Congress and the Executive branches will always find a clever way to hide the pork.

It’s sad, but that is how far our country has sunk with dire consequences. It is for instance one reason that in the not so distant future, every member of the ASEAN will overtake and leave us behind.

It is also one of the reasons why China looks down on us with utter contempt because of the notion that every govern-

ment official can be bought.

In the latest Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, the country’s rank has down to 120th out of 182 countries. In the ASEAN Region, only Cambodia and Myanmar are lower than us.

Our CPI score is 32 out of 100 which way below the global average score of 42. Our worsening rank is undoubtedly due to the never ending flood control investigations which should have ended much earlier but for one reason or another, continues to this day.

“
National pride and honor are now in the gutter for these corrupt officials

We do not know if there are some people who want this scandal to remain in the limelight to score political points.

But what is there to score when the reputation of the country continues to suffer.

As some are already saying, our economy has already basically stagnated. Investors in spite of some news saying that they continue to come upon closer examination are simply promises and very little are actually coming in compared to our neighbors. When will our leaders get their acts together?

To be fair, there is no country in this world that is corrupt free.

But the way we do it is something else.

We are perhaps one of the very few countries where corrupt officials steals everything and leave nothing for the country which is what ghost projects are all about.

I was just informed by my morning walking partner that one Congressman to this day continues to demand a 30 percent cut for every project in his district which is paid in advance.

What that guarantees is that every project undertaken will be substandard and we can actually see this in all the flood control projects that have been done and all the roads that we drive thru every day.

The 2027 national budget should have been an opportunity for our House leaders to show some sensitivity to what the suffering public wants them to do.

Unfortunately, the House of Representatives went ahead and submitted a budget full of pork contemptuous of what the public wants them to do. And to think that the country is going thru a very difficult time with our currency practically worth nothing.

National pride and honor are now in the gutter for these corrupt officials. But why should they really care. Voters after all keep on electing them back into office.

As the old saying goes, we deserve the kind of government we have with the kind of people we elect into public office.

One way corruption can be minimized based on my 42 years of government service is to lead by example.

If subordinates see that their superiors are managing government funds responsibly, they act accordingly and follow the leader.

Otherwise, it will be free for all as I suspect what is going on today.

has been complying with Trump’s demands for Caracas to open its energy industry to American companies.

Trump is hoping this showcase of supply from Venezuela will bolster support from voters, vowing that gasoline and diesel costs will soon cool.

Global oil prices have surged since US-Israel strikes targeting Iran in late February triggered Tehran’s retaliation in blocking off a key route of energy transit,

the Strait of Hormuz.

This has translated into higher costs at the gasoline pump and sparked a surge in transportation fees for businesses, threatening further spillover into consumer prices.

Republicans are wary that voter anger over inflation, stoked by Trump’s launch of war on Iran, could trigger a “blue wave” of Democrats winning in the midterms.

The US leader has since been working

to rally loyal supporters who often stay home when he is not on the ballot, as Republicans push to retain control of both chambers of Congress.

Trump has held near-daily rallies across the country over the past month.

His third visit to Texas in the past month reflects Republican concerns, as polls show a close senate race in a state that has stayed solidly Republican for more than 30 years. **AFP**

Malaysia foils \$12-m AI chip smuggling bid

SEPANG, Malaysia – Malaysia foiled an attempt to smuggle advanced artificial intelligence chips through the country’s main airport, customs officials said Wednesday, in a case worth more than \$12 million.

The bust was the fifth case this year involving a syndicate smuggling advanced AI chips, the officials said, with the total estimated value exceeding \$24 million.

The Southeast Asian nation, as a growing data-centre hub, is seeking to prevent itself from being used as a transit point for restricted chips headed elsewhere.

A team inspected Kuala Lumpur airport’s free trade zone this month and seized 30 server units containing advanced AI chips worth 49.5 million ringgit (\$12.1 million), airport customs director Aspalila Ag Tuah said.

Malaysia tightened export and transshipment controls on chips from the United States last year, requiring a strategic trade permit and advance notification if there is suspicion of misuse or diversion.

“The servers were declared as ‘electronic components’ to avoid detection by the authorities,” Aspalila told a news conference.

“Initial investigations found that the servers were to be re-exported to another country in Asia,” she added.

The syndicate involved used Malaysia as a transit point to ensure there were no restrictions during the export process of the servers to the next country of destination, she said.

Aspalila said the servers came from “an Asian country”, declining to specify their exact origin, where the chips were made or where they were headed. **AFP**

Netanyahu, rival both claim mandate after tight election



‘BLATANT VIOLATION.’ Mourners react as they attend the funeral of those who were killed in airstrikes carried out by Jordan the night before on the village of Al-Taf in the Al-Lajat region, in the northeastern countryside of Daraa, the other day, Syria condemned Jordan's strikes on the country following a deadly attack on a church, as Amman said its raids a day earlier had killed more than 20 jihadist fighters. In what was fast developing into the worst crisis between the neighbors since the ouster of longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in 2024, Jordan said it had ‘great respect’ for Syria, while expressing regret for civilian casualties. **AFP**

US to grant Bolsonaro visa as he flees Brazil

WASHINGTON, DC – Defeated right-wing presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro will be granted entry into the United States, Washington said Tuesday (Wednesday, Manila time), amid media reports that he has left Brazil for the country despite a court order banning his exit.

The son of jailed ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro lost the presidential election Sunday to incumbent Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and refused to concede defeat.

The US State Department said Tuesday it would issue visas to Bol-

sonaro and his family, allowing them entry into the United States, without confirming his travel plans.

The 45-year-old arrived in the United States Tuesday, CNN and the Washington Post reported, each citing an anonymous source. But where he landed remains unknown.

The right-wing senator on Monday said a Supreme Court justice had ordered him to hand over his passports. Bolsonaro is under investigation for alleged corruption and money laundering, and with his election loss is also set to lose parliamentary immunity.

A police source told AFP that the senator’s Brazilian and diplomatic passports had been canceled, adding that “there is no formal record of Flavio Bolsonaro leaving the country.”

But he has held Italian nationality since 2023, according to an Italian parliamentary document seen by AFP.

Bolsonaro’s campaign manager Rogerio Marinho expressed shock over reports that the defeated candidate had fled Brazil. **AFP**

JERUSALEM – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and rival Gadi Eisenkot each vowed on Wednesday to form a government after both came up short in the first election since the October 7, 2023 attack traumatised the country.

Voters turned out Tuesday in the highest numbers in decades to give their verdict on the divisive rule of Netanyahu, Israel’s longest-serving prime minister who has pushed the country sharply to the right and unleashed a wave of wars in response to the Hamas attack.

Exit polls showed Eisenkot, a former military chief and political novice, and his opposition bloc neck and neck with Netanyahu’s hard-right camp and both well away from the threshold for a majority in parliament.

The strongest gains came from Arab Israeli parties whose voters turned out in soaring numbers against Netanyahu, who has relentlessly warned that the minority would dilute the Jewish nationalist direction in which he has taken Israel.

Netanyahu, greeting cheering supporters at a Jerusalem convention centre after 3:00 am (0100 GMT), called for a “strong government of the right” and said that the “Jewish and Zionist majority must unite”.

The 77-year-old prime minister was unusually brief and did not directly claim victory.

Instead, he listed leaders Israel has killed under his orders and again hinted that he was ready for a third bombing campaign against Iran alongside US President Donald Trump, his close ally.

“Israel has a unique opportunity with our partner President Trump to forever eliminate the existential threat of Iran,” Netanyahu said.

Eisenkot, speaking to his own supporters in Tel Aviv, issued a veiled warning to Netanyahu, who observers say could use a war to push for a unity government.

“Netanyahu, don’t you dare use Israel’s security for your political needs,” Eisenkot said.

Addressing Israel’s security establishment, Eisenkot said that they served the state and not Netanyahu, calling him “a caretaker prime minister, without a mandate or the people’s trust.”

Eisenkot shares many of Netanyahu’s views on security and has backed the Gaza offensive following October 7 that has reduced the territory to rubble. **AFP**

Career Opportunity in 3M Service Center APAC Inc.	
Position title: Representative, Customer Service (Vietnamese) Vacancy (1)	
JOB DESCRIPTION <ul style="list-style-type: none">Performs end-to-end order management using SAP, Salesforce, and customer portals.Maintains customer master data, part numbers, and critical specifications.Investigates missed OTIF and resolves simple to moderately complex issues.	
Qualification (Education, Experience, Professional License, Skills Certification, Specialized Training): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor's degreeMinimum 1 year of relevant experience in Customer Service, Supply Chain, Manufacturing Operations, Logistics, or IT in local companies.Basic knowledge of customer service disciplines.Learns products and processes with guidance.	
Applications may be sent to: 3M GSC Philippines Talent Acquisition Email address: ph-gscrecruitment@mnm.com	
Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: 3M Service Center APAC Inc. Complete Address: 17th, 18th, 19th, Floors Bonifacio Stopover Corporate Center, E-Square Information Technology Park Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City 1634 Nature Of Business: a domestic corporation engage in Shared Services.	Name: Phuc Vo Huu Nguyen Address: Taguig City Nationality: Vietnamese Intended Period of Employment: one (1) year
3M Service Center APAC Inc. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - 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.	

NOTICE OF SELF-ADJUDICATION OF INSURANCE PROCEEDS <p>Notice is hereby given that JESICA FRANCISCO DE JONG, as the designated beneficiary under Allianz Policy No. 130191323 covering the life of WOUTER DE JONG who died on 24 January 2026, has executed an Affidavit of Self-Adjudication of Insurance Proceeds covering the insurance proceeds and other benefits lawfully payable to her under said policy.</p> <p>The Affidavit was subscribed and sworn to before Notary Public ATTY. JOSEPH NICO P. RAMARAMA in Mandaluyong City on October 19, 2026, and entered as Doc No.440, Page No. 68, Book No. 16, Series of 2026.</p> <p>This notice is published in compliance with the insurer's documentary requirements</p> <p>MS-OCT 22/28/NOV 5, 2026</p>
--

AUCTION SALE ACME PAWNSHOPS INC. <p>Auction sale on November 05, 2026 Alabang Town Center Stall 2074 U/L, 2:00 pm G/F Majalco Bldg. Benavidez St., Legaspi Village, Makati and Makati and 4:00 pm Glorietta 3 Ayala Center Legaspi Village Makati City All items Pawned June 01-30, 2026</p>

EXTRAJUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ESTATE OF SONIA M. BALLO, DELFIN C. BALLO AND CHRISTINA M. BALLO <p>Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Sonia M. Ballo, Delfin C. Ballo and Christina M. Ballo has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc No. 721, Page No. 41, Book No. II, Series of 2026, before Atty. Rhoun S. Loseraga, Notary Public City of Makati, until December 31, 2026, Appt. No. M-035 (2025-2026), Roll of Attorneys No. 49469, IBP Lifetime Member No. 09625, Manila II Chapter, PTR No. MK110738909 01/22/2026, Makati City, Unit 708 Cityland Herrera Tower, 98 V.A. Rufino St., Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines, Telephone No. 02 8816-3806</p> <p>MS-October 29, November 5, and 12, 2026</p>

Career Opportunities in MMS BULKSHIP MANAGEMENT (PHILIPPINES), INC.	
Position title: President/Chief Executive Officer Vacancy (1)	
JOB DESCRIPTION <ol style="list-style-type: none">Establishing and defining the overall Company Policy to be implemented by the COO/MO.Ensuring leadership, commitment and customer focus with respect to the Safety, Quality and Environmental Management System (SQEMS).Ensuring that the Company's Safety, Quality and Environmental Policy is implemented, understood, maintained, updated and reflected in everyday work routines.Ensuring that Company procedures and instructions are adhered to at all times.Appointing the Designated Person Ashore / Management Representative (DPA/MR), Company Security Officer (CSO), and Internal Audit Team members.Approving SQEMS documentation, revisions, and Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality Management Programs.Ensuring adequate resources are available for the effective implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the SQEMS.Providing oversight of Senior Management, including organizational development, succession planning, recruitment planning, and annual performance evaluation of General Managers and Senior Management personnel.Directing and participating in Senior Management Committee (SMC) and Management Review Meetings and determining additional agenda items as necessary.Providing oversight of internal audit activities and management review processes, including the appointment of auditors where applicable.Exercising final authority over Company media communications and external public statements.Promoting training, professional development, organizational learning, and knowledge sharing throughout the Company.	
In addition to his responsibilities at MMS Bulkship Management (Philippines), Inc. (BMP), the foreign national shall provide executive oversight of MK Real Estate, Inc., a sister company within the same corporate group, focusing on real estate operations, business planning, financial performance, regulatory compliance, and strategic development, subject to the authority of its Board of Directors.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">Provide executive leadership and strategic direction for the Company's real estate and property-related business activities.Develop and implement business strategies, corporate objectives, annual plans and long-term growth initiatives.Oversee real estate operations, including property acquisition, leasing, development, sales, property management and related business activities.Evaluate real estate investments, property projects and business opportunities, including related risks and potential returns.Oversee the Company's budgets, financial plans, business forecasts and overall financial and operational performance.Ensure compliance with applicable Philippine laws, regulations, permits, licenses and corporate governance requirements.Direct and supervise department heads and personnel, including manpower planning, resource allocation, performance management and organizational development.Represent the Company in executive-level meetings and business dealings with clients, investors, business partners, government agencies, financial institutions and other stakeholders.Coordinate with the Board of Directors on major business decisions, investments, corporate plans and organizational matters.Perform other executive management functions reasonably related to the Company's real estate and property-related business, within the authority delegated by the Board of Directors.	
QUALIFICATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Management, Maritime Studies, Finance, Economics, or a related field.At least five (5) years of relevant experience in executive management, ship management, maritime operations, real estate, business administration, or a related field.Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, business development, financial management, and organizational leadership.Knowledge of corporate governance, regulatory compliance, operational management, and business administration principles.Understanding of maritime safety, quality and environmental management systems, and/or real estate operations and investment management.Strong leadership, decision-making, negotiation, communication, and problem-solving skills.Ability to oversee business operations, evaluate commercial opportunities, manage risks, and coordinate with senior management and stakeholders.Proficiency in business planning, financial analysis, management reporting, resource allocation, and organizational development.	
Application may be sent to princess.galapo@mmsi-group.com / bill.martinez@mmsi-group.com	
Company / Employer	Name of Foreign National Intending to Apply for the Position
Company Name: MMS Bulkship Management (Philippines), Inc. Address: Room 312 MMS Savor Building Old Nia Road, Barangay Bayanan, Bacoor City Cavite Nature of Business: Ship Management / Real Estate.	Name of Foreigner: Kei Fuji Address: Brgy. San Lorenzo, Makati Nationality: Japanese Intended Period of Employment: 3 Yrs
MMS BULKSHIP MANAGEMENT (PHILIPPINES), INC hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), located at Dole Building, Murala Wing, corner General Luna Street, Intramuros, 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 the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), located at Dole Building, Murala Wing, corner General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila, after this publication. Please inform the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national	

Career Opportunity in DITO TELECOMMUNITY CORPORATION	
Position title: Advance Wireless Technologies and 5G Evolution Senior Advisor	
Job Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Planning & 5G Evolution Standards: Provide technical advisory on high-level technical standards, propagation modeling baselines, and engineering guidelines for macro/micro wireless access networks (RAN), specifically focusing on the architectural evolution toward 5G Standalone (SA) networks. Network Slicing Implementation frameworks, and future 5G technology readiness.Advanced Antenna & Beamforming Advisory: Deliver expert technical reference and recommendations on advanced Massive MIMO deployment strategies and customized Beamforming configurations to maximize network capacity, spectral efficiency, and coverage quality in high-density areas.Next-Gen Technology Scouting: Provide expert counsel on incorporating advanced 5G feature architectures—such as 5G Redcap (Reduced Capability) technical integration and AI-assisted RAN framework into the initial network blueprints to drive operational efficiency and support diverse IoT/Industrial vertical cases.	
Qualification (Education, Experience, Professional License, Skills Certification, Specialized Training): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Master's degree in Electronics and Communications Engineering, Information Systems is preferredAt least 7 years of experience within the technology sector, with a focus on telecommunications or related industries.Not bound by any non-compete or non-disclosure agreements with direct competitors.Proficient in both written and verbal communication with a proven ability to engage effectively with technology leaders.	
Applications may be sent to: sharmaine.rendon@dito.ph SHARMAINE RENDON	
Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: DITO TELECOMMUNITY CORPORATION Complete address: 11/F UDEMNA TOWER, RIZAL DRIVE CORNER 4TH AVENUE, BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY, TAGUIG CITY Nature of business: Telecommunications Company	Name: LIU, HAO Address: Unit 371, Tower 3 The Trion Towers, 8th Avenue corner McKinley Parkway, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City Nationality: CHINESE Intended period of employment: ONE (1) YEAR
DITO TELECOMMUNITY 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.	

Filipino/ Japanese Healthcare & Technical Document Interpreter/Translator (1) Vacancy	
Job Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Translate specialized Japanese healthcare, caregiving (Kaigo), and technical training manuals, Japanese nursing care plan templates, medical compliance documents, and institutional correspondence between Japanese and EnglishProvide accurate technical and cross-cultural interpretation during meetings, interviews, and training evaluations with Japanese healthcare principals and partners.Review and align Japanese clinical/healthcare terminology and documentation standards used in the Training Center's curricula.Conduct structured skills transfer and terminology coaching for Filipino instructors under company's Skills Development Program.	
Note: Strictly limited to language translating, interpretation, and training documentation support; Does not involve clinical nursing practice in the Philippines.	
Qualification (Education, Experience, Professional License, Skills Certification, Specialized Training): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Graduate of a Diploma in Nursing or an Allied Healthcare field.Holder of a valid Japanese Registered Nurse (Kangoshi) License or equivalent Japanese healthcare qualification.Minimum of four (4) years of actual work experience in a Japanese hospital or clinical setting handling Japanese nursing care plans, patient assessment records and clinical documentation.Native-level fluency in written and spoken Japanese (including clinical terminology and formal business Kaigo) and working proficiency in English.	
Applications may be sent to: Name of Company HR: Luz C. Bundo Email address: hr@aaa-ph.com	
Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Advance Ability Assistance Training Center Inc., Complete address : Unit 215, 2nd Flr, Crossstown Mall, Brgy. Pulang Sta.Cruz City of Sta.Rosa Laguna	Name: Rin Takada Address: Zodia Tower 1 6th floor Unit 9 Greenfield City,United Blvd, Don Jose, Santa Rosa, Laguna Nationality: Japanese
Nature of business: TESDA-Registered Japanese Language and Culture Training Center	Intended period of employment: One (1) year
Company 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.	

Career Opportunity in 888 Tripacific Corporation	
International Product Specialist Two (2) Vacancy	
Job Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Responsible for providing specialized product knowledge and international supplier coordination for the company's imported and exported dairy products.The position involves reviewing product specifications, coordinating technical and commercial product information with overseas suppliers and business partners, evaluating product documentation, and facilitating communication on product quality, packaging, storage, and market requirements.	
Qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Proficiency in the relevant foreign language, such as Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, or Hindi, when required for communication with overseas suppliers, technical personnel, product developers, or business partners.Knowledge of relevant foreign-market product requirements, customer expectations, or industry practices, where applicable to the position.Ability to evaluate technical information from overseas suppliers and communicate relevant findings to the company's local management and Filipino personnel.	
Applications may be sent to: tripacific.corp@gmail.com	
Company/Employer	Name of foreign national Intending to apply for the position
Company Name: 888 Tripacific Corporation Company Address: Unit 1001 Cityland 10 Tower 1, 154 H.V. Dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Bel-Air Makati City	Name: 1. Zheng Ping, 2. Xiao Jun Address: 1. Pasay City 2. Manila Nationality: 1-2. Chinese Intended period of employment: 1-2 - Three 3(years)
888 Tripacific 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 Dole Central office murala st corner general Luna..	

Career Opportunity in Sobute Philippines New Materials Corp.	
Product Development Specialist One (1) Vacancy	
Job Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Responsible for researching, evaluating, and improving the company's products and materials; analyzing raw material properties and product performance; Assisting in the development of new products; recommending improvements to product quality and manufacturing processes;Coordinating with local and international suppliers and business partners in China;Communicating technical specifications in Mandarin Chinese;Assisting in the alignment of product development activities with applicable technical standards and company requirements.	
Qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none">A Degree related to Construction is an advantage.Knowledge of material properties, product evaluation, quality standards, and product development processes.Proficiency in Mandarin Chinese to facilitate technical discussions, interpret product specifications, and communicate effectively with Chinese-speaking suppliers, manufacturers, and international business partners.Relevant experience in product development, materials testing, manufacturing, or international technical coordination is an advantage.	
Applications may be sent to: sobutephils@gmail.com	
Company/Employer	Name of foreign national Intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Sobute Philippines New Materials Corp. Company Address: Unit Lg20 Lower G/F Cityland 8 Condo., 98 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Brgy Pio Del Pilar Makati City	Name: 1. Zhai Peng Address: 1. Pasay City Nationality: 1. Chinese Intended period of employment: 1 - Three 3(years)
Sobute Philippines New Materials Corp. 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 Dole Central office murala st corner general Luna..	

Rays stay alive against Brewers in World Series

MIAMI—The Tampa Bay Rays staged a dramatic extra-innings rally to keep their World Series dream alive on Tuesday, walking off a 4-3 victory against the Milwaukee Brewers to avoid a clean sweep.

Tampa Bay’s Ben Williamson singled a ground ball to right field in the bottom of the 12th inning to complete a thrilling comeback at Tropicana Field that ensures a game five on Wednesday. “Just shows the resiliency of this group,” Williamson said afterwards. “We continue to fight and that’s been the motto this series and this whole season.” Milwaukee had looked to be heading for



Ben Williamson of the Tampa Bay Rays celebrates. **AFP**

a 4-0 series triumph after rookie shortstop Cooper Pratt launched a solo home run in the 12th inning to give the Brewers a 3-2

lead on the night. But with their season on the line, the Rays flipped the script, igniting a fightback when a throwing error by Brewers’ third baseman Joey Ortiz allowed Junior Caminero to reach first base. The Brewers brought in reliever Shane Bieber to replace Antonio Senzatela but the Rays continued to prosper with catcher Liam Hicks singling to send Caminero to third base with no outs. Jonny DeLuca then singled to drive in a run to make it 3-3, and shortly after that leveler Chandler Simpson singled to load the bases with no outs. Pinch hitter Williamson then came in and steered a ground ball to right field to score the winning run. The Rays — aiming to become the first team in World Series history to overturn a 3-0 series deficit after losing the opening three games -- had edged into an early lead in the second inning. **AFP**



The Far Eastern University Lady Tamaraws rejoice after scoring a point against the College of Saint Benilde Lady Blazers, en route to a 25-14, 25-9, 25-17 win. **Roman Prospero**

FEU nears Super League quarterfinal incentive

Games on November 7
(Playtime FilOil Centre)
11 a.m. --- Adamson vs CSB
1 p.m. --- Letran vs UST
3 p.m. --- FEU vs NU
5 p.m. --- UP vs Ateneo

FAR Eastern University drew closer to securing a twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals after an emphatic sweep of College of Saint Benilde, 25-14, 25-9, 25-17, for a second straight Round of 8 win in the 2026 Shakey’s Super League (SSL) Unity Cup on Wednesday at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. Dictating the pace for most of the match, the Lady Tamaraws took a little over an hour for a quick disposal of the hapless Lady Blazers for a 2-0 win-loss record in Pool E. FEU can formally clinch one of the two quarters bonus in its group if five-peat-seeking National University (1-0) defeats Adamson University (0-1) in their duel still being played as of press time. The Lady Tamaraws remained unscathed after five games overall in the league’s centerpiece competition, backed by Shakey’s Pizza Parlor, Peri-Peri Charcoal Chicken, Potato Corner, and R&B Milk Tea. Opposite spiker Ia David led FEU with 10 points while Gerz Petallo added seven markers in just two sets. Save for a brief spark of resistance from CSB early in the third set, the Lady Tamaraws breezed through the match with sustained energy. “Nag-start siya sa training and outside the court, na happy-happy lang kami as a team kasi knowing na ‘yung energy malaki talaga ang impact niya. ‘Di kami pwedeng nakasimangot, tinanggal namin ‘yung mga ganoon. Good vibes lang and good thing na-adapt namin sa loob ng court,” said David, who went 7-of-10 on attacks and added three kill blocks. Cla Loresco, Alyzza Devosora and Jaz Ellarina pumped in five points each while Karyll Miranda dished out 10 excellent sets to help FEU convert 41 attack points.

Kim, Avaricio seal explosive showdown for ICTSI Apo title

DAVAO CITY—Kim Seoyun delivered the decisive late punch in a gripping, see-saw battle with Chanelle Avaricio Wednesday here, birdieing the closing hole to fire a 71, force a tie for the lead and set up a potentially explosive final-round showdown for the ICTSI Apo Golf Classic crown and the Ladies Philippine Golf Tour season-ending spotlight. Kim erased a one-stroke overnight deficit with an early birdie, then displayed nerves of steel with a string of gutsy pars as the demanding Apo Golf and Country Club layout, compounded by the punishing heat and shifting winds, tested the leaders’ resolve and shot-making. Avaricio, meanwhile, endured a mid-round struggle that threatened to derail her bid to pull away. But the co-leader rediscovered her rhythm at a crucial juncture, stringing together three birdies in a four-hole stretch from No. 14 to regain the lead and put herself in position to double her overnight advantage at three-under overall. Just when Avaricio appeared poised to take control of the championship, however, Apo’s unforgiving finishing hole delivered another twist. Kim rose to the occasion on the par-5 18th, producing clutch shots and a pressure-packed 12-foot putt to cap her round with a birdie and

a 71. Avaricio, unable to match the finishing surge, holed out with a three-putt miscue for a 72, leaving the two contenders deadlocked at 142 after 36 holes. Despite a strong finish that put her on the cusp of a maiden victory, Kim rued the missed birdie opportunities that could have given her a bigger advantage after a challenging day on the course. Reflecting on her performance, Kim was pleased with her approach shots but admitted that her putting let her down, despite hitting 15 greens in regulation. “My approach shots worked pretty well today. I hit 15 greens and had a lot of birdie chances, but I struggled with my putting. The putts just weren’t dropping, so it was kind of sayang,” said Kim.. With an experienced campaigner like Avaricio standing in her way, Kim is bracing for a fierce battle in the final round. Rather than dwell on the pressure of the occasion, she intends to savor the moment and stay focused on her game. “I would enjoy my game and try to embrace the moment,” she said. Avaricio shrugged off her late misstep, remaining confident of extending her winning streak as she guns for a potential fourth title of the season.



With an experienced campaigner like Chanelle Avaricio (left) standing in her way, Kim Seoyun (right) is bracing for a fierce battle in the final round. **Manny Marcelo**

amazon

Career Opportunity in Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPH)

Position title: Accounting Assistant II

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- Knowledgeable in Accounts Receivable/Accounts Payable
- Subject Matter Expert in the domain that he/she supports
- Collecting and analyzing quantitative data
- Providing financial analysis to prioritize and lead cost reduction
- Use data analyses and statistical techniques to develop solutions to guide business decision-making

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

- Fluent in oral and written Chinese and English.
- Knowledge in Finance Processes.
- Preferably with a Bachelor's Degree in Finance/Accounting.
- Prior experience of at least 2 years in a similar BPO outfit in banking, Finance/Accounting.
- Preferably has working knowledge of Oracle Financials or other Finance ERP tools.

Applications may be sent to: Name of Company HR: Jani Yoo
Email address: janeyoo@amazon.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPH)	Name: Joseph Nole Francisco Kintada
Complete address: 12th Floor, W Fifth Avenue Building, 32nd Street corner 5th Avenue Bonifacio Global City Taguig City 1634	Address: Quays City
	Nationality: Capatzen
	Intended period of employment: two (2) years

Amazon Operation Services Philippines Inc (AOSPH) 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 902 Malaya Street, Manila, 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 902 Malaya Street, Manila, 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 Tenterly Philippines Corp.

Position title: Customer Care Specialist

Vacancies (2)

Job Description:

Maintain and improve contact center customer relations by providing exemplary customer service with one contact resolution. Achieve contact center goals and standards through overall personal performance. Play a key role in ensuring the business continues to achieve or exceed Client expectations.

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

- Excellent interpersonal, listening, written and verbal communication skills.
- Passion for customer service
- Ability to work collaboratively in a team environment.
- Exceptional time management skills and the ability to handle multiple tasks.

Applications may be sent to: Name of Company HR: Clarence Mae De Asis
Email address: mae.asis@tenterly.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Tenterly Philippines Corp.	Name: Orin Reine Dora Seghou
Complete address: 12th Floor, W Fifth Avenue Building, 32nd Street corner 5th Avenue Bonifacio Global City Taguig City 1634	Address: Cavite City
	Nationality: Iranian
	Intended period of employment: Two (2) Years

Nature of business: a domestic corporation primarily to engage in, operate, conduct and maintain the business of providing information technology outsourcing services and business process outsourcing services and support solutions including, but not limited to: inbound calls, back office quality monitoring (non-voice agent monitoring and evaluation), back office training development (non-voice training documentation development or knowledge management development), back office work force management (real time agent monitoring), back office reporting (reporting and data analytics), back office internal help desk - internal IT help desk support and back office IT development and other similar services, and to provide support to all aspects of the business of affiliates and related companies and operations, without engaging as an internet service provider.

Tenterly Philippines Corp. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment located at DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines.

Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired for, may file an objection at Department of Labor and Employment located at DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform Department of Labor and Employment - NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.

Career Opportunity in Tenterly Philippines Corp.

Position title: Customer Care Specialist

Vacancies (3)

Job Description:

Maintain and improve contact center customer relations by providing exemplary customer service with one contact resolution. Achieve contact center goals and standards through overall personal performance. Play a key role in ensuring the business continues to achieve or exceed Client expectations.

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

- Excellent interpersonal, listening, written and verbal communication skills.
- Passion for customer service
- Ability to work collaboratively in a team environment.
- Exceptional time management skills and the ability to handle multiple tasks.

Applications may be sent to: Name of Company HR: Clarence Mae De Asis
Email address: mae.asis@tenterly.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Tenterly Philippines Corp.	Name: Guillermo Adolfo Perra Guiza
Complete address: 12th Floor, W Fifth Avenue Building, 32nd Street corner 5th Avenue Bonifacio Global City Taguig City 1634	Address: Pasig City
	Nationality: Colombian
	Intended period of employment: Two (2) Years

Nature of business: a domestic corporation primarily to engage in, operate, conduct and maintain the business of providing information technology outsourcing services and business process outsourcing services and support solutions including, but not limited to: inbound calls, back office quality monitoring (non-voice agent monitoring and evaluation), back office training development (non-voice training documentation development or knowledge management development), back office work force management (real time agent monitoring), back office reporting (reporting and data analytics), back office internal help desk - internal IT help desk support and back office IT development and other similar services, and to provide support to all aspects of the business of affiliates and related companies and operations, without engaging as an internet service provider.

Tenterly Philippines Corp. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment located at DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines.

Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired for, may file an objection at Department of Labor and Employment located at DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform Department of Labor and Employment - NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.

Career Opportunity in Tenterly Philippines Corp.

Position title: Quality Management Advisor

Vacancy (1)

Job Description:

- The Quality Management Advisor is primarily responsible for the delivery of transaction monitoring support and measurement of quality of work process improvement of at least 1 year.
- The individual reports to the Quality Team Lead supporting a particular or multiple business units.

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

- Possessable with a Bachelor's Degree / At least 2 years of college education.
- At least 2 years in any service related business within the BPO or Contact Center Industry. Experience in quality assurance, reports, analysis and process improvement of at least 1 year.
- Experience and knowledge of QA reporting tools and methodologies - beginner to intermediate excellent organizational, English oral, written and comprehension (reading & auditory) skills
- May need to be fluent in a certain language (oral, written & comprehension) as required by the business such as French, Spanish, Basic Portuguese, etc.

Applications may be sent to: Name of Company HR: CLARENCE MAE DE ASIS
Email address: clara.asis@tenterly.com

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: Tenterly Philippines Corp.	Name: Marcus Salazar
Complete address: 12th Floor, W Fifth Avenue Building, 32nd Street corner 5th Avenue Bonifacio Global City Taguig City 1634	Address: Manila City
	Nationality: Capatzen
	Intended period of employment: Two (2) years

Nature of business: a domestic corporation primarily to engage in, operate, conduct and maintain the business of providing information technology outsourcing services and business process outsourcing services and support solutions including, but not limited to: inbound calls, back office quality monitoring (non-voice agent monitoring and evaluation), back office training development (non-voice training documentation development or knowledge management development), back office work force management (real time agent monitoring), back office reporting (reporting and data analytics), back office internal help desk - internal IT help desk support and back office IT development and other similar services, and to provide support to all aspects of the business of affiliates and related companies and operations, without engaging as an internet service provider.

Tenterly Philippines Corp. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment located at DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines.

Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired for, may file an objection at Department of Labor and Employment located at DOLE Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform Department of Labor and Employment - NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.

Career Opportunities in COLAS RAIL PHILIPPINES, INC.

Site Manager

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Oversees the daily operations of a physical work site, directing labor forces and subcontractors to ensure projects are completed safely and on schedule. Acts as the primary link between on-site teams and stakeholders while rigorously enforcing safety regulations and quality control standards. Delivers the project within the designated budget and technical specifications while troubleshooting any daily logistical issues.

QUALIFICATION:

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

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

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

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

Any Filipino jobseeker who is competent, able and willing to perform the services for which the foreign national is intended to be hired for, may file an objection at Department of Labor and Employment – Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Building, Murala Wing cor. General Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, 1002, Philippines after this publication. Please inform the Department of Labor and Employment – NCR, if you have any information on criminal offenses committed by the foreign national.



Stan Wawrinka AFP

Former Grand Slam winner Wawrinka ends tennis career

PARIS—tan Wawrinka bid farewell to tennis as he brought the curtain down on a decorated 24-year career following a first-round exit at the Basel Open on Tuesday.

The 41-year-old Swiss announced earlier in the season that his last tournament as a professional would be the ATP 500-level event in his home country and a 7-5, 7-6 (7/2) defeat by Czech Jiri Lehecka brought an end to the career of the three-time major champion.

Former world number three Wawrinka, along with Andy Murray, was the only player to win multiple Grand Slams in a period dominated by Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

“I was lucky enough to be able to play alongside them and sometimes beat them,” Wawrinka told AFP in 2024.

He bested Nadal to win his first Grand Slam at the Australian Open in 2014, before beating Djokovic in the French Open final the following season and then again in the US Open title-match in 2016.

Alongside his compatriot Federer, the Lausanne native won the Davis Cup for Switzerland and claimed gold in the doubles at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

On court in Basel, Wawrinka’s every point won, as well as several trademark booming one-handed backhands, was greeted by wild cheers from the partisan home crowd. **AFP**

The Ateneo Blue Eagles, led by Keiffer Alas (No. 1), celebrate after pulling off a 69-65 victory over the National University Bulldogs.



Bahay, Alas shine in crunch time as Eagles nip Bulldogs

JARED Bahay and Keiffer Alas came through when it mattered most, powering Ateneo de Manila University to a 69-65 victory over National University in the UAAP Season 89 men’s basketball tournament on Wednesday at the SMART Araneta Coliseum.

Bahay snapped out of a prolonged shooting slump by knocking down consecutive three-pointers, turning a 62-59 deficit into a 65-62 Ateneo lead with 1:19 left in the game.

Alas then buried another triple from the top of the key to stretch the Blue Eagles’ advantage to six points, 68-62, with 35.8 seconds remaining.

“In the fourth quarter, I thought we couldn’t find our offensive rhythm, but in the last two minutes, Jared and Keiffer were able to deliver with those big shots. We all know that these two

players are winners, are big-time players, and that’s what they did,” said Ateneo team manager Nico Salva.

Macmac Alfanta kept the Bulldogs in contention with a four-point play, although he missed the bonus free throw that could have brought NU closer. His basket trimmed Ateneo’s lead to 68-65 with 24.2 seconds to play.

NU had another opportunity to turn the tide after forcing Shawn Tuano into a five-second inbound violation with 18.6 seconds left. But Reinhard Jumamoy missed a three-point attempt on the

Games on Saturday
(Smart Araneta Coliseum)
10 a.m. – NU vs FEU (Women)
12 p.m. – AdU vs Ateneo (Women)
2:30 p.m. – NU vs UST (Men)
6 p.m. – Ateneo vs DLSU (Men)

ensuing possession before incurring an unsportsmanlike foul on Alas with 4.6 seconds remaining.

Alas missed both free throws awarded for the foul, but Ateneo maintained possession. When NU sent him back to the line moments later, the prized rookie converted at least one attempt to put the game beyond the Bulldogs’ reach.

The hard-earned victory completed Ateneo’s elimination-round sweep of NU, which had also fallen to the Blue

Eagles in their first-round meeting.

The Blue Eagles had previously defeated the Bulldogs, 87-76, in the first round, handing NU its most recent loss before it put together a four-game winning streak.

“We call it as an important shot but I guess for me it’s not that important kasi at the end of the day, kailangan din naman maglaro mula first quarter. In the fourth quarter, we couldn’t find our rhythm but we just trusted our shots,” said Bahay, who finished with 16 points, three rebounds, and two steals.

On track to return to the Final Four after a two-year absence, Ateneo joined De La Salle University in third and fourth places, respectively, with identical 5-4 records. The two rivals will battle for sole possession of third place on Saturday at 6 p.m., still at the Big Dome.

Riannah Chantelle Coleman



Coleman joins Ajido as flag-bearer in YOG opener

THE Philippines will have not just one, but two flag-bearers—Jamesray Misael Ajido and fellow swimmer Riannah Chantelle Coleman—during the parade of athletes in the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Youth Olympic Games (YOG) on October 31 in Dakar.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has been advocating on a male and female athlete to bear their countries’ colors during the ceremony.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Abraham “Bambol” Tolentino has earlier named Ajido as the lone flag-bearer and added Coleman because both athletes will be in Senegal in time for the opening ceremony at the Abdoulaye Wade Stadium in Diamniadio.

Joining Ajido and Coleman on an arduous 29-hour flight from Manila via Istanbul to Dakar on Wednesday night is wushu athlete Angel Polo and their coaches.

The other athletes—artistic gymnastics’ Tchelzy Maayo and Hillarion Palles III, cycling’s Maritanya Krog, athletics’ Pi Durden Wangkay and Naomi Marjorie Caesar and wind-surfing’s Jade Justine Justiniane will be flying to Dakar on November 4.

Shin tightens grip on Apo, builds 4-shot lead

DAVAO CITY—Micah Shin shrugged off a shaky backside start with a timely birdie-par-eagle finish before keeping his momentum at the Apo Golf and Country Club’s frontside to card a 68 Wednesday and tighten his grip on the ICTSI Apo Golf Classic.

Armed with a four-shot cushion and 36 holes left to play, Shin turned what had shaped up as a wide-open title battle into a potential runaway, capitalizing on his wealth of talent, overseas-honed skills and intimate knowledge of the demanding layout where he developed and sharpened his game.

Still, two rounds do not make a champion, and Shin knows the job is far from finished. But with his game holding firm under pressure and his course familiarity working to his advantage, the Korean-American has put himself in prime position to capture another Philippine Golf Tour crown and close out the season in emphatic fashion.

Shin, who ruled the season-opening The Country Club Invitation-al, the PGT’s flagship event, last January, assembled a 12-under 132 halfway total to pull clear of the field and put himself on course for a second major statement on the local circuit.

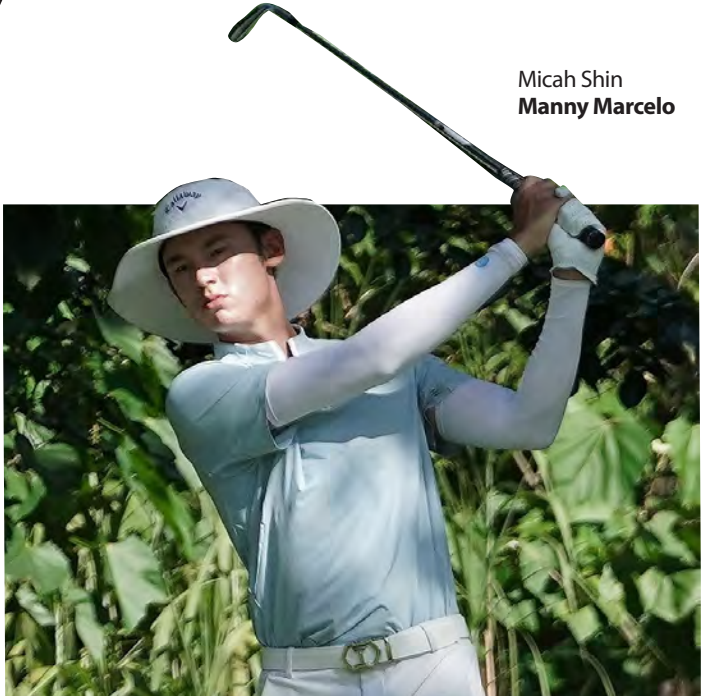
“I think if I just hit it well, I have a really good chance,” said Shin when asked about his chances after two rounds. “Yeah, I mean, it’s my home course, so it feels comfortable.”

“Today was actually worse than yesterday, but I got some lucky breaks and made some really good par saves,” he added, highlighting how his composure proved just as crucial as his power in keeping the chasing pack at bay.

“I thought I wasn’t putting too well, but I actually made a few putts, including some long ones. So I wouldn’t say I putted poorly, but yeah,” said Shin.

His charge also forced the pursuers to keep chasing, with last week’s South Pacific winner Clyde Mondilla firing a second 69 for solo second at 138 and Sean Ramos also turning in a three-under card for a 139.

Longshots Jeremy Tandoy and Kim Tae Soo matched 70s for joint fourth at 140, while Jeffren Lumbo and Collin Wheeler carded iden-



Micah Shin
Manny Marcelo

tical 71s to catch Russell Bautista, who matched par 72, at 142, and Negros leg winner Art Arbole carding a 70 to tie Angelo Que and amateur Alex Bisera, who matched 71s, at ninth with 143s.

Last week’s low amateur Jacob Rolida and 2024 champion Jhonnel Ababa kept matching output of 72s for 144s as 45 players made the cut at 152, including Keanu Jahns, who skied to a 79.

Starting at No. 10, Shin parred his first two holes before an up-and-down stretch threatened to undo his early advantage. He traded bogeys and birdies in a roller-coaster run from No. 12, allowing Mondilla and Ramos to close to within one shot and briefly putting the tournament leader under pressure.

Bugna leads rising stars as Palawan sustains grassroots drive

KATHLYN Bugna headlines a deep field of young aces in the Puerto Princesa Junior Age Group Tennis Championships, seeking another dominant campaign in the girls’ 16- and 18-and-under divisions as the Palawan Pawnshop-supported talent-search program continues its mission of discovering and developing the country’s next generation of tennis stars.

The Batang Onay/RSB standout from La Carlota, whose string of impressive performances in the nationwide talent-search series has established her as one of the country’s most promising young players, is again keeping expectations in

check, choosing to focus on the challenge ahead rather than the prospect of another sweep of the two premier girls’ divisions.

The 18-and-U category, in particular, promises a stern test, with Ashley Garcia, Freyah Delaska, Angela Gozon, Mildred Mantiza, Ysabel Balingit, Alveya Ibba and Moriah Laput among those ready to challenge Bugna for the title.

The Philta- and Universal Tennis-sanctioned Group 2 tournament gets under way Thursday at the Karawatan-RVM Complex Iwahig courts in Palawan, bringing together promising players in various age categories in another show-

case of emerging Philippine tennis talent.

Bugna’s campaign also highlights the continuing grassroots development efforts of the Palawan Pawnshop program under president and CEO Bobby Castro, which has helped provide young players from different parts of the country with competitive opportunities to hone their skills, gain tournament experience and pursue their tennis ambitions.

The girls’ 16-and-U division likewise shapes up as an equally competitive affair, with rising contender Etha Seno, Sofia Aguilera, Maria Shan Tuyor and Dominique Garcia joining Laput and Ibba in the hunt for the crown.

Indonesia assures PH of coal supply

By Alena Mae S. Flores

SINGAPORE—Indonesia will keep supplying coal to the Philippines despite Jakarta’s recent steps to curb energy exports, Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said.

Garin said on the sidelines of the Singapore International Energy Week 2026 conference that Indonesia does not export natural gas to the Philippines, only coal. Indonesia recently announced it would reduce natural gas exports to Singapore to prioritize domestic needs.

Earlier this year, Indonesia also announced that coal exports must be routed through state-owned PT Danantara Sumberdaya Indonesia. “So far, the assurance we have from them is that long-standing contracts will be honored,” Garin said.

She said the move to channel coal exports through a state enterprise is part of Indonesia’s internal reorganization and consolidation. “It’s more of their internal rules because they want to consolidate so that nobody abuses it, and there is no transfer pricing,” she said.

“It is meant to maintain discipline on their side rather than impact buyers, especially Filipino buyers,” she said.

Garin said Indonesian authorities have guaranteed an uninterrupted coal supply.

“We also asked them to maintain pricing so that rates won’t increase due to these changes,” Garin said.

“We do not have the same issue reported as Singapore’s experience with their gas supply,” she said.

The Philippines imports about 85 percent of its coal requirements from Indonesia. Coal accounts for more than 50 percent of the country’s electricity generation.



OFFSHORE WIND INVESTOR. Department of Finance (DOF) Undersecretary Ma. Angela Ignacio meets with Mingyang Group representatives led by chairman Zhang Chuanwei to discuss offshore wind opportunities in the Philippines. Mingyang shared updates on its plans to expand its presence in the country, transitioning from an OEM supplier to a local manufacturer capable of delivering offshore wind projects at scale. These include possible investments in port development and floating platform and wind turbine manufacturing.

Luzon Economic Corridor seen contributing P2.9t

By Othel V. Campos

THE proposed Luzon Economic Corridor (LEC) could generate P2.5 trillion to P2.9 trillion in economic output during construction, led by P1.1 trillion to P1.3 trillion in investments across 17 initially identified projects, property consultancy JLL Philippines said.

JLL head of research and consultancy Jan de los Reyes said Wednesday the trilateral initiative involving the Philippines, the United States and Japan covers 17 projects worth P1.1 trillion to P1.3 trillion in energy, water, transportation, logistics, digital connectivity and advanced manufacturing.

The projects could generate P477.3 billion to P560 billion in household income and create 1.4 million to 1.6 million jobs, potentially boosting consumer spending and business activity.

“Imagine the economic impact of all of these projects if it came to fruition,” De los Reyes said, noting that the estimates cover construction alone and exclude additional benefits once the projects become operational.

JLL used an input-output analysis based on the Philippine Statistics Authority’s (PSA) 2018 input-output table to estimate the effects of construction spending on economic output,

household income and employment.

The corridor covers Metro Manila, Central Luzon and CALABARZON, which accounted for 50.3 percent of Philippine GDP in 2025 and have a combined population of about 35 million. A proposed 212-kilometer Subic-Manila-Batangas freight railway is intended to improve connectivity and goods movement.

JLL sees the LEC as a growth opportunity as the economy grapples with slowing growth. GDP expanded 2 percent in the second quarter of 2026, its weakest pace since 2009, before a projected recovery to 3.5 percent to 4.5 percent for the full year and 5.6 percent in 2027.

Inflation hit 7.2 percent and is projected to ease to 5.4 percent next year due to El Niño and minimum wage increases. The LEC is expected to lift the economy over the long haul.

P2.9 trillion

Economic output expected

P1.3 trillion

Expected investments in LEC

1.6 million

Jobs expected in LEC

DREAM HOME, EASY TO OWN

LOW MONTHLY PAYMENTS!

Subsidized 3% Rate

CONDO UNITS, HOUSE & LOTS

Ready for Occupancy

Images show model units at Pasinaya Homes / Avesta Residences for illustrative purposes only

Your Dream Home Starts Here. **SCAN NOW!**

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

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

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

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

- The CRR_{CUF}, FOMR_{CUF} and VOMR_{CUF} shall be as previously defined above.

- Further, the Fuel Cost shall be calculated using a fuel rate based on the FP_i and FX_{in} as previously defined above and the Seller's Fuel Consumption Rate at the CUF level associated with the CRR_{CUF} and FOMR_{CUF}.

- In the event that the FP_i is unavailable due to the Facility being unable to utilize fuel and generate power for the supply under
 - the generation rate based on the approved tariff for this Agreement.

14.7 Line Rental ("LR").

The Line Rental Cap is PhP 0.2734/kWh and shall apply on a per Billing Period basis throughout the entire Term of the Agreement. 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.

14.8 Prompt Payment Discount ("PPD").

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 PPD 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.

If the Buyer makes a partial payment within the applicable Prompt Payment Period, the Seller shall still grant an applicable PPD determined on a pro rata basis, provided that full payment of the Seller Invoice is made by the Buyer on or before the Due Date.

RATE IMPACT ON FLECO'S OVERALL GENERATION RATE

The estimated rate impact on FLECO's overall generation rate with and without the additional supply from SPI is as follows:

Generation Rate Impact (exclusive of VAT) of SPI PSA	
Generation rate without SPI	PhP7.2578/kWh
Generation rate with SPI	PhP6.0777/kWh
Rate Impact	PhP1.1801/kWh

A copy of FLECO's Rate Impact Analysis is attached as Annex 05D. 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:

$$RP_i = [Min(CRR_{CUF}, CP_i) \times RE_i] + VAT_{CUF} \text{, if applicable}$$

$$CP_i = [(CRR_{CUF} + FOMR_{CUF} + VOMR_{CUF}) \times (\frac{FP_i \times FCR_{CUF}}{1000})]$$

RP _i	Replacement Power cost for the Billing Period, in PhP
RP _i	Actual generation rate of the Replacement Power exclusive of VAT, in PhP/kWh
CP _i	Generation rate based on this Agreement exclusive of VAT, in PhP/kWh
RE _i	Replacement Power Energy supplied by the Seller to the Buyer for the Billing Period, in kWh
FCR _{CUF}	As previously defined
FOMR _{CUF}	As previously defined
VOMR _{CUF}	As previously defined
FP _i	As previously defined
FCR _{CUF}	As previously defined
FX _{in}	As previously defined
VAT _{CUF}	Applicable VAT for the Replacement Power Cost for the Billing Period, if any.
t	Billing Period

14.5 Outages. The Seller shall have an Outage Allowance for each Contract Year not exceeding:

Scheduled Outages: 0 _ Days
Unscheduled Outages: 0 _ Days

14.6 Replacement Power ("RP").

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:

- the actual rate of the Replacement Power; or

Likewise, the Applicants provide the following documents for the evaluation of the Joint Application:

Description of Document	Annex
Power Supply Agreement (PSA) between FLECO and SPI	"01"
SPI's Certification on Documents Previously Submitted invoking Section 24 of the ERC Resolution No. 07, Series of 2026:	"02" ⁴
ERC Case No. 2026-103 RC <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 (<i>Confidential</i>)	
ERC Case No. 2025-018 RC <ul style="list-style-type: none">Certification on Non-Applicability of DWS Agreement Certification on Non-Applicability of Transmission Wheeling Contract Write-up on IPFA Agreement Write-up on EPC Contract Write-up on Project Feasibility Study Write-up on Wholesale Aggregator Agreement	
ERC Case No. 2026-057 RC <ul style="list-style-type: none">Transmission Service Agreement	
ERC Case No. 2026-063 RC <ul style="list-style-type: none">SPI's Certification on Ultimate Parent Company	
ERC Case No. 2026-121 RC <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 CRTPP SPI's Latest Audited Financial Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">SPI's Write-up on the Non-Applicability of Rental Agreements Operations and Maintenance Agreement (<i>Confidential</i>)	
FLECO's Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws	"02A"
FLECO's Business Registration	"02B"
FLECO's Supply and Demand Scenario	"03"
FLECO's Details of Existing Suppliers	"03A"
FLECO's Contract Utilization	"03B"
FLECO's Average Daily Load Curve	"03C"
FLECO's 2025 Distribution Development Plan	"03D"
FLECO's Power Supply Procurement Plan	"03D"
TOR vs PSA Provision Matrix	"04"
Bid Forms (<i>Confidential</i>)	"05A"
SPI's Generation Rate and Derivation (<i>Confidential</i>)	"05B"
Sample Power Bill	"05C"
FLECO's Rate Impact Analysis	"05D"
FLECO's WESM Registration	"07A"
FLECO's Estimation of Potential Reduction	"11"
FLECO's Board Resolution No. 109, Series of 2026	D and E
SPI's Secretary Certificate - Authority of Counsel to file the PSA and Authority of Affiant to execute Verification or CAFS	D-1 and E-1
SPI's Secretary's Certificate - Authority to execute the PSA	D-2
Brief Description of the CSP Conducted	"H"
Proof of BAC Establishment	"I"
CSP Observers	"J"
Invitation to Bid (ITB)	"K"
Certificate of Conformity from the NEA	"L"
Publication of the ITB	"M"
Posting of the ITB	"N"
Instructions to Bidders	"O"
Terms of Reference (TOR)	"P"

Pre-bid Conference	"Q and Series"
Eligibility Requirements	"R and Series"
Submission of Bids	"S and Series"
Evaluation of Bids	"T and Series"
Award of Contract	"U and Series"
Execution of Contract	"V and Series"
Protests and Dispute Resolution	"W and Series"
Affidavit to Support Provisional Approval	"X"

MOTION FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

Under the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure, a party to any proceeding before the Honorable Commission may request that certain information not be disclosed and be treated as confidential.⁵ Pursuant to this, Applicants FLECO and SPI pray for the confidential treatment of the information contained in the following annexes:

Documents and/or Information	Annex
Documents Related to Fuel	"02"
Operations and Maintenance Agreement	"02"
Bid Forms	"05A"
SPI's Generation Rate and Derivation	"05B"

1. In addition, Annex 02 (Documents Related to Fuel and Operations and Maintenance Agreement) are SPI's contract with its fuel supplier containing the terms, including the rate, at which SPI purchases or procures fuel for the Power Plant.

2. Annex "05A" contains the details of the breakdown of generation costs of other power suppliers who participated and submitted bid prices during the FLECO's CSP.

3. Annex "05B" contains the details concerning the financial plans and power rate calculations of SPI as well as the manner and details by which these were derived. The subject information is proprietary in nature and should be protected as trade secrets as contemplated by law and jurisprudence. In the case of *Air Philippines Corporation vs. Pennwell, Inc.*,⁶ 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 inadmissible 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:

- the extent to which the information is known outside of the employer's business;
- the extent to which the information is known by employees and others involved in the business;
- 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." (*citations omitted, emphasis supplied*)

The interest of the consuming public is sufficiently protected by the review and evaluation of the rates under the PSA by this Honorable Commission, without the need to disclose the contents of Confidential Documents. The reasonableness and transparency of the prices of electricity is to be assured by the Honorable Commission through its own review and verification of SPI's operating costs and expenses.

4. Joint Applicants hereby submit one (1) copy of the confidential documents in a sealed envelope, with the envelope and each page of the document stamped with the word "Confidential".⁷

5. Further, Joint Applicants would like to implore the discerning wisdom of the Honorable Commission to include in its issuance for this purpose the "procedures for the handling or returning the confidential information, as appropriate, upon the close of the proceedings or at the end of the period provided in this Rule".

6. This is guided by the fact that Joint Applicants will seek for the return of these sought to be declared confidential annexes after its utilization as evidence in this case and/or at the close of the proceedings hereof, so as to relieve the Honorable Commission of the burden of safekeeping the trade secrets of SPI enclosed in the subject annexes.

ALLEGATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY OR INTERIM RELIEF

7. Under Rule 14, Section 1 of the ERC Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Honorable Commission may issue a provisional authority or interim relief prior to a final decision, provided the facts and circumstances alleged warrant such remedy.

8. The FLECO's 10 to 225 MW power supply under PSA with the Sual Power Inc., with validity date until December 25, 2041.

9. With the current limitations on the available capacity in the Luzon Grid, FLECO must immediately source its power supply from SPI to achieve energy security and to avoid potential power outages in FLECO's franchise area.

10.The latest FLECO's DDP shows an increasing demand and energy requirements of its new and current customers in 2027-2041.

11.Without the supply of SPI, FLECO will be severely exposed to volatile prices in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market ("WESM"). Consequently, the FLECO's generation charge will be adversely affected to the prejudice of its customers.

12.As shown in the rate impact simulation, the subject PSA would provide FLECO's customers up to PhP 1.1801/kWh average rate reduction in their monthly electricity bill in 2027.

13.The implementation of the PSA with SPI will enable FLECO to continuously provide its customers with stable, reliable, secured, and long-term power supply at cheaper electricity rate.

14.The grant of a provisional authority or interim relief will allow FLECO to have a steady, continuous, secured, and reliable source of electricity, which will immediately redound to the benefit of FLECO's customers in terms of providing a more affordable rate. To support the Motion for Provisional Authority, the Affidavit of Engr. Richard B. Mondez, the FLECO's General Manager, is attached as Annex "X" of the Application.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, premises considered, it is respectfully prayed that the Honorable Commission:

(i) ISSUE an Order treating Annex "02", "05A", and "05B" as confidential in perpetuity, directing their non-disclosure to persons other than the officers and staff of the Honorable Commission, perpetually protecting the said information from public disclosure by maintaining the same separate and apart from the records of the case, ensuring that these are not divulged to unauthorized persons, and that these confidential documents are returned to FLECO and SPI after the termination of this case pursuant to Rule 4 of its Rules of Practice and Procedure;

(ii) Pending trial on the merits, GRANT provisional authority or interim relief allowing the implementation of the PSA including all the rates, fees, charges, and tariff adjustment mechanisms set out therein at the rates provided in the PSA and authorizing FLECO to charge and collect such rates, fees, charges, and tariff adjustment therein from its customers reckoned from the start of the supply by SPI to FLECO under the PSA subject of this Joint Application; and

(iii) After hearing on the merits, ISSUE a Decision approving the Joint Application and the PSA between FLECO and SPI, including all the rates, fees, charges, and tariff adjustment mechanisms set out therein at the rates provided in the PSA, and authorizing FLECO to charge and collect such rates, fees, charges, and tariff adjustments therein from its end-users reckoned from the start of the supply by SPI to FLECO under the PSA.

Other relief just and reasonable are likewise prayed for.

Cainta, Rizal and Pasig City for Pasig City, 01 October 2026.

FIRST LAGUNA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

By:

ARJUNO O. INUMERABLE
Counsel for FLECO

405 Eliza St., U.E. Village, Cainta, Rizal
Email: atyunumerable@yahoo.com.ph

Telephone No. (02) 8647-3056 / 0929-8408040
PTR No. 8459220 / 01-21-26 / Quezon City

IBP No. 537308 / 01-21-26 / Pasig City

MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0042694, Valid Until 14 April 2028
Roll of Attorneys No. 28764

SUAL POWER INC. (SPI)

By:

JUPITER M. CABAGUJO

5th Floor, CS Office Building Complex
#100 E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., C5 Road, Bo. Ugong,
Pasig City 1604, Metro Manila
Telephone No. (02) 5317 1000 / jcabaguios@mcgph.sanmiguel.com.ph
PTR No. 3977997 / 05 January 2026 / Pasig City
IBP Lifetime No. 06372 / Makati Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII - 0032570 valid until 14 April 2028
Roll No. 47112

ALEJINDO G. CEDENO III

5th Floor, CS Office Building Complex
#100 E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., C5 Road, Bo. Ugong,
Pasig City 1604, Metro Manila
Telephone No. (02) 5317 1000 / acedonii@mcgph.sanmiguel.com.ph
PTR No. 3977996 / 05 January 2026 / Pasig City
IBP Lifetime No. 010380 / FPLM Chapter
MCLE Compliance No. VIII - 0029077 valid until 14 April 2028
Roll No. 54500

JULIETA R. ESTAMO

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

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORUM SHOPPING

I, RICHARD B. MONDEZ, of legal age, Filipino, married, and with office address at First Laguna Electric Cooperative, Inc. (FLECO), Brgy. Lewin, Lumban, Laguna, Philippines, after having been duly sworn to in accordance with the law, hereby depose and state:

1. That I am the General Manager of FLECO and duly authorized by the Board of Directors to file or cause the filing of this Application with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), as evidence by the Annex Resolution No. 109 Series of 2026, hereto attached as Annex "B".

2. That I caused the preparation of the foregoing Application;

3. That I have read the foregoing Application and I attest that the allegations therein are true and correct of my personal knowledge and based on authentic records of FLECO;

4. The foregoing Application is not filed to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation;

5. The factual allegations in the foregoing Application have evidentiary support, or it specifically so identified, will likewise have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for discovery;

6. That I further attest that FLECO has not theretofore commenced any action or filed any claim involving the same issues and parties in any court, tribunal or quasi-judicial agency and, to the best of my knowledge, no such other action or claim is pending therein; and

7. That if I should hereinafter learn that the same or 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 the fact within five (5) days from discovery thereof to the Honorable Commission.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and affixed my signature this ____ day of October, 2026 in _____, Laguna.


Richard B. Mondez
Affiant
General Manager
First Laguna Electric Cooperative, Inc.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this ____ day of ____ 2026, at _____, Philippines, an Affiant exhibiting to me this PRC Number _____ valid until February 12, 2029.

Witness my hand and seal.

Doc. No. ____
Page No. ____
Book No. ____
Series of 2026

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORUM SHOPPING

I, ELENITA D. GO, Filipino, of legal age, and with office address at the 9th Floor, 100 Eslagio Rodriguez Jr. Avenue C5 Road (North Board) 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") as co-applicant in the Joint Application for Approval of the Power Supply Agreement between First Laguna Electric Cooperative, Inc. (FLECO) 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 theretofore commenced any action or proceeding arising from the same issues related 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 ____ day of ____ 2026 at Pasig City.


ELENITA D. GO
Affiant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this ____ day of ____ 2026, in _____, Pasig City, Affiant personally appeared and exhibited to me her Philippine Passport No. _____ 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. ____
Page No. ____
Book No. ____
Series of 2026


Notary Public
ROLAN M. SERRANO
Pasig City, Philippines


Notary Public
ROLAN M. SERRANO
Pasig City, Philippines
PTR No. 3977996, January 5, 2026 / Pasig City
IBP Lifetime No. 10301, December 31, 2025
MCLE Compliance No. VIII-0016943, valid until April 14, 2028

¹ Prescribing the Policy for the Mandatory Conduct of the Competitive Selection Process by the Distribution Utilities for the Procurement of Power Supply for their Captive Market" dated June 30, 2023
² 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" dated March 17, 2025
³ Adoption of the National Electrification Administration Competitive Selection Process Guidelines Implementing the Department of Energy's Department Circular No. DC2023-08-2023 and the Energy Regulatory Commission's Resolution No. 16, Series of 2023 or the NEA 2023 CSP Guidelines" dated November 21, 2023
⁴ Annex 02 includes Annexes "07", "08", "09", "10", "12", "13", "14", "15", "16", "17", "18", "19", "20" and "21" in the Technical Pre-Filing Requirements.
⁵ Section 1, Rule 4, Revised Rules of Practice and Procedure of the ERC Resolution No. 01, series of 2021
⁶ G.R. No. 172835, December 13, 2007
⁷ Soft copies of the same to be provided to this Honorable Commission are password protected.
⁸ Other registered email: genilarycoman@mcgph.sanmiguel.com.ph

BUSINESS



Out in the Open
Ray S. Enano

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE ANCILLARY SERVICES PROCUREMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND SMGP BESS POWER, INC. (TABANGO BESS), WITH PRAYER FOR THE ISSUANCE OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY AND MOTION FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

ERC CASE NO. _____

NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND SMGP BESS POWER, INC.

Applicants

X-----X

Applicants NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES ("NGCP") and SMGP BESS POWER, INC. ("SBPI") or "Co-Applicant") (collectively referred to as the "Applicants" or the "Parties"), by their respective counsels, respectfully state:

I. NATURE OF THE CASE

1. This Application is for the approval of the Ancillary Services Procurement Agreement ("ASPA") or "Agreement" dated 08 October 2026,¹ entered into by the NGCP and Co-Applicant, pursuant to Department of Energy ("DOE") Department Circular No. (DC) 2021-10-0031² and DOE DC No. 2025-08-0010³ in relation to the Ancillary Services – Cost Recovery Mechanism ("AS-CRM") promulgated by the Energy Regulatory Commission ("ERC") in its Decision dated 3 October 2007 in ERC Case No. 2006-049 RC.

II. THE PARTIES

2. Applicant NGCP is a corporation created and existing under the laws of the Philippines, with office address at NGCP Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. It holds a congressional franchise granted under Republic Act No. 9511,⁴ and is authorized to engage in the business of conveying or transmitting electricity through high-voltage back-bone systems of interconnected transmission lines, substations and related facilities, and for other purposes. The NGCP is authorized to conduct activities necessary to support the safe and reliable operation of the transmission system.

3. Applicant SBPI is a corporation duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Republic of the Philippines, with principal place of business at 5th Floor, #100 Eulogio Rodriguez Jr. Avenue, C5 Road Bo, Ugong, Pasig City, 1604 Metro Manila, Philippines.

4. Applicant SBPI is the owner and operator of a power plant of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), with a rated capacity of 20 MW continuous output at 60Hz, including required ancillaries and spare parts, located in Brgy. Tugas, Tabango, Leyte (the "Generation Facility").

5. Applicants NGCP and SBPI may be served with orders, notices, pleadings and other legal processes through their respective counsels at the addresses indicated below.

III. ANTECEDENT FACTS

a. Basis of Ancillary Services Procurement

6. Republic Act No. 9136, also known as the Electric Power Industry Reform Act ("EPIRA"), provides that it is the responsibility of NGCP to ensure and maintain the reliability, adequacy, security, stability and integrity of the nationwide electrical grid in accordance with the performance standards for its operations and maintenance, as set forth in the Philippine Grid Code ("PGC")⁵ adopted and promulgated by the ERC, and to adequately serve generation companies, distribution utilities and suppliers requiring transmission service and/or ancillary services ("AS" or "Ancillary Services")⁶ through the transmission system.⁷

7. "Ancillary Services" is defined in Section 4 (b) of the EPIRA as referring "to those services that are necessary to support the transmission of capacity and energy from resources to loads while maintaining reliable operation of the transmission system in accordance with good utility practice and the Grid Code to be adopted in accordance with this Act." These services are essential in ensuring reliability in the operation of the transmission system and consequently, in the reliability of the electricity supply in the Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao grids.

8. Similarly, the PGC provides that NGCP is responsible for determining, acquiring, and dispatching the capacity needed to supply the required Grid AS and for developing and proposing Wheeling Charges and AS tariffs of the ERC.⁸

9. To implement and regulate the procurement of AS, the ERC approved the Ancillary Services Procurement Plan ("ASPP") through its Order dated 9 March 2006 in ERC Case No. 2002-253 and the Ancillary Services-Cost Recovery Mechanism ("AS-CRM") through its Decision dated 3 October 2007 in ERC Case No. 2006-049 RC.

10. Pursuant to Section 4.1 of DOE DC 2021-10-0031, NGCP developed and submitted to DOE its Ancillary Service Agreement Procurement Plan ("ASAPP") covering years 2025 to 2034.⁹ The DOE later reviewed and approved the 2025-2034 ASAPP.

11. Thereafter, on 07 July 2025, NGCP posted the 2025-2034 ASAPP on its website.¹⁰

12. On 29 July 2025, DOE issued DC No. 2025-08-0010⁴ authorizing NGCP to procure AS through direct negotiation without the need of conducting a CSP, to wit:

Section 8. Direct Negotiation in the Procurement of AS

8.1. xxx

8.2. xxx

8.3. Subject to the *motu proprio* direction of the DOE or its approval of a request by the SO, the SO may directly negotiate with qualified AS Providers in the Grid without the need of conducting a CSP for AS, provided any of the following conditions are met:

a. Insufficiency of any or all types of contracted AS, persisting for a continuous period of three (3) months, wherein the actual AS levels scheduled in the Reserve Market are less than 50% of the requirement, as certified by the Market Operator; or

b. Sustained increase in the cost of providing AS, resulting in: (i) an average cost for any type of AS greater than or equal to the 75% of the reserve offer cap in the Reserve Market, in at least one of the major grids, for a period of three (3) months; or (ii) an average reserve rate of PhP 0.25/kWh for any AS type, persisting for a period of three (3) months, as certified by the Market Operator.

b. Proof of Exemption from the Conduct of CSP

13. On 24 October 2025, DOE issued Advisory No. 2025-10-001 SEC directing NGCP to implement necessary actions for direct negotiations pursuant to DC No. 2025-08-0010.¹²

14. Thereafter, through its Letter dated 06 February 2026, the DOE directed NGCP to undertake Direct Negotiation for the procurement of AS in the Visayas Grid.¹³

15. In its Letter dated 16 February 2026, NGCP informed the DOE that the necessary ERC regulatory guidelines for Direct Negotiation had yet to be issued and, to avoid delay, proposed to include all AS capacities open for contracting in the 2nd AS-CSP.¹⁴

16. Thereafter, NGCP received DOE letter dated 22 May 2026 reiterating its directive to procure AS through direct negotiation in view of the recent occurrences of Yellow Alerts in the Visayas Grid.¹⁵

17. On 27 May 2026, DOE sent a letter of even date citing the recurring Yellow and Red Alerts in the Visayas Grid since 12 May 2026 and the increasing WISM prices due to persistently tight supply of energy as basis of its directive for NGCP to immediately undertake direct negotiations for the procurement of AS in the Visayas Grid.¹⁶

18. On 16 June 2026, NGCP received DOE's final instruction to directly negotiate critical AS in the Visayas Grid and to immediately contract the required AS capacities with DOE's specified AS Providers following the "recent simulations of the Independent Electricity Market Operator of the Philippines (IEMOP) which unequivocally demonstrated the need for the addition of at least 160 MW of reserve capacity to mitigate grid vulnerability."¹⁷

19. Thereafter, on 19 June 2026, NGCP received DOE's letter dated 18 June 2026 amending its instruction to contract critical AS in the Visayas Grid.¹⁸

20. On 11 September 2026, the Market Operator issued a Certification certifying that the three (3) months average price is above 75% of the price cap of PhP25/kWh for Regulating Reserve, and three (3) months average reserve contribution rate is greater than PhP0.25/kWh for Contingency Reserve.¹⁹

21. On 08 October 2026, NGCP and SBPI signed the ASPA for the Provision of Ancillary Services in the Visayas Grid. The details of which are as follows:

Type of AS to be provided	AS Facility/Unit	Capacity Payment Rate (P/kWh)	Duration
RR	TABANGO BESS	2.20	Five (5) years

IV. CONTRACTED CAPACITY RATES AND IMPACT SIMULATION

22. Section 3 of the ASPA states that SBPI shall provide the AS in accordance with Schedule 1 of the ASPA, as follows:

Contracted Capacities:

Regulating Reserve ("RR"):

Tabango Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) – 22.830 MW

Reserve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73
73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145
145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169
169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193
193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217
217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241
241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265
265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289
289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313
313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337
337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361
361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385
385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409
409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433
433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457
457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481
481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505
505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529
529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553
553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577
577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601
601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625
625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649
649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673
673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697
697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721
721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745
745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769
769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793
793	794	795	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815	816	817
817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841
841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865
865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886	887	888	889
889	890	891	892	893	894	895	896	897	898	899	900	901	902	903	904	905	906	907	908	909	910	911	912	913
913	914	915	916	917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931	932	933	934	935	936	937
937	938	939	940	941	942	943	944	945	946	947	948	949	950	951	952	953	954	955	956	957	958	959	960	961
961	962	963	964	965	966	967	968	969	970	971	972	973	974	975	976	977	978	979	980	981	982	983	984	985
985	986	987	988	989	990	991	992	993	994	995	996	997	998	999	1000	1001	1002	1003	1004	1005	1006	1007	1008	1009
1009	1010	1011	1012	1013	1014	1015	1016	1017	1018	1019	1020	1021	1022	1023	1024	1025	1026	1027	1028	1029	1030	1031	1032	1033
1033	1034	1035	1036	1037	1038	1039	1040	1041	1042	1043	1044	1045	1046	1047	1048	1049	1050	1051	1052	1053	1054	1055	1056	1057
1057	1058	1059	1060	1061	1062	1063	1064	1065	1066	1067	1068	1069	1070	1071	1072	1073	1074	1075	1076	1077	1078	1079	1080	1081
1081	1082	1083	1084	1085	1086	1087	1088	1089	1090	1091	1092	1093	1094	1095	1096	1097	1098	1099	1100	1101	1102	1103	1104	1105
1105	1106	1107	1108	1109	1110	1111	1112	1113	1114	1115	1116	1117	1118	1119	1120	1121	1122	1123	1124	1125	1126	1127	1128	1129
1129	1130	1131	1132	1133	1134	1135	1136	1137	1138	1139	1140	1141	1142	1143	1144	1145	1146	1147	1148	1149	1150	1151	1152	1153
1153	1154	1155	1156	1157	1158	1159	1160	1161	1162	1163	1164	1165	1166	1167	1168	1169	1170	1171	1172	1173	1174	1175	1176	1177
1177	1178	1179	1180	1181	1182	1183	1184	1185	1186	1187	1188	1189	1190	1191	1192	1193	1194	1195	1196	1197	1198	1199	1200	1201
1201	1202	1203	1204	1205	1206	1207	1208	1209	1210	1211	1212	1213	1214	1215	1216	1217	1218	1219	1220	1221	1222	1223	1224	1225
1225	1226	1227	1228	1229	1230	1231	1232	1233	1234	1235	1236	1237	1238	1239	1240	1241	1242	1243	1244	1245	1246	1247	1248	1249
1249	1250	1251	1252	1253	1254	1255	1256	1257	1258	1259	1260	1261	1262	1263	1264	1265	1266	1267	1268	1269	1270	1271	1272	1273
1273	1274	1275	1276	1277	1278	1279	1280	1281	1282	1283	1284	1285	1286	1287	1288	1289	1290	1291	1292	1293	1294	1295	1296	1297
1297	1298	1299	1300	1301	1302	1303	1304	1305	1306	1307	1308	1309	1310	1311	1312	1313	1314	1315	1316	1317	1318	1319	1320	1321
1321	1322	1323	1324	1325	1326	1327	1328	1329	1330	1331	1332	1333	1334	1335	1336	1337	1338	1339	1340	1341	1342	1343	1344	1345
1345	1346	1347	1348	1349	1350	1351	1352	1353	1354	1355	1356	1357	1358	1359	1360	1361	1362	1363	1364	1365	1366	1367	1368	1369
1369	1370	1371	1372	1373	1374	1375	1376	1377	1378	1379	1380	1381	1382	1383	1384	1385	1386	1387	1388	1389	1390	1391	1392	1393
1393	1394	1395	1396</																					



Department of Agriculture

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY

Official Address: 2800 Alibon Road, Marikina City 1800

Phone No. (02) 8866-1000

Telefax No. (02) 8866-1001

Website: www.bpi.gov.ph



ISO 9001:2015 Certified

Quality Management System

ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR

No. **04**

Series of 2026

SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE IMPORTATION OF SEED AND TABLE POTATOES FROM FRANCE INTO THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS the Plant Quarantine Service (PQS) of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 1433 "Plant Quarantine Law of 1978", as revised by the Administrative Code of 1987 (BO 292), has the primary function of preventing the entry of foreign pests into the country and the further spread of pests already introduced to places where they are not known to exist;

WHEREAS the Plant Product Safety Services Division (PPSSD) of the BPI shall be responsible for the regulation of plant foods in the primary production and post-harvest stages of the food supply chain in accordance with Executive Order No. 366, s. 2004 and Republic Act No. 10611, also known as the "Food Safety Act of 2013";

WHEREAS the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and the FAO International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) reaffirms the sovereign right of the country to institute appropriate measures deemed necessary to protect human, plant, and animal life and health, provided that such measures do not unnecessarily restrict trade;

WHEREAS Article II, Section 4.1. of the DA Department Circular No. 6, Series of 2020 "Rules and Regulations Governing the Importation and Exportation of Plant Food" states that the importation of plant foods shall only be allowed under the condition that it had undergone risk analysis, taking into account potential food safety risks associated with plant foods, and considering the measures implemented by the exporting country's competent authority;

WHEREAS Article II, Section 5 of the DA Department Circular No. 6, Series of 2020 states that the food safety risk analysis for the importation of plant food shall be done by PPSSD based on PNS and Codex standards / guidelines and shall be conducted as part of the import risk analysis wherein the National Plant Quarantine Services Division (NPQSD), on the other hand, conducts analysis on the phytosanitary risks which may posed by the importation of plant food.

WHEREAS the Import Risk Analysis (IRA) for table and seed potatoes from France was conducted by the BPI, NPQSD and PPSSD wherein the risk estimates or levels pertaining to food safety and phytosanitary are determined and the appropriate risk management measures are formulated proportionate to the risks. This includes the Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) which evaluates the biological, scientific, and economic evidence to determine whether an organism is a pest, whether it should be regulated, and the appropriate strength of phytosanitary measures to be taken against it;

WHEREAS the Completed IRA, Workplan for the importation of seed and table potatoes, the Department of Agriculture (DA) Department Circular No. 4, Series of 2016 *Guidelines on the Importation of Plants, Planting Materials and Plant Products for Commercial Purposes*, DA Department Circular No. 6, series of 2020 *Rules and Regulations Governing the Importation and Exportation of Plant Food*, and Section 3.4 of BPI Administrative Order No. 1 Series of 2018 *Pest Risk Analysis Manual* served as the basis for the issuance of this Administrative Circular (AC).

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD GLENN F. PANGANIBAN Ph.D., Director of the Bureau of Plant Industry, by the powers vested in me by law, do hereby issue this Circular providing guidelines governing the importation of seed and table potatoes from French Republic (hereinafter referred to as France) into the Republic of the Philippines (hereinafter referred to as Philippines).

SECTION I
SCOPE, DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

OBJECTIVES - This Circular shall provide sanitary and phytosanitary rules and regulations governing the commercial importation of seed and table potatoes from France into the Philippines.

SCOPE - This circular shall govern the commercial importation of seed and table potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) from France for planting and human consumption.

DEFINITION OF TERMS- For the purpose of this Circular, the following terms, words, and phrases **herein used** shall be construed to mean as follows:

1. DEFINITION:

1.1. Additional Declaration - a statement required by the BPI- NPQSD to be indicated on a Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) which provides specific additional information pertinent to the consignment.

1.2. BPI SPS Import Clearance (SPSIC) - a document issued prior to importation by the BPI to ensure that the products being imported meet the standards to protect human, animal, or plant life or health, ensuring that the products are safe for consumers and to prevent the spread of pests or diseases among animals or plants. Such a document also prescribes the conditions to be complied with by the importer for the maintenance of quality and sustainability of the product for the intended purposes.

1.3. Commodity - A type of plant, planting material, plant product, or other article being moved for trade or other purposes.

1.4. Consignment - a specific quantity of seed or table potatoes from France to the Philippines covered by a single PC.

1.5. Food Safety - refers to the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared or eaten according to its intended use.

1.6. Importation - an act of bringing into the country by sea, land, or air foreign products intended for planting, consumption, manufacturing, trading, distribution, domestication, formulation, repacking, or any other purposes.

1.7. Importer - shall refer to any person, individual or juridical entity as well as any farmers' cooperatives/organization/association, or proprietor or authorized representatives or broker, partner, in case of a partnership, who transacts with the BPI for purposes of licensing and issuance of SPSIC in connection with the importation of plants, planting materials, and plant products.

1.8. Inspection - Official visual examination of plants, planting materials, plant products, or other regulated articles to determine if pests are present or to determine compliance with phytosanitary regulations.

1.9. Interception (of a consignment) - The refusal or controlled entry of an imported consignment due to failure to comply with phytosanitary regulations.

1.10. Interception (of a pest) - The detection of a pest during the inspection and testing of an imported consignment.

1.11. International SPS Certificate - a written guarantee issued by a competent authority from the country of origin, certifying that the products have been handled, processed, and packed in a hygienic manner and do not contain microorganisms, harmful substances that may pose food safety hazard and endanger human, animal or plant life or health and includes international health certificate, international phytosanitary certificate

1.12. Licensed Importer - refers to a person or juridical entity licensed by the DA and/or its bureaus and attached agencies are eligible to import agriculture and fisheries commodities and products for its own use, propagation, processing, wholesale and/or retail distribution.

1.13. Maximum Residue Limit - allowable limit of pesticide level on table potatoes set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission or by the France's Standards for MRL for pesticides on vegetables.

1.14. Must-Ship-Out-By-Date - the prescribed time (period) within which the actual product/consignment must have left the country of origin, the reckoning of which is based on the date of issuance of the SPSIC. The must ship out by date for seed and table potatoes is twenty (20) days.

1.15. Pest - Any species, strain, or biotype of plant, animal, or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or animals.

1.16. Pest Risk Analysis - the process of evaluating biological or other scientific and economic evidence to determine whether an organism is a pest, whether it should be regulated, and the strength of any phytosanitary measures to be taken against it [FAO, 1995; revised IPPC, 1997; ISPM No. 2, 2007]

1.17. Phytosanitary Certification - use of phytosanitary procedure leading to the issuance of a Phytosanitary Certificate [FAO, 1990; ISPM No. 5, 2006]

1.18. Phytosanitary Measure - any legislation, regulation, or official procedure having the purpose to prevent the introduction and/or spread of quarantine pests, or to limit the economic impact of regulated non-quarantine pests. [FAO, 1990; ISPM No. 5, 2006]

2. ACRONYMS:

BPI	-	Bureau of Plant Industry (the NPPO of the Philippines)
DA	-	Department of Agriculture
DGAL	-	French General Directorate for Food (the NPPO of France)
DTS	-	DA Trade System
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAP	-	Good Agricultural Practices
IPPC	-	International Plant Protection Convention
IPM	-	Integrated Pest Management
ISPM	-	International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures
LTO	-	License to Operate
RLTO	-	Renewal of License to Operate
MRL	-	Maximum Residue Limit
NPQSD	-	National Plant Quarantine Service Division
NPPO	-	National Plant Protection Organization
PC	-	Phytosanitary Certificate
PQI	-	Plant Quarantine Inspector
PQO	-	Plant Quarantine Officer
PPSSD	-	Plant Product Safety Services Division
PRA	-	Pest Risk Analysis
SPA	-	Special Power of Attorney
SPSIC	-	SPS Import Clearance
SPS	-	Sanitary and Phytosanitary

SECTION II
LICENSE TO OPERATE AS AN IMPORTER
GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES, AND ISSUANCE OF SPS IMPORT CLEARANCE (SPSIC)

This article, pursuant to the DA DC 04 s. 2016 and DA DC 6 s. 2020, shall be implemented in the licensing of the Importers of seed and table potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) and issuance of SPS import clearance. The following guidelines and procedures conform to the mandate of Republic Act (RA) No. 11032, otherwise known as the *Ease of Doing Business, Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018*.

SECTION III
SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES

Schedule of Fees and Charges - Relevant fees shall be imposed as necessary pursuant to DA AC No. 9, Series of 2015 as amended.

SECTION IV
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

1. General Requirements for Importation:

1.1. Any BPI-licensed importer who intends to import seed and table potatoes from France into the country shall secure a SPSIC from the BPI.

1.2. Only BPI-licensed importers and accredited by Bureau of Customs (BOC) shall be allowed to apply for a SPSIC.

1.3. The importer shall not apply for a SPSIC without a valid importer's LTO/RLTO from BPI or when the license has expired.

1.4. SPSIC shall not be issued for the first-time importation of the specific commodity except when an IRA has been undertaken relative to said commodity in accordance with BPI procedure on conducting IRA.

1.5. BPI shall not entertain or transact business with companies/importers/brokers that have standing alert orders/smuggling cases with the BOC and/or from any NPQSD office/stations.

1.6. SPSIC is required prior to the shipment of seed and table potatoes.

1.7. Pre-shipment requirements and post-shipment requirements as stipulated in SPSIC shall be complied with by the exporting country and the importer.

1.8. All issued SPSIC are non-transferable.

1.9. Seed or table potatoes must be shipped out from France within twenty (20) days from the date of issuance of the SPSIC.

1.10. Only the authorized broker as indicated in the SPSIC shall be allowed to transact business with the BPI upon presentation of a valid Special Power of Attorney (SPA). No broker can represent more than one applicant. In case of an exemption, justification must be submitted for evaluation.

Annex 1. Identified Philippine's Quarantine Pests for Seed and Table Potatoes . Overall risk ratings and mitigating measures.

Part A. Seed potatoes

PEST	Presence in France	ORR	Mitigating Measures in France
Insects			
<i>Agriotes lineatus</i> , <i>Agriotes sputator</i> , <i>Agriotes obscurus</i> , <i>Agriotes sordidus</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Delia platura</i>	Present	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Leptinotarsa decemlineata</i>	Present	High	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Melolontha melolontha</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Naupactus godmanni</i> (syn <i>Pantomorus cervinus</i>)	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Scrobipalopsis solanivora</i> (syn. <i>Tecia solanivora</i>)	Absent	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
Nematodes			
<i>Ditylenchus destructor</i>	Present	Moderate	Seed certification Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export / brushing
<i>Globodera pallida</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance
<i>Globodera rostochiensis</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance
<i>Heterodera trifolii</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export / brushing
<i>Meloidogyne chitwoodi</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance
<i>Meloidogyne fallax</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance
<i>Trichodorus viruliferus</i>	Present	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export / brushing
Fungi			
<i>Boeremia foveata</i> (syn. <i>Phoma exigua</i> var. <i>foveata</i>)	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i> (Syn. <i>Botryotinia fuckeliana</i>)	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Colletotrichum coccodes</i>	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Fusarium culmorum</i>	Present	High	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Fusarium caeruleum</i> (syn. <i>Fusarium solani</i> var. <i>caeruleum</i>)	Present	High	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Helminthosporium solani</i>	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Boeremia exigua</i> var. <i>exigua</i> (syn. <i>Phoma exigua</i> var. <i>exigua</i>)	Present	High	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Polycystium pustulans</i> (syn. <i>Oospora pustulans</i>)	Rare	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Helicobasidium brebissonii</i> (syn. <i>Rhizoctonia cricorum</i>)	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Sclerotinia minor</i>	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Synchytrium endobioticum</i>	Absent (eradicate d in 2012, CAB)	High	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme
<i>Phytophthora cryptogea</i>	Present	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
Bacteria			
<i>Burkholderia gladioli</i> pv. <i>gladioli</i>	Absent	Low	Visual examination of tubers to verify compliance with the threshold applied during technological and varietal certification.
<i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> subsp. <i>sepedonicus</i> (syn. <i>Corynebacterium sepedonicum</i>)	Absent	Low	Under official annual surveillance/ Visual examination of tubers
<i>Dickeya dianthicola</i>	Present	High	Visual examination of tubers to verify compliance with the threshold applied during technological and varietal certification.
<i>Dickeya solani</i>	Present	High	Visual examination of tubers to verify compliance with the threshold applied during technological and varietal certification.
<i>Streptomyces europaeicabiei</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers to verify compliance with the threshold applied during technological and varietal certification.
<i>Streptomyces stelliscabiei</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers to verify compliance with the threshold applied during technological and varietal certification.
Virus			
Necrotic potato virus Y	Present	Moderate	Monitored absence under seed potato certification scheme
Pepino mosaic virus (syn. Pepini potexvirus)	Present	Moderate	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme
Pomovirus solani (syn. Potato moptop virus)	Rare	Low	Visual examination of tuber lots intended for export
Potato virus A	Present	Moderate	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme.
Potato Virus M	Present	Moderate	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme.
Tobravirus tabaci (syn. Tobacco Rattle Virus)	Present	Moderate	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme.
Orthotospovirus melanimaculæ (syn. Tomato Spotted Wilt virus)	Present	High	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme.
Potato spindle tuber viroid	Absent (eradicate d in 2012, CAB)	High	Monitored absence under the seed potato certification scheme.
Part B. Table potatoes			
PEST	Presence in France	ORR	Mitigating Measures in France
Insects			
<i>Agriotes lineatus</i> , <i>Agriotes sputator</i> , <i>Agriotes obscurus</i> , <i>Agriotes sordidus</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Delia platura</i>	Present	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export
<i>Leptinotarsa decemlineata</i>	Present	High	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export

<i>Melolontha melolontha</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Naupactus godmani</i> (syn. <i>Pantomorus cervinus</i>)	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Scaphisoma solanivora</i> (syn. <i>Tecia solanivora</i>)	Absent	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
Nematodes			
<i>Ditylenchus destructor</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export / brushing.
<i>Globodera pallida</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance.
<i>Globodera rostochiensis</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance.
<i>Heterodera trifolii</i>	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export / brushing.
<i>Meloidogyne chitwoodi</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance.
<i>Meloidogyne fallax</i>	Present	High	Under official annual surveillance.
<i>Trichodorus viruliferus</i>	Present	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export / brushing.
Fungi			
<i>Boeremia javata</i> (syn. <i>Phoma exigua</i> var. <i>jovata</i>)	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i> (Syn. <i>Botryotinia fuckeliana</i>)	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Colletotrichum coccodes</i>	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Fusarium culmorum</i>	Present	High	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Fusarium caeruleum</i> (syn. <i>Fusarium solani</i> var. <i>coeruleum</i>)	Present	High	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Helminthosporium solani</i>	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Boeremia exigua</i> var. <i>exigua</i> (syn. <i>Phoma exigua</i> var. <i>exigua</i>)	Present	High	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Polyscytalum pustulans</i> (syn. <i>Oospora pustulans</i>)	Absent	Low	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Helicobasidium brebissonii</i> (syn. <i>Rhizoctonia cricorum</i>)	Present	Moderate	Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Sclerotinia minor</i>	Present	Moderate	Pest management in field/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
<i>Synchytrium endobioticum</i>	Absent	Low	Under official annual surveillance/ Visual examination of tubers for lots intended for export.
Bacteria			
<i>Clavibacter sepedonicus</i> (syn. <i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> subsp. <i>sepedonicus</i> , <i>Corynebacterium sepedonicum</i>)	Absent	Low	Under official annual surveillance/ Visual examination of tubers

Annex 2. Specific Pre-Entry Conditions for Seed and Table Potatoes

- The shipment and/or the seed potato/table potato tubers should be practically free from soil (±1% soil and debris).
- Seed potatoes /Table Potatoes shall be sourced from certified seeds produced according to the UE Council directives 2002/56/CE (2002/06/13), 2014/20/UE (2014/02/06) and 2014/21/UE (2014/02/06) related to the marketing of seed potatoes and potato seed classes.
- The table potatoes shall be treated with sprout inhibitors to prevent the potato tubers germination. In case of treatment with sprout inhibitors and other chemicals such as fungicide, the treatment should be stated in the Phytosanitary Certificate.
- The commodity shall be under cold storage condition throughout the transport.
- An original Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) shall be issued by DGAL/SRAL for each consignment that satisfactorily passed the pre-export quarantine inspection. The container and seal number are specified in the appropriate boxes of the PC. The following additional declaration must be mentioned on the PC:

"Seed Potatoes or Table Potatoes are exported in compliance with the conditions stated in the in the Work Plan for the importation of seed and table potatoes from France into the Republic of the Philippines. The seed potatoes or table potatoes in this shipment are produced from certified seeds.

The seed potatoes in this shipment are compliant with the French Seed Certification System.

These have been inspected by DGAL/SRAL and comply with the phytosanitary requirements as defined in the work plan."

"This shipment is covered by Plant Quarantine Clearance (PQC)/or Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPSIC) No. _____."

Annex 3. Specific Post-Entry Conditions for Seed Potatoes

- Shipment must be delivered in unopened/ original package to Plant Quarantine Office (MCP/South Harbor) for inspection.
- Verification of accompanying documents should be conducted by a Plant Quarantine Officer (PQO)/Inspector (PQI).
- Routine inspection and examination of the shipment should be conducted by a PQO/PQI.
- A sample size of 2% of the consignment shall be inspected by a PQO/PQI for quarantine pests. The inspection shall include the packaging material of the seed potato.
- Potatoes showing symptoms of infection and infestation or presence of pests shall be forwarded to the nearest BPI- Plant Quarantine Service laboratory for diagnosis and pest identification.
- The seed potatoes should be inspected for the following quarantine pests at the port of entry and/or laboratory:
 - Insects:** *Agriotes lineatus*, *Agriotes sputator*, *Agriotes obscurus*, *Agriotes sordidus*, *Della platara*, *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*, *Melolontha melolontha*, *Naupactus godmani*, *Tecia solanivora*.
 - Bacteria:** *Dickeya dianthicola*, *Dickeya solani*, *Streptomyces europaeiscabiei*, *Streptomyces stelliscabiei*.
 - Nematodes:** *Globodera pallida* and *Globodera rostochiensis*.
- Fungi:** *Boeremia javata* (syn. *Phoma exigua* var. *jovata*), *Botrytis cinerea* (Syn. *Botryotinia fuckeliana*, *Colletotrichum coccodes*, *Fusarium culmorum*, *Fusarium caeruleum* (syn. *Fusarium solani* var. *coeruleum*), *Helminthosporium solani*, *Boeremia exigua* var. *exigua* (syn. *Phoma exigua* var. *exigua*), *Polyscytalum pustulans* (syn. *Oospora pustulans*), *Helicobasidium brebissonii* (syn. *Rhizoctonia cricorum*), *Sclerotinia minor*, *Synchytrium endobioticum*, *Phytophthora cryptogea*.
- Viruses/Viroids:** Necrotic potato virus Y, Potato virus A, Potato Virus M, Tobacco virus tabaci (syn. Tobacco Rattle Virus).
- In case live quarantine insect pests and confirmed infestation of quarantine pathogens are detected during import inspection and laboratory testing, the infested consignment shall either be re-exported or destroyed at the importers' expense. The importation (of seed potatoes) shall be suspended pending the result of DGAL investigation. Resumption of the export program may take place upon successful implementation of identified corrective actions.
- In case of fungal infection by non-quarantine pests, the seed potato can be treated with appropriate fungicide.
- Seed potatoes will be subject to post entry quarantine (PEQ) activities including pre-examination and approval of PEQ areas/facilities where the materials will be planted, post entry quarantine monitoring and laboratory testing in case suspected quarantine pests are detected.
- The seed potatoes shall be monitored at the approved post entry quarantine facility/growing area for the following quarantine pests:
 - 3.10.1. Nematodes:** *Ditylenchus destructor*, *Globodera pallida*, *Globodera rostochiensis*, *Heterodera trifolii*, *Meloidogyne chitwoodi*, *Meloidogyne fallax*, *Trichodorus viruliferus*.
 - 3.10.2. Fungi:** *Polyscytalum pustulans* (syn. *Oospora pustulans*), *Helicobasidium brebissonii* (syn. *Rhizoctonia cricorum*), *Sclerotinia minor*, *Synchytrium endobioticum*, *Phytophthora cryptogea*.
 - 3.10.3. Bacteria:** *Barkholderia gladioli* pv. *gladioli*, *Clavibacter sepedonicus* (syn. *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *sepedonicus*, *Corynebacterium sepedonicum*).
 - 3.10.4. Viruses/Viroids:** Pepino mosaic virus (syn. *Pepini potenviruses*), *Pomovirus solani* (syn. *Potato mop-top virus*), *Orthotospovirus fontinalis* (syn. *Potato Spotted Wilt virus*), *Potato spindle tuber viroid*.
- In case quarantine pests are detected and confirmed during post entry quarantine monitoring and laboratory testing, the infested lot/tubers planted with seed potatoes shall either be recalled and destroyed at the importers' expense. Waste disposal will be according to the Plant Quarantine requirements.
- The importation of seed potatoes shall be suspended pending the result of DGAL investigation. Resumption of the export program may take place upon successful implementation of identified corrective actions.

Annex 4. Specific Post-entry Conditions for Table Potatoes

- Shipment must be delivered in unopened/ original package to Plant Quarantine Office (MCP/South Harbor/PQS Station) for inspection.
- Verification of accompanying documents should be conducted by a Plant Quarantine Officer (PQO)/Inspector (PQI).
- Routine inspection and examination of the shipment should be conducted by a PQO/PQI. A sample size of 1 % of the consignment shall be inspected by a PQO/PQI for quarantine pests. The inspection shall include the packaging material of the seed potato.
- Potatoes showing symptoms of infestation or presence of pests shall be forwarded to the nearest Plant Quarantine Service laboratory for diagnosis and pest identification.
- The potatoes should be inspected for the following quarantine pests at the port of entry and/or laboratory:
 - 4.5.1. Insects:** *Agriotes lineatus*, *Agriotes sputator*, *Agriotes obscurus*, *Agriotes sordidus*, *Della platara*, *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*, *Melolontha melolontha*, *Naupactus godmani*, *Scaphisoma solanivora* (syn. *Tecia solanivora*).
 - 4.5.2. Nematodes:** *Globodera pallida* and *Globodera rostochiensis*.
 - 4.5.3. Fungi:** *Boeremia javata* (syn. *Phoma exigua* var. *jovata*), *Botrytis cinerea* (Syn. *Botryotinia fuckeliana*, *Colletotrichum coccodes*, *Fusarium culmorum*, *Fusarium caeruleum* (syn. *Fusarium solani* var. *coeruleum*), *Helminthosporium solani*, *Boeremia exigua* var. *exigua* (syn. *Phoma exigua* var. *exigua*), *Polyscytalum pustulans* (syn. *Oospora pustulans*), *Helicobasidium brebissonii* (syn. *Rhizoctonia cricorum*), *Sclerotinia minor*, *Synchytrium endobioticum*, *Phytophthora cryptogea*.
- In case of detection of non-quarantine pests (fungal pathogens and pests), the table potato can be treated with appropriate fungicide/insecticide.
- In case live quarantine pests and infection of quarantine pathogens are detected/ confirmed during import inspection and laboratory testing, the infested consignment shall either be re-exported or destroyed at the importers' expense.
- Waste disposal shall be done in accordance with the Plant Quarantine requirements.
- The importation of table potatoes shall be suspended pending the result of DGAL investigation. Resumption of the table potato export program may take place upon successful implementation of identified corrective actions.

B6

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026

extrastory2000@gmail.com

RODERICK T. DELA CRUZ, Editor

ALENA MAE S. FLORES, Asst. Editor

Manila Standard



GREEN SWAN CONFERENCE. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) hosts the first Green Swan Conference held outside Basel, Switzerland. The event brought together participants from Europe, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, and the Americas. Central bankers, climate scientists and leaders from finance and business gathered to discuss how physical climate risks are evolving and what can be done to manage their impact on the economy and financial system. Co-organized with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), Banca d'Italia and Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), the conference took place on Oct. 19, 2026 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Manila.

NTC orders telcos to verify users with over 100 SIMs

By Darwin G. Amojelar

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has ordered mobile network operators (MNOs) to step up verification of subscribers who have registered more than 100 SIM cards under their names, as part of efforts to curb scams and other illegal activities.

Telecommunications companies have 15 days from receipt of the memorandum order to run know-your-client (KYC) checks and determine whether these subscribers still possess and control the cards and are using them for legitimate purposes, the NTC said.

The commission ordered the deactivation of SIM cards whose registered users cannot establish continuous possession, control and legitimate use.

“Once these numbers are deactivated, it is permanent, unless the person can prove, by proper identification documents, that the affected SIM is registered personally under their name,” NTC deputy commissioner Alvin Blanco said.

The NTC said the measure seeks to stop organized scam groups, individual scammers and opera-

tors of SMS blaster devices, which can send fraudulent text messages, from misusing SIM cards. It also targets financial fraud covered by the Anti-Financial Account Scamming Act (AFASA) and deceptive business venture offers, after the Philippine National Police raised concerns about scams related to El Niño.

The SIM Registration Act does not limit the number of SIM cards an individual may register, the NTC said. Subscribers with more than 100 SIMs, however, will face additional verification to establish legitimate ownership and use.

Selling or transferring SIM cards without complying with registration requirements is an offense under Republic Act No. 11934, or the SIM Registration Act. It is punishable by imprisonment of 6 months to 6 years and/or a fine of P100,000 to P300,000.

The NTC urged the public to register under their own names all SIM cards they personally use, particularly those linked to banking applications, over-the-top platforms and mobile payment services.

The NTC said legitimate subscribers who have properly registered their SIMs and use them lawfully are not the intended targets of the measure, which aims to strengthen the integrity of SIM registration.

PSE to buy DBP’s 3.08% stake in PDS

By Jenniffer B. Austria

THE Philippine Stock Exchange Inc. (PSE) said Wednesday it signed an agreement to acquire the Development Bank of the Philippines’ (DBP) 3.08-percent stake in Philippine Dealing System Holdings Corp. (PDSHC), bringing it closer to full ownership of the fixed-income market operator.

The PSE said in a disclosure it signed a share purchase agreement with DBP for 192,776 common shares in PDSHC at P600 per share. The transaction is subject to customary post-closing conditions.

It said the purchase will raise the PSE’s stake in PDSHC to 94.55 percent, following earlier acquisitions from other shareholders including Singapore Exchange Ltd., Tata Consultancy Services Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd., Whistler Technologies Services Inc., FINEX Foundation, San Miguel Corp. and the Social Security System.

The acquisition is part of the PSE’s plan to consolidate ownership of PDSHC, which operates through subsidiaries Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEX) and Philippine Depository & Trust Corp. (PDMC).

The PSE said a single-exchange structure for equities and fixed income would align the Philippine capital market with other markets and let investors trade different securities through a unified marketplace.

Ube’s... From B3

The US Department of Agriculture awarded the funds through its Food for Progress Program, says US Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Lipton.

US nonprofit TechnoServe will implement the five-year project, which is expected to support about 12,500 Filipino ube farmers. The program is funded through the sale of nearly 40,000 metric tons of U.S. soybean meal.

Ube is also receiving the support of the United Ube PH Federation.

Association head Velasquez says the industry

US offers financing for PH minerals sector

THE United States is seeking deeper cooperation with the Philippines on critical minerals, offering financing, technology and commercial support to help develop the country’s mining and processing industries and secure supply chains.

US Embassy in Manila senior commercial officer Gregg Harris said the Philippines is an important partner as Washington seeks reliable sources of copper, nickel, cobalt and other minerals needed for semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, defense and energy.

Speaking at the Mining Philippines 2026 International Conference and Exhibit in Pasay City, Harris said the Philippines has significant untapped mineral resources that could support a broader commercial relationship with the United States.

“We see the Philippines and treaty partners as an essential part of the global supply chain,” Harris said.

He said companies are interested in financing, developing and upgrading Philippine mining operations, with potential support covering mining equipment, drilling systems, automation, geospatial technology, infrastructure and mineral recovery. **Othel V. Campos**

Airlines to raise fuel surcharge in November

AIRLINE passengers will pay higher fares next month after the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) approved an increase in the fuel surcharge amid rising jet fuel prices.

The CAB said in an advisory that the passenger and cargo fuel surcharge for domestic and international flights will rise to Level 17 for Nov. 1 to 15 from Level 16 for Oct. 16 to 31.

Under Level 17, the fuel surcharge for domestic passenger flights will range from P559 to P1,635, depending on distance. For international flights, the surcharge will range from P1,846.10 to P13,726.58.

For cargo, airlines may charge P2.87 to P8.40 per kilo-

gram on domestic flights and P9.49 to P70.57 per kilogram on international flights.

The CAB is implementing a 15-day price monitoring and implementation cycle for passenger and cargo fuel surcharges on domestic and international flights. The interim measure replaces the standard one-month cycle and temporarily suspends specific provisions of CAB Resolution No. 25 (2022).

The agency said the measure aims to mitigate the impact of surging fuel prices on passengers and airline operations. It will remain in effect until the situation stabilizes or until the CAB revises or revokes it. **Darwin G. Amojelar**

IN BRIEF

gram on domestic flights and P9.49 to P70.57 per kilogram on international flights.

The CAB is implementing a 15-day price monitoring and implementation cycle for passenger and cargo fuel surcharges on domestic and international flights. The interim measure replaces the standard one-month cycle and temporarily suspends specific provisions of CAB Resolution No. 25 (2022).

The agency said the measure aims to mitigate the impact of surging fuel prices on passengers and airline operations. It will remain in effect until the situation stabilizes or until the CAB revises or revokes it. **Darwin G. Amojelar**

AFC SME offers P5-m loan for home construction

AFC SME Finance Inc. is offering loans of up to P5 million for home construction to landowners who cannot borrow from banks because of strict documentation requirements.

“Families keep telling us the same thing — they have the land but they simply cannot raise the money to build. This is the gap we are trying to bridge,” said AFC SME president Bernadette Recto. AFC SME is a member of the Asialink Group of Companies.

Recto said the loans are subject to a verified project cost or a 70-percent loan-to-value limit, with repayment terms of up to 20 years.

AFC SME also offers quick loan approval with less rigorous requirements so borrowers can build soon and beat rising costs due to inflation.

The program targets households with steady income, such as market vendors, small contractors, farmers, jeepney and tricycle operators and families supported from overseas.

Employed individuals and MSME owners may also apply, subject to credit evaluation, using a borrower-owned lot with a verified land title in their name as collateral. Recto said funds are released in 3 or 4 tranches based on construction progress and compliance with release conditions.

“We look at what a household earns and what it can realistically carry. That is the same discipline we apply to small business borrowers,” Recto said.

It is a boost to coffee chains like Starbucks, which rolled out an iced ube coconut macchiato across its US stores as a “trending” addition to its refreshed spring menu.

Ube has become a star attraction of Starbucks’ latest menu refresh. Videos of users sampling newly released ube drinks — which have also been launched this month by UK-based coffee-shop chain Costa — are already rippling across the social media platform.

Ube may soon find a second wind in our local farms.

E-mail: rayenano@yahoo.com



Manila's second Hopia Day draws 23 businesses, including 7 local hopia makers, to Binondo on Oct. 24 and 25 to celebrate Filipino Chinese heritage.

Manila celebrates Hopia Day

By Julie Ann Lope

THE second Manila Hopia Day took place at Plaza San Lorenzo Ruiz in Binondo on Oct. 24 and 25, 2026, celebrating the culture and heritage of the Filipino Chinese community.

Twenty-three businesses took part, including seven Manila-based hopia makers. These include Eng Bee Tin, Liberty, Baker's Fair, Ho-Land, Eng Ho, Polland and Kim Chong Tin

Hopia. Restaurants and shops offering beverages and snacks also joined. Manila Mayor Isko Moreno said hopia is more than a traditional pastry beloved by the public, describing it as

an important symbol of the culture, history and heritage of the Filipino Chinese community.

He said the tradition deserves to be preserved and passed on to the next generation.

The event coincided with Moreno's 52nd birthday on Oct. 24.

Manila District 3 councilor Jefferson Lau, Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII) president Victor Lim and other community leaders and members joined the celebration.



TaiwanLink Fair 2026 draws about 2,000 participants to Glorietta Activity Center on Oct. 24 to 25, showcasing Taiwanese brands and Taiwan-Philippines business cooperation.

Trade fair connects Taipei businesses with Filipino consumers

TAIWANLINK Fair 2026 ended its two-day run at Glorietta Activity Center in Makati on Oct. 25, bringing Taiwanese businesses and Filipino consumers together and highlighting opportunities for cooperation between Taiwan and the Philippines.

Organized by the Taiwan Association Inc. (TAP), the fair featured product exhibits, business exchanges, a documentary screening, agricultural cooperation presentations and interactive activities. Taiwanese and Taiwan-affiliated brands from food and beverage, consumer goods, technology and business services took part.

About 2,000 people joined QR code activities, and hourly lucky draws drew 636 entries.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines (TECO) Representative Wallace Minn-Gan Chow, Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) directors Cherbett Karen Maralit and Wilson Tecson, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) assistant secretary Kenneth Yap, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) director Zeus Eborra and Philippine Economic Zone Authority

(PEZA) representatives Philip Teomar Radin, Jalyssa Kalinina Abad and Jackie Lou Ribot attended the opening ceremony.

Taiwan was represented by Chung Ming-Chuan of the Ministry of Agriculture, Taiwan Trade Center Manila director Yang Wan-Yu and Dr. Hsieh Chung-An of the Commerce Development Research Institute (CDRI).

TAP president Jia Hsieh described TaiwanLink in her opening address as more than a traditional trade fair. The initiative aims to strengthen ties between Taiwan and the Philippines through business, investment, innovation and friendship.

Hsieh said Taiwanese companies contribute not only quality products but also investment, jobs, technology and economic opportunities. Many have operated in the Philippines for years, supporting local industries and communities. Through TaiwanLink, TAP hopes to raise awareness of these businesses and their contributions among a broader Filipino audience.

By connecting exhibitors directly with consumers, the fair gave companies a chance to build brand awareness, showcase their offerings and explore potential partnerships.

A screening of "A Chip Odyssey" introduced participants to Taiwan's semiconductor industry, tracing its path from early technological development to a key role in the global semiconductor supply chain.

The Taiwan Technical Mission, with support from Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund, also presented agricultural initiatives in the Philippines, including work to share expertise and support Filipino farmers.

A "Meet the Owner" session featured Charlie Hsieh of Pet Idea, Louis Cheng of Green E and Garfield Tseng of Elassion. Other activities included Taiwan trivia, brand presentations, Passport Missions and lucky draws. A shopping promotion gave eligible participants a chance to win Manila-Taipei round-trip tickets from China Airlines, EVA Air and STARLUX Airlines.

TAP said it chose Glorietta to bring Taiwanese brands into a major shopping destination and make them accessible to more Filipino consumers. The association hopes TaiwanLink will become a continuing platform for Taiwan-Philippines exchange and collaboration. **Julie Ann Lope**

Philippine Ling Nam Athletic Foundation marks 70th anniversary

THE Philippine Ling Nam Athletic Foundation celebrated its 70th founding anniversary and the 24th anniversary of its Fire and Rescue Volunteer Unit, and inducted its 2026-2028 board of officers on Oct. 18 at Century Seafood Restaurant in Manila.

Chinese Filipino Business Club Inc. (CFBCI) president Gerald Chan served as keynote speaker. Chinese Embassy Minister-Counselor and Consul General Wang Wei also attended and delivered a speech.

Philippine Ling Nam Athletic Foundation chairman Vicente Co reflected on the organization's seven decades of service.

He said the foundation, one of the country's pioneering martial arts institutions, built its heritage through generations of people who gave their time, courage and passion to serve the community. Co called on the community to work together to take the foundation's endeavors to greater heights.

Fire and Rescue Volunteer Unit president William Rogando,



The Philippine Ling Nam Athletic Foundation marks its 70th anniversary and the 24th anniversary of its Fire and Rescue Volunteer Unit.

who takes office with the new board, acknowledged the heavy responsibility of his new role. He urged team members to strengthen unity, raise public awareness of fire safety and bolster local emergency response capabilities, and pledged to stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow volunteers to safeguard the community.

Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce & Industry Inc. (FFCCCII) vice president Jose Go commended the organization's

contributions and highlighted Ling Nam's active presence in Filipino-Chinese community affairs.

He said its Fire and Rescue Volunteer Unit works alongside nearly 200 Filipino-Chinese volunteer fire brigades across the country.

Go said the volunteers, who have trained in Taiwan on multiple occasions, have earned deep respect from mainstream society and strengthened bonds between the Chinese-Filipino community and the broader public. **Michael Wong Ho**

Business summit boosts regional trade

By Michael Wong Ho

THE Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII) hosted the 2nd ASEAN-Chinese Business Leaders Summit and Business Forum 2026 on Oct. 18 and 19 at the Marriott Grand Ballroom in Pasay City.

trade and tourism. He encouraged businesses to expand commercial ties across national borders, make ASEAN a priority investment partner and ensure cooperation benefits a broader population.

Other participants included ASEAN Business Advisory Council chairman Jose Ma. Concepcion III, Agriculture



The FFCCCII hosts the 2nd ASEAN-Chinese Business Leaders Summit and Business Forum 2026 in Pasay City, drawing regional business leaders and officials to discuss trade, investment and cooperation. Source: FFCCCII Facebook page

The event brought together business leaders, entrepreneurs and political and commercial representatives from across ASEAN. Under the theme "Leading ASEAN Forward: Innovation, Resilience, and Regional Collaboration," the forum explored ways to deepen regional trade, expand investment, boost tourism and strengthen cross-border business ties to turn regional cooperation into tangible economic outcomes.

FFCCCII president Victor Lim said Chinese business communities across ASEAN share deep-rooted connections. He highlighted the role of chambers of commerce in bridging businesses and communities, fostering dialogue and advancing commercial collaboration. Lim urged enterprises to build on their strengths through innovation, regional cooperation and cross-border partnerships to support ASEAN's development.

Senate President Sherwin Gatchalian thanked the FFCCCII for convening the forum, saying it helps connect enterprises through interpersonal exchanges and promotes

Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary for Data Analysis and Knowledge Management Verna Esmeralda Buenasuceso, Securities and Exchange Commission chairperson Rogelio Quevedo and Jollibee Group Global president and CEO Ernesto Tan Mantiong.

A panel titled "Building Tomorrow Together: The Future of ASEAN Business Partnerships" brought together representatives from Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar and the Philippines.

The panelists were Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) vice president Dato Jeffrey Lai Jiun Jye, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) International Affairs Committee chairman Chia Kim Huat, Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce Vice President Kyaw Wing Aung, ASEAN Business Advisory Council Philippines Council member George Barcelon and Profood chairman and president Justin Uy.

PH explores coffee trade with Jiangmen

THE Philippine Consulate General in Guangzhou, represented by Consul Stephanie Alexis Cruz, joined the 2026 ASEAN Cultural Day in Jiangmen, Guangdong Province, to explore coffee industry partnerships and strengthen trade and cooperation with the city.

"We see opportunities to connect Philippine coffee producers and businesses with Jiangmen's expertise in processing and equipment manufacturing, while introducing Philippine specialty coffee to the Chinese market," Cruz said.

The Jiangmen Foreign Affairs Bureau organized the event, which brought together ASEAN diplomatic and business representatives for industry discussions, enterprise visits and cultural tours.

The delegation met Jiangmen officials led by Liang Hongwu, a Standing Committee member of the CPC Jiangmen Municipal Committee. Discussions focused on building cooperation around Jiangmen's industrial capabilities and longstanding ties with Southeast Asia.

The delegation visited Guangdong Cino Technology Co., Ltd., the Coffee Trade Exhibition Hall and Seng Pan Coffee Company. The visits highlighted opportunities in coffee processing, equipment sourcing, technology exchange and brand development.

Cruz presented the Philippines' coffee heritage and proposed closer links among Philippine producers, processing technology providers and market distributors.

Business discussions also covered agricultural trade, including interest in sourcing coconut shells from the Philippines.

The delegation also visited Birds' Paradise National Wetland Park and the Chenpi Museum to explore opportunities for tourism and cultural exchange.

The visit forms part of the consulate general's economic diplomacy initiatives to promote Philippine products, facilitate business partnerships and expand trade opportunities in Southern China.

Julie Ann Lope



Philippine Consul Stephanie Alexis Cruz joins ASEAN Cultural Day in Jiangmen to explore coffee partnerships and expand trade with Southern China.



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE CONSTITUTION
AND APPOINTMENT OF
THE ELECTORAL
BOARDS AND OTHER
POLL WORKERS, AND ON
THE CASTING AND
COUNTING OF VOTES IN
CONNECTION WITH THE
NOVEMBER 28, 2026
SPECIAL ELECTION FOR
MEMBER, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES,
LONE LEGISLATIVE
DISTRICT OF THE
PROVINCE OF BATANES.

GARCIA, George Erwin M.,
FEROLINO, Aimee P.,
BULAY, Rey E.,
MACEDA, Ernesto Ferdinand P., Jr.,
CELIS, Nelson J.,
TANGARO-CASINGAL, Maria Norina S.
PIPO, Noli R.,

Chairman
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

Promulgated: October 27, 2026

RESOLUTION NO. 11291

WHEREAS, on September 25, 2026, the Commission on Elections (Commission) promulgated Resolution No. 11276 entitled "CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES AND PERIODS OF CERTAIN PROHIBITED ACTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES."

NOW THEREFORE, the Commission, by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, the Omnibus Election Code, and other election laws, RESOLVED, as it hereby RESOLVES, to promulgate the following General Instructions for the constitution and appointment of Electoral Boards (EBs) and other poll workers, and on the casting and counting of votes in connection with the November 28, 2026 Special Election for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes.

ARTICLE I
CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL BOARDS (EBs),
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPERVISOR OFFICIALS (DESOs), AND DESO
SUPPORT STAFF (DESO SS)

SECTION 1. Scope. - This Article shall apply to the constitution, composition, and appointment of the Electoral Boards (EBs), Department of Education Election Supervisor Officials (DESOs), and DESO Support Staff.

SEC. 2. Electoral Board (EB). - There shall be an Electoral Board (EB) for every clustered precinct.

SEC. 3. Authority to Constitute and Appoint the Members of the EB. - The Commission, through the Election Officer (EO), shall constitute and appoint, not later than October 14, 2026, the EB for every clustered precinct in the Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes, using the prescribed form (CEF No.5 and CEF No. 5-A - copies of Appointment and Oath) (Annex A).

For the purpose of this November 28, 2026 Special Election, no Support Staff for the Electoral Board shall be appointed.

CEF No. 5 and CEF No. 5-A shall be distributed as follows:

- a. The first (1st) and second (2nd) copies shall be retained by the EO. One (1) copy shall be for filing and the other shall be attached to the payroll for the payment of honorarium of the EB; and
- b. The third (3rd) copy shall be issued to the Chairperson and/other Members of the concerned EB.

SEC. 4. Composition of the EB. - The EB shall be composed of the Chairperson, Poll Clerk, and Third Member.

As far as practicable and in order to ensure the protection of women EB members, they may not be assigned in areas with security concerns, far-flung barangays, or areas which are likely to cause gender-based violence or to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm.

SEC. 5. Right of Preference. - In the appointment of the Members of the EB, the EO shall give preference to public school teachers who are qualified, willing, and available to render election service.

For this purpose, the highest DepEd official in the municipality shall recommend and submit to the EO a certified list of public-school teachers and substitutes who are qualified, willing, and available to render election-related service within five (5) calendar days upon request by the EO, based on the Project of Precincts (POPs). The EO shall give preference to those with permanent appointments and those who served in previous elections based on the prescribed form (see Annexes "B" and "B-1").The request shall be accompanied by a copy of the POP.

The number of substitutes shall be twenty percent (20%) of the total number of members of the EB to be appointed (e.g. 20 clustered precinct x 3 = 60 x 20% = 12, hence, 12 substitutes).

In the preparation of such list, the highest DepEd official shall exercise due diligence to ensure that the persons appearing in the said list are indeed public-school teachers who are qualified, willing, and available to serve as members of the EB.

Within three (3) calendar days from receipt of the recommendatory list, the EO shall immediately conduct a verification on the qualifications of the persons appearing in the said list based on the qualifications set forth in the immediately succeeding section.

Public school teachers not included in the list who are qualified, willing, and available, may apply directly to the EO.

SEC. 6. Qualifications of Members of the Electoral Board. - No person shall be appointed as a member of the EB, whether regular, temporary, or as a substitute, unless such person possesses the following qualifications:

- a. A registered voter in the municipality comprising the Lone Legislative District of Batanes where he/she shall serve;
- b. Has good moral character and irreproachable reputation;
- c. Of known integrity and competence;
- d. Has never been convicted of any election offense or of any crime punishable by more than six (6) months of imprisonment, or has no pending Information for any election offense filed against him/her; and
- e. Able to speak and write Filipino, English, or the local dialect.

SEC. 7. Disqualification of Members of the EB. - No person shall be appointed as a member of the EB if said person is related within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity, to any member of the same EB, to any candidate to be voted in the polling place of assignment, or to the said candidate's spouse.

SEC. 8. Notice of Disqualification. - The Chairperson or any Member of the EB who is disqualified to serve for any reason shall immediately notify, in writing, the EO concerned.

SEC. 9. Posting of the List of the Constituted Members of the EBs. - A day after the constitution of the EBs, the list of the constituted members and substitutes shall be posted for five (5) calendar days on the bulletin boards in the Office of the Election Officer (OEO), and in the municipal hall.

SEC. 10. Opposition to the Constituted Members of the EBs. - Within three (3) calendar days from the posting of the list of constituted members of the EBs, any interested party may file a written opposition under oath against any appointed member of the EBs at the OEO.

In case an opposition is filed, the EO shall observe the following procedures:

- 1. Receive the written opposition. No opposition shall be acted upon by the EO, unless there is proof that a copy of the opposition has been furnished to the contested member;
- 2. Issue a notice to the contested member to answer the opposition. A written answer under oath shall be filed within two (2) calendar days from receipt by the contested member of such notice. No answer shall be considered by the EO, unless there is proof that a copy of said answer has been furnished to the opposing party;
- 3. With or without an answer, issue a notice stating the date, time, and place of the evaluation of the opposition. The notice shall be personally delivered to the known addresses of the parties;
- 4. Within a period of seven (7) calendar days from the receipt of the opposition, the EO shall resolve the opposition in writing stating the reason/s for the decision. The decision shall be final and non-appealable; and
- 5. Copies of the decision shall be furnished to the parties and concerned DepEd official.

Non-appearance of the parties shall not be a ground for the dismissal of the opposition or disqualification of the contested member, nor shall effectively bar the EO from conducting further investigation on the qualification of the contested member.

SEC. 11. Appointment of public-school teachers as substitutes. - In case of disqualification of a member of the EB, the EO shall appoint a substitute who is qualified, willing, and available. If the designation of a public-school teacher as substitute is no longer feasible, the other qualified substitutes as enumerated in the succeeding rule may be appointed.

SEC. 12. Appointment of qualified substitutes. - In case there are not enough public-school teachers who are qualified, willing, and available, other qualified substitutes may be appointed by the Commission, through the EO, in either of the following grounds:

- a. There is a lack of public-school teachers to be constituted as members of the EB based on the certified list submitted by the highest DepEd official in the municipality to the EO vis-à-vis the number of clustered precincts in the barangay or municipality, as the case may be; or
- b. One or more of the public-school teachers in the certified list has or have been disqualified by the EO and there are no other public-school teachers in the locality who are qualified, willing, and available to be appointed as substitute/s.

Substitutes shall be on call on election day. The EO shall cause the deployment of a substitute in case any member of the EB fails to report in their assigned polling place. Where there is a need to fill a temporary vacancy, the members of the EB who are present, may appoint a qualified non-partisan registered voter who shall serve until the regular or substitute member appears; provided, that:

- a. There is a considerable distance between the residence of the substitute and the location of the polling place;
- b. There is lack or difficulty of means of transportation; or
- c. There is inability of the EB to inform the EO of the non-appearance of any of the members.

SEC. 13. Order of Preference. - In case any of the circumstances mentioned in the preceding section exists, the EO may appoint the following persons based on their order of preference, who shall likewise be qualified, willing, and available to render election-related service, to wit:

- a) Private school teachers, giving preference to:
 - a.1. Those employed in private schools being utilized by the Commission as voting centers. If the voting center is a public building, private school teachers whose place of employment is within the vicinity may be appointed as members of the EB in that particular area.
 - a.2. Those teaching in high school or college level, holding regular positions who have previously served as member of the EB.
- b) National government employees;
 - b.1. DepEd non-teaching personnel; and
 - b.2. Other national government officials and employees holding regular or permanent positions, excluding uniformed personnel of the Department of National Defense (DND), all its attached agencies, and the Philippine National Police (PNP), except in cases provided in SEC. 27 hereof.
- c) Members of the citizens' arms of other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-government Organizations (NGOs) duly accredited by the Commission; and
- d) Any registered voter of known integrity and competence who is not connected with any candidate or political party:
 - d.1. Connection with any candidate shall mean:
 - d.1.1. Relationship within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity and affinity, including the spouse of the candidate;
 - d.1.2. supporter;
 - d.1.3. contributor/donor; or
 - d.1.4. other analogous cases.
 - d.2. Connection with any political party shall mean:
 - d.2.1. members or officials of the political party and their spouses and members of the family within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity and affinity;
 - d.2.2. contributor/donor;
 - d.2.3. supporter; or
 - d.2.4. other analogous cases.

For this purpose, the following persons shall recommend and submit a certified list of their respective personnel, who are qualified, willing, and available to render election-related service, based on the POP to the EO within five (5) calendar days upon request by the EO, to wit:

- a. The highest official of the private school in the municipality, as the case may be, in case of letter (a) above. In case there are two (2) or more private schools in the municipality, the EO shall send a request simultaneously (See Annex "C");
- b. The DepEd official in case of letter b.1. above (See Annex "D");
- c. The highest official of other national government agencies in the city, in case of letter b.2. above, if any;
- d. The highest officer authorized as the representative of the local chapter of citizens' arms or other CSOs and NGOs duly accredited by the Commission in the city, in case of letter c above. In case there are two (2) or more organizations in the city, the EO shall send the request simultaneously (See Annex "E"); and
- e. In cases of letters a and d, the EO shall observe the policy on first-come, first-serve basis.

The recommendation by the heads of the agencies shall serve as an authority for the employees who shall render election-related service to be on official business for purposes of attending trainings or seminars relative to their appointments as members of the EB.

In the preparation of the recommendatory list, the aforementioned officials shall exercise due diligence to ensure that the persons appearing therein are indeed qualified, willing, and available to render election-related service.

Private school teachers, national government employees, DepEd non-teaching personnel, other national government officials, and employees holding regular or permanent positions, excluding uniformed personnel of the Department of National Defense (DND) and all its attached agencies, and members of the citizens' arms, or other CSOs, and NGOs duly accredited by the Commission not included in the lists who are qualified, willing, and available, may apply directly to the EO.

Further, the Commission shall provide, free of charge, an application form, which shall be made available at the OEO for any registered voter who intends to be appointed as a member of the EB. The Information Technology Department (ITD) of the Commission shall ensure that the said form may be downloaded from its official website for easy access thereto.

SEC. 14. Posting of Notice of Date, Time, and Place of Filing of Application of Qualified Substitutes. - During the five (5)-calendar day period within which the highest DepEd official in the municipality shall recommend and submit to the EO a certified list of public-school teachers and substitutes who are qualified, willing, and available to render election-related service, applications for qualified substitutes falling under SEC. 13 (d) hereof may be filed at the OEO. At least three (3) calendar days before the start of the period for the filing of applications, the notice of the date, time, and place of filing shall be posted on the bulletin boards of the OEO and the municipal hall.

SEC. 15. Posting of the List of Applicants and Filing of Opposition. - Upon receipt of the applications mentioned in Section 14 above and after the last day of the period for filing of applications, the EO shall observe the procedures mentioned in Sections 9 and 10 hereof.

SEC. 16. Authority to Administer Oath. - The EO shall have the power to administer oath, free of charge, in all cases where said oath is required.

SEC. 17. Oath of the Chairperson and Members of the Electoral Board. - Before assuming office, the Chairperson or members of the EB shall take and sign an oath using CEF No. 5-A (Annex "A") before an officer authorized to administer oath or, in the absence of said officer, before any other member of the EB present, or in case no one is present, before any voter who is of known integrity and competence in the locality.

SEC. 18. Powers and Functions of the EB. - In addition to the powers and functions prescribed by law or by the rules and regulations issued by the Commission, the EB shall:

- a) Verify the identity of a voter using the EDCVL;
- b) Conduct the voting in the voting center and administer the counting of votes;
- c) Act as deputies of the Commission in the supervision and control of the conduct of elections in the polling place;
- d) Maintain order within the polling place and to keep an open and unobstructed access thereto;
- e) Prohibit the use of cellular phones, cameras, or any recording device by the voters during voting; and
- f) Enforce obedience to its or the Commission's lawful orders.

If any person refuses to obey the lawful orders of the EB or of the Commission or conducts himself/herself in a disorderly manner in the presence of the former, or within its hearing and thereby interrupts or disturbs its proceedings, the EB may issue an order in writing directing any peace officer to take such person into custody until the adjournment of the meeting, but in no case shall such order be executed as to prevent such person from voting.

In the absence of any peace officer, such order may be implemented by any other competent and able-bodied person deputized by the EB in writing. A copy of such written order shall be attached to the Minutes.

- g) Furnish copies of the Certificate of Votes upon request of the watchers; and
- h) Perform such other functions prescribed by law or by the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission.

SEC. 19. Voting Privilege of the Members of the EB. - Members of the EB may vote in the voting center where they are assigned on election day, provided that:

- a) They are registered voters of the municipality; and

- b) They shall add their names and precinct numbers and the place where they are actually registered in the EDCVL, and note such fact in the Minutes.

Any member of the EB, who is a registered voter of another barangay within the same municipality, may vote in the polling place where they are actually registered, provided that:

- a. The voting in their place of assignment is light;
- b. Their absence shall not be more than thirty minutes;
- c. The members of the EB shall schedule the voting so that only one (1) member shall leave at any given time;
- d. They must be given priority in voting; and
- e. The fact that they exercised their voting privilege shall be noted in the Minutes.

SEC. 20. Meetings of the EB. - The meetings of the EB shall be public and held only in the voting center authorized by the Commission.

The EB shall act through its Chairperson and, without delay, decide by majority vote all questions that may arise in the performance of its duties.

SEC. 21. Prohibition on Political Activities. - No member of the EB shall engage in any partisan political activity or take part in the election, except to vote and discharge his/her duties as such.

SEC. 22. Temporary Vacancies in the EB. - If at the time of the meeting of the EB, any member is absent or a position in the EB is still vacant, the members present shall call upon the substitute of the absent member to perform the duties of the latter. In case such substitute cannot be found, the members present shall appoint any qualified non-partisan registered voter of the voting center to temporarily fill said vacancy until the absent member appears or the vacancy is filled. In case there are two (2) or more members present, they shall act jointly.

SEC. 23. Arrest of Absent Member. - The members of the EB present may order the arrest of any member or substitute thereof, who, in the member's or members' judgment, is absent with the intention of obstructing the performance of the duties of the EB.

SEC. 24. Relief and Substitution of the Members of the EB. - The members of the EB shall not be relieved unless disqualified as provided in this Article.

SEC. 25. DESO and DESO Support Staff: Composition, Qualifications, and Functions. - Within the prescribed period for constituting and appointing the EB, the EO shall appoint one (1) DESO and one (1) DESO Support Staff for each voting center.

The DESO and his/her Support Staff need not be registered voters of the municipality but must possess all the other qualifications and none of the disqualifications for appointment to the EB.

The DESO, in coordination with the EO, shall:

- a. Plan, organize, lay-out, and supervise the setting up of a Voters' Assistance Desk (VAD) at the voting center to assist voters in locating their voting centers or precinct assignments.
- b. Supervise the strategic posting of the layout of the voting center indicating/showing the location of the voting centers of the clustered precincts, as well as the posting of other signages, which shall guide the voters in the voting process.
- c. Plan, organize, and supervise the crowd management at the ingress and egress areas of the voting centers;
- d. Ensure that the facilities of the voting center will not be damaged during the electoral process;
- e. Maintain a list of PNP and AFP personnel assigned in the voting center for efficient coordination;
- f. Serve as the contact and point person of the EO in the voting center;
- g. Supervise the Support Staff in the exercise of their duties and functions as provided in the succeeding sections hereof;
- h. Perform such other functions prescribed by law or by the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission.

SEC. 26. Reportorial Requirements. - The EO shall, within three (3) calendar days from the constitution and appointment of the (a) members of EB, (b) DESO and their Support Staff, submit to the ORED the following:

- a. List containing the names of the appointed members of the EB, their designations and an indication whether they are public school teachers or private school teachers or civil service employees or private citizens, arranged by precinct; and
- b. List containing the names of the appointed DESO and their Support Staff, with an indication whether they are public school teachers or private school teachers or civil service employees or private citizens, arranged by voting center.

The ORED shall consolidate then submit immediately the lists to the FSD and EBAD through the fastest possible means. Soft copies in PDF format are likewise to be submitted through email at finance@comelec.gov.ph and ebad@comelec.gov.ph.

SEC. 27. Deputation of Members of the PNP. - Uniformed personnel of the PNP who have undergone training may be deputized as a Member of the EB, in the following instances:

A. In case the Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes, or any area/part thereof, is classified under RED category or declared under COMELEC Control, the Regional Election Director (RED) of Region II, as Head of the Regional Joint Security Coordinating Council (RJSCC), shall:

- 1. Coordinate with the PNP Regional Director on the briefing of PNP personnel as EB members;
- 2. Determine the exact number of PNP personnel needed, where to source them out, venue of the briefing and other relevant matters;
- 3. Provide the lecturer and the briefing materials;
- 4. Prepare the contingency deployment plan for the utilization of PNP personnel as EB members; and
- 5. Submit the corresponding report to the Executive Director of the Commission.

B. In case there is/are request/s for utilization of PNP personnel:

- 1. The EO shall forward any request to the RJSCC for evaluation;
- 2. The RJSCC shall submit the same to the Executive Director for approval/disapproval; and
- 3. Upon approval thereof, the RED shall follow the protocol provided in letter (A) above.

C. In areas with no qualified, willing, and available public-school teachers to render election-related service and that the hierarchy of the order of preference provided in the "Election Service Reform Act" (ESRA) has been exhausted based on the certification issued by concerned officials mentioned in the Order of Preference:

- 1. The EO shall submit a report to the RJSCC, with attached certification that there are no other qualified, willing, and available persons to render election-related service in the city as issued by the above-mentioned officials;
- 2. The RJSCC shall transmit the same to the Executive Director for approval/disapproval; and
- 3. Upon approval thereof, the RED shall follow the protocol provided in letter (A) above.

The required CERTIFICATION, that there are no other qualified, willing, and available persons to render election-related service in the concerned municipality shall be issued by the following:

- a. The highest DepEd official for both public school teachers and DepEd non-teaching personnel;
- b. The highest official/s of the private school/s;
- c. The highest official/s of other national government agencies; and
- d. The highest officer/s or authorized representative/s of the local chapter of the citizens' arms or other CSOs and NGOs duly accredited by the Commission.

D. In the event that the EBs failed to report during the deployment of forms and supplies in the early morning of Election Day:

- 1. The EO shall report the matter to the RJSCC through the RED.
- 2. The RJSCC shall authorize the deployment of PNP who were trained as standby EBs, referred to in the preceding paragraph, and submit a report thereon to the Executive Director.

SEC. 28. Entitlement of Honoraria, Allowances, Service Credits, and Other Benefits. - Persons rendering election-related service shall be entitled to the following:

- a. Compensation Composed of Honoraria and Allowances. - The Chairperson and members of the EB, the DESO, and DESO Support Staff shall be entitled to compensation depending on their designation, which is inclusive of honoraria, travel, communication, and meal allowances:

Designation	Total Compensation (Gross Amount)
Chairperson of the EB	P 12,000.00
Member of the EB	P 11,000.00
DESO	P 10,000.00
DESO Support Staff	P 5,500.00

- b. Service Credit. - A fixed service credit of ten (10) calendar days shall accrue to all government officials and employees serving as EB, DESO, and DESO Support Staff.

SEC. 29. Period of Payment. - The honoraria and allowances mentioned in the immediately preceding section shall be paid within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the special election.

SEC. 30. Delay in the Payment of Honoraria and Allowances; Effect. - Any person who makes or causes delay in the payment of honoraria and allowances due to persons who rendered election-related service beyond fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the special election shall be held liable for an election offense.

SEC. 31. Other Benefits. - Persons rendering election-related service shall be entitled to the following:

- a. Death Benefits - The amount of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) shall be awarded to the beneficiaries of persons who died due to election-related risk.
- b. Medical Assistance- An amount not exceeding Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000.00) shall be awarded to the person who rendered election-related service and suffered election-related injury or illness.

SEC. 32. Legal Indemnification Package. - An equitable legal indemnification package for persons who rendered election-related service and have been a party in any administrative, civil, or criminal action, suit, or proceeding, by reason of or on the occasion of the performance of their functions or duties as such is hereby established in the form of:

- a. Legal assistance;
- b. Lawyer's fees;
- c. Indemnification for legal costs and expenses reasonably incurred; and
- d. Other forms of legal protection.

The legal indemnification shall not cover any action or suit initiated by the claimant in the latter's personal capacity or on behalf of the Commission, unless such action, proceeding, or claim was authorized by the Commission.

SEC. 33. Funds for Legal Indemnification Package. - The amount of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) as legal indemnification package shall be made available to each claimant.

SEC. 34. Committee on Claims and Assessment. - Claims for other benefits and legal indemnification package shall be filed with the Committee on Claims and Assessment (CCA) through the EO. The CCA shall be composed mainly of the ODEDO, Law Department, Personnel Department, and FSD.

SEC. 35. Legal Assistance. - A person who rendered election-related service is hereby authorized to engage the services of a government or private lawyer immediately upon receipt of a notice that a civil or criminal action, suit, or administrative proceeding relating to any election service has been filed against said person.

SEC. 36. Lawyer's Fees. - In the engagement of the services of a government lawyer, no claims for lawyer's fees shall be awarded.

Should the claimant prefer to engage the services of a private lawyer, the Commission, upon the recommendation of the CCA of the concerned national government agency, shall bear the reasonable lawyer's fees of the counsel of choice, which, in no case shall exceed the maximum limit of the legal indemnification package herein provided, otherwise, the former shall bear the excess.

In the event that private lawyers accept the case "pro bono," no claims for lawyer's fees shall be awarded.

SEC. 37. Legal Costs and other Reasonable Expenses. - Legal costs shall constitute the expenses directly incurred by reason of the election-related service case, such as but not limited to:

- a. filing fees, if applicable;
- b. mailing;
- c. notarial fees; and
- d. gathering of and photocopy of evidence.

A reasonable amount from the legal indemnification package shall be allocated by the Commission for the payment of the actual expense incurred for legal cost and other reasonable expenses.

SEC. 38. Other Forms of Legal Protection. - The claimant may avail of any legal protection and remedies available under existing laws by filing a request for legal protection with the CCA.

If upon evaluation, the CCA finds the request to be meritorious due to existing or imminent threat, violence, harassment, or intimidation against the claimant or any immediate member of the claimant's family, it shall recommend to the Commission *En Banc* the deputation of law enforcement agencies to provide security to the claimant and/or claimant's immediate family member within a specified period of time until such time that the condition for the protection no longer exists.

SEC. 39. Entitlement to Legal Indemnification Package.- The claimant shall be allowed reimbursement for reasonable legal expenses incurred if found not guilty of an election offense or exonerated from civil, criminal, or administrative case filed against him/her, in relation to the election-related service, subject to usual accounting and auditing rules and regulations of the COA.

ARTICLE II
WATCHERS

SEC. 40. Official watchers of candidates, political parties, and other groups. - Each candidate, political party or coalition of political parties fielding a candidate for the special election, as well as duly accredited citizens' arms may appoint two (2) watchers, to serve alternately, in every polling place.

Other civil, professional, business, service, youth, and any other similar organizations, with prior authority of the Commission, shall be entitled collectively to appoint one (1) watcher in every polling place.

If, due to limited space, all watchers cannot be accommodated in the polling place, preference shall be given to the watchers of the dominant majority and dominant minority parties as determined by the Commission and the watcher of the citizens' arm, with the latter being given preferential position closest to the EB. In case there are two (2) or more citizens' arm, preference shall be given to the one authorized by the Commission to conduct an unofficial count.

SEC. 41. Qualifications of watchers. - No person shall be appointed as a watcher unless he or she:

- a) Is a registered voter of the municipality comprising the precinct where he is assigned;
- b) Has good reputation;
- c) Has not been convicted by final judgment of any election offense or of any other crime;
- d) Knows how to read and write Filipino, English, or of the prevailing local dialect; and
- e) Is not related within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to the chairperson or to any other member of the EB in the polling place where he or she seeks appointment as watcher.

SEC. 42. Rights and duties of watchers. - Upon entering the polling place, the watchers shall deliver to the chairperson their appointments as watchers, and their names shall forthwith be recorded in the Minutes with a notation under their signatures that they are not disqualified to serve as such under the immediately preceding Section. The appointments of the watchers shall bear the signature of the candidate or duly authorized representative of the party, organization, or coalition that appointed them. For this purpose, independent candidates, registered parties, organizations, or coalitions authorized by the Commission to appoint watchers shall provide the EO with the names and signatures of their representatives authorized to appoint watchers in the municipality at least fifteen (15) days before the election day.

The watchers shall have the right to:

- a) Witness and be informed of the proceedings of the EB.
- b) Take note of what they may see or hear;
- c) Take photographs of the proceedings and incidents, if any, during the voting and counting of votes, as well as the election returns and the ballot boxes after the counting of votes;
- d) File a protest against any irregularity or violation of law which they believe may have been committed by the EB or by any of its members or by any person; and
- e) Obtain from the EB a certificate as to the filing of such protest and the resolution thereof.

Watchers shall not speak to any member of the EB, or to any voter, or among themselves, in such a manner as would disturb the proceedings of the EB.

The watchers representing the dominant majority and dominant minority parties and the watcher of the citizens' arm shall, if available, affix their signatures and thumbmarks in the election returns.

For purposes of the November 28, 2026 Special Election, the dominant majority and dominant minority parties shall be those who were declared as such during the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections.

ARTICLE III
ELECTION FORMS AND SUPPLIES

SEC. 43. Election forms, documents, and supplies. - Except when authorized to do so earlier by the Commission, the EB shall get the forms, documents, and supplies early in the morning of election day.

A. FROM THE MUNICIPAL TREASURER

CEF NO.	FORMS AND SUPPLIES	RATE OF DISTRIBUTION	
3	Poster Indicating the Clustered Precinct Numbers	1	Piece

6	Official Ballots	1	Piece per voter
9	Election Returns for Member, House of Representatives	1	set of 7 copies
10	Tally Sheet	1	sheet
11	Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes	1	set of 2 copies
12	Paper Seals	25	pieces
13	Certificate of Votes	10	pieces
14	Certificate of Receipt of Official Ballots, Other Forms and Supplies by EB	3	pieces
27	Official Receipt of Election Returns	10	pieces

ENVELOPES FOR VOTING AND COUNTING

15, 16, 16-A, 16-B, 16-C, 16-D & 28	For Counted Official Ballots, Excess, Marked, Spoiled, Torn Half of Unused Official Ballots, Other Half of Torn Unused Official Ballots, & Official Ballots	7	pieces
17, 17-B, 17-C, 17-D, 17-E, 17-F, 17-G	For Election Returns	1	set of 7 pieces
18 & 18-A	For Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes	1	set of 2 pieces
19	For Key of Ballot Box	1	piece

OTHER FORMS

30/31	Temporary Appointment of Chairperson/Poll Clerk/Third Member/Support Staff	10	pieces
35	Certificate of Challenge or Protest and		pieces

	Decision of the EB	10	
39	Oath of Voter Challenge for Illegal Acts	10	pieces
40	Oath of Identification of Challenged Voter	10	pieces
	Election Watcher's ID in Polling Place	2	pieces
	COMELEC Pass	2	pieces
	General Instructions for Electoral Board	3	copies/EB

SUPPLIES

	Ballpen	12	pieces
	Marking Pen	2	pieces
	Rubber Band	8	pieces
	Bond Paper Long	30	pieces
	Carbon Paper	5	sheets
	Plastic Security Seal for the Ballot Box	3	pieces
	Thumbprint/ Fingerprint Taker	1	piece
	Indelible Stain Ink	2	bottles
	Ballot Secrecy Folders	12	pieces
	Padlock with keys	1	piece
	Packaging Tape (brown)	1	roll
	Ballot Box	1	box

B. FROM THE ELECTION OFFICER

- a. One (1) copy of the Posted Computerized Voters List (PCVL) based on the latest Election Registration Board (ERB) hearing on June 1, 2026 to be used for posting at or near the door of the polling place on election day;
- b. One (1) copy of Election Day Computerized Voters List (EDCVL)/List of Voters with Voting Record) based on the latest ERB hearing on June 1, 2026; and
- c. Copies of Appointment and Oath of Office of the EB (CEF Nos. 5 & 5A).

The Information Technology Department (ITD) shall print one (1) copy of the PCVL and one (1) copy of the EDCVL, and shall all be duly certified by the ERB.

The poll clerk shall have custody of the EDCVL and the third member shall have custody of the PCVL.

The EB shall carefully check the different election forms, documents, and supplies, and the quantity actually received. The EB shall sign a Certificate of Receipt (CEF No. 14) in three (3) copies, the original of which shall be delivered to the Municipal Treasurer, who shall transmit the same to the ERSD, Comelec, Manila, immediately after Election Day.

SEC. 44. Official Ballot. - The official ballot shall be of uniform size and color, printed on security paper with distinctive, clear, and legible watermarks that will readily distinguish the ballot paper from ordinary paper.

It shall contain a stub and detachable coupon, both of which shall bear the same serial number of the ballot, with space for the thumbmark of the voter on the detachable coupon.

It shall bear the coat-of-arms of the Republic of the Philippines, the words "Official Ballot," "Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes", the date of the special election and the following notice in English:

"Fill out this ballot secretly using a ballot secrecy folder. Do not put any distinctive mark on any part of this ballot."

It shall contain the appropriate space for the position of Member, House of Representatives for the Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes, which the voter will fill out by writing the name of the candidate of his or her choice.

SEC. 45. Verification of forms, documents, and supplies before the Municipal Treasurer. - Before the election day, the Municipal Treasurer shall notify the EBs that the forms, documents, and supplies have been delivered to the Municipal Treasurer's Office and are ready for verification for completeness. For this purpose, a duly designated member of the EB shall verify the forms, documents, and supplies assigned to their polling places.

On election day, the EBs shall obtain from the EO/Municipal Treasurer the forms, documents, and supplies early in the morning of Election Day, except when authorized to do so earlier by the Commission, through the Regional Election Director (RED) of Region II.

SEC. 46. Request for early delivery. - Approval of any request for early delivery of election forms, documents, and supplies by the RED of Region II shall be governed by the following guidelines:

- a) That there is considerable distance between the Office of the EO/Municipal Treasurer and the location of the polling place;
- b) That there is lack or difficulty of means of transportation in the area;
- c) That the total number of precincts in the municipality is such that if the delivery of the official ballots, ERs, other election forms and paraphernalia is done early in the morning of election day, not all the EB members may be able to receive said forms, supplies, and paraphernalia in time for the opening of polls for early voting at five o'clock (5:00) in the morning of election day, unless otherwise fixed by the Commission; or
- d) That the peace and order conditions in the area justify such advance delivery in order to ensure the security of the forms, documents, and paraphernalia, and safety of the EB members.

The RED shall make a corresponding report on approved request/s for early delivery within twenty-four (24) hours from approval. The report shall specify the clustered precincts whose forms and supplies are to be released early, the date and time of the release, the location of the voting center, and the reason/s for the early release. Within the same period, a copy of the report shall be emailed at odedo@comelec.gov.ph, the official email address of ODEDO.

SEC. 47. Forms to be reproduced when needed. - The following forms may be reproduced when needed.

- a) Temporary Appointment of Chairperson/Poll Clerk/Member (Annex "F");
- b) Certificate of Challenge or Protest and Decision of the EB (Annex "G");
- c) Oath of Voter Challenged for Illegal Acts (Annex "H"); and
- d) Oath to Identify a Challenged Voter (Annex "I").

SEC. 48. Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes. - The EB shall accomplish in two (2) copies the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes (CEF No. 11) entering therein all data required as they become available and all acts as they occur. Copies of the minutes shall be signed and sealed in separate envelopes (CEF Nos. 18 and 18A) for distribution as follows:

- a. The copy intended for the Commission shall be delivered to the Election Officer who shall forward the same to the Election Records and Statistics Department, COMELEC, Manila; and
- b. The copy intended for the ballot box shall be deposited inside the ballot box compartment for valid ballots.

ARTICLE IV
DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF VOTING

SEC. 49. Date of election. - The special election for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes shall be held on November 28, 2026.

SEC. 50. Who are allowed to vote. - The following shall be allowed to vote:

- a) Registered regular voters of the precinct whose names appear in the EDCVL based on the latest ERB hearing on June 1, 2026, unless manually crossed-out with annotation and duly signed by the ERB (Chairperson and members) during the ERB meeting for the verification and certification of EDCVL and PCVL;
- b) Voters who were manually included in the EDCVL pursuant to a final and executory court order for inclusion and request to undelete approved by the Commission *En Banc*;
- c) Voters presenting final and executory order of the court, certified by the Clerk of Court and verified by the EO; and
- d) EB members entitled to avail of voting privileges under Section 19 hereof.

SEC. 51. Voting hours. - Regular casting of votes shall start at seven o'clock (7:00) in the morning and end at three o'clock (3:00) in the afternoon of election day, unless otherwise fixed by the Commission. Early voting hours shall be from five o'clock (5:00) in the morning to seven o'clock (7:00) in the morning, which shall be devoted exclusively for Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, including their assistants, if any, and pregnant voters as provided in Sec. 78 hereof. The assistants of Persons with Disability and Senior Citizens may also be allowed to vote during this time, provided that they are registered regular voters of the same polling place.

If at three o'clock (3:00) in the afternoon, there are still voters within the thirty (30)-meter radius of the polling place who have not yet cast their votes, voting shall continue but only to allow said voters to cast their votes without interruption. The Poll Clerk shall, without delay, list the names of said voters and consecutively number them. The voters listed shall be called to vote by the Poll Clerk by announcing each name three (3) times in the order in which they are listed. Any voter in the list who is not present when called shall not be permitted to vote at any later time. The said list shall be submitted to the EO.

SEC. 52. Place of Voting. - Voters shall cast their votes in their designated polling places.

SEC. 53. Voters' Assistance Desk (VAD). - To avoid gathering, crowding, and huddling around the PCVL, there shall be a Voters' Assistance Desk (VAD) in each voting center manned by any accredited citizens' arm or such other entities as may be determined by the Commission, under the supervision and control of the DESO. The VAD shall assist voters in ascertaining their precinct number, sequence number, and direction to their polling place.

In the event that there is no available accredited citizens' arm to man the VAD, the EO may enter into a MOA with a non-partisan NGO, CSO, or other organizations available in his area of responsibility to man the VAD.

In case the representatives of accredited citizens' arm, non-partisan NGO, CSO, or other organizations are not available, registered voters of known probity and integrity residing within the municipality may be designated to man the VAD, provided they are qualified and have no connection with the candidates. The designation shall be at no cost to the Commission.

Should there be no registered voter available to man the VAD, the voters shall follow the usual procedure of finding their precinct number and polling place in the posted PCVL.

SEC. 54. Preliminaries to the voting. - The EB shall meet at the polling place and perform the following preliminary activities:

- (a) At four o'clock (4:00) in the morning of election day:
 - 1) See to it that they have all the election forms, documents, and supplies needed;
 - 2) Post one (1) copy of the PCVL outside each polling place;
 - 3) Display the poster indicating the precinct number and location of the polling place (CE Form No. A3) near or at the door of the polling place;
 - 4) Set-up or arrange the polling place in accordance with the recommended Lay-out of Polling Place provided in Annex "J" hereof;
 - 5) Staple or paste the certified List of Candidates for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes in the ballot secrecy folders or desks/chairs/tables; and
 - 6) Place the ballot secrecy folder on the top of the desks/chairs/tables.

(b) Before the start of voting, the EB Chairperson shall:

- i) Open the ballot box, empty both compartments, and show to the public that they are empty. Then the EB Chairperson shall lock its interior cover with one (1) padlock. The Poll Clerk shall retain the key to the padlock during the voting; and
- 2) Show to the public and to the watchers present the package of the official ballots (CEF No. 6). Enter in the Minutes the number of pads and the serial numbers (SNs) of the ballots in each pad, and the fact that the package of ballots was shown to the public.

SEC. 55. Rules to be observed during the voting. - During the voting, the EB shall see to it that:

- a. The voters shall vote in the order of their arrival in the polling place;
- b. No watcher enters the places reserved for the voters and the EB, nor mingle and talk with the voters;
- c. No person carrying any firearm or other deadly weapon, except those expressly authorized by the Commission, enters the polling place;
- d. No crowding or disorderly behavior inside the polling place shall occur; and
- e. The interior cover of the ballot box shall remain locked until the voting is finished and the counting begins, except when it becomes necessary to make room for more ballots, the Chairperson may, in the presence of watchers, open the box, press down the ballots without removing any of them. After which, the Chairperson shall again close the interior cover of the ballot box and lock it with the padlock. Such facts shall be recorded in the Minutes.

SEC. 56. Prohibition on voting. - It shall be unlawful to:

- a. Bring the ballot and/or the ballot secrecy folder outside the polling place, except for voting involving persons with disability, SCs, pregnant voters, and voters in the IPP;
- b. Speak with anyone while inside the polling place as herein provided;
- c. Prepare the ballot without using a ballot secrecy folder or exhibit its contents to any person, except in cases of assisted voting;
- d. Erase any printing from the ballot or place any distinguishing mark thereon;
- e. Use carbon paper, paraffin paper, or other means of making a copy of the contents of the ballot, or otherwise make use of any other scheme to identify the vote, including the use of digital cameras, cellular phones, or similar gadgets;
- f. Intentionally tear or deface the ballot; and
- g. Disrupt or attempt to disrupt the proceedings of the EB.

SEC. 57. Persons allowed inside the polling place. - Only the following shall be allowed inside the polling place:

- a. EB members;
- b. Watchers who shall stay only in the space reserved for them;

- c. Voters casting their votes;
- d. Voters waiting for their turn to vote;
- e. Voters waiting for their turn to get their ballots; and
- f. Others who are specifically authorized by the Commission.

SEC. 58. Holding Area. – The EB, wherever necessary, in coordination with the DESO, may designate an adjacent room – with ample space if available, to be used as holding area. The holding area shall be used by the voters waiting for their turn to vote. The voters shall sit and arrange themselves such that they will vote according to the sequence of their arrival.

There shall also be a space in the holding area accessible to wheelchair users to be used by persons with disability and senior citizen voters who are waiting for their assistants to vote.

Giving numbers to the voters to determine their sequence of voting is strictly prohibited.

SEC. 59. Persons not allowed in and around the polling place. – Unless specifically authorized by the Commission, it is unlawful for the following to enter any polling place or stay within a radius of fifty (50) meters thereof, except to vote:

- a. Any officer or member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or the Philippine National Police (PNP), unless said PNP personnel is duly appointed as EB members pursuant to Section 27 hereof;
- b. Any peace officer or armed person belonging to any extra-legal police agency, special forces, reaction forces, strike forces, Civilian Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs), *Barangay Tanods*, or other similar forces or paramilitary forces, including special forces, security guards, and special policemen;
- c. All other kinds of armed or unarmed extra-legal police forces; and
- d. Incumbent Barangay and SK officials, whether elected or appointed.

However, the EB members, by majority vote, if it deems necessary, may order in writing the detail of a police officer or any peace officer for their protection or for the protection of the election documents and paraphernalia. Such order shall be entered in the Minutes. Said police officer shall stay outside the polling place within a radius of thirty (30) meters or near enough to be easily called by the EB at any time, but never at the door, except in areas declared under COMELEC control, in which case the police officer shall stay near or at the door of the polling place.

When there is actual disturbance or disruption of peace and order, the PNP or AFP officials/ personnel may enter the polling place even without the written order of the EB members.

In no case shall the said police officer hold any conversation with any voter or disturb or prevent or in any manner obstruct the free access of the voters to the polling place.

SEC. 60. Authentication of the Ballot. – In every case, the EB Chairperson shall, in the presence of the voter and before giving the ballot to the voter, authenticate the same by affixing his/her signature at the back thereof. Failure to authenticate shall be noted in the Minutes and shall constitute an election offense. Further, in no case shall the Chairperson pre-sign at the back of the ballot prior to its actual issuance to the voters.

SEC. 61. Order of Voting. – The voters shall fall in line in the order of their arrival in the polling place and cast their votes in the same order. They shall not crowd around the table of the EB and shall immediately depart after casting their votes.

The EB shall give priority to Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, and pregnant voters..

SEC. 62. Manner of obtaining the Ballots. – The manner of obtaining the ballot/s is/are as follows:

- (a) The voters shall proceed to the assigned clustered precinct and approach any member of the EB or its Support Staff, and state their names, precinct number, and sequence numbers.

(b) The Poll Clerk shall:

- Find out if the name of the voter is in the EDCVL and establish his/her identity. If the voter's name is not in the EDCVL, the voter shall not be allowed to vote, and shall be requested to leave the polling place;
- If the identity is established, check the fingernails for any indelible ink stain. If stained, it shall be a conclusive presumption that the voter has already cast his/her vote. As such, the voter shall be directed to leave the polling place after informing him/her the reason thereof. This fact, including the name and the precinct number of the voter, shall be recorded in the Minutes.
- If the fingernail is not stained, establish the identity of the voter through the following:
 - i. Voter's photograph or specimen signature in the EDCVL or in any other authentic identification document, except community tax certificate; or
 - ii. In the absence of any of the above-mentioned proof of identity, any member of the EB or any registered voter of the precinct/clustered precinct may identify under oath the voter, and such fact shall be reflected in the Minutes.
- If satisfied with the voter's identity, the name of the voter shall be distinctly announced in a tone loud enough to be heard through the polling place. If not satisfied with the voter's identity, the voter shall be directed to leave the polling place after informing him/her of the reason therefor.
- If the voter is not challenged or having been challenged, and the question has been decided in his/her favor, require the voter to sign in the EDCVL. In case of illiterate voters or persons with disability who cannot sign, require said voters to affix their thumbmarks in the EDCVL.
- Thereafter, the voter shall be directed to the Chairperson.

(c) The Chairperson shall:

- Distinctly announce in a tone loud enough to be heard throughout the polling place the name, precinct number, and Serial Number (SN) of the ballot to be issued to the voter. The Poll Clerk shall enter the same in the corresponding space labeled "Ballot SN" beside the name of the voter in the EDCVL:
 - i. Authenticate the ballot/s by affixing his or her signature at the back thereof;
 - ii. Fold the ballot/s in such a manner that its face, except the portion where the SN appears, is covered.
 - iii. Give the ballot/s to the voter;
 - iv. Ask the voter to affix his/her signature in the space provide in the EDCVL; and
 - v. Affix his/her signature in the space provided in the EDCVL.

Only the Chairperson shall issue the ballot and not more than one (1) ballot shall be issued at one time.

SEC. 63. Manner of Voting. – The voter shall, using a ballot secrecy folder, fill out the ballot by writing in the corresponding space, the name of the candidate voted for as appearing in the Certified List of Candidates.

SEC. 64. Express lane for Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, Pregnant Voters, and EBs exercising voting privilege. – Persons with disability, senior citizens, pregnant women, and EBs exercising voting privilege shall be afforded the right to an express lane and be allowed to vote as soon as they arrive. There shall be a sign inside the polling place indicating the location of the express lane and who can avail of it.

SEC. 65. Spoiled ballots. – If the ballot/s is/are accidentally spoiled or defaced in such a way that it cannot be lawfully used, the voter shall surrender it folded in the same way when it was issued by the EB Chairperson. The EB Chairperson shall write the word "spoiled" beside the ballot SN previously recorded in the EDCVL. The EB Chairperson shall then give the voter a second authenticated ballot after announcing its SN, with the Poll Clerk recording the same in the available space in the EDCVL. However, in cases of spoiled ballots under SECs. 66.2.ii, 66.5, and 66.6 hereof, the voter shall not be issued another ballot.

If the second ballot is again spoiled or defaced in such a way that it can no longer be lawfully used, the same shall be surrendered to the EB Chairperson in the same manner as the first spoiled or defaced ballot. No voter shall be allowed to change a spoiled/defaced ballot more than once.

The spoiled ballot shall, without being unfolded and without removing the detachable coupon, be distinctly marked with the word "spoiled", signed by the EB Chairperson at the back thereof, and deposited in the compartment for the spoiled ballots of the ballot box.

In all cases the Poll Clerk shall record in the Minutes the name of the voter and the SN of the spoiled or replacement ballot.

SEC. 66. Procedures after voting. – After voting, the following procedures shall be observed:

- After the voter has filled out the ballot/s, fold it in the same manner as it was received;
- The voter shall then proceed to the Poll Clerk who shall, within the view of the voter and the other EB members, without unfolding the ballot/s or seeing its contents, verify the SN/s against the number/s previously entered in the EDCVL to determine whether it is the same ballot/s given to the voter.
 - (i) If the SN/s of the ballot/s returned by the voter is the same as that recorded in the EDCVL, the voter shall affix his or her thumbmark in the corresponding space in the ballot coupon/s, and return it to the Poll Clerk;
 - (ii) If the SN/s is not the same with the SN/s as entered in the EDCVL, the ballot/s shall be considered "spoiled" and be marked and signed by the Chairperson and placed inside the compartment for spoiled ballot. Such fact shall be indicated in Part C of the Minutes.
- Ballot/s returned to the Poll Clerk, the detached coupon/s of which was not removed in the presence of the EB members and the voter, shall be considered "spoiled". The Chairperson shall write at the back of the ballot the word "spoiled", then sign and

place it inside the compartment for spoiled ballots. Such fact shall be noted in the Minutes.

- The Poll clerk shall then apply indelible ink at the base and extending to the cuticle of the right forefinger nail of the voter, or at the base of any other fingernail if there be no right forefinger.
- If the voter refuses to have the fingernail stained with indelible ink, the voter shall be informed that such refusal shall render the ballot/s spoiled.
- If the voter still refuses despite being informed thereof, the Chairperson shall, without unfolding the ballot/s and without removing the detachable coupon/s, write at the back of the ballot the word "spoiled", sign the same, and immediately place said ballot/s in the ballot box compartment for spoiled ballots. The voter shall then be required to leave. Such fact shall be recorded in Part C of the Minutes.
- The Chairperson shall detach the ballot coupon/s in the presence of the voter and deposit the folded ballot/s in the ballot box compartment for valid ballots and the detachable coupon/s in the compartment for spoiled ballots. The voter shall then leave the polling place.

The EB shall ensure that the EDCVL is properly accomplished. Failure to do the same shall be a ground for the filing of an administrative case against the erring EB members.

SEC. 67. Challenge against illegal voters. – Any voter or watcher may challenge any person offering to vote for: (a) not being registered; (b) using the name of another; (c) suffering from existing disqualification; or (d) being a double/multiple registrant. In such case, the EB shall satisfy itself as to whether the ground for the challenge is true by requiring proof of registration, identity, or qualification.

No voter shall be required to present his or her voter's identification card or any other valid identification cards, unless the identity is in doubt or challenged. However, the failure or inability to present authentic identification documents upon being challenged shall not preclude the voter from voting if identified under oath by:

- a. Any EB member;
- b. Another registered voter of the same barangay; or
- c. Any relative by consanguinity or affinity within the fourth (4th) civil degree.

A voter can only be identified by another voter of the same barangay. Such identification shall be recorded in Part E of the Minutes.

Any of the following authentic identification documents may be presented by the voter when challenged or the identity is in doubt:

- a. Postal ID;
- b. Persons with Disability ID;
- c. Student's ID or library card signed by the school authority;
- d. Senior citizen's ID;
- e. Driver's license;
- f. NBI clearance;
- g. Passport;
- h. SSS/GSIS ID;
- i. Unified Multi-Purpose Identification (UMID);
- j. National ID (PhilSys);
- k. PAG-IBIG ID;

- l. Integrated Bar of the Philippine (IBP) ID;
- m. License issued by the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC); or
- n. Certificate of Confirmation issued by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in case of members of ICCs or IPs.

SEC. 68. Challenge based on certain illegal acts. – Any voter or watcher may challenge any voter offering to vote on the ground that the challenged person has:

- a. Received or expected to receive, paid, offered or promised to pay, contributed, offered or promised to contribute money or anything of value in consideration for his/her vote or for the vote of another;
- b. Made or received a promise to influence the giving or withholding of any such vote; or
- c. Made a bet or is interested directly or indirectly in a bet which depends upon the results of the election.

The challenged person shall take an oath before the EB that he has not committed any of the acts alleged in the challenge. Upon the taking of such oath, the challenge shall be dismissed, and the voter shall be allowed to vote. In case the voter refuses to take such oath, the challenge shall be sustained and the voter shall not be allowed to vote.

SEC. 69. Record of challenges, oaths, and resolutions. – The Poll Clerk shall record in Part E of the Minutes all challenges and oaths taken in connection therewith and the EB resolution in each case. Copies of the challenges, oaths, and resolutions shall be attached to the copy of the Minutes. Upon the termination of the voting, the Poll Clerk shall certify that the Minutes contain all challenges, oaths, and resolutions made.

SEC. 70. Disposition of unused ballots at end of voting hours. – The Chairperson shall count while the Poll Clerk shall record in Part A of the Minutes the quantity of unused ballots, if any, and their SNs. Thereafter, he/she shall, in the presence of other EB members and watchers, if any, tear the unused ballots lengthwise in half without removing the stubs and detachable coupon.

The first half of the torn ballots shall be placed in the "Envelope for other Half of Torn Unused Ballots" which envelope shall be sealed with the paper seal to be submitted to the EO for safekeeping. It shall remain sealed unless the Commission orders otherwise. The second half of the torn ballots shall be placed in the "Envelope for Excess/Half of Torn Unused Ballots" which shall be sealed and deposited inside the compartment of the ballot box for spoiled ballots. Such fact shall be entered in Part C of the Minutes.

SEC. 71. Prohibition against premature announcement of voting. – Before the termination of the voting, no EB member shall make any announcement as to whether a certain registered voter has already voted, as to how many have already voted or how many so far have failed to vote or any other fact tending to show or showing the state of the polls, nor shall make any statement at any time, except as a witness before a court or body.

ARTICLE V COUNTING OF VOTES

SEC. 72. Counting of votes to be public and without interruption. – The EB shall publicly count in the polling place the votes cast and tally the results.

They may re-arrange the physical set-up of the polling place for counting and perform any other activity to accomplish an orderly counting. At all times, the ballot box and all election documents and paraphernalia shall be within close view of the watchers and the public.

They shall not adjourn or postpone or delay the count until it has been fully completed unless ordered otherwise by the Commission.

Any violation of this Section, or its pertinent portion, shall constitute an election offense and shall be penalized in accordance with Section 262 of BP Blg. 881, as amended.

SEC. 73. Transfer of counting of votes. – In the interest of free, orderly, and honest elections, the Commission through the EO may authorize the EB to count the votes and accomplish the ERs and other forms in any other place within a public building in the same municipality on account of imminent danger of widespread violence, terrorism, disorder or similar causes of comparable magnitude; provided, that the transfer shall have been recommended in writing by unanimous vote of the EB and endorsed by the majority of watchers present; provided further, that the said public building shall not be located within the perimeter of or inside a military or police camp, reservation, headquarters, detachment or field office nor within the premises of a prison or detention compound of any law enforcement or investigation agency. Any transfer of the venue for the counting of votes shall be duly recorded in the Minutes.

SEC. 74. Preliminaries to the counting of votes. – The following activities shall be undertaken by the EB before counting the ballots cast:

- Unlock the padlock, open the ballot box, and take out the ballots from the compartment for valid ballots;
- Examine the ballots to determine whether there are:
 - a. Excess ballots – The EB shall, without unfolding the ballots or exposing their contents, count the number of ballots in the compartment for valid ballots, and compare the number of ballots inside the ballot box with the number of voters who actually voted as reflected in the EDCVL.
 - a.a. If there are more ballots than there are voters who actually voted, all the ballots shall be returned to the compartment for valid ballots and thoroughly mixed therein. The Poll Clerk, without seeing the ballots and with the Poll Clerk facing away from the ballot box, shall publicly draw out as many ballots as may be equal to the excess and, without unfolding them, write at the back of the ballot the word "excess ballot," and place them in the Envelope for Excess Ballots;
 - a.b. If in the course of the examination, the ballots are found folded together before they were deposited inside the ballot box, they shall be considered excess ballots and placed in the corresponding envelope.
 - b. Ballots with detachable coupons – In case a ballot with an undetached coupon is found in the ballot box, the coupon shall be removed and deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots. The ballot shall be included in the pile of valid ballots.
 - c. Ballots with the word "spoiled" – If the ballot with the word "spoiled" is found in the compartment for valid ballots, it shall be placed in the compartment for spoiled ballots,

- d. Marked ballots – The EB shall then unfold the ballots and determine whether there are any marked ballots. If any should be found, they shall be placed in the corresponding envelope.

Excess, spoiled, and marked ballots shall not be read during the counting of votes. The envelope containing the excess and marked ballots shall be signed and sealed by the EB members and deposited in the compartment for valid ballots.

- After completion of the preliminary activities, the EB shall proceed to count the ballots cast.

SEC. 75. Ballots deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots. – Ballots deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots shall be presumed to be spoiled, whether or not they contain such notation. However, if the EB should find that during the voting, any valid ballot was erroneously deposited in this compartment, the EB shall open said compartment after the voting and before the counting of votes for the sole purpose of drawing out the ballot erroneously deposited therein. The valid ballot so withdrawn shall be mixed with the other valid ballots. Such fact shall be recorded in Part C of the Minutes.

SEC. 76. Manner of counting of votes. – The EB shall unfold the ballots and form separate piles of one hundred (100) ballots each, which shall be held together with rubber band. The Chairperson shall take the ballots of the first pile one by one and read the name of the candidate voted for.

In reading the ballots during the counting, the Chairperson, the Poll Clerk, and the Third Member shall assume such positions as to provide the watchers and the public, as may be conveniently accommodated in the polling place, an unimpeded view of the ballot being read by the Chairperson, of the ER and the tally sheet being simultaneously accomplished by the Poll Clerk and the Third Member, respectively, without touching any of these election documents. The table shall be cleared of all unnecessary writing paraphernalia. Any violation of this requirement shall constitute an election offense punishable under Sections 262 and 264 of BP Blg. 881.

The Poll Clerk and Third Member shall record each vote on the ERs and tally sheet, respectively, as the name of the candidate voted for is read. Each vote for a candidate shall be recorded by a vertical line, except every fifth (5th) vote for the same candidate, which shall be recorded by a diagonal line crossing the previous four (4) vertical lines.

The same procedure shall be followed with the succeeding piles of ballots.

After all the ballots have been read, the EB shall record in words and figures, the total votes obtained by each candidate both in the ERs and in the tally sheet. The counted ballots shall be placed in an envelope provided for the purpose, which shall be sealed, signed, and deposited in the compartment for valid ballots. The tally sheet as accomplished and certified by the EB shall not be changed or destroyed, instead, it shall be deposited in the compartment for valid ballots.

After completion of the counting of the votes cast, the EB shall announce the result of the election in the precinct, then proceed to unlock the padlock, open the ballot box, place the accomplished ER and tally sheet inside the ballot box, and, thereafter, lock the same.

After the counting of the votes, in no case shall the EBs conduct a revision and recount of the ballots.

SEC. 77. Appreciation of ballots. – In the appreciation of the ballots, every ballot shall be presumed valid unless there is clear and good reason to justify its rejection.

Any question on the appreciation of ballots shall be decided by a majority of the EB members present.

No watcher, candidate, or any other person inside the polling place shall be allowed to participate in the appreciation of ballots, except that any watcher may file a protest which shall be recorded in the Minutes.

The EB shall observe the following rules for the appreciation of ballots as provided for in Section 211 of BP Blg. 881, bearing in mind that the objective of the election is to obtain the expression of the voters' will:

- (a) Where only the first name or surname of a candidate is written, the vote for such candidate is valid if there is no other candidate with the same first name or surname for the same office;
- (b) Where only the first name of a candidate is written on the ballot which when read has a sound similar to the surname of another candidate, the vote shall be counted in favor of the candidate with such surname. If there are two (2) or more candidates with the same full name, first name or surname and one of them is the incumbent, and on the ballot is written only such full name, first name or surname, the vote shall be counted in favor of the incumbent;
- (c) In case the candidate is a woman who uses her maiden or married surname or both and there is another candidate with the same surname, a ballot bearing only such surname shall be counted in favor of the candidate who is an incumbent;
- (d) When two (2) or more words are written on the same line on the ballot, all of which are the surnames of two (2) or more candidates, the same shall not be counted for any of them unless one is a surname of an incumbent who has served for at least one (1) year, in which case it shall be counted in favor of the latter;
- (e) When on the ballot is written a single word, which is the first name of a candidate and which is at the same time the surname of his opponent, the vote shall be counted in favor of the latter;
- (f) When two (2) words are written on the ballot, one of which is the first name of a candidate and the other is the surname of his opponent, the vote shall not be counted for either one;
- (g) A name or surname incorrectly written which, when read, has a sound similar to the name or surname of a candidate when correctly written shall be counted in favor of such candidate;
- (h) When in a space in the ballot there appears a name of a candidate that is erased and another clearly written, the vote is valid for the latter;
- (i) The erroneous initial of the first name which accompanies the correct surname of a candidate, the erroneous initial of the surname accompanying the correct first name of a candidate, or the erroneous middle initial of the candidate shall not annul the vote in favor of the latter;
- (j) The fact that there exists another person who is not a candidate with the first name or surname of a candidate shall not prevent the adjudication of the vote of the latter;
- (k) Ballots which contain prefixes such as "Sir", "Mr.", "Datu", "Don", "Ginoo", "Hon.", "Gob." or suffixes like "Hijo", "Jr.", "Segundo", are valid;
- (l) The use of nicknames and appellations of affection and friendship, if accompanied by the first name or surname of the candidate, does not annul such vote, except when they were used as a means to identify the voter, in which case the whole ballot is invalid. Provided, that if the nickname used is unaccompanied by the name or surname of a candidate and it is the one by which he is generally or popularly known in the locality, the name shall be counted in favor of the said candidate for the same office with the same nickname;
- (m) Any vote containing initials only or which is illegible, or which does not sufficiently identify the candidate for whom it is intended shall be considered as a stray vote;
- (n) If on the ballot is correctly written the first name of a candidate but with a different surname, or the surname of the candidate is correctly written but with a different first name, the vote shall not be counted in favor of any candidate having such first name and/or surname;
- (o) Any ballot written with crayon, lead pencil, or ink, wholly or in part, shall be valid;
- (p) Where there are two (2) or more candidates voted for in an office for which the law authorizes the election of only one, the vote shall not be counted in favor of any of them;
- (q) Any vote in favor of a person who has not filed a certificate of candidacy or in favor of a candidate for an office for which he did not present himself shall be considered as a stray vote;
- (r) A ballot containing the name of a candidate printed and pasted on a blank space of the ballot or affixed thereto through any mechanical process is totally null and void;
- (s) Circles, crosses, or lines put on the spaces on which the voter has not voted shall be considered as signs to indicate his desistance from voting and shall not invalidate the ballot;
- (t) Unless it should clearly appear that they have been deliberately put by the voter to serve as identification marks, commas, dots, lines, or hyphens between the first name and surname of a candidate, or in other parts of the ballots, traces of the letter "T", "J", and other similar ones, the first letters or syllables of names which the voter does not continue, the use of two (2) or more kinds of writing and unintentional or accidental flourishes, strokes, or strains, shall not invalidate the ballot;
- (u) Any ballot which clearly appears to have been filled by two (2) distinct persons before it was deposited in the ballot box during the voting is totally null and void;

- (v) Any vote cast in favor of a candidate who has been disqualified by final judgement shall be considered as stray and shall not be counted;
- (w) The accidental tearing or perforation of a ballot does not annul it; and
- (x) Failure to remove the detachable coupon from a ballot does not annul such ballot.

ARTICLE VI
GUIDELINES FOR VULNERABLE SECTORS VOTING

SEC. 78. Early Voting Hours. – The early voting hours shall be from five o'clock in the morning (5:00 AM) to seven o'clock in the morning (7:00 AM), which shall be devoted exclusively, for Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, and Pregnant voters shall continue to enjoy the priority lane at the regular polling places from seven o'clock in the morning (7:00 AM) to three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 PM) on election day.

SEC. 79. Regular Voting Hours for Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, and Pregnant Voters. – Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, and Pregnant voters shall continue to enjoy the priority lane at the regular polling places from seven o'clock in the morning (7:00 AM) to three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 PM) on election day.

SEC. 80. Preparations of Ballots for Illiterate, Persons with Disability, and Senior Citizens by an Assistor. – No voter shall be allowed to vote as an Illiterate, Person with Disability, or Senior Citizen unless such fact is indicated in the EDCVL, or although not indicated as a Person with Disability in the EDCVL, when the disability is readily apparent, or if the person with disability was able to show his or her Person with Disability Card. If so, such voter may be aided in the preparation of the ballot, by an assistor of voting age, in the following order:

1. Relative within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity;
2. Person of his/her confidence who belongs to the same household as that of the voter. For this purpose, the person who usually assists the Person with Disability or the Senior Citizen, such as a personal assistant, caregiver, or a nurse, shall be considered as a member of the voter's household.

No person, except the members of the EB, may assist an Illiterate, Persons with Disability, or Senior Citizen more than three (3) times.

In all cases, the Poll Clerk shall first verify from the Illiterate, Person with Disability, or Senior Citizen whether said voter authorized a person to help him/her cast his/her vote. If the voter denies the authority of the assistor, any member of the EB may assist such Illiterate, Person with Disability, or Senior Citizen voter. The same shall be recorded in the Minutes of Voting.

The person assisting the Illiterate, Person with Disability, or Senior Citizen shall:

- a. Prepare, in the presence of the assisted voter, the ballot using a ballot secrecy folder; and
- b. Bind themselves in writing and under oath to fill out the ballot strictly in accordance with the instructions of the voter and not to reveal its contents, by indicating the appropriate data and affixing their signatures, thumbmark, or any available fingerprint if without a thumb, in the corresponding space in the Minutes of Voting.

The assistor may also be allowed to vote immediately after the person they are assisting has finished voting, provided that the assistor is a registered voter in the same polling place as the person being assisted.

The EB shall set up a separate holding area in said polling place exclusively for persons with disability and senior citizens. Accordingly, the EOs shall coordinate with the appropriate school or building officials to facilitate the establishment of such holding area.

SEC. 81. Early Voting Hours (EVH) Turnout Report.–The EO shall consolidate the data from the EVH Voter Turnout Form and submit the same to the VSO through electronic mail at vso@comelec.gov.ph within five (5) calendar days from election day.

A template of the EVH Turnout Form is attached herewith as Annex "K."

ARTICLE VII
PREPARATION OF ELECTION RETURNS AND CERTIFICATE OF VOTES

SEC. 82. Preparation of the election returns. – The EB shall prepare the election returns simultaneously with the counting of votes. The returns shall be prepared in seven (7) copies. All the members of the EB and the watchers, if any, shall sign the certification printed at the bottom of the election returns and affix their thumb marks on the space provided.

Upon completion of the election returns, each copy of the election returns shall be folded and sealed with a paper seal in such a manner that the copy cannot be unfolded without breaking the seal, accomplish the paper seal, and place them in their corresponding separate envelopes provided for the purpose, and again seal with a duly accomplished paper seal.

The EB shall immediately distribute the same under proper receipt, as follows:

- (a) The first (1st) copy to the Chairperson of the Municipal Board of Canvassers;
- (b) The second (2nd) copy for posting;
- (c) The third (3rd) copy to the Election Records and Statistics Department, COMELEC, Manila;
- (d) The fourth (4th) copy to the dominant majority party;
- (e) The fifth (5th) copy to the dominant minority party;
- (f) The sixth (6th) copy to the accredited citizens' arm; and
- (g) The seventh (7th) copy shall be deposited inside the ballot box.

SEC. 83. Announcement of result of the special election in the polling place. – Upon completion of the election returns, the Chairperson of the EB shall orally and publicly announce the total number of votes cast and counted in the precinct for each candidate.

SEC. 84. Alterations and corrections in the election returns. – Any alteration or correction made in the election returns by the EB before the announcement of the results of the special election in the polling place shall be duly initialed by all the members thereof.

After the announcement of the result of the special election in the polling place, the EB shall not make any alteration or amendment in any of the copies of the election returns, unless ordered by the Commission.

SEC. 85. Certificate of Votes. – After the counting of votes and announcement of the results of the special election in the precinct, and before leaving the polling place, the EB shall issue the Certificate of Votes (CEF No. 13) upon request.

The Certificate of Votes shall be signed and thumbmarked by all members of the EB.

The EB shall require the requesting party to acknowledge the receipt of the Certificate of Votes.

ARTICLE VIII
DISPOSITION OF ELECTION PARAPHERNALIA AND PRESERVATION OF EDCVL AND PCVL

SEC. 86. Disposition of ballot boxes, keys, election returns, and other documents. – Upon the termination of counting of votes and the announcement of results in the precinct, the EB shall:

- (a) Place the following documents inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots:
 - i. Envelopes containing the:
 - i. Counted official ballots;
 - ii. Excess/unused/spoiled and one-half of torn unused official ballots;
 - iii. Election Returns (copy for the ballot box); and
 - iv. Minutes of Voting and Counting (copy for the ballot box);
 2. Tally Sheet; and
 3. Stubs of used official ballots.

- (b) Close the interior covers of the ballot box and seal with plastic security seal, lock the outer cover of the ballot box with one (1) padlock, and seal with plastic security seal.

The serial number of the plastic security seal shall be recorded in the Minutes of Voting and Counting before the same (Minutes) is deposited inside the ballot box. The keys to the padlock shall be placed in a separate envelope which shall be sealed and signed by all members of the EB, and submitted to the EO.

- (c) Deliver the ballot box, as well as all documents and supplies, to the Municipal Treasurer, accompanied by the watchers present, if any. In case the ballot box delivered by the EB is not locked, the Municipal Treasurer shall lock the ballot box, and report such incident to the EO.

- (d) Deliver to the EO the following:

- (1) PCVL and EDCVL;
- (2) Envelope containing the election returns copy for the Election Records and Statistics Department, COMELEC, Manila;

- (3) Envelope containing the keys to the ballot box;
- (4) Envelope containing a copy of the Minutes of Voting and Counting; and
- (5) Envelope containing the other half of torn unused ballots.

SEC. 87. Wrapping the lid of the ballot box. – The EB shall also ensure that before the delivery of the ballot box to the Municipal Treasurer, they shall seal the lid of the ballot box with packaging tape in such a way that the lid cannot be opened without destroying the packaging tape, and with all the members of the EB and all watchers, if any, affixing their signatures on said packaging tapes.

SEC. 88. Preservation of the PCVL and EDCVL. – The EO shall keep and preserve the PCVL and EDCVL used in the special election in a safe place until such time that the Commission gives instructions on their disposition.

ARTICLE IX
DELIVERY AND TRANSMITTAL OF ELECTION RETURNS

SEC. 89. Manner of delivery and transmittal of election returns. – The copy of the ERs intended for the Municipal Board of Canvassers (MBOC) placed inside a sealed envelope shall be personally delivered by the EBs to the MBOC Reception and Custody Group (RCG) under proper receipt.

It shall be unlawful for any person to delay, obstruct, impede, or prevent through force, violence, coercion, intimidation, or by any means which violates consent, the transmittal of the ERs, or to take away, abscond with, destroy, deface, mutilate, or substitute the ERs or the envelope or the ballot box containing the ERs.

It shall also be unlawful to violate the right of the watchers to accompany the EB in delivering the ERs to the MBOC/RCG.

ARTICLE X
PUBLICATION, EFFECTIVITY AND DISSEMINATION

SEC. 90. Publication – The Education and Information Department, this Commission, shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines. The Information and technology Department shall post the same in the COMELEC website.

SEC. 91. Effectivity. – This Resolution shall take effect immediately after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SEC. 92. Dissemination. – The Deputy Executive Director for Operations shall furnish copies of this Resolution to the Department of Education, the Philippine National Police, the Regional Election Director of Region II, the Provincial Election Supervisor of the Province of Batanes, and the Schools Division Superintendent of the Province of Batanes.

The Provincial Election Supervisor of the Province of Batanes shall furnish copies of this Resolution to the Election Officers of the municipalities of the Province of Batanes, and the

latter shall furnish copies of the resolution to the Treasurers and DepEd Supervisors of their respective jurisdiction.

Let the Executive Director implement this Resolution.

SO ORDERED.

GEORGE ERWIN M. GARCIA
Chairman

AIMEE P. FEROLINO
Commissioner

REY E. BULAY
Commissioner

ERNESTO FERDINAND P. MACEDA, JR.
Commissioner

NELSON J. CELIS
Commissioner

MARIA NORINA S. TANGARO-CASINGAL
Commissioner

NOLI R. PIPO
Commissioner

CERTIFICATION

APPROVED for publication, October 27, 2026.

CONSUELO B. DIOLA
Director IV
Office of the Commission Secretary

This Resolution can be verified at this number (02)85272987; email address: comsec@comelec.gov.ph

CEF No. 5 Annex "A"



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES

APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL BOARD CHAIRPERSON/
POLL CLERK/THIRD MEMBER

(Municipality, Province, Region)

(Date)

Name: _____
Address: _____
(House No., Street, Barangay, Municipality, Province)

SIR/MADAM:

You are hereby appointed _____ of the Electoral Board (EB) in Clustered Precinct _____ (Electoral Board Chairperson/Poll Clerk/Third Member) with polling place located at _____ in _____ Municipality _____ Province of _____ Region.

You may immediately assume office upon taking your oath as required by law. However, this appointment will be automatically cancelled and considered null and void if you are related to any candidate or to any member of the Electoral Board of said precinct within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity. In such case, you shall not assume the duties of the office and shall immediately return this appointment to the Election Officer. Assumption to office notwithstanding this prohibition is punishable under the law.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION:

Election Officer as representative of
the Commission on Elections
(Signature Over Printed Name)

CEF No. 5-A

(Municipality, Province, Region)

OATH OF ELECTORAL BOARD CHAIRPERSON/POLL CLERK/THIRD MEMBER

I, _____ of the Electoral Board in Precinct No. _____ (Electoral Board Chairperson/Poll Clerk/Third Member) in Barangay _____ of the above-stated municipality, province and region to the best of my knowledge and ability, without favoring any person, candidate, political party or group, but I will obey the laws and legal orders promulgated by the duly constituted authorities, and that I voluntarily impose upon myself this obligation without mental reservation or purpose of evasion. SO HELP ME GOD.

(Signature Over Printed Name)

(Date)

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this _____ day of _____, 2026.

(Signature Over Printed Name)

Administrating Officer
Electoral Board Chairperson/Co-Member
Registered Voter of the Precinct

PREPARE IN THREE (3) COPIES: The Original and Second copies shall be retained by the Election Officer, (one (1) copy shall be for his/her file and the third copy shall be returned to the precinct for payment of honorarium of the Electoral Board) and the third copy shall be issued to the Chairperson, Members of the Electoral Board concerned.

Annex "B"

CERTIFIED LIST OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO ARE WILLING, AVAILABLE AND QUALIFIED TO SERVE AS MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL BOARDS FOR THE
NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES

NAME	POSITION/ DESIGNATION	SCHOOL OF ASSIGNMENT	WILLING, AVAILABLE AND QUALIFIED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ELECTORAL BOARD (YES/NO)	REGISTERED VOTERS WITH ACTIVE STATUS (YES/NO)	SERVED IN THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS AS MEMBER OF THE ELECTORAL BOARDS (If applicable, indicate position held and election years) (YES/NO)	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT (The signature is an attestation to the truthfulness of all the facts indicated in this Certificate)

I hereby certify that the foregoing public school teachers are qualified, willing and available to serve as Members of the Electoral Boards for the November 28, 2026 Special Election for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes.

Date of the Request of the OEO: _____
Date of Submission to the OEO: _____

(Name and Signature)
Deputy Official in the Municipality

Subscribed and Sworn to me this _____ day of _____, 2026; Affiant exhibiting to me his/her competent evidence of identity: _____.

Name and Signature of the Election Officer as Administering Officer

NOTICE/DISCLAIMER: All authorized recipients of any personal data, personal information, privileged information and sensitive personal information contained in this document, including other pertinent documents attached thereto that are shared by the Commission on Elections in compliance with existing laws and rules, and in conformity with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173) and its implementing Rules and Regulations, as well as the pertinent Circulars of the National Privacy Commission, are solemnly bound to comply with said laws, rules and regulations, relating to the privacy, security, confidentiality, protection and accountability.

I/We declare that I/we are of good moral character and irreproachable reputation; that I/we have never been convicted of any election offense or any of the crimes punishable by more than six (6) months of imprisonment; that I/we are not pending information against him/her for any election offense; I/We are able to speak and write English, Filipino, or the Local Dialect, and of known integrity and competence.

Annex "C"

CERTIFIED LIST OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS RECOMMENDED TO SERVE AS MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL BOARDS

NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES

NAME	POSITION/ DESIGNATION	SCHOOL OF ASSIGNMENT	REGISTERED VOTER WITH ACTIVE STATUS (YES/NO)	SERVED IN THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS AS MEMBER OF THE ELECTORAL BOARDS (If applicable, indicate position held and election years) (YES/NO)	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT (The signature is an attestation to the truthfulness of all the facts indicated in this Certificate)

I hereby endorse and certify that the foregoing private school teachers are qualified, willing, and available to serve as Members of the Electoral Boards for the November 28, 2026, Special Election for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes.

Date of the Request of the OEO: _____
Date of Submission to the OEO: _____

(Name and Signature)
Highest Private School Official

Subscribed and Sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 2026; Affiant exhibiting to me his/her competent evidence of identity: _____.

Name and Signature of the Election Officer as Administering Officer

NOTICE/DISCLAIMER: All authorized recipients of any personal data, personal information, privileged information and sensitive personal information contained in this document, including other pertinent documents attached thereto that are shared by the Commission on Elections in compliance with existing laws and rules, and in conformity with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173) and its implementing Rules and Regulations, as well as the pertinent Circulars of the National Privacy Commission, are solemnly bound to comply with said laws, rules and regulations, relating to the privacy, security, confidentiality, protection and accountability.

I/We declare that I/we are of good moral character and irreproachable reputation; that I/we have never been convicted of any election offense or any of the crimes punishable by more than six (6) months of imprisonment; that I/we are not pending information against him/her for any election offense; I/We are able to speak and write English, Filipino, or the Local Dialect, and of known integrity and competence.

Annex "D"

CERTIFIED LIST OF DEPED NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL WHO ARE WILLING, AVAILABLE AND QUALIFIED TO SERVE AS MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL BOARDS FOR THE
NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES

NAME	POSITION/ DESIGNATION	SCHOOL OF ASSIGNMENT	WILLING, AVAILABLE AND QUALIFIED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ELECTORAL BOARD (YES/NO)	REGISTERED VOTERS WITH ACTIVE STATUS (YES/NO)	SERVED IN THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS AS MEMBER OF THE ELECTORAL BOARDS (If applicable, indicate position held and election years) (YES/NO)	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT (The signature is an attestation to the truthfulness of all the facts indicated in this Certificate)

I hereby certify that the foregoing DepEd non-teaching personnel are qualified, willing and available to serve as Members of the Electoral Boards for the November 28, 2026 Special Election for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes.

Date of the Request of the OEO: _____
Date of Submission to the OEO: _____

(Name and Signature)
Deputy Official in the Municipality

Subscribed and Sworn to me this _____ day of _____, 2026; Affiant exhibiting to me his/her competent evidence of identity: _____.

Name and Signature of the Election Officer as Administering Officer

NOTICE/DISCLAIMER: All authorized recipients of any personal data, personal information, privileged information and sensitive personal information contained in this document, including other pertinent documents attached thereto that are shared by the Commission on Elections in compliance with existing laws and rules, and in conformity with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173) and its implementing Rules and Regulations, as well as the pertinent Circulars of the National Privacy Commission, are solemnly bound to comply with said laws, rules and regulations, relating to the privacy, security, confidentiality, protection and accountability.

I/We declare that I/we are of good moral character and irreproachable reputation; that I/we have never been convicted of any election offense or any of the crimes punishable by more than six (6) months of imprisonment; that I/we are not pending information against him/her for any election offense; I/We are able to speak and write English, Filipino, or the Local Dialect, and of known integrity and competence.

Annex "K"

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

**NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES**

VOTER TURNOUT

For Persons with Disability, Senior Citizens, and Pregnant Voters during the
Early Voting Hours (5AM - 7AM)

Name of Barangay/s: _____

No. of Voting Center/s: _____

VOTERS	NO. OF VOTERS WHO VOTED DURING THE EARLY VOTING HOURS		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
SENIOR CITIZENS			
PERSONS WITH DISABILITY			
PREGNANT VOTERS			
ASSISTORS			

PREPARED BY: _____

Signature Over Printed Name _____

Designation _____

Date: _____

Annex "H"

C.E. Form No. 39



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
 NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION
 FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES

Instructions: Prepare in two (2) copies. Attach one (1) copy to this Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes and one (1) copy to the challenged voter or affiant.

OATH OF VOTER CHALLENGED FOR ILLEGAL ACTS

I, _____, a resident of _____ and a registered voter of Precinct No. _____, Barangay _____, Municipality of _____, Province of _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have neither received nor expected to receive, have not paid, offered or promised to pay, nor have contributed, offered or promised to contribute money or anything of value as consideration for my vote or for the vote of another, that I have not made or received any promise to influence the giving or withholding of any vote; and that I have neither made any bet nor am I directly or interested in any bet which depends upon the result of the election.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this _____ day of _____, 2026 in the Municipality _____, Province of _____, Region _____, Philippines.

 Affiant
 (Signature Over Printed Name)

 (Municipality)
 _____)S.S.
 (Province)

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this _____ day of _____, 2026 in the above stated place.

 Chairperson/Member, Electoral Board
 (Signature Over Printed Name)

															
Republic of the Philippines COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS															
<i>Manila</i>															
IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTING THE GUIDELINES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF COMELEC CHECKPOINTS UNDER COMELEC RESOLUTION NO. 11067 IN CONNECTION WITH THE NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1 ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>GARCIA, George Erwin M.,</td> <td><i>Chairman</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>FEROLINO, Aimee P.,</td> <td><i>Commissioner</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>BULAY, Rey E.,</td> <td><i>Commissioner</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MACEDA, Ernesto Ferdinand P., Jr.,</td> <td><i>Commissioner</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CELIS, Nelson J.,</td> <td><i>Commissioner</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>TANGARO-CASINGAL, Maria Norina S.,</td> <td><i>Commissioner</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>PIPO, Noli R.</td> <td><i>Commissioner</i></td> </tr> </table>	GARCIA, George Erwin M.,	<i>Chairman</i>	FEROLINO, Aimee P.,	<i>Commissioner</i>	BULAY, Rey E.,	<i>Commissioner</i>	MACEDA, Ernesto Ferdinand P., Jr.,	<i>Commissioner</i>	CELIS, Nelson J.,	<i>Commissioner</i>	TANGARO-CASINGAL, Maria Norina S.,	<i>Commissioner</i>	PIPO, Noli R.	<i>Commissioner</i>
GARCIA, George Erwin M.,	<i>Chairman</i>														
FEROLINO, Aimee P.,	<i>Commissioner</i>														
BULAY, Rey E.,	<i>Commissioner</i>														
MACEDA, Ernesto Ferdinand P., Jr.,	<i>Commissioner</i>														
CELIS, Nelson J.,	<i>Commissioner</i>														
TANGARO-CASINGAL, Maria Norina S.,	<i>Commissioner</i>														
PIPO, Noli R.	<i>Commissioner</i>														
X _____ X	Promulgated: <u>October 27, 2026</u>														

Annex "I"



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

**NOVEMBER 28, 2026 SPECIAL ELECTION
FOR MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
LONE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES**

Instructions: Prepare two (2) copies. Attach one (1) copy to the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes intended for the ballot box. Give the other copy to the person making the challenge.

OATH TO IDENTIFY A CHALLENGED VOTER

I, _____ a member of the Electoral Board (EB) of Precinct No/s. _____ Barangay _____ Municipality of _____, Province of _____, do solemnly swear that the voter registered under the name of _____ is personally known to me as the same person who now presents himself/herself to vote under said name.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this _____ day of _____, 2026 in the Municipality of _____, Province of _____, Region _____, Philippines.

(Signature Over Printed Name)
Position as EB

(Municipality)
I, _____ S.S.
(Province)

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this _____ day of _____ 2026 in the above stated place.

(Signature Over Printed Name)
Position as EB

RESOLUTION NO. 11292

WHEREAS, Sections 52 (a) and (b) of the Omnibus Election Code provide that the Commission has the power to exercise direct and immediate supervision and control over national and local officials or employees, including members of any national or local law enforcement agency and instrumentality of the government required by law to perform election duties for the purpose of ensuring the holding of free, orderly, and honest elections;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) promulgated Resolution No. 11067 on September 25, 2024 entitled "Consolidated Resolution on the (1) Rules and Regulations on the Prohibitions on the Baring, Carrying, Or Transporting Of Firearms And other Deadly Weapons, including Explosives and/or their Components and/or Controlled Chemicals, and the Employment, Availment or Engagement of the Services of Security Personnel or Bodyguards during the Election Period; (2) Guidelines on the Establishment and Operation of Comelec Checkpoints; and (3) Guidelines on the Declaration of Election Areas of Concern and those to be placed under COMELEC Control and other Security Concerns in connection with the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region In Muslim Mindanao Parliamentary Elections";

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, and other election laws, the Commission **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVES**, to **ADOPT**, in so far as applicable, the guidelines on the establishment and operation of COMELEC checkpoints provided under Comelec Resolution No. 11067 for purposes of the November 28, 2026 Special Election for Member, House of Representatives, Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes, subject to the following amendments and/or modifications:

1. In view of the deactivation of the "Committee on the Ban on Firearms and Security Concerns" (CBFSC) or the "Gun Ban and Security Concerns Committee" (GSC), any reference in this Resolution to the said Committee, including its name, designation, authority, or functions shall be deemed inapplicable.
2. The guidelines on the establishment and operation of COMELEC checkpoints in connection with the November 28, 2026 Special Election shall be **applicable only in the Province of Batanes**.
3. Item (b) (vi) of Section 84 which states **"the logo of the 2025 NLE"** is hereby **repealed**.
- 4) Third paragraph of Section 85 which states that **"In all searches made in the checkpoints, the searching personnel must wear the required personnel protective equipment (PPE)"** is hereby **repealed**.

RESOLVED further, that any and all reference to "May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections and BARMM Parliamentary Elections" and "Election Period" are to be read and understood as referring to the **November 28, 2026 Special Election** in the Lone Legislative District of the Province of Batanes, and the Election Period set under Resolution No. 11276^o or from **October 29, 2026 (Thursday) to December 13, 2026 (Sunday)**;

RESOLVED finally, that this Resolution shall take effect immediately after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

The Education and Information Department of the Commission is directed to cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines. The Information and Technology Department shall post a copy of this Resolution on the COMELEC website.

The Office of the Deputy Executive Director for Operations shall furnish copies thereof to the Secretary of Justice, the Chief of Staff of the AFP, the Chief of the PNP, the Admiral of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), other law enforcement agencies, as well as the Regional Election Director of Region II, Provincial Election Supervisor of Batanes, and Election Officers of the different Municipalities in Batanes.

SO ORDERED.

LAYOUT PLAN

STEP 1. Voter checks Precinct and Sequence No. in the PCVLs posted outside the polling place.

STEP 2. Verification of the voter's name in the PCVL - by the Third Member.

STEP 3. Voter goes to the Chairperson of the Electoral Board who shall:

1. Announce the voter's name, precinct number and ballot's serial number while the Poll Clerk records the same in the EDCVL;
- 1.1 Authenticate the ballot by affixing signature at the back thereof;
- 1.2 Affix signature in the EDCVL;
- 1.3 Fold the ballots in such a manner that its face, except the portion where the SN appears is covered;
- 1.4 Ask the voter to affix his/her signature in the EDCVLs; and
- 1.5 Give the ballot to the voter.

STEP 4. Voter to proceed either to the waiting area or the voting area.

1. Voter shall, using a ballot secrecy folder, fill-out the ballot
2. Fold it in the same manner as it was received.

STEP 5. Voter shall proceed to the Poll Clerk who shall:

1. Verify the serial number of ballots issued against the serial number recorded in EDCVL;
2. Apply indelible ink the voter's right forefinger nail or any other finger nail if there be no right forefinger.

STEP 6. Voter shall finally proceed to the Chairperson who shall:

1. Detach the ballot coupon and deposit the folded ballot in the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots and the detached coupons in the compartment of spoiled ballots;
2. For unaccomplished ballot, announce the fact of refusal, mark the ballot as "abstained" and deposit the same in the compartment for spoiled ballots.

STEP 7. Voter leaves the polling place.

Diagram Labels: ENTRANCE, EXIT, PCVL, WATCHERS, EXIT, STEP 1, STEP 2, STEP 3, STEP 4, STEP 5, STEP 6, STEP 7, Chairmen, Third Member, Poll Clerk, BALLOTS, EDCVL, WAITING AREA, VOTING AREA, Annex - J, If polling place has two (2) doors.

GEORGE ERWIN M. GARCIA
Chairman

AIMEE P. FEROLINO
Commissioner

REY E. BULAY
Commissioner

ERNESTO FERDINAND P. MACEDA, JR.
Commissioner

NELSON J. CELIS
Commissioner

MARIA NORINA S. TANGARO-CASINGAL
Commissioner

NOLI R. PIPO
Commissioner

CERTIFICATION

APPROVED for publication, October 27, 2026.


CONSUELO B. DIOLA
Director IV
Office of the Commission Secretary

This Resolution can be verified at this number (02)85272987, email address comsec@comelec.gov.ph

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES AND PERIOD OF CERTAIN PROHIBITED ACTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NOVEMBER 28, 2028 SPECIAL ELECTION FOR THE MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (CONFIDENTIAL INSPECT OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL)

Michael Sager earns PBB fans’ approval as Alexa Ilacad’s new hosting partner

NETIZENS and *Pinoy Big Brother* fans are raving about **Michael Sager**’s addition to the reality show’s hosting lineup, with many seeing him as a suitable partner for **Alexa Ilacad**, one of the program’s regular hosts.

The Sparkle star officially joined *Pinoy Big Brother Collab 3.0* as the newest member of *Pamilya ni Kuya* during the show’s premiere on Saturday, Oct. 24.

Michael, a former housemate, now takes on the role of “Kapuso Wonder Host ni Kuya,” joining Alexa on *PBB OnlineVerse*, the digital segment that delivers updates, live reactions and behind-the-scenes content from the *Online World*.

Their pairing has caught the attention of viewers, who are looking forward to seeing how the two former housemates work together as hosts. Michael’s addition also gives him the opportunity to reconnect with the franchise from a different perspective, this time guiding viewers through the action inside the house.

His move into hosting follows several opportunities that have helped establish his presence outside acting. Netizens first took notice of his potential as a host at the *2025 Filipino Music Awards*. He later anchored eight consecutive premiere nights and co-hosted the *Gabi ng Parangal* at the 51st Metro Manila Film Festival.

Michael’s latest assignment adds another milestone to his growing hosting career, as he joins the ongoing collaboration between GMA Network and ABS-CBN for the *Pinoy Big Brother* franchise.

As a former housemate, he brings firsthand experience of the competition and the pressures of living inside Kuya’s house. Paired with **Alexa**, he is expected to help deliver the online program’s mix of updates, audience interaction and candid reactions.

Fans can catch *Pinoy Big Brother Collab 3.0* on GMA Network weeknights at 9:35 p.m., Saturdays at 6:15 p.m. and Sundays at 4:55 p.m. The All-Access Livestream is available daily on iWant from 8 a.m. to midnight.



Michael Sager joins the hosting lineup of ‘Pinoy Big Brother Collab 3.0’ as the ‘Kapuso Wonder Host ni Kuya’



Michael Sager (left) co-hosts with Alexa Ilacad on ‘PBB OnlineVerse,’ the digital segment featuring updates, live reactions and behind-the-scenes content

Janine Gutierrez takes on ambitious mystery-thriller in ‘Balaraw’

By Angelica Villanueva

JANINE Gutierrez was drawn to the scale of the story and its layers of mystery when she agreed to star in Netflix’s upcoming series *Balaraw*, a project that brings together Filipino folklore, adventure and family drama.

The actress, who plays Sabina in the mystery-thriller, described the script as an engaging read that made accepting the role an easy decision.

“Honestly, even before I read the script, I was really game. I was super excited,” Janine said during the series’ media launch.



From left: ‘Balaraw’ director and co-creator Rae Red and cast members Nonie Buencamino, Janine Gutierrez, Charlie Dizon, and Ronnie Lazara at the series’ grand press conference

Janine Gutierrez stars as Sabina in ‘Balaraw,’ a Netflix mystery thriller that follows a young woman’s search for her missing mother on an island filled with unsettling secrets

Nico Valdez recalls selling onions, driving for TNVS before showbiz break

By Jasper Valdez

BEFORE landing a role in VMX’s *Dutdot*, newcomer **Nico Valdez** was selling onions door to door, running small businesses and working as a ride-hailing driver to earn a living.

The actor, who plays Jericho in the film, shared his unusual path to show business during the movie’s press conference at Viva Cafe in Cubao, Quezon City.

“I used to do different things. I had businesses, sold onions, and worked as a Move It and Grab driver,” Nico said.

Selling onions was one of the businesses he started himself. He recalled going from house to house in their subdivision to find customers, taking advantage of a period when onion prices were unusually high.

“I was the one who invested in the onion business. I started it myself. Onions were expensive back then, so I sold them door to door in our subdivision,” he explained.

Although he did not disclose how much he earned, Nico said the business was profitable. He also tried other jobs to support himself before eventually turning his attention to acting.

During the interview, he was asked about a reported P4 million loss involving a scam. While the details of the incident were not fully discussed, Nico clarified that the money he had earned came from his previous

businesses and jobs, not from monetizing his social media content.

His interest in show business, however, began long before his VMX debut.

Nico recalled that people had encouraged him to try acting when he was younger. Opportunities had also come his way, but he was hesitant to pursue them.

“People would ask me why I didn’t try becoming an actor. Even when I was younger, there were already opportunities, but I didn’t pursue them because I was afraid. I kept thinking about what might happen,” he said.

That changed this year when he decided to give acting a serious try.

“This year, I told myself I wanted to start. So I finally did,” he added.

Nico also used social media to share fitness-related content, something he described as a way of showing the work he puts into maintaining his physique.

“I work out, so I wanted to express that creatively through my social media content,” he explained.

Now that he has entered show business, Nico said he has stopped working his previous jobs to concentrate on acting.

In *Dutdot*, he plays Jericho, the childhood friend of Mira, portrayed by **Aliya Raymundo**. The film follows a young woman whose decision to get her first tattoo leads to complicated relationships involving her mother and a tattoo artist.

Working with Aliya was a welcome opportunity for Nico, who said he was happy to share scenes with the actress.

While he is still establishing himself in the industry, Nico already has a goal beyond appearing in streaming productions.

“I’m working hard on everything right now. I already have a goal. I want to make a movie that people can watch in cinemas,” he said.

For now, he is focused on gaining acting experience and pursuing opportunities that could eventually bring him to the big screen.

Dutdot is now available for streaming on VMX.



After years of trying different businesses and jobs, Nico Valdez now concentrates on acting as he works toward his goal of appearing in a theatrical film

Part of the appeal was the chance to reunite with director and co-creator **Rae Red** and members of the creative team behind the 2019 film *Babae at Baril*. Gutierrez recalled how much she enjoyed making the film and had hoped to work with the group again.

“I thought that this wouldn’t happen again. Sometimes there are projects that are lightning in a bottle once in your lifetime,” she shared.

Learning that many of the people behind *Balaraw* had also worked on *Babae at Baril* strengthened her interest. Reading the material ultimately sealed the deal.

“When I saw the deck, when I saw the script, even if it was episodes of script, you’ll finish it in one reading because it’s super exciting, super page-turner, and the story is super epic,” Janine explained.

In *Balaraw*, Sabina searches for her mother, Rebecca, played by **Agot Isidro**, who mysteriously disappeared four years earlier. Her search leads her to the island of *Balaraw*, where unsettling secrets and elements of Filipino folklore complicate her quest.

For the actress, the series offers more than supernatural encounters and suspense. Its emotional center is a family story that audiences can relate to, even as the characters enter an unfamiliar world.

“It starts really as a mother-daughter story, which is so sentimental, and everybody will be able to relate,” she said.

Bringing that world to the screen also required the cast and crew to work in challenging locations. Gutierrez recalled filming with **Ronnie Lazaro** in the middle of the sea, where the team spent long hours aboard a boat with limited opportunities to return to shore.

The production’s physical demands made the experience memorable for the actress, who is eager to see the finished series alongside viewers.

She also hopes the project introduces international audiences to the country’s stories and creative talent.

“Hopefully, we’re able to share it with other nationalities and all kinds of people all over the world so that they can see what Filipino culture and Filipino creativity are about,” Janine stated.

Balaraw premieres globally on Netflix today, Oct. 29.



From left: Chester Grecia, director Christopher Novabos, Aliya Raymundo and Nico Valdez at the pres conference for ‘Dutdot,’ a drama centered on complicated relationships that unfold after a young woman gets her first tattoo

PEOPLE

By Nickie Wang

WITH millions of followers hanging on his every word, Dr. **Alvin John Francisco**, popularly known as Doc Alvin, is using his social media influence to make health and wellness advice more accessible, practical, and grounded in science.

Dr. Alvin John Francisco promotes evidence-based health information through his social media platforms

The radiologist, who has built a substantial following across TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, believes that educating people about their health starts with making the message relatable while ensuring that the medical evidence behind it remains sound.

His audience numbers speak for themselves. Doc Alvin has 4.5 million followers on TikTok, 574,000 on Instagram, 1.46 million on YouTube, and 8.5 million on Facebook.

His approach to health education focuses on helping people understand moderation and make informed decisions about their well-being, rather than treating healthy living as a long list of restrictions.

“I think that is one of the reasons so many people connect with me as a doctor,” he told *Manila Standard Lifestyle* in an interview in Marikina over the weekend. “Some people complain that everything seems to be prohibited nowadays. I tell them in my videos that nothing is necessarily forbidden. You can eat anything. It only becomes a problem when you consume too much.”

Doc Alvin believes that understanding personal limits is fundamental to wellness. He wants people to recognize how their everyday habits affect their bodies over time

and learn to make better choices without feeling overwhelmed by restrictions.

He is equally mindful of the responsibility that comes with having a large online audience, especially at a time when virtually anyone can share health advice on social media.

“Of course, I still do my research. I want the messages I share to be evidence-based, properly studied and supported by actual research,” he said.

He acknowledges that some of his videos begin with attention-grabbing hooks designed to draw viewers in. However, he said the important message comes through when people watch until the end. His goal is to make medical information engaging enough to hold people’s attention while ensuring that the substance remains credible.

One principle he consistently advocates is intentional living, particularly when it comes to health and wellness. Doc Alvin believes small decisions can accumulate into habits that affect a person’s physical health, productivity and emotional well-being.

He illustrated this through a familiar scenario: staying up late can leave someone stressed and unable to function properly at work the following day. Work difficulties can then lead to more stress, which may

Better health starts with small choices

How Doc Alvin uses his platforms to share evidence-based health advice and encourage Filipinos to make informed choices about their daily habits



Doc Alvin celebrates the brand's first anniversary with a pickleball friendly tournament attended by social media personalities and health enthusiasts

reactive,” he said. “When we are reactive, we only look for solutions when something happens or when we start feeling something unusual. But when we are intentional, we put effort into our small decisions. I think that is a good starting point for sustaining our wellness journey.”

The same principle applies to exercise. Whether lifting weights at the gym or completing a single repetition, he believes people benefit from being deliberate about what they do.

“Small decisions matter in the long term,” the medical content creator reiterated.

The philosophy also informed the development of Healthmate, a supplement brand he helped formulate with other doctors. Launched a year ago, the business was conceived as a daily wellness companion, drawing partly on his personal experience with supplements.

Doc Alvin remains active in radiology while managing the business. Healthmate’s current product line includes Harmony, marketed for women’s wellness; Defense, for daily supplementation and immune support; Glow,

for beauty support; and Endurance, for men’s vitality and stamina.

The company plans to introduce additional products, including alternatives to capsules, which Doc Alvin said some consumers find inconvenient. He also hopes to expand overseas, depending on the availability of suitable partners and the timing.

He identified research, ingredient quality, and affordability as the principles guiding the brand’s development. While he serves as one of its public faces, he said he wants Healthmate to build an identity independent of his social media following.

“I want Healthmate to have its own identity,” he said, citing repeat purchases and customer reviews as indicators of the brand’s progress.

Skin science meets global investment at Manila roundtable



Medical practitioners and industry representatives attend a roundtable organized by Pan Pacific Aesthetic Institute Foundation Inc., LAMELEX, Golden Visa Central and Manila House

DERMATOLOGISTS, cosmetic surgeons, and aesthetic practitioners gathered at Manila House Private Club in Bonifacio Global City for a roundtable discussion on skin barrier recovery, aesthetic medicine, and international investment opportunities.

The event was organized through a collaboration among Pan Pacific Aesthetic Institute Foundation Inc. (PPAIFI), skincare company LAMELEX, Golden Visa Central (GVC) and Manila House. The program combined a medical presentation on post-procedure skin care with a discussion on financial planning and overseas investment.

Vicky Luis, founder and president of Golden Visa Central, discussed international investment opportunities and wealth diversification, including financial planning options for medical

LAMELEX presented its skincare formulations and Multi-Lamellar Vesicle (MLV) technology, which is designed to support the skin’s natural barrier structure and the delivery of ingredients.

Catherine Andres-Gamo, CEO of Pretty Skin Lamelin Philippines, discussed the company’s skin barrier advocacy and encouraged medical practitioners to promote greater awareness of barrier-focused skin care in their clinics.

The presentation included professional skincare products, testers, and educational materials on skin barrier care and MLV technology. Participants also received product kits



The program covers post-procedure skin care, skin barrier repair and financial planning for medical professionals

professionals looking beyond their clinical careers.

The discussion also featured a presentation by Dr. **Finesse Angelica F. Evangelista**, who delivered “The Science of Recovery: Optimizing Barrier Repair in Post-Procedure and Compromised Skin.”

Her presentation examined the role of skin barrier integrity in recovery following dermatologic and aesthetic procedures, including the importance of appropriate care for compromised skin.

for further evaluation.

The gathering provided an opportunity for representatives of the four organizations to discuss potential partnerships and exchange ideas on medical education, skincare innovation, and professional development.

Through the collaboration, the organizers sought to connect developments in aesthetic care with discussions on financial planning and opportunities for practitioners beyond their medical practice.



PascualLab continues to expand its health and wellness offerings as it celebrates eight decades in the industry

Health and wellness products evolve with Filipino families

PASCUAL Laboratories Inc. (PascualLab) is marking its 80th anniversary in 2026 with new health and wellness products, continuing a business established in 1946 to address the health needs of Filipinos in the postwar period.

Founded by Isosceles and Leonora Pascual, the company has developed products across several health categories, including Poten-Cee vitamin C, Ascof Lagundi, C-Lium Fibre and OraCare Mouthrinse.

Its latest product offerings include MyColla-C, a collagen and vitamin C supplement, and Alevia-B, a combination of paracetamol and vitamins B1, B6 and B12 for mild to moderate muscle, joint and nerve pain.

The company also relaunched Poten-Cee Gummies, an alternative format for vitamin C supplementation, and introduced Pelargonium sidoides DC. Root (PELARGO), a product intended to provide relief from common cold symptoms.

PascualLab’s anniversary theme, “#GalingThatKeepsGoing,” draws on the company’s history and its stated vision of supporting strong, healthy families. As part of its anniversary activities, the company offered discount on selected products through a major drugstore chain.

PascualLab said it would continue developing health and wellness products as consumer needs evolve, while maintaining its focus on quality, accessibility and care.