



PHILIPPINES SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: May 19, 2026 - May 26, 2026

This report was produced using open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Executive Summary

The Philippines experienced a period of heightened security activity from May 19 to May 26, 2026, marked by escalating maritime tensions in the South China Sea and significant advancements in defense alliances and modernization efforts. Manila adopted an increasingly assertive stance against China's activities, while simultaneously strengthening its military capabilities through joint exercises and defense acquisitions with key allies. Cybersecurity emerged as a critical national security concern, with Philippine organizations facing a surge in cyberattacks. These developments underscore the Philippines' strategic pivot towards a more robust defense posture amidst complex regional geopolitical dynamics, aiming to protect its territorial integrity and enhance its overall security.

Key Security Developments

- Military Activities and Exercises

The Balikatan 2026 joint military exercise, the largest ever, concluded on May 22, 2026, in Manila. This exercise involved approximately 17,000 troops from the United States, Philippines, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Canada, and France, focusing on strengthening collective readiness and maritime defense capabilities. A significant component included live-fire drills off the western Northern Luzon coast, where decommissioned Philippine Navy vessels were sunk using a Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Type-88 surface-to-ship missile and U.S. Army High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

The "Kasangga" 2026-1 joint military exercise between the Philippine Army and Australian troops commenced on May 26, 2026, at Camp Elias Angeles in Pili, Camarines Sur. These drills, scheduled to run until June 21, aim to enhance interoperability in areas such as field training, mission planning, intelligence operations, jungle warfare, medical operations, and civil-military activities.

- Defense Policy and Strategic Shifts

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner issued a warning on May 14, 2026, about facing a "political war, economic war, and information war" in the South China Sea, urging the country to adopt a "wartime mindset" even in the absence of direct military conflict. This rhetoric is accompanied by a systematic campaign to alter the status quo in the Philippines' favor, including military escalation and infrastructure militarization on occupied features.

The Philippine government has formally elevated cybersecurity threats to national security risks, linking cyberattacks, misinformation, and data breaches to ongoing geopolitical tensions. This shift, highlighted at the GovMedia Summit 2026, means cyber incidents are now escalated to Cabinet and even Presidential attention.

- Diplomatic Relations

Japan and the Philippines advanced plans for the transfer of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) warships to Manila, as announced in May 2026 by Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. This follows Tokyo's lifting of its 80-year ban on exporting defense assets and includes discussions for up to six Abukuma-class destroyers and TC-90 aircraft.

Philippine and United States officials held discussions on cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and defense-related technology cooperation on May 23, 2026, at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. This collaboration aims to modernize the Philippines' military capabilities and strengthen its cyber defenses.

On May 18, 2026, the Philippines and the Netherlands issued a Joint Statement on their 75th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations, affirming their commitment to strengthening partnerships, including cooperation in defense/cybersecurity and maritime security.

- Security Incidents and Threats

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported on May 22, 2026, that China conducted illegal maritime research near the oil- and gas-rich Reed Bank within Manila's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea. A Chinese vessel, the Xiang Yang Hong 33, was spotted deploying a service boat toward Iroquois Reef for unauthorized operations.

Between May 4 and 11, Philippine forces tracked 35 Chinese vessels across key areas in the South China Sea, including 17 near Huangyan Dao (Scarborough Shoal), nine of which were China Coast Guard ships and eight People's Liberation Army Navy vessels. Other Chinese vessels were also observed near Ren'ai Jiao (Second Thomas Shoal), Xianbin Jiao, and Zhongye Dao.

During the recent "Atin Ito" protest voyage in the West Philippine Sea, Chinese-made drones intended to document the mission reportedly failed to take off. This incident raised concerns about technological vulnerability and potential "kill switches" embedded in foreign technology, prompting calls to ramp up the Philippines' cyber defense capabilities.

Authorities are currently managing a radiation contamination incident at a steel plant in Misamis Oriental. This incident led to the arrest of dozens of Chinese nationals, and the discovery of over 500,000 metric tons of substandard steel bars, raising health and safety concerns.

- Defense Acquisitions and Arms Deals

The Philippines is set to receive Abukuma-class destroyers and TC-90 aircraft from Japan, with discussions advancing for the transfer of up to six destroyers.

The proposed defense budget for fiscal year 2026 is PHP 299.3 billion (approximately USD 5.2 billion), marking a 16% increase over the 2025 allocation. This budget aims to accelerate Horizon 3 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program, funding multirole fighter aircraft, airborne early warning platforms, and aerial refueling tankers.

The Philippine Navy expects the delivery of an HDC-3100 corvette from HD Hyundai Heavy Industries in 2026, with a contract also in place for six offshore patrol vessels.

- Cybersecurity

Organizations in the Philippines are experiencing an escalation in cyberattacks, with an average of 4,003 attacks per week per organization over the last six months, significantly higher than the APAC average of 2,870. The manufacturing sector is particularly vulnerable, facing an alarming average of 9,146 attacks per week.

Smart Communications reported blocking nearly 1 billion scam and phishing text messages in the first quarter of 2026. This surge is attributed to fraudsters increasingly using fake cell towers and signal hijacking tools to bypass traditional telecom filters.

The Department of National Defense (DND) is establishing the Armed Forces of the Philippines Cyber Command and the Office of the Undersecretary for Information Systems and Cybersecurity to strengthen cyber resilience and expand the use of AI in cybersecurity response.

- Maritime and Border Security

Satellite imagery confirms ongoing infrastructure work to extend the runway on Thitu Island (Pag-asa) from 1.3 kilometers to 1.5 kilometers, and port expansion on Nanshan Island (Lawak). These projects, described by Philippine officials as civilian initiatives, are seen as enhancing military presence and maritime situational awareness in the disputed Spratly Islands.

- Counter-terrorism

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) reported significant gains, with nearly 10,000 projects funded under the Barangay Development Program (BDP) benefiting over 15.85 million Filipinos. The National Amnesty Program has also drawn 13,647 applicants, reflecting increased participation in government reintegration efforts.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Task Force on Anti-Terrorism secured three convictions against terrorists, marking progress in combating terrorism under

Republic Act (RA) 9372.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

The Philippines' security developments from May 19-26, 2026, significantly impact regional stability, particularly within the context of the South China Sea dispute. Manila's increasingly assertive actions, including infrastructure militarization on disputed features and a declared "wartime mindset," have heightened maritime friction with China. This stance, while aimed at asserting sovereign rights, risks turning the region into a flashpoint and complicates efforts to negotiate a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, despite the Philippines holding the rotating chair of ASEAN in 2026.

The strengthening of defense alliances with major powers like the United States and Japan is a critical aspect of the Philippines' strategy. The conclusion of the largest-ever Balikatan exercise, involving multiple allied nations, and the advancement of warship transfers from Japan, demonstrate a concerted effort to bolster deterrence and collective security in the Indo-Pacific. This deepening alignment is viewed by China with suspicion, as Beijing perceives it as part of a broader containment strategy by the U.S. The Philippines' central role in ASEAN security affairs and its strategic geography place it at the forefront of the intensifying great power competition between the U.S. and China.

Furthermore, the Philippines' vulnerability to external geopolitical shocks, particularly from the Middle East conflict, has been acutely exposed. The potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz, given the Philippines' near-total reliance on imported Middle Eastern petroleum, has triggered a national energy emergency and raised concerns about political instability. This highlights the interconnectedness of global security challenges and their direct impact on the Philippines' domestic stability and economic well-being. The ongoing discussions with the U.S. on cybersecurity and AI cooperation also reflect a broader trend of integrating advanced technologies into defense strategies to counter evolving threats.

Military and Defense Analysis

The Philippines is actively pursuing a Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept, which is reflected in its force posture and modernization programs. The focus is on enhancing air surveillance, coastal defense capabilities, and acquiring additional maritime assets to protect territorial integrity and respond across all domains: land, sea, air, and cyberspace. The recent infrastructure upgrades on Thitu Island (Pag-asa)

and Nanshan Island (Lawak), including runway extension and port expansion, are concrete steps to strengthen the physical presence and logistical capabilities in the disputed South China Sea.

Defense spending trends indicate a significant increase, with the proposed PHP 299.3 billion (USD 5.2 billion) defense budget for fiscal year 2026 representing a 16% increase over the previous year. This marks the third consecutive year of double-digit growth in military spending, underscoring the urgency to counter mounting tensions in the South China Sea. This increased allocation is crucial for accelerating Horizon 3 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program.

Capability developments are robust, with planned acquisitions including multirole fighter aircraft, airborne early warning platforms, and aerial refueling tankers, which will significantly transform the country's airpower doctrine. The ongoing delivery of platforms like BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, C-295 transport aircraft, and S-70i Black Hawk helicopters further strengthens the Philippine Air Force and Navy. The expected delivery of an HDC-3100 corvette and six offshore patrol vessels from HD Hyundai Heavy Industries will also bolster naval capabilities. The emphasis on interoperability is evident through large-scale exercises like Balikatan 2026, which involved seven nations and showcased advanced command and control systems and air and missile defense capabilities.

Outlook and Forecast

In the short-term (1-3 months), the Philippines is likely to experience continued elevated maritime tensions in the South China Sea. The assertive stance adopted by Manila, coupled with China's persistent presence and activities around disputed features, suggests that confrontations, though likely non-kinetic, will remain frequent. The ongoing infrastructure development on Philippine-occupied islands will likely draw further reactions from Beijing. Simultaneously, the Philippines will continue to deepen its security alliances and conduct joint military exercises with partners, further solidifying its external defense posture. Cybersecurity threats are also expected to remain high, with a continued focus on protecting critical infrastructure and government systems.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas will primarily revolve around the South China Sea, specifically Scarborough Shoal (Huangyan Dao), Second Thomas Shoal (Ren'ai Jiao), Thitu Island (Pag-asa), and the Reed Bank. Any significant escalation of Chinese maritime militia or coast guard activities in these areas, particularly those that directly impede Philippine resupply missions or infrastructure projects, could quickly become a flashpoint. The potential for miscalculation or accidental collision remains a significant risk. Domestically, while counter-terrorism efforts show progress, the underlying

vulnerabilities to cyberattacks, especially targeting critical sectors, pose a persistent risk to national security and economic stability.

Indicators to monitor include the frequency and nature of Chinese maritime patrols and actions in the West Philippine Sea, the progress of defense equipment transfers from allies like Japan, and the outcomes of ongoing cybersecurity cooperation initiatives with the United States. Any new announcements regarding defense acquisitions or significant shifts in diplomatic rhetoric from either the Philippines or China should also be closely watched. Furthermore, the impact of global events, particularly those affecting energy supply chains, will be a crucial indicator for the Philippines' overall stability.

Strategic recommendations for the Philippines include continuing its multi-pronged approach of strengthening alliances while simultaneously investing in indigenous defense capabilities. This involves accelerating the modernization program to acquire advanced platforms and systems that enhance maritime domain awareness, air defense, and deterrence. A robust, prevention-first, and AI-powered cybersecurity strategy is paramount to counter the escalating digital threats. Diplomatically, the Philippines should leverage its ASEAN chairmanship to advocate for a binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, while also exploring diversified energy sources and strengthening economic resilience to mitigate external shocks.

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ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

Source: GMA Network

- [Marines in Senate shooting test negative for gunpowder residue -- PH Navy](#) (2026-05-26 05:09)

Personnel of the Philippine Marine Corps deployed during the gunfire incident at the Senate premises on May 13 tested negative for gunpowder residue, the Philippine Navy said Tuesday.

- [2 PAF pilots in Benguet crash to be laid to rest at Libingan ng mga Bayani](#) (2026-05-26 04:43)

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) on Tuesday said the two pilots who died in an aircraft mishap in Benguet will be laid to rest at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Taguig City.

- [Con-ass plot claim may be intended to divert public attention -- Castro](#) (2026-05-26 04:38)

Palace Press Officer Undersecretary Claire Castro on Tuesday dismissed allegations that the administration is pushing for charter change through a constituent assembly (con-ass), saying the issue may be intended to divert public attention from other issues, including the looming impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Ombudsman: Marcoleta unjustly enriched self through P75-M 'gift'](#) (2026-05-26 04:07)

Former Sagip party-list representative and now Senator Rodante Marcoleta unjustly enriched himself by allegedly accepting an “unconscionable” P75 million gift from three individuals, according to the Office of the Ombudsman.

- [NBI asks PNP to cancel Bato dela Rosa's firearms license](#) (2026-05-26 03:55)

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has formally asked the Philippine National Police (PNP) to immediately cancel the firearms license of Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa.

- [Chinese vessels in West Philippine Sea increased to 36 in past week](#) (2026-05-26 03:53)

The number of Chinese vessels spotted in some West Philippine Sea (WPS) features has

increased to 36 in the past week, based on the data from Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson for WPS Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad Tuesday.

- [Farmer groups support bill restoring NFA role in rice market](#) (2026-05-26 03:34)

Farmer groups have expressed support for a bill that would allow the state-run National Food Authority (NFA) to intervene in the rice market by selling rice or buying palay from farmers to prevent unfair price increases.

- [Ombudsman, NBI, and AMLC to testify in VP Sara's impeachment trial --Ridon](#) (2026-05-26 03:18)

The House prosecutors in charge of the Article of Impeachment on unexplained wealth has identified several witnesses that will be presented during the Impeachment Trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [DOJ's Vida asks Bato dela Rosa to surrender: Heed the call of the rule of law](#) (2026-05-26 03:16)

Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida on Tuesday appealed to Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to surrender to authorities, following his disappearance again from the public eye amid the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against him.

- [Regular voters rise to 71M ahead of BSKE 2026 --Comelec](#) (2026-05-26 01:55)

The number of registered regular voters has increased to around 71 million ahead of the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections (BSKE), the Commission on Elections (Comelec) said Tuesday.

- [SC associate justice: No need for PH-issued warrant for ICC cases](#) (2026-05-25 22:05)

For Supreme Court (SC) Associate Justice Alfredo Benjamin Caguioa, there is no need for an arrest warrant from a Filipino judge in order to effect an arrest for cases under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

- [DSWD: Special payouts for P5k cash aid for PUV drivers from May 26 to 29, 2026](#) (2026-05-25 21:30)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will hold special payouts for unclaimed cash relief assistance for public utility vehicles (PUVs) and additional Metro Manila jeepney and tricycle drivers this week.

- [Zubiri apologizes to Inday Badiday's family for mentioning her in Senate debate](#) (2026-05-25 19:16)

Senator Juan Miguel “Migz” Zubiri on Monday apologized to the family of the late television host and journalist Lourdes Carvajal - more popularly known as “Inday Badiday” - for mentioning her name in objecting to Senator Imee Marcos' video alleging that the current administration is pushing for Charter change.

- [Cardinal David criticizes Cayetano's defense of Duterte's drug war as pro-life](#) (2026-05-25 18:12)

Kalookan Archbishop Cardinal Pablo David criticized connecting the Duterte administration's war on drugs as a human rights campaign, as part of pro-life efforts by Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano.

- [LOOK: Duterte's signed request to skip first status conference on drug war raps](#) (2026-05-25 17:38)

Former President Rodrigo Duterte has formally waived his right to be present at the first status conference of his alleged crimes against humanity charges scheduled on May 27, 2026 before the International Criminal Court (ICC).

- [SC explains why it junked Bato dela Rosa's TRO plea](#) (2026-05-25 16:16)

The Supreme Court explained on Monday why it denied the request of Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa for a temporary restraining order.

- [Casino Plus secures P1B surety bond for player protection in the Philippines](#) (2026-05-25 15:48)

Online casino platform Casino Plus on Monday said it has secured a P1-billion surety bond from PhilFirst Insurance to boost player protection and uphold its obligations, as the Philippines continues to face rising costs.

- [Marcoleta says P75M plunder complaint aimed to silence his voice](#) (2026-05-25 15:33)

Sen. Rodante Marcoleta said in a privilege speech that the plunder and indirect bribery complaint against him was meant to silence him from speaking about the flood control anomalies and ahead of the impeachment trial of his ally, Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [No jackpot winners in May 25, 2026 major lotto draws - PCSO](#) (2026-05-25 14:29)

No one won the jackpot prizes in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Monday night, May 25, 2026.

- [EXPLAINER: What is a precautionary hold departure order?](#) (2026-05-25 14:00)

The Supreme Court (SC) approved in 2018 a rule on the issuance of PHDO against suspected criminals in cases where the minimum penalty is at least six years and a day.

- [How 5 SC associate justices voted against ruling that denied Bato Dela Rosa's TRO](#) (2026-05-25 13:54)

Five Supreme Court (SC) associate justices had dissenting opinions on the High Court's denial of Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa's request for a temporary restraining order (TRO) and/or status quo ante order (SQAQO) in connection with his possible arrest based on the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

- [7 UP graduates rank top 10 in May 2026 Chemical Engineers licensure exam](#) (2026-05-25 12:33)

Seven graduates of the University of the Philippines emerged in the Top 10 passers of the Chemical Engineers computer-based licensure examination, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) announced.

- [Precautionary hold departure order requested for Marcoleta, Mike Defensor](#) (2026-05-25 11:48)

The Office of the Ombudsman has asked the Sandiganbayan to issue a precautionary hold departure order against Senator Rodante Marcoleta, former Anakalusugan party-list Rep. Mike Defensor, and two other businessmen.

- [Imee Marcos accuses admin of cha-cha, term extension](#) (2026-05-25 11:35)

Senator Imee Marcos on Monday accused the current administration of pushing for charter change and a possible extension of officials' terms, prompting sharp objections from several senators who sought to have her presentation stricken from the Senate records.

- [Senate elects Marcoleta and Jinggoy as Blue Ribbon Committee vice chairs](#) (2026-05-25 10:35)

The Senate has elected Senators Rodante Marcoleta and Jinggoy Estrada as vice chairmen of the

Senate Committee on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations, or the Blue Ribbon Committee.

- [Mike Defensor, Sonza, ex-Marines file counter-affidavits before DOJ](#) (2026-05-25 10:06)

Former AnaKalusugan party-list Rep. Mike Defensor, social media personality Jay Sonza, and 18 former Marines and soldiers on Monday filed their counter-affidavits on the complaints filed against them with the Department of Justice (DOJ).

- [MARINA launches Service Contracting Program for maritime sector](#) (2026-05-25 09:55)

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) has launched its nationwide Service Contracting Program for the maritime sector Monday at the Batangas Pier.

- [DENR: Safeguards in place for Manila, Palawan tree-cutting activities](#) (2026-05-25 09:04)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Monday said strict environmental safeguards and rehabilitation measures are in place for tree-cutting activities along Quirino Avenue in Manila and at the Berong Nickel Project in Palawan.

- [Alan Cayetano asserts Senate majority remains solid amid leadership talks](#) (2026-05-25 08:55)

The 13-member Senate majority bloc remains "solid" amid talks of possible leadership change, Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano said Monday.

- [Who is Francis Tolentino?](#) (2026-05-25 08:40)

Former senator Francis Tolentino has been named acting secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

- [Malacañang to give P30,000 aid to Parola fire victims in Binondo](#) (2026-05-25 08:07)

The Office of the President will distribute P30,000 in assistance to families displaced by the massive fire that hit a residential area at the Parola compound in Binondo over the weekend, Malacañang said Monday.

- [Hontiveros on Senate leadership shakeup: 'Status quo'](#) (2026-05-25 08:05)

Senator Risa Hontiveros on Monday said the situation at the Senate remains unchanged despite

rumors of another leadership shakeup.

- [PNP to act on any request to revoke Bato dela Rosa's gun license](#) (2026-05-25 07:47)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday said it would evaluate and act on any request for the revocation of the license of firearms registered to Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa.

- [Metro Manila crimes down 39% in past week -- NCRPO](#) (2026-05-25 06:56)

The number of index crimes recorded in Metro Manila dropped by 39% from May 18 to 24, 2026, compared with the same period last year, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Monday.

- [Marcos' Japan visit to focus on maritime security, energy, defense, investments](#) (2026-05-25 06:35)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos will embark on a state visit to Tokyo, Japan, from May 26 to 29, 2026, at the invitation of the Japanese government, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) spokesperson Analyn Ratonel said on Monday.

- [Lawmaker eyes free therapy sessions, P4K monthly allowance for persons with autism](#) (2026-05-25 06:34)

A bill providing for free therapy sessions and a monthly allowance of P4,000 for persons with autism, among other benefits for them, has been proposed in the House of Representatives.

- [Francis Tolentino named as new acting labor secretary](#) (2026-05-25 05:54)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has appointed former senator Francis Tolentino as the new acting secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment.

- [Ralph Recto faces plunder complaint over P60-B Philhealth fund transfer](#) (2026-05-25 05:41)

Health advocate Dr. Tony Leachon on Monday filed plunder and technical malversation complaints against Executive Secretary Ralph Recto and other Cabinet officials over the transfer to the National Treasury of the P60-billion excess funds of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. and P107 billion of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation funds.

- [Resolution urging Bato Dela Rosa's surrender now at rules committee -- Hontiveros](#) (2026-05-25 05:36)

The resolution urging Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa to surrender to authorities and avail himself of legal remedies has been referred to the Senate Committee on Rules, according to Senator Risa Hontiveros.

- [Bato Dela Rosa's wife urges courts to block senator's transfer to The Hague](#) (2026-05-25 05:16)

The wife of Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa has appealed to the judiciary not to allow her husband to be brought to The Hague following the issuance of an arrest warrant against him by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

- [Marcos assures aid to Parola Compound fire victims in Manila](#) (2026-05-25 04:17)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday assured continued government assistance to families displaced by the massive fire that hit a residential community in Parola Compound, Binondo, Manila over the weekend.

- [PMA welcomes 367 new cadets under Class 2030](#) (2026-05-25 04:09)

The Philippine Military Academy (PMA) formally welcomed its newest batch of cadets after conducting oath-taking and reception rites for 367 incoming cadets under Class 2030.

- [Makati Business Club calls for independent Senate leadership](#) (2026-05-25 03:12)

The Makati Business Club (MBC), one of the country's largest business groups, emphasized the need for an independent and credible Senate leadership as the chamber convenes as an impeachment court to try Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [OCTA survey: 76% of Filipinos committed to defending PH territory, WPS](#) (2026-05-25 01:22)

Around 76% of adult Filipinos said they are willing to support the government in defending the country's territory and sovereign rights including in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), an OCTA Research survey showed.

- [Benguet farmers struggle with low vegetable prices, oppose planned carrot imports](#) (2026-05-24 16:03)

Farmers in Benguet are facing heavy losses as cabbage prices continue to fall due to oversupply and rising transport costs, while concerns grow over the government's plan to import 6,000

metric tons of carrots.

- [Albay bettor wins P25M prize to Superlotto 6/49 - PCSO](#) (2026-05-24 14:55)

A bettor bagged the P25 million jackpot prize to the Superlotto 6/49 during the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) draw on Sunday, May 24, 2026.

- [Marcos visits wake of Air Force personnel killed in aircraft crash](#) (2026-05-24 14:24)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday visited the wake of the two Philippine Air Force (PAF) personnel who were killed in a crash in Tuba, Benguet on May 20.

- [SC clarifies: No ruling yet on Rodrigo Duterte, Bato Dela Rosa main petition](#) (2026-05-24 10:39)

The Supreme Court on Sunday clarified that it has yet to rule on the main petition filed by former president Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Senator Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa, amid public discussions surrounding the case.

- [Conti: Alan Cayetano drug war support puts Rodrigo Duterte ICC release at risk; Robin Padilla accountable for Bato dela Rosa escape](#) (2026-05-24 09:28)

Senate President Allan Peter Cayetano's latest statement defending the Duterte administration's bloody war on drugs campaign could jeopardize former president Rodrigo Duterte's bid for release, International Criminal Court Assistant to Counsel Atty. Kristina Conti said Sunday.

- [Lacson confirms efforts to change Senate leadership](#) (2026-05-24 09:22)

Senator Panfilo “Ping” Lacson on Sunday confirmed that efforts are underway to change the Senate leadership, as the chamber recently convened as an impeachment court for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Lacson urges better police intel in hunt for Bato dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-24 07:30)

Senator Panfilo Lacson on Sunday urged law enforcement agencies to strengthen intelligence efforts to locate Senator Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa, who is facing an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

- [PNP to secure missing sabungeros' kin amid alleged pressure from Atong Ang camp](#) (2026-05-24 07:04)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Sunday said it is prepared to provide security to the families of missing cockfight enthusiasts following reports of alleged pressure from the camp of businessman Charlie 'Atong' Ang, who has been tagged as the alleged mastermind in their abduction.

- [Labor group disputes workplace happiness report](#) (2026-05-24 05:51)

A labor group on Sunday questioned the validity of a recently published workplace happiness report by an online job search company, saying widespread labor rights violations, job insecurity, and low wages cast doubt on claims that Filipino workers are generally happy.

- [Bato dela Rosa not armed and dangerous --Atty. Jimmy Bondoc](#) (2026-05-24 05:40)

Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa is not armed and dangerous, his legal counsel Atty. Jimmy Bondoc said Sunday.

- [No records of Bato dela Rosa leaving PH, says BI](#) (2026-05-24 04:34)

There are no records of Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa leaving the country through international entry and exit ports amid the ongoing search for him, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) said Sunday.

- [DOH: WHO recognizes PH efforts to strengthen global workforce](#) (2026-05-24 03:21)

The Department of Health (DOH) on Sunday said the World Health Organization recognized the Philippines' efforts to strengthen the global health workforce and its efforts to ensure the world is safe from the spread of viruses.

- [PNP to Bato dela Rosa: Honor peaceful search, warrant enforcement](#) (2026-05-24 02:12)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Sunday urged Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa to honor his former duty as police chief and ensure a peaceful outcome in the authorities' efforts to locate and arrest him.

- [BI: No hold departure order yet vs Bato dela Rosa; only lookout bulletin in effect](#) (2026-05-24 02:05)

The Bureau of Immigration on Sunday said a hold departure order against Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa has yet to be issued, as the former Philippine National Police chief remains under an Immigration Lookout Bulletin Order while facing an arrest warrant from the

International Criminal Court.

- [Motorcycle taxi riders get cash aid as fuel hike looms anew](#) (2026-05-23 18:28)

Thousands of motorcycle taxi riders lined up in Manila to receive cash assistance from the government as another increase in fuel prices is expected next week, according to a report by 24 Oras Weekend.

- [Discussion: Filipino students are ready to lead--but why are they leaving?](#) (2026-05-23 15:32)

In classrooms across the Philippines, students are trained to think critically, communicate clearly, and contribute to society. Yet for many, the path forward still points elsewhere.

- [Bettor from Cavite wins P24.1M Lotto 6/42 jackpot](#) (2026-05-23 15:15)

A bettor from Cavite bagged the P24.1 million jackpot in the Lotto 6/42 draw on Saturday night, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

- [Comelec weighs Ombudsman action on Marcoleta donation](#) (2026-05-23 14:39)

The Commission on Elections said it may coordinate with the Office of the Ombudsman over issues surrounding a P75-million donation received by senatorial candidate Rodolfo Marcoleta.

- [NBI calls Bato dela Rosa 'armed and dangerous' amid manhunt](#) (2026-05-23 13:43)

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has tagged Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa as "armed and dangerous" as authorities carrying the arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) continue their efforts to locate him.

- [Teodoro rejects peace talks even after 'Toboso 19' deaths](#) (2026-05-23 13:28)

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. said the government is no longer open to peace talks with members of the New People's Army, according to a report on "24 Oras Weekend" on Saturday.

- [Alan Cayetano urges independent probe into Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-23 10:09)

Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano on Saturday called for an impartial investigation into the shooting incident on the Senate premises last week.

- [Mans Carpio files perjury raps against Trillanes over House testimony](#) (2026-05-23 09:04)

Manases Carpio has filed a perjury complaint against former Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, accusing him of making false statements under oath during a House hearing last month in connection with the impeachment raps against Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [PUV service contracting payouts to drivers are operators' duty -- LTFRB](#) (2026-05-23 08:26)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said Saturday payouts for duly documented trips under the government's service contracting program have already been disbursed to operators, who in turn must provide just compensation to public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers still awaiting their payment.

- [Shari'ah Bar exams 2026 set for May 24, 27](#) (2026-05-23 08:12)

The Supreme Court of the Philippines is set to administer the 2026 Shari'ah Special Bar Examinations (SSBE) on May 24 and May 27 across four local testing centers nationwide.

- [AFP chief honors fallen airmen in Benguet crash](#) (2026-05-23 07:18)

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Romeo Brawner Jr. visited the wake of the two airmen who died in a training flight crash in Tuba, Benguet.

- [#1 in the Philippines: GMA News surges to Top 3 worldwide in latest Tubular Labs rankings](#) (2026-05-23 06:57)

GMA News secured the No. 3 spot worldwide and emerged as the Philippines' No. 1 news publisher under the News and Politics category in the Tubular Leadership Worldwide Rankings for April 2026.

- [Santacruzán is more than pageantry, spectacle, Cardinal Advincula says](#) (2026-05-23 06:38)

The Santacruzán should be seen as more than a colorful procession or spectacle, but a reminder of the importance of the Catholic devotion to its flock, Manila Cardinal Jose Advincula has said.

- [More ICC arrest warrants coming out soon, NBI says](#) (2026-05-23 04:44)

More personalities may soon face arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court, according to National Bureau of Investigation Director Melvin Matibag.

- [No Ebola case in PH, DOH says](#) (2026-05-23 03:55)

The Department of Health on Saturday said there are no cases of Ebola in the Philippines.

- [Senate minority bloc wants Sherwin Gatchalian as new Senate president](#) (2026-05-23 01:02)

Members of the Senate minority bloc who refer to themselves as SB-11 or Solid Bloc 11 prefer to have Senator Sherwin "Win" Gatchalian as Senate president, Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan said Saturday.

- [Carpio says Philippine courts unnecessary for ICC arrest warrant for Bato dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-22 15:59)

Philippine courts are no longer needed for the service of the warrant of arrest that the International Criminal Court issued for Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa, who is facing charges as a co-conspirator of former President Rodrigo Duterte in the crimes against humanity of murder raps now before the tribunal.

- [ICC chamber orders continued detention of Rodrigo Duterte](#) (2026-05-22 15:30)

Former President Rodrigo Duterte will continue to be detained in The Hague pending the start of his trial for alleged crimes against humanity, the International Criminal Court (ICC) said Friday.

- [Pia Cayetano says she has 'moved on' from Senate emotional breakdown](#) (2026-05-22 15:26)

Senator Pia Cayetano jumped on a social media trend on Friday night. This, after her emotional breakdown in the Senate last Wednesday went viral online. “Kumusta na po kayong lahat? Balita ko trending na raw po ang 'kumusta ka?' Kaya ako magtatanong sa bawat isa sa inyo, kumusta ka?” Cayetano said in a Facebook live.

- [China helicopter reportedly approached Dutch warship en route to PH](#) (2026-05-22 14:22)

A helicopter of the Chinese navy approached the Netherlands' warship while on its way to Manila, the Dutch ship's commanding officer said on Friday.

- [No winners of major lotto draws on Friday, May 22, 2026](#) (2026-05-22 14:07)

There were no winners of either of the major lotto jackpots offered on Friday, May 22, 2026, the

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) announced.

- [Missing sabungeros' kin claim Atong Ang lawyer asking families to avoid hearings](#) (2026-05-22 13:34)

Loved ones of some of the missing sabungeros denied that they were the ones who initiated a meeting with Atong Ang's lawyer Atty. Caroline Cruz sometime in April.

- [Claire Castro mimics Pia Cayetano in personal vlog, scores gaslighting after Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-22 12:17)

Undersecretary Claire Castro, in her personal vlog, appeared to mimic Sen. Pia Cayetano's emotional manifestation in the plenary earlier this week, when the lawmaker said no one from her colleagues in the former majority asked in their group chat how the senators still in the premises were doing amid the Senate shooting.

- [Bill seeks 5% discount for students on tuition, supplies](#) (2026-05-22 12:01)

A bill seeking to grant a mandatory 5% discount for underprivileged students on tuition, food, medicine, school supplies, and gadgets has been filed in the Senate.

- [Marcoleta facing plunder, bribery complaints at Ombudsman](#) (2026-05-22 11:02)

The Field Investigation Bureau of the Ombudsman has recommended the filing of plunder and bribery charges against Senator Rodante Marcoleta for receiving P75 million in campaign donations last year.

- [EXPLAINER: What is IELTS? Here's why Filipinos need it for studying or working abroad](#) (2026-05-22 10:59)

IELTS is a globally recognized exam accepted by universities, employers, and immigration authorities in countries such as the U.S., UK, Canada, and Australia.

- [Gov't execs who helped Bato dela Rosa escape face ban from public office -- Carpio](#) (2026-05-22 10:58)

Government officials who will be found guilty of helping Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa escape the Senate following the May 13 shooting at the legislative chamber will be barred from holding public office, former Supreme Court senior associate justice Antonio Carpio said Friday.

- [CBCP issues prayer for a 'nation at a difficult crossroads'](#) (2026-05-22 09:31)

Filipino bishops have issued a prayer that would be recited in all parishes nationwide amid rising political tensions that they call on leaders to follow the ideals of integrity, humility, and to pursue the common good while citizens are to seek guidance as they defend the truth and pursue justice.

- [VP Sara Duterte trial may include hostile witnesses --House prosecutors](#) (2026-05-22 09:30)

Several members of the House prosecution panel said on Friday that they are studying the possible presentation of hostile witnesses during the Senate impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Romualdez camp confident of evidence vs. PGMN's Mabanta](#) (2026-05-22 09:19)

The camp of Leyte Representative Ferdinand Martin Romualdez has expressed confidence that it has solid evidence to prove its robbery extortion case against Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta and four others.

- [PNP orders probe into 'secret meetings' in missing sabungeros case](#) (2026-05-22 08:31)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said Friday it has ordered a thorough investigation into the alleged “secret meetings” of relatives of missing sabungeros and dismissed cops linked to the case.

- [PNP: OSAA gunshots during Senate shooting was 'overkill'](#) (2026-05-22 07:19)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Friday described as "overkill" the amount of shots fired by Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA) personnel during the Senate shooting on May 13.

- [Teacher seeks TRO vs. DepEd memo removing strands in Senior High School](#) (2026-05-22 06:42)

Teacher Barry Tayam on Friday filed a petition asking the Supreme Court (SC) to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Department of Education's (DepEd) removal of four academic strands.

- [Bato dela Rosa still in the Philippines -- PNP](#) (2026-05-22 06:35)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Friday said Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa remains in the country as authorities are set to enforce an International Criminal Court arrest warrant

against him.

- [Robin Padilla: Bato dela Rosa asked for a ride, got off in Makati after Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-22 06:25)

Robin Padilla: Bato dela Rosa asked for a ride, got off in Makati after Senate shooting

- [DSWD: Middle-class Filipinos can avail of AICS, not just the poor](#) (2026-05-22 04:37)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) program is open to all individuals--regardless of whether they are poor or belong to the middle class.

- [Torre: Law enforcers cannot pick which warrants to implement](#) (2026-05-22 04:13)

Former Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Nicolas Torre III on Friday said law enforcers cannot choose which warrants they will implement as a government manhunt is underway to arrest Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa.

- [UN anti-corruption official meets Ombudsman, eyes increased collaboration](#) (2026-05-22 04:11)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Team Lead Annika Wythes of the UNODC Southeast Asia and the Pacific Anti-Corruption Team has paid a courtesy call to Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla last Thursday, May 21.

- [EXPLAINER: What are tracker teams?](#) (2026-05-22 03:59)

EXPLAINER: What are tracker teams?

- [Arrest warrant can't be served to legal counsel --Matibag](#) (2026-05-22 03:42)

Arrest warrant can't be served to legal counsel --Matibag

- [CICC files inciting to sedition, rebellion raps vs. Isabela vice mayor Respicio](#) (2026-05-22 03:21)

Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) Executive Director Renato "Aboy" Paraiso on Friday filed a complaint against Isabela Vice Mayor Harold Respicio with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for allegedly inciting the public to sedition and rebellion.

- [PNP reshuffles 7 senior officials](#) (2026-05-22 00:46)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has ordered a new round of reassignments involving several police generals and senior officers effective Friday.

- [PNP tracker teams deployed for Bato dela Rosa's arrest](#) (2026-05-22 00:40)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said Friday that tracker teams have been deployed to locate and arrest Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa.

- [Filipino workers second happiest in Asia-Pacific --study](#) (2026-05-21 18:53)

Filipino employees are among the happiest workers in the Asia-Pacific region, ranking second only to Indonesia, according to the latest Workplace Happiness Index: Philippines 2025 released by Jobstreet by SEEK.

- [House sees changes in leadership of several committees](#) (2026-05-21 15:07)

At least three members of the House of Representatives lost their leadership posts in a minor tweak of the committee chairmanships in the chamber.

- [NBI vows Bato dela Rosa arrest 'without delay'](#) (2026-05-21 15:05)

National Bureau of Investigation Director Melvin Matibag said the NBI would arrest Sen. Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa “without delay.”

- [ICC denies Rodrigo Duterte camp's appeal request over confirmation of charges](#) (2026-05-21 14:27)

The International Criminal Court Pre-Trial Chamber I has denied the request for leave of the defense lawyers of former President Rodrigo Duterte to appeal the tribunal's decision on the confirmation of charges against him in connection with the killings under his war on drugs.

- [PCSO: No winners of major lotto jackpot draws on May 21, 2026](#) (2026-05-21 14:07)

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) said there were no winners of the major lotto jackpot draws on Thursday, May 21, 2026.

- [Atong Ang's lawyer admits meeting with kin of missing sabungeros](#) (2026-05-21 13:35)

The lawyer of businessman Charlie “Atong” Ang admitted that she recently met with some

relatives of the missing sabungeros last April 20.

- [Chiz Escudero faces Comelec investigation anew](#) (2026-05-21 13:34)

Sen. Francis Escudero is again facing an investigation in connection with the alleged illegal campaign donation he received for his 2022 senatorial bid, chairperson George Garcia said.

- [Bato dela Rosa lawyers question DOJ arrest order](#) (2026-05-21 13:29)

The lawyers of embattled Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa questioned the directive by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to arrest him.

- [Palace declares May 27, 2026 a regular holiday in observance of Eid'l Adha](#) (2026-05-21 13:16)

Malacanang has declared May 27, 2026, Wednesday, a regular holiday throughout the country in observance of Eid'l Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice.

- [LGUs, health experts call to strengthen maternal, child immunization in PH](#) (2026-05-21 13:00)

Local government unit (LGU) leaders and healthcare experts are calling to strengthen maternal and child immunization amid the persistence of vaccine-preventable diseases in the Philippines.

- [Prosecution panel preps for VP Sara Duterte impeachment trial, no formal notice yet](#) (2026-05-21 11:31)

Members of the House Prosecution Panel are conducting mock trials as part of their preparations for the upcoming Senate impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Risa Hontiveros urges Dela Rosa to respect law amid ICC warrant](#) (2026-05-21 10:52)

Sen. Risa Hontiveros on Thursday reiterated calls for Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to cooperate with authorities, following the Department of Justice's directive to enforce the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant issued against him.

- [49 foreigners nabbed for immigration violations in Davao, Pasay and Pampanga](#) (2026-05-21 10:03)

Authorities arrested 49 foreign nationals in Davao de Oro, Pasay City, and Pampanga after allegedly engaging in illegal and unauthorized activities and other immigration violations, the

Bureau of Immigration (BI) reported Thursday.

- [17 pass speech-language pathologists computer-based licensure exam](#) (2026-05-21 09:45)

Seventeen out of 19 test takers passed the computer-based licensure examination for speech-language pathologists, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) announced Thursday.

- [National gov't will not interfere with BARMM polls, says OPAPRU exec](#) (2026-05-21 09:00)

The national government assured it will not interfere with the first parliamentary elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) set on September 14, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) said Thursday.

- [Marcos on Navotas landfill fire: 'It's over, it won't happen again'](#) (2026-05-21 08:24)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Thursday assured that the government will exert efforts so that the massive month-long fire that hit the Navotas sanitary landfill recently will not happen again.

- [From Palarong Pambansa to podium: Filipino sports stars who began as student-athletes](#) (2026-05-21 08:04)

As the Palarong Pambansa 2026 draws near, the Department of Education (DepEd) is highlighting how the country's premier school-based sports competition continues to produce athletes who go on to shine on the world stage.

- [Gov't vows lawful enforcement of arrest warrant vs Bato dela Rosa -- Malacañang](#) (2026-05-21 08:02)

Malacañang on Thursday committed that the government will act in accordance with existing laws in enforcing the warrant of arrest against Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa.

- [Looking for a scholarship? Here's how to apply for CHED's Bagong Pilipinas Merit Scholarship Program](#) (2026-05-21 07:21)

Students seeking financial assistance for college may now apply for the government's Bagong Pilipinas Merit Scholarship Program (BPMSPP), with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) opening applications for the first semester of Academic Year 2026-2027.

- [Duterte under cell monitoring as 'elderly detained person' -- ICC Registry](#) (2026-05-21 07:15)

Former President Rodrigo Duterte is under cell monitoring due to his status as an elderly detained person with increased fall risk due to age and several chronic physical ailments, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Registry said.

- [Senate coup talks ongoing, says Erwin Tulfo](#) (2026-05-21 06:50)

Senator Erwin Tulfo on Thursday said talks of a leadership change at the Senate remain ongoing.

- [STI to adopt 'strengthened' SHS curriculum](#) (2026-05-21 06:30)

STI College will roll out the Department of Education's (DepEd) strengthened Senior High School (SHS) curriculum across its 63 campuses nationwide starting School Year 2026-2027.

- [Hontiveros, Erwin Tulfo back 'unified' Senate shooting probe](#) (2026-05-21 06:30)

Senator Risa Hontiveros on Thursday backed proposals to convene the Senate as a Committee of the Whole to investigate last week's shooting incident at the chamber.

- [Marcos: Education a right of the youth](#) (2026-05-21 05:49)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Thursday underscored the importance of education, saying that every young Filipino should have access to it.

- [PNP: Two cops relieved from posts over alleged interference in missing sabungeros case](#) (2026-05-21 05:38)

Two police officers were relieved from their posts amid the investigation into their alleged meddling in the case of missing sabungeros, according to the Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday.

- [PNP denies 'spliced' Senate shooting videos](#) (2026-05-21 05:32)

PNP denies 'spliced' Senate shooting videos

- [NBI retirees, former employees condemn Senate 'reckless actions'](#) (2026-05-21 05:10)

As they expressed support for National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) chief Melvin Matibag, the NBI Retirees and Ex-Employees Assn. Inc. (NBI-REXEAI) has condemned Senate security officers

who “unjustifiably” discharged their firearms on May 13.

- [PNP, NBI tasked to arrest 'fugitive' Bato dela Rosa --DOJ](#) (2026-05-21 04:42)

PNP, NBI tasked to arrest 'fugitive' Bato Dela Rosa, DOJ says

- [PNP awaits DOJ guidance on Bato Dela Rosa arrest](#) (2026-05-21 04:12)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said Thursday it is waiting for instruction from the Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding the possible implementation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa.

- [DA chief condoles with family of elderly who died while waiting to buy P20 per kilo rice](#) (2026-05-21 03:48)

DA chief condoles with family of elderly who died while waiting to buy P20 per kilo rice

- [DA sues DPWH execs, contractors over alleged P94-M ghost farm-to-market road](#) (2026-05-21 02:49)

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. filed Thursday graft and malversation complaints against six officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Davao Occidental and eight contractors over alleged P94-million ghost farm-to-market road projects.

- [Azcuna: Bato Dela Rosa can be arrested, but better to wait for SC ruling](#) (2026-05-21 02:48)

Retired Supreme Court (SC) Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna said Thursday the non-issuance of a temporary restraining order (TRO) for Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa means he can be arrested amid the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against him. However, Azcuna said that it may be better for authorities to wait for the High Court to rule on the main legal issues before surrendering him to the international tribunal, should the government decide to do so.

- [Ombudsman orders Chiz to answer flood control mess allegations](#) (2026-05-21 02:24)

The Office of the Ombudsman has ordered Senator Francis “Chiz” Escudero to answer the allegations linking him to the flood control mess

- [Erwin Tulfo denies Pia Cayetano's claims minority senators did not check on them during Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-21 02:05)

Erwin Tulfo denies Pia Cayetano's claims minority senators did not check on them during Senate shooting

- [LIVE UPDATES: Senate convenes as impeachment court vs VP Sara Duterte \(May 21, 2026\)](#) (2026-05-21 01:00)

Here are the latest news and updates after the Senate convened as an impeachment court for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [VP Sara Duterte impeachment trial to start July 6, Erwin Tulfo says](#) (2026-05-21 00:46)

Senator Erwin Tulfo on Thursday said the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte is expected to begin on July 6 following a caucus among senators. Interviewed on GMA News' Unang Balita, Tulfo said Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano had already discussed the proposed schedule with members of the Senate.

- [TOWNS Foundation disappointed with Loren Legarda's political decisions](#) (2026-05-20 20:05)

A group of women awardees for their outstanding service to the nation has expressed disappointment over the political stance on key issues of their fellow awardee, Senator Loren Legarda.

- [OSG welcomes SC decision to deny Bato dela Rosa's TRO request](#) (2026-05-20 19:20)

The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) welcomes the decision of the Supreme Court to deny the request of Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa for a temporary restraining order (TRO) and/or status quo ante order (SQAQO) in connection with his possible arrest based on the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

- [PHLPost celebrates new DBM secretary known for Guinness stamp collection](#) (2026-05-20 18:33)

The new Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Kim Robert de Leon is an avid stamp collector and Guinness World Record Holder, the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) revealed in a congratulatory statement.

- [Marcos commends Guinness World Record holder Lito De Veterbo](#) (2026-05-20 16:44)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed Claro “Lito” De Veterbo Jr. during a courtesy call at

Malacañang, honoring his extraordinary feat as the fastest person to traverse the Philippines on foot --from Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte to Glan, Sarangani.

- [LTFRB: No more formal hearings in applications for franchise renewals](#) (2026-05-20 15:35)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has fast-tracked the process for the application of extensions of the validity of certificates of public convenience (CPC) by doing away with the required formal hearing.

- [Adventist grad tops May 2026 dentists licensure examination](#) (2026-05-20 15:17)

A graduate of the Adventist University of the Philippines achieved the highest score in the licensure examination for dentists given earlier this month.

- [CBCP call for prayers, aid for OFWs, dialogue amid global conflicts](#) (2026-05-20 14:46)

Filipino bishops issued a statement that is focused on wars, acts of terror, grieving mothers, the wounded, the abandoned people with a deliberate call on civil and religious leaders to enter into dialogue while encouraging educators to continue their work as formators of conscience. The pastoral response of the Philippine Church, the prelates said, is to call on the people to continue pray for peace, extend assistance to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their families, and to promote dialogue "among neighbors, cultures, and peoples."

- [Robin Padilla could face liability over Bato Dela Rosa's Senate escape --law expert](#) (2026-05-20 14:41)

A legal expert warned that Senator Robin Padilla may be held liable for Senator Bato Dela Rosa's escape from the Senate, as a lawmaker flags potential criminal charges over the incident.

- [Bettor from Morong, Bataan bags P115M jackpot in Grand Lotto 6/55](#) (2026-05-20 14:12)

A bettor who bought a ticket in Morong, Bataan won the P115 million jackpot prize in the Grand Lotto 6/55 draw of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Wednesday, May 20, 2026.

- [Mao Aplasca says CCTV videos on Senate shooting 'spliced'; Jonvic Remulla cites timestamp](#) (2026-05-20 13:06)

Suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca on Wednesday said the CCTV videos showing the shooting incident inside the chamber last week were "spliced."

- [House OKs anti-oil crisis Kalinga bill on 2nd reading](#) (2026-05-20 12:01)

The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on second reading the Kalinga bill, a proposed aid package in response to lingering oil price surges triggered by armed conflict in the Middle East.

- [Malacañang on Senate shooting: We will not let this slide](#) (2026-05-20 11:08)

The Marcos administration will continue to take action following the May 13 shooting incident at the Senate, committing to hold the perpetrators accountable, Palace Press Officer Undersecretary Claire Castro said Wednesday.

- [Impeachment prosecutors to start with Sara Duterte's kill threat vs. Marcos](#) (2026-05-20 10:28)

The House prosecution panel's presentation of the Articles of Impeachment will start with Duterte's declaration that she had arranged for Marcos to be assassinated if she is killed.

- [CICC eyes charges, disbarment vs lawyer over alleged calls for revolution](#) (2026-05-20 10:23)

The Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) said it is studying the possible filing of criminal charges and disbarment proceedings against a lawyer accused of spreading false information and allegedly inciting unrest online.

- [Bato's lawyers question ICC's jurisdiction after SC denies TRO plea](#) (2026-05-20 10:14)

The camp of embattled Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa questioned the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) after the Supreme Court (SC) denied the temporary restraining order (TRO) request against the international court's arrest warrant.

- [Pia Cayetano turns emotional as Hontiveros questions Senate 'return to normalcy'](#) (2026-05-20 10:09)

Senator Pia Cayetano became emotional on Wednesday as she pushed back against Senator Risa Hontiveros' remarks criticizing the Senate's apparent "return to normalcy" following last week's shooting incident.

- [Marcos names Franz Alvarez as acting PNOC president](#) (2026-05-20 10:08)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. has appointed former Palawan 1st District Rep.

Franz Josef George Alvarez as the new acting president and chief executive officer of the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC).

- [Senate sets June 1 deadline for Sara Duterte's impeachment summons response](#) (2026-05-20 09:57)

Vice President Sara Duterte has until June 1 to answer the writ of summons issued against her in relation to her impeachment case, Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano said Wednesday.

- [FDA tightens monitoring of VAT-exempt medicines, fake drugs](#) (2026-05-20 09:45)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is strengthening its monitoring of value-added tax (VAT) exempt medicines to ensure lower prices for consumers while stepping up enforcement against counterfeit and unregistered drugs.

- [WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR: Where is Bato Dela Rosa?](#) (2026-05-20 09:37)

The whereabouts of Senator Ronald dela Rosa remain unclear after he left the Senate complex in the early hours of May 14, based on CCTV footage, logbook records, and police statements.

- [LOOK: Pasig court permits NBI to examine gadgets of Franco Mabanta, others](#) (2026-05-20 09:36)

The Pasig court on Wednesday permitted the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Organized and Transnational Crime Division to examine the confiscated cellphone of Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta and his companions following an alleged extortion attempt against former Speaker Martin Romualdez.

- [Anti-political dynasty bill hurdles second reading in House](#) (2026-05-20 09:35)

The House approved on second reading a bill prohibiting relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity from running in the same constituency on second reading.

- [TIMELINE: What happened before, during, after Senate shooting incident](#) (2026-05-20 09:16)

Gunshots rang at the Senate building in the evening of May 13. Operatives of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA) reportedly fired their guns.

- [Missing sabungeros' kin file complaint vs. cops over 'bribery, obstruction'](#) (2026-05-20 09:11)

Families and relatives of the missing cockfight enthusiasts or sabungeros on Wednesday filed complaints with the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) against cops over alleged bribery and obstruction of justice.

- [5.3M newly registered voters for 2026 BSKE -- Comelec](#) (2026-05-20 09:10)

There are 5.3 million newly registered voters for the Barangay for the 2026 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE), the Commission on Elections (Comelec) reported on Wednesday.

- [Ex-NYC chair Karl Legazpi proclaimed as Pinoy Workers Party-List representative](#) (2026-05-20 07:58)

Ex-NYC chair Karl Legazpi proclaimed as Pinoy Workers Party-List representative

- [K to 12 grads get direct pathway to gov't jobs via civil service exam -- DepEd](#) (2026-05-20 05:50)

Senior high school graduates and qualified junior high school completers may now have a more direct route to government employment, as the Department of Education (DepEd) encourages them to take the August 2026 civil service examination.

- [VP Sara impeachment private prosecutors waiving service fee, Adiong says](#) (2026-05-20 05:45)

VP Sara impeachment private prosecutors waiving service fee, Adiong says

- [Bato dela Rosa camp insists ICC warrant not enforceable in PH](#) (2026-05-20 05:37)

Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa's legal counsel on Wednesday maintained that although they recognize the existence of the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), they do not consider it enforceable in the Philippines.

- [DICT probes temporary downtime of PCO, Official Gazette websites](#) (2026-05-20 04:45)

DICT probes temporary downtime of PCO, Official Gazette websites

- [Amb. Romualdez meets new US envoy to PH Lee Lipton](#) (2026-05-20 04:15)

Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez and incoming US Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Lipton have met to discuss ways to reinforce bilateral economic engagement.

- [UP Board okays school of medicine in Mindanao, RadTech program in Manila](#) (2026-05-20 04:11)

The University of the Philippines (UP) is expanding its health-related programs following the approval of new academic initiatives aimed at addressing the country's healthcare workforce gaps.

- [Senate personnel arrive at CIDG amid shooting incident probe](#) (2026-05-20 03:20)

Personnel from the Senate arrived at the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) office in Camp Crame, Quezon City on Wednesday morning.

- [P92.8-M flood control project in Bong Revilla case had no materials test report](#) (2026-05-20 03:16)

A Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) engineer on Wednesday testified that the P92.8 million flood control project in Pandi, Bulacan, the subject of the malversation case against former senator Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., and six others, was certified complete despite lack of construction materials testing report.

- [Senate serves writ of summons vs. Sara Duterte](#) (2026-05-20 03:07)

The Senate impeachment court on Wednesday issued a writ of summons against Vice President Sara Duterte in relation to her impeachment case.

- [Eid al-Adha 2026 to be observed on May 27 --Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta'](#) (2026-05-20 01:19)

The Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta" has announced that the blessed month of Dhul-Hijjah 1447 AH began on May 18, with the observance of Eid al-Adha set on May 27.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Senate convenes as impeachment court vs VP Sara Duterte \(May 20, 2026\)](#) (2026-05-20 01:03)

Here are the latest news and updates after the Senate convened as an impeachment court for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [VP Sara Duterte honors Navy for defending PH sovereignty](#) (2026-05-20 00:52)

Vice President Sara Duterte on Wednesday paid tribute to the Philippine Navy during the celebration of its 128th anniversary.

- [DSWD: P7.3B in cash aid distributed to 1.4 million PUV drivers](#) (2026-05-19 18:20)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it has distributed over P7.3 billion in cash aid to more than 1.4 million public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers nationwide.

- [P228M in marijuana destroyed in two-day operations in Kalinga](#) (2026-05-19 17:32)

Authorities destroyed around P228 million in marijuana in three operations in Kalinga earlier this week, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Tuesday.

- [Robin Padilla: I was with Bato Dela Rosa during Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-19 16:58)

Almost a week after the shooting incident that jolted the Senate, Senator Robinhood Padilla said he has yet to receive any summons to the probe on Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa’s departure from the upper chamber in the early hours of May 14.

- [PNP-CIDG orders more Senate personnel to appear in shooting incident probe](#) (2026-05-19 16:49)

More personnel from the Senate were to appear before the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) on Wednesday, May 20, in connection with the shooting incident that took place inside the Senate complex on May 13.

- [North Sea security tied to SCS stability, says DFA's Lazaro](#) (2026-05-19 15:48)

“When international law is disregarded in one region, the vibration is felt everywhere,” Lazaro said of the strategic interconnection between the Indo-Pacific region and Europe at a forum in the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael) in The Hague.

- [PNP-ACG: 52 nabbed for cybercrimes in first half of May 2026](#) (2026-05-19 15:16)

The Philippine National Police-Anti-Cybercrime Group (PNP-ACG) arrested 52 individuals in anti-cybercrime operations in the first half of May.

- [Church leaders urge prayers, action amid rising political tensions](#) (2026-05-19 14:44)

Church leaders are calling for prayers amid political tensions, but underscore that the people

also have the option to stage protest actions against corruption and to use legal means as "pressure" for political change.

- [PH opposes US bid for diplomatic immunity for upcoming AI hub](#) (2026-05-19 14:20)

The AI hub is set to be located in New Clark City, Tarlac, covering more than 1,600 hectares, and is expected to attract billions of pesos in investment. In exchange for this project, the US requested diplomatic immunity for the Americans inside the hub. If granted, they will not be held accountable under Philippine laws, even if they have committed crimes, which the Philippines does not agree to.

- [PCSO: No jackpot prize winners in May 19, 2026 major lotto draws](#) (2026-05-19 14:18)

No one won the jackpot prize in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Tuesday, May 19, 2026.

- [How will Habagat and Super El Niño affect the Philippines?](#) (2026-05-19 13:23)

What should the country expect after state weather bureau PAGASA warned that the southwest monsoon, or Habagat, may coincide with a Super El Niño from June to August this year?

- [Weaken Senate? Palace says Cha-cha not being discussed](#) (2026-05-19 11:32)

Malacañang on Tuesday denied the allegation by Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano that there was an attempt to weaken the Senate by pushing for the amendment of the 1987 Constitution.

- [Marcos underscores importance of Trump, Xi talks for global economy](#) (2026-05-19 11:06)

Philippine President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. said the meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping last week was “very encouraging to see” as it could benefit the global economy if it eases trade tensions.

- [PNP: Bato Dela Rosa left Senate in Robin Padilla's vehicle after shooting incident](#) (2026-05-19 10:49)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Tuesday confirmed that Senator Ronald dela Rosa was seen leaving the Senate premises shortly after last week's shooting incident in a vehicle registered to Senator Robin Padilla.

- [Solicitor General asks SC to junk petition seeking drug test, physical exam for Marcos](#) (2026-05-19 10:46)

The Solicitor General has asked the Supreme Court to dismiss a petition seeking to direct Pres. Marcos to submit himself to physical and mental exam, including a hair follicle drug test.

- [Japan renews commitment to help PH during disasters, emergencies](#) (2026-05-19 10:33)

The Japanese government has renewed its commitment to support the Philippines during disasters and emergencies.

- [House prosecutors: Evidence vs. Sara Duterte will overcome Senate scrutiny](#) (2026-05-19 10:22)

The 11-member House prosecution panel for the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte on Tuesday expressed confidence that the senator-judges will allow them to present their evidence and it will survive the Senate's scrutiny.

- [Mark Villar elected as chairman of Senate Committee on Finance](#) (2026-05-19 10:00)

The Senate has elected Sen. Mark Villar as chairperson of the powerful Senate Committee on Finance, replacing Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian.

- [Raffy Tulfo denies minority senators threatening colleagues to change leadership](#) (2026-05-19 09:44)

Senator Raffy Tulfo on Tuesday denied allegations that members of the minority bloc were recruiting senators and issuing threats to unseat the current Senate leadership.

- [Senate shooting staged? Jonvic Remulla firm there was no attack](#) (2026-05-19 09:40)

Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Tuesday maintained that the Senate was not under attack, but paused on concluding whether the “gun-related incident” was staged.

- [Pasig court issues cyber warrant vs. Franco Mabanta, others -- NBI](#) (2026-05-19 09:23)

A Pasig court has allowed the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to open the gadgets of Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta and others following an alleged extortion try against former Speaker Martin Romualdez, the bureau said Tuesday.

- [PCG challenges Chinese vessel near Pandaquit, Zambales](#) (2026-05-19 08:52)

PCG challenges Chinese vessel near Pandaquit, Zambales

- [PH Navy expects 6 more AW159 helicopters, new offshore patrol vessels](#) (2026-05-19 08:44)

The Philippine Navy is expecting the acquisition of six additional AW159 Wildcat helicopters and more offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) to augment its fleet in the next few years.

- [ICC registry formalizes appointment of Duterte associate counsel](#) (2026-05-19 08:41)

The International Criminal Court (ICC) Registry has formalized the appointment of Kate Gibson as associate counsel for former President Rodrigo Duterte in his crimes against humanity case.

- [Jinggoy Estrada on DOJ reco for plunder, graft charges: 'Unfortunate development'](#) (2026-05-19 08:36)

Jinggoy on DOJ reco for plunder, graft charges: 'Unfortunate development'

- [Service contracting for PUVs to end on May 22 -- LTFRB](#) (2026-05-19 08:34)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) announced on Tuesday that the implementation of the Land-Based Service Contracting Program (LBSCP) will end on Friday, May 22.

- [Matibag: NBI has lead on Bato dela Rosa's location](#) (2026-05-19 08:33)

National Bureau of Investigation director Melvin Matibag said Tuesday they already have a lead on the whereabouts of Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa but refused to divulge yet.

- [Two party-list representatives resign from House](#) (2026-05-19 05:58)

Two members of the House of Representatives resigned from post Monday evening.

- [Ex-law dean says ICC warrant vs Bato dela Rosa should go through local court](#) (2026-05-19 05:37)

For lawyer Amado Valdez, a former dean of the University of the East College of Law, the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa must first go through a local court.

- [EXPLAINER: What is the role of senator-judges in the impeachment court?](#) (2026-05-19 05:35)

The Senate formally convened as an impeachment court on Monday, May 18, following the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte by the House of Representatives on May 11 and days after receiving the Articles of Impeachment.

- [Tinio seeks Ombudsman probe of P4.4B Davao flood control projects](#) (2026-05-19 04:32)

House Deputy Minority Leader Antonio Tinio has asked the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate up to P4.4 billion worth of flood control projects in Davao City's First District over alleged irregularities, including overlapping contracts, double funding, and missing project details.

- [Joel Chua to Senate court: Allow us to present evidence vs. Sara Duterte](#) (2026-05-19 04:10)

Manila Representative Joel Chua, one of the prosecutors for the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, on Tuesday appealed to senator-judges to allow them to present their evidence.

- [Marcos to push for energy security in Japan visit](#) (2026-05-19 04:07)

President Ferdinand "Bonbong" Marcos Jr. said he would discuss matters pertaining to ensuring energy security during his state visit to Japan next week.

- [Ombudsman seeks list of names of media workers during Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-19 03:41)

Ombudsman seeks list of names of media workers during Senate shooting

- [Sara Duterte can enter plea through counsel in Senate impeachment trial](#) (2026-05-19 03:34)

Vice President Sara Duterte is not required to appear to personally make her plea before the Senate impeachment court, University of the Philippines (UP) College of Law Associate Dean Paolo Tamase said Tuesday.

- [Marcos on China-Taiwan tensions: Conflicts can be resolved peacefully](#) (2026-05-19 03:06)

While asserting the country's adherence to the One China Policy, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has distanced himself from the growing tensions between Beijing and

Taiwan, saying the Philippines does not want to be involved in any conflict.

- [Chinese vessels in West Philippine Sea decreased to 27 in past week --AFP](#) (2026-05-19 02:47)

The number of Chinese vessels spotted in some West Philippine Sea features has decreased to 27 in the past week.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Senate convenes as impeachment court vs VP Sara Duterte \(May 19, 2026\)](#) (2026-05-19 00:10)

Here are the latest news and updates on after the Senate convened as an impeachment court for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte.

Source: PhilStar Global

- [‘Irresponsible, offensive’ : Broadcast group condemns anchor’ s on-air joke](#) (2026-05-26 00:30)

KBP urged broadcasters and media practitioners to treat the airwaves as a public trust requiring responsibility, professionalism and accountability.

- [Price Tracker: Oil, fuel monitor for May 26](#) (2026-05-25 23:30)

Prices of fuel products are expected to increase by over P1 on Tuesday, May 26.

- [21 police chiefs relieved after failing tests](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

Twenty-one police station chiefs in Quezon, Cavite and Rizal provinces were relieved from their posts after failing the enhanced managing police operations or EMPO course, the Philippine National Police said.

- [Palace declares holidays in 5 areas](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

Malacañang has declared special non-working days in five localities this June to give residents the full opportunity to participate in local celebrations.

- [8 dead, 7 injured in shooting, mishap](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

A barangay chairman, a police officer and two others were killed in a shooting incident during a barangay fiesta celebration here on Saturday night, while a road accident left four people dead in Alicia town also in Isabela yesterday morning. accident

- [Free condoms at MRT set](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

Free condoms will be available at Metro Rail Transit stations to help curb rising cases of human immunodeficiency virus infections, the Philippine National AIDS Council said yesterday.

- [Another PMA cadet graduates from West Point](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

A cadet of the Philippine Military Academy has graduated from the United States Military Academy Class of 2026, adding to the growing number of Filipino cadets trained at West Point.

- [DENR slammed for cutting trees on Quirino Avenue](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

A Catholic bishop yesterday criticized the cutting of decades-old trees along Quirino Avenue, saying the act is an ecological violence against the people of Manila and a direct assault on the poor who have been enduring extreme heat, poisoned air and flooding.

- [PNP: Focus crimes drop by 16%; Safer Cities cited](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

The Philippine National Police yesterday reported a nearly 16-percent decrease in focus crimes nationwide, with rape cases posting the steepest drop, as the PNP credited the Safer Cities initiative.

- [LRT to get P74 million infrastructure upgrade](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

Both the Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2 will undergo infrastructure upgrades to improve the working conditions of LRT personnel and enhance passenger comfort.

- [Marcos aids Parola fire victims](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

President Marcos yesterday distributed relief and cash assistance to over 2,000 families displaced by a fire at the Parola Compound in Binondo, Manila.

- [4 shabu dealers linked to southern terror groups arrested in Central Mindanao](#) (2026-05-25 12:04)

Four more shabu dealers who allegedly shared earnings with remnants of the two now defunct Mindanao terror groups were arrested in separate police operations in two Central Mindanao provinces within just three days.

- [Free bus ride project rolls out in Tawi-Tawi](#) (2026-05-25 11:16)

There is now a bus operating in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, transporting residents to schools, trading hubs and workplaces for free, reportedly the first of its kind in Bangsamoro region.

- [Salary question: Mayors hit Senate over Bato dela Rosa's absences](#) (2026-05-25 09:05)

Mayors see Bato dela Rosa's absences as “no work, no pay” issue

- [Parola residents seek probe into fire that displaced 2,134 families](#) (2026-05-25 08:15)

Residents of Parola Compound in Manila are calling for a deeper investigation into the fire that displaced 2,134 families.

- [Quirino Avenue mass tree-cutting slammed as 'ecological violence'](#) (2026-05-25 06:29)

Caritas Philippines asks: Who pays the price for Manila's concrete future?

- [PNP assists probe into Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-25 05:01)

Authorities are looking into the cause of the incident and possible safety and building code violations.

- [Angeles building collapse leaves 3 dead as search for 18 continues](#) (2026-05-25 01:31)

Rescuers continue searching for missing workers after a nine-story building collapsed in Angeles City.

- [Gibo airs concern over UP student governance, supervision](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro has raised concern over the University of the Philippines' governance and supervision of student activities, following the deaths of UP students and alumni in armed clashes in Negros between the military and communist rebels in the past years.

- [PMA welcomes 367 cadets for Class 2030](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

The Philippine Military Academy formally welcomed 367 incoming cadets of the PMA Class 2030 during the oath-taking and reception rites on Saturday in Borromeo Field at Fort General Gregorio H. del Pilar here.

- [PDEA seizes P136 million shabu in Cebu](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

Authorities seized P136 million worth of suspected shabu from two alleged drug traffickers during a sting in Naga City in Cebu on Friday, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency announced.

- [Leni bats for more investments in preventive health care](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

Former vice president and now Naga Mayor Leni Robredo has underscored the importance of increasing investments in preventive medicine to reduce long-term burden on the country's health care system.

- [Basilan leaders join Bangsamoro Federalist Party](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

Hundreds of community leaders in Basilan joined the newly established Bangsamoro Federalist Party during a symbolic rite over the weekend in Lamitan City.

- [2 pedophile fugitives nabbed](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

An American and a Japanese both wanted for child abuse have been arrested by the Bureau of Immigration.

- [DA lifts ban on Belgium poultry products](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

The Department of Agriculture has lifted the import ban on poultry products from Belgium.

- [PNP vows to protect missing sabungeros' kin](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

The Philippine National Police has vowed protection for the families of missing sabungeros or cockfight enthusiasts amid reports that some of the victims' kin are being paid P40,000 monthly by the camp of fugitive gaming tycoon Charlie "Atong" Ang in exchange for not pursuing the criminal charges filed against him.

- [Binondo fire leaves 2,134 families homeless](#) (2026-05-24 16:00)

Up to 2,134 families were displaced after a fire broke out at the Parola Compound in Binondo, the Manila city government said yesterday.

- [P2 million worth of imported cigarettes seized in Lanao del Norte](#) (2026-05-24 09:03)

Policemen seized 50 boxes of imported cigarettes, costing P2 million, in an anti-smuggling operation in Barangay Tambo in Munai, Lanao del Norte on Saturday, May 23.

- [More Basilan residents join Bangsamoro Federalist Party](#) (2026-05-24 08:58)

Hundreds more of Muslim and Christian community leaders in Basilan were sworn in as members of the newly-established Bangsamoro Federalist Party during a symbolic rite in Lamitan City in the province on Saturday, May 23.

- [Baguio HIV cases rise to 800](#) (2026-05-24 08:51)

Health officials are raising concern over the rising number of HIV-AIDS cases in Baguio City and the Cordillera region, saying that the Philippines now has the fastest-growing HIV epidemic in the Asia-Pacific region.

- [Over 2,000 families affected by Binondo fire; Manila LGU to give aid](#) (2026-05-24 08:29)

The Manila LGU said that 2,134 families were affected by the fire.

- [12 fellows named for inaugural Bangsamoro writers workshop](#) (2026-05-24 07:14)

Twelve fellows have been selected for the inaugural Bangsamoro Writers Workshop, scheduled for June 4–7 in Cotabato City, organizers announced.

- [At least 26 pulled from rubble after building collapse in Pampanga](#) (2026-05-24 03:47)

Earlier reports said that at 3 a.m. on Sunday, May 24, at least 30 to 40 people were trapped in the construction of the nine-story hotel at Brgy. Balibago, Angeles City, Pampanga.

- [Prove civilian killings in Toboso clashes, groups urged](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. yesterday challenged human rights groups to prove their claims that six of the 19 fatalities in the clashes in Toboso, Occidental last month were civilians.

- [Execs of raided steel firm cry harassment](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

Officials of a steel manufacturing company based in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental yesterday described as harassment the raid conducted on their facility by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission as well as the military.

- [Court worker dismissed over fake civil service record](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

A clerk of court in Kabacan, North Cotabato has been dismissed from her post after she was found to have falsified her civil service record.

- [Skeletal remains of woman slain by son-in-law recovered](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

The skeletal remains of a woman allegedly killed by her son-in-law eight months ago were found on Friday in a swamp in this city.

- [‘Probe secret meeting at PNP custodial center’](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

With the possibility that other Philippine National Police officers might be involved, PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. has ordered a deeper probe on the secret meeting last month between relatives of missing cockfight enthusiasts or sabungeros and the dismissed policemen implicated in the case.

- [Manila councilor indicted for Safe Spaces Act violation](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

The Manila city prosecutor’s office has ordered the filing of three counts of violation of the Safe Spaces Act against Councilor Ryan Ponce for the alleged harassment of his colleague, Eunice Castro.

- [MMDA: 12,000 tons of garbage collected per year](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

Despite months of declogging and desilting operations, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said that garbage remains the major cause of flooding in Metro Manila.

- [Quezon Memorial Shrine lighted for 80th Philippines-Australia celebrations](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

The Quezon Memorial Shrine in Quezon City was illuminated in green and gold on Friday evening to mark this year’s Philippines-Australia Friendship Day and the 80th anniversary of bilateral relations of the two countries.

- [Bulacan fire leaves 2 dead](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

Two people were killed while two others were injured in a fire that destroyed the victims’ property in this town on Friday afternoon.

- [Naga intensifies drive vs cervical cancer](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

Naga Mayor Leni Robredo has vowed to intensify the local government’s campaign against cervical cancer, noting the alarmingly low screening rate and vaccination among women.

- [Local execs welcome special award for WestMinCom chief](#) (2026-05-23 09:41)

Local executives in Central Mindanao welcomed the special award given by TopNewsAsia Magazine to the current commander of the Western Mindanao Command, saying it also recognized their continuing support for WestMinCom's peacebuilding programs.

- [Cops recover skeletons of woman killed by son-in-law](#) (2026-05-23 09:16)

Policemen found on Friday, May 22, in a swampy area in Sitio Timako in Barangay Kalanganan in this city the skeletons of a woman killed by her son-in-law eight months ago.

- [Leviste offers rice assistance to families yet to receive government aid](#) (2026-05-23 01:29)

Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste on Friday announced that he would distribute one million sacks of rice to families in Batangas who have yet to receive government assistance.

- [PNP spokesman named Western Visayas cop chief](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Philippine National Police spokesman Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño has been designated chief of the Western Visayas police, the PNP said yesterday.

- [Isabela vice mayor facing sedition raps](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

A municipal vice mayor in Isabela is facing charges for allegedly making seditious remarks.

- [Visayas grid on yellow alert anew](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Residents in the Visayas faced another yellow alert yesterday as power supply strain persisted for the fifth consecutive day.

- [11 Toboso clash fatalities test positive for gunpowder – PNP](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Eleven of 19 people killed in a series of encounters in Toboso, Negros Occidental last month have tested positive for gunpowder, according to the Philippine National Police.

- [STAR correspondent Obedencio writes 30](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Bohol journalist Ric Obedencio passed away yesterday at the age of 69.

- [Rare Biak-na-Bato limestone frogs spotted in Bulacan park](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Several Biak-na-Bato limestone frogs or Platymantis biak were recently spotted in the Biak-na-Bato National Park in Bulacan.

- [Cotabato radio journalist shot dead](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

A radio journalist was killed while his wife was injured in an attack by an unidentified assailant in Malidegao, Cotabato on Thursday night.

- [CBCP issues prayer for government leaders](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Seeing the country at a crossroads, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday released a prayer for the nation's leaders to work for the common good rather than personal ambition.

- [PNP readies rainy season disaster response measures](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

In anticipation of the start of the rainy season next month, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has activated disaster preparedness measures to protect vulnerable communities.

- [Torre to join manhunt for Bato, if President Marcos orders](#) (2026-05-22 16:00)

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) general manager Nicolas Torre III is ready to join the manhunt for Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, if President Marcos orders him to do so as a "special assignment."

- [Radio reporter killed in Cotabato ambush](#) (2026-05-22 05:29)

Gunmen killed a radio reporter in an ambush on Thursday night, May 21, in Barangay Fort Pikit in Malidegao town in Cotabato province.

- ['Government won't meddle in BARMM politics'](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

Presidential peace adviser Mel Senen Sarmiento has assured stakeholders in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity will not interfere in the BARMM political transition this September.

- [Palawan town logs 51 degrees Celsius heat index](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

The town of Cuyo in Palawan yesterday experienced the highest heat index so far this year with 51 degrees Celsius, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

- [6 DPWH execs face raps over P94 million Davao 'ghost' projects](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

Charges have been filed against six officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Davao Occidental and several private contractors in connection with eight non-existent farm-to-market road projects amounting to P94 million.

- [Yellow alert persists in Visayas grid](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

Tight electricity supply and high system demand continued to hound the Visayas power grid, prompting another yellow alert that lasted for five hours yesterday.

- [16 PAF trainer planes grounded over fatal Benguet crash](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

The Philippine Air Force has grounded 16 other PAF trainer aircraft following a fatal crash in Tuba, Benguet that killed two pilots on Wednesday morning.

- [Ex-ICC judge named Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasig dean](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

Pasig Mayor Vico Sotto has appointed former International Criminal Court judge and University of the Philippines College of Law dean Raul Pangalangan as the founding dean of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasig School of Law.

- [Marcos Jr. : No repeat of Navotas sanitary landfill fire](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

President Marcos yesterday gave assurance that the government would be vigilant to prevent incidents similar to the Navotas sanitary landfill fire, which posed health risks and displaced residents of nearby areas.

- [Caloocan lawmaker faces graft raps](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

Caloocan 3rd District Rep. Dean Asistio is facing complaints of graft, malversation of public funds and falsification of documents before the Office of the Ombudsman over alleged “ghost” and anomalous infrastructure projects worth P72.9 million.

- [Survey shows top-performing Metro Manila lawmakers](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

A non-government organization conducting surveys about the measurable index of governance among members of the House of Representatives has released a poll that showed the top-performing lawmakers in Metro Manila.

- [Ospital ng Maynila ER closed for a week](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

The emergency room of the Ospital ng Maynila will be closed from May 24 to June 1 to accommodate critical repairs and facility upgrades, Mayor Isko Moreno announced yesterday.

- [BARMM's chief minister assumes control of controversial regional agency](#) (2026-05-21 10:03)

Bangsamoro Chief Minister Abdulrauf Macacua assumed control on Wednesday, May 20, of their education ministry, which hit the news sparked by a report from the Commission on Audit about the misuse of P2.2 billion worth of funds from its coffers.

- [‘Rape is not a joke’ : Bacolod radio anchor under fire for on-air remark](#) (2026-05-21 03:48)

A women’ s group and several media groups and personalities expressed their frustration after a Bacolod-based radio anchor made a rape joke to a female reporter during a live broadcast.

- [Right to Information bill headed for House plenary as Poe underscores need for transparency](#) (2026-05-21 01:43)

A lawmaker has expressed strong support for the proposed substitute bill on the Right to Information (RTI) during its deliberations before the Committee on Appropriations.

- [Crane collapses at Mindoro bridge project; worker killed](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

A worker died when a crane at an ongoing bridge project in Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro collapsed on Tuesday afternoon.

- [City hall worker shot dead](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

An employee of the city government of Isabela in Basilan was killed in an ambush by motorcycle-riding men yesterday morning.

- [Arrest of 69 Chinese workers alarms embassy](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

The Chinese embassy yesterday expressed concern over the arrest and detention of 69 Chinese workers following a raid on a steel manufacturing plant in Tagaloan, Misamis Oriental.

- [Zamboanga bans entry of poultry, livestock products](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

Entry of poultry and livestock products in this city has been suspended following reported outbreaks of avian influenza in three towns in nearby Zamboanga Sibugay.

- [2 dead as PAF plane crashes in Benguet](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

Two military pilots were killed after a trainer plane of the Philippine Air Force crashed in the forest of Tuba in Benguet yesterday morning.

- [Power strain hits Visayas grid anew](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

For the eighth time this year, the Visayas grid was placed under yellow alert yesterday due to tight electricity supply amid high system demand and power plant outages.

- [Toxic chemicals found in school supplies](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

School supplies sold in parts of Metro Manila contain harmful chemicals, according to watchdog group BAN Toxics.

- [Secret police meeting in sabungeros' case probed](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

Two policemen are facing charges for allegedly facilitating a secret meeting between police implicated in the missing cockfight enthusiasts' case and the victims' relatives.

- [Court issues cyber warrant for Mabanta's phones](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

Pasig court has granted the request of the National Bureau of Investigation to examine the mobile devices of social media operator Franco Mabanta and four others, who are facing robbery charges for allegedly trying to extort former speaker and Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez.

- [Revilla allowed to skip malversation trial](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

The Sandiganbayan Third Division has allowed former senator Ramon Revilla Jr. to skip his P92.8-million malversation trial until July.

- [Barangay secretary, community watchman killed in ambush](#) (2026-05-20 11:02)

Men armed with assault rifles killed a barangay secretary and wounded a volunteer community watchman in an ambush in Barangay Kabasalan in Ligawasan town in Cotabato on Tuesday afternoon, May 19.

- [5 villagers hurt in Lanao del Sur gun attack](#) (2026-05-20 09:48)

Five Maranao villagers were wounded in an attack on Tuesday, May 19, in Barangay Pindolonan in Picong town in Lanao del Sur by armed men hostile to their clan leader.

- [2 killed in Cavite gun attack](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

A village watchman and a vendor were killed in an attack by a lone assailant in Dasmariñas, Cavite on Monday.

- [Cop found dead in Bacolod](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

A 55-year-old police colonel was found dead in his house in Barangay Handumanan in this city yesterday.

- [2 DPWH officials relieved over cyclist's fatal accident](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

Two officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways in the Cordilleras have been relieved from their posts in connection with the fatal accident of a cyclist in La Trinidad, Benguet.

- [Visayas grid back on yellow alert](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

High electricity demand and the shutdown of large coal-powered plants continued to strain the Visayas grid, triggering another yellow alert yesterday.

- [Over 5.1 million apply for BSKE as voter registration ends](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

More than 5.1 million Filipinos have applied to vote in this year's barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections as the voter registration closed on Monday, according to the Commission on Elections.

- [Hundreds flee floods in Davao City; 1 dead](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

Heavy downpour spawned by the easterlies and the intertropical convergence zone since Monday night triggered flooding in several areas in Davao City yesterday, leaving one person dead and families fleeing to safety.

- [Raps vs Quezon City cop in C5 traffic row junked](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

The Pasig City prosecutor's office has dismissed the frustrated murder case filed by the Quezon City Police District against a policeman who was recorded on video pushing off a motorcycle rider during a traffic altercation along C5 Road.

- [Marikina opens shoe bazaar](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

To financially support Marikina students ahead of the opening of classes on June 8, the city government has opened its annual back-to-school shoe bazaar where they can buy affordable yet quality footwear.

- [141,724 drivers to get P10/liter subsidy](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

Up to 141,724 drivers of passenger jeepneys and UV Express can avail themselves of the P10 per liter fuel subsidy, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board said on Monday.

- [‘Chinese fraudster not linked to Manila government’](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

A Chinese national arrested for allegedly using fake Philippine documents is not connected to the Manila city government.

- [Cotabato execs, WestMinCom intensify peacebuilding efforts](#) (2026-05-19 11:37)

Local executives, business groups and leaders of a former Moro rebel front assured on Tuesday, May 19, that they would help advance the peacebuilding initiatives of the Cotabato provincial government and the Western Mindanao Command, which both sides reaffirmed on Saturday, May 16.

- [COA report flags P2.2B fund 'misuse' in BARMM education ministry](#) (2026-05-19 11:20)

Bangsamoro Chief Minister Abdulrauf Macacua is likely to assume control of the region's education ministry, now embroiled in controversy following findings by the Commission on Audit of its questionable spending of P2.2 billion in funds, within a short period of time, sometime last year.

- [3-year-old child abused by mother’ s partner rescued in Taguig City](#) (2026-05-19 08:24)

Taguig police arrested a woman seen striking 3-year-old toddler in viral video.

- [Pag-IBIG Fund net income rises 11% to P16.772B in Q1 2026](#) (2026-05-19 06:00)

From January to March, Pag-IBIG Fund’ s net income grew by 11% or P1.700B to reach P16.772B.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer

- [Dangerous heat index to hit parts of Calabarzon on May 26, 27](#) (2026-05-26 13:57)

LUCENA CITY – The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has warned residents in five localities across Cavite, Batangas, Quezon, and Laguna to prepare for dangerous heat levels on Tuesday and Wednesday. In its 5 p.m. bulletin issued on Monday, Pagasa forecast that Cavite City in Cavite is expected to register a heat

- [PNP unit recommends cancellation of Dela Rosa’ s gun licenses](#) (2026-05-26 13:48)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Firearms and Explosives Office (PNP FEO) has recommended the cancellation of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa’ s firearms licenses.

“As early as last week, the FEO already conducted the motu proprio investigation or inquiry. We did not wait for the NBI’ s (National Bureau of Investigation) request for the cancellation,”

- [Erice to Marcos: Parting gift to PH is requiring debates for poll bets](#) (2026-05-26 13:48)

MANILA, Philippines — While the current administration may have missed the chance to implement significant projects, a lawmaker believes President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. can still initiate political and electoral reforms that would help the country have a better future. One of the things that Marcos can do, Caloocan Rep. Edgar Erice said in his privilege speech

- [Plunder case to be filed vs Jinggoy Estrada](#) (2026-05-26 13:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A plunder case will be filed before the Sandiganbayan against Sen. Jinggoy Estrada. Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla made the confirmation on Tuesday. /gsg

- [Groups decry cutting of decades-old trees for Manila expressway project](#) (2026-05-26 13:43)

MANILA, Philippines – Environmental groups, fisherfolk organizations, and concerned youth protested in Manila on Tuesday against the Department of Natural Resources (DENR)-backed cutting of decades-old trees for the Southern Access Link Expressway (SALEX) project. Led by Kalikasan People’ s Network for the Environment, the green advocates gathered along Mabini Street, forming a human chain around remaining

- [Activists Cumpio, Domequil urge CA to grant them bail post-conviction](#) (2026-05-26 13:38)

MANILA, Philippines – Community journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio and church worker Marielle Domequil urged the Court of Appeals (CA) to allow them to post bail after a Tacloban City court denied their earlier motions. In their 25-page petition for certiorari, Cumpio and Domequil told the appellate court in Cebu City that Presiding Judge Georgina Perez

- [DILG urges LGUs to speed up approvals for renewable energy projects](#) (2026-05-26 13:06)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) urged local government units (LGUs) to speed up the approval processes for renewable energy (RE) projects across the country. In a statement on Tuesday, DILG explained that their appeal to LGUs came amid the government’ s push for energy security and the declaration of

- [P1.36-M shabu seized, 3 nabbed in Taguig City sting](#) (2026-05-26 12:54)

MANILA, Philippines — The police seized an estimated P1.36 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) and arrested three suspects in a buy-bust operation in Taguig City, the Philippine National Police – National Capital Region Police Office (PNP – NCRPO) said on Tuesday. The

suspects were arrested late Monday night at a fast food restaurant

- [Recto says Leviste, opposition may be behind plunder complaint](#) (2026-05-26 12:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Executive Secretary Ralph Recto on Tuesday said he still has questions about who is really behind the plunder and malversation complaint filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, but added that the opposition or Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Leviste could allegedly be involved. He made the remarks during a brief media

- [PhilHealth, IBP ink ties to provide free legal aid to qualified members](#) (2026-05-26 12:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) have committed to bringing legal services closer to qualified PhilHealth members for free, especially in promoting and raising awareness of their rights under the Universal Health Care (UHC) program. PhilHealth and the IBP signed a two-year memorandum of

- [Nartatez to Cebu police: Speed up probe into car dealer ‘abduction’](#) (2026-05-26 12:42)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. ordered the Cebu police to speed up their investigation into the supposed abduction of a car dealer. “The PNP is treating this reported abduction case with utmost urgency and we are committed to determine the facts and identify those responsible,” Nartatez said

- [New Philippine Building Act pushed in Senate](#) (2026-05-26 12:38)

MANILA, Philippines – A bill that seeks to establish updated general regulations and policies governing the construction of buildings in the Philippines has been filed in the Senate. Senate Bill No. 2159, also known as the “New Philippine Building Act,” was filed by Sen. Raffy Tulfo on Monday. According to Tulfo, the urgent reasons for

- [Contractor liability eyed in Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-26 12:33)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — Authorities are now examining possible legal liability on the part of the contractor and building owner following the collapse of a nine-story structure in Barangay Balibago here, a Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) official said on Tuesday. Fire Supt. Maria Leah Sajili, BFP Central Luzon public information officer, said investigators are

- [Pagasa: ‘Habagat’ season starting soon; very strong’ El Niño looms](#) (2026-05-26 12:24)

MANILA, Philippines — The southwest monsoon or “habagat,” may begin by the end of May or the first week of June, the state weather bureau said. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) likewise warned of heavier rains over the western sections of the country due to the developing El Niño. During its

- [‘Ex-drug pusher’ to face attempted murder raps for shooting Leyte cop](#) (2026-05-26 12:19)

MANILA, Philippines — An alleged former drug pusher will face attempted murder charges for supposedly shooting at a police officer in Barugo, Leyte, the town police said. The suspect allegedly stopped the victim on his way home in Barangay Busay on Monday morning and supposedly told him “You are making it personal against me” before

- [3-year-old girl found dead behind chapel in Mountain Province](#) (2026-05-26 12:04)

PARACELIS, Mountain Province — A three-year-old girl who had been reported missing was found dead behind a chapel in Sitio Batnong, Barangay Banawel, Natonin, Mountain Province, on Sunday, police said Monday. The victim, identified as Thea Bonbon, was discovered lifeless behind the St. Martin de Porres Chapel at around 7:30 a.m. by her grandfather after

- [Red tide alert raised in Samar, Biliran waters](#) (2026-05-26 11:11)

TACLOBAN CITY — Health and fisheries authorities have raised a red tide warning in parts of Samar and nearby coastal waters after seawater and shellfish samples tested positive for saxitoxin, which can cause paralytic shellfish poisoning. In an advisory released on Monday, the regional office of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said

- [PNP sets up help desks for Parola fire victims](#) (2026-05-26 11:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) will set up help desks to assist victims of last Saturday’s blaze that displaced over 2,500 families at the Parola Compound in Binondo, Manila. “A sufficient number of our personnel were sent not only to secure evacuation centers but also to coordinate with the local government unit

- [3 persons of interest eyed in killing of BARMM radioman](#) (2026-05-26 10:55)

COTABATO CITY — Police authorities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) are looking into three persons of interest in the killing of an FM radio reporter in the region’s Special Geographic Area on May 21. Citing a report from the Malidegao Municipal Police Station, Capt. Steffi Salangit, spokesperson for the Police Regional

- [Padilla under DOJ scrutiny: ‘He already confessed to a lot of things’](#) (2026-05-26 10:53)

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Justice (DOJ) is studying the “factual circumstances” and public admissions to determine if Sen. Robin Padilla may be prosecuted for a particular crime. After six months in hiding, dela Rosa appeared before the Senate to cast his vote for a new Senate president. After the gunfire incident, he left

- [Taal Volcano logs 21 quakes, 10 tremors in past 24 hours](#) (2026-05-26 10:23)

LUCENA CITY — Taal Volcano recorded a significant increase in volcanic earthquakes and tremor episodes over the past 24 hours, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) on Tuesday. In its morning bulletin, Phivolcs reported that Taal Volcano recorded 21 volcanic earthquakes and 10 volcanic tremor episodes, each lasting between one and

- [Sandiganbayan begins hearing on PHDO vs Marcoleta, Defensor](#) (2026-05-26 10:20)

MANILA, Philippines — The Sandiganbayan Seventh Division on Tuesday began its hearing on the precautionary hold departure order (PHDO) against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta, former Rep. Michael Defensor and two other individuals over complaints of plunder, indirect bribery, and the Presidential Decree No. 46. On Monday, the Office of the Ombudsman filed a verified ex parte application for

- [DOJ Secretary Vida to PNP: Strip fugitive Bato dela Rosa of gun privileges](#) (2026-05-26 10:13)

MANILA, Philippines – Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida on Tuesday said the Philippine National Police (PNP) should have already revoked firearms licenses of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. Dela Rosa, a former PNP chief, has gone into hiding again after his brief appearance at the Senate last week. The International Criminal Court (ICC) already unsealed the

- [Cayetano to coup plotters: Show me 13 signatures](#) (2026-05-26 09:50)

MANILA, Philippines— Just show him 13 signatures and Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano would even administer the oath of his replacement. Cayetano himself said this on the Senate floor on Monday as he lamented the lingering ouster talks against him since he assumed the Senate presidency on May 11. READ: Alan

- [Missing man turns up safe after Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-26 09:42)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — A man earlier reported missing following the collapse of a nine-story building in Barangay Balibago here was later found safe, authorities said Tuesday. Andy Lemorinas personally appeared before the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWD) at around 3:30 p.m. on Monday, easing fears that he had been trapped beneath the

- [Search ends, retrieval begins at collapsed Angeles City building](#) (2026-05-26 09:01)

ANGELES CITY — After nearly two days of continuous searching through unstable rubble, operations at the collapsed nine-story building in Balibago, Angeles City, Pampanga, will shift to retrieval efforts starting Tuesday, May 26. Authorities on Monday night formally ended search and rescue operations at the site. READ: Angeles building collapse toll hits four, 17 missing

- [HEAT INDEX WATCH: 48 areas to hit danger levels on Tuesday](#) (2026-05-26 09:00)

MANILA, Philippines — At least 48 areas across the country are forecast to experience danger level heat indices on Tuesday, May 26, the state weather bureau said. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) calls the heat index the “feels like” temperature, combining humidity with the actual air temperature. Pagasa said some areas

- [DOJ asks Jimmy Bondoc for location of Bato dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-26 08:43)

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Justice’ s (DOJ) panel of prosecutors has reached out to Atty. Jimmy Bondoc to provide information regarding the location of Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida said this is an opportunity for Bondoc to “cooperate with the legal processes and the proper service of the ICC (International

- [Pagasa: LPA outside PAR has high chance of becoming tropical depression](#) (2026-05-26 07:34)

MANILA, Philippines — A low pressure area (LPA) being monitored outside the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) has a “high chance” of developing into a tropical depression within the next 24 to 48 hours, the state weather bureau said on Tuesday. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the LPA was

- [SC on Dela Rosa TRO denial: No invasion of rights](#) (2026-05-26 05:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa “has no clear and unmistakable right to be protected,” the Supreme Court (SC) said in its resolution denying the senator’ s request for a temporary restraining order (TRO) that would have blocked local authorities from acting on an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against him without a

- [Marcos names ex-Senator Tolentino acting Dole chief](#) (2026-05-26 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Sen. Francis Tolentino has been appointed acting secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole), replacing Bienvenido Laguesma, who resigned due to health concerns, Palace press officer Claire Castro announced on Monday. President Marcos administered Tolentino’ s oath at Malacañang, formally bringing the former senator into the Cabinet. The appointment places

- [Senate minority still hoping to secure Gatchalian in top post](#) (2026-05-26 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — With Congress adjourning next week, minority senators are still hopeful it could form a new coalition to back Sen. Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian as the upper chamber’ s new leader, while a group led by former Cabinet officials has also expressed support for the Senate minority’ s choice. The minority bloc, which Sen. Juan Miguel

- [Angeles building collapse toll hits four, 17 missing](#) (2026-05-26 05:15)

ANGELES CITY, PAMPANGA, Philippines — Buried beneath tons of concrete and twisted steel, construction worker Bryan Sytangco fought to stay alive as a nine-story building under construction in Barangay Balibago here collapsed early Sunday, killing at least four people and more than a dozen more under the rubble. Sytangco, 46, recalled waking up around 2:30

- [Recto, other execs sued over transfer of funds](#) (2026-05-26 05:05)

MANILA, Philippines — A former special adviser for the Department of Health (DOH) and the government’ s Covid-19 task force on Monday charged Executive Secretary Ralph Recto with plunder, graft and malversation for ordering state-run companies to divert part of their reserve

funds to the national treasury. Aside from Recto, also charged by Dr. Tony Leachon

- [NFA moves auction for aging rice stocks to June](#) (2026-05-26 05:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Food Authority (NFA) has rescheduled from this month to June the auction for aging rice stocks while guidelines for the process are being finalized. NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said on Monday they would offer about one million bags or more than 50,000 metric tons of aging rice stocks—a move aimed

- [DENR backs nickel project tree-cutting plan in Palawan](#) (2026-05-26 04:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has defended tree-cutting activities linked to the Berong Nickel Project in Palawan, saying strict safeguards, phased implementation and replacement measures are in place. “We assure the public that no tree is authorized for removal without strict legal basis, environmental safeguards and long-term rehabilitation requirements,”

- [Bohol town holds centuries-old fiesta ritual](#) (2026-05-26 04:35)

LOBOC, BOHOL, Philippines — Devotees filled the historic St. Peter the Apostle Parish Church on Sunday, gathering before the revered image of Our Lady of Guadalupe de Extremadura in a solemn display of faith during Loboc town’s 183rd fiesta celebration. Some carried candles, others clutched handkerchiefs, while many whispered silent prayers as they gathered before

- [Ombudsman, DOJ probe of Basilan ferry disaster sought](#) (2026-05-26 04:30)

MANILA, Philippines — A congressional panel on Monday approved its report on the January sinking of an interisland ferry off Basilan that left 65 people dead, referring the findings to the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Justice for possible case buildup. The 33-page draft report prepared and approved by the House of

- [SC TRO sought vs some BARMM rules ahead of parliament polls](#) (2026-05-26 02:13)

MANILA, Philippines — A petition was filed before the Supreme Court seeking a temporary restraining order (TRO) against certain provisions of the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BAA) ahead of the first regular parliamentary elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Barmm). In a 9-page manifestation filed on May 22, 2026, petitioners Sultan Alim Saad

- [Bill on nat’ l program, support for Filipinos with autism hurdles panel](#) (2026-05-26 00:08)

MANILA, Philippines — A bill that seeks to create a national program for Filipinos with autism, effectively expanding the range of services and assistance given to those diagnosed with conditions inside the autism spectrum disorder (ASD), has been approved by a House of Representatives committee. During the House committee on health’s hearing on Monday, a

- [LTO says Dermalog already ceased LTMS support; firm's new proposal hit](#) (2026-05-25 23:28)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office (LTO) has admitted that Germany-based Dermalog Identification Systems GmbH no longer provides information technology (IT) support for its Land Transportation Management Systems (LTMS) as the contract for the final module is set to expire by May 30. During the House of Representatives committee on transportation's hearing on Monday,

- [Heat index peaks at 48°C in Sangley Point, Cavite on Monday, May 25](#) (2026-05-25 22:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The highest heat index recorded across the country on Monday, May 25 was 48°C, specifically in Sangley Point in Cavite, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said. Meanwhile, dozens of other areas also reached “danger” level heat indices, or those ranging between 42°C and 51°C. READ: Here's how to

- [Cayetano draws flak over 'pro-life' framing of drug war](#) (2026-05-25 21:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Pahra), Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, and a drug policy advocacy group rebuked Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano after he referred to the Duterte administration's controversial “war on drugs” as a “pro-life campaign.” In a Facebook live video on Saturday, Cayetano said in mixed

- [No winners for May 25 Grand, Mega Lotto jackpots](#) (2026-05-25 21:43)

MANILA, Philippines—No bettor won the jackpot prizes for Grand Lotto 6/55 and Mega Lotto 6/45 during Monday night's draws, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO). Grand Lotto 6/55 yielded the winning combination 48-42-23-18-55-33 for a jackpot prize of about ₱45 million. No ticket holder matched all six numbers to claim the top prize.

- [DOTr launches sea-based service contracting program](#) (2026-05-25 21:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) on Monday said it has launched the sea-based service contracting program, which grants fare subsidies to participating operators and vessels. Dubbed the “Lakbay Alalay ng Gobyerno” or Layag program, the initiative aims to assist shipping companies and ferry passengers by providing subsidies on 11 high-demand, short-trip shipping

- [LTO: Still zero backlog for motorcycles, other vehicles' plates](#) (2026-05-25 20:39)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office (LTO) has maintained zero backlog for motorcycle and motor vehicle (MV) plates, officials told the House of Representatives on Monday. LTO Executive Director Martin Ontog told the House committee on transportation that the agency previously had a backlog of 11.4 million motorcycle plates, 2.39 million replacement plates for

- [Legarda seeks probe into PAF plane crash in Benguet](#) (2026-05-25 20:25)

Sen. Loren Legarda on Monday called for an investigation into the crash of a Philippine Air Force (PAF) trainer aircraft in Tuba, Benguet, which killed two pilots during a military training flight. In a statement, Legarda mourned the deaths of First Lieutenant Ruth Angelique Pasos and Second Lieutenant Cherky Embudo, who perished after their SF-260

- [565 pass May 2026 Chemical Engineering licensure exam](#) (2026-05-25 19:38)

MANILA, Philippines — A total of 565 out of 728 examinees passed the May 2026 Chemical Engineers computer-based licensure examination, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) announced on Monday. The results were released after only one working day after the Chemical Engineering board exams took place across testing centers in Metro Manila, Baguio, Butuan, Cagayan de

- [Razon Group foundations unite for sustainable development](#) (2026-05-25 19:10)

Corporate foundations across the Razon Group have joined forces to drive sustainable and inclusive development, strengthening synergy among their programs and initiatives. A ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing the Razon Group of Foundations was held on May 22 at La Mesa Ecopark in Quezon City. The group unites the six corporate

- [Erwin Tulfo notes peers' absence from Senate plenary: 'I miss them'](#) (2026-05-25 19:04)

MANILA, Philippines — The absence of many senators belonging to the new majority bloc during Monday's session did not escape the attention of Sen. Erwin Tulfo. "Where are our colleagues from the majority at this very moment? Are they still around, Sir, Ma'am? Because we are the only ones left here. I already miss them,

- [Angara leads oath-taking of 1,559 promoted teachers, school heads in Caraga](#) (2026-05-25 18:59)

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur — Education Secretary Sonny Angara led the mass oath-taking of 1,559 newly promoted teachers and school heads in the Caraga region on Sunday, marking another major boost to the Marcos administration's education reform agenda. Angara, who administered the mass oath, highlighted President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to ensure that no

- [Minority senators on Imee Marcos' claims of con-ass plot: Fake news](#) (2026-05-25 18:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Minority senators on Monday slammed Senator Imee Marcos's presentation on a constitutional assembly plot, calling it "propaganda" and "fake news" that threatened the integrity of the Senate. The dispute, marked by sharp language and a review of parliamentary rules, began when Marcos, during her privilege speech, presented a video

alleging a plot

- [Sandiganbayan asked to stop Marcoleta, 3 others from leaving PH](#) (2026-05-25 18:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman on Monday asked the Sandiganbayan to issue a precautionary hold departure order against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta and three other individuals over complaints of plunder and indirect bribery and violation of Presidential Decree No. 46. The anti-graft body filed a verified ex parte application for the issuance of

- [Dy: 1.2M Filipinos to benefit from bill extending PRC license validity](#) (2026-05-25 18:48)

Over 1.2 million Filipino professionals are expected to benefit from a House bill seeking to extend the validity of Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) licenses from three years to five years, House Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III said. According to Dy, House Bill No. 8876, which seeks to amend existing provisions governing the renewal of Professional

- [Palace: Marcos can work with any Senate leader to pass priority bills](#) (2026-05-25 18:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang said on Monday that while President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. can work with any Congressional leader to pass priority legislation, it cannot guarantee the same outcome in the Senate due to its current political upheavals. According to Palace press officer Claire Castro, the President had no issues with leaders of the Congress,

- [Ridon: Financial experts tapped for Sara Duterte impeachment trial](#) (2026-05-25 18:40)

MANILA, Philippines – The House prosecution team in Vice President Sara Duterte’s impeachment trial is enlisting independent financial experts to scrutinize her financial documents presented as evidence in the ouster case against her, Bicol Saro Rep. Terry Ridon said on Monday. Ridon, a member of the 11-man prosecution team, said they recruited auditors and accountants

- [House transpo panel OKs report on Basilan ferry sinking, raps eyed](#) (2026-05-25 18:36)

MANILA, Philippines – A congressional panel on Monday approved its report on the January sinking of an inter-island ferry off Basilan that left 65 persons dead, referring the findings to the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Justice for possible case buildup. The 33-page draft report prepared and approved by the House of

- [Palace to Rep Duterte: Davao City got P7.8B from Marcos admin, not zero](#) (2026-05-25 18:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang debunked on Monday the claim of Davao City First District Rep. Paolo “Pulong” Duterte that the city has not been receiving any support from the national government since the Marcos administration took over. Citing a statement from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Palace press officer Claire Castro said the claim

- [Dy backs proposed Universal Social Pension](#) (2026-05-25 18:34)

Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III on Monday backed the growing push to institutionalize a Universal Social Pension for senior citizens, saying the Philippine government has a moral obligation to protect elderly Filipinos who spent their lives sacrificing for their families and the nation. Speaking at the turnover of the initial batch of signatures for the

- [Akabayon gearing up for Risa Hontiveros’ potential 2028 presidential bid](#) (2026-05-25 18:29)

MANILA, Philippines – Akbayon Party said on Monday it will throw its full support behind Senator Risa Hontiveros’ presidential bid in 2028 should she decide to run, kickstarting efforts to mobilize the party’s political machinery to mount a possible campaign. Hontiveros could be the leader “who can help lift and fix our nation,” Akbayon said,

- [Marcoleta on plunder, bribery raps: At least I stated truth](#) (2026-05-25 18:12)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Rodante Marcoleta on Monday broke his silence after the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon’s field investigation bureau recommended plunder and indirect bribery complaints against him and his donors over alleged campaign donations worth P75 million. According to the complaint, the campaign donation of three donors breached the P50 million threshold for

- [Crimes in Metro Manila down by 39.06% in past week — NCRPO](#) (2026-05-25 17:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The crime rate in Metro Manila dropped by 39.06 percent in the past week, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Monday. In a statement, the NCRPO reported 78 index crime incidents from May 18 to 24, 2026, down from 128 during the same period last year. Index crimes refer

- [Survivors: Kids were inside Angeles City site before collapse](#) (2026-05-25 17:53)

ANGELES CITY — At least two survivors of the collapsed nine-story building in Barangay Balibago said minors may have been inside the construction site before the structure gave way. The accounts surfaced as rescuers continued searching for individuals feared trapped beneath the rubble of the unfinished mixed-use building along Teodoro Street. Ernesto Toleroso, 60, a

- [Escudero, Imee head Senate labor, electoral reforms panels](#) (2026-05-25 17:45)

MANILA, Philippines – Senator Francis Escudero is the new chairman of the Senate committee on labor while Senator Imee Marcos was named head of the committee on electoral reforms and people’s participation. Escudero and Marcos replaced Senators Raffy Tulfo and Risa Hontiveros, respectively. Their new assignments were read and approved in the plenary on Monday.

- [Angeles City building collapse: Worker recounts narrow escape](#) (2026-05-25 17:38)

ANGELES CITY — Buried beneath tons of concrete and twisted steel, construction worker Bryan Sytangco fought to stay alive as a nine-story building under construction in Barangay Balibago

here collapsed before dawn Sunday, killing at least four people and trapping dozens more under the rubble. Sytangco, 46, recalled waking up around 2:30 a.m. Sunday, to

- [DA launches P20/kilo rice program in Kalinga](#) (2026-05-25 17:18)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has expanded its flagship P20 rice program to the province of Kalinga in the Cordillera Administrative Region. According to the DA, Agriculture Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. himself led the rollout of the program in the landlocked province which has more than 47,000 hectares of largely irrigated

- [TOWNS urges Legarda to ‘reflect deeply’ on her political decisions](#) (2026-05-25 17:09)

MANILA, Philippines – The Outstanding Women in the Nation’s Service (TOWNS) Foundation Inc. has joined those expressing “not only concern, but profound disappointment” over the political decisions of Sen. Loren Legarda, a TOWNS awardee. “We…urge Senator Legarda to reflect deeply on whether her recent actions honor the values for which she was recognized as a

- [Palace fires back at Baste Duterte, points to recent Davao drug bust](#) (2026-05-25 17:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Monday said the Marcos administration can address the problem of illegal drug use without resorting to extrajudicial killings. These remarks came after Davao City Mayor Sebastian “Baste” Duterte said over the weekend that Marcos has “brought back” drugs, criminality, and corruption and has no achievements as the country’s chief executive. READ:

- [Angeles building collapse shows need for PH Building Act – solon](#) (2026-05-25 16:39)

Updated @ 7:15 p.m., May 25, 2026 MANILA, Philippines — The collapse of a nine-story building under construction in Angeles, Pampanga, underscores the urgency of passing a new Philippine Building Act (PBA), as the proposed measure could have prevented unnecessary deaths and property loss, Surigao del Sur Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. said on Monday. In

- [Laguesma says he resigned as Dole chief due to health reasons](#) (2026-05-25 16:25)

MANILA, Philippines — Bienvenido Laguesma on Monday said he resigned as labor secretary due to “health considerations.” He issued the statement after the Palace named former Senator Francis Tolentino as acting secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), weeks after the one-year ban on appointing losing candidates to government posts had lapsed. “I

- [‘No prejudgment’ : Palace leaves Duterte impeachment verdict to senators](#) (2026-05-25 16:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang said on Monday it will not make any prejudgment on the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, saying that only the senator-judges can determine whether or not she should be held accountable. Duterte’s impeachment trial is set to begin on July 6, after the Senate convened as an impeachment court on

- [4 family members die as truck rams car, motorcycle in Isabela](#) (2026-05-25 16:14)

ALICIA, Isabela — Four people were killed after a trailer truck reportedly lost control and rammed a multi-purpose vehicle and a motorcycle before crashing into a tree along the national highway in Barangay Rizaluna here early Monday morning, police said. Investigators said the truck was traveling toward the southern part of Isabela when its rear

- [Coalition eyed to install Sherwin Gatchalian as Senate president-Zubiri](#) (2026-05-25 16:09)

MANILA, Philippines — A new coalition is being eyed in the Senate to install Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian as the new Senate president, according to Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri. Zubiri admitted that until now, the minority bloc known as Solid Bloc-11 (SB-11) still needs to get the number needed to unseat Cayetano, who took over the Senate presidency

- [Cop survives ambush; suspect wounded in shootout in Leyte](#) (2026-05-25 15:59)

TACLOBAN CITY — A police officer survived an alleged ambush following a shootout with a suspect early Monday morning in Barangay Busay, Barugo, Leyte, authorities said. The victim was identified as Police Corporal “Rex,” 36, an active member of the Philippine National Police and a resident of Barugo, Leyte. He was unharmed during the incident.

- [DILG probes cause of Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-25 15:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Monday said an investigation has been launched into the collapse of a nine-story building under construction in Angeles City. “The department... extended its deepest sympathies to the families of the victims and those who remain missing,” it said in a statement. “All

- [New DOLE chief Tolentino enjoined to promptly address labor issues](#) (2026-05-25 15:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Different groups and several House of Representatives lawmakers have urged former senator and newly-appointed Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) head Francis Tolentino to “hit the ground running” in terms of solving problems related to the labor industry. In a statement on Monday, Kamanggagawa party-list Rep. Eli San Fernando said that the real

- [DSWD cash, relief aid reach Angeles City building collapse victims](#) (2026-05-25 15:03)

ANGELES CITY — The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has started distributing cash assistance and relief goods to workers and families affected by the collapse of a nine-story building under construction in Barangay Balibago, which has left four people dead and 17 others missing or feared trapped. Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian said

- [Marcos Cabinet should keep working despite raps, criticism — lawmaker](#) (2026-05-25 15:01)

MANILA, Philippines — The Marcos administration’s Cabinet officials should continue working despite several complaints, as staunch criticism comes with the territory, House Deputy Speaker Paolo Ortega V said on Monday. He made the statement in response to the plunder and malversation complaint filed against Executive Secretary Ralph Recto over the directive to transfer funds from

- [PhilHealth fund transfer legal, plunder rap a harassment case – Recto](#) (2026-05-25 14:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Executive Secretary Ralph Recto on Monday said the plunder and malversation complaint filed against him before the Office of the Ombudsman over the diversion of reserve funds from state-run companies to the national treasury is a “harassment case.” The complaint, filed by Dr. Tony Leachon early Monday, alleged that Recto “violated the Constitution

- [PNP: No formal request yet to revoke Dela Rosa’s gun licenses](#) (2026-05-25 14:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Monday that it has yet to receive a formal request to revoke Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa’s firearms licenses. Republic Act No. 10591, or the Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Law, tasks the PNP, through its Firearms and Explosives Office (FEO) under the Civil Security Group

- [Agusan del Sur debuts as Palarong Pambansa host](#) (2026-05-25 14:27)

MANILA, Philippines—The 2026 Palarong Pambansa kicked off Sunday night marking Agusan del Sur’s first time hosting the country’s biggest student athletic meet, as the Department of Education pushes to invest in youth development. The provincial government of Agusan del Sur formally opened the event scheduled until May 31, with over 16,000 delegates participating. Special Assistant

- [Deepfakes, coordinated online harassment are public order concerns – PNP](#) (2026-05-25 13:33)

MANILA, Philippines — Deepfakes and coordinated online harassment are now “public order concerns,” the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Monday. “Existing laws must continuously evolve to keep pace with AI (artificial intelligence)-driven disinformation, coordinated troll operations and deepfake technology,” PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez said in a statement. “Deepfakes and coordinated online harassment

- [Cop, village chair among 4 killed in Isabela shooting](#) (2026-05-25 13:32)

CITY OF ILAGAN, Isabela — Police have launched dragnet operations to track down the suspects behind the fatal shooting of four people, including a village chief and a police officer, in Barangay San Rafael Abajo, Santo Tomas, Isabela, on Sunday evening. Police Col. Manuel Bringas, Isabela police director, identified the fatalities as Barangay Colonguan chair

- [DENR defends tree-cutting activities tied to Palawan nickel project](#) (2026-05-25 13:30)

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) defends tree-cutting activities associated with the Berong Nickel Project in Palawan, saying that strict safeguards, phased implementation, and replacement measures are in place. “We assure the public that no tree is authorized for removal without a strict legal basis, environmental safeguards, and long-term term rehabilitation

- [Ex-Sen. Tolentino named acting DOLE chief](#) (2026-05-25 13:27)

. MANILA, Philippines — Former Senator Francis Tolentino has been named as the acting secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), replacing Bienvenido Laguesma, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro announced on Monday. Tolentino will take his oath of office before President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. later in the afternoon in Malacañang. READ: Filipinos losing jobs to

- [Eastern Visayas crime rate drops 57% under Safer Cities Initiative](#) (2026-05-25 13:09)

TACLOBAN CITY- The Police Regional Office 8 (PRO-8) reported on Monday a significant reduction in crime across Eastern Visayas, citing a 57.52 percent drop in the region’ s eight focus crimes following the intensified rollout of the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI). The SCI, which began full implementation on April 6, is a coordinated law enforcement strategy

- [Groups, leaders launch drive to restore Senate credibility](#) (2026-05-25 13:08)

MANILA, Philippines – Several former and incumbent government officials as well as church and civil society leaders have initiated a signature campaign calling for the “restoration of the integrity and credibility” of the Senate. In a public statement, the signatories said they also support the consensus of the 11-member Senate minority bloc in nominating Sen.

- [Plunder raps filed vs Recto over diverted state funds](#) (2026-05-25 12:48)

MANILA, Philippines — A plunder and malversation complaint was filed on Monday in the Office of the Ombudsman against Executive Secretary Ralph Recto for ordering the diversion of reserve funds of state-run companies to the national treasury. When he was the Department of Finance (DOF) chief, Recto ordered the diversion of unused funds of the

- [Some senators express intentions to move to minority – Hontiveros](#) (2026-05-25 12:43)

MANILA, Philippines – Amid whispers of another possible Senate shake-up, Sen. Risa Hontiveros said on Monday that some majority bloc senators have expressed intentions to move to the minority. During a press conference, Hontiveros was asked if there have been any senators who intend to move the minority bloc and possibly change the leadership once

- [NBI to ask PNP to revoke firearm licenses of Bato dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-25 12:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) will request the Philippine National Police (PNP) to cancel the licenses of firearms registered under the name of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, the agency’ s director said Monday. This came after NBI Director

Melvin Matibag said last weekend that dela Rosa, who is currently facing

- [Marcos: Sunog Apog pumping station in Tondo now working after 6 years](#) (2026-05-25 12:33)

MANILA, Philippines — After six years of being non-operational, the P774-million Estero de Sunog Apog pumping station in Manila is now working to prevent flooding in low-lying areas of Tondo district and nearby areas. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday inspected the flood control project to ensure that it will be fully functioning during the onset

- [4 areas in Mimaropa under danger-level heat index](#) (2026-05-25 12:20)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Sweltering heat continues to grip the country this dry season, with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) warning that four areas in the MIMAROPA region will experience danger-level heat index readings on Monday, making outdoor activities risky and potentially harmful to health. At the highest end of

- [Solon to Cayetano: Irony to preach Bible and say drug war is pro-life](#) (2026-05-25 12:09)

MANILA, Philippines — A lawmaker has called out Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano for his supposedly ironic use of Bible verses in statements and interviews and his belief that the past administration's bloody war against illegal drugs is pro-life, noting that the Christian book states killing the innocent is wrong. In a statement on Monday, Manila

- [Magnitude 5.2 quake jolts waters off Davao; aftershocks expected](#) (2026-05-25 11:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Aftershocks are expected after a magnitude 5.2 earthquake jolted waters off Davao Oriental on Monday morning, the state seismologists reported. According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), the tremor, which was tectonic of origin, occurred at 10:32 a.m. READ: Phivolcs Modernization Act to boost disaster monitoring capabilities Its epicenter

- [4th body recovered in Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-25 11:36)

ANGELES CITY – Another body was retrieved from the rubble beneath the collapsed building in Barangay Balibago here on Monday morning, raising the death toll to four, according to authorities. A consolidated report from the multi-agency search and rescue teams released at 10 a.m. showed that the body was retrieved from the second sector of

- [Oriental Mindoro grid placed under red alert amid supply deficit](#) (2026-05-25 10:56)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative (Ormeco) on Monday (May 25) warned consumers of possible rotational power interruptions as the province's power grid faces a critical supply-demand imbalance due to high electricity consumption and limited generation capacity. In an advisory, Ormeco said the Oriental Mindoro grid is expected to be placed

- [PMA cadet graduates from West Point, Baguio student from USCGA](#) (2026-05-25 10:25)

BAGUIO City — Another cadet of the Philippine Military Academy has graduated from the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point last week and is set to return to the country to serve in the Army. Cavite-born Cadet First Class Renzo Jamir Almodovar, 22, received his diploma for a Bachelor of Science Degree in

- [Armed men rob Benguet gas station of P260,000](#) (2026-05-25 10:18)

TUBA, Benguet — Police are searching for two unidentified armed men who robbed a gas station along Kennon Road in Camp 3 here on Sunday evening, May 24, and escaped with an estimated P260,000 in cash. An employee said workers had just finished counting the day's sales and were preparing to deposit the money in

- [Marcos to Binondo fire victims: We will not stop providing assistance](#) (2026-05-25 09:56)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday assured continued government assistance to the more than 2,500 families displaced by the fire that ravaged Parola Compound in Binondo, Manila, over the weekend, saying support would continue until their lives return to normal. He said this after inspecting the Delpan Sports Complex and the Delpan Evacuation

- [Death toll in Angeles City building collapse rises to 3](#) (2026-05-25 09:36)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — Rescuers recovered a third body from the rubble of the collapsed nine-story building under construction in Barangay Balibago here, authorities confirmed Monday, May 25. In its latest update, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) said it retrieved the latest victim from the wreckage of the mixed-use structure along Teodoro Street. No

- [Negros labor group hits W. Visayas wage board over junked pay hike plea](#) (2026-05-25 09:14)

BACOLOD CITY — Negros-based labor organization General Alliance of Workers Associations (GAWA) on Sunday, May 24, expressed dismay over the decision of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB)-Western Visayas to dismiss a petition seeking a wage increase for all private-sector workers in Western Visayas and Negros Occidental. Wennie Sancho, GAWA secretary general, said

- [Magnitude 5.5 earthquake, aftershocks jolt Surigao del Sur](#) (2026-05-25 08:59)

TANDAG CITY — A strong earthquake followed by a series of aftershocks struck off the coast near Bayabas, Surigao del Sur, shortly before 1 a.m. on Monday, May 25, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). Initial data released by Phivolcs showed that a magnitude 5.6 earthquake occurred at 12:48 a.m. at

- [PNP to help investigate Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-25 08:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) will assist in investigating the collapse of a building in Angeles City, Pampanga in which at least two people died over the weekend. In a statement on Monday, PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the national police force deployed its search and rescue personnel to

- [HEAT INDEX WATCH: 44 areas to reach ‘danger’ level Monday](#) (2026-05-25 08:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Forty-four areas in the country, including the weather station at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) in Pasay City, are expected to record a “danger” level heat index on Monday, May 25, according to the state weather bureau. Based on its latest update, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Naia’s

- [2nd fatality confirmed in Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-25 07:55)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — Authorities have confirmed a second fatality in the ongoing search, rescue, and retrieval operations at the site of a collapsed nine-story building under construction in Barangay Balibago, as rescuers continue searching for individuals believed trapped beneath the rubble. In an update released early Monday (May 25), the Bureau of Fire Protection

- [LPA trough to bring rain over Palawan, Mindanao on Monday](#) (2026-05-25 07:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The trough of the low-pressure area (LPA) being monitored outside the Philippine area of responsibility is expected to bring cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Palawan and the entire Mindanao on Monday, May 25, the state weather bureau reported. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration

- [Gaza hospital says child among three killed in Israeli strike](#) (2026-05-25 07:16)

GAZA City, Palestinian Territories – A pre-dawn Israeli airstrike killed three members of a Palestinian family, including a one-year-old child, in central Gaza on Sunday, a hospital said. Gaza remains gripped with daily violence despite a formal ceasefire in place since October, with both the Israeli military and Hamas accusing one another of violating the truce.

- [NPA ‘totally defeated’ in Negros – NTF-Elcac exec](#) (2026-05-25 07:00)

MANILA, Philippines – Recent defeats of New People’s Army (NPA) rebels in Toboso and Cauayan, Negros Occidental have shown the “irreversible collapse of the remaining communist terrorist infrastructure” in the region, a ranking National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) official said. These losses, NTF-Elcac executive director Undersecretary Ernesto Torres Jr. said,

- [Weeklong PDEA ops net P77.78-M illegal drugs, 85 suspects](#) (2026-05-25 06:53)

MANILA, Philippines – Authorities confiscated P77.78 million worth of illegal drugs and arrested 85 suspects in nationwide operations conducted from May 14 to 21, the Philippine Drug

Enforcement Agency (PDEA) said. Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Director General Isagani Nerez said the agency carried out 78 operations across the country during the period. [READ: PDEA dismantles alleged drug](#)

- [Lacson repeats earlier advice for Dela Rosa: Hide well](#) (2026-05-25 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — Hide well, Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson told Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa on Sunday, repeating the unsolicited advice he offered last year when the latter first disappeared from public view following reports he was ordered arrested by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for being a “co-perpetrator” in former President Rodrigo Duterte’s drug

- [Palace to Marcoleta: Blame yourself for your troubles](#) (2026-05-25 05:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Sunday denied allegations that the plunder case filed against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta and his election campaign donors were politically motivated, saying that the complaints stemmed from evidence and admissions coming from the senator himself. In an interview on dzMM, Palace press officer Claire Castro said the Marcos administration had no

- [Imee Marcos got wrong info again – Sotto](#) (2026-05-25 05:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Senate Minority Leader Vicente “Tito” Sotto III on Sunday disputed the claim of Sen. Imee Marcos that he and Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson were conniving to block the supposed presidential run of Vice President Sara Duterte in 2028. The opposition senator said Marcos was misinformed when she was told of supposed plans

- [1 dead, 20 feared trapped after collapse of building project](#) (2026-05-25 05:25)

ANGELES CITY, PAMPANGA, Philippines — A Malaysian national died while more than 20 workers were feared trapped beneath the rubble after a nine-story building still under construction collapsed in Barangay Balibago here before dawn on Sunday. Fire Chief Superintendent Wilberto Rico Neil Kwan Tiu, officer in charge of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), confirmed

- [House prosecutors seek full presentation of evidence vs Sara Duterte](#) (2026-05-25 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — House prosecutors on Sunday appealed to the Senate to allow them to fully present evidence and witnesses in the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, saying a complete airing of the case is essential for both senator-judges and the public to understand the allegations against the country’s second-highest official. Lanao del

- [Catanduanes ‘severe’ power woes flagged](#) (2026-05-25 04:45)

LEGAZPI CITY, ALBAY, Philippines — The island province of Catanduanes continues to endure prolonged rotational brownouts, with residents now experiencing up to eight hours of daily power interruptions, prompting a lawmaker to seek congressional intervention. TGP (Talino at Galing ng Pinoy) party-list Rep. Jose Teves Jr. urged the panel to address the worsening power

situation

- [Modern neuro lab opens in Pangasinan town](#) (2026-05-25 04:40)

DAGUPAN CITY, PANGASINAN, Philippines — The Julius K. Quiambao Medical and Wellness Center (JKQMWCC), Pangasinan's newest and most modern hospital, opened its EEG (electroencephalogram) and Sleep Laboratory on May 22, offering services vital in diagnosing and managing neurological conditions that occur during sleep. The conditions include epilepsy, seizure disorders, sleep apnea, insomnia and narcolepsy. The

- [Iqbal urges sobriety after losing BARMM education post](#) (2026-05-25 04:35)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — Veteran Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace negotiator Mohagher Iqbal has called for sobriety and unity in the Bangsamoro region after accepting his removal as education chief of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), while maintaining that the decision was carried out “without due process.” In a statement

- [Negros Occidental crop losses reach P16.2M](#) (2026-05-25 04:30)

BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, Philippines — Moisture stress due to extreme heat and lack of water damaged P16.2 million worth of rice and high-value crops in Negros Occidental from April to May, according to the provincial agricultural office. The losses, recorded over the same period, were detailed in a report submitted by acting Provincial Agriculturist

- [4 dead, 4 wounded in Isabela shooting](#) (2026-05-25 01:07)

CITY OF ILAGAN, ISABELA, Philippines — Four men were killed while four others were injured following a shooting incident in Santo Tomas town, Isabela early Sunday, May 24, according to local officials and police. Police in Santo Tomas confirmed the fatalities but withheld the identities of the victims pending notification of their families. The four

- [Magnitude 5.3 quake hits Bayabas, Surigao del Sur](#) (2026-05-24 23:32)

TANDAG CITY, SURIGAO DEL SUR, Philippines — A magnitude 5.3 earthquake of tectonic origin struck off the coast of Bayabas on Sunday night, May 24, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). In its Earthquake Information No. 1 bulletin, Phivolcs said the quake occurred at 9:19:02 p.m. and was traced 50 kilometers

- [One ticket matches ₱25M SuperLotto 6/49 jackpot](#) (2026-05-24 21:49)

MANILA, Philippines—One ticket matched the ₱25 million SuperLotto 6/49 jackpot in the Sunday, May 24, draw, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. Ultra Lotto 6/58 had the winning combination 50-12-20-57-14-21 for a ₱75 million jackpot. No ticket won the jackpot. SuperLotto 6/49 had the winning combination 33-24-12-13-04-09 for a ₱25 million jackpot. One ticket

- [Fires damage hardware store, home in Tagbilaran](#) (2026-05-24 21:34)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Two fires struck this city in Bohol on Sunday, damaging a hardware store in Barangay Manga and a residential house in Barangay Booy, authorities said. The evening fire gutted parts of the CMLM Hardware Store, also known as Mercantile, along CPG North Avenue in Purok 1 in Barangay Manga. The Bureau of

- [Pangasinan heat index hits record 48°C](#) (2026-05-24 20:35)

CALASIAO, Pangasinan — Pangasinan sizzled under extreme heat on Sunday, May 24, as the heat index reached 48 degrees Celsius at 3 p.m., the highest recorded in the province so far this year, according to the Pangasinan Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO). Janks Arenas, emergency operations center staff member of the PDRRMO, said

- [SC clarifies no ruling yet on Dela Rosa petition on ICC jurisdiction](#) (2026-05-24 19:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court on Sunday clarified that it has yet to rule on the main petition filed by Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa regarding the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) jurisdiction in the country. READ: ICC confirms arrest warrant vs Bato dela Rosa According to the SC’s statement, only the denial of the

- [NBI: Padilla should explain how Dela Rosa left Senate custody](#) (2026-05-24 18:55)

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said over the weekend that Sen. Robin Padilla should help authorities establish the full account of how Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa left the Senate premises after the former police chief had been placed under the chamber’s protective custody. NBI Director Melvin Matibag made the statement during the Saturday

- [Binondo fire affects over 2,500 families — Manila mayor](#) (2026-05-24 18:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The number of families affected by the blaze that ravaged a residential area in Binondo, Manila, over the weekend has reached more than 2,500, Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso said Sunday. He gave the figure after inspecting the Parola Compound in Binondo, where the fire broke out, as well as the Delpan

- [Adiong: Duterte impeachment trial a ‘litmus test’ for PH democracy](#) (2026-05-24 18:46)

House prosecution panel spokesperson Zia Alonto Adiong of Lanao del Sur said the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte will serve as a crucial test of the country’s democratic institutions and constitutional accountability mechanisms amid mounting political tensions surrounding the proceedings. “This is actually a litmus test for us that we can say this

- [Collapsed building in Angeles City claims life of Malaysian PWD](#) (2026-05-24 18:35)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — A Malaysian national who was a person with disability (PWD) was confirmed dead after a nine-story under-construction building collapsed in Barangay Balibago here before dawn Sunday, May 24. The Bureau of Fire Protection confirmed the fatality as emergency crews carried out delicate manual search and rescue operations amid unstable

debris along

- [House prosecution panel pre-marks evidence in Duterte impeachment](#) (2026-05-24 18:27)

While awaiting the start of pre-trial proceedings in Vice President Sara Duterte's impeachment case, House prosecution panel spokesperson and Kabataan party-list Rep. Renee Co said over the weekend that the panel is securing its evidence and witnesses. Co, a lawyer, explained that aside from conducting mock trials, the 11-member panel is pre-marking evidence to be

- [Palace: No need yet to tap Torre's help to arrest Dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-24 17:59)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang will not yet seek the help of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Nicolas Torre III in tracking down and arresting fugitive Sen. Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Palace Press Officer Claire Castro on Sunday said President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has not

- [Palace denies political motive in plunder case vs Marcoleta, donors](#) (2026-05-24 17:08)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Sunday denied allegations that the plunder case filed against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta and his campaign donors was politically motivated, saying the complaints stemmed from evidence and admissions from the senator himself. In an interview on dzMM, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the Marcos administration had no hand in the

- [Baste Duterte: Marcos has no achievements as president](#) (2026-05-24 17:01)

MANILA, Philippines — Davao City Mayor Sebastian “Baste” Duterte has again slammed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., this time accusing him of having no achievements as the country's chief executive. Duterte made the statement in a speech during a regional gathering of the Rage Coalition in Davao City on Saturday, May 23, where a large portion

- [PNP assures protection for missing sabungeros' kin amid pressure claims](#) (2026-05-24 16:07)

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippine National Police (PNP) has pledged to protect the families of the missing sabungeros, or cockfighting enthusiasts, amid allegations that they are being pressured to withdraw from court proceedings. In a statement on Sunday, PNP Chief Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the police will not disregard claims that some relatives were allegedly urged

- [Dizon: Over 20 trapped in collapsed building in Angeles City](#) (2026-05-24 15:59)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — More than 20 people, most of them construction workers, are believed to be trapped beneath the rubble of the collapsed nine-story building here, Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon said on Sunday. Dizon, who was directed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to inspect the site, said rescuers have detected signs of life

- [Adiong: House panel shakeup not linked to impeachment vote](#) (2026-05-24 15:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The committee leadership changes in the House of Representatives last week were not linked to the affected lawmakers’ impeachment votes, Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong said Sunday. This came amid speculation that they were stripped of their positions for opposing the impeachment complaint against Vice President Sara Duterte. Adiong denied

- [Lacson to law enforcers: Do a better job in making arrests](#) (2026-05-24 15:46)

MANILA, Philippines—Sen. Panfilo Lacson on Sunday advised law enforcers to strengthen their intelligence work to locate and arrest high-profile personalities, including Sen. Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa, who is facing an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC). Lacson also said he understood Dela Rosa’s decision to evade arrest and even advised him to “hide

- [BFP: Rescuers detect signs of life beneath collapsed building in Angeles](#) (2026-05-24 15:28)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — Rescuers detected possible signs of life beneath the rubble of the collapsed nine-story building in Barangay Balibago, according to the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP). Fire Chief Superintendent Wilberto Rico Neil Kwan Tiu, officer-in-charge of the BFP, told reporters that initial operations detected three possible survivors, including a foreign guest staying

- [PNP: Crime rate down 16% under ‘safer cities’ drive](#) (2026-05-24 15:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines’ crime rate dropped by 16 percent during the first 43 days of implementation of the anti-crime program “Safer Cities” initiative, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Sunday. Data show that a total of 3,776 focus crimes were recorded from April 6, when the campaign was launched, to May 18. This was lower than

- [Angeles mayor urges collapsed building owner to aid probe](#) (2026-05-24 14:38)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — Mayor Carmelo “Jon” Lazatin II on Sunday urged the owner of the collapsed nine-story building in Barangay Balibago to coordinate with authorities and send a representative to help validate the number of workers present at the site during the incident. In an interview with reporters, Lazatin identified a certain “Mr. Lim”

- [Police eye theft in vandalism of slain ex-Aparri vice mayor’s tomb](#) (2026-05-24 14:25)

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan — Police are investigating a possible theft following the vandalism and destruction of the tomb of former Aparri Vice Mayor Rommel Alameda in Cagayan. The incident, discovered on May 22, sparked outrage from the family. The victim’s widow, Elizabeth Alameda, expressed her anger on Facebook after confirming that the tomb had been

- [Bato Dela Rosa is not ‘armed and dangerous’ — lawyer](#) (2026-05-24 13:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa’s lawyer on Sunday denied claims that the lawmaker is “armed and dangerous,” contradicting the description given by National

Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag. Dela Rosa's whereabouts remain unknown after he fled the Senate on May 14 to evade an arrest warrant issued by the International

- [DPWH chief inspects site of collapsed building in Angeles City](#) (2026-05-24 13:46)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — Public Works and Highways Secretary Vince Dizon on Sunday afternoon arrived and inspected the site of a collapsed nine-story reinforced concrete building here as search and rescue operations continued for possible survivors. The structure, a proposed mixed-use concrete development still in its construction phase, collapsed before dawn, prompting a large-scale emergency

- [PNP vows intensified ops vs communist rebels](#) (2026-05-24 13:42)

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Sunday vowed to intensify operations against communist insurgents following the “Toboso 19” incident in Negros Occidental, amid renewed debate on whether the government should resume peace talks. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. reiterated that the national police force is aligned with the government's stance that there's

- [Red Cross taps emergency teams after Angeles City building collapse](#) (2026-05-24 13:23)

ANGELES CITY, Pampanga — The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) has deployed emergency response and welfare teams following the collapse of an under-construction, nine-story building along Teodoro Street in Barangay Balibago, Angeles City, on Sunday. The structure reportedly caved in between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m., with initial estimates indicating that 30 to 40 individuals may

- [18 injured in Catbalogan City bus crash](#) (2026-05-24 12:07)

TACLOBAN CITY — Eighteen persons were injured after a passenger bus reportedly suffered brake failure and plowed into several vehicles and roadside establishments in Catbalogan City Saturday morning, according to the local police. The Catbalogan City police reported that the bus was traveling from Guiuan to downtown Catbalogan when the driver reportedly lost control of the

- [Dangerous heat persists in Calabarzon; Cavite City hits 48°C](#) (2026-05-24 11:58)

LUCENA CITY — Parts of the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) region continued to experience dangerous indices over the weekend, with Cavite City hitting 48°C heat index on Saturday, despite forecasts that the rainy season may begin soon. Data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) showed that Sangley Point in

- [Dela Rosa urged to honor ‘sense of duty’ as former PNP chief](#) (2026-05-24 11:25)

MANILA, Philippines – Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Sunday appealed to Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to cooperate with authorities and

honor his duty as a former national police chief amid ongoing efforts to locate him. The PNP said it is still coordinating with other law enforcement agencies to

- [Vlogger' s cyber libel raps vs barangay chair, broadcaster dismissed](#) (2026-05-24 10:52)

DAGUPAN CITY — The cyber libel and slander complaints filed by a vlogger from Mapandan town against a barangay chairman in San Jacinto, Pangasinan, and a local media personality from Mangaldan town were dismissed by the Provincial Prosecutor' s Office of Abra for lack of probable cause. The dismissed complaints, filed by vlogger Jaime Aquino, were

- [Sotto refutes Imee Marcos: No talks on con-ass](#) (2026-05-24 10:34)

MANILA, Philippines – Senate Minority Leader Vicente “Tito” Sotto on Sunday refuted Sen. Imee Marcos’ claims about a plot to hold a constitutional assembly in a bid to block the presidential run of Vice President Sara Duterte in 2028. This comes a few days after minority Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson called Marcos’ claims “outright lies.”

- [Quezon fisherman gets P100,000 reward for turning over P34.5-M cocaine](#) (2026-05-24 09:39)

LUCENA CITY — Quezon Governor Angelina Tan awarded P100,000 to a fisherman from the island town of Patnanungan on Friday in recognition of his honesty after he turned over cocaine worth P34.5 million that he found along the shoreline. In a Facebook post written in Filipino on Saturday, Tan said the recognition coincided with a

- [26 rescued after Angeles City building collapses](#) (2026-05-24 09:10)

MANILA, Philippines – Twenty six persons have so far been rescued after a building under construction collapsed in Angeles City, Pampanga before fdawn Sunday. According to the Angeles City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (ACDRMO), a proposed nine-story concrete building under construction collapsed at around 3 a.m. in Teodoro Street, Balibago, Angeles City. “24

- [Dangerous 44°C heat index forecast in Metro Manila; 46°C in 4 areas](#) (2026-05-24 07:49)

MANILA, Philippines – Metro Manila is forecast to experience a dangerous heat index of 43 to 44°C on Sunday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) reported. Heat index levels of 42°C to 51°C fall under the “danger” category, where risks of heat cramps, heat exhaustion and worse, heat stroke, may be experienced.

- [LPA inside PAR dissipates; Sunday rain showers expected down South](#) (2026-05-24 07:34)

MANILA, Philippines – The low-pressure area (LPA) inside the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) dissipated on Sunday morning, the state weather bureau said. The extension of another LPA outside the PAR, however, will trigger scattered rains and thunderstorms to Mindanao, Palawan, Eastern Samar and Southern Leyte, according to the Philippine Atmospheric,

Geophysical and Astronomical Services

- [Minority bloc pushes for Sherwin Gatchalian as ‘coup’ talk persists](#) (2026-05-24 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Another round of musical chairs in the Senate could create a new majority, with Sen. Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian assuming leadership with the backing of a “solid” 11-member minority bloc and several other senators who would change sides. Former Senate President Pro Tempore Panfilo Lacson and Sen. Francis Pangilinan, in separate statements on

- [Ombudsman flags Marcoleta for raps dropped by Comelec](#) (2026-05-24 05:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman’s field investigation bureau in Luzon has recommended charging Sen. Rodante Marcoleta with plunder and three counts of indirect bribery over alleged campaign donations worth P75 million support his Senate bid last year. The bureau recommended the same chargers against three of Marcoleta’s donors, namely, former Rep. Mike

- [Alan Cayetano keeps drawing flak, likens Senate to Pokemon card game](#) (2026-05-24 05:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The student council of Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano’s law school rebuked him on Saturday for the turbulence in the chamber after he assumed the top leadership post in a “coup” last week. “[T]he Ateneo Law School Student Council believes that Senator [Alan] Peter Cayetano fell short of the ethical leadership expected

- [Sara Duterte’s bank accounts may ‘prove corruption’](#) (2026-05-24 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — “It might be fatal to the case if we do not see the official bank accounts of Sara Duterte,” former Ateneo School of Government Dean Tony La Viña said on Saturday, adding that the bank accounts could decide the outcome of the Vice President’s trial starting on July 6. “[But] there are

- [Bolinao’s tourism boom rooted in conservation](#) (2026-05-24 05:17)

BOLINAO, PANGASINAN—Three decades ago, residents of this coastal town fought to stop a multibillion-peso cement plant that threatened to transform Bolinao’s limestone hills and marine ecosystem into an industrial zone. Today, many locals believe that the decision changed the town’s future. Once a quiet fishing municipality in western Pangasinan, Bolinao, has evolved into one of

- [This week’s milestones: May 24 to May 30](#) (2026-05-24 05:15)

May 24, 2011 The “Lumang Bayan ng Dapitan” in Zamboanga del Norte was declared as a heritage zone or historic center by virtue of National Historical Commission of the Philippines Board Resolution No. 3, s. 2011. Recognized as one of Northern Mindanao’s oldest settlements and the site where Jose Rizal spent his four-year exile, the

- [New luxury hotel project to boost Bohol tourism](#) (2026-05-24 00:53)

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol — Bohol's tourism industry received another major boost after Robinsons Hotels and Resorts and Robinsons Land Corporation formally broke ground for the Grand Summit Bohol in Barangay Doljo, Panglao on Wednesday, May 20. The upcoming luxury hotel, which will feature more than 200 rooms, is expected to create employment opportunities and attract

- [ICPO launches whisper hotline, mobilizes private security to fight crime](#) (2026-05-24 00:50)

ILOILO CITY – In a bid to counter increasingly sophisticated criminal tactics, the Iloilo City Police Office (ICPO) has launched a proactive community-backed intelligence gathering initiative called “IHUTIK KAY TSIP” (Whisper to the Chief). The program aims to establish a direct pipeline for citizens and private security personnel to securely feed vital information to the

- [250 kilos of marine waste collected in touristy Panglao, Bohol](#) (2026-05-24 00:46)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Panglao, Bohol recorded the highest volume of garbage collected during the simultaneous underwater and coastal cleanup drive conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region VII on Thursday, May 21, as part of the nationwide “Scubasurero Drive” campaign. Data from DENR Region VII showed that volunteers gathered around 250

- [Lower generation charges bring down May power rates in Bohol](#) (2026-05-24 00:43)

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol — Consumers of Bohol Light Company, Inc. will see lower electricity bills this May after the company announced a significant reduction in power rates for residential and commercial customers. In its advisory on Friday, Bohol Light said residential electricity rates for May 2026 were set at P10.5081 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), while commercial

- [Dry spell brought P16M in crop damage in Negros Occidental](#) (2026-05-24 00:41)

BACOLOD CITY — The damage to rice and high-value crops in Negros Occidental caused by “moisture stress” reached P16.2 million on Friday, May 22. The damage from April to May was included in a report submitted by acting Provincial Agriculturist Dina Genzola to Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson. The report said damage to rice

- [New NBI office, training center open in Albay](#) (2026-05-24 00:33)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) inaugurated on Thursday its new regional office and training center in Rawis village here. The facility was inaugurated by NBI Director Lawyer Melvin Matibag, Bicol Regional Director Atty. Yehlen Agus, Legazpi Mayor Hisham Ismail, and Alfredo Garbin Jr. of Ako Bicol party-list. Funded by the

- [Bukidnon LGUs await DILG order on workweek scheme](#) (2026-05-24 00:30)

MALAYBALAY CITY, Bukidnon — Several local government units (LGUs) in Bukidnon are still awaiting official instructions from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)

regarding the lifting of the four-day workweek arrangement. The development followed the Supreme Court's decision to end its temporary four-day workweek and work-from-home setup effective May 2026, reverting to

- [Peasant group backs inter-agency pact to streamline gov't support](#) (2026-05-24 00:27)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon – A national peasant group has welcomed the government's move to streamline and strengthen support systems for farmers, fisherfolk, and agricultural cooperatives nationwide. "We welcome the government's effort to strengthen coordination among agencies in supporting agricultural cooperatives, farmers, and fisherfolk," Danny Carranza, secretary general of Kilusan Para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo

- [P321.8M released to drought-hit corn farmers in Cagayan](#) (2026-05-24 00:05)

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan — At least 31,782 corn farmers in the province whose farms were plagued by the dry spell were given P321.8 million assistance or P10,125 each on Friday, May 22. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) organized the farmers — who come from 22 towns and this capital city — into

- [Finding 'butanding' : Oslob explains absence of whale sharks in its waters](#) (2026-05-23 23:49)

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol — The local government of Oslob town in Cebu has denied reports circulating online claiming that whale sharks, locally known as "butanding," have disappeared from the town's famous whale shark interaction area. The clarification came after several social media posts and videos on Thursday, May 21, showed tourists waiting for hours without

- [Teodoro maintains 19 killed in Toboso encounter combatants](#) (2026-05-23 23:42)

BACOLOD CITY — Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. said on Saturday, March 23, that he is "100 percent sure" of the legitimacy of the Army's conduct during its series of armed encounters with the New People's Army (NPA) in Toboso and Cauayan towns, Negros Occidental. "There is a lot of misinformation coming out and I'm

- [Digital advocates remind netizens to be prudent in cyber speech](#) (2026-05-23 23:03)

BAGUIO CITY — A network of digital advocates welcomed moves to hold individuals accountable for statements that may cross legal boundaries following the filing of complaints against a vice mayor in Isabela province over alleged social media posts and statements that authorities said may constitute incitement and cyber-related offenses. Digital Pinoy's national campaigner Ronald Gustilo

- [Benguet students rally vs Joel Villanueva heading Senate education panel](#) (2026-05-23 22:52)

BAGUIO CITY — The Benguet State University College of Information Sciences Student Government joined nationwide calls opposing the appointment of Sen. Joel Villanueva as

chairperson of the Senate Committee on Higher, Technical, and Vocational Education (CHTVE), saying students need leaders “rooted in accountability and service” amid worsening economic hardship. Villanueva was appointed CHTVE chair on

- [PRO13 on full alert as Caraga gears up for 2026 Palarong Pambansa](#) (2026-05-23 22:21)

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur — As thousands of athletes, coaches, officials and supporters converge in Caraga for the 2026 Palarong Pambansa, the Police Regional Office 13 (PRO13) has declared full operational readiness ahead of the sporting event’s formal opening on Sunday, May 24, at the Gov. D.O. Plaza Sports Complex in Prosperidad town. In

- [Bohol rice subsidy program reaches over 26,000 indigent families](#) (2026-05-23 22:17)

TAGBILARAN CITY — More than 26,000 indigent families in Bohol province have already benefited from the ongoing rice subsidy program of the national and provincial governments during the first two weeks of distribution. Data released by the provincial government of Bohol showed that 26,191 families received 10 kilograms of rice each from May 14 to

- [Sacked from BARMM post, MILF peace ideologue calls for sobriety, unity](#) (2026-05-23 22:12)

COTABATO CITY — In his characteristic sober and diplomatic stance, veteran Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace negotiator Mohagher Iqbal has called for cooler heads to prevail as he accepted his removal as education chief of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), although he maintained that the ouster was carried out “without due

- [Lotto 6/42 player wins ₱24.16M jackpot on May 23](#) (2026-05-23 21:52)

MANILA, Philippines—A player won the Lotto 6/42 jackpot in the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office draw on Saturday, May 23, while the Grand Lotto 6/55 jackpot had no winner. According to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the winning Lotto 6/42 combination was 12-18-03-17-05-08, with a jackpot of ₱24.16 million. One ticket holder won the prize. The

- [Cops seize ₱14M worth of shabu, arrest 2 drug suspects in Bacolod City](#) (2026-05-23 20:54)

BACOLOD CITY—Police operatives seized over two kilos of shabu and arrested two suspected illicit drug traders during a high-impact buy-bust operation at Purok Camonsil, Barangay 3 here at around 3 a.m. on Saturday, May 23. Operatives recovered 2,100 grams of suspected shabu with an estimated value of ₱14.2 million, the Police Regional Office Negros Island

- [CitizenWatch urges DILG to streamline telco permit rules](#) (2026-05-23 20:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Streamlining electronics permit processes will help accelerate telecommunications infrastructure rollout, especially in poor communities where connectivity remains a major concern, a consumer advocacy group said. Because of this, CitizenWatch Philippines urged the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to streamline

electronics permit requirements for telecommunications infrastructure. The appeal comes as

- [LOOK: Kin of sabungeros claim lawyer offered money; counsel denies story](#) (2026-05-23 20:05)

MANILA, Philippines — Relatives of some of the missing sabungeros (cockfighting enthusiasts) said that a lawyer linked to the case offered them financial assistance. They also said the counsel had suggested to them to stop pursuing complaints related to the disappearances. During the National Police Commission (Napolcom) press briefing on Wednesday, May 20, Diane Loyola,

- [Nondisclosure of Sara Duterte' s bank accounts fatal to prosecution – La Viña](#) (2026-05-23 19:45)

MANILA, Philippines—Former Ateneo School of Government dean Tony La Viña on Saturday said the decision to open the bank accounts of Vice President Sara Duterte might decide the outcome of her impeachment trial, expected to begin on July 6. “It might be fatal to the case if we do not see the official bank accounts

- [NBI warns Senate vs becoming refuge for fugitives](#) (2026-05-23 19:13)

MANILA, Philippines — National Bureau of Investigation Director Melvin Matibag on Saturday warned against allowing the Senate to become a refuge for fugitives, saying it would set a dangerous precedent and undermine public trust in law enforcement and the justice system. Matibag issued the warning after Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa disappeared from public view

- [Barangay councilor arrested in Oriental Mindoro drug sting](#) (2026-05-23 19:08)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — A barangay councilor classified by police as a high-value individual (HVI) was arrested in an anti-illegal drug operation in San Teodoro town, Oriental Mindoro on Friday, May 22, according to a police report on Saturday. Joint operatives from the Regional Police Drug Enforcement Unit (RPDEU) 4B, San Teodoro Municipal Drug

- [PTFOMS condemns killing of BARMM broadcaster](#) (2026-05-23 18:25)

COTABATO CITY—The Presidential Task Force on Media Security (PTFOMS) on Friday denounced the killing of radio broadcaster Nestor Micator in Malidegao town in the Special Geographic Area of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on Thursday evening. “PTFOMS strongly condemns this act of violence and extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends,

- [Cayetano explains Senate ‘chaos’ to nephew via Pokémon, heroes, villains](#) (2026-05-23 18:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano on Saturday used a Pokémon-inspired analogy involving “Mega Dream,” “heroes,” “villains” and “chaos rising” to explain the ongoing tensions in the Senate to his nephew. Then, he stopped short of

directly addressing reports of efforts to replace him as Senate president. In a Facebook Live thisafternoon,

- [Forest Dragon spotted in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat](#) (2026-05-23 17:39)

MANILA, Philippines — A Forest Dragon was documented in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat, during a recent flora and fauna assessment in Barangay Hinalaan, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Community Environment and Natural Resources Office said. The CENRO Kalamansig identified the reptile as *Gonocephalus cf. interruptus*, an arboreal and diurnal lizard that usually thrives on

- [Gatchalian to lead impeach court with fairness, neutrality if elected SP](#) (2026-05-23 16:23)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian believes fairness, neutrality and impartiality are important in handling the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. Gatchalian enumerated these principles which, he said, will govern the proceeding if he is elected Senate president and if he will lead the Senate impeachment court. The senator's statement comes amid

- [WATCH: NUJP tackles journalist safety, duties after Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-23 15:58)

MANILA, Philippines – The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) has raised concerns over the safety and responsibilities of media workers following last week's shooting incident at the Senate. NUJP Secretary General Len Olea, together with Inquirer.net assignment editor and reporter Maila Ager, reflected on how journalists navigate coverage in high-risk environments, where

- [Work begins on collapsed section of Baguio-Bontoc Road](#) (2026-05-23 15:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The rehabilitation of the collapsed section of the Baguio-Bontoc Road in Barangay Caliking, Atok, Benguet has begun. In a statement Saturday, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported that the thoroughfare has been a one-lane road with a stop-and-go traffic scheme for almost a year. Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon

- [6 Calabarzon areas under dangerous heat index on Saturday \(May 23\)](#) (2026-05-23 15:01)

LUCENA CITY — At least six areas in the Calabarzon region are expected to experience dangerous levels of heat index on Saturday, May 23, according to the state weather bureau. In its 5 p.m. forecast on Friday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Sangley Point in Cavite City may still reach

- [LOOK: When a city loses its shade](#) (2026-05-23 14:52)

MANILA, Philippines — In a city that grows hotter by the day, trees are not ornaments. They are shelter. Along Quirino Avenue in Manila, that shelter is being cut down, one trunk at a time. What once stood as a line of mature trees with wide canopies now lies in pieces — stumps, roots, sawdust

- [P1.4M worth of ‘shabu’ seized in Iloilo drug buy-bust](#) (2026-05-23 14:46)

ILOILO CITY — A high-value drug suspect was arrested and around P1.4 million worth of suspected “shabu” (crystal meth) was seized in a buy-bust operation in Dingle, Iloilo on Friday, May 22. The operation was conducted along Devera Street in Barangay Poblacion following weeks of intelligence monitoring and case build-up by operatives of the Police

- [Ateneo Law student council expresses dismay over Cayetano’ s leadership](#) (2026-05-23 14:03)

MANILA, Philippines — Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano has drawn more flak as the student council of his former law school said the senator “fell short” of the ethical leadership expected of him. It wasn’ t just Cayetano’ s contemporaries from the University of the Philippines and his former classmates at Ateneo Law who weighed in on

- [Heat index in Taytay, Rizal nears 50°C](#) (2026-05-23 13:27)

LUCENA CITY — The local government of Taytay in Rizal province on Friday, May 22, urged residents to continue observing safety precautions against rising temperature after the town recorded a heat index of 49.15 degrees Celsius. “The heat index (real feel) in the municipality of Taytay reached 49.15°C as of 12:50 p.m. on May 22,

- [9,000 violators flagged in Western Visayas ordinance drive](#) (2026-05-23 13:18)

ILOILO CITY — The Police Regional Office 6 (PRO 6) has intensified its crackdown on local ordinance violators across Western Visayas as part of its campaign to maintain peace, order, and public discipline in communities throughout the region. A consolidated report covering operations from May 1 to 22 showed that police units from provincial and

- [367 new cadets join PMA at Reception Day](#) (2026-05-23 12:59)

BAGUIO CITY — The Philippine Military Academy (PMA) received 367 new cadets, who will form part of Class 2030, during Reception Day rites on Saturday (May 23). The plebes, composed of 290 young men and 77 young women, set foot for the first time at the academy grounds, where they will undergo training in modern

- [3 nabbed in Zamboanga del Sur maritime anti-smuggling operation](#) (2026-05-23 12:24)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — Three men were arrested during a maritime anti-smuggling operation in Barangay Sugod, Tukuran town, early Friday morning, May 22. The Zamboanga del Sur Maritime Police Station said the seaborne patrol operation was launched at 3:15 a.m. in coordination with the Tukuran Municipal Police Station. Authorities intercepted a motorized boat

- [NBI: Dela Rosa presumed armed, dangerous as search continues](#) (2026-05-23 11:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa is already presumed to be “armed and dangerous” under existing protocols, as the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) tries to locate the senator to serve the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), NBI chief Melvin Matibag said on Saturday. This was Matibag’s response when

- [Shellfish ban up in Biliran, parts of Samar, Eastern Samar due to red tide](#) (2026-05-23 11:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Shellfish meat samples collected from the coastal waters of Biliran Island tested positive for red tide toxin, or saxitoxin, prompting authorities to warn the public against gathering, selling, and consuming shellfish and alamang from affected areas. The advisory was issued on Friday, May 22, following laboratory examinations conducted by the Bureau of

- [NBI: Bato dela Rosa still in PH amid ICC arrest warrant](#) (2026-05-23 10:49)

MANILA, Philippines — Citing records from the Bureau of Immigration (BI), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag on Saturday said Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa is still in the country amid the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). At the Saturday News Forum, Matibag said the NBI is coordinating with

- [Over 160 hand grenades, firearms surrendered to Army in Lanao del Sur](#) (2026-05-23 10:35)

COTABATO CITY — More than 160 hand grenades, high-powered firearms, and ammunition were voluntarily surrendered to the military in Lanao del Sur, the Army said Saturday. Brig. Gen. Yasser Bara, commander of the 101st Brigade, said 11 individuals from Marogong and Lumbatan towns turned over various firearms and explosives during an activity conducted by the

- [Oriental Mindoro grid under red alert amid power deficit](#) (2026-05-23 10:03)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative (Ormeco) warned consumers on Saturday (May 23) of possible rotational brownouts as the province’s power supply remained under critical condition due to insufficient generating capacity. In an advisory, Ormeco said the Oriental Mindoro grid would be placed under “red alert status” from 8 a.m. to

- [Pangilinan: Minority bloc wants Gatchalian as next Senate prexy](#) (2026-05-23 08:52)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan on Saturday said that the new Senate minority bloc is endorsing Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian to be the new Senate president, noting that even current Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano said he would vote for him. This statement came after almost two weeks after the Senate leadership changed, where

- [PSA: Cordillera employment highest in PH in 2025](#) (2026-05-23 08:51)

BAGUIO CITY — The labor force in the mountainous Cordillera was reduced by 10,000 workers last year in the retail and mining sectors due to an economic growth slowdown in 2025, according to the latest labor force survey results which were presented at a forum on Thursday (May 21). The survey reveals a labor force

- [UPOU study finds stress, anxiety among remote workers](#) (2026-05-23 08:45)

MANILA, Philippines — A study conducted among PhilHealth employees working remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic found that most participants experienced moderate stress levels, while nearly half reported mild anxiety symptoms, underscoring the need for stronger mental health support and structured remote work policies. The study was conducted by Dr. Myra D. Oruga, professor and program

- [PNP probes ‘secret meetings’ in missing ‘sabungeros’ case](#) (2026-05-23 08:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has ordered a thorough investigation into alleged “secret meetings” between relatives of missing “sabungeros” (cockfighting enthusiasts) and dismissed police officers linked to the disappearance case. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said investigators are determining whether other police personnel helped facilitate the meetings following the relief of

- [Mayon Volcano logs 29 earthquakes, other seismic activity in 24 hours](#) (2026-05-23 08:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano in Albay logged 29 volcanic earthquakes and other seismic activities in the last 24 hours, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said on Saturday. In its 24-hour monitoring bulletin, Phivolcs said that the volcano also recorded 15 volcanic tremors which lasted for three to 53 minutes, 325 rockfalls,

- [Pagasa: LPA outside PAR unlikely to become tropical cyclone in 24 hours](#) (2026-05-23 07:34)

MANILA, Philippines — The low-pressure area (LPA) monitored outside the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) has a low chance of developing into a tropical cyclone in the next 24 hours and may not affect the country within the next four days, the state weather bureau said on Saturday. In the 5 a.m. weather forecast of

- [Cybercrime body sues lawyer over online posts](#) (2026-05-23 05:44)

MANILA, Philippines — The Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) has filed a cybercrime complaint against lawyer Jeryll Harold Respicio over alleged inflammatory social media posts that incite sedition or rebellion. At a press conference at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Pasay City office on Friday, CICC Undersecretary Aboy Paraiso said he filed the

- [SC asked to stop DepEd changes to curriculum](#) (2026-05-23 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — A private school teacher on Friday asked the Supreme Court to stop the full implementation in the coming school year of the senior high school (SHS) curriculum that the Department of Education (DepEd) had streamlined from the original four tracks to just two, fearing it could lead to job losses. Barry Tayam,

- [Lacson: Sotto ousted for not having ‘P142B’ to ‘look after’ Senate peers](#) (2026-05-23 05:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Vicente “Tito” Sotto III lost the Senate presidency because he did not have multibillion pesos at his disposal, unlike his predecessor, to “look after” his colleagues, a member of the minority bloc said on Friday. “The issue that reached us is that Senator Sotto supposedly did not know how to look

- [CIDG chief: What Aplasca, team did was ‘an overkill’](#) (2026-05-23 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — It was an “overkill.” This was how the chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) described the course of action taken by the personnel of the Senate’s Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms (Osaa) in the May 13 incident. Thirty-nine of the 44 spent shells recovered by police investigators after the May

- [Police, NBI urge Bato Dela Rosa to surrender, face ICC](#) (2026-05-23 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation on Friday appealed to fugitive Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to surrender and face the charges against him in the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Thursday ordered the PNP and the NBI to execute the ICC arrest

- [Temporary shutdown of Davao dump site eyed](#) (2026-05-23 05:06)

DAVAO CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Friday said it is considering the suspension of a sanitary landfill in Barangay New Carmen here, which collapsed on Wednesday, burying one person, injuring two, and leaving two others missing. In a statement, the DENR called on the city government to “accelerate stabilization

- [New sea link boosts Central Visayas tourism triangle](#) (2026-05-23 05:04)

OSLOB, Cebu — Gov. Pamela Baricuatro is pushing for a stronger tourism alliance among Cebu, Dumaguete City and Siquijor following the launch of a new direct ferry route connecting the three destinations. Baricuatro on Friday underscored the importance of interisland connectivity during the inauguration of the Asian Marine Transport Corp.’s (AMTC) newest sailing route linking

- [Stench from stranded Subic cargo affects tourism, health of workers](#) (2026-05-23 05:02)

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT — For seven years, Diwani Natural, 47, has welcomed tourists to the pristine coastlines of All Hands Beach, a popular beach resort located near a container terminal in this freeport. But these days, as the clock nears 4 p.m., an overwhelming sense of dread sets

in as staff brace for the daily

- [Ping Lacson: Imee Marcos' 'con-ass' claims are 'flat lies'](#) (2026-05-23 02:35)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson on Friday belied the allegations of Sen. Imee Marcos about a supposed attempt of the Senate minority to take control of the upper chamber leadership to pave the way for constitutional amendments. Marcos said this “high stakes” move is allegedly being discussed in a bid to thwart the

- [Risa Hontiveros wants single opposition bet in 2028](#) (2026-05-23 00:20)

ILOILO CITY – Positioning herself at the forefront of the country’s democratic opposition, Sen. Risa Hontiveros on Friday, May 22, confirmed she is “seriously considering” a run for higher office in 2028, framing the current political landscape as an informal “primaries” for potential leaders. Speaking to local media during her visit to the island province

- [Elderly man dies during aid payout for corn farmers in Cagayan](#) (2026-05-22 23:24)

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan — An elderly man died while queuing for the emergency cash transfer (ECT) payout for drought-ravaged corn farmers at the provincial capitol gymnasium here on Friday morning, May 22. The victim, Wilson Corpuz, 65, of Barangay Anquiray, Amulung town, was among the 31,782 farmers listed in five cluster areas to benefit from

- [5 fishermen held in Quezon for alleged dynamite fishing](#) (2026-05-22 23:19)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Authorities in San Andres, Quezon arrested five fishermen on Thursday, May 21, after they were allegedly found in possession of assorted fish believed to have been caught through illegal dynamite fishing. In a report released Friday, Quezon police said the local police station in San Andres town received information at around

- [Cops seize shabu worth P374,000, nab 2 construction workers in CDO](#) (2026-05-22 23:12)

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY — Anti-narcotics agents and local police arrested two construction workers and seized P374,000 worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) during a buy-bust operation in Barangay Canitoan here on Wednesday afternoon, May 20. Authorities from the City Drug Enforcement Unit (CDEU) of the Cagayan de Oro City Police Office (COCPO), operating alongside

- [No jackpot winners in Ultra Lotto, Mega Lotto on May 22](#) (2026-05-22 21:55)

MANILA, Philippines—No bettor won the jackpot prizes for Ultra Lotto 6/58 and MegaLotto 6/45 draws held Friday, May 22, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO). The winning combination for Ultra Lotto 6/58 was 45-20-16-33-40-28 for a jackpot worth ₱75 million. PCSO said no ticket holder matched all six numbers. READ: Lotto results May

- [Manila Water' s Upper Wawa Dam named 2026 Water Project of the Year](#) (2026-05-22 20:32)

MANILA, Philippines — East Zone concessionaire Manila Water proudly announces that the Upper Wawa Dam has been hailed as the Water Project of the Year at the prestigious 2026 Global Water Awards, one of the most distinguished awards programs in the global water industry. The Global Water Awards, held this year in Madrid, Spain coinciding

- [Plunder, bribery raps eyed vs Marcoleta over P75M campaign donation](#) (2026-05-22 20:22)

[Updated May 22, 11:46 p.m.] MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman's deputy bureau is recommending charges of plunder and three counts of indirect bribery against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta over alleged campaign donations worth P75 million. The field investigation bureau of the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon was the complainant of the criminal complaint lodged

- [LPA's trough affecting parts of Mindanao, Visayas](#) (2026-05-22 20:22)

MANILA, Philippines — While the low pressure area (LPA) inside the Philippine area of responsibility is not expected to develop into a tropical cyclone, its trough will continue to affect parts of Mindanao and Visayas, the state weather bureau said Friday. The LPA was last spotted 865 kilometers east of Southern Mindanao as of 3

- [Prosecution's preps, mock trial, meant to polish litigation skills – solon](#) (2026-05-22 20:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The bulk of the preparations of the prosecution team for Vice President Sara Duterte's impeachment proceedings — along with the reported mock trial being done — are all meant to sharpen and refine the lawmakers' skills on litigation. This is the view of 1-Rider party-list Rep. Ramon Rodrigo Gutierrez. Gutierrez, in an online

- [Angara: 2026 Palarong Pambansa features new sports, wider access](#) (2026-05-22 20:14)

PROSPERIDAD, Agusan del Sur — Education Secretary Sonny Angara said the 2026 Palarong Pambansa is set to open more opportunities for young Filipino athletes as the country's biggest scholastic sporting event introduces new sports, broader representation, and updated competition policies, backed by Agusan del Sur's extensive preparations for the national games. With final venue preparations

- [Macalintal seeks passage of law banning politicians in aid distributions](#) (2026-05-22 20:05)

MANILA, Philippines — Senior citizens' rights advocate and lawyer Romulo Macalintal on Friday called on the passage of a law that will strictly delegate the distribution of government assistance to government agencies only, and not with the presence of elected officials or their operatives. Macalintal made the call following a fatal incident involving a senior

- [LTO summons official over gov't vehicle seen at shopping store](#) (2026-05-22 19:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office has issued a show cause order against one of its officials after a government vehicle assigned to the agency was spotted parked at a

shopping establishment, the agency said Friday. According to the LTO, a photo circulating on social media showed a government-issued vehicle parked at a membership

- [Acidre to Imee: Stop political fiction; do your duty as senator-judge](#) (2026-05-22 19:16)

MANILA, Philippines — House of Representatives committee on higher and technical education chair Tingog party-list Rep. Jude Acidre on Friday called on Sen. Imee Marcos to stop spreading what he described as “baseless conspiracy theories” about extending President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s term and instead focus on her constitutional duties in the upcoming impeachment proceedings against Vice

- [Eradicate waste at source to prevent landfill disasters – Ecowaste](#) (2026-05-22 18:32)

MANILA, Philippines—An environmental group on Friday urged the government to adopt policies that reduce the production of waste, instead of focusing only on disposal of garbage. The statement comes following disasters that happened in landfills. In a statement, EcoWaste Coalition said the string of “landfill disasters” that occurred in Cebu, Rizal, Navotas and Davao “unmasked

- [DILG denies claims of food, transportation allowances for staff](#) (2026-05-22 18:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) denied that it had allegedly allotted food and transportation allowances for employees of Secretary Jonvic Remulla’s office. The agency made this pronouncement in a statement on Friday, citing that the claim was circulating online, but not immediately providing further context. “The Department of

- [Aparri, Tuguegarao in Cagayan to hit highest heat index at 47°C Saturday](#) (2026-05-22 18:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Aparri and Tuguegarao City in Cagayan are forecast to hit the highest heat index at 47°C on Saturday. On the other hand, 38 other areas will also experience danger levels of heat indices. This is according to the 5 p.m. heat index forecast issued on Friday by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and

- [Leviste vows 1 million sacks of rice to Batangas families](#) (2026-05-22 18:20)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste said he would give one million sacks of rice to families in Batangas who have not received government aid. Leviste made the announcement at the Kapihan ng Samahang Plaridel, where he discussed alleged discrimination in the distribution of government assistance. “I will give 1 million

- [Teacher seeks TRO vs streamlined SHS curriculum: It can cause job losses](#) (2026-05-22 17:39)

MANILA, Philippines—A private school teacher on Friday asked the Supreme Court to halt the full implementation of the streamlined curriculum for the senior high school (SHS) program in

the coming school year. The streamlined curriculum reduced the original four tracks to just two. Barry Tayam, a SHS teacher at San Beda College Alabang, filed a

- [Chua: Volunteer lawyers must be vetted; some may be Duterte plants](#) (2026-05-22 17:32)

MANILA, Philippines — With several lawyers approaching the prosecution team to offer help in the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, public prosecutor and Manila Rep. Joel Chua said there is a need to filter applicants since there is a danger that they may be planted by the opposing camp. In an online interview on

- [Marina to roll out sea-based SCP, giving fare subsidies across 11 routes](#) (2026-05-22 17:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The sea-based Service Contracting Program (SCP) of the government, which will grant fare subsidies to participating operators and vessels, will be implemented on Monday, May 25, the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) said on Friday. READ: Marina extends validity of seafarers' documents amid Middle East war According to Marina, the Lakbay Alalay ng

- [CATHography Cat Cabin serves as haven for 64 stray cats in Laoag](#) (2026-05-22 17:06)

For many stray cats roaming the streets of Laoag City, finding safety, food, and care is a daily struggle. But inside a humble home called CATHography Cat Cabin, 64 rescued cats are given a second chance at life. Founded by solo animal rescuer Sheena Leigh Cabuyaban, 28, the cat cabin has become a refuge where

- [LTFRB warns coops, firms that won't give payouts to drivers under SCP](#) (2026-05-22 16:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) may summon or suspend transport cooperatives or corporations that will not distribute payouts to their drivers who participated in the Service Contracting Program (SCP). The agency earlier announced that the implementation of the program will end on Friday, May 22. LTFRB board manager Atty. Greg

- [Veteran Bohol journalist Ric Obedencio dies at 69](#) (2026-05-22 16:39)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Veteran Bohol journalist Ric Obedencio passed away on Friday. He was 69. His death was confirmed by family members and friends, sending shockwaves across the Bohol media community. His daughter, Hannah Obedencio-Anire, said details of his wake would be announced by the family soon. READ: Veteran dzRH reporter Boy Gonzales dies; 66

- [Northern Samar orders work adjustments due to rising heat index](#) (2026-05-22 16:25)

TACLOBAN CITY — The provincial government of Northern Samar has ordered adjustments in work schedules and outdoor activities as the province remains under the “danger” heat index category on Friday amid continuing extreme heat conditions in Eastern Visayas. The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO), citing the Philippine Atmospheric,

Geophysical and Astronomical Services

- [Castro mocks Cayetano's 'Hindi naman kayo nangumusta' line](#) (2026-05-22 16:17)

MANILA, Philippines — “Hindi naman kayo nangumusta.” Palace Press Officer Claire Castro parodied Sen. Pia Cayetano's tearful remarks on the Senate floor Wednesday during a livestream on her personal YouTube channel, posting a meme and repeating the senator's line that has since gone viral online. “Hindi naman kayo nangumusta. Natakot na takot ako. (You didn't

- [Prosec worried over impeach trials starting at 2 pm: Might not be enough](#) (2026-05-22 16:05)

MANILA, Philippines — While it is a welcome development that the Senate Impeachment Court has supposedly determined when Vice President Sara Duterte's trial will start, the prosecution panel's spokesperson is concerned whether having hearings start by 2:00 p.m. would suffice. Prosecution team spokesperson and Kabataan party-list Rep. Renee Co said on Friday that they will have

- [Dangerous heat persists in parts of Calabarzon despite looming rains](#) (2026-05-22 16:02)

LUCENA CITY — Despite the approaching rainy season, several areas in Cavite, Batangas, and Rizal provinces are still expected to experience dangerous heat index levels on Friday. The three provinces are among the five that make up Calabarzon. Authorities in Taytay, Rizal, warned residents that the locality's heat index had reached 46.69 degrees Celsius as

- [Gatchalian says he's ready if elected Senate president](#) (2026-05-22 15:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian has assured the public that he is ready to assume the role of Senate president if ever his colleagues ask him and vote for him, as rumors about leadership changes in the upper chamber of Congress persist. Gatchalian, in an interview on Friday, was initially reluctant to discuss a possible Senate

- [Are more cops meddling in sabungeros case? PNP orders probe](#) (2026-05-22 15:39)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. ordered an investigation into allegations of unauthorized meetings between complainants and police officers who are respondents in the case of the missing cockfighting aficionados (sabungeros). “What P/Gen. Nartatez wants to find out is if there are other police officers involved in facilitating

- [Zamboanga del Sur marks 5th year as insurgency-free province](#) (2026-05-22 15:33)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — Zamboanga del Sur on Tuesday marked its fifth year as an insurgency-free province, a milestone that Presidential Peace Adviser Mel Senen Sarmiento described as proof of the province's transformation from a conflict area into a “show window of peace and development” in Western Mindanao. Sarmiento, together with Governor Divina

- [DENR trains ‘Bantay Dagat’ to boost Zambales marine sanctuary defense](#) (2026-05-22 15:23)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — To strengthen the protection of Central Luzon’s lone marine sanctuary, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in partnership with the local government of Masinloc, has completed a specialized training program for 96 Bantay Dagat (sea patrol) members. The paralegal training, which concluded last week, was designed to enhance the

- [Padilla may face obstruction raps if he is keeping dela Rosa – CIDG](#) (2026-05-22 15:23)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Robin Padilla may face obstruction of justice charges if he is found to be harboring Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said in a press briefing in Camp Crame on Friday. Asked if Padilla is now a person of interest in the search for dela

- [DOH: New HIV cases decreased by 9 percent](#) (2026-05-22 15:21)

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Health (DOH) has recorded 4,633 new cases of individuals with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) from January to March this year. This is 9 percent lower than the 5,101 new cases recorded in the same period last year. Based on data uploaded on the department’s website, 24 percent or 1,104 of the new

- [Left lane of Edsa Magallanes flyover southbound to be closed May 22-25](#) (2026-05-22 15:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The left lane of the southbound portion of the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA) Magallanes flyover in Makati City will be temporarily closed for a certain period of time from Friday, May 22, to Monday, May 25. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said on Friday that rehabilitation will be

- [Cavite City sizzles at 48°C, highest heat index in Calabarzon](#) (2026-05-22 14:59)

LUCENA CITY — Amid sweltering conditions, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) reported that Cavite City recorded a heat index of 48°C on Thursday. In its 5 p.m. bulletin issued Thursday, Pagasa said Sangley Point in Cavite City registered that heat index, exceeding the earlier forecast of 46°C. The city recorded the

- [72 families affected by North-South Commuter Railway to be relocated](#) (2026-05-22 14:33)

MANILA, Philippines — Seventy-two families that will be affected by the construction of the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) will be relocated to a residential site in Pampanga, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Friday. According to the DOTr, the 72 families will be transferred to San Fernando View Residences Phase 1 in Barangay Panipuan

- [Tacloban City on alert as extreme heat triggers heat exhaustion](#) (2026-05-22 14:25)

TACLOBAN CITY — Health authorities here are urging residents to take extra precautions as extreme heat continues to grip the city, with cases of heat exhaustion already being reported in local health facilities. City Health Officer Dr. Jaime Opinion said the city has begun monitoring heat-related illnesses, particularly heat exhaustion cases, as temperatures remain at

- [Solon urges colleagues to pass bill giving better benefits to seniors](#) (2026-05-22 14:11)

MANILA, Philippines — A lawmaker has called on his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass a bill that seeks to provide better benefits for senior citizens, saying that this will help the country's elderly population cope with rising prices brought by inflation. In a statement on Thursday, Agimat party-list Rep. Bryan Revilla urged for

- [Dead sunfish found in Iloilo as cop admits to firing shots](#) (2026-05-22 14:05)

ILOILO CITY – A massive sunfish, weighing an estimated 200 kilos, was found dead along the coast of Calaparan, Iloilo City, on Thursday, police said. The discovery prompted an investigation after authorities learned a police officer had fired a weapon near the marine animal. READ: Huge sunfish amazes locals in Ormoc City According to Police

- [Nartatez to dela Rosa: PNP will serve warrant, still best to surrender](#) (2026-05-22 13:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said it would be best for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to surrender to authorities, but added that the agency would still enforce the warrant against him. “He is a former police officer. His career was stellar, especially in the fight against crime and the maintenance of peace

- [Taal Volcano SO2 emission doubles after 2 days](#) (2026-05-22 13:35)

LUCENA CITY — After two days of lower sulfur dioxide (SO2) emissions, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology reported on Friday that Taal Volcano in Batangas again showed an increase in these emissions. In its latest 24-hour monitoring, Phivolcs said Taal Volcano emitted 1,314 tons of sulfur dioxide from its main crater on Thursday,

- [Lacson: Sotto ousted for failing to ‘take care’ of senators](#) (2026-05-22 13:35)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson on Friday claimed that former Senate President Vicente “Tito” Sotto III was removed from the Senate leadership partly because some lawmakers felt he did not know how to “take care” of fellow senators, a remark Lacson linked to alleged expectations for funding and project allocations. According to Lacson,

- [DOTr eyes completion of modernized Tuguegarao Airport by December 2026](#) (2026-05-22 13:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Tourists and passengers can expect the completion of a modern and improved Tuguegarao Airport by December this year, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Friday. According to the DOTr, the new airport can accommodate 743 passengers once it is finished, compared to only 212 passengers before. READ: CAAP to roll out

- [Dy says House focused on duty as 38 bills may be up for 3rd reading](#) (2026-05-22 12:36)

MANILA, Philippines — House Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III has assured the public that the chamber remains focused on its duty, noting that 38 bills passed on second reading can be considered for third and final approval before Congress adjourns session. In a statement on Friday, Dy said that the House has made “quick and steady

- [CIDG says Bato dela Rosa still in PH](#) (2026-05-22 12:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa is still in the Philippines, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said on Friday. Asked about dela Rosa’s whereabouts, in a press briefing in Camp Crame, CIDG director Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II initially declined to comment, saying “That information is classified.” READ: Dela Rosa

- [CIDG chief: Number of shots fired by Senate security men was ‘overkill’](#) (2026-05-22 12:32)

MANILA, Philippines — “I can say it was overkill.” Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) director Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II said this about the number of gunshots fired by the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA) personnel during the May 13 shooting. READ: CIDG recommends raps vs Aplasca, 2 others over Senate shooting

- [MMDA issues traffic advisory for DPWH repair works in QC on May 22-25](#) (2026-05-22 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on Friday advised motorists to take alternative routes for Department of Public Works and Highways’ (DPWH) repair works in certain areas in Quezon City from Friday, May 22 to Monday, May 25. READ: MMDA taps Project Noah to ease Metro Manila traffic In a traffic advisory,

- [Flood control trial: Witness submits list of infra proponents to court](#) (2026-05-22 12:12)

MANILA, Philippines — A witness from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has submitted before the Sandiganbayan the list of lawmakers who made project requests to the agency. Gerald Longoria of the DPWH programming division brought the documents before the anti-graft court to comply with the subpoena made by Associate Justice Ronald Moreno of

- [NBI to turn over Bato dela Rosa to DOJ once arrested – Matibag](#) (2026-05-22 12:11)

MANILA, Philippines – Once arrested, Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa will be turned over by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to the Department of Justice (DOJ), according to NBI Director Melvin Matibag. Matibag made the statement during a press conference on Friday, saying the NBI’s dedicated team is already tracing the senator’s location to

- [Nartatez: Bato may seek protective custody if he surrenders](#) (2026-05-22 11:52)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Friday said Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa may stay under police custody if he surrenders.

“That’s possible. Seeking protective custody means that one is surrendering,” Nartatez told reporters when asked if dela Rosa could place under the PNP custody. “If by all

- [NBI chief to Bato Dela Rosa: ‘Better for you to surrender’](#) (2026-05-22 11:22)

MANILA, Philippines — National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag has appealed to Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to just “surrender” and face the arrest warrant issued against him. In a press conference on Friday, Matibag said the bureau is already locating Dela Rosa following the order of the Department of Justice (DOJ) on

- [Padilla: Dela Rosa only hitched a ride, no idea where he was headed](#) (2026-05-22 11:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Robin Padilla on Friday admitted to letting Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa board his vehicle to leave the Senate but said he only dropped him off in Makati City and had no idea where he went afterward. This came after Padilla refuted allegations that he helped his political ally “escape” the

- [Ex-PNP chief Torre on helping arrest Bato: ‘Basta MMDA area, pwede’](#) (2026-05-22 10:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Usec. Nicolas Torre III on Friday gave a tongue-in-cheek response when asked if he would accept a possible assignment to help arrest Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa amid talks of a manhunt against the lawmaker. “Basta may information na si senator ay nandun sa landfill,

- [PNP readies emergency response teams as 2026 rainy season approaches](#) (2026-05-22 10:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is now preparing teams for emergency response amid natural hazards as this year’s rainy season approaches. “Police units in flood and landslide-prone areas are now coordinating closely with local disaster councils for planning on preemptive evacuation, traffic management and rescue operations,” PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez

- [P2.1-million ‘shabu’ seized in Lucena City](#) (2026-05-22 10:16)

LUCENA CITY — Anti-narcotics operatives arrested two alleged high-value drug suspects and seized over P2.1 million worth of “shabu” (crystal meth) in a buy-bust operation early Friday, as authorities intensified their campaign against illegal drugs in this city. Lt. Col. Ryan Hernandez, Lucena City police chief, said the suspects, identified only by their aliases “Rodel,”

- [Water shortage hits 40% of Bacolod consumers](#) (2026-05-22 10:05)

BACOLOD CITY — About 40 percent of consumers served by the Bacolod City Water District (BACIWA)-PrimeWater are experiencing reduced water supply due to the ongoing dry spell and

pipe leakages, a BACIWA official said Thursday. Engr. Michael Soliva, officer in charge of BACIWA, said the utility's available water supply stood at 90 million liters per

- [Marcos raises pork import cap to stabilize prices amid ASF-impact losses](#) (2026-05-22 09:57)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has issued Executive Order No. 116, increasing the minimum access volume (MAV) for pork from 54,210 metric tons (MT) to 204,210 MT to ensure its continued availability and affordability amid inventory losses caused by African Swine Fever (ASF). The order, signed on May 19 and made public on

- [Isabela town vice mayor faces raps at NBI over 'seditious' remarks](#) (2026-05-22 09:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) on Friday filed criminal and administrative complaints before the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) against Vice Mayor Jeryll Harold Respicio, of Reina Mercedes town in Isabela, over his alleged "seditious statements" posted on social media. CICC Executive Director Usec. Aboy Paraiso, along with Presidential Communications

- [PNP intelligence director is new deputy chief for operations](#) (2026-05-22 09:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) Directorate for Intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Wilson Joseph Lopez was appointed the agency's new deputy chief for operations. Lopez replaced outgoing PNP deputy chief for operations Lt. Gen. Edgar Allan Okubo, who retired from the police service on Thursday. Lopez's appointment was done through Special Order No. NHQ-SO-URA-2026-4623

- [Purpose, not pay, drives Filipino workers' happiness — report](#) (2026-05-22 09:35)

MANILA, Philippines — Filipino workers are increasingly finding workplace happiness not just in compensation, but in meaningful work, career growth and feeling valued by their employers, according to a new report by JobStreet by SEEK. The latest Workplace Happiness Index: Philippines 2025 found that 77% of Filipino employees described themselves as either "extremely happy" or

- [PNP reshuffles Western Visayas leadership](#) (2026-05-22 09:33)

ILOILO CITY — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has ordered a major leadership reshuffle in Western Visayas, replacing Police Regional Office (PRO)-6 director Brig. Gen. Josefino Ligan, effective Friday. READ: PNP: Ilocos, Mimaropa, NIR get new regional police chiefs Under Special Orders No. NHQ-SO-URA-2026-4698 issued by the PNP National Headquarters, Ligan was reassigned to the

- [HEAT INDEX WATCH: Metro Manila, 54 areas brace for danger levels Friday](#) (2026-05-22 09:27)

MANILA, Philippines – Dangerous heat indices are expected in Metro Manila and at least 54 other areas on Friday, May 22, the state weather bureau said. The heat index, also called the “feels-like” temperature, measures how hot it feels to the human body when humidity is combined with the actual air temperature. According to the

- [Dela Rosa arrest order: PNP mobilizes tracker teams with DOJ, NBI](#) (2026-05-22 09:20)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said his agency has mobilized tracker teams in coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to arrest Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. “I have issued clear instructions to all local and specialized units that any

- [Heat index in Pangasinan peaks at 47°C](#) (2026-05-22 09:12)

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan — Pangasinan recorded its highest heat index this year at a “danger” level of 47 degrees Celsius at 4 p.m. on Thursday, according to the provincial government. The Pangasinan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO), citing data from the Department of Science and Technology–Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa)

- [Radio announcer, Islamic preacher slain in BARMM gun attacks](#) (2026-05-22 08:55)

COTABATO CITY– A local radio announcer and an Islamic preacher were killed in separate gun attacks in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on Thursday, May 21. Police Capt. Vilma Dimaraw, chief of the Malidegao municipal police station, said Nestor Micator, 45, also known as “Teting,” was shot in front of the village

- [Baguio contemplates raising drinking age to 21 years](#) (2026-05-22 08:42)

BAGUIO CITY – The Baguio City Council is contemplating new policy that would raise the legal drinking age in the summer capital from the current 18 to 21 years old as it addresses the health impact of alcohol consumption in an upgraded liquor ordinance. Since the start of the year, the Council has been deliberating

- [Project Noah exec: Metro Manila needs flood management, not just control](#) (2026-05-22 07:37)

MANILA, Philippines – After localized thunderstorms triggered heavy rains and flooding in several areas in Metro Manila last week, Project Noah (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards) Executive Director Mahar Lagmay on Thursday underscored the urgent need to shift from traditional flood control projects to a broader “flood management” strategy. In a Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon interview, Lagmay

- [Cloudy skies, rains expected on Friday as trough, easterlies affect PH](#) (2026-05-22 07:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The country will continue to experience cloudy skies and rain showers on Friday as a low pressure area (LPA) and the easterlies prevail over parts of the Philippines,

the state weather bureau said. According to Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the LPA was last spotted 940 kilometers east of

- [DOE chief urges consumers to adopt energy conservation lifestyle](#) (2026-05-22 07:11)

MANILA, Philippines – Energy Secretary Sharon Garin has called on power consumers to adopt energy conservation as a habit, which, once it becomes a lifestyle, will benefit not only individuals but the whole country. During the launch of the energy conservation program called Oras Natin sa Efficiency or O.N.E. Campaign at the globe of SM Mall

- [Mabanta arraigned on robbery extortion case](#) (2026-05-22 05:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta was arraigned on Thursday at the Pasig City Regional Trial Court’s Branch 152 in connection with the robbery extortion case filed by former House Speaker and Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez. Mabanta and his lawyer, Bernice Piñol-Rodriguez, however, evaded the media after the proceedings.

- [Yellow alert for Visayas grid as power demand rises](#) (2026-05-22 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The Visayas continued to suffer from thin power reserves as the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) issued another yellow alert on Thursday due to the outages of three large coal plants and an increase in electricity demand. The yellow alert—which was in effect from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.—was the

- [Lacson relieved he’s no longer blue ribbon panel chair](#) (2026-05-22 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Panfilo Lacson has expressed “double relief” after he was replaced as head of the Senate blue ribbon committee, a body tasked to look into allegations of government irregularities. Sen. Pia Cayetano took over a week after her brother, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, was elected Senate president in a sudden leadership shakeup.

- [Caloocan lawmaker charged over P79-M ‘ghost’ projects](#) (2026-05-22 05:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Caloocan Mayor Rey Malonzo filed before the Ombudsman on Thursday charges of graft, malversation, and falsification of public documents against Caloocan Rep. Dean Asistio over allegedly “ghost” and overpriced flood control projects worth P79.2 million. The 74-year-old Malonzo who was city mayor from 1995 to 2004 also sued District Engineer Ruel

- [2 Crame cops axed for meddling in ‘sabungeros’ case](#) (2026-05-22 05:44)

MANILA, Philippines — Two police officers assigned at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City, have been relieved from their posts after they were accused of intervening in the case of missing “sabungeros” or cockfight enthusiasts. The two were identified as Highway Patrol Group (HPG) spokesperson Lt. Nadame Malang and PNP

Custodial

- [Air Force grounds 16 planes after crash kills 2 pilots](#) (2026-05-22 05:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Air Force (PAF) has grounded all of its 16 remaining SF260 Marchetti trainer aircraft after one of them crashed in Benguet, killing the two pilots who were on a training mission. “Yes, the remaining 16 SF260s are grounded pending [an] investigation,” Air Force spokesperson Col. Ma. Christina Basco said in

- [CHR: Kin of 3 ‘Negros 19’ fatalities seek autopsies](#) (2026-05-22 05:40)

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, Philippines — The families of at least three of the 19 alleged New People’s Army (NPA) members who were killed in an encounter with the military in Toboso, Negros Occidental, on April 19 have requested the exhumation and postmortem autopsies of their kin, a Commission on Human Rights (CHR) official said on Thursday.

- [Stuff of Senate drama: Tears, chats, memes](#) (2026-05-22 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — A week after a chaotic shooting incident shattered the peace in the Senate, the chamber has transformed into a stage for raw emotional outbursts, group chat receipts, and a relentless wave of internet memes. What began as a security issue on May 13 evolved into a multisided political drama involving tears on

- [Minority bloc nixes bid to let Dela Rosa join impeachment trial online](#) (2026-05-22 05:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Senators from the minority bloc are opposing a proposal to let Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa participate virtually—and ultimately vote—in the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. “Many of us, we in the minority, will not agree to that. He (Dela Rosa) has to be physically present,” said Sen. Erwin Tulfo

- [Malacañang: Justice will be served in arrest of Dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-22 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Thursday said efforts to arrest Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa would follow the law and that justice would be served after the Department of Justice (DOJ) declared that the warrant against the former national police chief would be enforceable. The DOJ ordered both the Philippine National Police and the National

- [DOJ: Dela Rosa ‘a fugitive’ ; protectors face raps](#) (2026-05-22 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Justice Secretary Frederick Vida on Thursday warned that anyone who helps Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa in evading an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity would face domestic and international legal consequences. The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) both

- [DPWH execs face raps over ‘ghost’ farm roads](#) (2026-05-22 05:08)

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Thursday filed complaints before the Office of the Ombudsman against several officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and private contractors over alleged “ghost” farm-to-market road projects in Davao Occidental worth P94 million. The complaints were filed against six DPWH officials, including

- [In Bacolod, radioman gets backlash for on-air rape joke](#) (2026-05-22 05:06)

BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, Philippines — A radio anchor in Bacolod City received widespread backlash from media and gender rights groups over a joke about raping a reporter while they were on live broadcast on Wednesday. Jean Paul Generoso, host of 11MBPS at K5 News FM Bacolod, told a reporter on air that he would

- [BARMM education minister sacked](#) (2026-05-22 05:04)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Interim Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua removed Education Minister Mohagher Iqbal from his post in defiance of the leadership of erstwhile secessionist group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). On May 11, Macacua had written to Iqbal to ask him to step down as head

- [Zambales fishers decry mounting losses](#) (2026-05-22 05:02)

IBA, ZAMBALES, Philippines — Groups of fishermen in Zambales province are sounding the alarm over the compounding financial toll on coastal communities of frequent maritime closures to give way to war games, complaining that irregular government food aid is not enough to sustain their families. For the second time, thousands of fishers will be forced

- [Health, sustainability at Organic Agri Congress in W. Visayas showcased](#) (2026-05-22 03:52)

ILOILO CITY, Philippines — Promoting organic farming not just as an agricultural alternative but as a long-term investment in public health, the Department of Agriculture (DA) Western Visayas officially opened the 11th Regional Organic Agriculture Congress (ROAC) on Wednesday, May 20. Coinciding with the celebration of Farmers and Fisherfolks Month, the three-day congress gathers farmers,

- [P3.4-M shabu seized; 3 alleged big-time drug pushers nabbed in Rizal](#) (2026-05-22 03:36)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — Anti-illegal drug operatives seized an estimated P3.4 million worth of shabu and arrested three alleged big-time drug traffickers in a buy-bust operation on Wednesday, May 20, in Taytay, Rizal. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) – Region 4A reported that its agents, together with police operatives, arrested suspects identified only

- [Zamboanga City limits entry of poultry, livestock products amid bird flu](#) (2026-05-22 03:29)

PAGADIAN CITY, ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR, Philippines — Zamboanga City Mayor Khymer Adan Olaso has banned the entry of poultry and livestock products from several towns of Zamboanga Sibugay province due to the threat of bird flu. Olaso convened an emergency meeting with city departments, police, and military units on Tuesday to lay out measures on

- [Bato dela Rosa's NBI escape now a game](#) (2026-05-22 01:57)

MANILA, Philippines — The events at the Senate on May 11, particularly the moment when Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa was recorded running from National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) operatives, have, safe to say, left a noticeable imprint in present Filipino media culture for all the wrong reasons—from irking the public to being memeified endlessly

- [Villager gets P50,000 fine over ‘malicious post’ on Cagayan town mayor](#) (2026-05-22 00:46)

TUGUEGARAO CITY, CAGAYAN, Philippines — A villager in Sanchez Mira town in Cagayan province was convicted of cyberlibel for posting a cropped photo of the town mayor and a woman. The Regional Trial Court Branch 6 in Aparri, Cagayan ordered Edwin Sacramed to pay P50,000 fine with subsidiary imprisonment in case of insolvency. Sacramed, also

- [Lawyer to Jonvic Remulla: Arrest Dela Rosa or resign as Interior chief](#) (2026-05-21 23:40)

MANILA, Philippines — A Human rights lawyer on Thursday challenged Interior Sec. Jonvic Remulla to immediately arrest Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa or step down from his position. Atty. Dino de Leon made the pronouncement as he lamented the weakness the government is projecting in implementing warrants and enforcing accountability. “Arrest Bato or resign,” De

- [University employee nabbed in P816,000 shabu bust in Iloilo town](#) (2026-05-21 23:35)

ILOILO CITY — A casual employee of the Iloilo State University of Fisheries Science and Technology was arrested on Wednesday evening after yielding over P800,000 worth of suspected shabu during an anti-illegal drug operation in Barangay Balabag, Santa Barbara town, Iloilo. The suspect, identified only by the aliases “Wax” and “Bax,” 54, and a resident

- [2 big-time traffickers yield P1.4-M shabu in Batangas City](#) (2026-05-21 23:20)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Two suspected big-time drug traffickers were arrested early Thursday, May 21, and yielded more than P1.4 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) in a buy-bust operation in Batangas City. The Police Regional Office 4A in a report said that anti-drug operatives arrested the suspects identified only as “Leony” and “Bopak”

- [Brian Poe joins PCG Auxiliary in push to protect PH seas](#) (2026-05-21 23:19)

MANILA, Philippines — FPJ Panday Bayanihan party-list Rep. Brian Poe was formally inducted as an Auxiliary Commodore of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary Executive Squadron during a donning of ranks and oath-taking ceremony held at the National Headquarters of the Philippine Coast Guard on May 21, 2026, marking what the lawmaker described as a

- [LOOK: Tentative schedule for Sara Duterte’ s impeachment trial](#) (2026-05-21 23:06)

MANILA, Philippines — With the start of Vice President Sara Duterte’ s impeachment trial expected on July 6, 2026, the Senate impeachment court is expected to follow a strict schedule as the upper chamber primes for what could become one of the most significant political proceedings in recent history. [READ: Sara Duterte’ s impeachment trial may start](#)

- [Lack of supply, misinformation hinder HPV vaccination in Naga](#) (2026-05-21 23:04)

NAGA CITY, Philippines — Naga City officials on Wednesday said insufficient supply and misinformation are preventing women from getting vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV), which can lead to cervical cancer, with immunization rates down to 40 percent last year from 43 percent in 2024. In a forum on cervical cancer, Health Undersecretary Glenn Mathew Baggao

- [Classroom shortage in Calapan eases as 14 new school buildings completed](#) (2026-05-21 22:58)

CALAPAN CITY, ORIENTAL MINDORO, Philippines — The local government here has formally received 14 school building projects designed to address the growing demand for classroom spaces in public educational institutions across the city. The turnover of the infrastructure projects was formalized through the signing of a supplemental Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of

- [Oriental Mindoro power rates slightly up in May billing](#) (2026-05-21 22:49)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Electricity rates increased slightly this month, brought about by reduced output from renewable energy sources amid the dry season, which necessitated the use of more expensive power supply alternatives, the Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative (Ormeco) said on Wednesday. In an advisory posted on social media, Ormeco said that the rate

- [61 wanted persons arrested in Eastern Visayas anti-crime operations](#) (2026-05-21 22:23)

TACLOBAN CITY — Police arrested 61 wanted persons across the Eastern Visayas region during simultaneous anti-criminality and law enforcement operations conducted on Tuesday, May 19, including two suspects facing rape and child abuse charges, the Police Regional Office 8 (PRO-8) said. Among those arrested was the region’ s seventh most wanted person, identified only by the

- [Romualdez camp: Case vs PGMN not attack vs press freedom](#) (2026-05-21 22:03)

MANILA, Philippines — The camp of former House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez has maintained that the case against online channel Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) is not an attack on press freedom, noting that responsible journalism is even encouraged. In an ambush interview on Thursday after the arraignment of PGMN founder Franco Mabanta, who is

- [DENR sets up research center in Aurora to protect Philippine Rise](#) (2026-05-21 21:57)

OLONGAPO CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is ramping up its efforts to safeguard the country's eastern marine frontier, undertaking the construction of a state-of-the-art Marine Scientific Research Station (MSRS) in Aurora province, to boost science-based management of the Philippine Rise. In a statement on Thursday, May 21, Alfredo Collado, head

- [Community watchdogs trained to safeguard road project in Quezon](#) (2026-05-21 21:53)

LUCENA CITY — Community representatives in Mulanay, Quezon, have undergone training to help monitor construction quality and safeguard the integrity of a 15.33-kilometer farm-to-market road project in the town. In a report Thursday, the regional project coordination office of the Department of Agriculture–Philippine Rural Development Project (DA-PRDP) in Region IV-A said 27 barangay officials and

- [Elderly woman drowns in Quezon river after epileptic seizure](#) (2026-05-21 21:49)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — A 63-year-old woman drowned in a river in the town of General Luna, Quezon, on Wednesday after reportedly suffering an epileptic seizure. A report from the Region 4A police identified the victim only as “Josefina.” Police said the woman went to a river in Barangay San Jose at around 4 p.m.

- [May 21 PCSO lotto: No winners for 6/49, 6/42 jackpots](#) (2026-05-21 21:46)

MANILA, Philippines — No bettor won the jackpots for Super Lotto 6/49 and Lotto 6/42 in the Thursday, May 21, draw, PCSO said. The winning combination for Super Lotto 6/49 was 09-28-21-02-37-23 for a ₱25 million jackpot. There was no jackpot winner. READ: Grand Lotto winner hits ₱115.36M jackpot May 20 The winning combination for

- [Man arrested, shabu worth P170,000 seized in Subic drug sting](#) (2026-05-21 21:37)

SUBIC, Zambales — A 59-year-old drug suspect, listed as a regional target, was arrested by anti-narcotics agents during a buy-bust operation in this town on Wednesday night, May 20. According to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Zambales Provincial Office, the suspect, a resident of Barangay Calapacuan, was cornered at around 9:13 p.m. Recovered from him

- [Delivery rider mistaken for rival, killed in Bulacan](#) (2026-05-21 21:36)

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—A 40-year-old delivery rider was stabbed and shot dead after being mistaken for another rider in what police described as a revenge attack in Bocaue, Bulacan, Tuesday. Col. Jay Baybayan, Bulacan police director, said the victim, who is from Barangay Binang 1st, was driving his motorcycle to deliver a parcel at

- [CIDG to implement arrest warrant vs Bato Dela Rosa ‘at all costs’](#) (2026-05-21 21:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police – Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) on Thursday said it will implement the International Criminal Court (ICC)

arrest warrant against Sen. Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa “at all costs” once ordered by the police chief. CIDG Director Maj. Gen. Robert Morico II made the pronouncement after the Justice

- [Palace declares May 27 regular holiday in observance of Eid’ l Adha](#) (2026-05-21 20:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang Palace on Thursday issued Proclamation No. 1264 declaring May 27, 2026, a regular holiday nationwide in observance of Eid’ l Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice. “WHEREAS, following the 1447 Hijrah Islamic Lunar Calendar, the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos has recommended that 27 May 2026, Wednesday, be declared a national holiday,

- [108 firearms surrendered to military in Lanao del Sur](#) (2026-05-21 20:56)

TARAKA, Lanao del Sur — Some 108 loose firearms from civilians in the towns of Taraka, Tamparan, Mulondo and Lumba Bayabao in Lanao del Sur were turned over to military officials on Tuesday, May 19, under the government’ s Small and Light Weapons Management (SALW) Program. The turnover rites were held at the Taraka municipal gymnasium,

- [Bato dela Rosa will be arrested ‘without delay,’ says NBI chief](#) (2026-05-21 20:45)

MANILA, Philippines — National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag said on Thursday that the bureau will carry out the order of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to arrest Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa “without delay.” This came after the DOJ earlier on Thursday ordered the NBI and the Philippine National Police to enforce

- [Group hits House anti-dynasty bill, citing ‘weak prohibitions’](#) (2026-05-21 20:13)

MANILA, Philippines — A group seeking to enact an anti-political dynasty law through a people’ s initiative criticized a similar measure that was recently approved on second reading by the House of Representatives for having “weak prohibitions.” In a statement on Thursday, the Dapat Isa Lang movement (D1L) described House Bill No. 8389, or the the

- [Drilon: Dela Rosa’ s role as senator now limited amid ICC warrant](#) (2026-05-21 20:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Amid a looming International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest, former Senate President Franklin Drilon said Thursday that Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa’ s role as senator will be limited, especially in Senate sessions where he will not be able to participate if not physically present. READ: Drilon says Aplasca ‘exposed Senate to danger’ Drilon

- [NBI continues manhunt for fugitive businessman Atong Ang](#) (2026-05-21 19:47)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) continues its manhunt operations against businessman Atong Ang, who remains at large, NBI Director Melvin Matibag told reporters in an ambush interview on Thursday. Matibag, who was in this city for the inauguration of the NBI regional office and training center, said agents continue to

- [PH-developed forensic tool aims to improve sexual assault investigations](#) (2026-05-21 19:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Women's rights advocate and access-to-justice champion, Justice Undersecretary Margarita Gutierrez has expressed personal support for the launch of the country's first-ever Philippine Sexual Assault Investigation Kit (SAI Kit). The DOJ Usec described it as a major step toward helping survivors pursue justice through science and evidence. Gutierrez, who has long advocated for

- [House prosecution panel's prep like bar exam — Luistro](#) (2026-05-21 18:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro likened the House prosecution panel's preparations for Vice President Sara Duterte's impeachment trial to studying for the bar exams, as the team seeks to secure her conviction in the high-stakes proceedings. She said that while all 11 members of the prosecution team are lawyers, they need to brush

- [Luistro: A lot of lawyers want to help us in Sara Duterte's trial](#) (2026-05-21 18:34)

MANILA, Philippines — The reason the House of Representatives has not yet announced the private lawyers that would help the prosecution team is because a lot of lawmakers have expressed their intent to help in the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro said on Thursday. Luistro, the lead public prosecutor for Duterte's

- [Luistro: Senator-judges must attend trial in person, not vote online](#) (2026-05-21 18:20)

MANILA, Philippines — House Committee on Justice Chair and lead impeachment prosecutor Gerville “Jinky Bitrics” Luistro of Batangas on Thursday opposed proposals allowing senator-judges to participate or vote remotely in the trial of Vice President Sara Z. Duterte. She said the gravity of the proceedings requires their personal presence throughout the trial. “My humble submission

- [NBI always ready to arrest dela Rosa following DOJ's order](#) (2026-05-21 18:13)

MANILA, Philippines — National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag said on Thursday that the bureau is “always ready” to conduct a manhunt operation for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. Matibag said this in an ambush interview at the NBI headquarters following the order of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to enforce the arrest

- [BIR speeds up business closure process; tax clearance ready in 3 days](#) (2026-05-21 17:43)

MANILA, Philippines — In another move aimed at cutting through bureaucratic red tape, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) has rolled out new rules meant to make it easier for businesses to formally shut down and cancel their tax registration. Issued through Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 47-2026 on May 19, the guidelines form part

- [Cop nabbed for drawing gun at vendor, parking attendant in Manila](#) (2026-05-21 17:22)

MANILA, Philippines — A patrolman was arrested for allegedly drawing his gun at a vendor and a parking attendant in Manila, the police said on Thursday. In a statement, the MPD said it had arrested the suspect after both victims reported the incident to the police after it had taken place in front of a

- [PTFoMS, NUJP slam Bacolod anchor over rape jokes at female reporter](#) (2026-05-21 17:04)

[Trigger warning: Mention of rape] MANILA, Philippines — A Bacolod-based radio anchor is under fire from the Presidential Task Force on Media Security (PTFoMs), National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), and women's rights advocates after making repeated rape jokes toward a female reporter during a live broadcast. On Wednesday, the reporter was discussing

- [Drilon says Aplasca 'exposed Senate to danger'](#) (2026-05-21 16:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Senate President Franklin Drilon said suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca “exposed the chamber to danger” during the shooting incident there last week. “With what happened in the Senate, he does not deserve to be the sergeant-at-arms because, according to the initial findings, he was the first one to fire a shot,”

- [Luistro doesn't think House panel changes are tied to impeachment vote](#) (2026-05-21 16:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Some minor changes in the House committee chairmanships and memberships are most likely not connected to the impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte as such movements are normal, Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro said on Thursday. Luistro, in an online interview, said she thinks the lawmakers' votes were not a factor since many of

- [Cops nab suspect in killing of Basilan employee](#) (2026-05-21 16:41)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur – Police arrested on Wednesday the suspected gunman in the fatal shooting of an employee of the Isabela City, Basilan local government, following intensified investigations and emergency security meetings convened by local leaders and security forces. Police Lt. Col. Wilfredo Palamos Jr., Isabela City police chief, said operatives collared the

- [Senators call on dela Rosa to surrender after DOJ OKs arrest](#) (2026-05-21 16:41)

MANILA, Philippines — Sens. Risa Hontiveros and Erwin Tulfo on Thursday called for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa's surrender as the Department of Justice (DOJ) said authorities may now enforce the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against him. Tulfo said he can only pray that dela Rosa is in good health while Hontiveros says

- [DOE steps in to solve power supply kinks in parts of Bukidnon](#) (2026-05-21 16:31)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — The Department of Energy (DOE) has stepped in to address the power situation in Valencia City following complaints over frequent and prolonged power interruptions raised by consumers and the city council. The move came after the Valencia City Council passed Resolution No. 294-2025, urging action over alleged poor electric service and

- [BARMM under state of calamity amid oil crisis, El Niño](#) (2026-05-21 16:04)

COTABATO CITY – Interim Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua has declared a state of calamity across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) due to the combined impact of the global oil crisis and the dry spell. Through Proclamation No. 002, Macacua declared a state of calamity across the entire BARMM in response to worsening

- [Palace on Bato Dela Rosa arrest warrant: Justice will be served](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

[Updated May 21, 2026, 5:23 p.m.] MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Thursday vowed that legal action in accordance with the law will be taken and that justice will be served, as the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that the arrest warrant against Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa may now be enforced. Earlier, the DOJ also

- [Cops nab 2 drug suspects, seize P1.5 million in meth in Iloilo bust](#) (2026-05-21 15:58)

ILOILO CITY – A joint anti-drug operation yielded some 230 grams of suspected shabu, estimated to be valued at P1,564,000, and resulted in the arrest of two individuals classified as “high-value targets” in Barangay Sinikway of Lapuz district here on Wednesday afternoon. The suspects, identified by authorities only by their aliases “Pipoy,” 34, and “Gerry,”

- [House OKs bill granting free license, civil service exams to poor Filipinos](#) (2026-05-21 15:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives on late Wednesday approved on third and final reading a bill granting free licensure and civil service examinations to poor Filipinos and members of indigenous groups. With 266 votes in favor, none against, and one abstention, lawmakers passed House Bill No. 8869. This measure seeks to exempt poor

- [Taytay, Rizal residents warned as heat index reaches 47.15°C](#) (2026-05-21 15:50)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon – The local government of Taytay, Rizal, advised residents to take precautionary measures after the town’s heat index reached 47.15 degrees Celsius on Thursday. In an advisory posted on its Facebook page around 1:10 p.m., the Taytay Public Information Office (PIO) said the municipality’s heat index, or “real feel” temperature, reached 47.15°C

- [Adiong vows: Prosecution to stick with evidence as people shun noise](#) (2026-05-21 15:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives’ prosecution panel will stick with their duty to present evidence against Vice President Sara Duterte as the people do not want mere political noise or theatrics, Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong said on Thursday. Adiong, one

of the spokespersons of the prosecution team, said in a statement

- [Erwin Tulfo: Senate coup attempts ongoing, numbers ‘tempting’](#) (2026-05-21 15:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Coup attempts in the Senate are ongoing as the slim gap between the majority and minority blocs continues to “tempt” senators into trying to secure their numbers, Sen. Erwin Tulfo said on Wednesday. Asked about persistent rumors of another coup attempt, Tulfo, who is part of the minority bloc, said the numbers

- [DENR tells public to keep off Benguet crash site](#) (2026-05-21 15:42)

BAGUIO CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Cordillera Administrative Region (DENR-CAR) on Thursday urged the public to stay away from the site of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) SF-260 trainer aircraft crash in Sitio Cabuyao, Poblacion, Tuba, Benguet, citing safety risks and the need to protect the environmentally sensitive area where the incident

- [PCG rescues 23 fishermen stranded off Zambales](#) (2026-05-21 15:31)

SUBIC, Zambales — Twenty-three fishermen were rescued after their fishing vessel suffered an engine failure in the waters off this province, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported on Thursday. The crew, led by 36-year-old boat captain Erwin Morate, departed their homeport in Barangay Wawandue here aboard the FBCA Wilyn early in the morning on Tuesday.

- [Ex-mayor, now Biliran board member, convicted of malversation](#) (2026-05-21 15:19)

TACLOBAN CITY — Incumbent Biliran 2nd District Board Member Lorenzo Alcala Reveldez Jr. has been convicted by a court in Naval, Biliran, for malversation of public property stemming from official acts during his term as mayor of Culaba town. In a decision dated May 19, 2026, the Regional Trial Court Branch 37 found Reveldez guilty

- [Palace mum on report linking Marcos to corruption, legacy rehab drive](#) (2026-05-21 15:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Thursday dismissed as “speculation and intrigue” a report linking President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to a corruption scandal, and to a London-based public relations firm allegedly tapped to “rehabilitate” his image within the international community. In a Viber message to reporters, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro also said the Palace has

- [House approves changes in some committee leaderships](#) (2026-05-21 14:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The leadership of several committees in the House of Representatives has been changed, following a motion from the chamber’s Majority bloc. During the session late Thursday night, Assistant Majority Leader and Batangas Rep. Ryan Recto said the Majority moves to reconsider the election of Southern Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado and Agusan del Norte Rep.

- [Rape suspect nabbed in Iligan while getting NBI clearance](#) (2026-05-21 14:49)

[Trigger warning: Mention of rape] MANILA, Philippines — A man wanted for rape for 15 years was nabbed in Iligan City after personally appearing at the bureau's office to apply for a National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) clearance, the bureau said. According to the NBI, the accused, identified as Ricardo Mabulay y Frias, went to

- [Fisherfolk slam Pia Cayetano's 'crocodile tears' as distraction](#) (2026-05-21 14:42)

OLONGAPO CITY— A militant fisherfolk group on Thursday blasted Sen. Pia Cayetano for allegedly playing the victim, calling her emotional display in the Senate “crocodile tears” meant to distract the public from the chamber's role in harboring a colleague facing international charges. In a statement, the group Pamalakaya denounced the “extended drama” in the upper

- [Artists, poets' group cuts ties with Legarda after Senate prexy vote](#) (2026-05-21 14:35)

MANILA, Philippines — A group of artists and poets who participated in “Kislap Diwa” – an annual event organized in partnership with the Office of Sen. Loren Legarda – has “dissociated” itself from the lawmaker. This move comes after she voted to elect Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano as Senate president. “For years, the Senator has presented

- [Search ongoing for 2 missing in Davao City landfill collapse](#) (2026-05-21 13:58)

DAVAO CITY – Search and rescue operations are ongoing for two individuals who went missing after the sanitary landfill slide in Barangay New Carmen, Tugbok District, on Wednesday afternoon, which also left one person dead and two others injured. The Davao City Police Office (DCPO) identified the deceased as Cristel, 31, a scavenger. Those missing were

- [Low consumption, high leakage: The Philippines' plastic paradox](#) (2026-05-21 13:40)

(Part 1) MANILA, Philippines—The Philippines' plastic crisis is shaped not only by how much plastic is consumed, but by how poorly much of that waste is managed after use. The country generates an estimated 1.51 million tons of plastic waste annually as of 2025, according to Earth Action's 2025 Plastic Overshoot Day report and World

- [PAF mourns loss of 2 pilots in Benguet crash](#) (2026-05-21 12:49)

BAGUIO CITY— The Philippine Air Force (PAF) is mourning the deaths of two of its pilots after their SF-260 trainer aircraft crashed in Cabuyao, Tuba, Benguet during a formation training flight on Wednesday. In a statement, the PAF expressed deep sorrow over the loss of its personnel and extended condolences to the families, friends, and

- [PNP alerts airport, maritime police over possible Bato dela Rosa exit](#) (2026-05-21 12:41)

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine National Police (PNP) alerted its airport and maritime units for the possibility of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa leaving the country in view of an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant. “Police forces... were alerted to be on the

lookout and to intensify intelligence monitoring on all exit points, including

- [Lacson on Pia Cayetano's 'no one checked on us' quote: They seemed to be happily eating](#) (2026-05-21 12:32)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Panfilo “Ping” Lacson took a swipe at Senator Pia Cayetano over her statement that no one from the minority bloc checked on the members of the majority following the May 13 shooting inside the Senate complex. Lacson questioned how members of the minority bloc could have checked on the majority senators

- [Mabanta camp mum on arraignment in Romualdez robbery-extortion case](#) (2026-05-21 12:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The camp of Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta declined to make any statement on what transpired during the arraignment hearing at the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 152 on Thursday in connection with the robbery extortion case filed by former House Speaker Martin Romualdez. The robbery extortion case

- [Grassfire hits Taal Volcano Island](#) (2026-05-21 12:30)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon – The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported a grass fire on Wednesday afternoon at the southeast slopes of Taal Volcano Island. “Ongoing grassfire that began around 05:35 PM yesterday, 19 May 2026, on the southeast slopes of Taal Volcano Island,” the Phivolcs said in its Facebook post around 6:30

- [Woman nabbed, 5 trafficking victims rescued in Zamboanga City](#) (2026-05-21 12:04)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — A late-night entrapment operation led by inter-agency operatives on Wednesday resulted in the arrest of a female suspect and the rescue of five human trafficking victims, including three minors, in Zamboanga City. The entrapment was done at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) compound in Barangay Upper Calarian, Zamboanga City.

- [Marcos vows vigilance against repeat of Navotas landfill fire](#) (2026-05-21 12:02)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday said the government will be vigilant in preventing another fire similar to the one that erupted at the Navotas Sanitary Landfill in Navotas City. In his speech during the “Bawat Bayan Makikinabang (each town will benefit): Obando, Bulacan” program in Obando, Bulacan, Marcos raised concern over

- [Pagasa: LPA seen in PAR but unlikely to become cyclone in next 24 hours](#) (2026-05-21 11:57)

MANILA, Philippines — A low pressure area (LPA) was spotted within the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) but is unlikely to become a tropical cyclone in the next 24 hours, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa). In its latest tropical cyclone formation outlook bulletin on Thursday morning, Pagasa noted that

- [PAF grounds 16 training aircraft after Benguet crash kills 2 pilots](#) (2026-05-21 11:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Air Force (PAF) has grounded all 16 remaining SF260 Marchetti trainer aircraft following the crash of one of its planes in Benguet that killed two pilots during a training mission. “Yes, the remaining 16 SF260s are grounded pending the investigation,” PAF spokesperson Col. Ma. Christina Basco said in a message

- [Nearly half of deaths occur outside health facilities as UHC gaps persist](#) (2026-05-21 11:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A public health researcher shed light on what has been described as “roadblocks” to universal health care in the Philippines, six years after it became law in 2019. Veincent Christian Pepito, an assistant professor at the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health’s Center for Research Innovation, said health care is rarely

- [Asistio faces Ombudsman rap over P79-M alleged ‘ghost’ flood projects](#) (2026-05-21 11:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Caloocan Third District Rep. Dean Asistio was the subject of a complaint filed before the Office of the Ombudsman over an alleged “ghost” and anomalous flood control projects worth P79.2 million. Former Caloocan Mayor Rey Malonzo filed Thursday the complaint against Asistio for graft, malversation and falsification of public documents. READ: Caloocan Mayor

- [Dangerous heat expected in Cavite, Quezon as temperatures soar](#) (2026-05-21 11:45)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Amid continuing sweltering conditions, four areas in Cavite and Quezon provinces are expected to experience dangerous heat index levels on Thursday. In its 5 p.m. forecast issued on Wednesday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Sangley Point in Cavite City may record a heat index of 46°C.

- [P4.9-million shabu seized from drug suspect in Mindoro town](#) (2026-05-21 11:33)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Authorities seized around P4.9 million worth of suspected shabu and arrested an alleged “high-value individual” during a coordinated anti-illegal drug operation in Roxas town, Oriental Mindoro, early morning on Thursday, police said in a report. Police said the arrested suspect is a 27-year-old man; another individual evaded arrest and remains

- [Will police arrest dela Rosa? PNP awaits DOJ order](#) (2026-05-21 11:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) maintained that it was waiting for a directive from the Department of Justice (DOJ) on whether to enforce the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant to arrest Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. The Supreme Court (SC) earlier denied dela Rosa’s request to block the enforcement of the global

- [LIST: New Senate committee chairmanships](#) (2026-05-21 11:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Twenty-two of the Senate’ s 41 committees remain vacant following the leadership change on May 11, when Senator Vicente Sotto III was unseated and replaced by Senator Alan Peter Cayetano as Senate president. After declaring all Senate posts vacant, the new leadership began reorganizing on May 18. READ: From coup to chaos: What

- [DA files complaint over P94-M ‘ghost’ farm-to-market road in Davao Occ.](#) (2026-05-21 10:41)

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel on Thursday filed formal complaints before the Office of the Ombudsman against several officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and private contractors over alleged “ghost” farm-to-market road (FMR) projects in Davao Occidental worth P94 million. A total of eight cases were filed against

- [Distrust in Marcos reflects class divide, data analysis finds](#) (2026-05-21 10:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Why Filipinos distrust President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. depends largely on where they stand in the country’ s class structure, according to an analysis of Pulse Asia data by University of the Philippines Diliman professor and Inquirer data scientist Dr. Rogelio Alicor Panao. Using results from the Pulse Asia survey conducted from Feb. 27

- [House OKs bill increasing PRC ID validity to 5 years on 3rd reading](#) (2026-05-21 10:11)

MANILA, Philippines — A bill that seeks to increase the validity of professional identification cards (PIC) issued by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to five years has been approved by the House of Representatives on third and final reading. During the session late Wednesday night, House Bill No. 8876 was approved on third reading, with 266

- [2 cops relieved for alleged interference in missing sabungeros case](#) (2026-05-21 10:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Two police officers were relieved from their posts for allegedly interfering in the case of the reported kidnappings of cockfighting aficionados (sabungeros). The relieved officers—a police lieutenant and a police major—are accused of facilitating unauthorized meetings between the complainants and the police officers implicated in the sabungeros case, who are detained at

- [Sara Duterte’ s impeachment trial may start on July 6 — Erwin Tulfo](#) (2026-05-21 09:36)

MANILA, Philippines – The impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte is expected to start in July, according to Sen. Erwin Tulfo. “There was already a schedule given yesterday (when) SP (Senate President Alan Peter) Cayetano called a caucus of all members. The impeachment trial will begin on July 6,” Tulfo said in a television

- [PNP denies manipulating Senate shooting footage](#) (2026-05-21 09:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) denied manipulating security footage of the shooting incident at the Senate last week after the chamber’ s sergeant-at-arms

claimed videos were “spliced to fit a narrative.” “The integrity of our investigative process is paramount and the footage we presented is authentic, time-stamped, and direct from the source,

- [Ombudsman probe vs Romualdez, Escudero now in preliminary stage](#) (2026-05-21 09:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman’s investigations into Sen. Chiz Escudero and Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez are now in the preliminary stage, Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said on Thursday. Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla previously said plunder cases would be filed against Escudero and Romualdez this month. The former speaker is also facing a

- [Erwin Tulfo: Minority senators checked on majority after Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-21 08:39)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Erwin Tulfo on Thursday disputed Senator Pia Cayetano’s claim that no one from the minority bloc checked on members of the majority after the May 13 shooting incident inside the Senate complex, saying several senators sent messages in their group chat that night. According to Tulfo, he and other senators from

- [MMDA resumes Pasig River ferry ops after repairs, river trash buildup](#) (2026-05-21 07:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The Pasig River Ferry Service resumed operations on Thursday, May 21, following maintenance work on its boats amid a high volume of garbage in the waterway, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) announced. The ferry service had been suspended since Tuesday, with the MMDA citing a “severe increase of trash in the

- [Hot, humid Thursday ahead as rains threaten parts of PH – Pagasa](#) (2026-05-21 07:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Partly cloudy to cloudy skies with chances of rain are expected across most of the country on Thursday, May 21, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa). In the agency’s Thursday morning forecast, Pagasa weather specialist Loriedin de la Cruz-Galicia said warm easterly winds continued to prevail over

- [50 Mayon evacuees in Albay down with chickenpox](#) (2026-05-21 06:52)

CAMALIG, ALBAY, Philippines — At least 50 evacuees staying in evacuation centers here for more than four months now have contracted chickenpox or bulutong-tubig, local disaster officials said on Wednesday. Dr. Rommel Negrete, chief of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO), said 19 families were affected by the contagious disease, which he

- [Rape raps vs Pampanga priest trashed](#) (2026-05-21 06:48)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA, Philippines — A young woman claiming to have been raped by a Roman Catholic priest has joined a picket of her relatives and village mates at the provincial capitol grounds here on Wednesday. The protesters mounted the picket after the

Office of the Provincial Prosecutor dismissed the complaint for rape

- [Rights group questions transfer of slain UP Cebu alumnus' body in Negros](#) (2026-05-21 06:40)

TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL, Philippines — Human rights group Karapatan Central Visayas has expressed concern over the reported transfer of the remains of slain UP Cebu alumnus Vince Francis “Ding” Dingding, saying the circumstances surrounding the handling of his body remain unclear. Dingding was among five alleged members of the New People’s Army killed during an

- [4 drug suspects nabbed, P7.2-M shabu seized in Laguna, Cavite](#) (2026-05-21 06:33)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — Four suspected drug traffickers were arrested in separate anti-illegal drug operations in Laguna and Cavite provinces on Tuesday, May 19, resulting in the seizure of more than P7.2 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth). In a belated report, the Police Regional Office 4A said anti-drug operatives arrested suspects identified

- [DENR shuts Quezon resort for encroaching into protected land](#) (2026-05-21 06:27)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered a resort in Infanta, Quezon to stop operations over the alleged construction of structures inside a protected national park, wildlife sanctuary, and game preserve. In a report released Wednesday, May 20, the DENR Regional Office IV-A said personnel from the

- [Driver falls asleep during trip; slams into fruit stalls in S. Cotabato](#) (2026-05-21 06:18)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — A fruit vendor was killed while an 11-year-old kid was hurt when a pick-up vehicle crashed into a roadside fruit stall in Tupi, South Cotabato, on Monday afternoon. The Tupi municipal police station reported that the driver of the white Toyota Hi-Lux pick-up fell asleep while traversing the national highway

- [Bacolod radioman issues apology amid backlash from on-air rape joke](#) (2026-05-21 06:07)

BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, Philippines — Broadcaster Jean Paul Generoso, radio anchor of K5 News FM here, has apologized for his joke about raping a reporter while they were on live broadcast on Wednesday morning. Generoso, host of 11MBPS program, had told a reporter on air that he would rape her so he could go

- [House neophyte reminded of ‘1-subject, 1-title’ rule](#) (2026-05-21 05:54)

MANILA, Philippines — In past House hearings, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo seemed to have played the patient listener to Batangas Rep. Leandro Leviste’s proposals and concerns regarding taxation. But on Monday, Quimbo, the current chair of the House committee on ways and means, had to engage the neophyte Leviste in a testy exchange just to

- [SC: Flexible work scheme without consent illegal](#) (2026-05-21 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines — An employer that reduces employees' workload and imposes a flexible work arrangement without their consent may be held liable for constructive dismissal, the Supreme Court ruled. In a Sept. 30, 2025, decision made public on Tuesday, the Supreme Court en banc found Valenzuela City-based Fiber Textile Manufacturing Corp. (FMC) liable for constructively

- [Marcos' 2025 SALN puts his appraised net worth at P1.45B](#) (2026-05-21 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos declared a net worth of P475.9 million in 2025, his personal wealth including a collection of artworks by national hero Jose Rizal and National Artist Fernando Amorsolo. His appraised net worth, however, reached more than thrice that figure at P1.457 billion. A declared net worth is based on the acquisition

- [DENR defends mass cutting of trees in Manila for road project](#) (2026-05-21 05:48)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) justified on Wednesday the cutting of mature trees with sprawling canopies that provided shade for years on Quirino Avenue in Manila, saying it was legally authorized and subject to strict environmental safeguards. Several netizens have voiced concern over the tree cutting amid rising temperatures

- [Antidynasty bill advances in House on second reading](#) (2026-05-21 05:46)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on second reading a bill barring relatives within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity from holding public office at the same time, bringing the measure aimed at curbing political dynasties closer to becoming a law since the 1987 Constitution mandated such a ban. In

- [DTI: Prices of some basic goods may rise](#) (2026-05-21 05:44)

MANILA, Philippines — Filipino consumers may soon see slight price increases for some basic goods as manufacturers have begun seeking government approval for adjustments amid rising costs linked to the still-unresolved conflict in the Middle East. This was according to Trade Secretary Cristina Roque, who said on Wednesday that while the prices of 68 percent

- [5 fertilizer firms suspended, face probe for violations](#) (2026-05-21 05:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) has suspended five firms over alleged violations of fertilizer laws and regulatory policies, including refusal to allow lawful inspections by its personnel and the sale of counterfeit and off-specification fertilizer products. Other infractions were product mislabeling and the unauthorized movement of products already covered by Stop

- [PH public school students bag 6 awards in international science fair](#) (2026-05-21 05:40)

MANILA, Philippines — High school students from public schools in Angeles City, Pampanga; Alaminos City, Pangasinan; and Quezon City came home with six awards after joining a global

science and engineering competition with over 1,700 participants from more than 60 countries, regions and territories. The Filipino students received two grand awards and four special awards

- [Senate shake-up deepens amid fresh coup rumors](#) (2026-05-21 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate announced on Wednesday a reorganization of several key committees amid persistent rumors of yet another imminent coup targeting the newly installed Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano. The adjustments follow the May 11 vote that ousted Sen. Vicente “Tito” Sotto III—the longest-serving senator in Philippine history and the only one elected

- [House prosecution: Sara Duterte’ s kill threats ‘most simple’ to prove](#) (2026-05-21 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — The House prosecution panel in the impending Senate impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte plans to start with the charge that it considers the “most simple” to prove—one involving an act that a stunned nation witnessed online in the wee hours of Nov. 23, 2024. It is the early-morning rant on

- [Police push raps vs Aplasca, 2 aides for firing ‘without provocation’](#) (2026-05-21 05:34)

MANILA, Philippines — The now-suspended acting chief of the Senate’ s Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms (Osaa) and two of his men should face criminal charges for illegally discharging their firearms and causing panic inside the Senate building last week, the police said on Wednesday. The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police

- [Pia Cayetano breaks down after Hontiveros’ remark on shooting incident](#) (2026-05-21 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Pia Cayetano turned emotional on Wednesday as she protested a colleague’ s remarks about the May 13 shooting incident in the Senate. “It’ s as if nothing happened. That is the statement of our honorable senator,” Cayetano said, referring to a privilege speech earlier delivered by Sen. Risa Hontiveros. Her voice cracking, Cayetano

- [SC junks Bato dela Rosa petition for TRO vs ICC arrest](#) (2026-05-21 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court has denied Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa’ s request for a temporary restraining order (TRO) that sought to prevent the government from arresting him on a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), where he faces charges over the bloody antidrug campaign he enforced as a police general during

- [Over 1,000 displaced as floods hit Davao City](#) (2026-05-21 05:06)

DAVAO CITY, Philippines — One resident died, and more than a thousand others were displaced after heavy rains brought massive flooding in this city this week. Authorities said the fatality was

a 21-year-old pump attendant from Manay, Davao Oriental, who had been renting a house in Buhangin village. He was found floating amid the floodwaters

- [2 PAF pilots dead in Benguet crash](#) (2026-05-21 05:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Two Philippine Air Force (PAF) pilots died after the trainer aircraft they were on crashed into a mountain in Tuba town, Benguet province, on Wednesday morning. Col. Ma. Christina Basco, PAF spokesperson, confirmed the crash and the fate of the pilots hours after the incident. “We are deeply saddened to inform that

- [Phividec may boot out raided steel plant from Misamis ecozone](#) (2026-05-21 05:02)

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, Philippines — The management of Phividec Industrial Authority (PIA), which operates the 3,000-hectare economic zone in Misamis Oriental that hosts the manufacturing plant of Chinese-run Philippine Sanjia-Steel Corp., is eyeing the cancellation of its lease contract following allegations that the company violated the country’s labor, immigration, and nuclear safety regulations. Joseph

- [Group asks NBI to probe LTO’s IT service provider](#) (2026-05-21 03:42)

MANILA, Philippines — A civic group has asked the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to probe the Land Transportation Office’s (LTO) IT service provider in its driver’s license (DL) system, over alleged violations involving national security. In a letter addressed to NBI director Melvin Matibag on May 19, Flag Maharlika called on the agency’s Cybercrime

- [Marcos orders completion of flood control projects ahead of rainy days](#) (2026-05-21 01:03)

MANILA, Philippines — Will the Marcos administration’s initiative, worth billions of pesos, be effective in mitigating floods in Metro Manila and key cities in the country? Only the upcoming rainy season can tell. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday inspected the ongoing “drainage improvement project” on G. Araneta Avenue in Quezon City as part of

- [43 areas seen to hit ‘danger’ level heat index on Thursday, May 21](#) (2026-05-21 00:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Forty-three areas are forecast to record “danger” level indices on Thursday, May 21, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said. “Danger” level heat indices refer to those ranging between 42°C and 51°C, and bring increased risks of heat cramps and heat exhaustion, which could then lead to heat stroke.

- [Marcos to LGUs: Amplify awareness of gov’t healthcare programs](#) (2026-05-20 22:35)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday called on local government units (LGUs) to help amplify public awareness on various government healthcare programs. In his speech during the oath-taking of the newly elected national and regional officers of the Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines (PBMLP) at Malacañang, Marcos highlighted the vital

- [Hontiveros: Senate gunfire an affront to institution](#) (2026-05-20 22:20)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Risa Hontiveros on Wednesday said the gunfire heard inside the Senate last week should not be treated as a political spectacle, but as an unprecedented affront to the institution and the people it serves. “This is no small matter,” Hontiveros said in a privilege speech. “This should not be left to

- [Right-of-way acquisition for Angeles segment of NSCR now at 90%](#) (2026-05-20 22:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) had already acquired 90% of right-of-way (ROW) for the whole segment of Angeles, Pampanga, under the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) project, the agency said on Wednesday. With this, Transport Sec. Giovanni Lopez shared that the agency will coordinate with the local government unit of Angeles City to

- [Police corporal held for punching partner’s alleged lover in Mandaluyong](#) (2026-05-20 21:59)

MANILA, Philippines — A police corporal was taken into custody for allegedly punching his partner’s alleged lover in Mandaluyong City, the police said on Wednesday. The implicated cop surrendered to his station commander and was brought to the city police after crossing paths with his foe along Correctional Road in Barangay Addition Hills on Tuesday

- [Police sergeant held for alleged lascivious acts vs minor in Malabon](#) (2026-05-20 21:59)

MANILA, Philippines — A police sergeant was arrested for an alleged lascivious act against a 14-year-old girl in Malabon City, the police said on Wednesday. The alleged incident took place along Salmon Street in Barangay Longos on Tuesday night, according to Malabon police chief Col. Allan Umipig in a press briefing in Camp Crame. “The

- [Napolcom: New raps for vlogger Francis Leo Marcos over unlicensed guards](#) (2026-05-20 21:59)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) has filed additional criminal complaints against vlogger Norman Mangusin, more commonly known as Francis Leo Marcos, in connection with allegedly unlicensed security guards. In a statement on Tuesday night, the National Police Commission (Napolcom) said the CIDG had filed the complaints against Mangusin and nine

- [Grand Lotto winner hits ₱115.36M jackpot May 20](#) (2026-05-20 21:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A ticket holder won the Grand Lotto 6/55 jackpot in the May 20 draw, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. The winning Grand Lotto 6/55 combination was 41-08-45-27-09-10 for a jackpot of ₱115.36 million. PCSO said one ticket won the jackpot. READ: Super Lotto jackpot won in May 10 draw The

- [Solon wants stronger mental health support in SUCs](#) (2026-05-20 21:39)

MANILA, Philippines — With less than a month to go before the new academic calendar, Parañaque Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan has called for stronger mental health support within state universities and colleges (SUCs), amid rising numbers of students being diagnosed with anxiety and depression disorders. In a statement on Tuesday, Yamsuan said he has already

- [House approves anti-political dynasty bill on second reading](#) (2026-05-20 20:47)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on second reading a landmark bill prohibiting political dynasties and promoting equal access to public office, in line with the mandate of the 1987 Constitution. House Bill No. 8389, or the proposed Anti-Political Dynasty Act, which bars relatives within the second degree of consanguinity or

- [DPWH halts ops at Udalo Bridge in Occidental Mindoro over fatal incident](#) (2026-05-20 20:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has ordered a cease and desist on the lifting operations of a contractor over a fatal incident in Udalo Bridge in Occidental Mindoro. In a statement on Wednesday, the DPWH identified Legacy Construction Corp. as the contractor in charge of the construction of Udalo

- [House panel plans regular updates as Duterte impeachment trial heats up](#) (2026-05-20 20:34)

MANILA, Philippines — House impeachment trial spokesperson Zia Alonto Adong of Lanao del Sur said on Wednesday that the House prosecution panel is considering holding regular press briefings during the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. That is to help the public better understand the proceedings and avoid confusion over legal issues raised before

- [Pagasa: Heat index peaks at 47°C in Catarman, Northern Samar on May 20](#) (2026-05-20 20:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Heat indices across the country peaked at 47°C on Wednesday, May 20, specifically in Catarman, Northern Samar, as dozens of other areas reach “danger” level indices, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said. Once the heat index ranges between 42°C and 51°C, Pagasa tags it as “danger” level due

- [No TRO is go signal for Dela Rosa’ s arrest or surrender, solons say](#) (2026-05-20 20:24)

MANILA, Philippines — Several past and present lawmakers have called on law enforcement agencies to treat the absence of a temporary restraining order (TRO) from the Supreme Court (SC) as a go signal to arrest Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, based on a warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC). In a statement on Tuesday, Akbayan

- [Sara Duterte’ s husband files perjury complaint vs Trillanes](#) (2026-05-20 20:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Manases Carpio, husband of Vice President Sara Duterte, filed a perjury complaint against former Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV over his pronouncements which he said sought to “destroy” his and Duterte family’s “good name.” Carpio filed the 11-page complaint-affidavit before the Office of the City Prosecutor in Pasig City, where Trillanes originally notarized

- [Laguna Water partners with BSP to solidify commitment to SDGs](#) (2026-05-20 20:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The Laguna Water, the province’s largest water and wastewater services provider, signed a memorandum of agreement with the Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) – Laguna Council to enhance its sustainable development programs. The partnership focuses on providing volunteer opportunities for the scouts through deployment in Laguna Water’s environmental programs including Pasibol,

- [Balaoro, Romero bring relief, renewed hope to fire-hit Mangyan villages](#) (2026-05-20 19:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) Commander Lt. Gen. Cerilo C. Balaoro Jr., PA, and former Deputy Speaker and TOWR-NOL Commander Brig. Gen. Mikee Romero led two major outreach missions with multi-sectoral groups deep into the remote mountain areas of Mindoro to bring assistance to marginalized Mangyan communities. Joining the mission were Commodore Marco

- [Angara to JHS, SHS learners: Build gov’t careers via civil service exams](#) (2026-05-20 19:41)

MANILA, Philippines — Education Secretary Sonny Angara has directed Department of Education (DepEd) field offices and schools to support qualified Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) learners and completers in applying for the August 9, 2026 Career Service Examination–Pen and Paper Test (CSE-PPT). The directive follows the Civil Service Commission’s (CSC) formal

- [Linking minority to Senate shooting speculative, irresponsible – Tulfo](#) (2026-05-20 19:35)

MANILA, Philippines – Senators Erwin Tulfo and Risa Hontiveros on Wednesday said last week’s shooting incident at the Senate should be treated as a serious institutional security matter instead of playing the blame game among some senators. Both senators condemned on Wednesday speculation that the senators who left the premises early knew of the chaos that was

- [Spokesperson for PNP chief Nartatez named](#) (2026-05-20 19:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has designated an acting spokesperson for its chief, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., according to the National Police Commission (Napolcom). Col. Marlon Santos, who was previously Cavite police chief and director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group units in Calabarzon and Central Visayas, was appointed to

- [House seeks to avoid vegetable spoilage via rescue-buy initiatives](#) (2026-05-20 19:32)

MANILA, Philippines — An initiative of the House of Representatives seeks to avoid food spoilage and help farmers by facilitating a “rescue-buy” of certain vegetables that are affected by oversupply or low prices. In a statement on Wednesday, the House said that the chamber under the leadership of Speaker Faustino Dy III and House Majority Leader

- [P5.1-M cigarettes sans graphic health warning seized; 2 arrested](#) (2026-05-20 19:05)

MANILA, Philippines — Two men were arrested in Laguna for possession of an estimated P5.135 million worth of cigarettes that allegedly lacked health warnings mandated by law, the Philippine National Police – Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP – CIDG) said on Wednesday. Identified by the aliases “Jon” and “Cris,” the suspects were apprehended in

- [Man nabbed for possession of lewd materials; 6 minors rescued](#) (2026-05-20 19:00)

MANILA, Philippines — A man was arrested for allegedly possessing child sexual abuse or exploitation materials (CSAEM) in Manila, leading to the rescue of six minors, the Philippine National Police – Women and Children Protection Center (PNP WCPC) said on Wednesday. This was the result of an operation implementing a warrant to search, seize and

- [Bacolod councilor calls out radio anchor’ s rape joke on air](#) (2026-05-20 18:58)

[Trigger warning: Mention of rape] BACOLOD CITY—Bacolod City Councilor Celia Flor on Wednesday, May 20, condemned a statement by a radio station anchorman who told a reporter on air that he would rape her so he could go to jail with a father who beat up his child at the Bacolod Public Plaza. The anchorman

- [Napolcom: Missing sabungeros complainants file case vs 2 cops](#) (2026-05-20 18:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Five complainants in the missing sabungeros case filed complaints before the National Police Commission (Napolcom) against two police officers over alleged interference. At a press briefing on Wednesday, the complainants claimed that several of the original complainants had withdrawn from the case after supposedly receiving P40,000 in monthly financial assistance. “In our

- [Senior citizen lining up for cheap rice hit by vehicle dies](#) (2026-05-20 18:48)

MANILA, Philippines — A senior citizen died after he was struck by a pick-up truck while he was lining up to buy subsidized rice in Quezon City on Wednesday, the police said. The victim was lining up in front of the Bureau of Animal Industry office along Visayas Avenue in Barangay Vasra at around 4

- [Artworks by Jose Rizal, Fernando Amorsolo declared in Marcos 2025 SALN](#) (2026-05-20 18:44)

MANILA, Philippines — The artworks of Dr. Jose Rizal and Fernando Amorsolo, the country’ s first National Artist, are among the artworks declared in President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’ s 2025 statement of assets, liabilities, and net worth (SALN). Obtained by the Inquirer from the Office

of the Ombudsman on Wednesday, the SALN — jointly filed by first lady Liza

- [House OKs bill on faster, automated response to future oil crises](#) (2026-05-20 18:42)

MANILA, Philippines — A proposal that seeks to institutionalize government action during oil crises, to ensure that the country is prepared for any eventuality like external shocks through a time-bound response, has been approved on second reading by the House of Representatives. During the session on Wednesday, House Bill (HB) No. 9305 or the proposed Komprehensibong

- [DA: 5 fertilizer firms face suspension over alleged violations](#) (2026-05-20 18:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday said five fertilizer firms were slapped with suspension and preventive suspension orders over alleged violations of fertilizer laws and regulatory policies. According to the DA in a statement, the sanctions—issued specifically by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA)—stemmed from separate investigations, monitoring operations, and compliance

- [New DBM chief vows no repeat of flood control scandal](#) (2026-05-20 18:18)

MANILA, Philippines — Only on his second day in office, newly installed Budget Secretary Kim Robert de Leon on Wednesday committed not to allow the national budget to be used again for another flood control scandal. Speaking before officials and employees during the turnover ceremony of the leadership of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM)

- [Marcos appoints Alvarez acting PNOC chief](#) (2026-05-20 18:06)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has named Franz Alvarez as acting president and chief executive officer as well as acting member of the Board of Directors of the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC). This was based on an appointment letter dated May 13 confirmed by Palace Press Officer Claire Castro to reporters.

- [Marcos SALN: Net worth increases to P1.4B, zero liabilities since 2022](#) (2026-05-20 18:04)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has an appraised net worth of P1.457 billion in 2025, a steady increase that has continued during his presidency. On the other hand, Marcos, who was jointly filed with First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, declared a net worth of P475.9 million in the same year. The figures were taken in the statement

- [Senator, congressman may be appointed if VP post becomes vacant – Comelec](#) (2026-05-20 18:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The president may choose between a senator or a member of the House of Representatives to take over as vice president should the position become vacant, Commission on Elections (Comelec) chairperson George Erwin Garcia said on Wednesday. Garcia issued the statement when asked about a replacement for an impeachable government official removed

- [Replacement for resigned House solon takes oath](#) (2026-05-20 17:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The replacement for one of the two party-list lawmakers who resigned from the House of Representatives has taken oath of office before Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III, hours after the Commission on Elections (Comelec) made the proclamation. During the session on Wednesday, Karl Josef Legazpi took his oath before Dy as the new

- [House passes 2nd degree anti-dynasty bill on 2nd reading](#) (2026-05-20 17:49)

MANILA, Philippines – The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on second reading a bill barring second-degree relatives from holding public office at the same time, inching forward a proposal aimed at curbing the influence of powerful families that dominate local and national politics. In a voice vote, lawmakers passed House Bill No. 8389 at

- [House bill barring 2nd-degree relatives from running for office OK’ d](#) (2026-05-20 17:49)

[Updated May 20, 2026, 9:10 p.m.] MANILA, Philippines – The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on second reading a bill barring second degree relatives from holding public office at the same time, bringing the measure aimed at curbing dynasties closer to becoming a law than at any point since the Constitution mandated such a

- [Alan Cayetano teases Sherwin Gatchalian amid coup rumors](#) (2026-05-20 17:46)

MANILA, Philippine — Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano teased Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian about voting him one day as the latter’ s name surfaced as his possible replacement amid an alleged destabilization plots against him. Cayetano himself bared the supposed ouster plot against him, just days after his allies succeeded removing Sen. Vicente “Tito” Sotto III as head of the

- [Will DILG enforce dela Rosa warrant sans TRO? Remulla points to DOJ](#) (2026-05-20 17:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Wednesday said the Justice department will have to take the lead on the issue of enforcing the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. On Wednesday, the Supreme Court (SC) denied dela Rosa’ s request for a temporary restraining order (TRO)

- [2 PAF pilots dead in Benguet trainer aircraft crash](#) (2026-05-20 17:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Two Philippine Air Force (PAF) pilots were killed after an SF-260 trainer aircraft crashed during a navigation training flight in Benguet province on Wednesday, authorities said. PAF spokesperson Col. Ma. Christina Basco confirmed the deaths hours after the incident. “We are deeply saddened to inform that both pilots passed,” Basco said. The

- [Jonvic Remulla denies Aplasca claims of ‘spliced’ footage](#) (2026-05-20 17:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Wednesday denied accusations made by suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Ma. O. Aplasca, who said the CCTV footage of last week’ s shooting incident at the Senate was “spliced.” Aplasca’ s remarks came after

Remulla, Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida, and Philippine National Police Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Tuesday

- [Extended blackout sparks consumer outrage in Bukidnon](#) (2026-05-20 17:02)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — Thousands of electric consumers expressed frustration and disappointment after prolonged power interruptions lasted nearly 27 hours beginning at 4 a.m. on Tuesday, affecting households, businesses, and economic activities in several areas of Bukidnon. Many consumers aired complaints on social media and criticized First Bukidnon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (FIBECO) after the electric

- [Bulusan Volcano logs increased seismic activity; Alert Level 1 stays](#) (2026-05-20 16:59)

MANILA, Philippines — Increased seismic activity was recorded at Bulusan Volcano in Sorsogon, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported on Wednesday. Phivolcs issued the advisory after recording a total of 442 volcano-tectonic earthquakes since 4 p.m. on Monday, May 18, of which 55 were located less than 5 kilometers beneath the Bulusan

- [Dela Rosa, Padilla headed to Makati after Senate building exit – Remulla](#) (2026-05-20 16:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The vehicle carrying Senators Ronald dela Rosa and Robinhood Padilla from the Senate building last week was last seen heading toward Makati City, according to Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla. In a phone patch interview with Palace reporters, Remulla recounted the events surrounding the senators' departure from the legislative chamber at around 2:30

- [Pampanga's most wanted man nabbed, 3 firearms seized](#) (2026-05-20 16:51)

MABALACAT CITY, Pampanga — Authorities arrested one of the most wanted persons in Pampanga province who allegedly yielded three firearms and dozens of rounds of live ammunition in a police operation in Porac town on Wednesday. In a statement, the Police Regional Office 3 (PRO3) said the suspect, a 37-year-old man who has a pending

- [Pia Cayetano sobs over Hontiveros' remark on Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-20 16:45)

MANILA, Philippines— Sen. Pia Cayetano broke into tears on Wednesday as she protested a colleagues' remark that as if nothing happened after the shooting incident in the Senate last week. “Parang walang nangyari. Yan po ang statement ng ating butihing Senadora (Risa) Hontiveros,” Cayetano said as she took the floor to respond to Hontiveros' statement

- [Keith Flores admits he can't stomach voting against Duterte impeachment](#) (2026-05-20 16:44)

MANILA, Philippines — Bukidnon Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores has admitted that he cannot, in good conscience, oppose the articles of impeachment against Vice President Sara Duterte, as he knew the gravity of the evidence presented before him and other lawmakers. Flores on Tuesday addressed questions over his controversial vote when the House of Representatives tackled

House Resolution

- [Woman nabbed with P3.5-million smuggled cigarettes in Batangas](#) (2026-05-20 16:44)

LUCENA CITY – A woman was arrested in a buy-bust operation in Balayan, Batangas, on Tuesday after authorities allegedly seized more than P3.5 million worth of smuggled cigarettes from her. In a report, the Batangas Provincial Police Office said operatives from the Provincial Intelligence Unit, in coordination with local police, arrested the suspect identified only

- [New livelihoods sought for Pangasinan fishers amid regular red tide](#) (2026-05-20 16:32)

BOLINAO, Pangasinan – With the annual occurrence of the red tide phenomenon in the island town of Anda and this coastal town, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Region I discussed long-term income-generating fishery projects with the affected fisherfolk on Tuesday. The latest BFAR shellfish advisory issued last May 16 showed that the waters

- [NBI on alert, ready to conduct ‘manhunt’ for Dela Rosa, says spox](#) (2026-05-20 16:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is on alert and ready to implement a manhunt operation for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa should they receive a directive to do so. NBI spokesperson Palmer Mallari said this in an ambush interview on Wednesday, shortly after the Supreme Court denied Dela Rosa’ s request for

- [Ping Lacson removed as blue ribbon head, replaced by Pia Cayetano](#) (2026-05-20 15:41)

MANILA, Philippines – Sen. Panfilo Lacson has been removed as chairman of the Senate blue ribbon committee, which has been looking into the flood control projects scandal allegedly involving fellow lawmakers. Lacson was replaced by Sen. Pia Cayetano, sister of incumbent Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano. Under Lacson’ s leadership, the blue ribbon panel investigated the

- [Palace says Bato dela Rosa’ s ICC warrant ‘valid’ amid SC TRO rejection](#) (2026-05-20 15:41)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Wednesday asserted that the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa is valid, following the Supreme Court’ s (SC) decision to deny the senator’ s request for temporary legal protection against a possible arrest. Voting 9-5-1, the SC rejected dela Rosa’ s plea for temporary

- [PNP-CIDG: No-show for Senate personnel summoned over shooting](#) (2026-05-20 15:25)

[Updated May 20, 2026, 6:22 p.m.] MANILA, Philippines — More than 10 Senate personnel who were subpoenaed over the shooting incident last week, have not appeared so far, according to the Philippine National Police – Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP – CIDG) on Wednesday. CIDG personnel reportedly served the subpoena to Senate staff on

- [P28.5 million in shabu seized in Bacolod City sting operation](#) (2026-05-20 15:19)

BACOLOD CITY—The Bacolod City Police Office City Drug Enforcement Unit (BCPO-CDEU) arrested a “high value individual,” seizing around 4.2 kilos of meth valued at P28.56 million during a buy-bust operation in Purok Fatima, Islamic Center in Barangay 31 here on Tuesday. Arrested was alias “Bongi,” 36, a resident of Purok Fatima, the Police Regional Office

- [Being from Mindanao pushed me to back impeachment — Lordan Suan](#) (2026-05-20 14:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Instead of being deterred from supporting Vice President Sara Duterte’ s impeachment due to his proximity to the Dutertes’ stronghold, Cagayan de Oro Rep. Lordan Suan said it is his being a Mindanaoan that spurred him to back accountability calls and join the prosecution team. Suan, during the first-ever press briefing of the prosecution panel

- [Suspended Senate security chief contests gunfire CCTV footage](#) (2026-05-20 14:35)

MANILA, Philippines – Suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Ma.O Aplasca on Wednesday said the CCTV footage of last week’ s shooting incident at the Senate was “spliced” to “support their narrative.” The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Justice (DOJ) and Philippine National Police (PNP) on Tuesday presented CCTV footage showing Aplasca firing shots

- [Palace releases video of dela Rosa, Padilla leaving Senate premises](#) (2026-05-20 14:05)

MANILA, Philippines — The Palace on Wednesday shared footage of Senators Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa and Robin Padilla leaving the Senate premises together before dawn last Thursday, May 14, hours after a shooting incident. Dela Rosa was seen wearing a dark-colored jacket and a cap in the video, while Padilla wore a light-colored long-sleeved shirt.

- [CIDG knows where Padilla’ s car went, stays mum on dela Rosa warrant](#) (2026-05-20 13:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) has information on where Sen. Robin Padilla’ s vehicle went after leaving the Senate shortly following the shooting incident there last week. According to the Philippine National Police (PNP) in an earlier Palace briefing, the vehicle — which was registered to Padilla — was carrying Sen.

- [3 Calabarzon areas face `danger’ heat index despite rain forecast](#) (2026-05-20 13:57)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon – Three areas in Cavite, Batangas, and Rizal are expected to experience dangerous heat levels on Wednesday amid isolated rain showers forecast across the country due to easterlies and localized thunderstorms, according to the state weather bureau. Based on monitoring by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), Sangley Point

- [Impeachment proceedings won't affect 2028 poll preparations – Comelec](#) (2026-05-20 13:44)

MANILA, Philippines — The ongoing impeachment proceedings for Vice President Sara Duterte will not affect the preparations of the Commission on Elections for the 2028 elections, Comelec chairperson George Erwin Garcia said on Wednesday. While Garcia acknowledged that an impeachment process will always be political, he said that the Comelec does not want to be

- [PAF plane crashes in Benguet; 2 injured](#) (2026-05-20 13:41)

BAGUIO CITY — Two Philippine Air Force (PAF) personnel were injured after their aircraft crashed into Mt. Sto Tomas in Sitio Cabuyao, Barangay Poblacion, Tuba, Benguet, on Wednesday morning. Police said the incident happened around 10:20 a.m. but was reported to local authorities at about 11:40 am. READ: Pilot, crew of PAF chopper on relief mission

- [Barangay kagawad slain, gunman nabbed in Zamboanga City](#) (2026-05-20 13:30)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — A village official was shot dead in the early hours of Wednesday, May 20, in Sitio Calanasan, Barangay Quinipot, Zamboanga City. Authorities identified the victim as Warlito Sanson Salvador, 57, a kagawad of Barangay Quinipot, Zamboanga City. The suspect was identified as Alvin Bartolome Francisco, 36, also a resident

- [Quimbo schools Leviste: You can't place two topics in one bill](#) (2026-05-20 13:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Throughout hearings in the House of Representatives, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo seemed to be a patient listener and mentor amid Batangas Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste's proposals and grievances about taxation. But on Monday, it appears that Quimbo's patience ran out, after Leviste insisted several times that the lowering of value-added tax (VAT) rates

- [Smoking increasingly tied to poverty in PH — data](#) (2026-05-20 13:02)

MANILA, Philippines — For decades, smoking in popular culture carried an image of sophistication, a habit associated with power, wealth or urban cool. In the Philippines, however, data increasingly point to a different reality: Smoking exposure is becoming more concentrated among poorer households. Data analyzed by University of the Philippines Diliman professor and Inquirer data

- [Study: Why Filipinos distrust Sara Duterte varies by income group](#) (2026-05-20 12:54)

MANILA, Philippines—As the Senate prepares for the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, new survey data suggest public distrust toward her is not driven by the same concerns across income groups. An analysis by Inquirer data scientist Dr. Rogelio Alicor Panao of Pulse Asia's Feb. 27-March 2, 2026, survey found that while corruption remains

- [Jeepney driver yields P300,000 in shabu in Pangasinan buy-bust](#) (2026-05-20 12:40)

SAN CARLOS CITY, Pangasinan – A jeepney driver residing in this city was arrested by police during a buy-bust operation that yielded P306,000,000 worth of suspected shabu on Monday. The police recovered three heat-sealed transparent plastic sachets containing 35 grams of shabu from the 35-year-old suspect known as “Alias Pusa.” Authorities considered the suspect a

- [Woman, grandchild drown crossing swollen river in Davao del Sur](#) (2026-05-20 12:19)

DIGOS CITY, Davao del Sur – The bodies of an elderly barangay health worker and her 5-year-old grandchild were retrieved by joint search and rescue personnel on Tuesday night after they were reported missing, believed swept by raging floodwater while crossing a river in Barangay San Agustin here on Monday. John Basil Sevilla, Digos City

- [CIDG recommends raps vs Aplasca, 2 others over Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-20 12:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) has recommended the filing of charges against suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca and two of his personnel over the shooting that created chaos inside the Senate last week. In a press briefing at Camp Crame on Wednesday, CIDG director Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II maintained

- [Pagasa tracks 3 possible LPAs, but storm risk remains low](#) (2026-05-20 12:03)

MANILA, Philippines — Three possible low-pressure areas (LPAs) may develop over the Pacific Ocean during the last week of May, although the chances of these intensifying into tropical cyclones remain low, the state weather bureau said. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), one of the three systems may enter the

- [Magnitude 4.8 quake jolts waters off Surigao del Norte](#) (2026-05-20 11:31)

MANILA, Philippines — A magnitude 4.8 quake struck off the coast of Pilar, Surigao del Norte on Wednesday morning, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). In its earthquake bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor occurred at 10:26 a.m. and was traced 23 kilometers northeast of Pilar. The quake was tectonic in origin

- [OVP confirms receipt of impeachment court summons on Sara Duterte](#) (2026-05-20 11:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Vice President (OVP) on Wednesday confirmed that it received the summons issued by the Senate impeachment court in connection with the impeachment complaints filed against Vice President Sara Duterte. According to the OVP, the summons was received at around 10:40 a.m. on May 20. “The Office of the

- [PCO, Official Gazette websites restored after temporary outage](#) (2026-05-20 10:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Websites of the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) and the Official Gazette have been restored hours after they became temporarily down. In a joint

statement on Wednesday, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and the PCO said the websites of PCO and Official Gazette were “fully restored” and again accessible to the

- [Sandiganbayan OKs Revilla request to skip case trial until July](#) (2026-05-20 10:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Sandiganbayan Third Division has approved the request of former Senator Bong Revilla to skip his trial on malversation case until July. “His waiver is approved, unless [his appearance is] required by the court,” third division’s clerk of court Dennis Pulma told Inquirer in a text message on Wednesday. Revilla’s lawyer Ready Anthony

- [Debt, peso slide and looming Super El Niño put PH food security at risk](#) (2026-05-20 10:28)

Food security in the Philippines is increasingly undermined by the convergence of three interacting systemic pressures: (1) rising national debt and fiscal rigidity, (2) peso depreciation driven by structural import dependence and governance failures, and (3) climate-induced agricultural losses under the looming Super El Niño. An analysis of the Philippine debt situation, the downward spiral

- [Marcos ramps up flood-control efforts ahead of rainy days](#) (2026-05-20 10:12)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday committed to ramp up flood-control projects ahead of the rainy season. During an inspection of the G. Araneta Drainage Improvement Project along E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue in Quezon City, Marcos said the government is implementing various projects nationwide aimed at reducing flooding during heavy rains. READ:

- [HEAT INDEX WATCH: Most parts of PH may still experience danger levels](#) (2026-05-20 08:49)

MANILA, Philippines — At least 40 areas across the country may continue to experience dangerous levels of heat index on Wednesday, reaching as high as 45°C, according to the state weather bureau. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) calls the heat index as the “feels like” or “apparent” temperature. This is a

- [Group condemns abuse of 3-year-old toddler that went viral in Taguig](#) (2026-05-20 08:44)

MANILA, Philippines – The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) condemned the physical abuse of a three-year-old child in Taguig City, calling it an unacceptable violation of children’s rights. In a statement Tuesday night, the CWC denounced the incident, which took place in Sitio Bagong Pag-asa, Barangay Western Bicutan, after a video showing the

- [Easterlies, thunderstorms to bring rains across PH on Wednesday – Pagasa](#) (2026-05-20 07:42)

MANILA, Philippines — Easterlies and localized thunderstorms will bring isolated rain showers across the country on Wednesday, the state weather bureau said. In its latest forecast, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said that the easterlies or warm and humid winds coming from the Pacific Ocean are affecting Southern Luzon and the

- [‘Final opportunity’ : Sara Duterte’ s absence won’ t delay trial](#) (2026-05-20 05:55)

MANILA, Philippines — What happens if Vice President Sara Duterte refuses to show up at her impeachment trial? Resolution No. 39, or the Rules of Procedure on Impeachment Trials, dated March 23, 2011, which governs impeachment proceedings in the Senate, says that an impeached official’ s absence at the Senate impeachment trial would not delay the

- [PNP probe indicates Senate ‘not attacked’](#) (2026-05-20 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — All the evidence gathered from the initial investigation of the Philippine National Police on the May 13 shooting incident inside the Senate building showed that no “attack” took place, contrary to the description used empathically by Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano. Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla said President Marcos was already informed of

- [‘Radioactive’ materials found in raided Misamis steel plant](#) (2026-05-20 05:45)

TAGOLOAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL, Philippines — While waiting to be documented by authorities on Monday, “Al,” a man in his 30s, told the Inquirer that he and other workers have not felt anything wrong with their bodies so far, in the years working at the plant operated here by Philippine Sanjia-Steel Corp., where experts have found

- [NBI receives ‘many leads’ on Dela Rosa’ s whereabouts](#) (2026-05-20 05:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation has received “many leads” on the whereabouts of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, who secretly left the Senate in the early morning of May 14 to thwart an attempt to arrest him based on a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). “We have gotten so

- [NBI may now check Mabanta’ s gadgets for other ‘extort’ ops](#) (2026-05-20 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation can now retrieve information such as text messages, call logs, videos, and photos from gadgets seized from Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta and his four associates in connection with an alleged extortion attempt on former Speaker Martin Romualdez. NBI Director Melvin Matibag said on

- [Digital card for seniors ‘official, legitimate’ gov’ t ID](#) (2026-05-20 05:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) has reminded its partners from both the public and private sectors to recognize and accept the digital version of the National Senior Citizens ID (NSCID), saying cardholders should be given the discounts, value-added tax (VAT) exemption, and other privileges they are entitled to under the

- [Estrada ‘baffled’ by ‘unjust’ plunder recommendation](#) (2026-05-20 04:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Jinggoy Estrada on Tuesday called the recommendation of the Department of Justice (DOJ) for the Office of the Ombudsman to file a plunder case against him “baffling and unjust.” The recommendation to file plunder, graft and bribery charges against Estrada and former Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) officials is

- [Bus firm suspended after accident hurts conductor](#) (2026-05-20 04:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said on Tuesday that it has suspended for 30 days the operations of a bus firm after an accident on Edsa injured the bus conductor. The suspension order will cover 18 buses of the Baclaran Metrolink Bus Company. On May 17, the bus traveling

- [Court clears Dumaguete activist, 26 others in terror funding rap](#) (2026-05-20 04:40)

DUMAGUETE CITY, NEGROS ORIENTAL, Philippines — A court in Cebu City has dismissed terrorism financing charges against Dumaguete-based environmental and women’s rights advocate Nancy Estoloso and several other activists in Central Visayas, ruling that the prosecution failed to comply with legal requirements and that the alleged acts did not constitute a crime at the time

- [Parents of slain ex-UP Cebu student leader decline to claim body](#) (2026-05-20 04:30)

BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS ORIENTAL, Philippines — The parents of Vince Francis Dingding, 30, a former University of the Philippines Cebu student leader who later joined the New People’s Army (NPA), said they would no longer claim his remains after he was killed in an encounter with government troops in Cauayan, Negros Occidental on May 16.

- [3 arrested in Taguig over P1.3 million worth of shabu](#) (2026-05-20 03:25)

MANILA, Philippines — Three “high-value individuals” were arrested after around P1.3 million worth of shabu was seized in a buy-bust operation in Taguig City on Tuesday, the Southern Police District (SPD) said. According to the SPD, the three suspects—all identified only with their aliases: “Nash,” 25; “Parouk,” 32; and “Dustin,” 18—were arrested on Tuesday evening

- [Woman who physically assaulted a child arrested in Taguig](#) (2026-05-20 03:24)

MANILA, Philippines — A woman in Taguig City was charged with child abuse after she was recorded assaulting a three-year old boy, said the Southern Police District (SPD) on Wednesday. According to the SPD, the woman, identified only by her alias Carla, 28, was arrested for the violation of Republic Act 7610 or the “Special

- [OSG: Petition forcing Marcos to undergo drug test has no legal basis](#) (2026-05-19 23:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) has urged the Supreme Court to dismiss outright the petition compelling President Marcos to undergo a drug test and medical examination and disclose the results to the public. In a 23-page comment dated May 15, the OSG told the high tribunal that the petition for

- [2 DPWH execs in Cordillera sacked over cyclist death in Benguet accident](#) (2026-05-19 21:59)

BAGUIO CITY — Two officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in the Cordillera region were relieved from their posts by DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon following the death of a 13-year-old cyclist in La Trinidad, Benguet. Relieved were Benguet First District Engineering Office District Engineer Isagani Cayme and Maintenance Section Engineer III

- [No jackpot winners for May 19 PCSO lotto draws](#) (2026-05-19 21:52)

MANILA, Philippines — No player won the jackpots in the PCSO lotto draws on Tuesday, May 19. According to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the Ultra Lotto 6/58 winning combination was 06-38-09-26-48-14 for a ₱75 million jackpot. The SuperLotto 6/49 winning combination was 49-35-44-04-14-05 for a ₱25 million jackpot. READ: No winner for April 29

- [What if Senate hampers evidence? Defensor says people will snap at that](#) (2026-05-19 21:47)

MANILA, Philippines — With all the developments in Vice President Sara Duterte's looming impeachment trial, one of the constant messages from the prosecution team is that they are ready to present pieces of evidence that are strong enough to merit a guilty verdict. But what happens if the Senate, sitting as an impeachment court, would

- [DOTr, Land Bank partner to pay P3.6-B obligations to LRM](#) (2026-05-19 21:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) have partnered with the state-run bank Land Bank of the Philippines to settle unpaid obligations with Light Rail Manila Corporation (LRMC), the private operator of the LRT-1. In a press release on Tuesday, the DOTr said that under the credit

- [Valenzuela factory workers win SC case vs employers](#) (2026-05-19 20:38)

MANILA, Philippines — An employer that reduces the workload and adopts a flexible work scheme without employee consent is tantamount to dismissing them. The Supreme Court en banc, in a Sept 30, 2025 decision made public only on Tuesday, found Valenzuela City-based Fiber Textile Manufacturing Corp. (FMC) liable for constructive dismissal of seven of its

- [LTFRB suspends bus firm for 30 days over Edsa busway crash](#) (2026-05-19 20:36)

MANILA, Philippines — The operation of a passenger bus firm has been suspended for 30 days by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) after one of its buses was involved in a road crash along Edsa busway on Tuesday. In a statement on Tuesday, LTFRB said

that the suspension of Baclaran Metrolink Bus

- [LTFRB announces end of LBSP giving fare discounts effective May 22](#) (2026-05-19 20:03)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday announced that the Land-Based Service Contracting Program (LBSP), which grants fare discounts to commuters, will end on May 22. According to the LTFRB, the LBSP, which offers a 20 percent fare discount to regular passengers and a total 40 percent discount to students,

- [Padilla: Suspended Senate sergeant-at-arms saved lives](#) (2026-05-19 19:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Recently suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Ma.O Aplasca’ s actions during a shooting incident at the Senate “saved lives,” Sen. Robin Padilla remarked on Tuesday. In a social media post, Padilla asserted that Aplasca’ s warning shot to the National Bureau of Investigation agents and vice versa “calmed the situation” at the Senate. “The only truth

- [Luistro: Duterte places herself at disadvantage if she, camp, skip trial](#) (2026-05-19 19:48)

MANILA, Philippines — While the impeachment trial would push through even if Vice President Sara Duterte and her legal team skip proceedings in the Senate, a lawmaker believes this will put her at a disadvantage since the senator-judges will rely on the prosecution’ s evidence. Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro, the lead public prosecutor for Duterte’ s trial, said

- [Arenas, Benitez take oath as new House deputy speakers](#) (2026-05-19 19:39)

MANILA, Philippines — Bacolod City Rep. Alfredo Benitez and Pangasinan Rep. Maria Rachel Arenas on Tuesday took oath as new deputy speakers of the House of Representatives. House Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III of Isabela administered the oath of Arenas and Benitez during the first regular session. READ: House elects Arenas, Frasco, Benitez as new

- [DILG, DOJ and PNP present timeline of Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-19 19:24)

MANILA, Philippines — Six days after the shooting in the Senate, Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla, Justice Secretary Frederick Vida and Philippine National Police chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Tuesday presented a detailed timeline of what transpired in the legislative chamber. They described the shooting as a “gun-related incident.” Here is

- [2 DPWH officials sacked over Benguet road accident](#) (2026-05-19 19:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Two officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Cordillera Administrative Region have been relieved from duty over a road accident in Benguet. In a memorandum made public on Tuesday, DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon ordered the removal of Isagani Cayme as the district engineer and Marjory Banao as the

- [Dy-backed Kalinga bill gains momentum as crisis-response vs fuel shocks](#) (2026-05-19 19:06)

MANILA, Philippines — A proposed measure seeking to shield Filipino families, workers, and businesses from the devastating effects of global fuel shocks gained momentum in the House of Representatives on Tuesday after House Ways and Means Chair Rep. Miro Quimbo formally sponsored the Kalinga bill on the plenary floor. During his sponsorship speech, Quimbo described

- [House prosecution team reveals assignments for Duterte impeachment trial](#) (2026-05-19 18:56)

MANILA, Philippines — As the impeachment of Vice President Sara Z. Duterte moves closer to trial, the 11-member House prosecution panel on Tuesday laid out each prosecutor’s specific assignments, signaling the panel’s readiness for the long-awaited Senate proceedings. During a press conference, lead prosecutor and House Committee on Justice Chairperson Gerville “Jinky Bitrics” Luistro of

- [Chua: Duterte impeachment trial to proceed even if she refuses to appear](#) (2026-05-19 18:31)

MANILA, Philippines — House impeachment prosecutor, Rep. Joel Chua of Manila on Tuesday said the impeachment trial against Vice President Sara Z. Duterte will proceed even if she personally chooses not to appear before the Senate impeachment court. Speaking in an interview on ANC’s “Headstart”, Chua explained that under impeachment rules, the Senate’s writ of

- [Culprits in Senate shooting already ‘identified,’ says DOJ](#) (2026-05-19 18:24)

MANILA, Philippines — Justice Acting Sec. Frederick Vida on Tuesday said the culprits behind last week’s shooting inside the Senate building have already been “identified.” Vida made the pronouncement during a Palace press conference, but he did not specify who these persons are. READ: Ombudsman seeks list of media personnel present during Senate shooting “We’ve

- [Archbishop of Cebu urges Filipinos to rally behind due process](#) (2026-05-19 18:17)

MANILA, Philippines — Archbishop of Cebu Alberto Uy has urged Filipinos to unite around accountability, due process and the common good as the Senate prepares to handle the impeachment case against Vice President Sara Z. Duterte. In a pastoral statement titled “A Pastoral Appeal to the Filipino People in a Time of National Tension,” Uy

- [Evidence shows no attack against Senate – DILG](#) (2026-05-19 18:16)

MANILA, Philippines — “All evidence points that there was no attack on the Senate.” This was what Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla said on Tuesday, six days after a “gun-related incident” shook the Senate. During a Palace briefing, Remulla maintained that no agents from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) set foot at

- [PNP: Dela Rosa, Padilla seen leaving Senate hours after shooting](#) (2026-05-19 18:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Sens. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa and Robin Padilla left the Senate premises together before dawn on May 14, just a few hours after the shooting incident inside the Senate, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said on Tuesday. “On May 14 at about 2:30 a.m., a white Fortuner

- [Senate should ‘exhibit political neutrality’ in impeach trial – de Lima](#) (2026-05-19 18:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate must act with impartiality in Vice President Sara Duterte’s impeachment trial and hear the case free of bias and regardless of political leanings, Mamamayang Liberal Rep. Leila de Lima said on Tuesday. In a media briefing, de Lima said that the Senate’s impeachment guidelines outline that senator-judges should be politically

- [Joel Chua: House prosecutors ready to present evidence to Senate](#) (2026-05-19 17:52)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Rep. Joel Chua said the House prosecution panel is ready to perform its constitutional mandate and present evidence before the Senate impeachment court in the trial of Vice President Sara Z. Duterte. Chua, one of the 11 members of the House prosecution panel, issued the statement after the Senate convened as

- [Mark Villar is new Senate finance committee head](#) (2026-05-19 17:32)

MANILA, Philippines – Sen. Mark Villar has been elected chairman of the Senate committee on finance, replacing Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian. This new assignment was made in the Senate plenary upon a motion of acting Majority Leader Joel Villanueva before the session was adjourned on Tuesday. Sought for comment on his replacement, Gatchalian expressed confidence that Villar could

- [Luistro: Continue impeachment trial even if Sara Duterte resigns](#) (2026-05-19 17:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate should continue holding the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte even if she resigns from office as there are two possible penalties if she is convicted, Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro said on Tuesday. In a press briefing at the Batasang Pambansa complex, Luistro said that an impeachment trial carries

- [NBI nabs 14 foreigners over illegal online operations](#) (2026-05-19 16:57)

MANILA, Philippines – The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has arrested several foreigners in three separate operations for allegedly engaging in illegal online activities. In a press conference on Wednesday, NBI Director Melvin Matibag said that agents arrested five Koreans, six Vietnamese two Chinese and one Malé national. According to the NBI-Special Action Unit’s agent-on-case,

- [‘Libreng Sakay,’ tourism perks await Agusan Palarong Pambansa athletes](#) (2026-05-19 16:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Delegates of the 66th Palarong Pambansa are set to benefit from free transportation and tourism activities as the provincial government of Agusan del Sur rolls out its

“Libreng Sakay” program. Education Secretary Sonny Angara acknowledged Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Cane Jr. and provincial officials for providing transport and tour arrangements for thousands

- [NBI: Tony Yang-linked Misamis Oriental plant made ‘substandard’ steel](#) (2026-05-19 16:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A manufacturing plant in Misamis Oriental supposedly linked to Tony Yang, brother of former presidential economic adviser Michael Yang, was accused of producing “substandard” steel, according to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). The steel manufacturing plant in Tagoloan town, belonging to the Philippine Sanjia Steel Corporation, was raided by authorities last

- [Heavy rains, lightning expected over parts of Zambales](#) (2026-05-19 16:40)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Moderate to heavy rain showers accompanied by lightning and strong winds are expected to affect several towns in Zambales within the next two hours, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Tuesday afternoon. In an advisory issued at 2:20 p.m., Pagasa said the affected areas include Masinloc, Palauig,

- [‘Prosecution’ s preparations for Duterte impeachment trial in full swing’](#) (2026-05-19 16:39)

MANILA, Philippines – The preparations of the House of Representatives’ prosecution panel for Vice President Sara Duterte’ s impeachment trial is in full swing as the team seeks to secure her conviction in the high-stakes proceedings — which may end in Duterte being barred from holding public office. In a press briefing on Tuesday, Batangas Rep. Gerville

- [2 nabbed, P1.16M ‘shabu’ seized in Puerto Princesa buy-bust](#) (2026-05-19 16:34)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY — Two suspected drug peddlers were arrested and approximately P1.16 million worth of suspected “shabu” (crystal meth) was seized in a buy-bust operation in Barangay Sicsican here on Monday evening. Joint operatives from the Puerto Princesa City Police Station 2–Special Drug Enforcement Team, Philippine National Police Drug Enforcement Group, other units of

- [NTF-Elcac mourns death of ex-student leader slain in Negros clash](#) (2026-05-19 16:25)

TAGBILARAN CITY — The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-Elcac) on Tuesday expressed grief over the death of alleged New People’ s Army (NPA) member Vince Francis Dingding, saying the incident underscores the emotional toll of armed conflict on Filipino families. Dingding, a former student leader from Cebu City, was among five

- [AFP flags national security risks in Misamis steel plant raid](#) (2026-05-19 16:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Tuesday raised national security concerns over alleged links between a raided steel plant in Misamis Oriental and foreign influence operations, following the arrest of dozens of Chinese nationals and the discovery of hazardous materials inside the facility. AFP spokesperson Col. Francel Margareth Padilla said the military

- [Iloilo City launches ‘Oplan Kontra Baha’ to reduce flooding risks](#) (2026-05-19 15:57)

ILOILO CITY — The Iloilo City government, led by Mayor Raisa Treñas, launched on Tuesday the “Creek Cleaning Oplan Kontra Baha” initiative in Barangay Ticud, La Paz, to strengthen flood control and disaster preparedness in the city. The city government partnered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Region 6 and the Department of

- [Marcos swears in Kim Robert de Leon as new DBM chief](#) (2026-05-19 15:50)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday administered the oath of office to new Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Acting Secretary Kim Robert de Leon at Malacañang Palace. At 32, de Leon is now the youngest member of the Marcos Cabinet. READ: UP assistant professor Kim Robert de Leon named new DBM

- [Over 10,000 delegates now in Agusan del Sur for Palarong Pambansa](#) (2026-05-19 15:39)

ILOILO CITY — More than 10,000 delegates from across the country, including thousands from the Visayas, have arrived in Agusan del Sur for the 2026 Palarong Pambansa as health authorities continue monitoring dozens of medical cases amid dangerous heat conditions. A situation report released Tuesday by the Department of Education’s Health, Safety, and Welfare Committee

- [Valenzuela’s 9 pumping stations to be under LGU’s care by June 2026 – Dizon](#) (2026-05-19 15:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The operation and maintenance of nine pumping stations in Valenzuela City will be transferred from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to the local government unit (LGU) of Valenzuela City by June this year. This is just in time for the start of the rainy season, Secretary Vince Dizon said

- [Jinggoy Estrada says DOJ plunder raps ‘baffling and unjust’](#) (2026-05-19 15:32)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Jinggoy Estrada on Tuesday called the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) recommendations of a plunder case against him “baffling and unjust.” On Monday, the DOJ recommended the filing of plunder, graft, and bribery charges against Estrada due to his alleged involvement in anomalous flood control projects. “This is an unfortunate development. I

- [Ombudsman urged to probe P4.4-B flood control projects in Davao](#) (2026-05-19 15:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman on Tuesday was urged to investigate allegedly anomalous flood control projects in Davao City’ s first district worth over P4 billion, a move which the district representative said was done to “demonize” the Duterte family. Act Teachers party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio went to the anti-graft body’ s office to

- [Ex-village official, 2 LGU workers nabbed in Surigao drug den bust](#) (2026-05-19 15:16)

TANDAG CITY, Surigao del Sur — A former barangay kagawad (village councilor) and two local government unit (LGU) job order workers were arrested after authorities dismantled a suspected drug den in Purok Lutos, Barangay Quezon, Mainit, Surigao del Norte on Monday afternoon. The anti-illegal drug operation was jointly conducted by operatives of the Philippine Drug

- [Digital senior citizens ID must be honored, establishments told](#) (2026-05-19 15:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Senior citizens presenting their digital National Senior Citizens IDs (NSCIDs) should still receive discounts, Value-Added Tax (VAT) exemptions, and other privileges, according to the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC). The agency on Monday called on business establishments and offices to recognize and accept digital NSCID in all transactions, urging them to

- [PNRI: ‘Radioactive material’ found at Misamis steel plant tied to Tony Yang](#) (2026-05-19 15:04)

MANILA, Philippines — “Radioactive material” was found at some sites at the steel manufacturing plant raided by the authorities over the weekend in Misamis Oriental, the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) said on Tuesday. “The raw materials [of the steel plant] have matched the presence of naturally-occurring radioactive thorium,” PNRI radiation safeguards and security specialist

- [Village watchman, vendor killed in Cavite shooting](#) (2026-05-19 15:03)

LUCENA CITY — A barangay tanod (village watchman) and a vendor were killed in a shooting incident in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, on Monday, police said. In a report released Tuesday, the Police Regional Office 4A identified the primary victim only as “Rody,” 51, a barangay tanod from Barangay Sta. Cruz 1. Police said the victim

- [Oducado: Resignation due to health issues, not over impeach vote](#) (2026-05-19 15:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Former 1Tahanan party-list Rep. Nathaniel Oducado has clarified that health issues, and not his stand on the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte, prompted his sudden resignation from the House of Representatives. In an ambush interview on Tuesday, Oducado relayed that his family has had a history of lung illness, and that he

- [High heat index for 5 Batangas, Cavite areas despite rainy outlook](#) (2026-05-19 14:53)

LUCENA CITY — While rains are expected to affect parts of the country on Tuesday due to the combined effects of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), easterlies, and localized thunderstorms, five areas in Cavite and Batangas are still projected to experience dangerous heat index levels. In its Monday afternoon forecast, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and

- [House panel approves P3,000 Teachers' Day incentive](#) (2026-05-19 14:41)

MANILA, Philippines — A proposal to provide a P3,000 incentive for teachers to be given when the country celebrates the World Teachers' Day has been approved by the House committee on basic education and culture. In a statement on Tuesday, Eastern Samar Rep. Christopher Sheen Gonzales confirmed that the committee approved the proposal during its Monday

- [OSAA personnel appear before CIDG for Senate shooting probe](#) (2026-05-19 14:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Several Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA) personnel appeared before the Philippine National Police – Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) on Tuesday morning, in connection with the probe into the Senate shooting incident last week. This was confirmed by PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño in a message to reporters, citing

- [Court allows NBI to access Franco Mabanta, others' gadgets](#) (2026-05-19 14:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The Pasig City Regional Trial Court (RTC) has approved the National Bureau of Investigation's (NBI) cyber warrant application to examine the seized gadgets of Peanut Gallery Media Network (PGMN) founder Franco Mabanta and other individuals recently arrested for allegedly extorting money from former House Speaker Martin Romualdez, according to NBI Director Melvin

- [Almost 24,000 aspiring principals join DepEd assessment](#) (2026-05-19 13:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Nearly 24,000 aspiring school principals nationwide joined a simultaneous assessment conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), to ensure that the country will be able to maintain a pipeline of future school leaders under its continuing education reform initiative. In a statement on Tuesday, Education Secretary Sonny Angara said that the National Assessment

- [Matibag on Cayetano's suspension remark: He must be suspended for Aplasca's actions](#) (2026-05-19 13:46)

MANILA, Philippines — “If command responsibility will be the basis, the first person who should be suspended is Senator Alan Peter Cayetano.” This was how National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag on Tuesday responded to Senate President Cayetano's recent call for the Office of the Ombudsman to suspend Matibag. Cayetano was reacting to

- [Sandigan orders DPWH exec to bring sealed docs showing infra proponents](#) (2026-05-19 13:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The Sandiganbayan on Tuesday ordered a witness from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to produce documents containing the proponents of infrastructure projects. During the Third Division’s hearing on Tuesday, Associate Justice Ronald Moreno issued the subpoena to compel engineer Gerald Longoria of the DPWH programming division to bring the

- [NBI sends findings on Senate shooting to DOJ-Ombudsman probe team](#) (2026-05-19 13:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has submitted its findings on the shooting at the Senate last week to the panel investigating the incident. “The Department of Justice and the Office of the Ombudsman already created a panel to investigate,” NBI director Melvin Matibag told reporters in Camp Crame on Tuesday. “Today,

- [Over 1,100 PNP personnel penalized in internal cleansing drive](#) (2026-05-19 13:20)

MANILA, Philippines — A total of 1,191 police officers have been penalized administratively from January 1 to May 6, 2026 as part of the national police force’s internal cleansing and disciplinary efforts, data from the Philippine National Police (PNP) showed. The Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management (DIDM) said that among the penalties imposed were

- [7 Pangasinan barangays get tractors under tobacco excise tax fund](#) (2026-05-19 13:15)

VILLASIS, Pangasinan — The local government unit (LGU) here has turned over seven tractors worth about P1.356 million each to seven barangays in this agricultural town, funded through tobacco excise tax revenues. The beneficiary barangays are Lipay, San Blas, Unzad, Labit, Bacag, Tombod, and Amamperez. This marks the third consecutive year that the municipal government

- [Prosecutors raring to present evidence in Sara Duterte impeachment trial](#) (2026-05-19 12:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Members of the House of Representatives’ prosecution team are raring to present evidence in Vice President Sara Duterte’s impeachment trial, saying they will carry out their mandate seriously and with “respect for the process.” In a statement on Tuesday, Manila Rep. Joel Chua said that the prosecution team acknowledges the Senate’s move on Monday

- [NBI has many leads on dela Rosa’s whereabouts, says Matibag](#) (2026-05-19 12:19)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has several information on the whereabouts of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa following his exit from the Senate building, NBI Director Melvin Matibag revealed on Tuesday. But Matibag refused to provide details on dela Rosa’s location, citing the bureau’s investigation process. “There have been so many

- [Cebu court dismisses terrorism financing case vs NGO officials](#) (2026-05-19 12:19)

TACLOBAN CITY — A Cebu City court has dismissed the terrorism financing case filed against officials and members of the Community Empowerment Resource Network, Inc. (CERNET), ruling that the alleged acts were not punishable under the law at the time they were supposedly committed. In a 13-page decision promulgated on May 15, Judge Van Russel

- [Senate shooting suspect says he never held gun, cites video footage](#) (2026-05-19 12:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) volunteer driver tagged in last week's Senate shooting on Tuesday denied firing or even holding a gun on the day of the incident as captured in a video footage and wonders why he tested positive for gunpowder residue after a paraffin test. He said he never

- [Isabela textile hub launched; DOST eyes P9M annual income](#) (2026-05-19 11:58)

BENITO SOLIVEN, Isabela — Science and technology officials and local executives formally inaugurated the Natural Textile Fiber Innovation Hub in a village in this town on Monday, a facility expected to generate up to P9 million in annual income while creating new livelihood opportunities. The project promotes sustainable banana fiber production in the province by

- [Oriental Mindoro gov gives IPPs until May 31 to resolve power issues](#) (2026-05-19 11:29)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Gov. Humerlito “Bonz” Dolor has given independent power producers (IPPs) until May 31 to resolve operational issues and begin full operations, warning that their agreements could be terminated if they fail to comply. The ultimatum comes as Oriental Mindoro faces a worsening power crisis during the peak of the dry

- [Matibag: NBI driver may have gotten gunpowder in Senate premises](#) (2026-05-19 11:20)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) volunteer driver, who was recently named a “suspect” in the recent shooting incident in the Senate shooting, could only have tested positive in paraffin test since he may have gotten the gunpowder in the Senate premises, NBI Director Melvin Matibag said on Tuesday. Matibag said this

- [Visayas thunderstorms to persist; Iloilo, Negros heat index at 36°C](#) (2026-05-19 11:10)

ILOILO CITY — Warm and humid conditions will continue across most parts of the Visayas, with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms expected due to localized thunderstorms and easterlies, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) Visayas on Monday afternoon. In its forecast valid from 5 p.m. Monday to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Pagasa

- [Rising prices, impeachment politics risk fueling PH unrest](#) (2026-05-19 11:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Cost-of-living pressures, political divisions linked to the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte, and concerns over a flood-control corruption scandal risk intensifying social unrest in the Philippines, according to BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions. In a report, BMI said the cost-of-living crisis triggered by the conflict in the Middle East has

- [Bacolod taxi groups plan protest caravan over fuel subsidy](#) (2026-05-19 10:58)

BACOLOD CITY — Local taxi drivers and operators are planning a caravan rally to protest the “unfair” distribution of government fuel subsidies, alleging that unregistered “colorum” tricycles and transport network vehicle service (TNVS) units are being prioritized over legitimate public utility vehicles (PUVs). The Samahan ng mga Taxi Drivers sa Bacolod (SMTDB) and the Taxi

- [P1.49-million illegal drugs, gun seized in Iloilo City](#) (2026-05-19 10:43)

ILOILO CITY — A 46-year-old man was arrested in a buy-bust operation in Barangay Bakhaw, Mandurriao here on Monday evening, yielding about P1.49 million worth of suspected “shabu” (crystal meth) and a firearm. The operation, carried out at 6:20 p.m., was led by the City Drug Enforcement Unit (CDEU) under Police Capt. Roque C. Gimeno

- [9 arrested in MIMAROPA anti-crime operations](#) (2026-05-19 10:35)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Police in the MIMAROPA region arrested nine individuals, mostly wanted by police, in a series of coordinated anti-crime operations conducted over more than 24 hours, Acting Regional Director Police Brig. Gen. Christopher Ramos Dela Cruz said Monday. In Palawan, authorities arrested the No. 3 most wanted person in Sofronio Española,

- [Ombudsman seeks list of media personnel present during Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-19 10:34)

MANILA, Philippines – The Office of the Ombudsman’s Field Investigation Bureau (FIB) has asked the Senate for a list of media personnel inside the Senate premises during last Wednesday’s shooting incident. On Tuesday, FIB Director Maria Melinda Mananghaya-Henson wrote the request addressed to the Senate Public Relations and Information Bureau Director Michael Caber, amid the

- [DPWH exec: Private citizens can legally act as project proponents](#) (2026-05-19 10:21)

MANILA, Philippines – Being a project proponent is not necessarily wrong. In fact, even private citizens can become one, a Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) official told the Sandiganbayan on Tuesday. This came up during the questioning of Associate Justice Ronald Moreno to engineer Gerald Longoria of the DPWH programming division, during the

- [6-year-old boy drowns in Samar; 2 minors rescued in Leyte](#) (2026-05-19 10:18)

TACLOBAN CITY — A six-year-old boy died while two other minors were rescued in separate drowning incidents reported in Samar and Leyte on Monday. In Jiabong, Samar, a six-year-old boy identified only as “Kiel” was declared dead on arrival after drowning in a swimming pool in Barangay Parina at 11:45 a.m. READ: Missing 7-year-old boy

- [NBP’s lease could generate steady revenue for BuCor modernization](#) (2026-05-19 09:52)

MANILA, Philippines – Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) Director General Gregorio Pio Catapang said the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) site will be transformed into a mixed-use property that could generate steady revenue to support the Bureau’s ongoing development and modernization plan. Catapang made this remark as BuCor hosted a market-sounding summit at The Somerset in Alabang, Muntinlupa

- [‘Pamatron’ fiesta tourism program launched in Samar town](#) (2026-05-19 09:50)

TACLOBAN CITY— The provincial government of Samar officially launched “Pamatron” , a localized fiesta-stay tourism program designed to immerse visitors in the province’s cultural traditions, with the kickoff held in Matuguinao on Monday, ahead of the town’s fiesta celebration on Tuesday. The program, derived from the phrase “patrons of culture,” aims to transform tourists from passive

- [3 Pangasinan fishermen nabbed for illegal compressor fishing](#) (2026-05-19 09:15)

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan — Three fishermen were arrested before dawn on Sunday after they were allegedly caught using a compressor as a breathing apparatus while fishing in the coastal waters of Sual town. In a report on Monday, the police identified the suspects as single men aged 41, 38, and 47, all residents of Alaminos City.

- [DepEd prepares for class opening in Bicol amid Mayon Volcano unrest](#) (2026-05-19 09:08)

LEGAZPI CITY — The Department of Education (DepEd) in Bicol is preparing for the opening of classes for School Year 2026–2027 despite the ongoing effusive eruption of Mayon Volcano in Albay. In a private message to the Inquirer on Monday (May 18), DepEd regional director Gilbert Sadsad said Brigada Eskwela would be held from June

- [La Union police caution public over risky highway acts in San Juan](#) (2026-05-19 08:40)

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union — The La Union Provincial Police Office (LUPPO) on Monday (May 18) urged tourists and residents to refrain from engaging in dangerous or disruptive activities along busy national highways. The appeal was issued on Facebook by La Union police director Colonel Redentor Ulsano after a video showing a group of

- [HEAT INDEX WATCH: Danger levels to hit Metro Manila, other areas](#) (2026-05-19 08:25)

MANILA, Philippines — Metro Manila and several areas across the country are expected to experience danger-level heat index on Tuesday, May 19, the state weather bureau said. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the heat index, or “apparent temperature,” refers to how hot it feels to the human body when

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of May 19, 2026](#) (2026-05-19 08:01)

MANILA, Philippines — Oil companies have implemented another round of fuel price hikes Tuesday, May 19, marking the latest increase driven by tensions in the Middle East. Gasoline

prices will increase by P1.21 per liter, while diesel prices will climb by P2.82 per liter. Meanwhile, kerosene prices will decrease by P2.21 per liter. READ: Mixed

- [ITCZ, easterlies to bring rains across PH Tuesday – Pagasa](#) (2026-05-19 07:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), easterlies, and localized thunderstorms will bring rains across the country on Tuesday, according to the state weather bureau. In its latest forecast, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the ITCZ, a weather system formed by the convergence of winds from the northern and

- [Death of ex-student leader in NegOcc clash case of terror grooming](#) (2026-05-19 06:09)

MANILA, Philippines – The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-Elcac) on Monday called the death of former student leader, Vince Francis Dingding, one of the five reported New People’s Army (NPA) members killed in the May 16 clash in Cauayan, Negros Occidental, a case of terror grooming. “His death is another

- [VP impeachment trial on as Senate convenes court](#) (2026-05-19 05:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate on Monday formally convened as an impeachment court for the trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, with 23 senators donning maroon robes and taking their oath as judges. Notably absent from the proceedings was Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, who managed to sneak out of the Senate premises early Thursday

- [DOJ recommends plunder raps vs Estrada – Ombudsman](#) (2026-05-19 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman on Monday said the Department of Justice (DOJ) had recommended the filing of cases, including plunder, graft, and bribery, against Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and other former Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) officials in connection with flood control project anomalies. Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said the

- [DOE: El Niño may lead to more power alerts](#) (2026-05-19 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — There may be more rotational brownouts this year as a looming strong El Niño threatens to further strain the country’s power supply, prompting energy officials to brace for additional yellow and red alerts. In a media briefing on Monday, the Department of Energy (DOE) said that power alerts could persist in the

- [Cayetano stays as Senate president, for now](#) (2026-05-19 05:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate resumed its session with Alan Peter Cayetano still presiding as Senate President, but several sources had confirmed there were talks hours before Monday’s plenary session on his possible replacement. Among the names cited by the sources were Senators Francis “Chiz” Escudero, Juan Miguel “Migz” Zubiri and Vicente “Tito” Sotto III,

- [DILG: Delay in Dela Rosa arrest hinged on local court order](#) (2026-05-19 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Monday said it could not immediately enforce the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa because of President Marcos’ order to await a local court order on that matter. In a statement on Monday,

- [Marcos appoints UP prof as new budget secretary](#) (2026-05-19 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — President Marcos has appointed University of the Philippines (UP) professor and technocrat Kim Robert de Leon as secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). At 32, De Leon becomes the youngest member of the Cabinet and takes charge of one of the government’s most powerful fiscal agencies. Palace press officer

- [Ombudsman serves suspension order on Senate official](#) (2026-05-19 04:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman on Monday served on acting Senate Sergeant at Arms (SAA) Mao Aplasca a six-month preventive suspension order after he admitted to firing the first warning shot that led to an exchange of gunfire with National Bureau of Investigation personnel in the Senate last week. “Ombudsman personnel were

- [Gov’t loses P23B in revenues over illegal vapes](#) (2026-05-19 04:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Some 86 percent of vapes sold in the Philippines in 2025 were illicit, marking the highest rate among Southeast Asian countries where vaping products remain legal, according to a regional study. In a report released on Monday, the EU-Asean Business Council and market intelligence firm Euromonitor International estimated that illicit vape sales

- [Ex-student leader among 5 ‘NPA rebels’ killed in Negros](#) (2026-05-19 04:40)

BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, Philippines — A former student leader in Cebu City, who was tagged by the military as a New People’s Army (NPA) member, was among five people killed in an encounter with government troops in Cauayan, Negros Occidental, on Saturday, government officials said on Monday. The Philippine Army identified the fatality as

- [New Subic BOC chief vows to dispose of 118 overstaying containers](#) (2026-05-19 04:35)

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT, ZAMBALES, Philippines — Newly appointed Bureau of Customs (BOC) Port of Subic District Collector Geniefelle Lagmay has vowed to expedite the clearing of 118 overstaying refrigerated containers that have become a major health and operational concern inside the freeport. Lagmay, who officially assumed the post from outgoing District Collector Arnold Saulog on

- [‘Resign order’ vs BARMM education minister opposed](#) (2026-05-19 04:30)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — Thousands of supporters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) marched and staged a protest rally on Monday in front of the

Bangsamoro government center to oppose Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua's letter asking Education Minister Mohagher Iqbal to resign. The rally participants also called for the full implementation of the

Source: The Manila Times

- [Cable thief caught in the act through live MMDA Cameras](#) (2026-05-26 02:56)

MANILA, Philippines — A man accused of stealing electrical cables inside the Ayala Tunnel along EDSA in Makati City was arrested minutes after Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) personnel spotted the incident through live CCTV monitoring. The MMDA said Tuesday that CCTV operators monitoring the tunnel saw the suspect pulling hanging cables and cutting them into pieces at around 10:35 p.m. on Friday. The agency's Metrobase unit immediately alerted the Southern Police District-Makati Police Station, triggering a rapid response operation inside the tunnel area. Police arrested the suspect at around 10:48 p.m. while he was attempting to leave the Ayala Tunnel carrying a backpack, according to the MMDA. A video released by the agency showed the suspect allegedly dragging the cables inside the tunnel before authorities intercepted him. The suspect is now under the custody of Makati police and was subjected to inquest proceedings before the Office of the City Prosecutor in Makati. The incident also underscored the use of the MMDA's live tunnel surveillance system not only for traffic management but also for detecting crimes and coordinating immediate police response along major Metro Manila roads. The MMDA urged the public to report suspicious activities and road-related incidents through its 136 hotline.

- [DOJ subpoenas key govt institutions in expanded probe of ICC warrant on dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-26 02:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued a series of subpoenas to key government institutions as part of its expanding investigation tied to the enforcement of the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against Sen. Ronald dela Rosa and alleged obstruction of justice surrounding his reported movements. Justice Secretary Frederick Vida said in a media briefing on Tuesday that the special panel of prosecutors has ordered the production of documents from the Senate, the Commission on Audit (COA), and the Philippine National Police–Firearms and Explosives Office (PNP-FEO), as part of efforts to establish a complete factual record relevant to the case. At the center of the subpoenas is the Office of the Senate Secretary, which was directed to submit internal records, including security entry and exit logs, as well as documents from the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms covering personnel deployment and security procedures. The DOJ also requested a complete inventory of firearms owned by the Senate, along with issuance records identifying officials or employees authorized to possess or access specific weapons. Authorities said the request included verification of a firearm allegedly seen in video footage, described as a “Scorpion” type weapon. Vida said the security logs were essential in reconstructing movements within the Senate premises during the

period under investigation, noting that entry and exit records are routinely time-stamped and could help establish a clear timeline. “Every entry and exit is recorded. We are validating those records as part of the investigation,” he said. The COA was also subpoenaed to submit audit and inventory reports related to Senate assets, particularly firearms and other regulated equipment under government custody. In a parallel directive, the PNP–Firearms and Explosives Office was ordered to produce records on firearms registered under the Senate, including ownership and licensing data, to verify accountability and trace weapon issuance. Vida said the coordinated subpoenas form part of a broader fact-finding effort linked to the ICC warrant enforcement and the ongoing determination of possible obstruction of justice. He stressed that the probe was not limited to locating dela Rosa but also covered whether individuals or institutions may have helped conceal persons of interest, tamper with evidence, or delay law enforcement actions. The DOJ said the ICC warrant against dela Rosa remained valid and enforceable in the Philippines, with operational efforts to locate him continuing. Vida declined to confirm details on an Interpol red notice application, saying such matters remained within operational channels, but said enforcement mechanisms were actively being pursued. The justice chief added that the panel of prosecutors would assess all relevant admissions and factual circumstances to determine possible liability of other individuals who may have assisted or facilitated movements linked to the senator. He said the subpoenas were intended to ground the investigation on documentary evidence as agencies begin submitting the required records to the DOJ panel.

- [Zubiri apologizes to Inday Badiday's family for dragging name during heated Senate plenary discussions](#) (2026-05-26 02:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Miguel Zubiri apologized to the family of late talk show host Inday Badiday for mentioning her name when he motioned to strike off the record a video presented by fellow Sen. Imee Marcos linking the minority bloc to Charter change (Cha-cha). The senator issued the apology Monday night after Badiday's grandson IC Mendoza called him out for dragging her late grandmother to the issue. The 11-member minority bloc, where Zubiri belonged, denied Marcos' insinuation and stood one by one to support Zubiri's motion. During his manifestation Monday afternoon to strike out the "horrible propaganda video" contained in Marcos' privilege speech, Zubiri said, "Inday Badiday na ba tayo dito sa Senado (Have we become Inday Badiday here at the Senate)?" Badiday used to host a television program which contained a segment on showbiz scandals or rumors, earning her the moniker "queen of intrigues." "[That's] Slip of the tongue po iyon in the middle of a heated debate, and I take full responsibility because I should have been more careful with my words," Zubiri wrote on Facebook. He said Mendoza was right that his grandmother should not have been dragged in political matters. "Again, I apologize deeply to the family and I will be more mindful moving forward." "I want to say this from the heart: I respect Inday Badiday, and like many from my generation, I grew up seeing her on TV. She was part of our pop culture and she was loved by so many Filipinos," he said in English and Filipino. Zubiri said Badiday was really lovable "with her own charm, wit and warmth, and I fully recognize her contribution to Philippine television,

entertainment journalism and media." "My frustration was about the video shown on the Senate floor, and I never meant to disrespect her memory or reduce her legacy to politics," he added. Sen. Panfilo Lacson, on X, wrote, "In showbiz, during her prime, Maria Lourdes Jimenez-Carvajal, more popularly known as 'Inday Badiday' was a decent person. She was authentic and truthful, trusted and credible." Without mentioning any name, Lacson said that in the Senate plenary on Monday someone presented a "fake source, fake messenger; and fake back-up."

- [How some SC justices voted on dela Rosa petition against ICC arrest warrant and why](#)
(2026-05-26 00:58)

MANILA, Philippines — As the government tightened its noose on fugitive Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, members of the Supreme Court, which paved the way for his arrest by the International Criminal Court (ICC) by thumbing down his petition to stop the enforcement of the warrant explain their positions. Voting 9-5-1 during a special en banc session on May 20, 2026, the Court denied dela Rosa's application for a temporary restraining order (TRO) or status quo ante order that sought to bar government agencies from arresting him on the basis of any ICC warrant, Interpol Red Notice, or foreign judicial process without a Philippine-issued warrant. The full decision, including the concurring and dissenting opinions, was released to the public on Monday. Here are some of the justices' opinions and why:

Associate Justice Alfredo Benjamin Caguioa In his concurring opinion, Caguioa said the Court "should not come to the rescue of an individual, a public officer no less, who is charged with mass murder, and who is being brought before the ICC to face the consequences of his actions that flouted the rule of law with impunity." Caguioa said dela Rosa's plea for immediate judicial intervention must be viewed in light of the "recent history of impunity" that drove victims of the anti-drug campaign to seek relief before an international tribunal. "To invoke due process in order to prolong historical injustices is a severe insult to the deceased and trivializes the immense agony of the families left behind," he wrote. On the issue of whether an ICC arrest warrant requires validation by a Philippine court, Caguioa argued that "there is no need for a separate warrant from a Philippine judge in order to effectuate an arrest for cases cognizable by the ICC," citing Article 59(4) of the Rome Statute. He said probable cause determinations for ICC cases fall exclusively under ICC judges because such offenses were not cognizable before Philippine courts.

Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen In a separate concurrence, Leonen emphasized that courts generally did not restrain criminal prosecutions through injunctions or prohibition. He added that legal remedies remained available even after an arrest, and that provisional judicial relief could not be used to preempt law enforcement action at that stage.

Associate Justice Maria Filomena Singh Singh, meanwhile, pointed to dela Rosa's conduct and invoked the equitable doctrine of "clean hands." Singh noted that the senator allegedly went into hiding for months, resurfaced only to participate in the Senate leadership election, and later disappeared again. "The present record weighs heavily against the grant of provisional relief," Singh wrote. "Senator dela Rosa's actions... show that his conduct has been tainted with bad faith." "This conduct shows that Senator dela Rosa only engaged with

the legal processes based on his convenience, and reflects inequitable conduct which should bar the grant of the relief he seeks,” she added. Dissenting justices — Ramon Paul Hernando, Amy Lazaro-Javier, Henri Jean Paul Inting, Ricardo Rosario, and Antonio Kho Jr. — argued that dela Rosa satisfied the requirements for injunctive relief and faced the risk of irreversible harm if arrested and transferred to The Hague. Associate Justice Ramon Paul Hernando In his four-page dissent, Hernando said there was “no domestic judicial process authorizing the arrest or surrender” of dela Rosa to the ICC and maintained that the tribunal lacked jurisdiction over the case. He warned there was “zero guarantee” that dela Rosa would not be immediately surrendered once arrested. “Indeed, the injury cannot be repaired after the fact by any subsequent ruling. Hence, the necessity of an injunctive relief,” Hernando wrote. Hernando also questioned Section 17 of Republic Act 9851, saying cooperation with international tribunals “must still operate within constitutional limits.” “Cooperation with international tribunals must still be exercised in a manner that does not contravene the Bill of Rights and the statutory protections that implement them,” he said. Justice Amy Lazaro-Javier In her nine-page dissent, Javier said the issue required “a disciplined legal inquiry and not a referendum on personality, political identity, or public sentiment.” She argued that the circumstances “not only justify but necessitate the issuance of temporary injunctive relief.” “The rights at stake are neither speculative nor abstract. The potential injury is not merely political or reputational; it is juridical, concrete, and irreparable,” Lazaro-Javier wrote. “To deny provisional relief under these conditions is to expose petitioner to harm that the law itself recognizes as intolerable,” she added.

- [Southwesterly wind flow signals rainy season's approach —Pagasa](#) (2026-05-25 23:37)

MANILA, Philippines – The onset of the southwest monsoon or ‘habagat’ associated with rains would be likely sooner following the emergence of the southwesterly wind flow, the state-run weather agency said on Tuesday. Nathaniel Servando, Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) chief, said this weather system – which brings warm, moist air from the southwest across the country – has already been affecting the Zamboanga Peninsula, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Occidental, and Palawan. Pagasa said its presence usually indicates the onset of the rainy season, mainly affecting the western section of the archipelago. Servando said the southwesterly wind flow is also bringing cloudy skies with scattered rains and thunderstorms over the BARMM (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) and SOCCSKSARGEN (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos). Meanwhile, the state weather bureau said the trough, or extension of the low-pressure area outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility, has been bringing similar weather over the rest of Mindanao. The other weather system, easterlies – winds that carry warm, humid weather – has been affecting Eastern Visayas, bringing partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms. Metro Manila and the rest of the country would experience isolated downpours or thunderstorms within 24 hours.

- [Summer Movie Guide 2026 Here’ s what’ s coming to theaters and streaming from May to August](#) (2026-05-25 21:00)

This summer at the movies, the Minions are filmmakers, the Mandalorian is working for the good guys, Matt Damon tries to find his way home (again), Anne Hathaway, Zendaya and Tom Holland are everywhere and no one remembers Peter Parker. Well, at least in the movie. The hope is that audiences not only remember but want to know what comes next for Spider-Man. Hollywood's summer movie season kicks off the first weekend in May not with a superhero movie but with "The Devil Wears Prada 2," though one might argue that Miranda Priestly might be the Iron Man of fashion. May also brings a Billie Eilish concert film, the first "Star Wars" movie in seven years and a D-Day drama with Brendan Fraser as Dwight D. Eisenhower. June kicks off with a live-action He-Man, a John Carney musical (with Nick Jonas and Paul Rudd!), an original Steven Spielberg sci-fi spectacle, the return of Supergirl and Woody and Buzz as well. July brings a dose of Minions in 1920s Hollywood, Moana and a back-to-back dose of Holland and Zendaya, first in "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" and then in Christopher Nolan's adaptation of "The Odyssey" where Holland plays Odysseus' son Telemachus and Zendaya is the goddess Athena. August ends the season with some comedy ("Super Troopers 3"), a supernatural horror ("The End of Oak Street"), a new Jane Schoenbrun film and two very different dog movies for two very different audiences. One is "PAW Patrol." The other is a Ridley Scott-directed postapocalyptic survival movie. And that's not even counting the myriad streaming options, including a Ben Stiller pickleball movie, the return of Enola Holmes and a John Krasinski Jack Ryan movie. Here's The Associated Press' guide to help make sense of the many, many options in theaters and at home.

May 2026 Movie Releases

May 1 "The Devil Wears Prada 2" (20th Century Studios, theaters): A sequel to one of the most rewatchable movies of the century? Groundbreaking. But it's not just replaying the hits. Filmmaker David Frankel told the AP that "one of the reasons we were motivated to even attempt a sequel was to explore how the world of journalism and media at large had changed so dramatically over the 20 years since we made the first movie." (Read AP's review.) "Animal Farm" (Angel Studios, theaters): Andy Serkis directs an animated adaptation of George Orwell's classic political allegory, featuring the voices of Seth Rogen, Woody Harrelson, Glenn Close and Laverne Cox. (Read AP's review.) "Deep Water" (Magenta Light Studios, theaters): Gene Simmons (yes, that Gene Simmons) produced this Renny Harlin survival pic about an airplane crash in shark-filled waters, starring Aaron Eckhart and Ben Kingsley. "Hokum" (Neon, theaters): Adam Scott visits a haunted Irish hotel in this supernatural thriller. (Read AP's review.) "Swapped" (Netflix, streaming): Michael B. Jordan lends his voice to this animated body swap film about a tiny woodland creature who switches places with a bird. "Our Land" (Strand Releasing, theaters): Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel's first foray into nonfiction storytelling centers on Chuschaqasta leader and Indigenous activist Javier Chocobar, who was murdered in 2009. "Two Pianos" (Kino Lorber, theaters): This French melodrama from Arnaud Desplechin is about a gifted concert pianist (François Civil), lured back into performing by his former mentor (Charlotte Rampling). "The Last One for the Road" (Music Box Films, theaters): This Italian comedy follows two penniless, and perpetually buzzed, 50-somethings on a road trip. "An Autumn Summer" (Blue Harbor Entertainment, theaters): The summer before college is full of romance, sunsets and lazy days on the lake for a few friends.

May 7 "My Dearest Assassin" (Netflix, streaming): This Thai action film is about a girl with a rare and hunted blood type and

her adopted assassin family. May 8 “Billie Eilish – Hit Me Hard and Soft: The Tour (Live in 3D)” (Paramount, theaters): James Cameron shares co-directing credits with Eilish for this unique concert film, constructed from her Manchester performances last summer. “It is totally spectacular,” Cameron told the AP. “Seeing it in 3D is astonishing. You really feel an intimacy with her and yet you feel the scale of the spectacle.” (Read AP’s review.) “Mortal Kombat II” (Warner Bros., theaters): Karl Urban reprises his role as Johnny Cage in this video game-inspired film. “The Sheep Detectives” (Amazon MGM Studios, theaters): Hugh Jackman plays a loving farmer who reads detective stories to his sheep at night. When he ends up dead, the animals (voices include Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Bryan Cranston) set out to help the town’s dim-witted police officer (Nicholas Braun, with an English accent) solve the mystery in this star-studded comedy. Writer Craig Mazin told the AP that, “Seeing this movie is a purely positive experience. There is no downside. There is just sort of a delight and a joy and emotions but all of them, I think, in the end, quite positive and beautiful.” (Read AP’s review.) “Remarkably Bright Creatures” (Netflix, streaming): Sally Field and Lewis Pullman star in this adaptation of Shelby Van Pelt’s bestseller about a widow and an octopus (voiced by Alfred Molina) who team up (yes, her and the octopus) to solve the mystery of her missing son. (Read AP’s review.) “Silent Friend” (1-2 Special, theaters): Tony Leung and Léa Seydoux lead this centuries-spanning film about a ginkgo tree in a German town. It picked up several prizes at the Venice Film Festival. May 15 “In the Grey” (Black Bear, theaters): Henry Cavill, Jake Gyllenhaal and Eiza González star in this Guy Ritchie action pic about elite operatives on an impossible heist. “Is God Is” (Amazon MGM Studios, theaters): Twin sisters (Kara Young and Mallori Johnson) are out for revenge in Aleshea Harris’ adaptation of her Obie-winning play. “It’s an epic road trip, it’s a Greek tragedy. It’s a love story between two sisters,” Young told the AP. (Read AP’s review.) “Obsession” (Focus Features, theaters): Horror master Jason Blum produced this movie about a crush and the sinister downsides of a wish that comes too true. “The Wizard of the Kremlin” (Vertical, theaters): Jude Law transforms into Vladimir Putin in Olivier Assayas’ historical drama charting the Russian president’s rise to power alongside a character inspired by the real political strategist Vladislav Surkov. Paul Dano plays the fictionalized adviser. “Mobile Suit Gundam Hathaway: The Sorcery of Nymph Circe” (Bandai Namco Filmworks, theaters): Gundam fans will finally get to see the latest installment, which has been out in Japan for months. “Decorado” (GKIDS, theaters): Not many animated movies reference “The Truman Show” and “Scenes from a Marriage” as inspirations, but it’s fitting for this Spanish-language drama about a mouse in the throes of an existential crisis. “LifeHack” (Iconic Events Releasing, theaters): Inspired by true events, a group of good-hearted hackers try to take down a crypto billionaire from their bedrooms. “Magic Hour” (Greenwich Entertainment, theaters): Katie Aselton directs herself and Daveed Diggs in this drama about a couple navigating relationship challenges in a new desert home. “The Crash” (Netflix, streaming): This documentary looks at the suspicious circumstances surrounding a crash in Ohio that killed two of three young adults in the car. “Driver’s Ed” (Vertical, theaters and VOD): Sam Nivola and a group of teens steal a driver’s ed car (from Kumail Nanjiani) to visit his girlfriend in college. May 20 “Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan: Ghost War” (Amazon MGM Studios and Prime Video, streaming): John Krasinski’s Jack Ryan finally gets a movie of his own. May

22 “The Mandalorian and Grogu” (Walt Disney Studios, theaters): Pedro Pascal’s bounty hunter makes his big-screen debut, alongside his adorable green counterpart. “He’s a bit different from when we first met him, but he’s still, at his heart, a gunfighter and a warrior,” filmmaker Jon Favreau told the AP. “Tuner” (Black Bear, theaters): Leo Woodall plays a gifted piano tuner who finds out he also has a knack for cracking safes in this character-driven thriller (with romance! Drama! Heists!) from Daniel Roher (who won an Oscar for his documentary “Navalny”). Woodall, Roher told the AP, “has this boyish charm, this absolute hunkish, dreamy quality, but there’s also the melancholy there ... that he deputizes to great effect.” “I Love Boosters” (Neon, theaters): Keke Palmer stars in Boots Riley’s new comedy about a group of professional shoplifters who call themselves the Velvet Gang. Demi Moore, LaKeith Stanfield, Don Cheadle, Taylour Paige, Eiza González and Will Poulter also star.

“Passenger” (Paramount Pictures, theaters): A van life adventure turns terrifying in this horror, with Melissa Leo. “Ladies First” (Netflix, streaming): Sacha Baron Cohen plays a chauvinist who turns up in an alternate world where the gender dynamics are reversed. It’s based on a French film, and Rosamund Pike co-stars. “Corporate Retreat” (Western Film Service, theaters): A company getaway goes very wrong in a bloody horror, with Odeya Rush, Alan Ruck and Rosanna Arquette. “Saccharine” (Independent Film Company and Shudder, theaters): A medical student takes part in a wild weight-loss experiment. Side effects may include terror at the hands of a sinister force.

May 29 “The Breadwinner” (Sony Pictures, theaters): Nate Bargatze is in over his head as a stay-at-home dad to three daughters while mom (Mandy Moore) is away in this family comedy. “Backrooms” (A24, theaters): YouTube phenomenon Kane Parsons adapts his popular horror shorts into a feature starring Chiwetel Ejiofor and Renate Reinsve. The concept, Parsons told the AP, is “like the exaggerated idea of being stuck in an atomizing monospace for the rest of your life ... like the back space of a Sears or something.” “Pressure” (Focus Features, theaters): Brendan Fraser plays Dwight D. Eisenhower in the tense 72 hours before D-Day in this historical drama, with Andrew Scott, Kerry Condon, Chris Messina and Damian Lewis. “Propeller One-Way Night Coach” (Apple TV, streaming): John Travolta is director, writer and narrator for this ode to the golden age of aviation, about a young boy and his mother’s cross-country flight. “Miss You, Love You” (HBO Original Films, streaming): Jim Rash wrote and directed this drama about a grieving widow (Allison Janney) who plans her husband’s funeral with her estranged son’s assistant (Andrew Rannells).

May 31 “Speed Demon” (Maverick Film and Complex Corp, VOD): The demon Asmodeus follows Katie Cassidy and William H. Macy onto a New York bound train.

JUNE MOVIE RELEASES

June 4 “Toxic” (Prime Media, theaters): Indian star Yash plays two roles in this period gangster film, reportedly the most expensive Indian film ever made. “The Amazing Digital Circus: The Last Act” (Fathom Entertainment, theaters): A series finale to the animated web phenomenon, combining the eighth and new ninth episode.

June 5 “Masters of the Universe” (Amazon MGM Studios, theaters): By the power of Grayskull, will a new generation embrace the 1980s toy in movie form? Nicholas Galitzine stars as He-Man. “Power Ballad” (Lionsgate, theaters): Paul Rudd plays Rick, a washed-up wedding singer who bonds with fading boy band star Danny (Nick Jonas) — but things get a little tricky when Danny finds new success with one of Rick’s songs in this film from writer-director John Carney (“Once”). “Scary Movie”

(Paramount, theaters): Everything from “M3GAN” to “Get Out” and “Sinners” is on the table in the first “Scary Movie” movie since 2013. “We’ ve been away from it for a while, and it was fun to get back together with the guys and get in the room and study horror films and kick ideas around on how to make a funny parody,” said Shawn Wayans. “Check your computers at the door ... come to laugh.” “Office Romance” (Netflix, streaming): Jennifer Lopez stars opposite Brett Goldstein in a (raunchy) romantic comedy about a couple of workaholics. “Carolina Caroline” (Magnolia, theaters): Samara Weaving and Kyle Gallner go “Bonnie and Clyde” in this romantic crime thriller. “Jinsei” (Greenwich Entertainment, theaters): Ryuya Suzuki directs this animated Japanese drama about a hero’ s extraordinary life, as a J-pop idol, outcast and oracle, over 100 years. “Mexico 86” (Netflix, streaming): Diego Luna stars in this satiric comedy about Mexico’ s bid to host the 1986 World Cup. “The Birthday Party” (Quiver Distribution, VOD): A Greek business tycoon (Willem Dafoe) hosts a 25th birthday celebration for his daughter on a private island in the Mediterranean in the 1970s. June 12 “Disclosure Day” (Universal Pictures, theaters): Fifty years after he made “Close Encounters of the Third Kind,” Steven Spielberg returns with another film that will have audiences questioning whether we’ re alone in the universe. Starring Emily Blunt, Josh O’ Connor and Colman Domingo, Spielberg has kept the plot quite secret. “All I can say is it’ s an experience,” Spielberg said at CinemaCon. “And all you need to get from the beginning to the end is a seat belt.” “Stop! That! Train!” (Bleecker Street, theaters): RuPaul plays the U.S. president in this colorful action comedy about a runaway train (the Glamazonian Express), featuring “Drag Race” alums Ginger Minj and Jujubee as well as Matt Rogers, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Rachel Bloom, Lisa Rinna and Nicole Richie. “The Furious” (Lionsgate, theaters): An ordinary man must save his daughter from a violent criminal empire in this English-language action pic hailing from Hong Kong. It’ s directed by Japanese stuntman and action choreographer Kenji Tanigaki and produced by Bill Kong (“Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”). “Find Your Friends” (Shudder, streaming): A girls’ trip to Joshua Tree turns into a nightmare. June 19 “Toy Story 5” (Walt Disney, theaters): Woody comes back to Bonnie’ s room to help Jessie and Buzz deal with the arrival of a new threat: screentime. Filmmaker Andrew Stanton said the trick is thinking about it from a toy’ s perspective, which he told the AP was “juicy material.” “The Death of Robin Hood” (A24, theaters): Hugh Jackman plays a very different kind of Robin Hood in this dark and bloody tale inspired by a ballad from the 17th century and directed by “A Quiet Place: Day One” filmmaker Michael Sarnoski. “Leviticus” (Neon, theaters): This “conversion therapy” horror about two teen boys trying to escape a violent entity, from Australian filmmaker Adrian Chiarella, was a breakout at the Sundance Film Festival. “It is about growing up queer and how the fear of growing up queer can block someone mentally from acting on their desires, and physically,” actor Stacy Clausen told the AP. “But I think that there is something in it for everyone.” “Rose of Nevada” (1-2 Special, theaters): Callum Turner and George MacKay take a mysterious fishing vessel out and return from the voyage to find everything has changed in this mesmerizing film, shot entirely on 16mm. “Girls Like Girls” (Focus Features, theaters): Hayley Kiyoko adapts her hit song-turned-novel into a feature film, a coming-of-age summer love story starring Maya da Costa and Myra Molloy. “Voicemails for Isabelle” (Netflix, streaming): In this romantic

comedy, Jill (Zoey Deutch) leaves voicemails for her dead sister, not knowing that they're going to another person, Austin (Nick Robinson). "Maddie's Secret" (Magnolia Pictures, theaters): John Early directs, writes and stars in this movie about a food influencer with an eating disorder. He's said he wanted to play an ingenue in a "lurid, tawdry, melodrama." "Finnegan's Foursome" (Republic Pictures, VOD): Edward Burns wrote, directed and stars in this family drama about brothers, and their adult children, going to Ireland to scatter their father's ashes.

June 26 "Supergirl" (Warner Bros., theaters): Kara Zor-El (Milly Alcock) has more of an antihero edge than her straightlaced cousin, Superman. "It's kind of an interstellar odyssey," DC Studios co-chair and co-CEO Peter Safran told the AP. "It's just a great movie for audiences. It's not just for superhero fans." "The Invite" (A24, theaters): Olivia Wilde and Seth Rogen play a couple on the edge who host their more uninhibited upstairs neighbors (Penélope Cruz and Edward Norton) in their apartment for dinner. The truths start to come out in this shrewd adult dramedy. Olivia Wilde told the AP that, "the whole project for me is really tipping my hat to Mike Nichols." "jackass best and last" (Paramount, theaters): Johnny Knoxville, Steve-O, Chris Pontius and Wee Man return for more pain. But this is the last time. Really. "Lucky Strike" (Roadside Attractions, theaters): This World War II film starring Scott Eastwood, Colin Hanks and Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor is set in the aftermath of the Battle of the Bulge. "Romería" (Janus Films, theaters): Newcomer Lúcia García plays a young, orphaned woman searching for her paternal grandparents in this semi-autobiographical film from Spanish filmmaker Carla Simón. "Couture" (Vertical, theaters): Angelina Jolie plays an American filmmaker in Paris during fashion week. "Bouchra" (Film Movement, theaters): The coyote wears Prada in this animated movie for adults about a queer Moroccan animal in Manhattan. "Little Brother" (Netflix, streaming): John Cena plays a top real estate agent whose world is made a little chaotic when his "little brother" (Eric André) comes back into his life. "Chris & Martina: The Final Set" (Netflix, streaming): A documentary about tennis stars Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert.

JULY MOVIE RELEASES

July 1 "Minions & Monsters" (Universal Pictures, theaters): This time, the yellow creatures are making a monster movie in 1920s Hollywood, as sound starts to enter the picture. Think "Singin' in the Rain," but with Minions. "Enola Holmes 3" (Netflix, streaming): Sherlock's little sister (Millie Bobby Brown) is back, solving mysteries and debating marriage.

July 3 "Young Washington" (Angel Studios, theaters): That's young George Washington, who is played by William Franklyn-Miller, in a cast that includes Ben Kingsley, Andy Serkis, Kelsey Grammer and Mary-Louise Parker.

July 10 "Moana" (Disney, theaters): Catherine Laga'aia makes her film debut as Moana, alongside Dwayne Johnson as Maui, in this live-action adaptation of Disney Animation's 2016 hit. "It isn't just watching the animated with real faces," Laga'aia told the AP. "But I think all the stuff that people wanna see and people loved about the 2016 are all definitely still there." "Gail Daughtry and the Celebrity Sex Pass" (Sony Pictures Classics, theaters): A small-town woman (Zoey Deutch) travels to Hollywood before her wedding to try to use her free pass on Jon Hamm in this raunchy but sweet but also violent Wizard of Oz-esque comedy from David Wain. "Barrio Triste" (Film Movement, theaters): Bad Bunny music video director Stillz directs this youth-focused film set in Medellín, 1987.

July 17 "The Odyssey" (Universal Pictures, theaters): Neither Christopher Nolan nor Homer's 3,000-year-old epic need any sort of

introduction. But it was a gap the Oscar-winner spotted in modern cinematic culture. “To see Greek mythology brought to the big screen with all of the resources that Hollywood has bringing that to bear on the story, it feels like something that is long overdue. And I’ m really excited to be able to do it,” Nolan told the AP. July 24 “Evil Dead Burn” (Warner Bros., theaters): Sam Raimi produces this sixth “Evil Dead” film, directed by Sébastien Vaniček. “The Dink” (Apple TV, streaming): Ben Stiller takes on pickleball in a new sports comedy with Jake Johnson, Mary Steenburgen, Ed Harris, Chloe Fineman and Patton Oswalt. It worked for dodgeball! “Rosebush Pruning” (MUBI, theaters): An outsider (Elle Fanning) comes into a wealthy family living in hedonistic isolation in this wild satire directed by Karim Aïnouz and co-starring Callum Turner, Riley Keough and Jamie Bell. “Motor City” (Independent Film Company, theaters): Alan Ritchson is out for revenge in 1970s Detroit after being framed by a local gangster (Ben Foster). “72 Hours” (Netflix, streaming): Kevin Hart and Marcello Hernández star in this comedy about a 40-something who joins his 20-something colleagues at a bachelor party weekend. “Hadestown: The Musical” (Crosswalk/LD Entertainment): A West End production of the Tony-winning musical featuring some of the original Broadway cast. July 31 “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” (Sony, theaters): Four years after Tom Holland’ s Peter Parker erased himself from everyone’ s memory in “No Way Home,” he continues the fight for good in New York City, completely alone. “I Want Your Sex” (Magnolia, theaters): Filmmaker Gregg Araki cast Olivia Wilde as a renowned art world provocateur who begins an affair with a 20-something intern (Cooper Hoffman) in this sex-positive comedy. “It’ s fun, it’ s colorful, it’ s sexy. And it’ s a ride,” he said at the Sundance Film Festival. AUGUST MOVIE RELEASES Aug. 7 “One Night Only” (Universal Pictures, theaters): Premarital sex is only legal once a year in this script, which got a place on The Black List. Will two beautiful people, Monica Barbaro and Callum Turner, make it work in the comedy directed by Will Gluck (“Anyone But You”)? “Teenage Sex and Death and Camp Miasma” (Mubi, theaters): “I Saw the TV Glow” filmmaker Jane Schoenbrun returns with their third feature, about a queer filmmaker and her “final girl” star, with Hannah Einbinder and Gillian Anderson. “Super Troopers 3” (Searchlight Pictures, theaters): Jay Chandrasekhar and the Vermont State Troopers are back in a new comedy. “Ice Cream Man” (The Horror Section, theaters): Eli Roth writes and directs a new horror about, yes, an ice cream man whose products send an idyllic town into chaos. “Late Fame” (Magnolia Pictures, theaters): In this Manhattan-set film, Willem Dafoe plays a poet who is “rediscovered” by a group of downtown 20-somethings. Greta Lee also stars. “Fall 2” (Lionsgate, theaters): Two women are stranded on a plank 3,000 feet in the air in this survival thriller. “The Last House” (Netflix, streaming): Greta Lee and Wagner Moura star in this thriller about a family of four who find themselves trapped in their house with no way out. Aug. 14 “The End of Oak Street” (Warner Bros., theaters): Anne Hathaway and Ewan McGregor star in this supernatural thriller in which a cosmic event transports their sleepy suburban street ... elsewhere. “PAW Patrol: The Dino Movie” (Paramount, theaters): It’ s rumored that Chase is on the case. “The Brink of War” (Angel Studios, theaters): Jeff Daniels plays U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Jared Harris is Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev in this retelling of the tense Reykjavik Summit in 1986. “The Rivals of Amziah King” (Black Bear, theaters): Matthew McConaughey stars as a bluegrass-playing Oklahoma honey maker whose

empire is under threat in this crime thriller, co-starring Kurt Russell and Cole Sprouse. “Don’t Say Good Luck” (Netflix, streaming): A coming-of-age film about a teen preparing to lead her high school musical while dealing with drama at home. Melanie Lynskey, Max Greenfield and Sunny Sandler star. Aug. 21 “Insidious: Out of the Further” (Sony Pictures, theaters): The “further” is the “purgatorial realm of lost souls.” “Mutiny” (Lionsgate, theaters): Jason Statham tries to clear his name and avenge his dead billionaire boss. “Spa Weekend” (Black Bear, theaters): Leslie Mann, Isla Fisher, Michelle Buteau and Anna Faris star in this comedy about a girls’ weekend. “Hot Spot” (Focus Features, theaters): A sentient AI rules a near future society in this thriller with Noomi Rapace. Aug. 28 “Coyote vs. Acme” (Ketchup Entertainment, theaters): Three years after it was unceremoniously shelved by Warner Bros., the Looney Tunes movie about Wile E. Coyote’s lawsuit against the Acme Corporation (inspired by a 1990 New Yorker article) is finally making its way to theaters. “The Dog Stars” (20th Century Studios, theaters): Jacob Elordi and Josh Brolin lead Ridley Scott’s adaptation of Peter Heller’s “The Dog Stars,” a thriller set in the aftermath of a devastating flu that wipes out most of humanity. “Finding Emily” (Focus Features, theaters): This British rom-com is about an American psychology student (Angourie Rice) who decides to help a lonely musician (Spike Fearn) find the girl of his dreams after he’s given the wrong number at the club. “Idiots” (Independent Film Company, theaters): Dave Franco and O’Shea Jackson Jr. must transport a mischievous teen (Mason Thames) to rehab in this wild road trip comedy that got a more PG name after Sundance. “Colony” (Well Go USA, theaters): Korean filmmaker Yeon Sang-ho (“Train to Busan”) made a zombie thriller. “Legend of the White Dragon” (Well Go USA Entertainment, theaters): Originally planned for a 2020 release, this Kickstarter-funded superhero movie starring the late actor Jason David Frank was delayed by COVID-19, the Hollywood strikes and other reasons, but is finally coming out. “The Whisper Man” (Netflix, streaming): Robert De Niro, Michelle Monaghan and Adam Scott star in this adaptation of a New York Times bestseller about a crime writer whose young son goes missing, and who turns to his estranged police detective father for help.

- [No winners in Grand Lotto 6/55, Mega Lotto 6/45 draws for May 25](#) (2026-05-25 20:36)

There were no winners in the Grand Lotto 6/55 and Mega Lotto 6/45 draws on Monday night, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) said. The winning combination for the Grand Lotto 6/55 was 48-42-23-18-55-33, with a jackpot prize of P45,000,000. No winners were also recorded in the Mega Lotto 6/45 draw, which had the combination 21-13-43-28-05-17 and a jackpot prize of P25,359,201.44.

- [The Scripps National Spelling Bee starts next week. Find competitors near you](#) (2026-05-25 19:45)

OXON HILL, MD — The Scripps National Spelling Bee begins May 26, with 247 spellers representing 50 states, the District of Columbia, three U.S. territories and five other countries. They will compete in preliminary rounds on May 26, quarterfinals and semifinals on May 27, and finals on May 28, with the winner taking the unofficial crown of top speller in the English

language. The champion's haul includes a trophy and more than \$52,000 in cash and prizes. Spellers can compete through the eighth grade, and this year's competitors range in age from 9 to 15. Faizan Zaki won last year's bee and will return in a ceremonial role; past champions are not allowed to compete again. Last year's runner-up aged out of the competition, but the third-place finisher from 2025, Sarv Dharavane of Dunwoody, Georgia, is back and considered one of the favorites. The bee moves this year to a new venue, Constitution Hall in downtown Washington, after more than a decade at a convention center just outside the city in Oxon Hill, Maryland. Mina Kimes, an NFL analyst for ESPN and the recent "Celebrity Jeopardy!" champion, will serve as the television host, the bee's first celebrity host since LeVar Burton in 2022.

- [Minibus strikes a parked vehicle on a Pakistan highway, killing 17 people](#) (2026-05-25 17:26)

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — A speeding minibus rammed into a bus parked along a motorway in northwest Pakistan on Monday, killing 17 people and injuring five others, police and rescue officials said. The crash occurred near Mardan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province when the minibus slammed into the parked bus, according to Shah Fahad, director-general of Rescue 1122 emergency services. He said preliminary findings suggested driver negligence caused the accident. The bus was carrying passengers to the scenic Swat Valley. Rescue workers and police shifted the dead and injured to a hospital, Fahad said. Road accidents are common in Pakistan because of poor infrastructure, reckless driving and weak enforcement of traffic safety regulations.

- [Colombia vote tests leftist rule as violence surges](#) (2026-05-25 17:23)

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — Colombians vote Sunday in a presidential election overshadowed by a surge in violence, facing a stark choice between extending four years of leftist rule or shifting sharply right. Barred from re-election, President Gustavo Petro leaves office after a turbulent term marked by car bombs, explosive drones and the assassination of a presidential candidate. But joblessness has fallen and wages have risen, and polls show Petro's protégé, leftist Senator Ivan Cepeda, 63, as the front runner. The son of a slain senator, Cepeda has pledged to extend social programs and continue peace talks with armed groups, despite limited results. "I give him my vote because my life changed under this government," said 23-year-old Natalia Rojas, a design student in Bogota and a beneficiary of a subsidized education program. To win outright, Cepeda must secure more than half the vote. Polls predict a June 21 runoff against right-wing lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella. Nicknamed "the Tiger," the 47-year-old millionaire has no political experience and runs an eccentric campaign. He campaigns in a bulletproof vest and delivers a hardline security message. In an interview during the campaign, he told AFP he would seek US backing for a 90-day campaign of airstrikes and crop fumigation against cocaine-producing armed groups if elected. "What De la Espriella wants is to put the house in order," said Wilmer Bolivar, a 47-year-old ex-soldier. He compared the approach to El Salvador's popular president Nayib Bukele. The comparison is not accidental. De

la Espriella has backed building Bukele-style megaprisons and his facial hair bears more than a passing resemblance to the Salvadoran leader. But De la Espriella faces a tight race for second against opposition Senator Paloma Valencia, aged 50. She is backed by political kingmaker and former president Alvaro Uribe. Deeply polarizing Petro led Colombia's first-ever leftist government and has been deeply polarizing. Poorer Colombians cheer his investment in social programs and the raising of the minimum wage. Unemployment fell, partly driven by state hiring. The country remains one of the most economically unequal in the world. "This election is marked by class struggle," said political scientist Alvaro Forero. "That is Petro's main electoral ammunition," he told AFP. To critics, Petro is erratic and his policy of "total peace" has let armed groups run rampant. The policy has so far failed to demobilize armed groups that survived the 2016 FARC peace deal. Experts say armed groups used talks to strengthen themselves. Colombia remains the world's largest cocaine producer, and much of the violence is tied to drug trafficking. Juanita Goebertus of Human Rights Watch said "2025 was a very bad year" for the country. Kidnappings more than doubled and displacement hit its highest level in nearly 20 years. Challenges Each candidate has faced serious threats throughout the campaign. Last year's killing of right-wing candidate Miguel Uribe has left many Colombians nervous about a return to the bad old days. Rising drug trafficking also strained relations between Petro and US President Donald Trump. The dispute escalated into mutual insults and nearly derailed longstanding security cooperation. Whoever wins will inherit a country with serious security problems and a fiscal deficit that has ballooned to seven percent of GDP. Petro inherited a weak post-pandemic economy, but since then tax collection has severely lagged behind bumper social spending. "What's at stake is continuing Petro's change agenda or rejecting it," Forero said.

• [40,000 people under evacuation orders for a chemical tank leak in Southern California](#)
(2026-05-25 17:19)

Authorities in Southern California on Friday were racing to figure out how to prevent the explosion of a storage tank that has been leaking a hazardous chemical used to make plastic parts, as some 40,000 people were under evacuation orders in the area. A storage tank holding between 6,000 and 7,000 gallons (22,700 and 26,500 liters) of methyl methacrylate overheated Thursday and began venting vapors into the air at an aerospace plastics facility in Garden Grove, a city in Orange County, the local fire authority said. The tank could fail and crack, releasing the chemical onto the ground, or it could explode, Orange County Fire Authority Division Chief Craig Covey said Friday. "This thing is going to fail, and we don't know when," Covey said. "We're doing our best to figure out when or how we can prevent it." Officials ordered residents in Garden Grove to leave and expanded evacuation orders Friday to some residents of five other Orange County cities — Cypress, Stanton, Anaheim, Buena Park and Westminster — after being unable to stop the leak overnight on the tank at GKN Aerospace, which makes parts for commercial and military aircraft. No injuries or deaths have been reported, authorities said. In an update later Friday, Covey said authorities have been able to maintain the tank's temperature, buying time to figure out how to fix it. Garden Grove is about 38 miles (61 kilometers) south of downtown Los Angeles and next to Anaheim, home to

Disneyland's two theme parks, which were not under evacuation orders Friday. Danny Pham said he was deep in a dream when his roommate banged on his door around 7 a.m. Friday morning and told him he needed to leave immediately. Pham had been working late the night before at a Vietnamese restaurant and had not seen the news. "It was shocking to me," said Pham, who lives only a couple blocks from the plastics plant. "I didn't know how serious it would be. I never knew that a thing like this could happen." He left minutes later, grabbing only his wallet and passport, and took shelter at a friend's restaurant in a neighboring city. By late Friday afternoon, Pham was still trying to figure out where he would stay the night and worrying that he had only the clothes on his back, possibly for days to come. Covey said crews have created containment barriers with sandbags in case there is a chemical spill from the tank to prevent the toxic chemical from getting into storm drains or reaching creeks or the nearby ocean. Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong, the county health officer, said if the chemical heats up, it can release a vapor that is harmful to people's health. It can cause respiratory issues, itching and burning eyes, nausea and headaches. Crews were initially successful and were able to neutralize one of two damaged tanks, but Covey said they determined Friday morning that the remaining tank was "in the biggest crisis." GKN Aerospace said specialized hazardous material teams are assessing the situation. "There are no reports of injuries at this time and our priority remains the safety of our employees, responders, and the surrounding community," a spokesperson said in an emailed statement. "We will provide verified updates as soon as more information becomes available." Kim Yen, a retiree in Garden Grove, was settling in for the night Thursday when she heard a sirenlike sound coming from her phone. An alert told her she needed to leave her home, which was just two blocks from the chemical leak. As Yen drove to her daughter's house in Seal Beach, she worried that others in the local Vietnamese community might ignore or not understand the evacuation alert because it was in English. "They are family," she said. "I'm hoping they stay alert and listen to the news and the authorities. This is scary." Yen, who is originally from Vietnam and has lived in Orange County since 1980, quickly stopped by her house Friday morning to grab important documents and medications. By then her neighborhood was "a ghost town," and she was comforted to see police officers going door to door to make sure everyone had evacuated. "We understand that this is frightening," Garden Grove Mayor Stephanie Klopfenstein said. "But the evacuation orders are in place for your safety." Local Vietnamese television stations translated updates from officials and urged residents to take the situation seriously.

- [Serbian president deepens ties with China while facing pressure from protests at home](#) (2026-05-25 17:16)

BEIJING, China — Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic deepened ties with China on Monday during a trip to Beijing as he faced pressure at home from anti-government protests in his Balkan country, including a major rally that prompted clashes over the weekend. After a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, the two leaders witnessed the signing of more than 20 cooperation agreements, covering areas such as politics, trade, technology and education, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported. During their talks, Xi told Vucic that their countries

should strengthen exchanges and cooperation to push their comprehensive strategic partnership to new heights. “China supports Serbia in persisting on a development path that suits its own national conditions, and is willing to strengthen exchanges of governance experience with Serbia,” CCTV quoted Xi as saying. Xi also said both sides should expand cooperation in artificial intelligence, digital economy and green energy to develop new growth drivers. In a joint statement released by Chinese official news agency Xinhua, both sides said countries must not politicize human rights issues, the two nations would promote sovereign equality, practice multilateralism and observe international rule of law. Vucic said Serbia attaches great importance to developing relations with China and steadfastly supports China’s core interests, CCTV reported. Xi awarded him a “friendship medal”, Xinhua said. Vucic, who began his five-day state visit to China on Sunday, is facing political pressure in his country. Clashes erupted between groups of protesters and riot police after Saturday’s huge anti-government rally by tens of thousands of his opponents in the Serbian capital of Belgrade. Vucic has sought to curb mass demonstrations that have shaken his hard-line rule in the Balkan country. But big crowds on Saturday suggested the dissent persists more than a year after protests first started to demand accountability for a deadly collapse at a train station in November 2024. The tragedy became a flashpoint for broader dissatisfaction with Serbia’s rule and has led to growing public demands for transparency in the graft-plagued country, which has carried out a quick series of large infrastructure projects, mostly with Chinese companies. Serbia is formally seeking European Union entry, but it has fostered ties with Russia and China. In Vucic’s opinion piece published by the South China Morning Post newspaper on Sunday, he said discussions about China in Europe are “too often clouded by suspicion and strategic anxiety.” “I understand that every major political community must guard its future, but I believe Europe should approach China not with fear and suspicion but with confidence and a serious, open-eyed willingness to cooperate,” he wrote.

- [Trump links normalizing ties with Israel to Iran peace deal](#) (2026-05-25 17:13)

WASHINGTON, United States — US President Donald Trump on Monday said Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations must normalize ties with Israel as part of efforts to reach a deal with Iran, adding fresh uncertainty into protracted peace negotiations. Progress on a deal to end the conflict that broke out in late February has slowed as both sides talked down the prospect of an imminent agreement, with Tehran saying they were not close to signing and Trump warning he was in no hurry. In another hurdle for any deal, the US leader said it should be mandatory for Qatar, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey and Jordan to sign up to the Abraham Accords, a set of agreements brokered in 2020 with nations historically hostile to Israel. “After all the work done by the United States to try and pull this very complex puzzle together, it should be mandatory that all of these Countries, at a minimum, simultaneously, sign onto the Abraham Accords,” he wrote in a lengthy social media post. “Those Countries discussed are Saudi Arabia, The United Arab Emirates (already a Member!), Qatar, Pakistan, Turkiye, Egypt, Jordan, and Bahrain (already a Member!)” Trump said he had spoken to the leaders of those countries on Saturday about efforts to end the war with Iran. Bahrain and the UAE have already signed the accords, along

with Morocco and Sudan. US and Iranian forces have observed a ceasefire since April 8 while diplomats push for a negotiated settlement, although Iran has maintained controls on Gulf shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the US Navy has sought to blockade Iran's ports. A high-level Iranian delegation that includes the country's top negotiator and foreign minister was in Doha on Monday to discuss an agreement with the US and the release of frozen funds, a source briefed on the matter told AFP. The visit was focusing "on issues relating to the Strait and highly enriched uranium", the source added. Trump said earlier on Monday that a deal with Iran would either be "great and meaningful" or there would be "no deal." But while the accords were welcomed by some as a foreign policy success, they remain deeply unpopular among the public in many parts of the Middle East, not least because they do not tackle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The issue is fraught as countries like Gulf heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Qatar have said they will never normalise ties with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is created. Going crazy Anna Jacobs of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington said Trump's latest demand added to the disaster that has been the war on all fronts for Gulf nations. "The national security of the Gulf states has been threatened more than ever before because of President Trump's reckless decisions, and he expects Arab states to thank him and to normalize relations with Israel, which they will not do at this stage," she said. "These expectations and assumptions from this US administration shows how little they understand the Middle East." Trump's maximalist demand came after top US diplomat Marco Rubio suggested a deal could be reached within the day, causing world oil prices to tumble based on renewed optimism about an agreement. "We thought we might have some news last night, maybe today," Secretary of State Rubio told reporters during a visit to New Delhi, referring to hopes for a deal. "We have what I think is a pretty solid thing on the table in terms of their ability to open up the straits, get the straits open." But Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei poured cold water on hopes for a quick final settlement. "It is correct to say that we have reached a conclusion on a large portion of the issues under discussion," he told a weekly news briefing. "But to say that this means the signing of an agreement is imminent -- no one can make such a claim." In Iran's capital Tehran, residents who spoke to Paris-based journalists said they were losing patience at the lack of diplomatic progress. "We're going crazy. Imagine getting hopeful ten times a day, and disappointed a hundred times a day," said Amir, 40. "We're all frustrated." Critical moment Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that he and Trump had agreed that "any final agreement with Iran must eliminate the nuclear threat entirely." Iranian officials have stressed that, despite the long-standing US demand for an end to its uranium enrichment, talks on the issue of the Islamic republic's nuclear programme have been deferred until after an initial agreement. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif -- whose government is spearheading efforts to mediate a negotiated agreement between the United States and Iran -- met China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Speaking to Chinese leaders, Sharif said "the world is passing through a critical moment," Pakistan's state-run PTV channel showed. "Things are moving in the right direction. I would like to thank China's support to promote peace."

- [Cuba hits back at EU top diplomat's comments over crisis](#) (2026-05-25 17:07)

HAVANA, Cuba — Cuba on Monday criticized EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas for a lack of "objectivity" in her comments about the economic and energy crises on the US-blockaded island. Kallas, the European Union's foreign policy chief, told reporters in Mexico on Thursday that Cuba's current hardship had followed "decades of mismanagement and political repression." "Cuban people deserve opportunity and freedom, and no more control and isolation," she said. Washington imposed an energy blockade on Cuba in January as part of its bid to exert maximum pressure on the communist-run island. The move has worsened living conditions for Cubans, with frequent blackouts and supply shortages becoming a daily reality. US President Donald Trump has also openly mused about taking over the island. Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said Kallas's comment "reveals a marked double standard." "Failing to acknowledge that the illegal, cruel and unjust collective punishment the US government is imposing on the Cuban people -- with an unprecedented tightening of the blockade, the oil embargo and the military threat -- are the main causes of the difficult situation Cubans are facing today undermines objectivity," he said on X. Government policy over the last decade had "broad popular consensus" and was part of "internal affairs," he added. Trump on May 1 issued an executive order that imposed a further wave of sanctions on Cuba and threatened secondary sanctions on the operations of foreign companies there, including several European companies. Rodriguez asked why Kallas had not voiced "concern or support" for these affected businesses and individuals. In 2017, the EU and Cuba entered an agreement calling for political dialogue and cooperation. Washington last week ramped up tensions by indicting former Cuban president Raul Castro in a case dating back to 1996, which Havana warns could serve as a pretext to justify US military intervention on the island.

- [Cannes' amfAR Gala raises millions for AIDS research with sales of artwork, jewelry and lavish goods](#) (2026-05-25 17:04)

ANTIBES, France — Actors and celebrities at the Cannes Film Festival were coaxed off the Croisette and up the French Riviera coast to Antibes on Thursday for dinner, performances and the annual amfAR Gala auction, which raised millions for AIDS research. Guests were treated to a lavish reception on the Hotel Du Cap, Eden Roc, lawn, followed by performances from Robbie Williams, Zara Larsson and Lizzo over dinner. The gala was hosted by Geena Davis, who appears on this year's festival poster, a tribute to "Thelma & Louise." Lizzo teased her new album on the red carpet. "I'm just so excited. I'm trying to bring back good, clean fun. Like, I just want to have fun again, people need to dance, people need to laugh." Other guests included Rami Malek who has a film in competition in Cannes, Eva Longoria, Heidi Klum, Sofia Carson, Natasha Poly and Bar Refaeli. An array of art, jewelry and experiences were auctioned. Actor William Abadie auctioned off a walk-on part in "Emily in Paris" while confirming the sixth season will be the show's last. After some enthusiastic bidding, two opportunities were given for a turn in the limelight, for 375,000 euros (\$435,545) each. Some of the artwork raised the bar with a famed full set of Andy Warhol screen prints of Marilyn Monroe fetching 2.8 million euros (\$3,252,228). Festival sponsor Chopard donated diamond earrings that sold for 600,000 euros (\$696,906). And a limited-edition Audemars Piguet watch — one of only five — went for an

eye-watering 1,450,000 euros (\$1,684,160). Williams performed a medley of his hits ending with “Angels” dedicated to his daughter. A surprise lot of VIP concert tickets was split between two bidders at 220,000 euros (\$255,5278) each for two sets of tickets each. Larsson closed the dinner with a high-energy performance that lured diners into dancing in front of the stage. The guests then moved to the after-party around the hotel’s pool to dance and celebrate. Since 1985, amfAR has raised nearly 841 million euros (\$950 million) in support of AIDS research and programs and awarded more than 3,800 grants.

- [Stephen Colbert is back on TV on community access in Michigan along with rocker Jack White](#) (2026-05-25 16:37)

NEW YORK — One night after Stephen Colbert recorded his final episode of “The Late Show” on CBS, he made a surprise appearance hosting the “Only in Monroe” community access show broadcast in southeast Michigan along the shores of Lake Erie. Michigan native Jack White, who grew up in Detroit about 40 miles northeast of Monroe, joined Colbert as his “volunteer music director.” “Looking forward to hearing some of your music, time permitting,” Colbert joked with White, as laughter could be heard from a handful of people off camera. Colbert interviewed actor Jeff Daniels during the hourlong broadcast that leaned heavily into Michigan-centric jokes. Actor Steve Buscemi appeared in a recorded bit joking about Buscemi’s Pizza in Monroe. Rapper Eminem, who was raised in Detroit, appeared on tape as the “fire marshal” who approves setting fire to remnants of the set that Colbert, White and Daniels destroyed at the end of the show. Colbert also spoke via FaceTime with comedian Byron Allen, who will be hosting “Comics Unleashed” that is replacing Colbert’s canceled “Late Show.” The community access program’s normal hosts, Michelle Baumann and former Miss America Kaye Lani Rae Rafko Wilson, sucked helium from balloons with Colbert while discussing Baumann’s battle with cancer. A warning on the screen said, “Former professional TV host, do not try this at home.” It marked the second time Colbert has hosted “Only in Monroe.” As he said during the surprise Friday broadcast, he previously hosted an episode in the summer of 2015 just before taking over “Late Night” from David Letterman. It was not clear where or when Colbert recorded the latest episode, which aired exactly 24 hours after his final “Late Night” show. Messages left Saturday seeking comment from the community access channel were not immediately returned.

- [4 dead, 17 still missing in collapsed building in Angeles City](#) (2026-05-25 16:21)

(UPDATE) ANGELES CITY — Rescuers using thermal scanners and sniffer dogs pursued a search for survivors on Monday, more than 30 hours after the collapse of a nine-story building under construction that has already claimed four lives, authorities said. More than a dozen people are believed to be still missing after rescuers failed to bring out alive two trapped construction workers who had been found buried beneath the rubble in Barangay Balibago, Angeles City on Sunday. “We have detected signs of life” among the ruins, Maria Leah Sajiri, the regional spokeswoman for the fire bureau, told reporters. “Rescue operations are ongoing.” The rescuers, led by local firemen, said they are using infrared technology to detect human body

heat beneath the rubble. Earlier Monday, two workers who were found alive and pinned beneath the wreckage of the nine-story structure, later died despite rescue efforts. “The first of the two was pulled out alive, but unfortunately, his body gave out and he did not survive. Doctors could not resuscitate him,” Sajili said. “The other one suffered a cardiac arrest around 3:00 a.m. Doctors could not attend to him as he was still pinned down,” she added. A Malaysian guest at a nearby hotel damaged by the collapsed building was also killed Sunday, while crews pulled another corpse from the rubble on Monday. It was not immediately clear if the unidentified body belonged to a person listed among the missing, rescuers said in an updated toll. The Malaysian Embassy in Manila confirmed that two Malaysians were affected by the building collapse in Angeles City, Pampanga — with one confirmed safe. “Currently all necessary efforts are being made to locate and establish contact with the next of kin of both individuals,” the embassy said in a statement. The retrieved bodies were identified as Mohd Rezal Abdullah, a Malaysian, Mark Laurence Capungay and Properio Alikaway, both residents of Marilao, Bulacan. The fourth body is still being identified to see if it belongs to a construction worker or the reported vendor outside the collapsed building. Due to the uncertainty, authorities said about 17 other people were still considered missing, mostly construction workers who were sleeping at the building site when disaster struck. Lea Casilao, girlfriend of a missing construction worker, said she had taken a bus from her Manila home to Angeles with rice and canned goods for her partner on Sunday, unaware of the pre-dawn accident on the same day. “It’s very difficult; it is breaking my heart to wait for something uncertain,” 47-year-old Casilao said, crying as she recounted how she slept alone at a local government building overnight Sunday. Search to continue Search, rescue and retrieval operations will continue as long as there are people still unaccounted for, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said Monday. “Until someone is found, until someone is saved, the operation continues,” the DILG said in a statement, as rescue teams pressed on with efforts at the Teodoro Street construction site that collapsed before dawn. The department said that the safety and preservation of life remain its highest priority, while also recognizing the “extraordinary courage” of responders working under highly unstable and dangerous conditions. As of 12 noon on May 25, authorities reported 26 people rescued, four confirmed fatalities and 17 still missing. Rescue efforts are being led on-site by the Bureau of Fire Protection in coordination with other government agencies and local disaster response units. A total of 267 personnel remain deployed, including members of the BFP Special Rescue Force, emergency medical teams, and augmentation units from Pampanga and neighboring provinces in Central Luzon. The Philippine National Police (PNP) said it provided assistance to local authorities as well as emergency response units in Angeles City, Pampanga, while investigating the collapse of the hotel under construction. “The PNP... will assist in the conduct of the investigation to determine the circumstances that led to the incident in the interest of truth and accountability. But, for now... the focus is on search and rescue operations,” said PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. “Every second matters in a crisis, and our duty is to act without delay, bringing every available asset to save lives, account for the missing, and support affected families on the ground,” he added. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority’s Search and Rescue team was also on site to locate people trapped beneath the rubble. The MMDA said

the SAR team had already entered parts of the damaged structure and was conducting a technical search using advanced equipment such as a vibraphone and life locator to determine the exact location of possible survivors under the debris. Lacking safety gear The cause of the collapse is not known. Regional labor department director Geraldine Panlilio said she had briefly shut the project down in September 2024 over violations of occupational safety standards. “Our labor inspectors had monitored poor working conditions, a violation that would put our workers at risk,” she said in an interview over radio DZMM. The construction workers “lacked safety gear” like hardhats, boots, safety belts and lifelines, and worked under poor lighting and with no visible safety signs, she added. Construction resumed a month later after the building contractor complied with requirements, Panlilio said. Officials said up to 70 people were employed at the construction site, though most had gone home for the weekend. Alfredo Albis, 55, said he was asleep at a barracks for workers about five meters from the structure when it gave way. “I have two cousins who are still trapped there. They were working here to earn for their families and (they) are missing,” he said, adding “there’s a possibility that my relatives are dead.” Sajili, the fire bureau spokeswoman, said that “rescue in (a) building collapse is very challenging since any sudden shift triggered by the movements of our rescuers can cause areas to move and people under can get crushed.” If no more survivors are found via scanners, earthmoving equipment will be brought in to clear debris and recover bodies, she said, but gave no timeline. Government assistance The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) extended immediate assistance, distributing family food packs, hygiene kits, and ready-to-eat food packs to affected individuals and families in the area. Each of the 34 affected individuals also received P10,000 in financial assistance from the agency. Assistant Secretary Irene Dumlao of the DSWD Disaster Response Management Group said the department continues to monitor the situation closely while preparing additional interventions if needed. WITH BERNADETTE TAMAYO, JAMES DANIEL DANIO AND MOISES CRUZ

- [Imee's 'horrible' video struck off the record](#) (2026-05-25 16:19)

THE Senate minority bloc won in its bid to strike off the record a video contained in the privilege speech of Sen. Imee Marcos that linked members of the group to an alleged Charter change (Cha-cha) campaign, denouncing it as untrue and a “propaganda tool.” Except for Sen. Lito Lapid, the rest of the minority bloc stood up to support the motion of Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri to remove the “horrible” video from the Senate records, saying they never discussed Cha-cha in any of their meetings. Sen. Rodante Marcoleta opposed Zubiri’s motion, but Marcos later on relented and agreed to remove the video from her privilege speech. Zubiri, in turn, withdrew his motion. The video in question showed that Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III allegedly discussed Cha-cha with House Speaker Faustino Dy III, allegedly to push term extension, indicating a “no election” scenario in 2028. But Zubiri said the contents of the video sowed intrigue. “It’s unparliamentary. We just want to bring back the integrity of this same chamber,” he said. Zubiri motioned to strike it off the records for violating the Senate Rules particularly Sections 93, 94, 95, on unparliamentary acts and language. “I just want to point out that the video that the lady senator presented was obviously opinionated, a propaganda tool,

[and] it should be stricken off the record,” he said. Senate as circus Zubiri said that if Marcos is dissatisfied with the government, she “should direct her anger toward her brother,” President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. “Curse her brother. But she should not drag other people who have nothing to do with that [Cha-cha moves],” he said. “Cannot we discuss that as a group, as a body? That we fight for our integrity? For the good name to be brought back? For people like Diokno, people like Tañada, people like Aquino, people like Salonga, even Frank Drilon, people like Miriam Defensor Santiago, Joker Arroyo, who stood here for what was the best times of our institution. Have we forgotten that and we’ve made it already like a circus?” he added. Sotto denied any involvement in Cha-cha efforts. “I have nothing to do with that.” Sen. Erwin Tulfo said, “We need respect. We deserve respect. We must not tolerate presentation of unparliamentary acts.” “Clearly, disinformation has no place in this plenary hall,” said Sen. Francis Pangilinan. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian said, “For the record, we never discussed Charter change.” Sen. Panfilo Lacson described Marcos’ allegations as “outright lies, flat out lies.” “Many of us here will not allow a ‘no election’ scenario,” Sen. Bam Aquino said. “Let’s move on. We have been a circus for the past few days. We’ve become the butt of the jokes,” said Sen. Raffy Tulfo. “It’s so embarrassing. Are we going to be always like this?” Sen. Risa Hontiveros asked. “Let us not to be used as platform for misinformation. We must bring back the trust of the people,” said Sen. JV Ejercito. Solid Block 11 Hontiveros said the minority’s “Solid Block 11” (SB-11) would focus on reviving the image of the Senate as it continues to negotiate to install Gatchalian as the new Senate president. The senator on Monday said so far the SB-11 has not been able to convince any member from the 13-man majority group, led by Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano. Aside from Hontiveros and Gatchalian, the other SB-11 members are Sens. Bam Aquino, Panfilo Lacson, Lito Lapid, Kiko Pangilinan, Vicente Sotto III, Erwin Tulfo, Raffy Tulfo, and Migz Zubiri. “No one has been added [so far to the minority bloc]. We are solid 11 in the minority,” Hontiveros said in Filipino during a briefing. She said the “new majority” that the SB-11 wanted to form would be “on the basis of common values, common interest.” “Well, if Senator Win becomes SP that would be good for the Senate,” Hontiveros said. “I have worked with him for about a decade. He is serious about his work as legislator. He stays on the [Senate] floor. He always discusses work with his staff and puts importance on the dignity [of the Senate],” she added. Asked to confirm reports that Sen. Francis Escudero might join the minority to unseat Cayetano, she said, “I heard about that discussion.” “As I mentioned, if it would be Senator Win [to replace Cayetano]. That would be good for the Senate,” Hontiveros said. Pangilinan, in a television interview, confirmed that there were discussions to encourage Escudero to jump to the minority bloc, but these were immediately shot down. “There were intermediaries but not Senator Chiz himself. It was not pursued because the proposition is not acceptable to the Solid 11,” he said. Pangilinan declined to discuss the SB-11’s moves to muster the 13 votes to remove Cayetano. “I’m not part of those assigned from our group to explore a Win Gatchalian Senate presidency. There are several senators on our end doing backchannel talks,” he said.

- [Interpol Red Notice sought for dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-25 16:18)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Justice (DOJ) confirmed that the Philippines is seeking an Interpol Red Notice against Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, intensifying efforts to arrest the fugitive lawmaker on the basis of a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity during the Duterte administration's bloody war on drugs. DOJ spokesman Polo Martinez said the application for an Interpol Red Notice Forms part of the legal remedies available to authorities pursuing dela Rosa. An Interpol Red Notice is a request circulated among law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition or similar legal action. If issued, all 195 Interpol member countries may assist in locating and detaining the subject. The move came as law enforcers continued searching for dela Rosa, who has remained out of public view since May 14. Justice Secretary Frederick Vida earlier declared dela Rosa a fugitive from justice and directed both the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to enforce the ICC arrest warrant. The warrant covers allegations of crimes against humanity involving murder in connection with at least 32 killings linked to anti-drug operations conducted between July 2016 and April 2018 under the administration of former president Rodrigo Duterte. Duterte is detained at The Hague in the Netherlands awaiting trial. The Supreme Court on May 20 denied dela Rosa's petition for a temporary restraining order seeking to stop his arrest. Voting 9-5-1, the tribunal allowed authorities to proceed with enforcement. The Court is expected to release its full resolution, including concurring and dissenting opinions, on Monday. Dela Rosa's wife Grace on Monday posted an appeal to the judiciary not to be an accessory to bringing her husband to The Hague to face trial for crimes against humanity. Grace Nancy dela Rosa made the appeal in an open letter to the judiciary which she posted on Facebook. "Please do not be an accessory to bringing my husband to the Hague. Every Filipino must be tried in his own country," she said. 100 guns Amid the continuing manhunt, NBI Director Melvin Matibag confirmed that the bureau has requested the cancellation of firearms licenses for more than 100 guns reportedly registered under dela Rosa's name. In an interview, Matibag said the NBI had already sent a letter to the PNP seeking revocation of the licenses. The firearms reportedly include automatic rifles, high-powered firearms, and shotguns. The bureau previously tagged dela Rosa as "armed and dangerous" in relation to ongoing efforts to locate and arrest him. Authorities also cited the senator's background as a former PNP chief as a "major concern," saying it could complicate enforcement operations. But the PNP on Monday said it has not received word from the NBI regarding its request that the firearm licenses be revoked. Bounty considered Matibag also disclosed that the DOJ is studying the possibility of offering a bounty or reward for information that could lead to dela Rosa's arrest. "Again, the lead agency here is the Department of Justice. I believe that is being studied and considered, but they will be the ones to announce it," Matibag said. He clarified that the NBI's primary role remains operational, particularly in locating the senator and carrying out lawful arrest orders. "Our role is really to locate him and effect the arrest based on the warrant issued by the ICC," he said. Matibag added that the NBI continues coordinating with other law enforcement agencies, including the PNP, as authorities pursue leads on dela Rosa's whereabouts. The NBI chief also said there is still no official record showing that dela Rosa has left the country. "If we base it on the records of the Bureau of Immigration, there is still no record of his departure," Matibag

said. However, he acknowledged that investigators remain cautious because undocumented exits remain possible, citing the country's numerous entry and exit points and past incidents involving unrecorded departures. Flood of unreliable information Matibag said authorities continue pursuing several leads regarding dela Rosa's possible location, but noted that investigators are also dealing with a flood of unreliable information from the public. "There are many people giving us information that we cannot simply ignore, so we still need to validate these reports, but many eventually turn out negative and cause delays in operations," he said. The NBI director also warned of what he described as a growing spread of misinformation and online exploitation linked to the case, including individuals allegedly using the search for the senator to scam people for money. According to Matibag, some individuals fabricate stories based on circulating news reports before attempting to solicit money from the public. "Please be careful because there are many of these now," he said, adding that the NBI has already identified some individuals allegedly involved in such schemes and is monitoring them. Matibag also cautioned against inflammatory and extreme statements circulating online related to the case, warning that such rhetoric could mislead the public and aggravate tensions. He expressed concern that some individuals may be influenced by calls encouraging violence or self-sacrifice in support of political beliefs, saying authorities are closely monitoring activities that could lead to public disorder.

Mayors speak out Also on Monday, the Mayors for Good Governance questioned the prolonged absence of dela Rosa from Senate sessions, saying ordinary workers would face penalties for the same conduct while still receiving government pay. In a statement, the group said dela Rosa was allegedly absent for about seven months before appearing again on May 14, 2026, to vote in the change of Senate leadership. The organization said the senator continued receiving an estimated monthly salary of about P300,000, which it said could already total about P2.1 million during the period of absence. "For Filipino workers, the rule is 'no work, no pay.' If an ordinary employee did this, whether in government or the private sector, he would surely face suspension or dismissal from work. Why does the law seem different when powerful officials are involved?" the group said. The group said such alleged neglect of duty was unacceptable for officials being paid by taxpayers while Filipinos continue to face high prices, poverty, and livelihood difficulties. "It is a huge insult to millions of Filipinos who continue striving and enduring hardships just to support themselves and their families," the statement read. The organization also called on senators not to allow the Senate to become "a refuge for absenteeism and cover-ups," saying elected officials should not be protected while allegedly avoiding their responsibilities and continuing to receive salaries from public funds. "The lawmakers themselves should lead in following the law, especially the spirit behind why laws were created — for accountability, integrity, and the welfare of the Filipino people," the group added.

- [Defense, energy top priorities in Marcos state visit to Japan](#) (2026-05-25 16:17)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is expected to push for strengthened collaboration in security and energy resilience when he embarks on a state visit to Japan, which runs from May 26 to 29, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Monday. Marcos, accompanied by first lady Liza

Araneta-Marcos and some members of the Cabinet, will also seek deeper cooperation in the fields of maritime and defense, economy, and “emerging and future-oriented sectors” when he meets with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. “The two leaders are also expected to discuss regional and global issues affecting the Philippines and Japan such as Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, and developments in the Middle East,” DFA spokesman Analyn Ratonel said in Filipino in a pre-departure briefing in Malacañang. “The two countries are expected to announce new agreements on defense, trade and investment, and human resources. The president is also scheduled to meet with Japanese business groups and members of the Filipino community in Japan,” she added. Apart from the face-to-face with Takaichi, Marcos is also slated to have an audience with The Emperor and Empress at the Imperial Palace for a welcome ceremony and a state call. This will be followed by a state banquet in honor of the president and the first lady. “The president is also scheduled to meet with Japanese business groups and members of the Filipino community in Japan,” Ratonel said. The Philippines and Japan commemorate this year the 70th anniversary of the normalization of their diplomatic relations.

- [PNP asked to probe possible sabotage of transmission line](#) (2026-05-25 16:16)

THE National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) has asked the Philippine National Police (PNP) to investigate the possible sabotage of a huge transmission line in Batangas province. In a letter to PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. and Batangas City Police head Lt. Col. Lira Morello, the NGCP pointed to the Ilijan-Tayabas 500-kiloVolt (kV) transmission line that tripped on May 13, 2026. The NGCP said the incident occurred after the conductor between Towers 129 and 130 in Barangay Haligue Silangan, also in the city, was severed. The transmission disturbance resulted in the loss of around 1,700 MW of power delivered from generating plants connected to the line. Initial findings following inspections conducted by NGCP personnel showed severance reportedly occurred within the conductor span between spacers and exhibited characteristics that suggested deliberate human intervention. To ensure a thorough and impartial investigation, the NGCP said it was seeking the help of the PNP. It then assured authorities of its full cooperation and committed to provide all relevant technical findings and information needed for the investigation. “Protecting the integrity and security of the country’s transmission network remains critical to maintaining reliable power delivery nationwide,” NGCP said. The privately owned corporation, which is in charge of operating, maintaining, and developing the country’s state-owned power grid, lamented that the incident has affected the already thin generation reserves in Luzon and Visayas, which eventually led to the declaration of red and yellow alerts in both grids. The NGCP, in a statement emailed to The Manila Times, noted that the damage appeared to be inconsistent with normal wear-and-tear or natural causes. It added that prior inspections on the line also showed no defect or abnormality that could have caused such damage. As the country continues to experience tight power supply conditions during periods of high demand, the NGCP cited the importance of safeguarding critical transmission infrastructure.

- [Most Filipinos back territorial defense](#) (2026-05-25 16:15)

A SURVEY commissioned by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) suggests that patriotism and territorial defense remain strong unifying sentiments among Filipinos. The first-quarter survey by Octa Research found that 76 percent of adult Filipinos are willing to support the government in defending Philippine territory and asserting sovereign rights, including in the West Philippine Sea (WPS). The survey, however, also notes that while some regions posted near-unanimous support, others showed unusually high skepticism — particularly in parts of Mindanao and Central Visayas. “The survey’s most critical outlier is the Davao Region,” Octa said, after the area registered the country’s highest disagreement rate at 34 percent — nearly five times the national average of 7 percent. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement: “I love my country, and I am committed to support the government in defending its territory and asserting sovereign rights, including over the West Philippine Sea.” Nationally, only 17 percent said they were undecided. Support was strongest in Metro Manila, where 83 percent agreed with the statement, followed by Balance Luzon at 77 percent. Mimaropa — home to Palawan, the country’s western frontier facing the disputed waters — recorded the highest regional support at 93 percent. Caraga posted 91 percent, and Western Visayas 90 percent. Central Visayas had the lowest agreement rate nationwide at 45 percent, revealing what Octa described as a “48-point gap” between regions. The findings come amid continuing tensions in the West Philippine Sea, where Philippine vessels have repeatedly encountered Chinese maritime forces near contested features. The survey suggests that support for territorial defense is not confined to elites or highly educated sectors. Class D respondents — who comprise the bulk of the population — matched the national average exactly at 76 percent, while rural respondents posted nearly identical support levels as their urban counterparts. “This confirms that patriotic sentiment is deeply rooted in the mass base of Filipino society,” Octa said. The poll also showed that vocational graduates registered the strongest backing for territorial defense at 85 percent, surpassing even college and postgraduate respondents at 80 percent. Filipinos aged 45 to 54 posted the lowest support levels among all age groups at 71 percent. Octa suggested that economic concerns may partly explain the hesitation among middle-aged respondents, saying they could be more cautious about the potential costs of geopolitical conflict. The survey was conducted from March 19 to 25, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 respondents nationwide. It carried a ± 3 percent margin of error at a 95-percent confidence level.

- [DOJ probes dela Rosa escape from Senate](#) (2026-05-25 16:14)

SEN. Robinhood Padilla could be among those summoned in the investigation of the Department of Justice (DOJ) into the disappearance of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag said Monday the DOJ will set the direction of the investigation and decide the individuals who will be summoned. Matibag said Padilla is among the persons of interest who may be asked to shed light on the senator’s last known movements. Padilla admitted that he used his car in bringing dela Rosa out from the Senate and dropping him off on Ayala Avenue in Makati City, where dela Rosa’s own vehicle was waiting. Matibag said that Padilla has been singled out for questioning. “If there is a clear

instruction to us, that is when we will summon those who need to be summoned,” he said. Matibang said Padilla’s account is considered potentially significant, since he was the last known companion of dela Rosa before the senator went missing. He urged Padilla to voluntarily cooperate with the DOJ investigations. Padilla has denied any wrongdoing, saying he did not know what happened after he dropped dela Rosa off and rejecting claims that he helped the senator evade authorities. He also pointed out that there was no arrest warrant at the time. The NBI cited security footage showing a white Toyota van, reportedly registered under Padilla’s name, leaving the Senate complex around 2:30 a.m. on May 14. The departure came hours after a shooting incident at the Senate premises, which has been included in the broader investigation.

- [Marcos names Tolentino as new Labor secretary](#) (2026-05-25 16:13)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. named former senator Francis Tolentino as the new Acting Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Malacañang announced on Monday. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said in a briefing that Tolentino’s appointment was prompted by the decision of Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma’s decision to step down due to health reasons and after the one-year appointment ban on losing 2025 elections candidates lapsed earlier this month. Tolentino was a senatorial candidate of the Marcos-backed Alyansa Para sa Bagong Pilipinas. Asked if Laguesma would be given another government post in the future, Castro stressed she could not preempt the president’s decision, and that it would also largely depend on Laguesma’s medical state. A senator from 2016 to 2022, Tolentino was also chairman of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) from 2010 to 2015 and mayor of Tagaytay City from 1994 to 2004. The leadership change at DOLE is the latest in the Marcos Cabinet. Last week, the president appointed Kim Robert de Leon to head of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

- [Leachon sues Recto over PhilHealth funds](#) (2026-05-25 16:12)

PHYSICIAN Tony Leachon on Monday filed a case of plunder and technical malversation against Executive Secretary Ralph Recto and several other respondents over the transfer of P60 billion from the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) to the national treasury. Leachon said in a media interview that patients were not able to use the amount. In a statement, Recto called the complaint “harassment” and said the transfer was mandated under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2024. “The Supreme Court justices themselves said that I have no criminal liability because I ‘simply followed the law and implemented it in good faith,’ ” Recto said. The complaint “should not be tossed aside gently. It should be thrown out with great force,” he said in a statement. Recto insisted that the transfer, done when he was still secretary of the Department of Finance, was mandated by law under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2024. The “excess” PhilHealth funds have since been restored. Recto said the case “is nothing but a harassment case by a person masquerading as a health reformer, a perennial applicant for Health offices across several presidencies, but always rejected despite his aggressive self-promotion.” “His claim that I have financially benefited

from said PhilHealth funds is an outright falsehood. This is libelous,” he said.

- [Vico Sotto suspends 2 City Hall employees](#) (2026-05-25 16:11)

PASIG Mayor Vico Sotto on Monday said two city government employees were placed under preventive suspension over alleged solicitation from contractors and fixing activities, as he intensified his anti-corruption campaign to include lower levels of the bureaucracy. Sotto said the suspensions reflected the city’s continuing effort to change what he described as deeply rooted corruption practices in government that had long been tolerated or considered normal. One of the suspended employees was from the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), who was allegedly caught soliciting from a contractor connected to the office. Sotto said practices such as asking contractors for birthday or Christmas party contributions may have been treated casually in government before, but stressed these should not be tolerated, especially when public contracts are involved. “This is something that may have become a habit in government, like it’s nothing serious, that it’s not bribery anyway, or the contract was already awarded, so maybe it’s OK to ask for birthday money or Christmas party contributions,” Sotto said. He noted that Pasig City had prohibited contractors from giving contributions to City Hall events and activities shortly after he assumed office in 2019. Another suspended employee from the City Treasurer’s Department allegedly admitted to acting as a fixer for clients, according to the mayor. Sotto said both employees were only under preventive suspension pending administrative proceedings, adding that the cases would still undergo hearings before authorities determine whether they should face heavier penalties, including dismissal from service. The mayor also revealed that personnel from the city’s legal department were under investigation, although he declined to provide details because proceedings were ongoing. Sotto linked the suspensions to the broader reform campaign his administration has pursued since 2019, saying efforts initially focused on procurement systems and operations inside City Hall before expanding toward the village level during his third term. He said investigations involving some village officials were also ongoing before the Pasig City Council’s Blue Ribbon Committee, with preventive suspensions imposed to prevent possible interference with witnesses or evidence. Without naming specific officials, Sotto pointed to alleged cases involving questionable handling of public funds at the village level, including advance releases of community development funds and reports of funds allegedly being used for personal expenses. “It cannot continue that public funds are handled this way for life,” he said. The mayor acknowledged that pursuing administrative cases against government workers and officials could be personally difficult, especially when some involved individuals were known to him, but said reforms would fail if violations continued to be tolerated. He also urged residents to continue reporting irregularities involving public funds while remaining fair in recognizing officials who perform their duties properly.

- [Binondo fire ‘a problem’ but recovery plan ‘soon’](#) (2026-05-25 16:10)

(UPDATE) MANILA Mayor Isko Moreno admitted on Monday that his government was faced with the “problem” of helping residents affected by last week’s fire of recovering “soon” but

assured them that there was “a plan” and hoped to bring some “good news” to the victims. Speaking at the city’s weekly flag ceremony, Moreno said the city government was already preparing measures to help “within the day” more than 2,000 displaced residents after the fire that struck Binondo. “The problem now is how they will recover soon. But, again, in our own little way, we have a plan. Hopefully, within a day, we can bring some good news to our fellow Manileños,” said Moreno. In a previous interview, Moreno said the city would provide financial assistance to affected families. The blaze erupted Saturday afternoon at the Parola Compound and escalated to Task Force Charlie before firefighters were able to fully extinguish it after around six hours.

- [Maynilad: emergency repairs slated](#) (2026-05-25 16:09)

(UPDATE) MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. on Monday said that it was conducting emergency repair activities on a damaged pipeline in Ermita, Manila, to prevent further water loss in affected areas. “We are currently undertaking emergency repair works to prevent further water loss. Water service will resume gradually after repair completion, system re-energization, and pressure build-up. Mobile water tankers are being deployed as needed to assist affected customers,” Maynilad said. The company said that it was also validating the latest repair completion and service restoration estimate, as well as the final affected customer count. Parts of Las Piñas City, Parañaque City, and Pasay City in Metro Manila and parts of Bacoor City, Cavite City, Imus City, Noveleta, Kawit, and Rosario in Cavite experienced unannounced water interruptions on May 24, starting at 5 a.m. because a 750-millimeter-diameter water pipeline along A. Villegas Street corner N. Lopez Street was damaged by a drainage contractor of the Manila City government, prompting emergency repairs. The water concessionaire said that repairs were initially projected to be done by May 26 at 1 a.m.

- [Mass tree-cutting in Manila a ‘direct assault on the poor’](#) (2026-05-25 16:08)

CARITAS Philippines said the mass-cutting of trees along Quirino Avenue in Manila was a “direct assault on the poor.” The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has authorized cutting 600 trees to make way for the construction of San Miguel Corporation’s Southern Access Link Expressway project, which will connect the Skyway to Roxas Boulevard. About 200 trees have been taken down. Caritas Philippines President Bishop Gerardo Alminaza said on Monday that the decades-old trees have long provided shade for the public, shielding them from extreme heat and offering respite amid their daily work. Alminaza said the trees play a critical role in mitigating the urban heat island effect, improving air quality, and reducing flood risks in a city already grappling with the harsh realities of the climate crisis. “Now, these trees are being reduced to bleeding stumps to make way for another expressway under the guise of ‘progress,’ thereby flattening our urban environment and, once again, asking the poor to pay the highest price,” he said. Alminaza questioned why “progress” has to jeopardize vulnerable sectors. “Why are our cities designed for vehicles and concrete instead of for children, workers, pedestrians, and the elderly?” he said. The mass tree cutting is not just an environmental issue but a moral failure, a “wound inflicted on our

common home" and a glaring example of environmental injustice, Alminaza said. He called for a shift in how development is conceptualized, urging leaders to prioritize projects that enhance life rather than erode it. Alminaza urged a halt to the tree-cutting and a review of infrastructure projects through the lens of ecological justice. He emphasized that such decisions must prioritize the welfare of communities and the environment over corporate gains and vehicle-centric urban planning. Quoting Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, the bishop warned against a "throwaway culture" that views both nature and vulnerable communities as expendable in the pursuit of profit. Alminaza rallied the faithful to "demand to keep and defend the remaining green spaces of our cities. Demand accountability from our leaders. Demand on a development that gives life, rather than one that leaves us in the shadows of stumps." On Monday, the DENR said that no trees on Quirino Avenue or at the Berong Nickel Project in Palawan were removed without a legal basis, environmental safeguards, or rehabilitation plans. "We assure the public that no tree is authorized for removal without [a] strict legal basis, environmental safeguards, and long term rehabilitation requirements," it said in a statement. For the Berong Nickel Project, the DENR has authorized the cutting of 26,617 trees and the earth-balling and transplanting of 43,743 saplings. The DENR, the Berong Nickel Project has "one of the highest mitigation standards in the country." For every tree approved for cutting, the project proponent must plant 100 indigenous or mangrove seedlings, totaling an estimated minimum of 2.66 million seedlings. The trees must include pagatpat, api-api, and other DENR-approved native species suited for the area's rehabilitation needs. It said the Palawan project will be implemented in phases, with each phase occurring simultaneously with the planting of replacement trees to guarantee ecological recovery. The project proponent is also required to maintain the planted seedlings for at least three years to guarantee survival, followed by long-term protection and stewardship of the rehabilitated areas. Local families and communities should handle the planting, maintenance, and protection activities. Payments to the community will be released only after the DENR validates their work. The progress in the rehabilitation efforts will be tracked through geo-tagged monitoring reports and supervised by DENR foresters together with a Multipartite Monitoring Team composed of government, local government units, community members, and civil society. The project must also maintain 20-meter buffer zones along all rivers and waterways and rehabilitate any non-minable or protected areas. "These safeguards — similar to the strict conditions imposed [on] Quirino Avenue — ensure transparency, accountability, and long-term ecological recovery," the DENR said. "We assure the public that the DENR is closely supervising every phase of the activity and enforcing all safeguards. Our priority is to protect communities, uphold the law, and ensure that the environment gains more than it loses. We ask for the public's calm and continued engagement as we carry out our mandate with transparency and care," said the agency.

- [What we know and don't know about the emerging deal to end the Iran war](#) (2026-05-25 16:07)

CAIRO — The United States and Iran appear to be closing in on a deal to end the war and open the Strait of Hormuz. U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that negotiations are

“proceeding nicely,” while reiterating his warning that fighting would resume if no deal is reached. It is not clear when or how the deal might be finalized and when its various parts will take effect. Details come from two regional officials and a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations. An Iranian delegation led by parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf traveled to Qatar on Monday as part of talks, though it wasn’t immediately clear what would be discussed. Qalibaf led historic face-to-face talks with Vice President JD Vance in Pakistan last month. Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Esmail Baghaei, said that while understandings have been reached on “a large portion of the issues,” there was still work to be done. “To say that this means an agreement is on the verge of being signed is not something anyone can claim,” he told reporters. Here’s what we know and don’t know: The war would end. In the 12 weeks since the U.S. and Israel launched the war with attacks that killed Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top officials, Tehran has insisted that any deal focus on ending the fighting on all fronts. That includes Lebanon, where the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group has been fighting Israel since two days into the war. A fragile ceasefire has held since April 7, despite occasional drone and missile attacks on the United Arab Emirates and some exchanges of fire in the Strait of Hormuz. A more permanent truce would allow for global shipping, including an estimated 20% of the world’s oil, to begin flowing through the strait again. It also would allow the rebuilding of energy and other infrastructure in the region. Both regional officials said the draft deal includes an end to the war between Israel and Hezbollah, as well as a commitment to not interfere in the domestic affairs of countries in the region. That’s a reference to Iran’s support for proxies, including Houthi rebels in Yemen, Hamas militants in Gaza and Shiite armed groups in Iraq. The U.S. wants Israel to have a free hand to respond to what they view as threats in Lebanon, while Iran rejects it, one regional official said. The U.S. official said the deal would guarantee Israel’s right to act against imminent threats in self-defense. The Strait of Hormuz would reopen gradually. The stated objectives of the U.S. and Israel were to dismantle Iran’s nuclear program, curb its missile program and end its support for armed proxies. But Iran’s chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, which was open to international shipping before the war, quickly shot to the top of global concerns as hundreds of ships carrying oil, natural gas, fertilizer and other supplies were stranded, causing a spike in prices far beyond the region. Under the emerging agreement, the strait would gradually reopen in parallel with the U.S. ending the blockade of Iran’s ports it imposed on April 17, the regional officials said. The blockade has limited Iran’s ability to ship its oil and bring in badly needed cash for its long-suffering economy. The U.S. would allow Iran to sell its oil through sanctions waivers, said one of the officials, who has been briefed on the negotiations. Sanctions relief and the release of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian funds would be negotiated during a 60-day period, the official said. Iran would give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium. Iran’s nuclear program and international concerns over its possible pursuit of a nuclear weapon underlie the tensions. The U.S. and Israel have considered highly complex military operations to go in and take out its highly enriched uranium. Under the potential deal, Tehran would agree to give up that stockpile, according to the regional officials. One official, with direct knowledge of the negotiations, said how Iran would give it up would be subject to further talks over the 60-day period. Some would likely be diluted and the rest transferred to a

third country, the official said. Russia has offered to take it. A U.S. official confirmed the 60-day period and said if Iran doesn't give up its stockpile, there will be no sanctions relief. Baghaei, the Iranian spokesperson, said "the focus of the negotiations is on ending the war, and at this stage we are not discussing the details of the nuclear issue." Iran has 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of uranium that is enriched up to 60% purity, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90%, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran says it has an "inalienable" right to nuclear technology while insisting its program is peaceful. On Sunday, President Masoud Pezeshkian told state TV they were ready "to assure the world that we are not after a nuclear weapon." What appears to be missing "Negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are proceeding nicely!" Trump wrote on social media Monday. "It will only be a Great Deal for all or, no Deal at all — Back to the Battlefield and shooting, but bigger and stronger than ever before — And nobody wants that!" Despite the claims of progress, several issues appear to be unsettled, including whether Iran would be able to enrich uranium and to what level, and the fate of its missile program, which Israel in particular views as a major threat. While the United States and Israel entered the war with the stated hope of seeing Iranians rise up against their government after nationwide protests early in the year, any discussion of leadership change in Tehran appears to be out. As for Iran's past stated aims during negotiations, there appears to be no mention of any withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region, or for reparations for the damage the war has caused.

- [Group wants LTO probed over data privacy, national security risks](#) (2026-05-25 16:07)

A CIVIC organization advocating for Philippine data sovereignty has asked the National Privacy Commission (NPC) to investigate the Land Transportation Office (LTO) over alleged security and data privacy concerns involving the agency's driver's license system. In a letter to NPC Commissioner and Chairman Johann Carlos Barcena, a copy of which was obtained by The Manila Times, the Flag Maharlika, alleged that Dermalog, a foreign technology provider LTO previously contracted, has gained access to and control of the agency's driver's license inventory and printing application modules. The group said the LTO's own Management Information Division reportedly concluded in a 2020 report that Dermalog had "access and control" over the modules. The same report allegedly warned that the situation posed a potential national security threat because driver's license cards could be printed beyond the direct control of the Philippine government, it said. Flag Maharlika also cited concerns that certain system functions allegedly required assistance from personnel based outside the Philippines, raising questions regarding cross-border access to sensitive personal information of Filipino motorists. Salvador Piamonte, head of the group's Community Affairs, said the issue goes beyond administrative concerns, stressing that millions of Filipinos may potentially be affected if personal data security safeguards are found inadequate. Piamonte noted that the LTO database contains highly sensitive information, including names, addresses, photographs, biometric identifiers, signatures, government-issued identification numbers, and driver's license classifications. Under the Data Privacy Act, government agencies acting as personal information controllers must implement organizational, physical and technical safeguards to

protect personal information from unauthorized access, disclosure, misuse, or transfer. The group also asked the NPC to require public disclosure of entities and individuals with administrative access to the driver's license systems, determine whether cross-border processing or foreign access to Filipino motorists' personal information occurred and recommend appropriate administrative or criminal action should violations be established. It called on the concerned authorities to strengthen safeguards protecting government-held data, emphasizing that issues involving national identification and driver's license systems directly impact public trust, national security, and digital sovereignty. The LTO and Dermalog have yet to issue statements on the group's request before the commission.

- [Approaching LPA likely to turn into a storm](#) (2026-05-25 16:06)

THE low-pressure area (LPA) outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) could become a tropical depression, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said on Monday. The LPA was estimated at 1,515 kilometers east of northeastern Mindanao. Pagasa did not say if the LPA would enter PAR, but its trough or extension is already affecting Mindanao and Palawan, bringing cloudiness with scattered rains and thunderstorms. The Bicol Region and Quezon would likely have cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated showers or thunderstorms due to the easterlies — winds that carry warm and humid weather. Metro Manila and the rest of the country would have a similar weather pattern due to the effect of localized thunderstorms in 24 hours.

- [Ejercito concerned over difficulty tracking fake recruiters online](#) (2026-05-25 16:05)

SEN. JV Ejercito, on Monday, deplored the difficulties in tracking and prosecuting online illegal recruitment syndicates targeting Filipinos seeking work overseas. Ejercito said online platforms have become a primary tool for syndicates preying on aspiring OFWs, and that such scams are now “very difficult to detect.” Sen. Raffy Tulfo, Committee on Migrant Workers chairman, led the hearing on several bills promoting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Ejercito asked Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac how existing laws could be strengthened against bogus online job offers proliferating on platforms, such as Facebook and TikTok. “Maybe that's all we can ask so that this can help us formally or amend some laws so that we can strengthen to dismantle recruitment agencies targeting our OFWs,” Ejercito said in English and Filipino. Cacdac said his department has coordinated with digital platforms such as Meta (Facebook) Philippines and TikTok in removing illegal recruitment content. He said concerned authorities still face challenges in identifying and going after the operators behind illegal job offers. “The bigger scourge, I believe, is those who are not licensed by the DMW,” Cacdac said. He said many fake or “dummy” recruitment pages impersonate legitimate agencies, while others are not registered at all. Ejercito asked the DMW about the “common gaps” encountered by authorities in building cases against illegal recruiters. Cacdac said the problem involves “extra-territorial jurisdiction” because some syndicates are based abroad.

- [Dupont, Capuozzo returns hand Toulouse Top 14 run-in boost](#) (2026-05-25 16:04)

TOULOUSE, France — France scrum-half Antoine Dupont and Italy full-back Ange Capuozzo have recovered from injuries to help Toulouse's French Top 14 bid, the record 24-time champions announced on Monday. Dupont missed Toulouse's last game, a 38-10 defeat at La Rochelle on May 17, because of a groin niggle while Capuozzo has been sidelined with a shoulder injury since February 22. The bad news for Toulouse, who are chasing a fourth successive Brennus title, is that France back-rower Anthony Jelouch will be out until the end of the season after dislocating his shoulder in mid-April. Dupont, Capuozzo as well as Scotland full-back Blair Kinghorn, who sustained a rib issue against La Rochelle, are set to feature against Lyon on Saturday. Toulouse lead the Top 14 table with two rounds of the regular season to play. They have already booked their place in the play-offs but victory this weekend would send them directly into the semi-finals, to be held in Marseille on the weekend of June 19-20.

- [Speaker backs social pension for all senior citizens](#) (2026-05-25 16:04)

SPEAKER Faustino "Bojie" Dy III on Monday showed support for having all senior citizens receive social pension. "I believe that true service starts with listening, understanding, compassion, and love," Dy said in Filipino before senior citizens' groups, lawmakers, and universal senior citizen social pension supporters at the turnover of over a million signatures supporting such a universal social pension. Currently, the social pension program for senior citizens, which provides P1,000 to those qualified, covers only indigent ones. A bill to make social pension universal is pending at the House Committee on Appropriations. Dy said a universal social pension for senior citizens "is not simply about assistance — it is about dignity, gratitude and compassion." "Given the costs of medicine, food and health care, our seniors must be provided support to help them afford all of their basic needs," he said. "Let us always remember: The true measure of a nation is how it cares for its most vulnerable citizens," Dy said. The turnover of the signatures, which were gathered nationwide, was led by United Senior Citizens Rep. Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay, who is the chairman of the House Committee on Senior Citizens. Aquino-Magsaysay said the group hopes to gather more signatures "until our voices are heard and our signatures turn into law." She said she has appealed to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to support social pension for all senior citizens. Dy assured her the House "will continue to support the right steps that will ease and improve their lives because this is humane and just."

- [House panel changes not linked to vote – impeach trial spokesman](#) (2026-05-25 16:03)

COMMITTEE changes in the House of Representatives were not meant to influence the decision of lawmakers on whether to impeach Vice President Sara Duterte, House Assistant Minority Leader and Kabataan Rep. Renee Co said. "This is not, in our view, connected to voting for or against on a particular issue," Co, one of the House's two impeachment trial spokesmen, said in Filipino and English in an interview on Sunday with DWIZ. The House voted to impeach Duterte on May 11 over the alleged misuse of confidential funds, the amassing of unexplained wealth, bribery and threats to kill President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his wife, and former speaker Martin Romualdez. Duterte denies the allegations. The articles of impeachment have been

submitted to the Senate, and the trial is expected to start by June. If found guilty of any of the complaints, Duterte will be removed as vice president and faces a lifetime ban from holding any government position.

- [Cardinal flays Cayetano for saying drug war was ‘pro-life’](#) (2026-05-25 16:02)

KALOOKAN Bishop Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David slammed Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano for saying that former president Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs was a “pro-life campaign.” On Facebook Live on Saturday, Cayetano remarked that the “campaign against drugs is a human rights campaign. It’s a pro-life campaign, because drugs kill.” On a Facebook post Sunday, David questioned whether Cayetano can personally make his remarks to the families of victims of the bloody anti-drug campaign. “I wonder if he can say this straight to the faces of the thousands of women widowed and children orphaned when their loved ones — on mere suspicion of drug involvement and without benefit of due process — were murdered in cold blood,” David said. He recalled that many of the victims of the war on drugs were abducted, tortured and left dead in public places. “Countless victims were not simply shot. They were abducted, tortured then dropped dead in the streets, their heads wrapped in plastic bags, sealed with packaging tape around their necks — left to struggle for their last gasp of oxygen until they breathed no more,” David said. He said defending or legitimizing extrajudicial killings could have legal consequences under international law, stressing that they could constitute “instigation” or “aiding and abetting” crimes against humanity under Article 25 of the Rome Statute if they embolden perpetrators and create a sense of impunity. “Mr. Cayetano should know that under international law, public statements that frame extrajudicial killings as ‘pro-life’ — that rehabilitate and legitimize a campaign of murder — do not enjoy the protection of free speech,” he said. “Words have consequences. Words have victims. And in international criminal law, words have accountability,” David said.

- [Pope calls for robust regulation of AI in manifesto that ponders the future of humanity](#) (2026-05-25 16:00)

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV called Monday for robust regulation of artificial intelligence and for its developers to work for the common good rather than profit, issuing a sweeping manifesto on safeguarding humankind as the technology impacts everything from work to war. “Magnifica Humanitas” (Magnificent Humanity), Leo’s first encyclical, has been eagerly awaited ever since history’s first U.S.-born pope announced days after his election that he considered AI to be the biggest challenge facing humanity today. In the text, Leo denounced the “culture of power” driving the AI race, especially in developing ever more sophisticated methods of remote warfare. He declared that it was “not permissible” to entrust irreversible, lethal decisions to AI systems, setting up another flash point between the American pope and the Trump administration, which has worked aggressively to deregulate AI development. “Artificial Intelligence now demands to be disarmed, freed from logics that turn it into an instrument of domination, exclusion and death,” the pope told a special Vatican presentation of the encyclical, one of the most authoritative types of teaching documents a

pope can issue. Experts in the tech industry, academia and Catholic morality said the document will likely become a benchmark in the debate over AI, a point of reference for policymakers, researchers and ordinary folk alike. It comes as the near-daily developments in the technology trigger concerns over AI replacing human jobs and even human intelligence. Taylor Black, a Microsoft AI executive and director of Catholic University of America's AI institute, said the document would prompt people "at the forefront of these tools" to ask questions such as "What does it mean to be human?" Pope calls out AI companies even as he hosts Anthropic.

The Vatican launch also included remarks by the co-founder of Anthropic, which is currently locked in a legal battle with the Trump administration over access to its AI technology. The Vatican decided to involve Anthropic as part of its decade-long effort to engage Silicon Valley in dialogue over the human cost of AI. And yet in his text, Leo repeatedly blasted the concentration of power and data in the hands of so few people in the private sector as a danger, especially to children and the most vulnerable, and called for external regulation of their work. "It is not enough to invoke ethics in the abstract; robust legal frameworks, independent oversight, informed users and a political system that does not abdicate its responsibility are required," he wrote. "A more moral AI is not enough if that morality is determined by a few." Leo appealed to AI developers and political leaders responsible for regulating them to slow down and reflect on what they are doing. He urged them to use ethical and spiritual guidelines to make the choice to work not for their own profit or power, but the betterment of humanity.

AI competitors OpenAI and Anthropic are the second- and third-most valuable U.S. private companies, each valued at hundreds of billions of dollars, more than the GDP of many nations. Both companies are heading toward near-trillion dollar IPOs. Anthropic co-founder Christopher Olah welcomed Leo's criticism and concern. He said such external checks were fundamental to the technology "going well" for humankind since there is so much at stake — "a real possibility that AI will displace human labor at a very large scale." "We need more of the world — religious communities, civil society, scholars, governments — to do what His Holiness has done here: to take this seriously, to look closely, and to push events in a better direction," Olah said. "We need moral voices that the incentives cannot bend." Experts say the text will become a benchmark.

In a methodical text, the math major pope traced the history of the Catholic Church's social teaching and applied its core concepts — justice, solidarity, the dignity of work and the universal destination of resources — to the digital revolution. "I am convinced that this will prove to be a defining document for our era, a profound and prophetic document," said Paolo Carozza, law professor at Notre Dame Law School and chair of the Meta Oversight Board. "Pope Leo is offering a clear, comprehensive, and coherent voice urging us to take responsibility for constructing a world in which technology will serve humans rather than degrade them," he said.

In its strongest chapters, Leo denounced how AI had helped accelerate the "normalization of war" by desensitizing people to its cost. He didn't name specific conflicts, but cited "opposing imperialisms, between powers that wish to preserve their supremacy, and those that aspire to seize that supremacy." He demanded transparency and accountability by AI developers so that the chain of decision-making command in ordering strikes with AI weaponry is always known. He declared that the Catholic Church's "just war" theory, which provides specific criteria for when force can be justified, was now "outdated"

given the technological advances of warfare. A text in the church's social justice tradition Leo signed the text May 15, the 135th anniversary of the publication of "Rerum Novarum" (Of New Things), the most important teaching document of Leo's hero and namesake, Pope Leo XIII. That document addressed workers' rights, the limits of capitalism, and the obligations that states and employers owed workers as the Industrial Revolution was underway. It became the foundation of modern Catholic social thought, and the current pope cited it at the start of his pontificate in relation to the AI revolution, which he believes poses the same existential questions that the Industrial Revolution posed over a century ago. "Magnifica Humanitas" thus becomes the latest chapter in a century-long history of popes adapting "Rerum Novarum" to the social questions of their times, often dwelling on the dignity of work for human flourishing. AI is evoking both existential fears and utopian vision amid an intensifying debate on whether it will become a catalyst that enriches humanity or a technological toxin that dulls human intelligence while wiping out millions of high-paying jobs. "The pursuit of greater profits cannot justify choices that systematically sacrifice jobs, because the human person is an end, not a means, and the economic order must remain subordinate to human dignity and the common good," Leo wrote. Leo extended his concern for upholding human dignity in labor to issue the first-ever papal apology for the Holy See's own role in legitimizing slavery by giving European sovereigns explicit authority to subjugate and enslave "infidels." A decade-long dialogue with Silicon Valley Vatican officials declined to say who contributed to Leo's encyclical. But Vatican and church officials have been engaged in a dialogue with Silicon Valley tech firms for a decade. The decision to include Anthropic at the Vatican launch was criticized by some who considered it a papal stamp of approval of the AI firm, which is currently suing the Trump administration after it ordered all U.S. agencies to stop using Anthropic's technology for its refusal to allow the U.S. military unrestricted use of it. Brian Boyd, U.S. faith liaison for the nonprofit Future of Life Institute, read the inclusion of Anthropic's co-founder Olah as a recognition of its prominence in the field and as similar to a papal audience with a head of state: not an endorsement. Anthropic is an "enormous corporation that is taking onto itself an enormous risk and responsibility," Boyd said, adding that the company has "demonstrated genuine goodwill and integrity and interest in dialogue."

- [WHO urges DRC's neighbours to act immediately on Ebola](#) (2026-05-25 15:56)

GENEVA, Switzerland — The countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of Congo are at high risk from Ebola and should act immediately to counter the virus, the World Health Organisation's head said on Monday. "Countries bordering DRC are at especially high risk and should take immediate action," said WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, adding that he would travel on Tuesday to the DRC, the epicentre of the current outbreak of the deadly disease. "The outbreak is spreading rapidly," Tedros told a virtual ministerial meeting on the viral haemorrhagic fever, which spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids. It can cause severe bleeding and organ failure. He said the current outbreak was "especially challenging". "First, the delay in detecting the outbreak means that we are now playing catch-up with a very fast-moving epidemic. We are urgently scaling up operations but at the moment, the

epidemic is outpacing us," he said by videolink from Geneva. Secondly, the eastern provinces of the DRC, where the outbreak was first detected on May 15, "are highly insecure, with intensified fighting in recent months (and) there is also significant distrust of outside authorities among the local population". Thirdly, he pointed out, there were "no approved vaccines or therapeutics" for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola behind the current outbreak. The WHO has recorded 10 confirmed Ebola deaths and 220 suspected deaths in the DRC since May 15. One person is confirmed dead in neighbouring Uganda. Ten African countries are at risk of being affected by the Ebola virus, in addition to the DRC and Uganda, the African Union's health agency, Africa CDC, warned on Saturday.

• [Huawei touts new chipmaking technology to sidestep US restrictions](#) (2026-05-25 15:51)

SHANGHAI, China—Chinese tech giant Huawei said on Monday it had developed a new way of making semiconductors that could get around its US-enforced lack of access to the most advanced chipmaking equipment. Huawei has been at the centre of a geopolitical standoff in recent years after Washington warned its equipment could be used by the Chinese government for espionage, an allegation the firm denies. Sanctions since 2019 have cut Huawei's access to components and technologies made by the United States and some of its allies -- including the lithography machines used to make the world's most advanced chips. However, the head of Huawei's semiconductor division He Tingbo said on Monday that the company will be able to produce chips equivalent to next-generation 1.4-nanometre (1.4nm) ones by 2031. Taiwan's TSMC, the industry leader, has projected it will be able to do the same by 2028. Cutting-edge chips that can train and power artificial intelligence systems are a crucial and highly sensitive element of the technology rivalry between the United States and China. The computing power of chips has increased dramatically over the decades as makers cram them with more microscopic electronic components. Huawei's announcement suggests it might have sidestepped the need for extreme ultraviolet lithography (EUV) machines, which have been considered crucial for mass manufacturing chips of 5nm or under. "Over the past six years, I have often been asked... how did you survive and come back on top?" He said in a presentation to the International Symposium on Circuits and Systems (ISCAS) in Shanghai. She said the new technique came about through a shift in how chipmaking has been conceptualised historically. "Moore's Law", a principle developed by Intel co-founder Gordon Moore, states that the number of transistors -- devices regulating the flow of electricity -- on a chip doubles every two years. A higher density of transistors results in a smaller chip or one the same size with faster processing power. He proposed on Monday "the Tau Scaling Law", or "Her's Law", by which instead of optimising for space, designers optimise for the time taken for the various elements making up a chip to communicate. This overcomes a key challenge facing Moore's Law that Intel sums up as: "You can make something smaller and smaller and smaller... until you can't". US sanctions have meant that "these challenges arrived earlier and are tougher" for Huawei, He said. "Our solution is feasible and affordable. The performance of the new chip can fully compete with that of the other path," she said. Huawei's next iteration of its Kirin chip, set to launch in the autumn, will be the first to fully adopt an architecture called "LogicFolding" based on the new principle, the

company said. No way out" Over the past six years, there was a period when I felt quite frustrated, as if there was really no way out," He told reporters after the ISCAS presentation. But she said she had been inspired by "a masterpiece of engineering", southwestern China's Dujiangyan irrigation system that was originally constructed around 256 BC. She said she realised she was just facing problems others would come across 10 years later. "I can confidently say in the coming 10 years our solutions for mobile computing and AI computing will be competitive," He told reporters. But she acknowledged that obstacles remained in scaling up -- not least the necessity for new design tools and the challenges of overheating. The Tau Scaling Law "underscores the company's ambition to lead rather than follow in the global chip race", said George Chen, Partner and Chair of Digital Practice at The Asia Group. "Even without a new product launch today, Huawei's intent is clear — and its trajectory will likely heighten US concerns."

• [Ombudsman seeks hold order vs Marcoleta, Defensor, 2 others](#) (2026-05-25 15:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman is seeking a precautionary Hold Departure Order (PHDO) against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta, former lawmaker Michael Defensor and two others. Its Verified Ex Parte Application For the Issuance of a Precautionary Hold Departure Order was filed on Monday before the Sandiganbayan. Ombudsman field investigators filed a complaint against Marcoleta, Defensor, Aristotle Viray, and Joseph Espiritu last May 18, alleging that "Marcoleta's acceptance of gifts with an aggregate amount of P75 Million on three separate occasions constitute the crime of plunder." "Aside from the lack of a clear purpose or pending transaction for which the amounts received may be a consideration, there is no showing that the gifts would still be given were it not for Respondent's position on government. Hence it cannot be denied that the P75 Million was given by Respondents Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray by reason of Respondent Marcoleta's office," the investigators said. Defensor countered that "there was no illegal act, no corrupt transaction, no favor sought, and absolutely no conspiracy to commit any crime." Marcoleta said in a post on Facebook that the complaint was "without evidence of public injury, official favor, corrupt consideration, or abuse of office".

• [Celebrity birthdays for the week of May 24-30 includes Octavia Spencer and Carey Mulligan](#) (2026-05-25 15:02)

Celebrity birthdays for the week of May 24-30: May 24: Jazz saxophonist Archie Shepp is 89. Comedian Tommy Chong of Cheech and Chong is 88. Musician Bob Dylan is 85. Actor Gary Burghoff ("MASH") is 83. Singer Patti LaBelle is 82. Actor Priscilla Presley is 81. Country singer-songwriter Mike Reid is 79. Actor Jim Broadbent ("Moulin Rouge," "Iris") is 77. Actor Alfred Molina is 73. Singer Rosanne Cash is 71. Actor Cliff Parisi ("Call the Midwife") is 66. Actor Kristin Scott Thomas is 66. Actor John C. Reilly ("Chicago," "Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story") is 61. Actor Dana Ashbrook ("Twin Peaks") is 59. Actor Eric Close ("Nashville," "Without a Trace") is 59. Actor Carl Payne ("Martin," "The Cosby Show") is 57. Guitarist Rich Robinson of The Black Crowes is 57. Actor Dash Mihok ("Silver Linings Playbook") is 52. Actor

Bryan Greenberg (film's "Bride Wars," TV's "One Tree Hill") is 48. Actor Billy L. Sullivan ("Something So Right") is 46. Actor-rapper Big Tyme is 45. Drummer Cody Hanson of Hinder is 44. Dancer Mark Ballas ("Dancing With the Stars") is 40. Country singer Billy Gilman is 38. Rapper G-Eazy is 37. Actor Cayden Boyd ("The Adventures of Shark Boy and Lava Girl") is 32. May 25: Actor Ann Robinson ("War of the Worlds") is 97. Actor Ian McKellen ("Lord of the Rings") is 87. Country singer Jessi Colter is 83. Actor-singer Leslie Uggams is 83. Director-Muppeteer Frank Oz is 82. Actor Karen Valentine is 79. Actor Jacki Weaver ("Silver Linings Playbook") is 79. Singer Klaus Meine of Scorpions is 79. Actor Patti D' Arbanville ("New York Undercover") is 75. Actor Connie Sellecca is 71. Singer-guitarist Paul Weller of The Jam is 68. Actor-comedian Mike Myers is 63. Actor Joseph Reitman ("The Perfect Storm") is 58. Actors Sidney and Lindsay Greenbush ("Little House on the Prairie") are 56. Actor Jamie Kennedy ("Scream") is 56. Actor Octavia Spencer ("Hidden Figures," "The Help") is 56. Actor Justin Henry ("Kramer Vs. Kramer," "Sixteen Candles") is 55. Rapper Daz Dillinger of Tha Dogg Pound is 53. Actor Erinn Hayes ("Kevin Can Wait") is 50. Actor Cillian Murphy ("Oppenheimer," "The Dark Knight") is 50. Actor Ethan Suplee ("My Name Is Earl") is 50. Actor Lauren Frost ("Even Stevens") is 41. Actor Ebonée Noel (TV's "FBI") is 36. Musician Guy Lawrence of Disclosure is 35. May 26: Sportscaster Brent Musburger is 87. Drummer Garry Peterson of The Guess Who is 81. Singer Stevie Nicks is 78. Actor Pam Grier is 77. Actor Philip Michael Thomas ("Miami Vice") is 77. Country singer Hank Williams Jr. is 77. Actor Margaret Colin is 68. Singer Dave Robbins (BlackHawk) is 67. Actor Doug Hutchison ("The Green Mile") is 66. Actor Genie Francis ("General Hospital") is 64. Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait is 64. Singer Lenny Kravitz is 62. Actor Helena Bonham Carter is 60. Drummer Phillip Rhodes of The Gin Blossoms is 58. Actor Joseph Fiennes ("Shakespeare in Love") is 56. Singer Joey Kibble of Take 6 is 55. "South Park" co-creator Matt Stone is 55. Singer Lauryn Hill is 51. Bassist Nathan Cochran of MercyMe is 48. Actor Elisabeth Harnois ("CSI") is 47. Actor Hrach Titizian ("Homeland") is 47. May 27: Actor Lee Meriwether is 91. Actor Bruce Weitz is 83. Singer Bruce Cockburn is 81. Jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater is 76. Actor Richard Schiff ("The Good Doctor," "The West Wing") is 71. Singer Siouxsie Sioux of Siouxsie and the Banshees is 69. Singer-guitarist Neil Finn of Crowded House and Split Enz is 68. Actor Peri Gilpin ("Frasier") is 65. Actor Cathy Silvers ("Happy Days") is 65. Comedian Adam Carolla is 62. Actor Todd Bridges ("Diff' rent Strokes") is 61. Drummer Sean Kinney of Alice In Chains is 60. Actor Dondre' Whitfield ("Queen Sugar") is 57. Actor Paul Bettany ("The Da Vinci Code," "A Beautiful Mind") is 55. Singer-guitarist Brian Desveaux of Nine Days is 55. Actor Jack McBrayer ("30 Rock") is 53. Musician Andre 3000 of Outkast is 51. Rapper Jadakiss is 51. TV chef Jamie Oliver is 51. Actor Ben Feldman ("Mad Men") is 46. Actor Darin Brooks ("The Bold and the Beautiful") is 42. Actor Chris Colfer ("Glee") is 36. Actor Ethan Dampf ("American Dreams") is 32. Actor Desiree Ross ("Greenleaf") is 27. May 28: Actor Carroll Baker is 95. Singer Gladys Knight is 82. Singer Billy Vera is 82. Singer John Fogerty is 81. Musician Jerry Douglas of Alison Krauss and Union Station is 70. Actor Louis Mustillo ("Mike and Molly") is 68. Actor Brandon Cruz ("The Courtship of Eddie's Father") is 64. Actor Christa Miller ("Scrubs," "The Drew Carey Show") is 62. Country singer Phil Vassar is 62. Singer Chris Ballew of Presidents of the United States of America is 61. Singer Kylie Minogue is 58. Rapper

Chubb Rock is 58. Actor Justin Kirk (“Weeds”) is 57. Talk show host Elisabeth Hasselbeck (“Fox and Friends,” “The View”) is 49. R&B singer Jaheim is 49. Actor Jake Johnson (“New Girl”) is 48. Actor Monica Keena (“Dawson’s Creek,” “Undeclared”) is 47. Actor Alexa Davalos (“Clash of the Titans” “The Chronicles of Riddick”) is 44. Actor Megalyn Echikunwoke (“24”) is 44. Singer Colbie Caillat is 41. Actor Carey Mulligan (“The Great Gatsby”) is 41. May 29: Singer Rebbie Jackson is 76. Composer Danny Elfman (Oingo Boingo) is 73. Singer LaToya Jackson is 70. Actor Ted Levine (“Monk,” “The Silence of the Lambs”) is 69. Actor Annette Bening is 68. Actor Rupert Everett is 67. Actor Adrian Paul (TV’s “The Highlander”) is 67. Singer Melissa Etheridge is 65. Actor Lisa Whelchel (“The Facts of Life”) is 63. Guitarist Noel Gallagher (Oasis) is 59. Singer Jayski McGowan of Quad City DJ’s is 59. Actor Anthony Azizi (“Threat Matrix,” “Lost”) is 57. Guitarist Chan Kinchla of Blues Traveler is 57. Actor Laverne Cox (“Doubt,” “Orange Is the New Black”) is 54. Guitarist Mark Lee of Third Day is 53. Cartoonist Aaron McGruder (“Boondocks”) is 52. Singer Melanie Brown (“Scary Spice”) of the Spice Girls is 51. Rapper Playa Poncho is 51. Singer Fonseca is 47. Actor Justin Chon (“Deception,” “Dr. Ken”) is 45. Actor Billy Flynn (“Days of Our Lives”) is 41. Actor Blake Foster (“Power Rangers Turbo”) is 41. Actor Riley Keough (“Daisy Jones and the Six”) is 37. Actor Brandon Mychal Smith (“Sonny With a Chance”) is 37. Actor Kristen Alderson (“General Hospital,” “One Life To Live”) is 35. Actor Lorelei Linklater (“Boyhood”) is 33. May 30: Actor Ruta Lee (“High Rollers,” “What’s My Line?”) is 91. Actor Keir Dullea (“2001: A Space Odyssey”) is 90. Guitarist Lenny Davidson of The Dave Clark Five is 82. Actor Stephen Tobolowsky (“Groundhog Day,” “Sneakers”) is 75. Actor Colm Meaney (“Star Trek: The Next Generation”) is 73. Actor Ted McGinley (“Hope and Faith,” “Married... With Children”) is 68. Actor Ralph Carter (“Good Times”) is 65. Actor-filmmaker Tonya Pinkins (“All My Children”) is 64. Country singer Wynonna Judd is 62. Guitarist Tom Morello of Audioslave and Rage Against the Machine is 62. Actor Mark Sheppard (“Supernatural”) is 62. Film director Antoine Fuqua (“Training Day,” “The Replacement Killers”) is 61. Actor John Ross Bowie (“Speechless,” “The Big Bang Theory”) is 55. Guitarist Patrick Dahlheimer of Live is 55. Singer-actor Idina Menzel is 55. Singer Cee Lo Green (Gnarls Barkley, Goodie Mob) is 51. Rapper Remy Ma is 46. Guitarist James Smith of Underoath is 44. Actor Javicia Leslie (“God Friended Me”) is 39. Actor Sean Giambrone (“The Goldbergs”) is 27. Actor Jared Gilmore (“Once Upon a Time,” “Mad Men”) is 26.

- [Rescuers race to reach 7 trapped in a Laos cave after flash floods block exit](#) (2026-05-25 14:53)

BANGKOK — Rescuers are racing against time to reach seven people who have been trapped in a cave in central Laos since last week. A group of villagers in Xaisomboun province went into the cave to look for gold on May 19, but heavy rain triggered flash flooding that blocked the exit, according to Laos and Thai rescue teams involved in the operation. Bounkham Luanglath, who leads the Laos’ Rescue Volunteer for People, told The Associated Press on Monday that one of the people from the group escaped before the exit was blocked and alerted authorities. The status of the seven people who are trapped remains unknown. He said the cave is a narrow

chamber often visited by villagers searching for gold deposits. He said that authorities had repeatedly warned people against entering the cave out of safety concerns. State-run Lao National Radio reported that Thai rescuers arrived at the site on Sunday for assistance. Divers have since begun navigating flooded sections of the cave toward the area where they believe the group may be trapped. The Laos' Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined to comment. The Southeast Asian nation is a one-party communist state with no organized opposition and the government often keeps a tight lid on information.

- [Leaders keep a wary eye on Belarus for any signs it might offer Russia help in Ukraine](#)
(2026-05-25 14:50)

KYIV, Ukraine — Belarus' exiled opposition leader visited Kyiv on Monday as the Ukrainian capital cleaned up after Russia's biggest missile attack of the year, and world leaders kept a close eye on how much support the Belarusian government is ready to provide for Moscow's all-out invasion of Ukraine. Russia and its ally Belarus held joint nuclear drills last week, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has increasingly warned in recent days that Belarus could provide a launchpad for Russia to open a new front in northern Ukraine. Some Russian troops entered Ukraine from Belarusian territory in Moscow's invasion on Feb. 24, 2022. In a further sign that concerns about any Belarusian role are increasing, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke by phone with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Sunday about the war in Ukraine, their first call since the invasion began. With that conflict more than four years old, the Russian army is locked in a hard and costly slog on the 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line that mostly snakes through eastern and southern Ukraine. "Russia hit a dead-end on the battlefield, so it terrorizes Ukraine with deliberate strikes on city centers," Kaja Kallas, the European Union's foreign policy chief, said in a post on X, in the wake of the weekend barrage that killed two people and damaged buildings across the Ukrainian capital. With American-made air defense missiles in short supply because of the Iran war, Russian missiles are harder for Ukraine to stop. Meanwhile, U.S. efforts to stop the fighting made little progress and have now stalled. Countries keep a wary eye on Belarus. In his call with Lukashenko, Macron "underscored the risks for Belarus of allowing itself to be dragged into Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine," according to a presidential aide in the French leader's office who spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with the presidential palace's practices. Macron also spoke Sunday with Zelenskyy. Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who arrived by train for her first visit to Kyiv on Monday, echoed that France's main goal is to send a warning to Belarus. "Lukashenko's regime knows well what needs to be done to improve ties with the European Union, but it isn't happening, instead hybrid attacks, nuclear blackmail and threats to the entire region continue," Tsikhanouskaya told The Associated Press on Sunday. A terse readout released by the Belarusian presidential press service said that the call took place "on the French side's initiative" and that the two leaders discussed "regional issues" and the relations of Belarus with the European Union and France. Lukashenko, who has governed his country of some 9.5 million people with an iron fist for more than three decades, relies on the Kremlin for cheap energy, loans and other support.

Western countries have repeatedly slapped sanctions on Belarus, including for its crackdown on human rights and for allowing Moscow to use its territory to invade Ukraine. More recently, Lukashenko has been trying to improve ties with the West. Since President Donald Trump returned to the White House, Lukashenko has released hundreds of political prisoners as part of deals that lifted some U.S. sanctions. Russia fires hypersonic missile at Ukraine Sunday's heavy bombardment included Russia's powerful hypersonic Oreshnik ballistic missile, which can carry multiple warheads. Russian President Vladimir Putin has boasted it can travel up to 10 times the speed of sound and evade air defense systems. Zelenskyy said Ukrainian intelligence services had received tipoffs from the United States and European countries that Russia was preparing to launch an Oreshnik. In addition to the two deaths, at least 91 people were wounded in Sunday's barrage, according to Tymur Tkachenko, the head of the Kyiv City Administration. The intense assault damaged buildings across the city, including near government offices, residential buildings, schools and a market, Ukrainian authorities said. Shattered glass still littered sidewalks on Monday. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha on Monday led ambassadors from more than 70 countries on a visit to the sites of the Kyiv strikes. He urged the international community to step up pressure on Moscow and ensure Ukraine gets more air defense support. "Every such strike only demonstrates yet again the true nature of Putin's regime — the regime that doesn't recognize human life, international law, or borders," Tsikhanouskaya, the Belarusian opposition leader in exile, wrote on Telegram after witnessing the attack's aftermath. In other developments Monday: Russia's Federal Security Service said that divers found magnetic mines attached to the hull of a liquefied petroleum gas tanker in the Russian Baltic port of Ust-Luga. The tanker Arrhenius was bound for Samsun, Turkey, it said, adding that the limpet mines were made in a NATO member country. Ukrainian officials made no immediate comment. Meanwhile, a Russian missile hit a business in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Derhachi, killing two people and wounding 19 others Monday, Kharkiv regional administration head Oleh Syniehubov said. Seventeen people were hospitalized.

- [Marcoleta links plunder charges against him to impeachment trial of VP Sara](#) (2026-05-25 14:33)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Rodante Marcoleta hinted that the "trumped-up" plunder charges against him involving alleged undeclared campaign donations were linked to the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. Investigators from the Office of the Ombudsman filed a complaint for plunder against Marcoleta, former representative Michael Defensor, and two others. The Ombudsman gave them 15 days to submit their counter-affidavits. The probers said that Marcoleta's acceptance of gifts worth P75 million on three separate occasions when he was a member of the House of Representatives constitutes the crime of plunder. "The trumped-up charges filed against me and some of my friends are not merely legal accusations," Marcoleta said on Monday in a privilege speech. "Whether one favors or opposes any party in those [impeachment] proceedings -- that's not the point. The point is whether the Constitution shall speak above political convenience," he said. The senator said he would perform his duty "with

conscience, impartiality, and due regard for the record."He also said the complaint against him was meant to silence him as he was vocal against the apparent failure of concerned agencies to run after the masterminds of the flood control budget mess."They form part of a deeper and more nefarious design: to intimidate independent voices, to punish dissent, and to warn every senator that the price of asking hard questions could lead to personal damnation," he said."If the intention of these cases is to silence me, let me say this at the very beginning: it has failed. I will not be silenced. I will answer this complaint in the proper forum, calmly, firmly, and with evidence," he said.Marcoleta added, "Let us not pretend that this came in a vacuum. The pattern is too visible to ignore. First, remove the inconvenient voices from the inquiry. Then weaken those who refuse to conform. Then frighten others into silence and submission before the decisive constitutional battles begin." "When this chamber is called upon to sit in impeachment proceedings, we are not merely politicians. We are senator-judges. We are bound to listen to weigh evidence, to apply Constitution, and to according to our conscience," he said.The responsibility cannot be curtailed by fear, pressure, harassment, or manufactured accusation, Marcoleta said."No one should be allowed to intimidate a senator-judge into silence. No one should be allowed to punish a member of this chamber for ensuring that impeachment must be governed by law, by evidence, due process, and conscience," he said."Whether one favors or opposes any party in those proceedings - that's not the point. The point is whether the Constitution shall speak above political convenience. I will perform that duty," he said.

- [Muslims begin the annual Hajj in sweltering heat against a backdrop of war concerns](#)
(2026-05-25 14:33)

MECCA, Saudi Arabia — The annual Hajj pilgrimage, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, officially began Monday. More than 1.5 million pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia from outside the country, Saleh bin Saad Al-Murabba, commander of the Hajj passport forces, said Friday. The faithful have been pouring into the country for the Hajj against the backdrop of a tenuous ceasefire in the Iran war and related regional tensions and uncertainty. Egyptian pilgrim Samya Abdul Moneim said she was grateful to God that she made it to the Hajj, which is required once in a lifetime of every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to make it. "I am in a state of blessing and happiness," she said in Mecca on Sunday. "It's an indescribable feeling, truly. I mean, thank God, I am in a blessing." Typically on the first day, many pilgrims in Mecca converge on a vast tent camp in the nearby desert. Ahead of that, pilgrims have been circling the cube-shaped Kaaba in the Grand Mosque in sweltering temperatures. For pilgrims, Hajj can be a deeply moving spiritual experience and a chance to seek God's forgiveness and the erasure of past sins. Pilgrims perform the Hajj rituals over several days. This Hajj "is, in effect, a hard reset for me," Youssef Chouhoud, a political scientist at Christopher Newport University in Virginia, said Monday from the tent city of Mina. "I pray that I emerge on the other side of this journey with a new sense of purpose and the discipline to see it through." Around him, many pilgrims were resting and refueling, he said via WhatsApp, noting how demanding the pilgrimage is. "It is for many pilgrims the most difficult thing they will ever do in their lives,"

he said. “But nothing this meaningful is ever going to be easy.” He found it inspiring “to see so many who have sacrificed so much to be here ... only to compete with one another in giving charity and helping each other along the way,” he said. “All this in the hope that their intentions and actions may be accepted by their Lord.” Pilgrims brave intense heat Many spend years hoping and praying to one day perform the Hajj or saving up money and waiting for a permit to embark on the trip. As they brave the intense heat to perform religious rituals, many pilgrims have been using umbrellas for shade and carrying handheld fans. Volunteers hand out water bottles to help them stay hydrated and fans spray fine mists of water. On Saturday, U.S. President Donald Trump said a deal with Iran on the war, including opening the Strait of Hormuz, has been “largely negotiated” after calls with Israel and other allies in the region. He described it as a “Memorandum of Understanding pertaining to PEACE” that still must be finalized by the United States, Iran and the other countries that participated in the calls. That capped a week in which the U.S. weighed a new round of attacks on Iran. Ahead of the trip for Hajj, some have said they were leaning on their faith as they embark on the journey amid the tensions and that they were feeling immense gratitude for the opportunity to go. Hajj brings together large numbers of Muslims of diverse races, ethnicities, languages and economic classes, creating a sense of unity for many. Regional tensions and Hajj travel plans With uncertainty and global concerns high, authorities in Indonesia, home to the world’s largest Muslim population, have in the run-up to the Hajj season emphasized contingency planning for the pilgrimage and issued instructions to ensure that additional travel costs not be passed on to Indonesian pilgrims. In India, home to a large Muslim minority, pilgrimage planning has proceeded largely as normal, but high fuel prices have pushed up travel costs for pilgrims. A reopening of the strait would begin to ease a worldwide energy crisis sparked by the U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran on Feb. 28, which led Tehran to effectively close the waterway. Prices have spiked for oil, gas and several related products, jolting the world economy. The U.S. has blockaded Iranian ports for over a month, and Trump on Sunday said the blockade “will remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed.” In response to the U.S.-Israeli attacks, Iran has launched retaliatory strikes and the conflict widened. A fragile ceasefire was reached in April. In Saudi Arabia, pilgrims have been doing the ritual circuit around the Kaaba since arriving in Mecca over recent days. Pilgrims in Mina will camp there and pray and worship. On Tuesday, in what is considered the pinnacle of the pilgrimage, the pilgrims will stand on the plain of Arafat, where they praise God, plead for forgiveness and make supplications. Many carry prayer requests from loved ones and raise their hands in worship with tears streaming down their faces.

- [Japan plans \\$19 bn extra budget as costs rise with Iran war](#) (2026-05-25 14:22)

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Monday the government will compile a \$19 billion supplementary budget to support households grappling with soaring everyday costs driven by the Iran war. Takaichi said the budget, which is about 3 trillion yen, will be used to ease the rising cost of petrol, electricity and gas, explaining that “the situation in the Middle East remains uncertain”. “With a view to minimising risk, we have drawn up a supplementary

budget to ensure we're fully prepared financially," she told reporters, adding the draft would be submitted to parliament possibly next week. Early this month, leading potato chip maker Calbee unveiled a new grey packaging for 14 product lines, swapping its signature orange-and-yellow packets, with local media attributing the move to an ink shortage linked to the Iran war. But Takaichi said the government expected to be able to secure a stable supply of oil until next spring. She added that alternative supplies for naphtha, an oil byproduct used in a wide range of industries, from outside the Middle East have recovered to more than 80 percent of previous levels. Japan's central bank hiked its inflation forecasts last month and cut its growth projections after the Iran war sent oil prices soaring. It said "the rise in crude oil prices is expected to push up prices, mainly of energy and goods, with moves to pass on wage increases to selling prices continuing".

• ['Signs of life' detected under rubble of collapsed building as search for survivors continues](#)
(2026-05-25 14:10)

ANGELES CITY, Philippines — Rescuers using thermal scanners pursued a search for survivors on Monday, a day after the collapse of a building under construction that has already claimed four lives, authorities said. More than a dozen people are believed to be still missing after rescuers failed to bring out alive two trapped construction workers who had been found buried beneath the rubble in the northern city of Angeles on Sunday. "We have detected signs of life" among the ruins, Maria Leah Sajiri, the regional spokeswoman for the fire bureau, told reporters. "Rescue operations are ongoing," she added. The rescuers, led by local firemen, said they were using infrared technology to detect human body heat beneath the rubble. Earlier Monday, two workers who were found alive and pinned beneath the wreckage of the nine-storey structure, later died despite rescue efforts. "The first of the two was pulled out alive, but unfortunately, his body gave out and he did not survive. Doctors could not resuscitate him," regional Sajiri told AFP. "The other one suffered a cardiac arrest around 3 a.m. (1900 GMT Sunday). Doctors could not attend to him as he was still pinned down," she added. A Malaysian guest at a nearby hotel damaged by the collapsed building was also killed Sunday, while crews pulled another corpse from the rubble on Monday. It was not immediately clear if the unidentified body belonged to a person listed among the missing, rescuers said in an updated toll. Due to the uncertainty, authorities said approximately 17 other people were still considered missing, mostly construction workers who were sleeping at the building site when disaster struck. Lea Casilao, girlfriend of a missing construction worker, told AFP she had taken a bus from her northern Manila home to Angeles with rice and canned goods for her partner on Sunday, unaware of the pre-dawn accident on the same day. "It's very difficult; it is breaking my heart to wait for something uncertain," 47-year-old Casilao said, crying as she recounted how she slept alone at a local government building overnight Sunday. Lacking safety gear The cause of the collapse is not known. Regional labor department director Geraldine Panlilio said she had briefly shut the project down in September 2024 over violations of occupational safety standards. "Our labor inspectors had monitored poor working conditions, a violation that would put our workers at risk," she said in an interview over Manila radio station DZMM. The

construction workers "lacked safety gear" like hardhats, boots, safety belts and lifelines, and worked under poor lighting and with no visible safety signage, she added. Construction resumed a month later after the building contractor complied with requirements, Panlilio said. Officials said up to 70 people were employed at the construction site, though most had gone home for the weekend. Alfredo Albis, 55, told AFP he was asleep at a barracks for workers about five metres (16 feet) from the structure when it gave way. "I have two cousins who are still trapped there. They were working here to earn for their families and (they) are missing," he said, adding "there's a possibility that my relatives are dead." Sajili, the fire bureau spokeswoman, said that "rescue in (a) building collapse is very challenging since any sudden shift triggered by the movements of our rescuers can cause areas to move and people under can get crushed". If no more survivors are found via scanners, earthmoving equipment will be brought in to clear debris and recover bodies, she said, but gave no timeline.

• [Taj Mahal, Village People and elephants Rubio's India excursion](#) (2026-05-25 14:06)

AGRA, India — Marco Rubio leads US foreign policy as diplomacy on Iran goes down to the wire, but he is also making time for cultural attractions as divergent as the Taj Mahal and the Village People. Rubio, who serves as President Donald Trump's secretary of state and national security advisor, took a day for sightseeing in India on Monday, touring the Taj Mahal, the renowned monument to love. "It's one of the wonders of the world," Rubio said of the imposing mausoleum in Agra. "I think it's important to show respect to the culture of the countries that you visit." Rubio travelled to the Taj Mahal with his wife Jeanette, who usually shuns the spotlight. He put his arm gently around her as they posed on a bench that featured the iconic shot of Princess Diana in 1992. Jeanette was not the only person to take pictures with Rubio at the Taj. He also posed with members of the Village People, the disco group originally associated with the camp New York gay underground but whose cultural meaning has been transformed entirely by Trump after he adopted their song "YMCA". They flew in to perform Sunday night at a gala party in New Delhi for the 250th anniversary of US independence, where they serenaded Rubio with "Happy Birthday" over a towering four-storey cake. Rubio turns 55 on Thursday. The party was the brainchild of the US ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, a high-octane former aide to Trump, who eagerly joined the Rubios at the Taj Mahal. Crowds were kept 100 metres away, but the Taj Mahal did not go into a full shutdown as it did for Vice President JD Vance. The Rubios, joined by Gor and senior aides, later flew to the desert city of Jaipur, where they took open-windowed jeeps up a ragged road to tour the imposing Amber Fort, the former residence of the Rajput maharajas that stares down on a lake. Rubio was welcomed at the fort by twirling dancers in red turbans pounding drums, to which he gave a fist of approval. After a brief tour, he was welcomed at his hotel, a converted palace, by assembled elephants, white horses and camels as peacocks fluttered in the garden. - Wooing India - The excursion is unusual for Rubio, who in nearly a year and a half on the job has preferred short, business-like trips and rarely done events outside of government meetings. Rubio said he was taking advantage of a one-day break in his schedule before a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday of the Quad -- Australia, India, Japan and the United States. He will also stop in Armenia on Tuesday on his way home. The

hectic pace comes as Rubio comments daily on Iran, predicting chances of an imminent breakthrough. Rubio was not entirely away from Iranian influence at the Taj Mahal, whose domes and four-way charbagh gardens are heavily influenced by Persian architecture. The Taj Mahal was built in the 17th century on orders of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal who died in childbirth. Rubio is visiting four cities over four days in India as he seeks to revive ties with a country successive US administrations saw as a like-minded partner in a world dominated by China's rise. Trump has shaken up that approach since returning to office, temporarily imposing high tariffs, warming to both China and India's historic adversary Pakistan, curbing visas used by Indian professionals, and reposting insulting language about Indian immigrants. In remarks Sunday by speakerphone to the party, Trump insisted he was on board with the relationship, telling the crowd: "We've never been closer to India, and India can count on me 100 percent".

- [Self-driving bus in Sweden crashes with tram on first day](#) (2026-05-25 13:58)

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — A self-driving bus was involved in a crash with a tram on its first day carrying passengers in the Swedish city of Gothenburg on Monday, the Vasttrafik public transport company said. The bus has been taken out of service for inspection, Vasttrafik spokesman Patrik Chi told AFP. "The self-driving bus with people onboard in Gothenburg braked and was hit from behind by a tram. There are no casualties or personal damages," he said. The bus had been circulating in central Gothenburg since the end of March, but Monday was its first day carrying passengers. A driver was on board the vehicle to take control if necessary. Sweden's Transportstyrelsen transport agency had given the green light for the bus to have passengers on board for a trial that was to last until July 31, 2027. Self-driving buses and shuttles in Europe operate under local authorisations, granted city by city and route by route, often on private roads. The EU has not yet granted Europe-wide approvals for commercial deployment of self-driving public transport or robotaxis.

- [China's Xi meets Pakistan PM Sharif as Iran war mediation drags on](#) (2026-05-25 13:50)

BEIJING — China's leader Xi Jinping met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing on Monday, state media reported, as diplomatic efforts by several countries to formally end the Iran war drag on. The high-level meeting, reported by state news agency Xinhua, followed Sharif's talks earlier in the day with Premier Li Qiang, China's number two leader. Pakistan has emerged as a central mediator between the United States and Iran, hosting face-to-face talks last month that failed to yield a lasting agreement. Sharif was accompanied on his trip by army chief Asim Munir, Islamabad's key negotiator between the United States and Iran, Pakistan television showed on Monday. Xi praised Pakistan for "taking the initiative to play a mediating role in restoring peace in the Middle East", according to a Chinese readout of the talks between the two leaders. "Both sides should continue to maintain close communication and coordination (and) jointly oppose unilateralism and Cold War mentality," Xi said. China has played a quieter mediation role, shepherding phone calls and meetings with officials of affected Gulf countries. Sharif, speaking to Chinese leaders alongside Munir, said "the world is passing

through a critical moment", Pakistan's state-run PTV channel showed. "Pakistan has played a sincere role to mediate between US and Iran. Field marshal (Munir) was in Tehran and did not want to miss this great visit," Sharif said. "Things are moving in the right direction. I would like to thank China's support to promote peace," he said. Sharif kicked off his four-day official visit in Hangzhou in eastern Zhejiang province on Saturday. It follows a visit by Munir to Tehran on Friday and Saturday alongside Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi as part of mediation efforts to end the war. China has said it would work with Pakistan to "make positive contributions to the early restoration of peace and stability in the Middle East". In April, Pakistan hosted the only direct negotiations between US and Iranian officials to take place since the war began. Munir was at the centre of the action during that round of talks, greeting both delegations on their arrival and displaying bonhomie with US Vice President JD Vance. But the talks ultimately failed, with Iran accusing the United States of making "excessive demands".

- [Pope urges 'disarming' of AI in major manifesto](#) (2026-05-25 13:37)

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV called Monday for the "disarming" of artificial intelligence in his long-awaited manifesto on the rapidly developing technology, and warned of "new forms of slavery" behind its rise. Leo, the first US pope, warned against "a race for ever more powerful algorithms and larger datasets, driven by the desire to secure geopolitical or commercial dominance". He presented his first encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas" (Magnificent Humanity) in person at the Vatican, alongside AI experts including Christopher Olah, co-founder of US giant Anthropic. Anthropic is embroiled in a legal battle with the US military after opposing the use of its technology for lethal autonomous warfare and mass surveillance. At the presentation, Olah said AI companies operate "inside a set of incentives and constraints that can sometimes conflict with doing the right thing". He welcomed input from outside actors like the Catholic Church, to "push events in a better direction", saying that "the questions raised by AI are bigger than the AI research community". Leo said he accepted Olah's invitation "to walk together, to listen and to speak and together to find the way for humanity". He had confidence that "together, we can discern the major questions of our time, and so, the future of humanity". The pope said he had listened to scientists, engineers, political leaders, parents and teachers in preparing his manifesto, and had heard "very troubling voices" as well as "the silence of those who have no voice". AI must be "freed from logics that turn it into an instrument of domination, exclusion and death", he said. In his encyclical, Leo sounded the alarm over AI-directed weaponry, saying it was "not permissible to entrust lethal" decisions to tech. Leo has repeatedly clashed with the White House over the Iran war and its use of religion to justify conflict. The "just war" theory -- espoused recently by the Trump administration -- was "outdated", Leo wrote, adding that "no algorithm can make war morally acceptable". - 'Armed competition' - AI could be worth up to \$4.8 trillion by 2033, a 25-fold increase in a decade, while concentrating its profits in the hands of a limited few, according to the United Nations. "Disarming AI means freeing it from the mentality of 'armed' competition," the pope wrote. "To disarm does not mean rejecting technology, but preventing it from dominating humanity," Leo wrote. AI should be "human-friendly", accessible to all and opened to discussion and debate, he added. The head of

the world's 1.4 billion Catholics has made the hot-button issue a cornerstone of his papacy by dedicating to it his first encyclical -- a document which lays the basis for Church teaching and longer-term debate. The manifesto references a range of cultural giants, from Greek philosopher Plato to Beethoven and his Ninth Symphony, even citing a character from JRR Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings". - 'Not magical' - "Magnifica Humanitas" was signed on May 15, the 135th anniversary of an 1891 encyclical by Leo XIII which laid the foundations of the Church's social doctrine during the Industrial Revolution. Leo warned of new forms of slavery fuelling the technological revolution, noting "nothing in the world of AI is immaterial or magical". "Every seemingly immediate and flawless response... relies on the silent work of millions of people", from content moderators forced to watch disturbing material, to children who extract the rare earth elements on which AI depends. They are "scarred, injured and worn down so that computational flow may continue uninterrupted", he wrote. Greater efficiency or innovation did not excuse "a chain of exploitation that remains deliberately hidden", he wrote, while more must be done to reduce AI's environmental impact and "protect our common home". He also issued an unprecedented apology for the Vatican's role in the slave trade and in helping to justify slavery, saying it was "a wound in Christian memory". "For this, in the name of the Church, I sincerely ask for pardon," Leo wrote. The release of the text follows several years of study by the Church on AI-related technologies. As early as 2020, the Holy See launched the "Rome Appeal for an AI Ethic", which called for new technologies to respect human dignity. Experts say "Magnifica Humanitas" could prove as influential as Pope Francis's "Laudato Si", a 2015 climate manifesto that triggered political and civic reactions worldwide.

- [Truck overturns in central Bangladesh, killing at least 15 people](#) (2026-05-25 13:29)

DHAKA, Bangladesh — A truck carrying iron rods and extra passengers overturned on a major highway early Monday in central Bangladesh, leaving at least 15 people dead and 10 others injured, police said. The crash happened after the driver lost control around 5 a.m. at Soratol area in Tangail district, 83 kilometers (52 miles) northwest of the nation's capital, Dhaka, said local police chief Fuad Hossain. Hossain said the truck was carrying hitchhiking passengers and travelling from Dhaka to the northern region as vacationers began traveling ahead of the Islamic festival Eid al-Adha on Thursday. The truck overturned and killed them at the scene, he said. The official said most of the passengers were day laborers and were traveling to join their families for the festival. Witnesses told TV stations that they rushed to the scene after hearing noise and started rescuing passengers who got trapped. Road accidents kill thousands every year in the nation of more than 170 million people because of lax oversight of traffic rules, bad road conditions and unskilled driving.

- [Padilla defends staff against allegation she helped dela Rosa 'escape'](#) (2026-05-25 09:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Robinhood Padilla defended his deputy chief of staff, retired Colonel Jean Robles, from allegations linking her to the escape of Sen. Ronald dela Rosa last week from the Senate despite being under the chamber's "protective custody." The senator on Monday said "any insinuation that she acted improperly or illegally is unfair, speculative, and

irresponsible."Padilla on May 14 allegedly helped dela Rosa slip out of the Senate following the issuance of a warrant of arrest by the International Criminal Court (ICC) over the senator's alleged involvement in the drug campaign under the administration of then president Rodrigo Duterte who will face trial before the ICC at The Hague, Netherlands on charges of crimes against humanity "[Retired] Colonel Jean Robles merely performed her official duties as part of my staff during the events that transpired inside the Senate," Padilla said in a statement."There was no lawful order preventing anyone from leaving the Senate premises at that time. No law enforcement officer stopped, restrained, or prohibited our movements," Padilla said."Unfortunately, we were held in a lockdown situation inside the Senate premises, and some staff members stayed as part of operational and security coordination," he added.Padilla said that it was about 2:30 a.m. of May 14 when Robles hitched a ride and he brought Robles to her condominium out of concern for her safety.He also dismissed Robles' link to the former president. He said Robles "never personally served" Duterte nor was she part of his personal staff.Padilla said Robles served the Filipino people as an Army officer from 2002 until 2020 before later entering the Department of Foreign Affairs as a foreign service officer.He said Robles "acted professionally, in good faith, and within the scope of her responsibilities as [my] deputy chief of staff."

- [Defense, energy, among Marcos' top priorities in Japan state visit](#) (2026-05-25 08:50)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is expected to push for strengthened collaboration in key areas of interest, among them security and energy resilience, between Manila and Tokyo when he embarks on his state visit to Japan from May 26 to 29, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Monday.Deeper cooperation in the fields of maritime and defense, economy, and “emerging and future oriented sectors” are also in the agenda when Marcos meets with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. “The two leaders are also expected to discuss regional and global issues affecting the Philippines and Japan such as Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, and developments in the Middle East,” DFA spokesman Analyn Ratonel said in Filipino in a pre-departure briefing in Malacañang. “The two countries are expected to announce new agreements on defense, trade and investment, and human resources. The President is also scheduled to meet with Japanese business groups and members of the Filipino community in Japan,” she added. This is Marcos' fourth visit to Japan, and his first state visit. His previous three trips were working and official visits.

- [Govt tightens noose on dela Rosa with Interpol red notice application, cancellation of gun licenses](#) (2026-05-25 08:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The government has tightened its noose on Sen. Ronald dela Rosa with the Department of Justice (DOJ) confirming that it has applied for an Interpol red notice to hasten his arrest and its attached agency, the National Brureau of Investigation (NBI), seeking the cancellation of his gun licenses.The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued a warrant against the senator over alleged crimes against humanity during the Duterte administration' s

anti-drug campaign. DOJ spokesman Polo Martinez said the request for an Interpol red notice was among the legal remedies available to authorities seeking dela Rosa's arrest. "As far as I know, there is an application for an Interpol red notice," Martinez said. "That is a remedy available to us." An Interpol red notice is a request circulated to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition or similar legal action. Once issued, all 195 Interpol member countries may assist in locating and detaining the subject. The development came as authorities continued searching for dela Rosa, who has remained out of public view since May 14. CCTV footage earlier released showed the senator leaving the Senate premises at around 2:30 a.m. aboard a white Toyota van reportedly registered to Sen. Robin Padilla. The incident occurred hours after a shooting incident near the Senate complex. Padilla later confirmed he transported dela Rosa to Makati and dropped him off near Ayala Avenue, where another vehicle allegedly picked up the senator. The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has since identified Padilla as a person of interest in the case, although the actor-turned-lawmaker denied any wrongdoing. Justice Secretary Fredrick Vida declared dela Rosa a fugitive from justice and directed both the Philippine National Police and the NBI to enforce the ICC arrest warrant. The warrant covers allegations of crimes against humanity involving murder in connection with at least 32 killings linked to anti-drug operations conducted between July 2016 and April 2018 under the administration of former president Rodrigo Duterte. The Supreme Court on May 20 denied dela Rosa's petition for a temporary restraining order seeking to stop the implementation of the ICC warrant. Voting 9-5-1, the tribunal allowed authorities to proceed with enforcement. The High Court is expected to release its full resolution, including concurring and dissenting opinions, on Monday, May 25. Cancel gun licenses Meanwhile, the NBI has moved to cancel the licenses of more than 100 firearms allegedly registered under dela Rosa's name. NBI Director Melvin Matibag confirmed on Monday that the bureau has sent a letter to the PNP requesting the cancellation of the licenses. Among the firearms reportedly registered under dela Rosa's name were automatic rifles, high-powered firearms, and shotguns. The NBI tagged the senator as "armed and dangerous." The bureau also considers dela Rosa's former role as PNP chief as a "major concern" in ongoing efforts to locate him, citing his familiarity with law enforcement operations. The PNP, through Col. Allen Rae Co, Public Information chief, said it has not received word from the NBI on its request to revoke the firearm licenses registered under dela Rosa. "Upon receipt of such request, we will evaluate and act on the same in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10591 and its revised IRR [Implementing Rules and Regulation], swiftly and within the bounds of the law," Co said. Dela Rosa, an active gun enthusiast, legally maintains a large collection of firearms. "The Firearms Licence Revocation and Restoration Board under the Civil Security Group shall convene and thereafter determine if any grounds was present," he added.

- [MMDA suspends expanded number coding traffic scheme on Eid' I Adha](#) (2026-05-25 07:44)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said the implementation of the expanded number coding scheme would be suspended across Metro Manila on Wednesday in observance of Eid' l Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice. The MMDA said the suspension took effect during regular holidays and special non-working holidays. Under the expanded number coding scheme, vehicles with plate numbers ending in certain digits are barred from major roads in Metro Manila during designated weekday hours. Plate numbers ending in 5 and 6 are not allowed to travel every Wednesday. The agency advised motorists to plan their trips properly to avoid inconvenience, while also reminding drivers to follow traffic rules and observe road safety. Eid' l Adha is one of the major Islamic holidays observed by Muslims worldwide.

• [2 Pasig City employees suspended as Vico Sotto intensifies anti-corruption crackdown](#)
(2026-05-25 05:59)

MANILA, Philippines — Pasig Mayor Vico Sotto on Monday said two city government employees were placed under preventive suspension over alleged solicitation from contractors and fixing activities, as he intensified his anti-corruption campaign to include lower levels of the bureaucracy. Sotto said the suspensions reflected the city' s continuing effort to change what he described as deeply rooted corruption practices in government that had long been tolerated or considered normal. One of the suspended employees was from the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), who was allegedly caught soliciting from a contractor connected to the office. Sotto said practices such as asking contractors for birthday or Christmas party contributions may have been treated casually in government before, but stressed these should not be tolerated, especially when public contracts are involved. "This is something that may have become a habit in government, like it' s nothing serious, that it' s not bribery anyway, or the contract was already awarded so maybe it' s okay to ask for birthday money or Christmas party contributions," Sotto said. He noted that Pasig City had prohibited contractors from giving contributions to City Hall events and activities shortly after he assumed office in 2019. Another suspended employee from the City Treasurer' s Department allegedly admitted to acting as a fixer for clients, according to the mayor. Sotto said both employees were only under preventive suspension pending administrative proceedings, adding that the cases would still undergo hearings before authorities determine whether they should face heavier penalties, including dismissal from service. The mayor also revealed that personnel from the city' s legal department were under investigation, although he declined to provide details because proceedings were ongoing. Sotto linked the suspensions to the broader reform campaign his administration has pursued since 2019, saying efforts initially focused on procurement systems and operations inside City Hall before expanding toward the village level during his third term. He said investigations involving some village officials were also ongoing before the Pasig City Council' s Blue Ribbon Committee, with preventive suspensions imposed to prevent possible interference with witnesses or evidence. Without naming specific officials, Sotto pointed to alleged cases involving questionable handling of public funds at the village level, including advance releases of community development funds and reports of funds allegedly being used

for personal expenses. “It cannot continue that public funds are handled this way for life,” he said. The mayor acknowledged that pursuing administrative cases against government workers and officials could be personally difficult, especially when some involved individuals were known to him, but said reforms would fail if violations continued to be tolerated. He also urged residents to continue reporting irregularities involving public funds while remaining fair in recognizing officials who perform their duties properly.

- [PNP vows to protect missing 'sabungeros' kin amid claims of pressure from Atong Ang's camp](#) (2026-05-25 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) expressed readiness to provide security to the families of the “missing sabungeros” (cockfight enthusiasts) amid reports of alleged pressure and interference from the camp of fugitive gambling lord Charlie “Atong” Ang. Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., PNP chief, said the police would not ignore claims that relatives of the missing sabungeros were allegedly asked to skip hearings, stressing that any intimidation or bribery will be investigated. “Police assistance does not end with case build-up and filing of charges. It expands to ensuring that no mockery of the justice system will happen at the course of the legal process,” Nartatez said. Relatives of the missing sabungeros trooped to the National Police Commission (Napolcom) to report that the camp of Ang, through his lawyer Caroline Cruz, silenced most of the families of the involved in the case by paying them P40,000 monthly along with regular free travels. The payment, according to a complainant, was in exchange for their non-appearance and eventual dropping of cases against Ang. Once the cases weaken, Ang will show up to express his gratitude through a final payment of P1 million for each family. Napolcom Vice-Chairman and Executive Officer Rafael Calinisan said he was shocked to learn that the missing sabungero cases were falling because of alleged bribery. Cruz admitted that she gave cash to the families of the missing sabungeros but only as a form of assistance.

- [2GO, SMX strengthen partnership for nationwide event logistics services](#) (2026-05-25 04:46)

MANILA, Philippines — 2GO Group Inc. and SMX Convention Center have expanded their partnership to provide integrated logistics and transport solutions for exhibitors, event organizers, and corporate clients holding events across the country. In a statement released over the weekend, the companies said the collaboration would integrate 2GO’s logistics, freight forwarding, customs brokerage, and sea travel services into SMX Convention Center’s nationwide operations to improve cargo movement and event support services. The partnership covers SMX venues in Manila, Clark, Bacolod, Davao, SM Aura, and the newly opened SMX Seaside Cebu. Under the agreement, exhibitors from the Philippines and abroad will have access to end-to-end logistics support for transporting booth equipment, event materials, construction supplies, and other cargo needed for conventions, trade shows, and exhibitions. The companies said the setup would allow organizers and exhibitors to manage both cargo transport and personnel mobility through a single logistics provider. Walid Wafik, senior vice president for

operations of SM Hotels and Conventions Corp., said the growing number of on-ground events nationwide has increased demand for efficient logistics support. “Events today require speed, reliability, seamless coordination, and most importantly, convenience for exhibitors and organizers managing operations across different parts of the country,” Wafik said. “Through this collaboration with 2GO, we aim to elevate the exhibitor and organizer experience by providing more efficient logistics support and integrated services across our SMX venues nationwide,” he added. The collaboration is also expected to support logistics requirements for future SMX expansion and development projects nationwide. Will Howell, chief operating officer and chief financial officer of the 2GO Group, said the partnership would help ensure the timely delivery of event materials and equipment while supporting the movement of personnel involved in staging large-scale events. “Through our end-to-end logistics capabilities and 2GO Travel services, we help move not only cargo, but also the people behind every successful event, forward,” Howell said. Both companies said they were pursuing a long-term collaboration aimed at streamlining exhibition logistics and strengthening support services for events held across SMX venues nationwide.

- [Mayors' group questions dela Rosa's prolonged Senate absence](#) (2026-05-25 04:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Mayors for Good Governance on Monday questioned the prolonged absence of Sen. Ronald dela Rosa from Senate sessions, saying ordinary workers will face penalties for the same conduct while still receiving government pay. In a statement issued on Monday, the group said dela Rosa was allegedly absent for about seven months before appearing again on May 14, 2026 to vote in the change of Senate leadership. The organization claimed the senator continued receiving an estimated monthly salary of around P300,000, which it said could already total about P2.1 million during the period of absence. “For Filipino workers, the rule is ‘no work, no pay.’ If an ordinary employee did this, whether in government or the private sector, he would surely face suspension or dismissal from work. Why does the law seem different when powerful officials are involved?” the group said. The group said such alleged neglect of duty was unacceptable for officials being paid by taxpayers while Filipinos continue to face high prices, poverty, and livelihood difficulties. “It is a huge insult to millions of Filipinos who continue striving and enduring hardships just to support themselves and their families,” the statement read. The organization also called on senators not to allow the Senate to become “a refuge for absenteeism and cover-ups,” saying elected officials should not be protected while allegedly avoiding their responsibilities and continuing to receive salaries from public funds. “The lawmakers themselves should lead in following the law, especially the spirit behind why laws were created — for accountability, integrity, and the welfare of the Filipino people,” the group added.

- [Manila mayor admits 'problem' after Binondo fire but assures victims of recovery plan](#) (2026-05-25 03:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Mayor Isko Moreno admitted on Monday that his government was faced with the “problem” of helping residents affected by last week's fire of recovering “

soon" but assured them that there was "a plan" and hoped to bring some "good news" to the victims. Speaking at the city's weekly flag ceremony, Moreno said the city government was already preparing measures to help "within the day" more than 2,000 displaced residents after the fire that struck Binondo. "The problem now is how they will recover soon. But, again, in our own little way, we have a plan. Hopefully, within a day, we can bring some good news to our fellow Manilenos," said Moreno. In a previous interview, Moreno said the city would provide financial assistance to affected families. The blaze erupted Saturday afternoon at the Parola Compound and escalated to Task Force Charlie before firefighters were able to fully extinguish it after around six hours.

- [Philippine construction collapse toll hits three, 17 missing](#) (2026-05-25 03:25)

(UPDATE) ANGELES CITY, Philippines — The death toll rose to three Monday in the collapse of a building under construction near the Philippine capital, with 17 people still believed missing, authorities said. Two workers pinned beneath the wreckage were found alive after the nine-storey structure gave way Sunday, hitting a nearby hotel and killing a Malaysian guest. But the two workers trapped at the site in Angeles, which is north of the capital Manila, died despite rescue efforts. "The first of the two was pulled out alive, but unfortunately, his body gave out and he did not survive. Doctors could not resuscitate him," regional fire bureau spokeswoman Maria Leah Sajili told AFP. "The other one suffered a cardiac arrest around 3 a.m. (1900 GMT Sunday). Doctors could not attend to him as he was still pinned down," she added. Seventeen other people, mostly construction workers who were sleeping at the building site when disaster struck, remained missing, Sajili said. The cause of the collapse is not known. Officials said up to 70 people were employed at the construction site, though most had gone home for the weekend. Alfredo Albis, 55, told AFP he was asleep at a barracks for workers about five meters (16 feet) from the structure when it gave way. "I have two cousins who are still trapped there. They were working here to earn for their families and (they) are missing," he said, adding "there's a possibility that my relatives are dead." Sajili, the fire bureau spokeswoman, said that "rescue in (a) building collapse is very challenging since any sudden shift triggered by the movements of our rescuers can cause areas to move and people under can get crushed". Sudden movements "may also bury our responders," she said, explaining why this phase of the operation had to be done mostly manually. Rescuers will now use thermal scanners "to check if there are possible signs of life," she said. If no more survivors are found, mechanical diggers and other heavy equipment will be brought in to clear debris and recover bodies, she said, but gave no timeline. Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) provided assistance to local authorities as well as emergency response units as it investigated the incident. In a statement on Monday, PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the national police force deployed its search and rescue personnel to support the ongoing response efforts. He also instructed local police to set up a first aid and welfare desk to provide victims with medical and psychosocial support. "The PNP... will assist in the conduct of the investigation to determine the circumstances that led to the incident in the interest of truth and accountability. But, for now... the focus is on search and rescue operations," Nartatez said. "Every second matters in

a crisis, and our duty is to act without delay, bringing every available asset to save lives, account for the missing, and support affected families on the ground,” he added. According to Nartatez, Police Regional Office 3 immediately deployed personnel to assist in rescue and retrieval operations, traffic management, and area security. As of 1:52 p.m. on Sunday, a total of 175 PNP personnel are on the ground working alongside the Bureau of Fire Protection, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Angeles City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, and local government units. According to the PNP, rescue operations remain ongoing amid hazardous conditions caused by unstable debris and live power lines. The PNP is likewise supporting the ongoing investigation to determine the cause of the incident and possible violations of safety and building regulations. The public is advised to avoid the area to allow unhampered emergency operations.

- [Bishop David rebukes Cayetano over ‘pro-life’ defense of Duterte’s drug war](#) (2026-05-25 02:23)

MANILA, Philippines — Kalookan Bishop Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David slammed Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano over his remarks, claiming that former president Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs campaign was a “pro-life campaign.” In a Facebook post late Sunday, David questioned whether Cayetano could personally say his remarks to the families of victims of the bloody anti-drug campaign. “I wonder if he can say this straight to the faces of the thousands of women widowed and children orphaned when their loved ones—on mere suspicion of drug involvement, and without benefit of due process—were murdered in cold blood,” he said.

- [Malaysia confirms 2 citizens in area of building collapse, says one safe](#) (2026-05-25 01:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Malaysian Embassy in Manila confirmed that two Malaysians were affected by the building collapse in Angeles City, Pampanga, one of who has been confirmed to be safe. The embassy on Sunday evening said it was “ascertaining the status of the second Malaysian national.” “Currently all necessary efforts are being made to locate and establish contact with the next of kin of both individuals,” the embassy said in a statement. The embassy said it was “in close communication with local authorities to monitor the well-being of the citizen who is safe and to verify the status and whereabouts of the remaining national.” “Malaysians requiring immediate consular assistance, or those wishing to provide information regarding other Malaysian nationals who may be in the area are urged to contact the embassy,” it added. The embassy said it was closely monitoring the rescue operations for individuals feared trapped. “The embassy is actively gathering verified information through the relevant local authorities to ascertain the situation on the ground,” it added.

- [Mercedes’ Kimi Antonelli wins Canadian Grand Prix](#) (2026-05-24 21:50)

MONTREAL, Canada — Kimi Antonelli made it four wins in a row when he took the chequered flag at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal on Sunday. With his Mercedes teammate and nearest challenger George Russell retiring from the race because of a power unit malfunction,

the 19-year-old Antonelli extended his lead in the world championship to 43 points.

- [Revelers pack a Hong Kong island for a bun festival, a century-old tradition](#) (2026-05-24 21:37)

HONG KONG — Iconic bun festival drew throngs of revelers to the densely populated city's outlying island, Cheung Chau, to celebrate a century-old tradition that is rooted in prayers for peace and blessings. Residents and tourists braved the heat to watch children in costumes take part in a parade, called “Piu Sik,” which translates as “floating colors.” Children dressed as legendary deities, historic characters or local politicians were carried on stands above the crowds, moving through the island’s narrow lanes. The festival highlight is the “bun-scrambling” competition around midnight, where participants climb a tower covered with plastic buns. They have to collect buns, which carry different scores depending on their locations, within a time limit. The one who earns the highest total score wins. But the participant who gets the greatest number of buns in the time allotted will receive the “Full Pockets of Lucky Buns” award. The race was suspended for decades after bun towers collapsed in 1978, injuring dozens of people. The tradition resumed in 2005. According to Hong Kong’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Office, legends say Cheung Chau was once devastated by a plague and some residents then invited monks and Taoist priests to set up a sacrificial altar near a temple to pray to deities. They also paraded deity statues along village lanes. After the ritual, the plague ceased and Cheung Chau residents have since been organizing the event, also known as the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, to dispel disaster and pray for blessings for peace and safety, the office said. The festival has become one of the most popular events for tourists in Hong Kong in recent years. Many people like to buy steamed buns carrying the Chinese characters for “peace” and “safety” or souvenirs modeled on the buns.

- [Here are some of China's major coal mining disasters this century](#) (2026-05-24 21:20)

CHINA — A gas explosion at a coal mine in China’s northern province of Shanxi, the country’s main coal mining province, killed at least 82 people, local officials said Saturday. The cause of the explosion, which took place on Friday evening at the Liushenyu coal mine in the city of Changzhi, is under investigation. With a size larger than Greece and a population of around 34 million, the province’s hundreds of thousands of miners dug 1.3 billion metric tons of coal last year — nearly a third of China’s total. Mining disasters are common in China, where rapid industrialization came with intense resource exploitation, poor working conditions and a weak regulatory framework. Mine owners and local officials are frequently blamed for putting profits ahead of safety. Underground explosions often are blamed on lack of ventilation equipment to clear gas that seeps from the coal bed. In the past two decades, the Chinese government has been making efforts to reduce mining deaths, by improving safety and closing some smaller mines. Here are some major incidents: 2023: 53 people were killed after a collapse at an open-pit mine in northern China’s Inner Mongolia region. 2009: 108 miners died as a result of a gas explosion at the state-run Xinxing mine in Heilongjiang province near the border with Russia. State broadcaster CCTV displayed a diagram showing the miners trapped about a third of a mile

underground. Footage showed one entrance was blocked and rescuers in orange suits with breathing equipment attempting to enter through another. 2005: 171 people died in a blast at the Dongfeng coal mine in Qitaihe in Heilongjiang province. 2005: 214 miners were killed following a gas explosion at the Sunjiawan coal mine in the Liaoning province in China's northeast. 2004: 166 died in a gas explosion at the Chenjiashan coal mine in the Shaanxi province, in China's northwest. 2004: 148 people were killed in a gas explosion at the Daping coal mine in China's inland Henan province. 2000: 162 people died after an explosion at the Muchonggou coal mine in the mountainous Guizhou province in China's southwest.

- [How Congo is battling an Ebola outbreak complicated by aid cuts, armed rebels and anger](#) (2026-05-24 20:53)

KINSHASA, Congo — Arson attacks on Ebola treatment centers in eastern Congo underscore the serious challenges authorities face — including a backlash in local communities — as they try to stem an outbreak of the infectious disease that has been declared a global health emergency. On Sunday, Congolese authorities said suspected cases have now passed 900 in the east of the country, mainly in Ituri Province, where the ongoing outbreak is centered. The burning last week of the centers in two towns at the heart of the outbreak exposed the anger in a region beset by violence linked to armed rebel groups, the displacement of a large number of people, the failure of local government and international aid cuts that experts say have stripped health facilities in vulnerable communities. “A devastating set of emergencies are converging,” said the Physicians for Human Rights nonprofit. Here's a look at the longstanding crises in eastern Congo that have made it home to one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, and how they are now affecting the response to a rare type of Ebola: The region is constantly threatened by violence. Eastern Congo has for years seen attacks by dozens of separate rebel and militant groups, some of them with links to foreign countries or the extremist Islamic State group. The Rwanda-backed M23 rebels are in control of parts of the region. While the Congolese government still largely controls the northeastern Ituri Province, the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak, that control is tenuous. The Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan Islamist group linked to IS, is one of the dominant rebel groups there and responsible for violent attacks against civilian targets. Before the outbreak, Doctors Without Borders said in an assessment that the insecurity in Ituri had worsened recently, causing doctors and nurses to flee and leaving overwhelmed health facilities and in some parts, “catastrophic conditions.” Ebola cases soar in Ituri, where nearly a million people are displaced. The U.N. humanitarian office says almost a million people have been displaced from their homes by conflict in Ituri. That means this Ebola outbreak is “unfolding in communities already facing insecurity, displacement and fragile health care systems,” said Gabriela Arenas, a regional coordinator at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. There are concerns the disease might spread to the large displacement camps near the city of Bunia, where the first cases were reported. The Congolese Ministry of Communication, in a post to X on Sunday, said that there were 904 suspected cases and 119 suspected deaths, mostly in Ituri. That was a significant jump from the previously announced more than 700 suspected Ebola

cases, though suspected deaths were revised down from more than 170 announced earlier. The change in the number of fatalities could not immediately be explained. Cases have also been reported in two other eastern provinces, North Kivu and South Kivu, where the M23 rebels are in control, and also in the neighboring country of Uganda. As a result, the outbreak in Congo is being managed by the government and in part by rebel authorities, with an array of aid agencies also helping. Aid cuts were devastating for eastern Congo. Health experts say international aid cuts last year by the United States and other rich nations were devastating for eastern Congo because of its multiple problems. The cuts “reduced the capacity to detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks,” said Thomas McHale, public health director at Physicians for Human Rights. Congo has had more than a dozen previous Ebola outbreaks. Aid groups fighting this outbreak on the ground say they don’t have the equipment they need, such as face shields and suits to protect health workers from infection, testing kits, and body bags and other materials needed to safely bury the bodies of victims, which can be highly contagious. “We have made requests to different partners, but we have not yet really received anything,” said Julienne Lusenge, president of Women’s Solidarity for Inclusive Peace and Development, an aid group operating a small hospital near Bunia. “We only have hand sanitizer and a few masks for the nurses,” she said. The Bundibugyo type of Ebola virus responsible for the outbreak has no approved vaccine or treatment. Health and aid workers also face anger from local communities. The burning of treatment centers in the Rwampara and Mongbwalu areas — which have the highest Ebola case counts — show how a backlash in some communities is further complicating the response. Colin Thomas-Jensen, director of impact at the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, said the attacks may reflect the “built-in skepticism and anger” of people in eastern Congo over how the region has been treated, with years of violence from foreign-linked rebel groups and a failure of their government and international peacekeepers to protect them, he said. Another source of anger has been the strict protocols around the burial of suspected victims of Ebola, which authorities are taking charge of wherever they can to prevent further spread of the disease in traditional burials — when families prepare the bodies and people gather for a funeral. The first burning of an Ebola center in Rwampara was by a group of local young men trying to retrieve a friend’s body, according to witnesses and police. The witnesses said the crowd accused the foreign aid group operating there of lying about Ebola. Authorities in northeastern Congo have now banned funeral wakes and gatherings of more than 50 people, and armed soldiers and police are guarding some burials carried out by aid workers. Imray reported from Cape Town, South Africa. Associated Press writers Mark Banchereau and Wilson McMakin in Dakar, Senegal, contributed to this report.

- [A suicide bombing near a railway track in southwest Pakistan kills at least 23 people](#)
(2026-05-24 20:14)

QUETTA, Pakistan — A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle near a railway track as a passenger train passed through the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta on Sunday, killing at least 23 people and wounding over 70 others, officials said. The force of the explosion caused two of the train cars to overturn and catch fire, sending thick black smoke into the air,

according to footage shared online. The attack happened in an area where security forces are usually stationed, badly damaging several nearby buildings and smashing more than a dozen vehicles parked along the road, according to witnesses and images circulating on social media. Doctors at local hospitals said they had received the wounded, with 20 in critical condition. Three security officials told The Associated Press the bodies were transported to hospitals following the attack. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to be able to speak to the media. The outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, or BLA, which demands independence from Pakistan's central government, has claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement sent to reporters. The militant group said it targeted a train carrying security personnel. Quetta is the capital of insurgency-hit Balochistan province. The oil- and mineral-rich region has long been the scene of a low-level insurgency. The insurgents have frequently targeted security forces, government installations and civilians in the province and elsewhere in the country. "We strongly condemn the targeting of innocent civilians and are deeply saddened by the loss of precious human lives. Terrorist elements deserve no leniency," said Shahid Rind, Balochistan provincial government spokesman. He said following the explosion, a medical emergency was declared at hospitals in Quetta, and an investigation has been launched. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack, calling it a "cowardly act of terrorism" in a post on X and offering condolences to the families of the victims. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti strongly condemned the attack in Quetta, saying the militants targeted "innocent civilians, including women and children," vowing to "hunt (them down)" in a post on X. Bugti and the federal government in Islamabad often use the phrase "Fitna al-Hindustan" to refer to the BLA, which they allege is backed by India. New Delhi denies the allegation. Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari denounced the bombing, saying militants and their backers sought to undermine Pakistan's role in regional and international peace efforts. The attack came a day after Pakistan said the United States and Iran were close to reaching a memorandum of understanding to end the war in the Middle East that began on Feb. 28 after the U.S. and Israel attacked the Islamic Republic, upending global travel and spiking oil prices. U.S. President Donald Trump had said a deal related to the conflict had been "largely negotiated" following calls with regional allies, including Pakistan. Zardari promised in a statement that his country "will defeat terrorists, their facilitators, financiers and those providing them safe havens." Pakistan and India have long had strained relations and have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, which is claimed by both in its entirety. Although Pakistani authorities say they have quelled the insurgency, violence in Baluchistan has persisted. At least 26 people, including soldiers, were killed in 2024 when a suicide bomber attacked a train station in Balochistan.

- [China launches Shenzhou 23 spacecraft with 1 of 3 astronauts set for yearlong stay](#)
(2026-05-24 19:42)

JIUQUAN — China launched the Shenzhou 23 spacecraft Sunday night with three astronauts heading to its space station, including one set to stay in space for a year. The spacecraft blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China. The much-anticipated launch comes as China prepares for its first crewed lunar landing by 2030. The astronauts on the

mission are Zhu Yangzhu, the commander, Zhang Zhiyuan and Lai Ka-ying, also identified by Chinese authorities as Li Jiaying using the Mandarin transliteration of her name. Lai, who was born and raised in Hong Kong and has a doctoral degree in computer forensics, is the first astronaut from the city on a space mission. The crew is set to conduct dozens of science and application projects, state media said. They are also expected to complete an in-orbit rotation with the crew of Shenzhou 21, who has been at the Tiangong space station for more than 200 days. One of the three astronauts on the Shenzhou 23 mission is scheduled to stay at the orbiting space station for a year in what would be among the world's longest single stays in space. The astronaut's mission is to "explore human adaptability and performance limits" in long-duration spaceflight environments, state media reported. As China steps up its space program, its astronauts have carried out multiple missions to the Tiangong space station, developed after China was effectively excluded from the International Space Station on U.S. concerns over national security. The U.S. is seen as China's top space rival, with NASA aiming to land astronauts on the lunar surface in 2028. China's space station Tiangong, which translates to "Heavenly Palace," first hosted the country's crew in 2021. Last year, an emergency mission in the Shenzhou program, which means "Divine Vessel," returned a team of astronauts stranded on the space station due to a damaged spacecraft.

- [Norway-set drama about political polarization 'Fjord' wins Palme d' Or at Cannes](#)
(2026-05-24 18:56)

FRANCE — Cristian Mungiu's Norway-set drama about political polarization, "Fjord," has won the Palme d' Or, handing the Cannes Film Festival's top honor for the second time to Mungiu, the Romanian director of "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days." At a 79th Cannes Film Festival that saw few films cause a stir, "Fjord" found wide admiration for its engrossing tale of what Mungiu called "left-wing fundamentalism." It stars Sebastian Stan and Renate Reinsve as Romanian Evangelicals who move to Norway, but soon after have their children taken from them by child services for spanking them. "Today the society is split. It's divided. It's radicalized," said Mungiu. "This film is a pledge against any type of fundamentalism. It's a pledge for these things we quote very often, like trauma and inclusion and empathy. These are lovely words but we need to apply them more often." Mungiu becomes just the 10th filmmaker to win the Palme d' Or twice. His "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days," a Romanian abortion drama, won the award in 2007. The win for "Fjord" extends one of the movies' most extraordinary streaks. Neon, the specialty label, has now taken seven Palme d' Or winners in a row. "Fjord" adds to its unparalleled run, including last year's champion, Jafar Panahi's "It Was Just an Accident," and the 2024 winner, "Anora." The latter went on to win best picture at the Oscars. "Minotaur" wins Grand Prix The Grand Prix, or second prize, went to "Minotaur," Andrey Zvyagintsev's domestic thriller set against Russia's war with Ukraine. Loosely based on Claude Chabrol's 1969 film "The Unfaithful Wife," "Minotaur" is about a Russian businessman suspicious of his wife's indiscretions. At the same time, he's tasked with conscripting 150 of his workers for Vladimir Putin's war machine. "The only person who can stop this butchery is you, Mr. President of the Russian Federation,"

Zvyagintsev said, accepting his award. "Put an end to this slaughter. The whole world is waiting for this." By wide consensus, it wasn't a banner festival. Hollywood largely sat out this year's edition. Many of the selections struggled to bowl over critics. The global buzz that Cannes typically generates was fitful at best. But the awards handed out Saturday as the 79th Cannes drew to a close will significantly raise the international profiles of the winners. Last year's Cannes produced a long string of Oscar nominees, including "Sentimental Value" and "The Secret Agent." The nine-member jury that decided the awards was headed by Korean filmmaker Park Chan-wook. Demi Moore, Chloé Zhao and Stellan Skarsgård were also jurors. Chan-wook, a Cannes regular including last year with his satirical thriller "No Other Choice," joked that he preferred not to give away the Palme d'Or to any of the films, because it's an award I myself have never gotten," Chan-wook told reporters after the ceremony. "But I had no other choice." Awards are split and shared. Two films won for best director: the Polish filmmaker Pawel Pawlikowski, for his postwar drama "Fatherland," and the Spanish creative duo Javier Ambrossi and Javier Calvo for "The Black Ball," a generation-spanning queer epic "The Black Ball." It was Pawlikowski's second time winning the same Cannes prize in as many films, following his "Cold War" in 2018. But the award marked a breakthrough for Ambrossi and Calvo in their first Cannes entry. "No one knew us. Thierry didn't know us," Ambrossi told reporters, referring to Thierry Fremaux, Cannes artistic director. "It was just that the movie spoke." Virginie Efira and Tao Okamoto, the two stars of Ryusuke Hamaguchi's "All of a Sudden" shared the best actress award. In the elegantly empathetic drama, the two play women brought together in friendship out of their mutual sense of care for others. The jury also split the best actor prize. They chose Emmanuel Macchia and Valentin Campagne, the two stars of "Coward," Lukas Dhont's drama about young Belgian men sent to the front lines of World War II. The prize for best screenplay was awarded to Emmanuel Marre for "A Man of His Time," a French drama about a Nazi collaborator in Vichy France. Marre based it on the experiences of his own great-grandfather. The jury prize, or third place, went to German filmmaker Valeska Grisebach's "The Dreamed Adventure," a crime drama set in a Bulgarian border town. Saturday's ceremony was missing its tribute honoree. Barbra Streisand was to receive an honorary Palme d'Or, but a knee injury prevented her from attending. Isabelle Huppert nevertheless celebrated Streisand during the ceremony, and Streisand appeared in a taped video message. The Camera d'Or, Cannes' award for best first film, went to Marie Clémentine Dusabejambo's post-genocide drama "Ben' Imana," the first Rwandan film to be officially selected for the festival.

- [40,000 people under evacuation orders for a chemical tank leak in Southern California](#)
(2026-05-24 17:42)

Authorities in Southern California on Friday were racing to figure out how to prevent the explosion of a storage tank that has been leaking a hazardous chemical used to make plastic parts, as some 40,000 people were under evacuation orders in the area. A storage tank holding between 6,000 and 7,000 gallons (22,700 and 26,500 liters) of methyl methacrylate overheated

Thursday and began venting vapors into the air at an aerospace plastics facility in Garden Grove, a city in Orange County, the local fire authority said. The tank could fail and crack, releasing the chemical onto the ground, or it could explode, Orange County Fire Authority Division Chief Craig Covey said Friday. “This thing is going to fail, and we don’t know when,” Covey said. “We’re doing our best to figure out when or how we can prevent it.” Officials ordered residents in Garden Grove to leave and expanded evacuation orders Friday to some residents of five other Orange County cities — Cypress, Stanton, Anaheim, Buena Park and Westminster — after being unable to stop the leak overnight on the tank at GKN Aerospace, which makes parts for commercial and military aircraft. No injuries or deaths have been reported, authorities said. In an update later Friday, Covey said authorities have been able to maintain the tank’s temperature, buying time to figure out how to fix it. Garden Grove is about 38 miles (61 kilometers) south of downtown Los Angeles and next to Anaheim, home to Disneyland’s two theme parks, which were not under evacuation orders Friday. Danny Pham said he was deep in a dream when his roommate banged on his door around 7 a.m. Friday morning and told him he needed to leave immediately. Pham had been working late the night before at a Vietnamese restaurant and had not seen the news. “It was shocking to me,” said Pham, who lives only a couple blocks from the plastics plant. “I didn’t know how serious it would be. I never knew that a thing like this could happen.” He left minutes later, grabbing only his wallet and passport, and took shelter at a friend’s restaurant in a neighboring city. By late Friday afternoon, Pham was still trying to figure out where he would stay the night and worrying that he had only the clothes on his back, possibly for days to come. Covey said crews have created containment barriers with sandbags in case there is a chemical spill from the tank to prevent the toxic chemical from getting into storm drains or reaching creeks or the nearby ocean. Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong, the county health officer, said if the chemical heats up, it can release a vapor that is harmful to people’s health. It can cause respiratory issues, itching and burning eyes, nausea and headaches. Crews were initially successful and were able to neutralize one of two damaged tanks, but Covey said they determined Friday morning that the remaining tank was “in the biggest crisis.” GKN Aerospace said specialized hazardous material teams are assessing the situation. “There are no reports of injuries at this time and our priority remains the safety of our employees, responders, and the surrounding community,” a spokesperson said in an emailed statement. “We will provide verified updates as soon as more information becomes available.” Kim Yen, a retiree in Garden Grove, was settling in for the night Thursday when she heard a sirenlike sound coming from her phone. An alert told her she needed to leave her home, which was just two blocks from the chemical leak. As Yen drove to her daughter’s house in Seal Beach, she worried that others in the local Vietnamese community might ignore or not understand the evacuation alert because it was in English. “They are family,” she said. “I’m hoping they stay alert and listen to the news and the authorities. This is scary.” Yen, who is originally from Vietnam and has lived in Orange County since 1980, quickly stopped by her house Friday morning to grab important documents and medications. By then her neighborhood was “a ghost town,” and she was comforted to see police officers going door to door to make sure everyone had evacuated. “We understand that this is frightening,” Garden Grove Mayor Stephanie Klopfenstein said. “But the evacuation orders are in place for

your safety.” Local Vietnamese television stations translated updates from officials and urged residents to take the situation seriously.

- [Senate minority says choice of Gatchalian non-negotiable](#) (2026-05-24 16:14)

THE Senate minority bloc’s quest to install Sen. Win Gatchalian as the new Senate president is “non-negotiable,” Sen. Panfilo Lacson said on Sunday. “Insofar as we are concerned, [installing] Senator Win as SP (Senate president) is non-negotiable,” Lacson said in Filipino and English during a radio interview. “With regard to who might join [us], I don’t want to go there. We will not accept any SP other than Senator Win,” he said. Lacson refused to say whether Gatchalian will openly challenge Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano as Senate head when sessions resume on Monday. Reports were circulating that Sen. Chiz Escudero, who helped Cayetano oust Sen. Vicente Sotto III as Senate president on May 11, was trying to form a separate group to wrest the chamber’s leadership. Asked if there are negotiations for a counter-coup against Cayetano, Lacson replied, “If there’s any, I’m not at liberty to disclose because that’s a critical issue.” “That’s a sensitive matter. I won’t confirm nor deny [such move]. The quest to remove the SP is a continuing crime,” Lacson said. Cayetano is in a precarious position as the majority bloc to which he belongs is now down to 12 members, with Sen. Ronald dela Rosa having gone into hiding to elude arrest. In contrast, the 11-member minority bloc is still strong and has promised “not to abandon each other,” Lacson said. “I was asked why I have been silent regarding Senate leadership. Wrong! I was the one who brought out the idea of making Sherwin (Gatchalian) as SP (Senate President),” Sotto said in a text message on Sunday. Lacson dismissed speculations that the minority’s move is linked to efforts to amend the Constitution or influence the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. “Our primary or main concern is to restore the Senate’s integrity. We never discussed anything else — not Con-ass, not the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte,” he said. “We in the minority bloc agreed that our reason for seeking a leadership change is to give the Senate a fresh start. That is why we rally behind Senator Sherwin Gatchalian; he is a fresh face and has no ‘enemies’ among senators,” he said. Aside from Lacson, Sotto and Gatchalian, the other members of the minority group are Senators Bam Aquino, JV Ejercito, Risa Hontiveros, Lito Lapid, Kiko Pangilinan, Erwin Tulfo, Raffy Tulfo, and Migz Zubiri. Lacson said he saw some “redeeming value” for Cayetano when he convened the impeachment court that will try Vice President Sara Duterte. “I saw that he can defy any pressure not to convene [the Senate as impeachment court],” Lacson said. “I mentioned before that the immediate convening of the Senate as impeachment court by SP (Cayetano) was a breath of fresh air,” Lacson said. Lacson also said the minority bloc will oppose the motion of Sen. Rodante Marcoleta to allow dela Rosa to vote “virtually” on any Senate bills to be approved on third and final reading or on any crucial Senate matters. On Sunday, the spokesman for the House of Representatives’ prosecution panel for the trial of Duterte said it is up to the Senate to settle the leadership issue. “For us, whatever the composition of the Senate will be, regarding the positions or leadership... we are not substantially considering this because, for us, what we are standing by are the pieces of evidence that we can present,” Lanao del Sur 1st District Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong said in an

interview with DZBB. “So we leave it to the Senate because this is internal to them and whatever their decision will be, we respect it on our part,” Adiong said. “Should there be changes in the Senate leadership, there will be no changes in the evidence that the House prosecution panel can present,” Adiong said. The prosecution team is made up of Batangas 2nd District Rep. Gerville Luistro, Bicol Saro Rep. Terry Ridon, 1-Rider Rep. Ramon Rodrigo Gutierrez, San Juan City Rep. Ysabel Maria Zamora, Iloilo 3rd District Rep. Lorenz Defensor, Akbayan Rep. Jose Manuel Diokno, Mamamayang Liberal Rep. Leila de Lima, Dinagat Islands Rep. Kaka Bag-ao, Bukidnon 2nd District Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores, Cagayan de Oro 1st District Rep. Lordan Suan, and Manila 3rd District Rep. Joel Chua. On May 11, the House, voting 257-25 with nine abstentions, impeached Duterte over alleged misuse of confidential funds, unexplained wealth allegedly amassed, alleged bribery, and the kill remark against President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The House sent the four articles of impeachment to the Senate three days later. Article 1 accuses Duterte of graft and corruption, and betraying public trust “through the systematic misuse, misappropriation, and irregular liquidation of confidential funds amounting to” P500 million “released to the Office of the Vice President and” P112.5 million “released to the Department of Education.” Duterte served as education secretary before she resigned from the post in 2024. Article 2 accuses the vice president of lying about her and her husband’s assets, liabilities, and net worth and failing to divest and, instead, willfully continuing all her business interests during her tenure as vice president. Article 3 alleged that she gave monetary gifts or payments to “certain people to induce the violation and circumvention of procurement and other related laws.” Article 4 accuses Duterte of hiring an assassin to kill President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and former speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and “actively inciting sedition against the republic.”

- [Building under construction in Angeles collapses; 19 feared trapped](#) (2026-05-24 16:12)

RESCUERS used their hands and sniffer dogs to search for 19 people who are feared trapped after a building under construction in Angeles City collapsed early on Sunday. The building collapsed on itself while also heavily damaging an adjacent hotel where two of the 26 people who were rescued had been staying, they said. Local delivery rider James Bernardo, 30, told AFP by telephone he had just dropped off food on the same street when the disaster occurred. “A few seconds later, there was suddenly a loud noise in the area, and when I looked, I realized that (the building) had already collapsed,” Bernardo said. A video clip taken by Bernardo and verified by AFP showed a giant pile of twisted steel beams, power pylons and slabs of concrete blocking the street as fellow witnesses took photographs with their phones. In the clip, Bernardo can be heard saying, “We thought it was an earthquake, but it turned out it was the building (collapsing).” Angeles City information officer Jay Pelayo told AFP the nine-story building’s walls and scaffolding had buckled, likely trapping people in a pile of debris. While there were no initial reports of casualties, “there are 19 personnel that usually report in the area, so they are the ones we are trying to locate now,” Pelayo said. “There are big chunks of concrete, and we need equipment to lift them up. That is what’s challenging for the rescue right now.” Initial reports suggested 24 people had been rescued from the rubble, as well as two from a hotel that was

also hit when the building came down, the city government said. "We hope the 19 people are part of that number" and therefore accounted for, Pelayo said. Firefighters, police and disaster-response teams used their hands and sniffer dogs to search for the trapped survivors, Public Works Secretary Vinzon Dizon told reporters. "There are some signs of life ... There are voices that are being heard," Dizon said, adding that rescuers were moving with extreme caution. "It's a very, very unstable site, and the priority is to get the people out." Rescuers were "hearing voices" in the rubble, while 24 workers managed to dash to safety or were rescued, police and other officials said. The building collapsed after a fierce thunderstorm. Among the 21 people who remained unaccounted for, most were believed to be workers at the building, according to Francis Pangilinan, who heads Angeles City's disaster mitigation office and was at the scene. Two other people, including a Malaysian tourist, were injured when their lodgings were hit by debris from the collapsed building, officials said. The incident ignited fierce online debate over the building's structural integrity, after street-level photos appeared to show columns far too slender for such a tall edifice. The building is owned by a certain Ernest Jackson Lim. Netizens and construction watchers began scrutinizing Google Maps Street View captures of the project during its early phases. "The columns visible in those photos can only support up to a four-story building," several online commentators said. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) sent K9 teams to help search for victims who could still be trapped under the rubble.

- [Parts of Metro Manila, nearby areas to have water, power cut-offs this week](#) (2026-05-24 16:11)

PARTS of Metro Manila and nearby areas will have water and power service interruptions this week. Water distributors Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. attributed the interruptions to maintenance work and high demand. Aside from Metro Manila, Rizal and Cavite will also experience service interruptions. Manila Water said that in Marikina City, parts of Barangay Marikina Heights will have no water on May 25–26 from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. because of step testing activities to detect possible leaks. Parts of Barangay Tumana will have no water on May 27–28 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. while a valve is being installed on Liwanag Street. In Quezon City, the interruptions will affect the villages of UP Campus, Pansol, Kamuning, Sacred Heart, Old Capitol Site, and Culiati on May 28–29 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. Barangay Kalusugan will have no water on May 28–29 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. while a line meter along E. Rodriquez Sr. Avenue cor. Gilmore Avenue is replaced. Barangay Holy Spirit will have no water on May 25–26 between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. In Makati City, Barangay Forbes Park will have no water on May 28–29 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. In Rizal, Barangay Dela Paz in Antipolo City will have no water on May 25–26 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. In Cainta, Barangay Isidro will have no water on May 28–29 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. For Maynilad, Barangay (villages) 313, 314, 329, 330 and 335 Sta. Cruz in Manila will have no water on May 25–31 between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. because of leak exploration activities. Barangay 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 315, and 313 in Sta. Cruz will have no water from May 25 to June 1 between 11:01 p.m. and 3 a.m. because of leak exploration. In Tondo, Barangay 124, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138,

139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 177 and 179, 180, 181 and 182 will have no water on May 25–31 between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. because of leak exploration. Barangay 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 74, 75, 76, 78, 81, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 163, 168, 169, 170, 171 and 172 also in Tondo will have water interruptions on May 25–31 between 12 a.m. and 3 a.m. Barangay 649 in Tondo will have service interruptions on May 25–June 1 between 11:01 p.m. and 3 a.m. because of leak exploration activities. Barangay 16, 55, 133, 182, 184, 187, 195, 237, 238, 240, 241, 242, 245, 247, 248, 250, 297, 299, 310, 317, 323, 331 and 609 in Manila will have water service interruptions on May 25–26 between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. due to network maintenance activities. In Binondo, Barangay 292, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 303, 304 and 305 will have no water on May 25–June 1 between 11:01 p.m. and 3 a.m. In Pandacan, Barangay 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840 and 865 will have no water on May 25–June 1 between 11:01 p.m. and 3 a.m. because of leak exploration works. In Sampaloc, Barangay 524, 525, 529, 532, 533 and 535 will have no water May 25–June 1 between 11:01 p.m. and 3 a.m. Barangay 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 430, 457 and 460 on Recto Avenue, in Sta. Cruz will have no water on May 26–June 1 between 12:01 a.m. and 3 a.m. There will be water cutoffs in Barangay 198 to 220 and 202-A in Manila. In Caloocan City, Barangay 36, 39, 40 and 187 to 197 will have no water on May 25–31 between 12 a.m. and 3 a.m. Barangay 124 to 146 and 177 in Manila, and NBBS Kaunlaran, NBBS Proper, North Bay Boulevard North and San Rafael in Navotas City will have no water on May 25–26 between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. In Valenzuela City, Barangay Gen. T. De Leon and Parada will have no water on May 25–26 between 12:01 a.m. and 4 a.m. In Imus City, Cavite, Barangay Alapan I-C, Anabu I-A, Anabu I-B, Anabu I-C, Anabu I-D, Anabu I-E, Anabu I-F, Anabu II-A, Anabu II-B, Anabu II-C, Anabu II-D, Anabu II-E, Bayan Luma I, Bayan Luma II, Bayan Luma III, Bayan Luma IV, Bayan Luma V, Bayan Luma VI, Bayan Luma VII, Bayan Luma VIII, Bayan Luma IX, Bukandala III, Bukandala IV, Bukandala V, Carsadang Bago I, Carsadang Bago II, Malagasang 1-A, Malagasang I-B, Malagasang I-C, Malagasang I-D, Malagasang I-E, Malagasang I-F, Malagasang I-G, Medicion I-B, Poblacion III-B, Poblacion IV-B, Poblacion IV-D, and Tanzang Luma VI will have no water on May 25–26 between 5 a.m. and 1 a.m. The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) also announced on Sunday power interruptions in parts of Metro Manila and five provinces because of maintenance work. Affected areas in Metro Manila are Marikina, Taguig, Caloocan, Parañaque, Quezon City, Muntinlupa, Pasig, Manila and Malabon. The affected provinces are Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Quezon and Rizal. In Marikina, Barangay Sto. Niño and Sta. Elena will have no electricity on May 25 between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m. In Taguig City, the Bay Breeze Executive Village in Barangay Hagonoy will have no power on May 26 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. In Taguig, Barangay Sta. Ana, Calzada, Palington and Napindan will have no electricity on May 28 between 9 a.m. and noon. Parts of Grace Park in Caloocan City will have power interruptions on May 26–27 between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. due to line reconductoring works along 8th Avenue in Grace Park. In Parañaque, parts of Solaire Resort & Casino along Aseana Ave. will have no electricity on May 26 between 8 a.m. and noon. A portion of C. Benitez St. near Sunset Drive in Barangay Bagong Lipunan ng Crame, Quezon City, will have power interruptions on May 27 between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m. In Quezon City, Barangay Tandang Sora, Sauyo and Talipapa will have no electricity on May 29–30 between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. In Muntinlupa City, Barangay Bayanan and Putatan

will have no electricity on May 28 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. In Pasig City, parts of Barangay San Antonio will have no power on May 28–29 between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. Barangay Rosario will have no electricity on May 28 between 12:30 a.m. and 1 a.m. In Manila, some areas in Binondo and Tondo, Manila, will have power interruptions on May 28–29 between 11:45 p.m. and 4:45 a.m. In Malabon City, Barangay Baritan, Concepcion and Muzon will have no power on May 29 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. In Batangas, the Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Import Facility in Barangay Tabangao Ambulong Proper in Batangas City will have no power on May 28 between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. In Bulacan, parts of Barangay Tabing Ilog in Marilao City will have power interruptions on May 29 between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m. Intercity Ricemillers Industrial Compound in Barangay Wakas, Bocaue, and Barangay San Juan, Balagtas, will have no power on May 31 between 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. In Cavite, the Palo Alto Subdivision in Barangay Habay I, in Bacoor City, will have no electricity on May 26 between 9 a.m. and noon. In Imus City, Corner Stone Executive Homes-Imus in Barangay Medicion II-D will have no electricity on May 28 between 9:15 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. The towns of Alfonso, Naic, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Magallanes, Maragondon, and Ternate in Cavite will have no electricity on May 28 between 11 a.m. and 11:05 a.m. In Quezon, Barangay Cabatang and Talisay in Tiaong, and Antonino, Dolores, will have no electricity on May 28 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. In Rizal, Barangay Calumpang, Darangan and Kalawaan in Binangonan will have no electricity on May 28–29 between 11:30 p.m. and 5:30 a.m.

• [Ahead of French Open, Eala receives birthday cake from friend Jovic](#) (2026-05-24 16:10)

AHEAD of her campaign in the French Open, Alex Eala received a birthday cake from her tennis buddies, which included Iva Jovic, whom she will face in the tournament's first round. Eala, who turned 21 on May 23, was presented the cake by Jovic, Eva Lys of Germany, and Zeynep Sonmez of Turkey after a practice round. "21 can you do sum (some) for meeeee," Eala posted on social media. The Filipina tennis sensation also had a simple birthday dinner with her family, with the iconic Eiffel Tower as the backdrop. With no exact match time announced, anticipation builds for what will be the first-ever singles match between Eala and Jovic, the 17th-seeded American. Earlier this year, the two teamed up in doubles at the ASB Classic in Auckland, New Zealand, reaching the semifinals before falling to the third-seeded Chinese pair Xu Yi Fan and Yang Zhao Xuan. At Roland Garros, Eala will partner up in the women's doubles with world No. 9 Victoria Mboko of Canada. They will go up against Leylah Fernandez of Canada and Diana Shnaider of Russia in the first round. Messages of support for Eala poured in from across the tennis world and beyond, including from fellow Filipina and Olympic gold medalist Hidilyn Diaz. Reigning French Open champion Coco Gauff of US and Philippine Women's Open titlist Camila Osorio of Colombia also commented on Eala's post.

• [Defensor: Plunder case 'completely baseless'](#) (2026-05-24 16:10)

FORMER lawmaker and environment and natural resources secretary Michael "Mike" Defensor on Sunday railed at the timing of the filing of a complaint of plunder against him, Sen. Rodante Marcoleta and two other people, saying "it was completely baseless and appears to

be built on assumptions and speculation.” Defensor told The Manila Times in a Viber interview that he and the other respondents are “prepared to fully defend ourselves.” “I have faith in our institutions and in the rule of law. I trust that when facts — not politics, assumptions, or publicity — are examined, the truth will prevail,” said Defensor, who was Malacañang chief of staff during the term of president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. “I have faced many battles in public life before. We will face this one head-on, and we will let the evidence speak,” he said. The nephew of the late senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago said he did not commit any wrongdoing. “There was no illegal act, no corrupt transaction, no favor sought, and absolutely no conspiracy to commit any crime,” he said. The mere act of giving or receiving funds does not automatically constitute plunder, bribery, or corruption, said Defensor. The law requires facts and evidence — not insinuations. “What is disturbing is the reckless effort to elevate ordinary and lawful acts into serious criminal accusations without showing any clear connection to a government contract, official act, undue benefit, or quid pro quo. Serious charges like plunder should never be used for headlines or harassment,” he said. “The timing and manner by which this has surfaced naturally raise questions. But regardless of motive, we will confront this directly and through the proper legal process,” according to Defensor, who recently made news when he introduced to Marcoleta former Marine Sgt. Orly Guteza — who became a surprise whistleblower at the height of the Senate inquiry into the flood control project scandal. The Office of the Ombudsman gave the respondents 15 days from receipt of its order to submit their counter-affidavits. The complaint, filed last May 18, alleged that Marcoleta’s acceptance of gifts worth a total of P75 million on three separate occasions when he was a member of the House of Representatives constitutes the crime of plunder. It alleged that on Jan. 6, 2025, Marcoleta received P30 million from Defensor, which was “evidenced by a donor’s tax return and a ... deposit slip showing that Defensor paid the donor’s tax on” Dec. 17, 2025.

• [Sara trial ‘litmus test’ for democracy](#) (2026-05-24 16:10)

HOUSE Assistant Majority Leader and Lanao del Sur 1st District Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong called the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte a “litmus test” for democracy in the country. “It is actually a litmus test for us that we can say this democracy still works,” Adiong, one of the House’s impeachment trial spokesmen, said in the Saturday News Forum on May 23, 2026. “And this is the perfect and democratic venue for both sides to air their complaint,” he said. On May 18, 2026, the Senate convened as an impeachment court and ordered the issuance of a writ of summons directing Duterte to file an answer on the articles of impeachment. This came after the House of Representatives, voting 257-25 with nine abstentions, impeached her on May 11, over alleged misuse of confidential funds, unexplained wealth she allegedly amassed, alleged bribery, and the kill remark against President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., and sent the impeachment articles to the Senate for trial. Under the 1987 Constitution, only the House can initiate impeachment cases and only the Senate can conduct an impeachment trial. Duterte, who has a June 1, 2026, deadline to file her answer to the impeachment articles, denied the allegations in the two complaints heard by the House Committee on Justice. This committee found probable cause to impeach her on April 29, 2026,

and subsequently sent the impeachment articles to the House plenary for action. Adiong said in the forum that “what we just want to establish is that there will be enough time for all the articles to be aired, to be explained to the public because... we are all stakeholders... in this issue.” “What we are talking about here is how strong our Constitution is...,” he said. Duterte’s removal from office and a lifetime ban from any government position. “Wherefore, it is respectfully prayed that after trial, the Senate, sitting as an Impeachment Court, render judgment” declaring her guilty on all the articles; imposing upon her “the penalty of removal from office as Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines and perpetual disqualification from holding any office under the Republic of the Philippines” ; and declaring that she “shall further be liable to prosecution, trial, and punishment, according to law.” Article I alleged that Duterte committed culpable violations of the Constitution, graft and corruption, and betrayed public trust “through the systematic misuse, misappropriation, and irregular liquidation of confidential funds amounting to” P500 million “released to the Office of the Vice President and” P112.5 million “released to the Department of Education.” Duterte served as Education secretary before she resigned from that post in 2024. Article II alleged that she committed culpable violation of the Constitution and betrayed public trust when she: allegedly amassed “unexplained wealth manifestly disproportionate to her lawful income and earnings during her incumbency as a public official” ; allegedly failed “to fully and truthfully disclose all her and her spouse’s assets, liabilities, and net worth in her Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN), including in her SALN for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024” ; and allegedly failed “to divest, and instead, willfully continued, all her business interests during her tenure as” vice president “for the years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.” Article III alleged that she “committed bribery, graft and corruption, culpable violation of the Constitution, and betrayed public trust when she gave monetary gifts or payments to” certain people “to induce the violation and circumvention of procurement and other related laws.” The last article, Article IV, alleged that Duterte “committed culpable violation of the Constitution, high crimes, and betrayed public trust by contracting for the assassination of” President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and Leyte 1st District Rep. and former speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez “by making grave threats, and by actively inciting sedition against the” republic. Duterte has denied making an assassination threat. In her answer to the complaints, she said that the complaints failed to show “any shred of proof” that a contract to kill ever existed. “Instead, complainants rely on exaggerated conclusions dressed up as fact,” it read. “Absent any statement of ultimate facts in any of these Impeachment Complaints, there is nothing for the respondent to answer. Respondent thus only admits averments therein insofar as they allege her election, assumption to the Office of the Vice President, appointment as Secretary of Education, and her prior offices as Mayor and Vice Mayor of Davao City,” Duterte’s answer to the complaints read. “The rest of the allegations, including the annexes and so-called evidence attached to the Impeachment Complaints, are specifically denied for being false, misleading, irrelevant, and mere conclusions of fact and law,” it added.

- [No Palace order for Torre to join manhunt for Bato](#) (2026-05-24 16:10)

THERE is no order from President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to former police chief Nicolas Torre III to join the manhunt for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, Malacañang said on Sunday. Torre, who served arrest orders against former president Rodrigo Duterte and Kingdom of Jesus Christ founder Apollo Quiboloy, had said he was ready to help in the hunt for dela Rosa, who went into hiding after the International Criminal Court (ICC) confirmed issuing a warrant for his arrest for being an alleged “indirect co-perpetrator” in Duterte’s controversial campaign against drugs. “For now, there is nothing. I have not been given a message regarding that,” Palace spokesman Claire Castro said during an interview over dzMM. “I don’t want to preempt the president. But right now, it seems like the PNP (Philippine National Police), NBI (National Bureau of Investigation), and CIDG (Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) have enough forces (to go after dela Rosa),” she said. Torre, now the general manager of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), said he would not think twice of taking on the “special assignment” of tracking down his former boss at the PNP should Marcos give the order. But even without the directive, Torre said he and the whole MMDA would assist in the search for dela Rosa if it fell within the agency’s jurisdiction. Castro reiterated Marcos’ instruction to all law enforcement agencies to do everything by the book. She insisted there is enough legal ground for the government to recognize and implement the ICC’s order, contrary to dela Rosa’s argument that only local courts have jurisdiction in his case. “There is no need to go through the local courts. That’s what Solicitor General (Darlene) Berberabe said. No need to go through the local court. We have RA (Republic Act) 9851. It states what the government’s first option is. It’s clear. It’s an international court that we’re talking about here, not a requesting state. And that’s what we’re saying now; we’re not violating any law. That’s the government’s view,” Castro said. The same law will be applied in case the ICC also orders the arrest of the other co-conspirators of Duterte, she said. On Sunday, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said good intelligence work is the key to tracking down and arresting high-profile personalities like dela Rosa linked to crimes against humanity. Lacson gave the advice to law enforcement agencies that are also going after prominent personalities, including Atong Ang, former Bureau of Corrections chief Gerald Bantag, and resigned party-list representative Zaldy Co. Ang had been charged with the disappearance and death of at least 26 cockfighting enthusiasts, while Bantag allegedly masterminded the killing of radio broadcaster Percy Lapid. Co, who is believed to be hiding in France, is facing plunder and graft charges over his alleged involvement in the multibillion-peso flood control budget scandal. Intelligence is the key to any law enforcement or military operation, Lacson said in a radio interview. He said that without good intelligence work and proper coordination, law enforcers tasked to arrest high-profile fugitives would be “wasting their resources.” Lacson, who once served as chief of the Philippine National Police from 1999 to 2001, was dela Rosa’s superior in the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force. Lacson scored some lawyers for being “manipulative and misleading,” including one who tried to compare his case and that of dela Rosa insofar as evading arrest is concerned. He said that his situation is different from that of dela Rosa. “Spot on. Not all lawyers are created equal. Some are learned and updated on jurisprudence; some are dumb and lazy. And yes, some are devious and manipulative with the obvious intent to mislead. All are bound by the code of ethics of the legal profession, though,” Lacson wrote on

X. “There are pretender lawyers; not all lawyers are created equal. Some are learned and study hard, some are dumb and lazy, some are devious and do nothing worthwhile but force their fake ‘knowledge’ on others,” he said in Filipino and English in a radio interview. Lacson was referring to the claim of one “lawyer” that he had gone into hiding after being the subject of an arrest warrant. Dela Rosa has been on the run since the International Criminal Court ordered his arrest. Lacson pointed out that when he went into hiding as a “fugitive from injustice” in the 2010s, he did not break the law, citing the then-applicable jurisprudence (*Miranda v. Tuliao*) that allowed an accused to seek judicial relief even if he was not under the court’s physical custody. Lacson was eventually acquitted, and the Supreme Court affirmed the ruling. But Lacson noted the jurisprudence has since been modified since late 2025, limiting such an option to six months.

- [PMA welcomes over 1k incoming members of Class 2030](#) (2026-05-24 16:09)

(UPDATE) AT least 367 incoming cadets, composed of 290 males and 77 females, of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) took their oath, as they were received by their upper classmen, marking the start of their transformation from civilians into members of the Cadet Corps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Out of 33,640 individuals who applied, 24,630 qualified to take the PMA Entrance Exam 2025, from which 1,436 passed and underwent the rigorous screening process. The biggest number of incoming cadets came from Cordillera at 12 percent, National Capital Region and Calabarzon at 11 percent each. In his opening remarks at the Borromeo Field on Saturday, the Commandant of Cadets underscored the significance of the occasion as the first step in the cadets’ military and academic journey inside the Academy. “The Reception Rites mark a life-changing milestone — it marks the official beginning of your military career. This is not merely a ceremonial event, rather, it signifies your transition from a carefree civilian life into the disciplined, demanding, and regimented life of a cadet,” he said. Meanwhile, Vice Admiral Caesar Bernard Valencia, PMA superintendent, highlighted the Academy’s thrusts in ensuring a responsive training amidst the evolving security landscape. “The academy is aggressively undertaking initiatives to enhance our academic and military curriculum, elevating it to be at par with the highest international standards. Your children will be trained not just in the classic art of war, but in critical systems thinking, cybersecurity, international defense, and strategic leadership,” Valencia said. “We will always endeavor to provide them with the best education and training the nation can offer, ensuring that when they graduate, they are fully equipped to protect our nation in the 21st century,” he added. As members of PMA Class 2030, the incoming cadets will undergo the enhanced Bachelor of Science in Management major in Security Studies curriculum, similar to PMA Classes 2028 and 2029. The program is designed to equip cadets with competencies relevant to modern warfare, territorial defense, and the evolving operational environment, while developing the knowledge and skills essential for future military officers. The new recruits were met by the Second Class Cadet Squad Leaders from PMA “Siklab Kasilag” Class of 2028.

- [Group slams no-sail zone for PH-US maritime drills](#) (2026-05-24 16:08)

FISHERFOLK group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) decried a scheduled "no-sail zone" off Zambales for the upcoming Philippines-United States Bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (BMCA) from May 28 to 30. Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap said military exercises offer no benefit to Filipinos, but instead disrupt the livelihoods of local fisherfolk. "Disruptions to livelihoods result from US military exercises, which offer no benefit for Filipinos," he said. Hicap also argued that military exercises escalate territorial tensions, leaving fisherfolk caught in the middle. He also accused the Marcos administration of sacrificing local fishing rights for the US' geopolitical interests, adding that this is not what our local fisherfolk need. "How can the Marcos administration sacrifice the fishing rights of Filipinos on the altar of the US geopolitical agenda? Defense interoperability isn't an immediate concern for us and doesn't affect our daily lives." In these trying times, the last thing the Filipino fishers need is foreign troops conducting amphibious landing exercises in our fishing waters and coastal communities," he said. This marks the second recent fishing restriction in Zambales, following the no-sail zone policy imposed during the Balikatan exercises from April 20 to May 8. Pamalakaya said the previous no-sail zone implementation affected at least 4,840 fisherfolk in Subic, Zambales. The upcoming joint maritime exercise is expected to affect 11 coastal towns of Zambales, including Sta. Cruz, Palauig, Candelaria, Masinloc, Iba, San Antonio, Botolan, Cabangan, San Felipe, San Narciso, and Subic.

- [Weeklong PDEA raids net P78M illegal drugs, 85 suspects](#) (2026-05-24 16:07)

AUTHORITIES confiscated P77.78 million worth of illegal drugs and arrested 85 suspects in nationwide operations conducted from May 14 to 21, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) said on Sunday. PDEA Director General Isagani Nerez said the agency carried out 78 operations across the country during the period. "This week's accomplishment report is a testament to the unwavering commitment, dedication and bravery of our operatives on the ground," Nerez said in a statement. "From intercepting illegal drug shipments at the airport to dismantling drug dens and eradicating marijuana plantations in remote areas, we are proving that no corner of the country is beyond the reach of law enforcement. We will continue to intensify our antidrug operations until every community is freed from the threat of illegal drugs." Seized during the operations were 9,596.85 grams of shabu, 12,257.32 grams of dried marijuana leaves, 41,520 fully grown marijuana plants and 12,120 marijuana seedlings believed to be intended for distribution to multiple drug networks nationwide. Of those arrested, 58 were identified as drug pushers, 11 as possessors and five as alleged drug den operators. All suspects involved in illegal drug activities will face charges under Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. PDEA said the confiscated items were placed in government custody for forensic examination and presented as evidence in court proceedings.

- [SSS partners with anti-red tape agency for faster, streamlined services](#) (2026-05-24 16:06)

(UPDATE) THE Social Security System (SSS) partnered with the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) as part of its commitment to ensure faster and more responsive public service. SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph de Claro said ARTA, under the leadership of Secretary Ernesto Perez, has

continuously pushed for reforms in government service delivery. “On our end, the SSS remains committed to developing programs that are more responsive, practical and relevant to the everyday realities of the Filipino people,” de Claro said on ARTA’s eighth anniversary. The SSS chief in a statement emailed to The Manila Times stressed that SSS continued to strengthen frontline services, simplify processes and modernize systems to better respond to member concerns, in line with the shared goal of improving government service delivery for Filipinos. As one of the country’s largest public service institutions, de Claro said the SSS recognized that every transaction affected the daily lives of our members. “We continue to improve our systems, processes and frontline services because faster and more responsive government service is not only an operational goal, but a public responsibility,” de Claro said. “The agency’s strong financial performance in 2025 has strengthened its capacity to expand member assistance programs and accelerate reforms aimed at improving service delivery,” de Claro added. In 2025, SSS posted a net income of P142.97 billion while its Reserve Fund surpassed the P1-trillion mark for the first time in the institution’s history, a major milestone that further strengthens the long-term stability of the pension fund for current and future members. “Its strong financial position allows it to invest directly in better services, new technologies, infrastructure upgrades and programs that will improve the experience of its members,” according to the top SSS official. De Claro likewise highlighted the agency’s expanded relief programs designed to help Filipino workers and families cope with the continuing impact of the national energy emergency. Moreover, de Claro said SSS was also preparing to roll out the Energy Sustainability Loan Program in September. The program allows qualified SSS members with a Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) account to avail themselves of financing to install residential solar panel systems, payable for up to seven years, the SSS chief executive said. The MPF is a compulsory retirement savings scheme that automatically enrolls SSS members who are contributing to the regular SSS program with a monthly salary credit above P20,000, he said. Furthermore, the SSS head revealed that the agency aimed to support at least 100,000 homes by 2028 through the program, which seeks to help families manage rising electricity costs while promoting long-term energy sustainability. The initiative reflects the evolving role of SSS in responding not only to traditional social security concerns, but also to emerging economic pressures affecting Filipino households, de Claro said.

- [Japanese, American fugitives nabbed in back-to-back operations](#) (2026-05-24 16:05)

(UPDATE) AUTHORITIES arrested two foreigners suspected of involvement in child exploitation cases in separate operations conducted in Cavite and Tarlac provinces. In a news release on Sunday, Bureau of Immigration (BI)-Fugitive Search Unit chief Rendel Ryan Sy said police and immigration agents nabbed Japanese Yuto Konno, 43, during an operation in Cavite on May 12. He is wanted by Japanese authorities for forcible sexual intercourse and forcible indecency with a child. Records showed that in 2018, he allegedly molested three minors inside a restroom facility in Hokkaido, Japan. A warrant for his arrest was issued by the Nagoya Summary Court on Aug. 16, 2024. Authorities seized from him several electronic devices allegedly containing child sexual abuse or exploitation materials. Immigration records revealed that the suspect arrived in

the Philippines in 2019 as a temporary visitor and has overstayed since April 2022. He was also found to have an active blacklist and watch list orders for undesirability and overstaying. In a separate operation on May 13, 37-year-old American Tony Le was arrested in Bamban, Tarlac. Le is wanted by United States authorities for charges related to enticing and coercing a minor to engage in sexual activity, in violation of US federal laws involving child sexual exploitation materials. The arrest stemmed from information provided by the US government regarding his presence in Tarlac. Verification by immigration authorities showed that Le had previously been excluded from entering the country in February 2024 due to derogatory records connected to possible child sex exploitation investigations. Authorities believe he may have illegally entered the Philippines. Both fugitives are under the custody of the BI Warden Facility pending deportation proceedings.

- [‘Palaro’ athletes told: Compete with integrity](#) (2026-05-24 16:05)

SPEAKER and Isabela 6th District Rep. Faustino "Bojie" Dy III urged athletes to compete with pride and integrity in the 2026 Palarong Pambansa, which he described as an opportunity for them to build character, make friends, and learn. "The Palarong Pambansa is a celebration of the hard work, discipline, teamwork, and dreams of the Filipino youth," Dy said in Filipino and English in a video message on Sunday, posted ahead of the games' opening. "It goes beyond sports — it is an opportunity for our youth to build character, form lifelong friendships, learn the value of perseverance, and discover how far hard work and determination can take them," he said. Dy told all who have reached the games that they could already be considered winners "because of your dedication and perseverance that you showed." "To our athletes: compete with passion, play with integrity, and represent your schools and communities, and regions with pride and honor", Dy said. The May 24–31, 2026, Palarong Pambansa features new sports. "Palarong Pambansa continues to evolve alongside the aspirations of our learners. This year, we are opening more spaces for participation, recognizing more forms of athletic excellence, and creating a competition environment that is fairer and more inclusive for every student-athlete," Angara said in a statement on Friday. "We believe that through a fairer and more inclusive Palarong Pambansa this year, every young athlete will be given greater opportunities to show their talent, potential, and excellence," he said. Weightlifting, football for secondary girls, and futsal for elementary girls were added "to the list of regular sports and events," the DepEd said in the Friday statement. "The games will also showcase demonstration sports including Karate, Kickboxing, and Soft Tennis, while Muay Thai and selected Paragames events — namely Sitting Volleyball and Table Tennis — will be featured as exhibition events to support greater inclusivity in school sports," it said. The DepEd added that participation this year "expands with the return of the Negros Island Region (NIR) as a separate regional delegation." "The Philippine Schools Overseas and the National Academy of Sports, the DepEd said, "will field independent delegations, broadening the reach of the competition and allowing more learners to represent their communities and institutions." The department added that it would implement updated policies for some of the events. "These include a modified Winner-Take-All policy for team sports such as baseball, basketball, football, futsal, sepak

takraw, softball, and volleyball; the continuation of qualifying standards for athletics, swimming, and archery; and the Home Region Representation Policy," it said. "Eligible athletes from the National Training Pool and National Developmental Pool are also now welcomed to participate," the DepEd said.

- [PNP: Crime rate down under ‘safer cities’ drive](#) (2026-05-24 16:04)

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) said Sunday that the country's crime rate dropped by 16 percent during the first 43 days of implementing the anti-crime program "Safer Cities." Data show that a total of 3,776 focus crimes were recorded from April 6, when the campaign was launched, to May 18. This was lower than the 4,495 focus crimes recorded from Feb. 22 to April 5, reflecting a decrease of 719 cases or 15.99 percent. All eight focus crimes — murder, homicide, physical injury, rape, robbery, theft, car theft, and motorcycle theft — registered decreases during the monitoring period. Rape cases fell by 30.61 percent; carjacking of motor vehicles, 28.20 percent; physical injury, 25.93 percent; robbery, 15.12 percent; theft, 10.61 percent; motorcycle theft, 6.64 percent; homicide, 5 percent; and murder, 2.17 percent. In the National Capital Region, the focus crime incidents declined by 8.57 percent during the same monitoring period. The PNP attributed the improvement to proactive policing strategies, intelligence-driven operations, strategic deployment of personnel, and sustained coordination with local government units and stakeholders. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the initial gains of the safer cities initiative demonstrate the effectiveness of sustained police presence and responsive law enforcement operations in urban centers and communities. "Ang pagbaba ng focus crimes ay bunga ng mas pinaigting na police presence, mabilis na response, at pakikipagtulungan ng iba't ibang sektor sa ating kapulisan. Patuloy nating palalakasin ang ating mga hakbang upang mapanatili ang kaayusan at kaligtasan ng mamamayan (The decrease in focus crimes is a result of increased police presence, rapid response, and collaboration between various sectors in our police force. We will continue to strengthen our measures to maintain order and the safety of the people.)," Nartatez said in a statement.

- [BI seeks stronger coordination with LGUs](#) (2026-05-24 16:03)

THE Bureau of Immigration (BI) has called for stronger coordination between the national government and local government units (LGUs) through direct reporting channels, joint operations, information-sharing and community-based monitoring of immigration-related concerns. Immigration Commissioner Joel Anthony Viado said in a news release on Saturday that the bureau would conduct a series of training and capability-building activities with LGUs and local partner agencies to strengthen the awareness and enforcement of immigration laws, improve detection of immigration violations and enhance coordination in responding to community concerns involving foreign nationals. He said the initiative was part of the bureau's continuing efforts to strengthen immigration enforcement, border security, interagency coordination and public service modernization. "Our objective is simple: to protect our communities, uphold the rule of law and ensure that the Philippines remains a safe, respected and welcoming destination for responsible visitors," he added. On Friday, Viado met with local

government officials and law enforcement partners in Siargao to address growing community concerns related to immigration violations, public order and responsible tourism in key destinations. During the meeting, he emphasized that the Philippines remained open to legitimate tourists, investors, students and foreign residents who respect Philippine laws, local culture and communities. “Filipinos are known around the world for their warmth, hospitality and friendliness toward visitors. We take pride in welcoming people into our communities. But that hospitality should never be abused, taken advantage of or mistaken for weakness,” he said. Viado acknowledged the concerns raised by LGUs and residents regarding overstaying foreigners, disorderly conduct, illegal work, environmental violations and other activities that negatively impact local communities. “The vast majority of foreign visitors contribute positively to our economy and communities. However, foreign nationals who violate our immigration laws, threaten public order or exploit our people will face appropriate sanctions, including deportation and blacklisting when warranted,” he said. He added that immigration enforcement will be based on conduct and violations, not nationality, race or religion. “This should serve as a clear warning to foreign nationals who intend to abuse our hospitality, violate our laws or disrespect our communities: The Philippines will not hesitate to enforce its immigration laws and take necessary action against offenders,” he said. Viado also announced the strengthening of the BI’s local immigration office in Siargao to ensure faster response to community complaints, closer coordination with LGUs and law enforcement, stricter monitoring of immigration violations and a more visible government presence in the area.

- [Urban poor agency backs balanced housing program](#) (2026-05-24 16:02)

(UPDATE) THE Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) has thrown its full support to the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) in its ongoing efforts to implement the Balanced Housing Development Program (BHDP) which involves private realty developers. PCUP Chairman Michelle Anne Gonzales said on Sunday that the agency has passed a resolution in the wake of an opinion issued by the Department of Justice and the findings of the Commission on Audit which showed that the incentivized compliance scheme resulted in the under-computation and under-collection of mandatory compliance obligations contrary to the minimum participation rates required by law. The DOJ directed the recomputation and collection of deficiencies that deprived the government of substantial resources intended for socialized housing production. “The PCUP strongly endorsed the position of the DHSUD in strictly enforcing the BHDP and supporting the reassessment, recomputation and recovery of deficiencies arising from the incentivized compliance mechanism,” Gonzales said. With the four PCUP commissioners — Emmanuel Gison, Bret Monsanto, Reynaldo Galupo and Remedios Chan — expressing their support, Gonzales said it would only indicate the agency’s unified stand in upholding balanced housing compliance and protecting the interests of urban poor communities. “The commission expresses its full support for the DHSUD’s ongoing efforts to correct prior implementation issues and to strictly enforce the law as intended,” the PCUP chief said. The PCUP officials acknowledged that some private developers may have complied in good faith based on existing administrative issuances. Thus, the commission recommended that

enforcement and collection measures be implemented fairly and reasonably, including possible phased payment arrangements or other equitable compliance mechanisms consistent with law, Galupo told The Manila Times. In the same resolution, Galupo said PCUP has also recommended that a substantial portion of escrow fund collections be earmarked for a dedicated socialized housing reserve for families displaced by court-ordered evictions and demolitions, especially those lacking adequate relocation assistance. According to DHSUD, the initiative is projected to generate P30 billion in collections, which could enable the construction of around 30,000 socialized housing units. "Every peso properly collected under BHDP translates into additional housing opportunities and greater security for vulnerable Filipino families," the top PCUP official said.

- [Marcos visits wake of fallen PAF pilots](#) (2026-05-24 15:42)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday paid his respects to instructor pilot First Lieutenant Ruth Angelique Pasos and aviation student Second Lieutenant Cherky Embudo, the two Philippine Air Force (PAF) pilots who perished in a crash in Tuba, Benguet last May 20. In photos shared by the Presidential Communications Office (PCO), Marcos personally visited the PAF Mortuary in Villamor Airbase in Pasay City to express his sympathies to Pasos' and Embudo's families and lauded their heroism, dedication, and loyal service to the nation. The Commander-in-Chief awarded the posthumous Silver Wing Medal to Pasos and Embudo in recognition of their sacrifice, bravery, and service to the nation. Pasos and Embudo were aboard the SF-260 trainer plane on a navigation training flight last Wednesday when it crashed in Sitio Cabuyao while en route to Baguio City. The ill-fated aircraft was part of a group of 11 SF-260 trainer aircraft that took off from the Fernando Air Base in Lipa City, Batangas for a training mission.

- [Gaza hospital says child among three killed in Israeli strike](#) (2026-05-24 15:32)

GAZA — A pre-dawn Israeli airstrike killed three members of a Palestinian family, including a one-year-old child, in central Gaza on Sunday, a hospital said. Gaza remains gripped with daily violence despite a formal ceasefire in place since October, with both the Israeli military and Hamas accusing one another of violating the truce. Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir el-Balah said it had received the bodies of a couple and their infant after an Israeli strike hit a residential apartment in the Al-Nuseirat camp before dawn. "He was asleep in his house with his wife and son when the missile landed on their bed," Maram Abu Malouh, the mother of the man killed in the strike, told AFP. AFP footage showed relatives grieving at the hospital, where the three bodies lay wrapped in white body bags. The Gaza civil defence agency, which operates as a rescue service under Hamas, confirmed the toll. Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital said around 10 people were also wounded. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military about the three deaths, though it said it had struck three Hamas weapons storage facilities in central Gaza over the preceding 24 hours. The civil defence agency said another Israeli strike early on Monday in Deir el-Balah caused no casualties but left vast destruction. A gaping hole scarred the facade of a building, with vast debris of shattered concrete strewn across the surrounding area, AFP

footage showed. Residents, among them children, were seen picking through the debris at the site of the attack. A ceasefire has been in place in Gaza since October, but Israel reserves the right to strike targets it deems a threat. At least 890 Palestinians have been killed since the October 10 ceasefire, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the UN. The Israeli military says five of its soldiers have also been during the same period. Media restrictions and limited access in Gaza have prevented AFP from independently verifying casualty figures or freely covering the fighting.

- [Anxious Chinese families await news of missing coal miners](#) (2026-05-24 14:54)

CHINA — A man nervously smoked a cigarette as he sat by a checkpoint, waiting for news of his older brother caught up in China's worst mining disaster in nearly two decades. His 47-year-old sibling, a father of three, was working in the Liushenyu shaft in northern China's Shanxi province on Friday when a catastrophic gas explosion ripped through the mine, killing at least 82 people. A total of 247 workers were underground at the time, according to state media. Emergency rescuers were racing on Sunday to find two people still missing, state media reported, but it was unclear if the man's brother was one of them -- or indeed if more people were missing than had been reported. Phone calls to the man's brother "wouldn't go through" since the explosion, he told AFP, asking not to be named, adding that his parents are still unaware that their older son is missing. "I don't dare tell them," he said. The man and a few other family members milled around the checkpoint on Sunday that prevented them from continuing up the road to the mine, hoping for information about their loved ones. Police kept a watchful eye nearby, ordering AFP reporters at the checkpoint to avoid talking to the families and to leave the area. The man said his brother, whose youngest child is just five, had been working at the mine for three to four years, earning around 7,000 to 10,000 yuan (\$1,030 to \$1,470) a month. "I really hope nothing has happened to him," the younger brother said. "They say two people are missing, but who knows if that's accurate? We honestly don't know," he added. He said he had "no idea how the accident actually happened" and hoped only that his brother is safe. - 'Worst' management - As family members paced back and forth near the checkpoint, ambulances and police cars were allowed through. Some relatives wiped tears from their faces, AFP reporters saw. Rugged and mountainous Shanxi, one of China's poorer provinces, is the centre of the country's coal mining industry. While mine safety in China has improved in recent decades, accidents still occur in an industry where safety protocols are often lax and regulations vague. Chinese authorities have launched an investigation into the blast, saying initial findings showed the Tongzhou Group operating the mine had committed "serious illegal violations". "Those found responsible will be severely punished in accordance with laws and regulations," officials told a news conference on Saturday. Miners working at the Liushenyu shaft accused their employer of a lack of care, with two telling AFP they had not been paid in months. "From what I've seen, the management (at this company) is the worst," said a 58-year-old miner from Shandong, who has worked in several coal mines over the last three decades. The miner, who wished to remain anonymous for fear of repercussions, said workers at the mine paid for safety helmets out of their own pockets. They told AFP they had been

working a morning shift on Friday and were not in the mine during the gas explosion."If we had been (working) a few hours later, it would have been us," the 58-year-old told AFP."I feel really heartbroken."AFP has contacted Tongzhou Group for comment.- 'Worried sick' -One middle-aged woman sitting under a tree near the checkpoint waited for information about her husband, a coal miner who also remained unaccounted for."Worrying about it won't do any good," she told AFP, not wanting to give her name."We're already worried sick, but being anxious doesn't change anything," she said.Her husband of more than 20 years, who was unreachable since the explosion, rarely talked about his job, she told AFP."You should go ahead and do your work first," she said, brushing AFP reporters away."I'm really not in the mood to talk about this."

- [Turkey riot police use tear gas to take opposition party HQ](#) (2026-05-24 14:41)

ANKARA, Turkey — Hundreds of Turkish riot police using teargas forced their way into the Ankara headquarters of the main CHP opposition party on Sunday after a court dismissed its leadership, AFP journalists saw.Party members had blocked the building's entrances, defying the court order issued Thursday as part of an official probe against the Republican People's Party (CHP), before officers broke in to remove the group's leader.A prominent rights NGO, Human Rights Watch, on Saturday warned that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government was undermining Turkish democracy with "abusive tactics" against the CHP.Last year, Turkish authorities jailed Erdogan's main political rival, Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, who was the CHP's candidate for the presidential election due in 2028.The court order on Thursday cancelled the 2023 victory in party elections of CHP head Ozgur Ozel and named its former chair Kemal Kilicdaroglu -- a lacklustre figure who chalked up a string of electoral defeats -- as interim leader."The Republican People's Party will from now be on the streets or in the squares," Ozel said as he was forced out of the building."We will march towards the seat of power," he vowed as he set off for parliament surrounded by supporters.Kilicdaroglu's backers had tried to push their way in, before police received orders to step in and take the building.Last year, similar scenes took place in Istanbul, when the courts named an administrator to take charge of the regional CHP offices.Human Rights Watch called the court order "the latest deeply damaging blow to the rule of law, democracy and human rights" in Turkey.

- [Foreigner dies as rescuers race to free 2 trapped workers from collapsed building; search for missing continues](#) (2026-05-24 14:05)

ANGELES, Philippines — Rescuers were racing on Sunday to free two workers pinned under a building that collapsed in the northern Philippines, killing a Malaysian man and leaving 20 people missing.The search for survivors continued as night fell, with firemen shining small lights into the rubble for signs of life.Twenty-six people have been rescued so far after the nine-storey building collapsed in Angeles City, 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of the capital Manila.The disaster also damaged a nearby hotel and killed a 65-year-old Malaysian guest, Mohd Rezal bin Abdullah, officials said.The man, from Malaysia's northern Sabah state, had managed to communicate with rescuers by phone while pinned under a hotel wall shortly after the collapse

at 3 a.m. Sunday, acting Philippine fire chief Rico Kwan Tiu told AFP. "Unfortunately, when we retrieved him just now, he was already lifeless," he added. "We are trying to rescue two (workers)" from the nine-storey building, Kwan Tiu said. "They are conscious but pinned underneath." City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin told reporters "almost all of (those inside the collapsed building) were asleep because this happened in the early hours of the morning." Rescuers posted footage on the regional fire service's Facebook page showing a fireman using a power tool to try to free a man in a blue shirt who moaned in pain beneath a scaffolding of metal tubes and plyboard. "Relax, brother," the fireman is heard telling the victim. Another clip showed firemen in orange helmets and clothing inserting themselves through narrow gaps among rubble in an attempt to find other trapped workers. The cause of the collapse is yet to be determined. 'Loud noise' Delivery rider James Bernardo, 30, told AFP by telephone he had just dropped off food on the same street when the disaster unfolded. "A few seconds later, there was suddenly a loud noise in the area, and when I looked, I realized that (the building) had already collapsed," Bernardo said. "Thank God I'm safe." A video clip taken by Bernardo and verified by AFP showed a giant pile of twisted steel beams, power pylons and slabs of concrete blocking the street as fellow witnesses took photographs with their phones. In the clip, Bernardo can be heard saying, "We thought it was an earthquake, but it turned out it was the building (collapsing)." City information officer Jay Pelayo told AFP the nine-storey building's walls and scaffolding had buckled, likely trapping people in a pile of debris. "There are big chunks of concrete and we need equipment to lift them up. That is what's challenging for the rescue right now," Pelayo said. Rescuers working at the disaster site did not have powerful flood lights to help them locate those trapped under the rubble, AFP journalists saw. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority sent rescue equipment and police dogs to aid the rescue, its general manager Nicolas Torre told AFP. "We also deployed life monitors, listening devices and also our rescue spreaders to help the rescuers since many debris need to be cut and lifted to locate people," Torre said.

- [PMA welcomes over 1k incoming members of Class 2030](#) (2026-05-24 08:07)

MANILA, Philippines — At least 367 incoming cadets, composed of 290 males and 77 females, of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) took their oath, as they were received by their upper classmen, marking the start of their transformation from civilians into members of the Cadet Corps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Out of 33,640 individuals who applied, 24,630 qualified to take the PMA Entrance Exam 2025, from which 1,436 passed and underwent the rigorous screening process. The biggest number of incoming cadets came from Cordillera at 12 percent, National Capital Region and Calabarzon at 11 percent each. In his opening remarks at the Borromeo Field on Saturday, the Commandant of Cadets underscored the significance of the occasion as the first step in the cadets' military and academic journey inside the Academy. "The Reception Rites mark a life-changing milestone — it marks the official beginning of your military career. This is not merely a ceremonial event, rather, it signifies your transition from a carefree civilian life into the disciplined, demanding, and regimented life of a cadet," he said. Meanwhile, Vice Admiral Caesar Bernard Valencia, PMA superintendent, highlighted the

Academy’ s thrusts in ensuring a responsive training amidst the evolving security landscape. “The academy is aggressively undertaking initiatives to enhance our academic and military curriculum, elevating it to be at par with the highest international standards. Your children will be trained not just in the classic art of war, but in critical systems thinking, cybersecurity, international defense, and strategic leadership,” Valencia said. “We will always endeavor to provide them with the best education and training the nation can offer, ensuring that when they graduate, they are fully equipped to protect our nation in the 21st century,” he added. As members of PMA Class 2030, the incoming cadets will undergo the enhanced Bachelor of Science in Management major in Security Studies curriculum, similar to PMA Classes 2028 and 2029. The program is designed to equip cadets with competencies relevant to modern warfare, territorial defense, and the evolving operational environment, while developing the knowledge and skills essential for future military officers. The new recruits were met by the Second Class Cadet Squad Leaders from PMA “Siklab Kasilag” Class of 2028.

- [Urban poor agency backs enforcement of balanced housing requirements](#) (2026-05-24 04:18)

MANILA, Philippines — The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) has thrown its full support to the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) in its ongoing efforts to implement the Balanced Housing Development Program (BHDP) which involving private realty developers. PCUP Chairman Michelle Anne Gonzales said on Sunday that the agency has passed a resolution in the wake of an opinion issued by the Department of Justice and the findings of the Commission on Audit (COA) which showed that the incentivized compliance scheme resulted in the under-computation and under-collection of mandatory compliance obligations contrary to the minimum participation rates required by law. The DOJ directed the re-computation and collection of deficiencies that deprived the government of substantial resources intended for socialized housing production. “The PCUP strongly endorsed the position of the DHSUD in strictly enforcing the BHDP and supporting the reassessment, re-computation, and recovery of deficiencies arising from the incentivized compliance mechanism,” Gonzales said. With the four PCUP commissioners - lawyer Emmanuel Gison, lawyer Bret Monsanto, Reynaldo Galupo, and Remedios Chan – expressing their support, Gonzales said it would only indicate the agency’ s unified stand in upholding balanced housing compliance and protecting the interests of urban poor communities. “The commission expresses its full support for the DHSUD’ s ongoing efforts to correct prior implementation issues and to strictly enforce the law as intended,” the PCUP chief said. The PCUP officials acknowledged that some private developers may have complied in good faith based on existing administrative issuances. Thus, the commission recommended that enforcement and collection measures be implemented fairly and reasonably, including possible phased payment arrangements or other equitable compliance mechanisms consistent with law, Galupo told The Manila Times. In the same resolution, Galupo said PCUP has also recommended that a substantial portion of escrow fund collections be earmarked for a dedicated socialized housing reserve for families displaced by court-ordered evictions and demolitions, especially those

lacking adequate relocation assistance. According to DHSUD, the initiative is projected to generate P30-billion in collections, which could enable the construction of around 30,000 socialized housing units. “Every peso properly collected under BHDP translates into additional housing opportunities and greater security for vulnerable Filipino families,” the top PCUP official said.

- [Former lawmaker says plunder complaint 'baseless,' ready to defend self](#) (2026-05-24 03:42)

MANILA, Philippines – A former lawmaker and Environment and Natural Resources secretary on Sunday blasted the timing of the filing of a plunder complaint against him, Sen. Rodante Marcoleta and two others, saying “it was completely baseless and appears to be built on assumptions and speculation.” But Michael “Mike” Defensor, Anakalusugan party-list congressman, told The Manila Times through Viber that he and the other respondents would be ready to answer every allegation at the proper forum and “we are prepared to fully defend ourselves.” “I have faith in our institutions and in the rule of law. I trust that when facts—not politics, assumptions, or publicity—are examined, the truth will prevail,” said Defensor, a former Malacanang chief of staff under the administration of then president and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. “I have faced many battles in public life before. We will face this one head-on, and we will let the evidence speak,” he said. The nephew of late senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago reiterated that he never committed wrongdoing. “There was no illegal act, no corrupt transaction, no favor sought, and absolutely no conspiracy to commit any crime,” he said. The mere act of giving or receiving funds does not automatically constitute plunder, bribery, or corruption. The law requires facts and evidence—not insinuations, said Defensor, also a former Quezon City councilor before he became a member of the House of Representatives representing the city’s District 3. “What is disturbing is the reckless effort to elevate ordinary and lawful acts into serious criminal accusations without showing any clear connection to a government contract, official act, undue benefit, or quid pro quo. Serious charges like plunder should never be used for headlines or harassment,” he pointed out. He was made to believe that there was an ill motive behind dragging his name into the matter. “The timing and manner by which this has surfaced naturally raise questions. But regardless of motive, we will confront this directly and through the proper legal process,” according to Defensor, who recently made news when he introduced to Marcoleta an ex-Marine sergeant – Orly Guteza – who became a surprise whistleblower at the height of the Senate inquiry on flood control project scandal. In an order dated May 21, 2026, the Office of the Ombudsman gave the respondents 15 days from receipt of its order to submit their counter-affidavits. In the complaint, filed last May 18, the investigators said Marcoleta’s acceptance of gifts worth a total of P75 million on three separate occasions when he was a member of the House constituted the crime of plunder. The investigators said that Marcoleta, on Jan. 6, 2025, received P30 million from Defensor, which, they said, was “evidenced by a donor’s tax return and a... deposit slip showing that Defensor paid the donor’s tax on” Dec. 17, 2025.

- [Japanese, American fugitives nabbed in back-to-back operations](#) (2026-05-24 03:32)

MANILA, Philippines – Authorities arrested two foreigners suspected of involvement in child exploitation cases in separate operations conducted in Cavite and Tarlac provinces. In a news release Sunday, Bureau of Immigration-Fugitive Search Unit Chief Rendel Ryan Sy said police and immigration agents nabbed Japanese Yuto Konno, 43, during an operation in Cavite on May 12. He is wanted by Japanese authorities for forcible sexual intercourse and forcible indecency with a child. Records showed that in 2018, he allegedly molested three minors inside a restroom facility in Hokkaido, Japan. A warrant for his arrest was issued by the Nagoya Summary Court on Aug. 16, 2024. Authorities seized from him several electronic devices allegedly containing child sexual abuse or exploitation materials. Immigration records revealed that the suspect arrived in the Philippines in 2019 as a temporary visitor and has overstayed since April 2022. He was also found to have active blacklist and watchlist orders for undesirability and overstaying. In a separate operation on May 13, 37-year-old American national Tony Le was arrested in Bamban, Tarlac. Le is wanted by US authorities for charges related to enticing and coercing a minor to engage in sexual activity, in violation of US federal laws involving child sexual exploitation materials. The arrest stemmed from information provided by the US government regarding his presence in Tarlac. Verification by immigration authorities showed that Le had previously been excluded from entering the country in February 2024 due to derogatory records connected to possible child sex exploitation investigations. Authorities believe he may have illegally entered the Philippines. Both fugitives are under the custody of the BI Warden Facility pending deportation proceedings.

- [Power interruptions to hit parts of Metro Manila, 5 provinces this week due to maintenance works](#) (2026-05-24 03:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Some areas in Metro Manila and five provinces will experience scheduled power interruptions this week because of maintenance works, the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) said on Sunday. Affected areas in Metro Manila are Marikina City, Taguig, Caloocan, Paranaque, Quezon City, Muntinlupa, Pasig, Manila and Malabon. Affected provinces are Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Quezon and Rizal. In Marikina City, Sto. Niño and Sta. Elena will have no electricity on May 25 between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m. due to line reconstruction works and line reconductoring works along Shoe Ave. in Barangay Sto. Nino. In Taguig City, the Bay Breeze Executive Village in Barangay Hagonoy will have no power on May 26 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. due to the replacement of electricity poles and line reconductoring works along Seagull Ave. Sta. Ana, Calzada, Palingon and Napindan also in Taguig will have no electricity on May 28 between 9 a.m. and noon due to the installation of electricity facilities along C-6 Road. Parts of Grace Park in Caloocan City will have power interruptions on May 26-27 between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. due to Line reconductoring works along 8th Ave. in Grace Park. In Parañaque City, parts of Solaire Resort & Casino along Aseana Ave. will have no electricity on May 26 between 8 a.m. and noon due to maintenance works inside the establishment. A portion of C. Benitez St. near Sunset Drive in Barangay Bagong Lipunan Ng Crame, Quezon City will have power interruptions on May 27 between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m. because of the replacement of

electricity facilities and line reconductoring works along C. Benitez St. Tandang Sora, Sauyo and Talipapa also in Quezon City will have no power on May 29-30 between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. because of line reconductoring works along D. Muñoz Ave. in Barangay Tandang Sora. In Muntinlupa City, portions of Barangay Bayanan and Putatan will have no electricity on May 28 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. because of the relocation of electricity facilities along Bautista St. in Barangay Bayanan. Sections of Barangay San Antonio, Pasig City will have no power on May 28-29 between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. due to the installation and replacement of electricity facilities along Garnet and Topaz Roads in Ortigas Commercial Center, Barangay San Antonio. Portions of Barangay Rosario will have a brief power interruption on May 28 between 12:30 a.m. and 1 a.m. because of line maintenance works along GSIS Road in Barangay Rosario. Some areas in Binondo and Tondo, Manila will have power interruptions on May 28-29 between 11:45 p.m. and 4:45 a.m. due to the reconstruction and installation of electricity facilities along Padre Algue and Sanchez Sts. in Tondo. In Malabon City, the villages of Baritan, Concepcion and Muzon will have no power on May 29 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. due to the upgrading, installation and replacement of electricity facilities along A. Reyes and Karilagan Streets in the villages of Baritan, Concepcion and Muzon. Provinces, too The Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Import Facility in Barangay Tabangao Ambulong Proper in Batangas City, Batangas will have no power on May 28 between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. because of National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) maintenance works inside its Batangas substation, and line maintenance works along the Batangas–Taysan 69 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines. Parts of Barangay Tabing Ilog in Marilao City, Bulacan will have power interruptions on May 29 between 12:01 a.m. and 5 a.m. due to the relocation of facilities along M. Villarica Road in Barangay Tabing Ilog. Intercity Ricemillers Industrial Compound located in Barangay Wakas, Bocaue and in Barangay San Juan, Balagtas in Bulacan will have no power on May 31 between 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. due to line maintenance works in the building. The Palo Alto Subdivision in Barangay Habay I, Bacoor City in Cavite will have no electricity on May 26 between 9 a.m. and noon because of the upgrading of electricity facilities there. In Imus City, Corner Stone Executive Homes – Imus in Barangay Medicion II-D will have power interruptions on May 28 between 9:15 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. due to the relocation of electricity poles along Medicion II St. in Barangay Medicion II-D. Power interruptions in Alfonso, Naic, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Magallanes, Maragondon, and Ternate in Cavite will have power interruptions on May 28 between 11 a.m. and 11:05 a.m. because of line maintenance works along Governor’s Drive in Ternate, Cavite. In Quezon, villages of Cabatang and Talisay in Tiaong; and parts of Barangay Antonino, Dolores will have no electricity on May 28 between a.m. and 3 p.m. because of the relocation of electricity poles affected by the construction of the South Luzon Expressway Toll Road 4 (SLEX TR4) along Cabatang Road in Barangay Cabatang, Tiaong, Quezon. The villages of Calumpang, Darangan and Kalawaan in Binangonan, Rizal will have power interruptions on May 28-29 between 11:30 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. because of the relocation of electricity facilities and line reconductoring works along J. P. Rizal Ave. in Barangay Calumpang, Binangonan.

- [SSS partners with anti-red tape agency for faster, streamlined services](#) (2026-05-24 02:53)

MANILA, Philippines – The Social Security System (SSS) partnered with the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) as part of its commitment to ensure faster and more responsive public service. SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph de Claro said ARTA, under the leadership of Secretary Ernesto Perez, has continuously pushed for reforms in government service delivery. “On our end, the SSS remains committed to developing programs that are more responsive, practical, and relevant to the everyday realities of the Filipino people,” de Claro said on ARTA's 8th anniversary. The SSS chief in a statement emailed to The Manila Times stressed that SSS continued to strengthen frontline services, simplify processes, and modernize systems to better respond to member concerns, in line with the shared goal of improving government service delivery for Filipinos. As one of the country's largest public service institutions, de Claro said the SSS recognized that every transaction affected the daily lives of our members. “We continue to improve our systems, processes, and frontline services because faster and more responsive government service is not only an operational goal, but a public responsibility,” de Claro said. “The agency's strong financial performance in 2025 has strengthened its capacity to expand member assistance programs and accelerate reforms aimed at improving service delivery,” de Claro added. In 2025, SSS posted a net income of P142.97-billion while its Reserve Fund surpassed the P1-Trillion mark for the first time in the institution's history, a major milestone that further strengthens the long-term stability of the pension fund for current and future members. “Its strong financial position allows it to invest directly in better services, new technologies, infrastructure upgrades, and programs that will improve the experience of its members,” according to the top SSS official. De Claro likewise highlighted the agency's expanded relief programs designed to help Filipino workers and families cope with the continuing impact of the national energy emergency. Moreover, de Claro said SSS was also preparing to roll out the Energy Sustainability Loan Program in September. The program allows qualified SSS members with a Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) account to avail themselves of financing to install residential solar panel systems, payable for up to seven years, the SSS chief executive said. The MPF is a compulsory retirement savings scheme that automatically enrolls SSS members who are contributing to the regular SSS program with a monthly salary credit above P20,000, he said. Furthermore, the SSS head revealed that the agency aimed to support at least 100,000 homes by 2028 through the program, which seeks to help families manage rising electricity costs while promoting long-term energy sustainability. The initiative reflects the evolving role of SSS in responding not only to traditional social security concerns, but also to emerging economic pressures affecting Filipino households, de Claro said.

- [Trough of new LPA outside PH to bring rain over Mindanao areas](#) (2026-05-23 23:17)

MANILA, Philippines – The state-run weather agency said Sunday that it is closely monitoring the movement of a low-pressure area (LPA) outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR). Weather specialist Veronica Torres of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said in a 5 a.m. briefing that the weather disturbance, estimated at 2,195 kilometers east of southern Mindanao, would not be a threat to

any part of the archipelago in the next 24 to 48 hours. However, its trough or extension has already been affecting Mindanao, Palawan, Eastern Samar, and Southern Leyte, bringing cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms, she said. “Flash floods or landslides due to moderate to at times heavy rains would be even possible in these areas due to the trough of the LPA,” the Pagasa forecaster added. Meanwhile, another weather system, the easterlies – winds that carry warm and humid weather – would be experienced over Bicol Region and Quezon province, bringing partly cloudy to overcast skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms possibly within 24 hours, Pagasa said. Metro Manila and the rest of the country would be experiencing a similar weather pattern due to localized thunderstorms, Torres said.

- [NBI expects more ICC arrest warrants soon](#) (2026-05-23 16:18)

THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said Saturday that more individuals may soon face arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court (ICC) and assured the public that law enforcement agencies are prepared to enforce these orders. NBI Director Melvin Matibag said the bureau had received information indicating that additional warrants may be issued in the coming days in connection with ongoing ICC proceedings involving alleged crimes against humanity. “We have information that there are several who may be issued arrest warrants,” Matibag said during the news forum. He added that authorities would act regardless of the identities of those named in the warrants. “It doesn’t matter who it is or what crime is involved. As long as there is a warrant, we have a protocol. So if an additional arrest warrant comes out, we are always ready to enforce and serve it,” he said. Matibag said the NBI would not disclose further details on possible targets, citing operational security. Dela Rosa armed, dangerous The NBI chief also addressed the ongoing manhunt for Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, who is facing an ICC arrest warrant linked to a crime against humanity charge arising from the Duterte administration’s bloody war on drugs in which thousands of suspects were killed without trial. Matibag said dela Rosa is being treated as “armed and dangerous,” a standard law enforcement classification for fugitives, particularly those with prior security or police experience. “It is our standard protocol that when we are locating a fugitive from justice, our assumption is that he is armed and dangerous,” Matibag said. He added that dela Rosa’s background as a former Philippine National Police (PNP) chief may complicate efforts to track him. “He knows how law enforcement works, so that is one of the concerns in our operation,” he said. Despite this, Matibag said authorities remain confident that the law will be enforced. “The law will catch up with you, and law enforcers will get you wherever you are,” he said. He also urged dela Rosa to surrender and face the charges before the ICC. No record of departure Matibag said coordination with the Bureau of Immigration showed no record of dela Rosa leaving the country. “Based on Bureau of Immigration records and monitored points of entry and exit, there is no record of his departure,” he said. However, he acknowledged the difficulty of monitoring all possible exit points nationwide and said authorities continue to receive daily leads suggesting the senator remains in the Philippines. The Department of Justice has previously described dela Rosa as a fugitive from justice. Matibag also clarified that dela Rosa’s lawyer cannot receive the arrest warrant on the senator’s behalf. “I think the lawyer

might be thinking he can be the one to serve the warrant, but that is not how it works,” he said. The NBI said it is also examining whether other individuals or groups may be assisting the senator in evading arrest. Matibag warned that those who may be helping could face charges for obstruction of justice. The bureau has deployed tracker teams and additional units to assist in locating dela Rosa. Authorities have also urged the public to report any information on his whereabouts. Padilla urged to cooperate Matibag called on Sen. Robinhood Padilla to cooperate with investigators, after Padilla confirmed that he had given dela Rosa a ride to Makati following their exit from the Senate on May 13, hours after a shooting incident in the Senate complex. “Without even law enforcement asking, I think as a responsible senator and citizen, he should help shed light on what happened,” Matibag said. Dela Rosa is among individuals facing allegations tied to the Duterte administration’s anti-drug campaign, during which he served as PNP chief from 2016 to 2018. The Supreme Court earlier rejected dela Rosa’s bid to block the enforcement of the ICC warrant, clearing the way for possible arrest actions by local authorities. Surrender unlikely Sen. Panfilo Lacson said dela Rosa is unlikely to voluntarily surrender to the ICC, as he appears to be banking on political developments that could prevent his possible turnover to the ICC, particularly if political allies regain influence in the coming years. “For EJK (extrajudicial killing) victims, yes; for the Filipino people, yes. But for Sen. dela Rosa, that is not in his best interest,” Lacson said. “He is hiding, hoping that if Vice President Sara Duterte wins (the presidency in 2028), he will not surrender. Senator Bato plans to just wait three years, although he will remain an international fugitive. Since he will not be turned over, he can roam around the Philippines.” The remarks came amid renewed public debate over accountability for thousands of deaths linked to the Duterte administration’s anti-illegal drugs campaign, one of the most controversial law enforcement programs in recent Philippine history. Dela Rosa, a former chief of the Philippine National Police and chief implementer of the war on drugs during the early years of the Duterte administration, has repeatedly denied allegations that state forces systematically carried out extrajudicial killings during anti-drug operations. Human rights organizations, however, estimate that as many as 30,000 suspected drug pushers, addicts and civilians died during police operations and vigilante-style killings between 2016 and 2022. The ICC investigation centers on allegations of crimes against humanity tied to the anti-drug campaign, including accusations that law enforcement personnel engaged in unlawful killings under a state-backed policy targeting suspected drug offenders. Former president Rodrigo Duterte, who built his presidency on a hardline anti-crime platform, has long defended the campaign, insisting that police officers were only instructed to use force in self-defense. Critics, however, argue that many victims were killed without due process and that accountability mechanisms within the country were inadequate. Lacson, himself a former police chief and longtime lawmaker, said there appears to be an inconsistency in how authorities handled the situations involving Duterte and dela Rosa. He pointed out that Duterte was reportedly transported directly to The Hague following his arrest, while no similar action has been taken against dela Rosa despite his alleged connection to the same ICC investigation. “There is an inconsistency in the case of former president Rodrigo Duterte and Sen. Bato dela Rosa,” Lacson said. “In Duterte’s case, he was immediately flown to The Hague after his capture, while in the case of dela Rosa, he was not arrested.” Legal analysts

note that any potential arrest or surrender of dela Rosa would depend largely on the Philippine government's level of cooperation with the ICC. Although the Philippines officially withdrew from the Rome Statute in 2019 under Duterte's administration, the tribunal has maintained that it retains jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed while the country was still a member of the treaty. The administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has sent mixed signals regarding cooperation with the ICC. While Malacañang has repeatedly stated that Philippine institutions remain functional and capable of addressing allegations domestically, some officials have also indicated that the government may comply with obligations through international police mechanisms if warranted.

- [ICC: Duterte to stay detained](#) (2026-05-23 16:14)

(UPDATE) THE International Criminal Court (ICC) has allowed former president Rodrigo Duterte to skip the first status conference in his crimes against humanity case while ordering his continued detention in The Hague, after rejecting defense claims that his deteriorating health and cognitive condition justified his release. In separate rulings issued Friday, Trial Chamber III said Duterte would not be required to personally attend the May 27, 2026 status conference because the proceeding was administrative in nature, but at the same time ruled that the risks of flight and obstruction of justice remained high enough to keep him in ICC custody pending trial. Presiding Judge Joanna Korner and the two other members of the chamber said Article 63(1) of the Rome Statute, which requires an accused person to be present during trial, "does not apply to other hearings such as status conferences, which are essentially administrative in nature." The chamber also denied a request by victims' lawyer Gilbert Andres to participate remotely through a secure video link. While other representatives of victims, including the Office of Public Counsel for Victims, will attend and make submissions during the conference, the judges said remote participation for Andres could not be accommodated because "it was not possible to have a secure link with the legal representative in case the use of private sessions would be required" to protect sensitive information. The May 27 conference will be divided into three sessions and is expected to address the projected timetable for trial, pre-trial deadlines, anticipated evidence and witness presentations, disclosure obligations, possible additions to incidents covered by the charges, pre-trial motions, victims' participation deadlines, and protocols involving witness preparation and vulnerable persons. Although the proceedings will generally be public, the chamber said portions may shift into private session to avoid disclosing sensitive information related to witness protection and security. The court also disclosed that Duterte had changed legal representation after the Chamber's April 30 scheduling order. Lawyers Peter Haynes and Kate Gibson were appointed as Duterte's new counsel and associate counsel, respectively, replacing members of his previous legal team who had earlier been authorized to withdraw from the case. The new defense team, according to the chamber, has already been briefed on pending deadlines and assured the court it would be prepared for the upcoming conference. In a separate unanimous ruling, the same Chamber ordered Duterte to remain detained pending trial, rejecting arguments that his physical frailty and cognitive decline constituted a "prima facie change in circumstances" that warranted reconsideration.

of his detention. Duterte, 81, surrendered to the ICC on March 12, 2025, after the court issued an arrest warrant against him over alleged crimes against humanity linked to his anti-illegal drugs campaign. The chamber noted that his detention had already been upheld in earlier rulings, including decisions in September 2025 and January 2026 that were later affirmed by the Appeals Chamber. Defense lawyers argued that Duterte's physical condition had worsened, citing "frequent episodes of falls occasioned by a loss of balance" and claiming his impaired short-term memory made him incapable of directing any attempt to interfere with witnesses. But the judges said three court-appointed medical experts examined Duterte and found no basis to alter his detention conditions. The judges also cited Duterte's refusal to attend his confirmation of charges hearing, during which he declared that he did not recognize the ICC's jurisdiction over him. According to the chamber, the statement demonstrated "at its lowest that the accused will not comply with any orders that might be made in respect of a release from custody." The court further pointed to Duterte's "access to vast resources and contacts, including his family and supporters in the Philippines who may assist him in evading justice," concluding that his health issues did not outweigh the risks of flight and interference with proceedings under Article 58 of the Rome Statute. Trial Chamber III said the confirmation of charges against Duterte on April 23, 2026, had, in fact, heightened the possibility that he could abscond. "The confirmation of charges increases the risk that an accused may abscond and is therefore not a change in circumstances that militates in favor of conditional release, but rather one supporting continued detention," the ruling stated. Duterte will remain in ICC custody in The Hague as preparations continue for trial.

- [Plunder complaint filed vs Marcoleta, Defensor](#) (2026-05-23 16:13)

INVESTIGATORS from the Office of the Ombudsman filed a complaint for plunder against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta, former lawmaker Michael Defensor, and two other people. In an order dated May 21, 2026, the Office of the Ombudsman gave the respondents 15 days from receipt of its order to submit their counter-affidavits. In the complaint, filed last May 18, the investigators said Marcoleta's acceptance of gifts worth a total of P75 million on three separate occasions when he was a member of the House of Representatives constitutes the crime of plunder. The investigators said that Marcoleta, on Jan. 6, 2025, received P30 million from Defensor, which, they said, was "evidenced by a donor's tax return and a... deposit slip showing that Defensor paid the donor's tax on" Dec. 17, 2025. The investigators said Marcoleta, on Jan. 8, 2025, received P25 million from Joseph Varias Espiritu, which was "evidenced by a donor's tax return and a... deposit slip showing that Espiritu paid the donor's tax on" Dec. 15, 2025. The investigators said that Marcoleta, on Jan. 9, 2025, received P20 million from Aristotle Baluyut Viray. "Aside from the lack of a clear purpose or pending transaction for which the amounts received may be a consideration, there is no showing that the gifts would still be given were it not for respondent's position in government. Hence, it cannot be denied that the P75 million was given by respondents Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray by reason of respondent Marcoleta's office," the investigators said. Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray "belatedly filed the donor's taxes for the gifts. However, the payments were merely their

afterthought and were intended to invoke good faith and make it appear that the gifts were legally accepted,” the investigators said. Under the National Internal Revenue Code, the return of the donor shall be filed within 30 days after the date the gift was made. “In this case, all the donor’s taxes for the gifts given in January 2025 were paid in December 2025, or almost 12 months thereafter,” the investigators said. Aside from wanting the Ombudsman’s office to file a plunder case in court against Marcoleta, Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray, the investigators wanted the same office to file three indirect bribery cases against Marcoleta. “Undoubtedly, respondent Marcoleta should also be charged for indirect bribery for accepting the gifts from the private individuals, which, although not given as consideration for a specific act, were actually given because of his position or potential influence as a public officer,” they said. “To reiterate, while respondent Marcoleta admitted accepting the gifts and characterized them as ‘donations,’ the disposition of which rests upon his discretion, there is no indication as to his relationship with the givers and as to why he would be given such excessive amounts of money. The amounts given were of such magnitude and reason dictates that it can no longer be considered as an ordinary act of generosity, but rather a corrupt act done to gain unwarranted favors from the recipient,” they said. Comelec to cooperate The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has expressed readiness to assist and coordinate with the Office of the Ombudsman in its case against Marcoleta, even as its own motu proprio investigation into the lawmaker has already been dismissed, Comelec Chairman George Erwin Garcia said on Saturday. In a statement, Garcia clarified that the poll body’s independently initiated inquiry into Marcoleta is no longer active. “The Comelec is ready to help and coordinate with the Ombudsman,” Garcia said in Filipino. “On Comelec’s end, the motu proprio investigation against Senator Marcoleta has already been dismissed.” He added that the commission has not taken up any move to revive the case. “With regard to reviving the case, Comelec has not yet considered it,” Garcia said, adding that the agency has not received any motion for reconsideration. Garcia issued the statement amid a separate criminal complaint filed before the Office of the Ombudsman against Marcoleta, which recommended the filing of charges for plunder and three counts of indirect bribery over alleged campaign donations totaling P75 million. The complaint stated that the donations exceeded the P50-million threshold for plunder and may constitute indirect bribery, as these were allegedly given by reason of Marcoleta’s position as a public official.

- [Another coup? Minority rallies behind Gatchalian](#) (2026-05-23 16:12)

LESS than two weeks after Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano took over as Senate president, minority lawmakers are discussing yet another leadership shakeup, Sen. Panfilo Lacson confirmed. Speaking during an interview on Storycon aired on One News, Lacson confirmed that the 11-member minority bloc has been discussing plans to reorganize the Senate leadership amid what he described as growing concerns over the institution’s credibility and direction. “This much I can say: a change in leadership under the present situation is in the works,” Lacson said. Lacson revealed that Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian has emerged as a “compromise candidate” for Senate president, acceptable to both members of the majority

and minority blocs. Lacson said the position of former Senate president Vicente Sotto III has become “somewhat untenable,” adding that Sotto himself had recognized the political realities surrounding the issue. “The compromise reached was for our preferred candidate for Senate president to be Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian,” Lacson said. The minority bloc, however, still lacks the necessary votes to formally challenge the current leadership. Even with support from some senators in the majority coalition, the bloc reportedly needs at least two more votes to initiate proceedings to vacate key Senate posts. Lacson disclosed that several senators from the current majority had expressed interest in joining the minority, but negotiations failed after they backed a different candidate for Senate president. While he declined to identify the senator, political reports said their preferred choice was Sen. Francis Escudero, who was ousted as Senate president by Sotto. “As far as the 11 members of the minority bloc are concerned, whenever we discuss this, we are unanimous on the matter. Our primordial concern is the integrity, dignity, and reputation of the Senate,” Lacson said.

Shifting alliances Lacson cited recent Senate history to underscore how quickly political alignments can shift within the chamber. On Sept. 8, 2025, several senators joined the then five-member minority bloc to elect Sotto as Senate president, replacing Escudero, who had come under fire for delaying the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. Months later, on May 11, four senators from Sotto’s 15-member faction crossed over to the minority coalition to install Cayetano as Senate president. Sen. Ronald dela Rosa — despite facing an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court — emerged from months in hiding to cast the decisive vote for Cayetano. Lacson, who relinquished his position as Senate president pro tempore and chairman of the Blue Ribbon Committee following the leadership transition, said efforts to explore another reorganization are part of normal Senate politics. “There’s always a possibility,” Lacson said.

“In 2025, there were only five of us, yet Tito Sotto became Senate president. Earlier this month, there were only nine of them, while we were 15, but we were replaced. So, everything is possible.” In several interviews following the leadership change, Lacson suggested that some senators believed Sotto had failed to adequately “take care” of members of the majority bloc — a phrase widely interpreted in political circles as referring to political accommodation, committee concerns, and allocation-related expectations.

Gatchalian: I’m ready In a separate interview with radio dzMM, Gatchalian acknowledged the circulating rumors about his possible ascent to the Senate presidency but declined to elaborate on ongoing discussions. “From my perspective, I have learned a lot from the Senate, especially from handling complicated committees. So, when the time comes, I’m really ready,” Gatchalian said in Filipino.

Now in his 10th year as senator, Gatchalian has chaired several influential committees, including economic affairs, energy, basic education, ways and means, and finance. Before joining the Senate, Gatchalian served as mayor and district representative of Valenzuela City. He has built a reputation as a meticulous and data-driven legislator, often using charts, presentations and detailed reports during high-profile investigations. He played a prominent role in Senate inquiries into illegal gaming syndicates and the controversial citizenship case involving convicted human trafficker Alice Guo. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Gatchalian also pushed for greater transparency in budget deliberations. Under his leadership, bicameral conference meetings on the national budget were opened to the public, while an online

transparency portal was established to provide access to hearing transcripts and budget documents. Pangilinan backs Gatchalian. Sen. Francis Pangilinan also voiced support for Gatchalian's potential bid for the Senate presidency. In a statement, Pangilinan said members of the "Solid Bloc 11" unanimously support Gatchalian because of his performance during deliberations on the proposed 2026 National Budget. "He has proven that he can protect the people's money and ensure that public funds go where they are most needed," Pangilinan said. Pangilinan described Gatchalian as "competent, steady, and fair," adding that he could unite a broader reform-oriented coalition within the Senate. Restoring credibility. Gatchalian on Saturday said restoring public trust in the Senate would require unity among lawmakers amid growing speculation that he could become the chamber's next Senate president. Gatchalian thanked members of the "SB-11" bloc and other senators backing his possible leadership, saying many lawmakers share the goal of rebuilding the institution's credibility following recent controversies involving the Senate. "I would like to thank the minority bloc and those who have expressed trust and confidence in us," Gatchalian said. "Many people were disappointed by what happened, especially since the Senate is one of the country's highest institutions." The senator acknowledged that recent incidents, including a shooting controversy and public disputes involving senators, have damaged the Senate's image and sparked criticism online. "It is indeed a big challenge," he said. "But this cannot be done by one leader alone. Every senator must work together to restore the good image of our institution." Gatchalian stressed the need for an impartial investigation into the shooting incident, saying accountability is necessary to regain public confidence. "The investigation must be impartial and independent," he said, noting that the Senate and the National Bureau of Investigation are involved in the probe. "If anyone is guilty, they must be held accountable." He also called for stronger communication and coordination among government officials to prevent similar incidents in the future. "These are government officials. They should not be shooting at each other," Gatchalian said. "Even small misunderstandings can escalate if there are no clear lines of communication." The senator also underscored the importance of stability in Senate leadership, warning that frequent leadership changes disrupt committee work and delay important legislation. As political maneuvering continues inside the chamber, observers say the coming weeks may determine whether the current 13-member majority coalition led by Cayetano can withstand another leadership challenge from the increasingly assertive minority bloc.

- [Green Card seekers must now apply from their home country](#) (2026-05-23 16:11)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Trump administration announced on Friday that most foreigners seeking a Green Card, granting permanent US residency, must apply from their home countries. "From now on, an alien who is in the US temporarily and wants a Green Card must return to their home country to apply, except in extraordinary circumstances," US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) spokesman Zach Kahler said in a statement. "Nonimmigrants, like students, temporary workers, or people on tourist visas, come to the US for a short time and for a specific purpose," Kahler said. "Our system is designed for

them to leave when their visit is over,” he said. “Their visit should not function as the first step in the Green Card process.” According to The Washington Post, the United States grants more than 1 million Green Cards each year, and, up until now, more than half of the applicants are already in the United States. Kahler said having Green Card seekers apply from their home nation “reduces the need to find and remove those who decide to slip into the shadows and remain in the US illegally after being denied residency.” He said Green Card applications would be handled by the State Department at US consular offices abroad. President Donald Trump campaigned for the White House on a pledge to expel millions of undocumented migrants, and his administration has also closed several legal pathways to US residency since he took office.

- [Filipino students' experiment conducted by NASA astronaut](#) (2026-05-23 16:11)

AN experiment led by students from Rizal Technological University (RTU) was successfully conducted onboard the International Space Station (ISS) by an astronaut from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In a statement on Friday, the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) said the Double Gyroscope experiment — developed by third-year Filipino students as part of the 2025 Asian Try Zero-G (ATZG 2025) competition — was performed by astronaut Christopher Williams inside the Kibo module of the ISS on March 24, 2026. Gyroscopes are spinning devices used to measure and maintain direction and balance, essential for spacecraft orientation. The team behind the experiment — Christopher Tumamac, Ryan Andrew Doña, and Rose Ann Cezar — designed the Double Gyroscope to demonstrate principles of spacecraft orientation in microgravity. The students hypothesized that two spinning gyroscopes, placed at opposite ends of a stick, could stabilize or alter the system’s direction depending on their rotational dynamics. The experiment is crucial as it aims to simulate how spacecraft maintain orientation in space, crucial for satellite and spacecraft operations. Williams conducted multiple tests in microgravity to observe these dynamics, with results to be presented at the 2025 ATZG wrap-up session later this year. The experiment was one of 11 finalists selected from countries including Australia, Bangladesh, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates. These experiments were performed live on the ISS and streamed to the finalists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Tsukuba Space Center in Ibaraki, Japan. Doña and Tumamac presented their proposal at the Tsukuba Space Center before the experiment’s execution, with results aligning with their hypotheses. The Philippines’ participation in the ATZG competition was facilitated by PhilSA. “We are very thankful for this opportunity given to us by PhilSA, and we hope more Filipino students will apply in the next batches of ATZG to experience proposing experiments in zero gravity and seeing them carried out,” the team said. Since 2022, experiments from Filipino students “have consistently been selected as ATZG finalists and carried out on the ISS by astronauts,” the agency said.

- [PNP probes ‘sabungeros’ case meetings](#) (2026-05-23 16:10)

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) has ordered a thorough investigation into alleged “secret meetings” between relatives of missing “sabungeros,” or cockfighting enthusiasts, and

dismissed police officers linked to the disappearance case. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said investigators are determining whether other police personnel helped facilitate the meetings following the relief of two officers who became the subject of complaints before the National Police Commission (Napolcom).” Any action outside of what the PNP should do is not only a betrayal of our mandate but also of the trust and confidence of the people we serve. Let us always allow our moral compass to lead the way toward the integrity and professionalism of our organization,” Nartatez said in a statement on Friday. While he said he respects meetings between the parties involved, Nartatez pointed out that police intervention in cases already before the courts is a serious matter that warrants investigation. Napolcom earlier disclosed the alleged involvement of two police officers in facilitating meetings between the families of the victims and dismissed police officers implicated in the case. The PNP on Thursday identified the two relieved officers as former Highway Patrol Group spokesman Lt. Nadame Malang and former Custodial Center warden Maj. Reynaldo Pañebe Jr. Nartatez reminded personnel to observe professionalism and remain within the bounds of their authority, especially in sensitive cases involving ongoing investigations. He also urged individuals with knowledge of the alleged meetings to cooperate with authorities, noting that the PNP’s internal investigation is running parallel with Napolcom’s probe. The PNP assured the public that the investigation would proceed without favoritism and that any officer found to have improperly intervened would face legal consequences.

- [61 OFWs repatriated from Kuwait, Bahrain](#) (2026-05-23 16:09)

THE Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) reported on Saturday that 61 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were brought home from Kuwait and Bahrain on Friday. The move was part of the government repatriation process for Filipinos trapped in the ongoing war in the Middle East. The latest batch, composed of 50 OFWs along with their dependents, arrived on board Gulf Air Flight GF154 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 at 11:06 a.m. on Friday. Fourteen of them came from Kuwait, while 36 came from Bahrain. They were followed by 11 more OFWs, also from Kuwait, onboard an Etihad Airways commercial flight at NAIA Terminal 3. The repatriated Filipinos were assisted by DMW and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration representatives upon their arrival. “The DMW continues to coordinate with various agencies to strengthen post-repatriation assistance for returning OFWs. This includes profiling, skills assessment, job matching, livelihood assistance and National Reintegration Network Job Fairs in different provinces. With every return of our fellow Filipinos, the government aims to ensure not only their safe return, but also their recovery and a fresh start with their families,” the agency said in a statement in Filipino.

- [Cash aid for PWDs pushed](#) (2026-05-23 16:08)

SEN. Joel Villanueva has filed Senate Bill 2096, seeking to provide regular monthly financial assistance to 3 million persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the country. Under the measure, a standing fund would be established under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to grant qualified PWDs a monthly stipend of P2,000, with the amount adjusted

periodically to account for inflation.” The responsibility rests on the State to exert greater effort to ensure that no citizen of theirs is left behind, and that individuals with disabilities are adequately supported to overcome the risks and barriers associated with their condition,” Villanueva said. The proposed measure mandates the DSWD to administer the fund in coordination with the National Council on Disability Affairs and organizations representing PWDs. These groups will jointly determine eligibility criteria and oversee implementation guidelines. The bill outlines a two-phase rollout over six years. During the first three years, priority beneficiaries would include children with disabilities, adults with moderate to severe disabilities who face significant barriers and PWDs already covered by existing government assistance programs such as the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens. In the succeeding three years, the program would expand to include all indigent PWDs certified by the DSWD. Besides a monthly cash allowance, the measure provides support for transportation, food and nutrition, maintenance medicines, rehabilitation services, assistive devices and technology, as well as preemployment and employment support services aimed at improving participation in the workforce. To strengthen implementation and monitoring, the bill proposes the creation of a Disability Data Management System linked to the Community-Based Monitoring System, the National ID System and the Department of Health Persons with Disability Registry. The integrated database is intended to provide real-time information on beneficiaries and facilitate subsidized enrollment in PhilHealth. The measure contains penalties against fraudulent enrollment. Individuals found guilty of enrolling ineligible beneficiaries may face fines ranging from P25,000 to P50,000 for a first offense and P50,000 to P100,000 for subsequent violations.” This proposed measure aims to promote inclusion, reduce inequality and empower persons with disabilities to live with dignity and actively participate in nation-building,” Villanueva said. The proposal comes amid growing concerns over the economic vulnerability of households caring for persons with disabilities. Data from the Department of Health as of April 7 showed that approximately 3 million Filipinos are living with some form of disability, including more than 1 million with physical disabilities, over 434,000 with speech impairments, nearly 398,000 with psychosocial disabilities, more than 303,000 with visual disabilities and close to 182,000 with mental disabilities. A joint study by DSWD and United Nations Children’s Fund found that families raising children with disabilities experience poverty rates at least 50 percent higher than the national average. Funding for the program would be sourced from the DSWD’s annual General Appropriations, with allocations required to increase progressively in line with the bill’s “progressive realization” principle aimed at expanding social protection coverage over time.

- [Go reaffirms support for sports development](#) (2026-05-23 16:07)

SEN. Bong Go declared his unwavering commitment to grassroots sports development as he extended support and congratulatory messages to a city tournament. Go’s representatives will be at the finals and awarding ceremony of the MB Cup in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City, today, Sunday. Go thanked Quezon City councilor Mikey Belmonte for organizing the tournament and sustaining community-based sports initiatives. The senator emphasized that

sports play a vital role in steering the youth away from illegal drugs, criminality and other harmful influences while promoting discipline, teamwork and healthy living.” I will continue to support sports — if there are sports clubs in your barangay, I will support them. That is one way to keep the youth away from bad habits,” Go said in Filipino.” Win or lose, I am proud of all those who play with heart and with the community in mind,” he added. Go is the author and co-sponsor of Republic Act 11470, which created the National Academy of Sports (NAS) in New Clark City, Tarlac. The NAS integrates secondary education with a specialized sports curriculum, allowing student-athletes to pursue academic excellence while receiving intensive athletic training. He refilled Senate Bill 413, which aims to institutionalize the Philippine National Games as the country’s premier grassroots sports competition. The measure aims to establish a nationwide platform for discovering, developing and supporting Filipino athletic talent from the local level upward.

- [De Lima pushes expanded income tax exemption](#) (2026-05-23 16:06)

MAMAYANG Liberal Rep. Leila de Lima has filed House Bill 9172, aiming to increase the income tax exemption ceiling for individual taxpayers from P250,000 to P480,000 yearly income.” The pay received by many of our countrymen is very insufficient, and often nothing is left of it just several days after payday,” de Lima said in Filipino in a statement on Friday.” What more when [a] crisis comes, or someone in the family gets sick? One way to lessen the economic challenges confronting many of our countrymen is to implement reforms in income tax exemption that will increase their take-home pay or disposable income,” she added. De Lima acknowledged that taxes are a source of funding for critical public services such as education, health care and public safety, but noted that taxpayers are already squeezed dry, hence, the government must ease their burden.” The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion law introduced a significant change to the Philippine income tax system by exempting individuals earning up to P250,000.00 annually from personal income tax. This reform was designed to ease the tax burden on low- and lower-middle-income earners, allowing them to retain a larger portion of their income. However, once annual earnings exceed this threshold, a progressive task structure applies, with rates starting at 15 percent and rising to 35 percent for top earners. As a result, even modest increases in income can lead to disproportionately higher tax liabilities,” she said in the bill’s explanatory note. The measure was filed on May 11 and was fully adopted. It was succeedingly filed as Senate Bill 267 by Sen. Bam Aquino.

- [MMDA launches hotline 136 for flooding updates](#) (2026-05-23 16:05)

(UPDATE) MOTORISTS traversing Metro Manila during heavy rains can now call Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) hotline 136 for real-time road and flood updates this rainy season, according to MMDA General Manager Nicholas Torre III. The hotline is part of the agency’s effort to improve emergency response and public access to flood information following the widespread flooding experienced across Metro Manila last year. During a press conference at The Manila Hotel on Friday, Torre told The Manila Times that motorists no longer have to rely solely on Facebook posts to check road conditions or flooded areas during the rainy

season. Past MMDA flood advisories usually indicate whether roads are passable to all types of vehicles during flooding incidents. “As part of strengthening Metrobase 136, we improved our social media positioning. That is real time, and if you have questions and want real-time answers, call 136, and we will answer you,” Torre said. Pressed if motorists could directly ask whether specific roads are flooded or passable, Torre answered, “Yes. If they want to call about it, we will answer you.” “To use the service, motorists need to dial 136 from a mobile phone or landline and ask Metrobase operators about real-time road conditions or potential alternate routes across Metro Manila,” he added. The MMDA said the hotline operates 24/7 and is free to call, allowing motorists to seek assistance during emergencies or sudden flooding situations without worrying about load balance. MMDA’s Metrobase command center monitors major roads through the no contact apprehension policy CCTV cameras and coordinates with field personnel for on-ground validation and response. Torre said the first major rains in May exposed remaining weaknesses in Metro Manila’s flood control system despite the cleanup and inspections before the rainy season, which is why the MMDA is encouraging motorists traversing the capital during heavy rains to maximize hotline 136 and its real-time flood advisories. Torre also urged motorists to monitor the agency’s official Facebook page, where flood advisories and road updates are posted in real time.

- [QC advises motorists on traffic crawl for Sunday](#) (2026-05-23 16:04)

(UPDATE) MOTORISTS are advised to expect slow-moving vehicular traffic on several major roads in Quezon City early Sunday morning as a tunnel-boring machine for the Metro Manila Subway Project will be transported from Plaridel, Bulacan, to the North Avenue Station site in Quezon City. The Quezon City government said the transport operation will take place this morning, May 24, from 2:45 a.m. to 6 a.m. Traffic slowdown is expected along the following roads: C3 Road – 2:45 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. Araneta Avenue – 3:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. Quezon Avenue – 4:30 a.m. to 5:10 a.m. Elliptical Road – 5:10 a.m. to 5:20 a.m. North Avenue – 5:20 a.m. to 6 a.m. City officials said the tunnel boring machine will be used to dig subway tunnels connecting the North Avenue Station and Quezon Avenue Station of the subway project. The city government said personnel from the Traffic and Transport Management Department, and the Department of Public Order and Safety will be deployed to help manage traffic flow during the transport activity. Motorists were advised to take alternative routes to avoid possible delays. The Metro Manila Subway Project is the country’s first underground railway system, which is expected to connect Quezon City to Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City once completed, with several stations planned across Metro Manila.

- [CFO offices, airport desks closed May 27 for Eid al-Adha](#) (2026-05-23 16:03)

THE Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) announced the temporary closure of its main and extension offices nationwide on Wednesday, May 27, in observance of Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice. The suspension of operations follows Proclamation 1264, which declares May 27 a regular holiday, one of the most significant Islamic holidays. In an advisory, the CFO said its main office in Pasay City, extension offices in Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Baguio and Davao, as well

as airport desks located in Clark and Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminals 1 and 3, will close for the duration of the holiday. Affected clients with confirmed appointments scheduled for May 27 via email or phone call to reschedule their transactions. The agency assured the public that regular office operations and services will resume on Thursday, May 28. Also, the CFO advised overseas-bound Filipinos and other clients to monitor official announcements and updates through its website and official social media pages to avoid inconvenience. The CFO is the government agency tasked with promoting and protecting the interests of Filipinos residing or migrating abroad. Its services include predeparture orientation seminars, counseling programs for emigrants and spouses of foreign nationals, and assistance for overseas Filipinos and their families.

- [The Filipino workers keeping Greenland in business](#) (2026-05-23 16:02)

ILULISSAT, Denmark — Marinel Garciano dislikes winter, and that's tough when it lasts nine months in Ilulissat, Greenland. But she has no regrets about leaving the Philippines to give her children opportunities. Her family is among the roughly 1,200 Filipinos living on the vast Arctic island of 57,000 inhabitants, the largest foreign diaspora in the Danish autonomous territory. "We're just looking for a greener pasture," smiled the 38-year-old, her eyes stealing a glance outside the window. But behind the glass, there was no greenery — just the pristine white of a blizzard enveloping the streets of Ilulissat, north of the Arctic Circle, in the icy month of April. Teleported Marinel was taking a break at the Nuka cafe, where her husband works, flashing a contagious smile despite being tired from work, her long dark hair falling down her back. In 2012, Owie Garciano left the lush landscapes of the Visayas and headed to Greenland for a job as a cook. Marinel and their three children joined him in 2021, amid a tourism boom in the town known for its icebergs. "It was like I had teleported," Marinel recalled. "From the tropical forest to here." At first, she worked in a warehouse, eventually landing a job as a receptionist. Her 15-year-old daughter sometimes helps her, while her eldest son, 18, works as a kitchen hand in a restaurant. The Garcianos are often tired from working so much, but it's for their future: Marinel invests "every penny" in real estate back home to give her children a better life. "I want my kids to not grow up like me. You want to offer them what you didn't have," she said. In between orders, Owie bounced out of the kitchen, gave her a quick kiss, then disappeared again, leaving behind an odor of fried food. Since they never know how long their visas will be renewed for, they don't want to waste any time in Greenland. Marinel keeps meticulous accounts, watching the children's spending closely, even going so far as to confiscate their money "for their future." "In any case, it's too cold to go out and have fun," she said. "And if you drink, you just end up hungover and broke." She squirmed on the red vinyl seat. "I don't know... maybe I'm crazy," she laughed. The next morning, she helped some Filipino friends clean the town's new airport, which is set to open in October. Labor shortage At dawn, life at the Best Western hotel begins to stir. A Thai chambermaid disappears behind a flurry of sheets, a Filipino cook behind a burst of flame. Here, a quarter of the staff is foreign. "We want to hire locals, but it's hard," admitted Manager Arnarissiq Moller. "I don't know how we could maintain our high-quality service" without the guest workers, he said. A town of 5,000 inhabitants, Ilulissat

has about 50,000 visitors annually. Tourism is growing rapidly, but Greenland, whose population is in decline, has a labor shortage. According to Greenland's employers' association, 5 to 6 percent of workers on the island are Asian, drawn by the tourism sector. Their presence is needed, but sometimes misunderstood. Marinel said she senses it sometimes, in lingering looks and harsh words: "Go home! Go home!" "Like in any country," she said. "We have to learn the language, and adapt to the culture... but it's not that easy." She switches between Greenlandic, Danish and English all day. At her side, her youngest child Neliowi, 5, watched cartoons in English. "In the mornings, I always urge her to speak four or five languages." Not die here Marinel hesitated when the subject of happiness arose. "I'm happy knowing that my children might not end up being poor again," she said. She doesn't want to die in Greenland, she said, hoping to move back to the Philippines before she turns 40. Night began to fall, and the tourists gradually left the Nuka cafe one after another. Outside, the blizzard raged. Marinel pulled on her warm coat with a grimace, saying she dreams of "Trees. Sea. Sand." Owie emerged through the swinging kitchen doors, looking tired. A Filipino kitchen hand greeted him with a bloodstained hand. He was preparing reindeer legs for a panang curry, which has become the "in" dish at Ilulissat's restaurants. In the dining area, a young woman laid the tables for the next day. Ilulissat went to sleep beneath its blanket of snow, but the warm light and strains of Thai pop rock from the Nuka cafe hinted at another life still awake.

- [Concerns raised over vape addiction](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

SEN. Sherwin Gatchalian raised the alarm on Saturday over the growing use of illegal vape products among Filipino youth. He warned that the widespread availability of cheap, smuggled vaping products is harming both public health and government revenue. "Instead of focusing on education, many of our youth are addicted to using vapes because these smuggled products are easy and cheap to buy," Gatchalian said. The senator cited a report by the EU-Asean Business Council and Euromonitor International Ltd. showing that the Philippines lost an estimated P141 billion in government revenues due to the illicit tobacco trade in 2024 and 2025. According to Gatchalian, the continued smuggling of cigarettes and vape products not only deprives the government of much-needed funds but also poses serious risks to consumers because of the uncertain origin and quality of the products being sold illegally. "The continued smuggling of cigarettes and vape products is a major drain on government revenue. More than that, it poses a health risk to our countrymen because we are not sure where these products come from," he added. Gatchalian stressed that the illegal tobacco and vape trade weakens the country's rule of law, fuels institutional corruption and undermines legitimate businesses that comply with government regulations and taxation policies. The senator urged authorities to strengthen border control, intensify enforcement operations against smuggling syndicates and implement stricter measures to prevent minors from accessing vape products. Health advocates have expressed concern over the increasing popularity of vaping among young Filipinos, warning that nicotine addiction may negatively affect learning, behavior and long-term health outcomes.

- [Awareness for neurofibromatosis sought](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

HEALTH experts urged a stronger awareness campaign on Friday for Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1), a rare disease that causes tumors to grow along the nerves. The call was made during the observance of World Neurofibromatosis Day. "Awareness is important because when families, schools and communities understand the condition better, children are given a greater opportunity to thrive," Dr. Amparo Itto Agrava, pediatric neurologist and neurosonologist said during a briefing led by AstraZeneca Philippines. NF1 is a rare genetic condition that affects 1 in 3,000 people worldwide. It causes tumors to grow along the nerves and can lead to complications involving the skin, bones, eyes and brain, with symptoms such as skin growths and noticeable markings. Health experts explained that the health condition varies from patient to patient, noting that no two patients present the same way. This, they noted, is the primary reason why many patients in the country are left undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. While the disease is not contagious, Agrava said greater understanding can help patients in their journey to recovery — especially from their families. "Support starts with the family. The way parents accept and support their child influences how that child sees themselves," said Agrava. Dr. Loudella Castillo of the Philippine General Hospital noted that most patients consult multiple specialists over the course of several years before receiving a confirmed diagnosis — delaying not just treatment but access to the right support systems and care. "As health care professionals, one of our responsibilities is helping patients reach the right doctors and support systems. When we address not only the medical needs of patients but also their emotional and psychosocial needs, families become more empowered to participate actively in care and decision-making," Castillo noted. AstraZeneca Philippines said a new therapeutic option was recently introduced in the country, adding a Filipino patient recently received an approved targeted therapy. Experts and advocates called on policymakers to strengthen and invest in rare disease centers and create clearer referral pathways to serve people with conditions like NF1. "At AstraZeneca, we believe that every patient living with rare diseases deserves access to innovation, dignity and a health care system that sees them," said Dr. Cyril Tolosa, medical affairs director for biopharmaceuticals and rare disease of AstraZeneca Philippines.

- [Marcos declares June as 'Judiciary Month'](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has declared June as "Judiciary Month," in time for the commemoration of the 125th founding anniversary of the Supreme Court. The president, through Executive Secretary Ralph Recto, signed Proclamation 1265 on May 21, amending Proclamation 47, which declared the "Judiciary Week." "There is a need to further strengthen public awareness and appreciation of the Judiciary as a pillar of democratic governance by providing a longer period for the conduct of programs and activities that promote judicial integrity, independence, accountability and efficiency," the president said. "Extending the observance to the entire month of June will allow the Judiciary greater flexibility in organizing activities and will enable wider participation from stakeholders while ensuring that the celebration remains anchored on the founding anniversary of the Supreme Court," he added. Marcos directed all agencies and instrumentalities to participate and provide the necessary assistance for the effective implementation of Proclamation 1265. The Supreme Court

was established on June 11, 1901, through Act 136 of the Philippine Commission. It had 26 chief justices with Cayetano Arellano as the first chief magistrate. Incumbent Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo is the 27th head of the judiciary. Associate Justice Raul Villanueva is the latest appointee at the Supreme Court as the 195th associate justice. In celebration of its 125th anniversary, the court has rolled out a series of activities throughout the year under the theme “Supreme Court: 125 Years of Tradition and Innovation.” The commemoration began with a special en banc session on Jan. 14 at the Ayuntamiento de Manila, where the Supreme Court once sat until World War II. An exhibit highlighting its history was also displayed at the Ayuntamiento and at the Supreme Court Main Lobby on Padre Faura Street, Ermita, Manila. Throughout the Judiciary Month, the court said that several commemorative initiatives will be unveiled like historical markers from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines at the Supreme Court New Building, which has served as the court’s principal seat since 1991. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will present commemorative coins and banknotes, while the Philippine Postal Corp. will issue stamps and other philatelic products honoring the court’s history and legacy. Meanwhile, AF Payments Inc. will release beep cards promoting public awareness of the Judiciary. These will be available to the public, with complimentary cards distributed to Supreme Court employees. Soon to open is the Supreme Court Gift Shop at the court’s main building, offering official merchandise, such as apparel, accessories, drinkware and stationery, including special 125th anniversary items. Another highlight of the occasion is the launch of the Model Supreme Court, an educational program for senior high school students inspired by Model United Nations. It will simulate oral arguments on public interest cases and demonstrate how court decisions are communicated through press briefings. For its inaugural run, participants will come from Manila Science High School, taking on roles such as justices, counsel, amici curiae (friends of the court), Supreme Court spokesman and media representatives. On June 11, Gesmundo will lead a whole-day anniversary celebration at the Supreme Court Quadrangle in Manila, to be attended by incumbent and retired justices, court officials and employees.

- [UP Manila develops plant-based mosquito repellent](#) (2026-05-23 16:00)

THE University of the Philippines (UP) Manila has developed a sustainable solution to curb dengue in the country by producing a plant-based mosquito repellent and insecticide technology from natural extracts. According to its latest data, the Department of Health recorded a total of 9,104 dengue cases in January this year — a 73-percent decrease compared to the same period last year. Despite the decline, dengue remains the most common vector-borne viral disease. Dr. Gracia Fe Yu, a former full-time professor from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology of the UP College of Medicine, led the research behind Mox Oil — short for “Mosquito Away Oil.” The project came into fruition after Yu questioned whether a safer alternative to mosquito repellents was possible to protect children from synthetic components. After years of research, Mox Oil was created. The formulation was proven effective against ants and other insects, making it a versatile household solution. The laboratory tests confirmed that mosquitoes were dying within minutes of exposure to the

extract. Skin irritation tests further validated the product's safety for topical use, making it a suitable option for families seeking natural protection against mosquito bites. The product comes in various forms, including lotions and sprays, catering to diverse consumer needs. Aside from that, the product was developed to support local communities, particularly Indigenous groups like the Aetas, who participate in cultivating medicinal plants and sourcing raw materials. Yu expects to collaborate with stakeholders to commercialize the product. "We are ready for collaboration. We have a potential market here in the Philippines because there are many mosquitoes in the country. Filipinos need Mox Oil, and for this, we are ready to collaborate with you," Yu said, urging stakeholders to join in manufacturing and commercializing the product.

- [Two bettors win Lotto 6/42, 6D Lotto jackpots on May 23](#) (2026-05-23 15:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Two bettors won the jackpot prizes in the Lotto 6/42 and 6D Lotto draws on Saturday night, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. The winning combination for the Lotto 6/42 draw was 12-18-03-17-05-08, with a jackpot prize of P24,158,158.53. Another bettor won the 6D Lotto draw with the winning combination 01-09-03-03-01-05 and a jackpot prize of P1,640,315.00. Meanwhile, there were no winners in the Grand Lotto 6/55 draw, which had the winning combination 52-36-38-12-48-42 and a jackpot prize of P45 million.

- [Awareness for Neurofibromatosis sought](#) (2026-05-23 14:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Health experts urged a stronger awareness campaign for Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1), a rare disease that causes tumors to grow along the nerves, in observance of World Neurofibromatosis Day. In a press briefing led by AstraZeneca Philippines on Friday, health experts highlighted the urgency of addressing NF1 cases that often go undiagnosed due to low awareness. "Awareness is important because when families, schools, and communities understand the condition better, children are given a greater opportunity to thrive," Dr. Amparo Itto Agrava, pediatric neurologist and neurosonologist, said. NF1 is a rare genetic condition that affects 1 in 3,000 people worldwide. It causes tumors to grow along the nerves and can lead to complications involving the skin, bones, eyes, and brain. Health experts explained that the health condition varies from patient to patient, noting that no two patients present the same way. This, they noted, is the primary reason why many patients in the country are left undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. AstraZeneca Philippines said a new therapeutic option was recently introduced in the country, making treatment for patients more accessible.

- [NBI seeks specific law to go after troll farms](#) (2026-05-23 13:32)

MANILA, Philippines - The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) was seeking a specific law in addressing troll farms. "We are probably proposing a bill...because we do not have a specific law," NBI Director Melvin Matibag said in Filipino and English in the Saturday News Forum. "We're always hearing troll farms, that there are troll farms but we do not have legal basis or legal cover to go after troll farms," Matibag said. He said that "we are addressing it. We

are in the process of procuring tools to combat this so that we can fight this kind of system."

- [2 fires recorded in Manila](#) (2026-05-23 13:13)

(UPDATED) MANILA, Philippines—Fire hit a residential area in Tondo, Manila on Saturday afternoon, reaching the fourth alarm. According to the Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (MDRRMD), the incident happened at around 3 p.m. Firefighters, along with the Philippine Red Cross, continue to respond to the scene to contain the blaze and ensure the safety of residents. The cause of the fire has yet to be determined. Meanwhile, another fire hits Manila on Saturday evening, this time in Intramuros. This comes after a separate fire incident was reported in Binondo, Manila in the afternoon, where authorities raised the alarm to Task Force Charlie. According to reports, the Intramuros fire was first identified at 8:39 p.m. It was then raised to first alarm 5 minutes later, and the second alarm by 8:51 p.m. Authorities are currently responding to extinguish both fires.

- [NBI intensifies search for 'armed and dangerous' dela Rosa](#) (2026-05-23 09:12)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has intensified its manhunt for Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, describing him as “armed and dangerous” as law enforcement units step up efforts to locate the former Philippine National Police (PNP) chief. In a news forum on Saturday, NBI Director Melvin Matibag said the classification was part of standard protocol for individuals being actively sought by authorities, particularly those with prior law enforcement or security background. Matibag said Dela Rosa was being treated with heightened caution to ensure the safety of NBI personnel and other operatives involved in the operation. He urged the public to immediately report any sighting of the senator to authorities, stressing the need for coordination to prevent risks during enforcement actions. The NBI chief also warned that individuals who may assist in allegedly concealing or facilitating evasion could face charges, including obstruction of justice. According to the bureau, tracker teams have been deployed, while additional units have been ordered to assist in the ongoing search and possible service of legal orders.

- [House OKs bill expanding VAWC law](#) (2026-05-23 09:07)

THE House of Representatives has approved a bill aiming to expand the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act. House Bill 8420 hurdled third and final reading Wednesday, with 260 lawmakers voting for its passage. Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Sarah Elago, in a statement posted on Facebook, said that the bill was an important step to amend the law on violence against women and children. In 2004, then-president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, now Pampanga second district representative, signed the Anti-VAWC Act into law. "But while times change, the form that violence takes also changes. So it is time to strengthen and amend the law to address the worsening online abuse, harassment, and other new forms of abuse against women and children," Elago said. The bill defines technology-facilitated violence against women and their children. Elago said the bill recognizes unauthorized dissemination of sensitive images and creation of fake accounts as crimes. Sound clips of a sensitive nature are

also covered by the bill. Elago said the bill recognizes online harassment, stalking, and hacking as forms of violence. The lawmaker said the bill has stricter penalties for violators. She said these include a P500,000 fine and imprisonment. The bill gives women 20 days of paid leave which, it said, "shall cover the days when" they have to "attend to medical, legal, and other valid concerns related to the pending case." Under the bill, they are entitled to this benefit during the application of any protection order, investigation, prosecution, and/or trial of the criminal case.

- [Ombudsman fortifies anti-corruption ties with UN](#) (2026-05-23 09:04)

THE Office of the Ombudsman said that its partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is as strong as ever. In a courtesy visit, Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla welcomed UNODC Southeast Asia and the Pacific Anti-Corruption Team Lead Annika Wythes and UNODC Philippines National Program Officer Kirbee Tibayan at the Ombudsman central office Thursday. "The strong, growing partnership between the Office of the Ombudsman and the UNODC is vital in advancing anti-corruption efforts, institutional capacity building, and international cooperation," Remulla said. The courtesy call, the Ombudsman's office said in a statement, "served as an opportunity to discuss future areas of collaboration, including advanced digital forensics training, strengthened international cooperation mechanisms, and the possible development of a unified National Anti-Corruption Framework for the Philippines." The Office of the Ombudsman, the statement said, has worked with the UNODC on various technical trainings, workshops, and regional engagements focused on financial investigations, digital evidence, anti-money laundering, corruption prosecution, asset recovery, and international cooperation. "Through partnerships grounded on integrity, innovation, and a shared commitment, the Office of the Ombudsman continues to strengthen its capability to address evolving corruption challenges and uphold public accountability," Remulla said. The Office of the Ombudsman, he added, "recognized the UNODC's continued support for initiatives promoting integrity, ethics, and corruption prevention, including the annual *Sikhay Laban sa Korapsyon* (Silak) Summit in celebration of International Anti-Corruption Day and Anti-Corruption Month." In 2006, the Philippines ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

- [NASA astronaut tests device developed by Filipino students at space station](#) (2026-05-23 08:18)

MANILA, Philippines — An astronaut of the National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) on board the International Space Station (ISS) performed an experiment using a device developed by Filipino students that measured and maintained direction and balance, essential for spacecraft orientation. In a statement on Friday, the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) said the Double Gyroscope — developed by third-year students from the Rizal Technological University (RTU) as part of the 2025 Asian Try Zero-G (ATZG 2025) competition — was tested by Christopher Williams inside the Kibo module of the ISS on March 24, 2026. The students hypothesized that spinning the double gyroscopes in opposite directions would create a

stabilizing effect, but slight differences in their motion could gradually alter the system's orientation. Williams conducted multiple tests in microgravity to observe these dynamics, with results to be presented at the 2025 ATZG wrap-up session later this year.

- [Fire hits Tondo residential area](#) (2026-05-23 08:00)

MANILA, Philippines—Fire hit a residential area in Tondo, Manila on Saturday afternoon, reaching the fourth alarm. According to the Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (MDRRMD), the incident happened at around 3 p.m. Firefighters, along with the Philippine Red Cross, continue to respond to the scene to contain the blaze and ensure the safety of residents. The cause of the fire has yet to be determined.

- [NBI: More individuals face arrest on ICC warrants in coming days](#) (2026-05-23 05:47)

MANILA, Philippines — National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Melvin Matibag said on Saturday that the agency was prepared to enforce any additional arrest warrants that may be issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in connection with the crimes against humanity case involving former president Rodrigo Duterte. Matibag issued the statement after confirming that the NBI had received information indicating that more individuals could face arrest warrants from the ICC in the coming days. Matibag said the bureau's readiness remained paramount, stressing that law enforcement agencies will act regardless of the identities of individuals involved. "We are always ready to enforce and serve the warrants. It doesn't matter who it is," Matibag said. "If there are additional warrants, we are ready to enforce them and serve them." He added that the agency would not go into further discussion regarding possible warrants or the identities of individuals allegedly linked to the case, citing the need for operational discretion.

- [Quezon City advises motorists of traffic slowdown on Sunday for subway machine transfer](#) (2026-05-23 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — Motorists are advised to expect slow-moving traffic along several major roads in Quezon City early Sunday morning as a tunnel boring machine for the Metro Manila Subway Project will be transported from Plaridel, Bulacan to the North Avenue Station site in Quezon City. The local government said the transport operation would take place from 2:45 a.m. to 6 a.m. Traffic slowdown is expected along: • C3 Road — 2:45 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. • Araneta Avenue — 3:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. • Quezon Avenue — 4:30 a.m. to 5:10 a.m. • Elliptical Road — 5:10 a.m. to 5:20 a.m. • North Avenue — 5:20 a.m. to 6 a.m. City officials said the tunnel boring machine would be used for the construction of subway tunnels connecting the North Avenue Station and Quezon Avenue Station of the subway project. The city government said personnel from the Traffic and Transport Management Department and the Department of Public Order and Safety would be deployed to help manage traffic flow during the transport activity. Motorists are advised to take alternative routes to avoid delays. The Metro Manila Subway Project is the country's first underground railway system and is expected to connect Quezon City to Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City once completed, with several

stations planned across Metro Manila.

- [ICC allows Duterte to skip first status conference, denies victims' lawyer remote access](#)
(2026-05-23 05:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The International Criminal Court (ICC) granted former president Rodrigo Duterte's request to skip the first status conference in his crimes against humanity case, while denying a victims' lawyer to participate remotely. In an order issued Friday, Trial Chamber III confirmed that Duterte would not be required to attend the May 27, 2026 status conference, describing the proceeding as administrative in nature. "The Accused wishes to waive his right to appear before the Chamber on 27 May 2026 and fully trusts his legal team to address the procedural matters listed," the defense said in a request submitted by email on May 21, which the Chamber subsequently approved. However, Presiding Judge Joanna Korner and the other members of the Chamber directed Duterte's legal team to submit a signed written waiver from the former president no later than May 25 at 12 p.m., in compliance with statutory requirements. The Chamber noted that Article 63(1) of the Rome Statute, which requires an accused person to be present during trial, "does not apply to other hearings such as status conferences which are essentially administrative in nature." The judges also denied a request by victims' lawyer Gilbert Andres to attend the conference through a secure video link. While other members of the victims' legal team, including the Office of Public Counsel for Victims, will attend and make submissions on behalf of victims, the Chamber said remote participation could not be accommodated because "it was not possible to have a secure link with the Legal Representative in case the use of private sessions would be required" to protect sensitive information. The order further disclosed that Duterte has changed his legal representation since the Chamber issued its scheduling order on April 30. Lawyers Peter Haynes and Kate Gibson have been appointed as Counsel and Associate Counsel, respectively, replacing Duterte's previous legal representatives who were allowed to withdraw from the case. According to the Chamber, the new defense team has been informed of all pending deadlines and assured the court it would be prepared to attend the status conference. The May 27 conference will be conducted in three sessions and is expected to tackle matters related to the projected start of trial, pre-trial deadlines, anticipated evidence and witness presentations, disclosure obligations, possible additions to incidents covered by the charges, pre-trial motions, victims' participation deadlines, and protocols concerning witness preparation and vulnerable individuals. Although the proceedings will generally be held in public, the Chamber said private sessions may be ordered when necessary to avoid disclosing sensitive information involving witness protection and security. The judges added that additional matters raised by parties and participants may be addressed in future status conferences ahead of trial.

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- [Comelec ready to assist Ombudsman in Marcoleta case even after terminating own probe](#) (2026-05-23 05:03)

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Elections (Comelec) expressed readiness to assist and coordinate with the Office of the Ombudsman in its case against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta, even as its own investigation into the lawmaker has been dismissed, Comelec Chairman George Erwin Garcia said on Saturday. In a statement, Garcia clarified that the poll body's independent inquiry against Marcoleta was no longer active. "The Comelec is ready to help and coordinate with the Ombudsman," Garcia said in Filipino. "On Comelec's end, the motu proprio investigation against Senator Marcoleta has already been dismissed." He added that the commission had not discussed any move to reopen the case. "With regard to reviving the case,

Comelec hasn't thought about it yet," he said, adding that the agency has also not received any Motion for Reconsideration. Garcia's remarks came amid a separate criminal complaint filed before the Office of the Ombudsman against Marcoleta, which recommended charges for plunder and three counts of indirect bribery over alleged campaign donations totaling P75 million. According to the complaint filed by the field investigation bureau of the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon on May 18, Marcoleta allegedly received campaign contributions from former representative Mike Defensor and two other individuals amounting to P30 million, P25 million, and P20 million, respectively, in January 2025. The complaint stated that the donations exceeded the P50-million threshold for plunder and may constitute indirect bribery, as they were allegedly received by reason of Marcoleta's position as a public official. It also alleged that the contributions were not properly declared in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN) and Statement of Contributions and Expenditures (SOCE), noting discrepancies between declared cash holdings and the reported P75 million in donations. The complainants further argued that Marcoleta's failure to disclose the alleged contributions could expose him to administrative and criminal liabilities under the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials. The Office of the Ombudsman has ordered Marcoleta, along with his alleged donors, to submit counter-affidavits within 15 days, after which complainants may file their reply. Meanwhile, Garcia said the Comelec had previously concluded that no election offense was committed, citing that the alleged donations were made before the start of the official campaign period for the 2025 elections. He noted that under a 2009 Supreme Court ruling, liability for election offenses applies only once the campaign period begins. In March, Comelec's Political Finance and Affairs Department had terminated its own investigation into the matter. Garcia reiterated that while the poll body was no longer pursuing its own investigation, it remained open to coordinating with the Ombudsman if needed in connection with the case.

- [ICC orders continued detention of Duterte, rejects health concerns](#) (2026-05-23 04:46)

MANILA, Philippines — The International Criminal Court (ICC) has ordered the continued detention of former president Rodrigo Duterte pending trial, rejecting defense arguments that his declining health and cognitive impairment warranted release. In a unanimous decision, Trial Chamber III found that the confirmation of charges against Duterte — which includes crimes against humanity over his controversial "war on drugs" — actually increased the risk that he might abscond or obstruct justice. "The confirmation of charges increases the risk that an accused may abscond and is therefore not a change in circumstances that militates in favour of conditional release, but rather one supporting continued detention," the three-judge panel wrote. Duterte, 81, was surrendered to the court on March 12, 2025, pursuant to an arrest warrant issued days earlier. His detention has been upheld in multiple rulings since then, including a September 2025 interim release decision and a January 2026 review — both confirmed by the Appeals Chamber. The defense had argued that Duterte's physical condition and cognitive capacities represented a "prima facie change in circumstances" meriting reconsideration. Lawyers described "frequent episodes of falls occasioned by a loss of balance"

and said his impaired short-term memory meant he "is not capable of remembering sufficient details for the purpose of instructing others to tamper with witnesses." However, the Chamber noted that three court-appointed medical experts had examined Duterte, and their reports "do not contain any information that warrants modifying the Accused's detention." Presiding Judge Joanna Korner, along with Judges Keebong Paek and Nicolas Guillou, also pointed to Duterte's refusal to attend his confirmation hearing, during which he stated: "I do not recognise the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over my person." The court said that statement demonstrated "at its lowest that the Accused will not comply with any orders that might be made in respect of a release from custody." Citing Duterte's "access to vast resources and contacts, including his family and supporters in the Philippines who may assist him in evading justice," the Chamber found that his health issues did "not constitute factors which outweigh the risks" of flight or obstruction. The risks under Article 58(1)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Rome Statute — concerning flight and interference with proceedings — have increased, the court said, while it saw "no change in circumstances" regarding other risks. Duterte will remain in ICC custody in The Hague. The trial is expected to proceed following the April 23, 2026, confirmation of charges against him.

- [Want to know where flooded roads are? MMDA's 136 hotline will tell you](#) (2026-05-23 02:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Motorists traversing Metro Manila during heavy rains can now directly call MMDA hotline 136 for real-time road and flood updates, especially this rainy season, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority General Manager Nicholas Torre III. The hotline is part of the agency's efforts to improve emergency response and public access to information following the widespread flooding experienced across Metro Manila last year. During a press conference at The Manila Hotel on Friday, Torre told The Manila Times that motorists no longer have to rely solely on Facebook posts to check road conditions or flooded areas. Past MMDA flood advisories usually indicate whether roads are passable to light vehicles, not passable to light vehicles, or not passable to all types of vehicles during flooding incidents. "As part of strengthening Metrobase 136, we improved our social media positioning. That is real-time, and if you have questions and want real-time answers, call 136 and we will answer you," Torre said. Asked if motorists could directly ask whether specific roads were flooded or passable, Torre answered: "Yes. If they want to call about it, we will answer you." To use the service, motorists simply need to dial 136 from a mobile phone or landline and ask Metrobase operators about real-time flood conditions, road passability, or alternate routes across Metro Manila. The MMDA said the hotline was 24/7 and free. The agency's Metrobase command center monitors major roads through NCAP CCTV cameras and coordinates with field personnel for on-ground validation and response. Torre said the first major rains in May exposed remaining weaknesses in Metro Manila's flood control system despite pre-rainy season cleanup and inspections, which is why the MMDA is encouraging motorists traversing the capital during heavy rains to maximize hotline 136 and its real-time flood advisories. The MMDA chief also urged motorists to monitor the agency's official

Facebook page, where flood advisories and road passability updates were posted in real time.

- [No winners in Ultra Lotto 6/58, Mega Lotto 6/45 draws for May 22](#) (2026-05-22 21:27)

There were no winners in the Ultra Lotto 6/58 and Mega Lotto 6/45 draws on Friday night, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) said. The winning combination for the Ultra Lotto 6/58 was 45-20-16-33-40-28, with a jackpot prize of P75,000,000. No winners were also recorded in the Mega Lotto 6/45 draw, which had the combination 27-09-42-37-34-03 and a jackpot prize of P21,822,707.74.

- [FDA staff blindsided by move allowing more e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches onto US market](#) (2026-05-22 20:56)

WASHINGTON — Senior officials in the Food and Drug Administration's tobacco center were blindsided by a recent decision that opens the door to allowing more unauthorized electronic cigarettes and nicotine pouches onto the U.S. market, The Associated Press has learned. The guidelines, posted days before former FDA Commissioner Marty Makary resigned, will allow companies to launch certain nicotine-based products before they've been fully vetted by regulators. Some FDA officials tasked with enforcing vaping regulations were not consulted on the changes and only learned of them the night before the document was published earlier this month, according to two staffers who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential agency matters. The document's sudden appearance sparked internal confusion about how the policy came about and who authorized it, the staffers said. In recent days, agency officials have convened hourslong meetings grappling with how to implement the six-page memo, which breaks with longstanding FDA policy requiring scientific verification of health benefits for smokers before any new products are introduced. It's highly unusual for the FDA to draft new policies without input from the staffers who oversee them. "It begs the question of whether the true subject matter experts may have actually opposed this policy and were ordered to do it anyway," said Mitch Zeller, who retired as the FDA's tobacco director in 2022. "And that goes to the ability of the public to have trust and faith in institutions like FDA." The vaping guidelines bypassed a federally required period that allows for public comment and revisions. Instead, the FDA published them as a finalized policy hours after media reports surfaced that President Donald Trump had approved a plan to fire Makary. He resigned from the FDA last week following months of complaints from industry lobbyists close to the White House. A Health and Human Services spokesperson did not address the origins of the guidance in a written statement. "This approach strengthens protections against youth nicotine addiction while supporting evidence-based alternatives for adult smokers seeking to move away from combustible tobacco products," Andrew Nixon said in a statement. Messages seeking comment from Makary were not immediately returned Friday. FDA eyes new approach to vaping flavors Most health researchers agree that e-cigarettes are significantly less harmful than traditional cigarettes, and the products have been promoted in the U.K. and other European countries as an alternative for smokers. In the U.S., the FDA has struggled to police the market for over a decade. The agency has authorized vaping products from five companies while

rejecting millions of other applications, mainly due to the presence of fruit, candy and other sweet flavors that were deemed appealing to kids. And yet, unauthorized vapes are widely available. But recent changes in Washington and across the U.S. reflect a shifting landscape. Underage vaping among U.S. teenagers has fallen to its lowest level in more than 10 years, following the disruptions of the pandemic and new state and federal restrictions. Trump came to power last year after vowing to “save” the vaping industry. Major tobacco companies, such as Reynolds American and Altria, have contributed millions to political action committees supporting Trump and other administration priorities, including Trump's inauguration and his proposed White House ballroom. Both companies have invested heavily in e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches, in addition to cigarettes. Despite the influence campaign, vaping issues took a backseat at FDA under Makary. On rare occasions when Makary addressed e-cigarettes, he voiced skepticism about the data showing declining underage use. Even as FDA staffers were poised to shift course on flavors, Makary and other agency leaders intervened. In February, one of Makary's deputies blocked an FDA decision that would have authorized the first fruit-flavored vapes, according to internal memos later released by the agency. FDA reviewers had determined the products were unlikely to be used by children when combined with digital age-verification technology. The mango- and blueberry-flavored products were finally OK'd during Makary's last full week heading the FDA, just days before the agency posted the new guidelines allowing unauthorized nicotine products. Under the guidance, the FDA is supposed to publish a list of e-cigarettes and pouches that are not yet authorized but will be subject to “enforcement discretion,” meaning they can be sold without regulators targeting them for removal. While there is no public list of products that might qualify, the policy is expected to allow for new flavors that had previously been blocked by regulators. “What we're seeing is a broader opening up and responsiveness to flavored products by the agency both in terms of a stronger appetite for authorization but also less appetite to take enforcement action against flavored products,” said Brian King, former FDA tobacco director now with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. US stores are already packed with illegal flavored vapes. While FDA's new approach breaks with precedent, it may have little impact on the flavors already available at gas stations, vape shops and convenience stores. The U.S. market has been flooded for years by unauthorized vapes containing mango, gummy bear, strawberry and dozens of other flavors. These disposable e-cigarettes filled the vacuum left by Juul when it pulled its high-nicotine flavored products from the market, after they became ubiquitous in U.S. schools beginning around 2017. Currently, the company only sells FDA-authorized e-cigarettes in tobacco and menthol flavors. Juul and other companies now see the chance to directly compete with disposable Chinese vapes, which by some estimates account for 80% of U.S. sales. “The choice we face is not whether flavored vaping products should be sold in the U.S. They already are,” said Robyn Gougelet, a Juul vice president. “The choice is whether those products should be regulated and responsibly marketed — or illegal, untested, and smuggled into the country.” Rather than targeting flavors, the FDA said its new enforcement approach will focus on vapes with specific youth-appealing features, such as designs that resemble children's toys. “The reality is they're just deluged by illegal products coming across the border,” said Jonathan Foulds, a tobacco-addiction specialist at Penn State

University. “So they’re making it clear what should be common sense: ‘We’re going to focus on the worst actors.’ ” New policy may create winners and losers among vaping firms. It’s far from clear whether FDA’s new approach will be embraced by the vaping industry at large, which includes multinational tobacco companies alongside hundreds of smaller companies selling imported devices from China. As written, the guidance suggests only e-cigarettes that are under “scientific review” will qualify to launch without FDA authorization. Only a small number of applications typically reach that stage, which requires detailed health data on smokers who switch to the new product, King noted. “This is certainly going to benefit the larger tobacco companies, which have the resources to get far enough into the application review process and thus won’t be prioritized for enforcement,” King said. Lobbyists for smaller companies say it’s too early to tell whether the policy will help or hinder their clients, but they fear being left behind. “The big companies would love nothing more than to see their largest swath of competitors out of the marketplace,” said Tony Abboud of the Vapor Technology Association.

- [Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa says will leave post](#) (2026-05-22 20:49)

MADRID — Alvaro Arbeloa confirmed Friday he would leave his role as Real Madrid coach at the end of a trophyless season. “Yes,” Arbeloa said at a press conference when asked to confirm that he would not be coaching the team next season, amid widespread reports that veteran manager Jose Mourinho is returning to the club. Los Blancos host Athletic Bilbao on Saturday at the Santiago Bernabeu in their final La Liga match of a turbulent campaign. Real Madrid president Florentino Perez appointed Arbeloa to replace Xabi Alonso in January and he is set to be replaced himself by Portuguese veteran Mourinho. Spaniard Arbeloa said he would not work as a member of Mourinho’s staff if the Portuguese coach is appointed as his successor. “Mou has a fantastic technical team, he’s got good people around him, if he comes to Madrid he will come with his team,” said Arbeloa. “There’s no chance that I would be with him. Then, my future... from Monday I’ll think about that.” Arbeloa, who played at Madrid between 2009-2016 and later coached there at youth level said he hoped this match was a “see you later” rather than goodbye. “I hope it’s a see you later... I’ve always considered this my home, I’ve belonged to Madrid for 20 years in various roles,” said Arbeloa. “It will be my last game this season as coach of Real Madrid, I don’t know if it will be the last game of my life as coach of Real Madrid.” “We never know. I’ll try and enjoy it and try to get the win.”

- [Wrapture Beauty Academy Recognized as 2026 Consumer Choice Award Winner for Esthetics Schools in Winnipeg](#) (2026-05-22 20:20)

WINNIPEG — Academy has been named the 2026 Consumer Choice Award winner in the School - Esthetics category for Winnipeg. This recognition highlights the academy’s reputation as a leading training institution and its commitment to delivering advanced, industry-focused education in the beauty sector. As a multi-award-winning esthetics academy, Wrapture Beauty Academy offers a comprehensive range of courses designed to prepare students for successful careers in the beauty industry. Programs span a wide variety of specialties, including skin care,

laser treatments, brows and lashes. In addition to individual certifications, the academy provides accredited diploma programs that reflect the evolving demands of the industry. Wrapture Beauty Academy's curriculum is continuously updated to align with the latest trends, technologies, and techniques. This ensures that students and alumni receive modern, relevant training that equips them with the skills needed to succeed in a competitive and rapidly changing field. "Receiving the Consumer Choice Award is an honour for our team," said the Wrapture Beauty Academy team. "We are passionate about providing innovative, high-quality education and supporting our students throughout their careers. This recognition reflects the trust our students place in us and motivates us to continue raising the standard in esthetics training." A defining strength of the academy is its student-centred approach. Classes are designed to provide hands-on, practical experience, allowing students to build confidence and refine their skills in a supportive environment. Instruction is led by experienced educators who are active industry professionals, bringing real-world insights and expertise into the classroom. The academy's commitment to quality extends to the tools and products used in training. By utilizing Health Canada registered equipment and professional-grade products, Wrapture Beauty Academy ensures students gain experience with industry-standard technologies, reinforcing its position as a leading training facility and product distributor in Winnipeg. Consumer Choice Award is based on independent consumer research that measures reputation, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Businesses are evaluated within their respective markets to identify those that consistently exceed expectations. Being named a 2026 winner underscores Wrapture Beauty Academy's dedication to excellence and its strong standing within the Winnipeg community. As the beauty industry continues to evolve, Wrapture Beauty Academy remains focused on innovation, education, and student success. With a commitment to high-quality training and ongoing support, the academy is well-positioned to continue shaping the next generation of beauty professionals.

- [Kate 'edging' back into foreign trips after illness Prince William](#) (2026-05-22 19:51)

LONDON, United Kingdom — Britain's Prince William on Friday said his wife Catherine, popularly known as Kate, was "edging herself back into doing more" overseas trips following her cancer diagnosis in 2024. William, 43, told Heart radio's breakfast show that the Princess of Wales was "buzzing" after her visit to Italy earlier this month, her first foreign visit since the diagnosis. "She's been through so much in the last couple of years, particularly, and she'd been looking forward to the Italian trip a lot, and so I'm really glad it went really well." Kate, 44, announced she was in remission from cancer in January 2025 and has gradually returned to public duties since then. "She's an amazing mum, an amazing wife, and literally our family couldn't cope without her," William told the radio show, speaking from the Isles of Scilly off the Cornish coast in southwest England. The father-of-three spoke about parenting as well, including the school run for his children which he said "can be" chaotic. "Charlotte, Louis, if you're listening, make sure you're on time, please make sure (you're) not fighting over who's listening to what this morning," William said, addressing his two youngest children. His eldest son, George, 12, was "boarding" on Thursday night, William said. The heir-to-the-throne revealed that

jam sandwiches were kept in the car for the youngest Louis, 8, to snack on."He'll leave jam fingerprints throughout the car, which is really helpful," said William. William has been giving more personal interviews recently, and last year revealed that he and Catherine have a phone ban to protect their children. The prince, who admitted he is "definitely not a morning person", said his breakfast of choice is "eggs on sourdough". He said he enjoyed "motivational" music and "loved dance music." Prince William also spoke about seeing Aston Villa, the football team he supports, win the UEFA Europa League this week in Istanbul. "I got really into the moment, and you know, I've been following Aston Villa most of my life. And so it was a huge moment for all Villa fans."

- [NTF-ELCAC: No massacre in Toboso, Reds given chance to surrender but they refused](#)
(2026-05-22 19:47)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) on Friday rejected claims that the April 19 encounter in Toboso, Negros Occidental was a massacre, insisting that New People's Army (NPA) members were repeatedly urged to surrender but refused. In a statement, NTF-ELCAC Executive Director Ernesto Torres Jr. said all 19 individuals killed in the incident were combatants who died during a legitimate armed engagement with government forces. "Attempts to portray some of the fatalities as civilians, farmers, or researchers have collapsed under the weight of physical evidence, forensic findings, crime scene investigation reports, and even admissions from the CPP-NPA itself," Torres said. Citing 3rd Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Michael Samson, Torres said government troops encountered armed individuals during the April 19 clash and had reason to treat them as combatants. "Government forces continuously called on members of the armed group to surrender because no one wanted these encounters to happen," Torres said.

"Tragically, opportunities for peace were repeatedly ignored and rejected even during the lull in combat," he added. Torres also addressed the cases of Alysa Alano and RJ Ledesma, saying that regardless of prior identity, profession, or affiliation, individuals found armed and actively participating in an encounter are considered combatants in that operational context. Among the evidence cited by Torres were findings from Police Col. Reynaldo Calaoa of the Regional Forensic Unit–Negros Island Region, showing that 11 of the 19 fatalities tested positive for gunpowder residue. Torres noted that the findings were significant given that several bodies were exposed to seawater and high tide for nearly 24 hours before recovery. "Surface gunshot residue is highly vulnerable to environmental degradation. Even ordinary washing can substantially reduce detectable residue," he said. He added that despite prolonged saltwater immersion, wave action, sand abrasion, and movement during recovery operations, a majority still tested positive for residue. "That is powerful forensic evidence supporting the reality of an active firefight," Torres said. He stressed that negative paraffin test results do not prove an individual never fired a weapon, explaining that residue may no longer have been detectable by the time tests were conducted. Torres said the mixed findings—11 positive and eight negative—were not unusual under uneven environmental conditions, including varying levels of submersion, clothing protection, and tidal movement. He pointed to the case of Roger Fabillar,

alias “Jong,” identified as commander of the Northern Negros Front and acknowledged by the NPA as one of its slain members, who tested negative for gunpowder residue. “If anyone would insist that a negative paraffin finding automatically means non-participation in combat, then that argument immediately runs into serious difficulty,” Torres said. On Thursday, Police Brig. Gen. Dennis Wenceslao presented Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) findings showing investigators recovered more than 20 long and short firearms, ammunition, expended cartridges, communication equipment, backpacks, hammocks, medical supplies, and other war materiel from the encounter site. Torres said at least 10 of the 19 fatalities had also been publicly identified and claimed by the NPA as members of the organization. Among them were Fabillar and Josel Guimang, initially presented by the NPA as an 18-year-old fighter but later found to be only 17 years old. Torres said three child combatants were recovered from the site, raising concerns over the NPA’s alleged recruitment and use of minors in combat, which he said violated local and international humanitarian laws. He also cited observations from forensic pathologist Dr. Raquel Fortun indicating no signs of close-range firing among the fatalities, which he said supported the conclusion that the deaths resulted from a legitimate armed encounter. Torres further criticized what he described as shifting narratives from the CPP-NPA, which initially acknowledged 10 members killed, then 13, before later attempting to portray some as civilians. “But changing numbers do not change facts,” he said. He also questioned calls by communist front organizations seeking “justice for all 19,” including individuals already identified by authorities and acknowledged by the NPA as members of the armed movement. “Justice must rest on facts and truth, not on selective narratives,” Torres said. “The totality of evidence now speaks clearly: physical evidence, forensic examination, scene investigation, recovered war materiel, and admissions from the armed movement itself all point in one direction. The Toboso incident was not a massacre. It was a legitimate armed engagement,” he added..

- [Tennis players 'ignored', want 'respect' in Grand Slam pay dispute](#) (2026-05-22 19:45)

PARIS — World number eight Taylor Fritz said Friday that tennis players' concerns about prize money have been "ignored" by Grand Slam tournament organisers, leading to their planned protest at the French Open, which Jannik Sinner says is about "respect". The bulk of the world's top 10 will limit their media duties at the clay-court major, which starts at Roland Garros on Sunday, due to perceived low prize money. Players have claimed they are currently only paid 15 percent of the revenue from the Slams, asking for 22 percent instead. "It's not about wanting more money. It's about just wanting what's fair," Fritz told reporters in Paris. "We have been pretty patient and mild with, I'd say, our requests, and I think all of us feel it's a bit disrespectful to just be ignored when the sport is the healthiest, when I think there is a very fair partnership and open dialogue between the players and the tournaments." Sinner reiterated his call, initially made earlier this month in Rome, for organisers to show more respect to the players. "I think it's something good because without us events are not possible to play," said the world number one and red-hot French Open title favourite. "It's about the respect. We have to wait for over a year for just a small response... the best 10 players -- it's not nice." Women's world number one

Aryna Sabalenka also said at the Italian Open that players might have to boycott the sport's four biggest tournaments -- the Australian, French and US Open and Wimbledon -- to "defend our rights". Fritz says a boycott has not been seriously discussed by the players, but did not rule out that it could become an option in the future. "Something does have to change if we are ignored, so that's a conversation to have, I think," said the American when asked about a potential boycott. "Right now I'm not ready to start tossing that around, because I want to really mean it if I'm going to say it." Sabalenka said her decision to protest was in order to help players lower down the rankings. "It's not easy to live in this tennis world with the percentage that we are earning," said the Belarusian. "But as a world number one, I feel like I have to stand up and fight for those players, for lower-level players, especially those who are coming back after injuries, the upcoming next generation." Reigning women's champion Coco Gauff was timing the length of her press conference and said: "This is the first real point of action that we've done. Yeah, I think I'm proud that we were all able to get on the same page." Novak Djokovic said he was not involved in the protest. - 'They don't hear you' - French Open tournament director Amelie Mauresmo said Thursday that Roland Garros organisers "would not budge" on the issue of prize money. Russia's Andrey Rublev, a 10-time Grand Slam quarter-finalist, hit out at a lack of communication from tournament organisers when players have raised their concerns. "They don't hear you. They don't answer," said the 28-year-old. "When you send the mail in, no one responds to official mail for months, it's like -- and we are doing the same thing." "Come on, guys. We are together, or you completely don't care that much that you cannot even communicate." Iga Swiatek confirmed she was also taking part in the protest, for which players will speak to the media for no longer than 15 minutes, a limit symbolically chosen to represent the 15 percent of revenue they say they receive. "We have nothing against media, obviously," said the four-time women's French Open champion. "I feel like we will do more when the tournament will do more for us." Women's world number eight Mirra Andrejeva believes the players are "united" in the decision to put pressure on the Grand Slams. "I do think that we have a reason behind it, and I do think that all of us are, as I said, united and all of that," said the 19-year-old. The 2026 French Open singles champions will win 2.8 million euros (\$3.3 million) this year, up from 2.55 million euros last year. The prize money on offer is larger than at the Australian Open, but smaller than at Wimbledon and the US Open.

- [Everest record-holder Kami Rita Sherpa urges limit on climbers as crowds swell on the peak](#) (2026-05-22 18:13)

KATHMANDU, Nepal — A renowned Mount Everest guide who this week scaled the peak a record 32nd time urged authorities on Friday to limit climbers on the summit. The number of climbers making the ascent on the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) peak from the Nepalese side is higher this season because China has closed the route from Tibet. Everest can be scaled from either the southern side in Nepal or the northern side in China. On Wednesday, 274 climbers reached the summit, the highest number on a single day from the Nepal side. A total of 494 climbers have been issued permits by Nepal's mountaineering authorities and an equal number Sherpa guides are accompanying them. "It was very crowded this year compared to

last year,” Kami Rita Sherpa told reporters at Kathmandu airport after flying back from the mountain. “There is a need for authorities to control this number.” Climbers only get a few windows of good weather to make their attempt on the summit. A large number of people waiting in a fixed rope line they are all clipped into increases the risks of a traffic jam and exposes the climbers to increased hours of harsh weather. Kami Rita's closest competitor, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, scaled the peak for the 31st time on Friday, which was his second successful ascent this week. Kami Rita, 56, first climbed Everest in 1994, and has been making the trip nearly every year since. He is one of many Sherpa guides whose expertise and skills are vital to the safety and success of foreign climbers aspiring to stand on top of the mountain each year. His father was among the first Sherpa guides. In addition to Everest, Kami Rita has climbed other peaks that are among the world's highest, including K2, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Lhotse.

- [Matthew Perry's family trusted his assistant to help keep him sober. He instead helped him overdose](#) (2026-05-22 17:56)

LOS ANGELES — Matthew Perry paid Kenneth Iwamasa \$150,000 a year to be his live-in personal assistant. His role for the “Friends” star would expand to drug messenger, addiction enabler and de facto doctor, according to court filings. Iwamasa injected Perry with the doses of ketamine that would prove fatal on Oct. 28, 2023, and then left the actor to run errands. He returned to find Perry dead in the Jacuzzi. The ex-assistant became the first to reach a plea deal of five people indicted in connection with Perry's death. On Wednesday, he'll become the last to be sentenced. Prosecutors are asking for a prison term of three years and five months. That's more than the 2 1/2-year sentence of the doctor who sold Iwamasa ketamine and taught him to inject it into Perry, but far less than the 15-year sentence of the admitted drug dealer who sold Iwamasa the final doses. Iwamasa, 60, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute ketamine resulting in death and became the case's most important witness in the indictments of his four co-defendants. That is virtually certain to lead to a lighter sentence. Family members blame the assistant above all others “I have no sympathy for Kenny Iwamasa,” Perry's younger sister Caitlin Morrison wrote in a letter to the judge. “I wasn't there the night my brother died. I cannot read Kenny's thoughts. I will never know if the lethal dose of ketamine was only lethal by accident. But I know that when Kenny left the house, he was doing one of two things. He was either escaping from something he knew he had done or he was willfully abandoning a vulnerable person in a dangerous situation.” Perry's mother Suzanne Morrison wrote that her son and the family had known Iwamasa for decades, and that relatives were relieved when Perry, who'd had recurring struggles with addiction throughout his life, hired the assistant in 2022. “Mathew trusted Kenny. We trusted Kenny. Kenny's most important job — by far — was to be my son's companion and guardian in his fight against addiction,” she wrote. “We trusted a man without a conscience, and my son paid the price.” Iwamasa's lawyers argued that he was an employee doing the bidding of his boss. In a presentencing filing, they said Iwamasa had “a particular vulnerability to the relationship dynamic which he fell into with the victim. In short, he could not 'simply say no.' That inability had tragic consequences.” Suzanne Morrison said Iwamasa knew he could call any family member should Perry start making drug

demands, and his job would be safe. Family disgusted by Iwamasa's behavior following Perry's death Perry's mother wrote, "When he had killed my son, he kept a sharp eye on me. He sent me songs, he drew a little map to help me find my way around the cemetery. If he saw a rainbow — one of Matthew's favorite things — he would call me. He insisted on speaking at Matthew's funeral. He clung to me and the family as if he was somehow the good guy who tried to save Matthew." She said Iwamasa expected a financial payout, and when it was clear he wouldn't get one, he threatened legal action. Iwamasa did speak at the funeral, which would later leave the family disgusted. "The person responsible for my brother's death stood up and addressed the people who loved him most," another sister, Madeline Morrison, wrote. "That is like a cruel joke I still struggle with. He didn't just take my brother's life — he tainted our final memories of saying goodbye." Truth about the ketamine was slow to come out. The LA County Medical Examiner found that ketamine, a surgical anesthetic that has become widely used for other purposes both legal and illegal, was the primary cause of Perry's death. Drowning was a secondary cause. On the day of Perry's death, Iwamasa gave police a list of all the medications Perry was taking, but he left off ketamine and said nothing about the injections, prosecutors said. After investigators served a search warrant on the house in January 2024, that began to change, and he would slowly admit his role in Perry's death. Iwamasa said he had been giving Perry six to eight injections of ketamine per day in the last days of his life, and that Perry had told him, "Shoot me up with a big one" on the day he died. Iwamasa said he had worked with middleman Erik Fleming, who was sentenced to two years in prison May 13, to get drugs from dealer Jasveen Sangha. In his first text to Fleming, Iwamasa said, "Alfred here batmans butler. He said I can text you directly." Madeline Morrison wrote that when the truth emerged, "It felt like my brother died all over again. Everything I believed about the day he died—everything Kenny told us—was a lie. I had to relive Matthew's death from an entirely new and devastating perspective." Iwamasa pleaded guilty in August 2024 before the case became public. Wednesday will be his first court appearance since. Perry, who died at 54, became one of the biggest stars of his generation as Chandler Bing on "Friends," NBC's culture-changing sitcom that ran from 1994 to 2004. "He was my Matso, my Manew," his mother wrote. "He was, in spite of all we went through, my heart and my soul."

- [Leviste undecided on political plans](#) (2026-05-22 16:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Leviste on Friday had no political plans yet ahead of the 2028 elections. "I am not planning. I have not yet decided what I will do for the next elections", he said in Filipino and English at the Kapihan ng Samahang Plaridel. Leviste, 33, is on his first term as a congressional representative.

- [Bato dela Rosa still in PH as police deploy tracker teams](#) (2026-05-22 16:15)

(UPDATE) TRACKER teams from the Philippine National Police (PNP) have joined the nationwide manhunt for Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Friday said the specialized units were deployed after the Department of Justice (DOJ) gave the green light for Dela Rosa's arrest. Nartatez said the teams have orders to apply maximum

tolerance and professionalism during the manhunt. “Our mandate is clear, but I am emphasizing to our personnel that operational discipline is paramount. There will be no shortcuts, and every movement will be heavily aligned with existing protocols to protect constitutional rights and maintain public trust,” Nartatez said in a statement. In a later interview, Nartatez said that once arrested, Dela Rosa will be turned over to the DOJ. The DOJ did not say if the senator would be flown immediately to The Hague, Netherlands, where he will be under the International Criminal Court (ICC) detention. “The procedure to be followed pertains to operational matters that cannot be publicly disclosed so as not to defeat the ultimate objective to bring him to the ICC and exact justice,” DOJ spokesman Polo Martinez said. Last year, former president Rodrigo Duterte was flown directly to The Hague after he arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from Hong Kong to stand trial for crimes against humanity before the ICC. The PNP’s Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) confirmed it has a copy of the ICC arrest warrant for Dela Rosa. The CIDG also assured that the senator has not left the country, belying reports that he has been spotted in Malaysia. “Senator Bato is still in the country, and we will enforce that warrant,” Police Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II told reporters in Camp Crame. Morico also warned that anyone who will help, protect or block the serving of the warrant against Dela Rosa faces arrest. “If there’s a warrant and you aid a fugitive from evading justice, [that’s] obstruction of justice. We will also be filing charges, and we will be arresting people from resorts, houses or subdivisions who will prevent us from serving the warrant,” he said. The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is fielding its own teams to go after the senator. NBI Director Melvin Matibag told a media briefing on Friday that efforts to locate Dela Rosa are in full swing. “We are right now looking for him. If we will see him today, we will arrest him today. If we will see him tomorrow or next week, we will arrest him,” Matibag said. Pressed on whether the NBI will wait for the full ruling of the Supreme Court before implementing the arrest order, Matibag said he is leaving the matter of legal interpretation to the DOJ. Matibag said there is no confirmation from the Bureau of Immigration that Dela Rosa had left the country. Also on Friday, Sen. Robinhood Padilla denied he helped Dela Rosa secretly leave the Senate building last week. Interviewed on the Net 25 program “Sa Ganang Mamamayan,” Padilla dismissed circulating claims he abetted Dela Rosa’s “escape,” saying not one stopped them when they left the Senate. “There were a lot of police inside and outside the Senate, and there is CCTV. No one stopped us,” he said. Padilla said he stayed in the Senate for three days to accompany Dela Rosa amid rising tensions that began after the senator showed up at the Senate following a six-month absence. “You can feel the atmosphere is different. There are armed men outside. There are rallies, there are heated discussions,” he said. He recounted reports of gunfire near the lower portion of the Senate building, sowing fears among the people inside. Padilla and Dela Rosa were reportedly in their offices on the fifth floor at the time. “Some senators were really scared. It was dark, there was no light, and the situation was tense. Some were crying. So, I went down to see if everything was OK,” Padilla said. He said Dela Rosa appeared more concerned about the safety of senators, members of the media and civilians at the Senate complex than about his own situation. Padilla confirmed that Dela Rosa spoke with Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla and Nartatez when they visited the Senate after the incident. He recalled Remulla telling

Dela Rosa, “I am not here to arrest you, sir; I am here to secure the place.” “The conversation was light-hearted, there was no tension,” Padilla recalled. Padilla said neither the NBI nor the PNP presented any warrant issued by a local court, reinforcing his belief that there was no basis for claims that Dela Rosa was fleeing authorities. Padilla said that shortly before dawn on Thursday, he told Dela Rosa that he needed to go home because his wife was looking for him. Dela Rosa decided to leave with him. “Senator Bato said, ‘I’ll go.’ Why should I deny that? Sen[ator] Bato has no vehicle because he was just brought to the Senate by Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano’s vehicle,” Padilla said. Dela Rosa got off somewhere in Makati City, where his own vehicle fetched him. Padilla said he did not ask where Dela Rosa planned to go afterward. Padilla also objected to descriptions of Dela Rosa as a “fugitive,” arguing that Philippine legal processes should take precedence over external characterizations. “For me, he is not a fugitive. I cannot accept that we should just call him that because a foreigner said so. We also need to respect our own process as a country,” he said. Former PNP chief Nicholas Torre III believes it was the duty of police officers to implement lawful warrants. “It’s not about me or Senator Bato. It is about a process. It is about a system. It is about a law. And it is about a job,” Torre said in an interview on Friday. “The job of the police is not to judge the case but to implement the processes and in this case, the warrant,” he said. Torre said several lawyers and legal authorities have stated that the warrant against Dela Rosa was legal and enforceable.

- [ICC rejects Duterte's request to appeal confirmation of charges](#) (2026-05-22 16:14)

THE International Criminal Court’s (ICC) Pre-Trial Chamber I has rejected a request by former president Rodrigo Duterte seeking leave to appeal the decision confirming charges of crimes against humanity related to his war on drugs. In a decision dated May 21, the three-judge panel denied the defense’s “Request for Leave to Appeal the Decision on the Confirmation of Charges,” ruling that neither of the two proposed issues met the legal threshold for an interlocutory appeal under Article 82(1)(d) of the Rome Statute. Duterte was committed to trial on March 23, after the chamber confirmed all charges brought by the prosecution. The defense filed an appeal on March 29, raising two issues: that the chamber erred by adopting an overly “flexible approach” to delineating the scope of the charges; and that it failed to give a reasoned evidentiary basis for confirming the charges. The chamber, presided by Judge Iulia Antoanella Motoc, dismissed both arguments. Regarding the first issue, the chamber said it had clearly set out the basis for defining the charges in paragraphs 17–24 of its original confirmation decision, applying settled ICC jurisprudence — particularly the Appeals Chamber’s reasoning in the Ntaganda case. The judges noted that the charges included specific time periods, geographic locations, categories of victims and alleged perpetrator networks. The broadness of the scope “is inherent to the wide scale of criminality covered” and does not render the case undefined. On the second claim, the judges said that confirmation proceedings do not require an exhaustive, incident-by-incident account of evidence akin to a trial judgment. The confirmation decision, the judges noted, included dedicated sections assessing evidence and cited specific witness sources, police reports and official documents where necessary to

illustrate the chamber's reasoning. "The defense's submissions regarding the Second Proposed Issue mischaracterize the Confirmation Decision and amount to a mere disagreement with the manner in which the Chamber articulated its assessment of the evidence," the ruling stated. The chamber concluded that neither proposed issue qualified as an appealable "issue" under the Statute, making it unnecessary to address the remaining cumulative criteria for granting leave to appeal.

- [Filipinos 2nd in workplace happiness in Asia-Pacific](#) (2026-05-22 16:13)

EMPLOYEES in the Philippines are the second happiest in the workplace in the Asia Pacific region, according to a Jobstreet SEEK report. The Workplace Happiness Index: Philippines 2025 report said that 77 percent of Filipino employees are "extremely and somewhat happy" in their place of work. With a rating of 82 percent, Indonesia topped the Jobstreet list of the happiest workplaces in the region. Separately, the index said 44 percent are "somewhat happy" while 33 percent are "extremely happy." Meanwhile, 18 percent are "neutral," 3 percent are "somewhat unhappy," while 2 percent are "extremely unhappy." By region, respondents in the Visayas are the happiest (82 percent), followed by those in the National Capital Region (77 percent). Luzon and Mindanao are tied at last place (76 percent). "Interestingly, happiness at work is similar across Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, suggesting that workers in the Philippines are broadly united in their sentiment toward workplace happiness," the report read. Employees also "increasingly associate their workplace happiness with their sense of purpose, learning and development opportunities, and day-to-day responsibilities" The report found that 77 percent of respondents feel valued at work, while 74 percent described their jobs as "fulfilling, revealing widespread positivity and satisfaction." "While salary remained the top factor to attract and retain employees, purpose at work — how their work contributes to the overall company and personal goals — has a stronger impact on overall engagement and personal satisfaction, the report reveals," the report said. "Career progression also emerged as a major factor influencing retention, with 55 percent of respondents saying they think about changing careers somewhat or extremely often. Employees dissatisfied with career progression opportunities were significantly more likely to consider leaving their jobs, which is a key factor in considering clear development pathways among hirers," it said. However, the report also cited that nearly 40 percent of employees have experienced burnout in their jobs. "Despite broad happiness levels, Jobstreet by SEEK reports that stress and burnout are having an impact on workers. Only two in five (41 percent) report being in control of their stress levels, while 38 percent said they are burnt out or extremely exhausted with their jobs," it said. Also, 41 percent of workers are concerned about how artificial intelligence (AI) impacts their work. "The report only shows how employee preferences are evolving and how their work environment shapes their overall happiness and sense of purpose. Jobstreet by SEEK, through this study, seeks to empower hirers to navigate these shifts and create workplaces that foster talent engagement and long-term growth," said Dannah Majarocon, Managing Director of Jobstreet by SEEK in the Philippines. Reacting to the report, Federation of Free Workers President Sonny Matula said overall quality of work should

be the focus if the country is to improve its ranking. “If we want to improve our ranking further — and perhaps catch up with or even surpass our Southeast Asian neighbors — we need to focus not only on morale but also on the overall quality of work. This includes fair wages, better working conditions, flexible work arrangements where possible, mental health support and clear career development opportunities,” Matula said in a Viber message to The Manila Times on Friday. “It also makes a huge difference when leaders and companies know how to listen to employees and uphold dignity and respect in the workplace. It is not enough for workers to simply feel happy; their well-being must also be sustainable,” he said. Matula said the report is good news for the Philippines, but said it should not be used as a “discount coupon” for poor working conditions.. “In a country where wages are low, the cost of living is high, commutes are exhausting and overtime sometimes moves faster than salary increases, it’s quite remarkable to hear that Filipinos are among the happiest employees in the Asia-Pacific region,” he said. “But perhaps this is also the reality: Filipinos are naturally resilient and positive. Even in toxic workplaces, there are still jokes in the pantry and memes in the group chat. Even with little sleep, the familiar ‘just keep going’ spirit remains alive,” Matula said. He agreed with the report that burnout is still affecting Filipino employees, while others search for “better career growth, work-life balance and fairer compensation.” “Stress and burnout are also driven by low pay, high prices, long commutes, heavy workloads, job insecurity, lack of career growth, AI-related anxiety, and the pressure to keep saying *laban lang* (just fight) even when already exhausted,” Matula said. The former senatorial candidate also said while concerns about AI in the workplace are real, it should not be rejected, but “governed.” “Concerns about AI in the workplace are real: job displacement, deskilling, surveillance, bias and loss of human dignity. Like the Luddites during the First Industrial Revolution, people fear technologies that threaten their livelihoods — but the solution today is not to destroy AI, rather to manage and govern it so it serves people,” said Matula. He said AI should “improve work” and not make human workers disposable. “The answer is not to reject AI, but to govern it. Workers must be consulted before AI systems are introduced. Companies should provide upskilling, clear rules on data privacy, protection against unfair algorithmic decisions and assurance that AI will assist — not replace — human judgment,” he said. “Overall, workers who feel happy in their roles are nearly twice as likely to feel motivated to go above and beyond for their employer. This reveals that when businesses put employee happiness at the heart of their culture, they’re rewarded with greater engagement, productivity and retention,” the report said.

- [Pag-IBIG, DHSUD officials visit Laguna housing site](#) (2026-05-22 16:12)

OFFICIALS from the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) and the Home Development Mutual Fund, also known as the Pag-IBIG Fund, conducted a site inspection in Cabuyao, Laguna, on Thursday and turned over housing units under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s Expanded Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino (4PH) Program. A ceremony on Thursday highlighted the government’s “continuing efforts to help more Filipino families gain access to decent and affordable housing.” Housing Secretary Jose Ramon

Aliling and Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Marilene Acosta, together with other government officials and representatives from the private sector, inspected Pasinaya Heights, which is described as “one of the pioneering condominium developments in South Luzon under the Expanded 4PH Program.” Aliling said the turnover reflected the Marcos administration’s “commitment to make homeownership more accessible to more Filipinos.” “President Marcos has been clear in his directive: decent and affordable housing must be brought closer to Filipino families, especially workers who need government support the most. Pasinaya Heights shows what can be achieved when government, Pag-IBIG Fund and responsible private developers work together. Through the Expanded 4PH Program, we are turning the President’s housing directive into actual homes that Filipino workers can afford,” Aliling said. Pag-IBIG said 300 of its members bought units in Pasinaya Heights through its home financing program. Pasinaya Heights is a 2.5-hectare socialized condominium development consisting of four seven-story residential towers with more than 2,700 housing units. Amenities include a swimming pool, covered basketball court, playground, daycare center, health care center and open spaces for its residents. “With the program’s subsidized 3 percent interest rate during the first five years, an eligible borrower buying a Pasinaya Heights unit valued at P1.404 million may pay about P5,919 per month. This is lower than the P8,644 monthly amortization under Pag-IBIG Fund’s regular housing loan rate, and is also below many condominium rental rates in nearby Laguna areas,” the agency said in a statement. Acosta said the new project under the Pag-IBIG Fund shows how the Expanded 4PH Program and the agency’s Housing Loan work together in helping workers purchase their own homes through affordable monthly payments. Acosta also recognized Joy-Nostalg Hearth Corp. for its “continued partnership with Pag-IBIG Fund in advancing socialized housing projects nationwide” and added that the developer has “consistently been recognized among the agency’s top-performing partners,” reflecting its “significant contribution in expanding access to affordable housing for Filipino workers.” “Every peso saved from monthly housing payments matters to our members. It can help pay for food, education, health care, utilities and other daily needs of the family. Through the Expanded 4PH Program and Pag-IBIG Fund’s subsidized Housing Loan rate for socialized homes, Filipino workers now have a real and practical path to owning a safe and decent home. In doing so, we help ease the monthly burden of Filipino families, bring homeownership within their reach and allow them to build a better future under a Bagong Pilipinas,” she said.

- [Potential 'super' El Nino forming in Pacific](#) (2026-05-22 16:11)

FORECASTERS say a potentially “super” El Niño is rapidly taking shape in the Pacific — but whether it evolves into a history-making event could hinge on fickle winds and other volatile atmospheric shifts. The fast-warming tropical Pacific is pointing to a major event, but a crucial weakening of trade winds — capable of turbocharging or throttling the phenomenon — has yet to materialize. Scientists say these interactions are notoriously complex and difficult to predict — making it too early to confidently forecast how powerful this El Niño could become. The United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) says there is about an

80 percent chance of El Niño developing by July. Sea temperatures in key El Niño zones of the equatorial Pacific are rapidly rising, and an enormous pool of abnormally warm water is massing beneath the surface. Several leading weather services are predicting Pacific sea temperatures could surge 2.5C or more above average later this year — exceptionally high projections. Just three events — 1982/83, 1997/98 and 2015/16 — have breached 2C since the first major El Niño recorded in the modern era in 1877/78. Adam Scaife, head of long-range prediction at the UK Met Office, said this El Niño could be the strongest in decades or “even be of record strength.” “There’s definitely something coming. We’re very confident about that, and it looks like it will be a big event,” he told Agence France-Presse (AFP). NOAA forecasts a one-in-three chance this episode will hit 2C or above — crossing into what is dubbed “super El Niño” territory. But key pieces of the puzzle had yet to fall into place, said Michelle L’Heureux, NOAA’s El Niño-Southern Oscillation lead. El Niños build strength as the ocean and atmosphere increasingly “couple” over the summer months, shifting air pressure, cloud patterns and winds. This feedback loop can turn a modest El Niño into a blockbuster event, supercharging heat and triggering chaotic weather worldwide. A hallmark of the strongest El Niños is the weakening of trade winds that blow east to west across the equator. But those winds are unpredictable and can strengthen unexpectedly, said L’Heureux. “When that happens, it pauses the growth of El Niño or even reverses it,” she told AFP. “Ultimately the strength of this event will be likely influenced by these details, like the low-level winds, which we cannot predict many months in advance.” El Niño tends to peak around December but ocean heat releases slowly and can drive up global temperatures the following years. Many record-hot years — including 1998, 2010, 2016, 2023 and 2024 — followed major El Niño events or developed alongside them. Climate scientists interviewed by AFP said global heat records could fall in 2026 — but 2027 was the year to watch. There “could easily be a new record level of global warmth in 2027” if an extreme El Niño takes shape this year, said Scaife.

- [Bong Go: Sara trial should reveal truth, expose lies](#) (2026-05-22 16:10)

SEN. Bong Go on Friday said the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte should serve as an opportunity for the truth to emerge and for falsehoods to be exposed before the public. In a statement on Friday, Go emphasized that senators acting as judges have a clear constitutional mandate: to hear the case impartially and decide based solely on evidence, the law and the truth. He stressed that political affiliations or alliances should not influence the proceedings, and that every senator must fulfill his or her constitutional duty regardless of political loyalties. “Whether Duterte bloc or any other bloc, we Filipinos must perform our duties. And I will be impartial,” Go said. He warned that he would not hesitate to call out what he believes are false statements or fabricated evidence, citing testimonies from previous congressional inquiries that he described as questionable. “So if I see a lie — that’s why I didn’t speak the other day — if I see a lie in what is being presented, I will say it’s a lie,” he said. Go noted that the impeachment court provides a more structured venue for cross-examination and fact-finding, compared to earlier congressional hearings. “This is our chance to bring out the truth. We saw a lot in their hearings; we saw some liars. This is where we will ask them. This is

my chance to ask questions and make a decision,” he said. The Senate formally convened as an impeachment court on May 18, with senators taking their oath as senator-judges for the trial of Vice President Duterte.

- [Lacson says Senate probe should focus on reforms](#) (2026-05-22 16:10)

ANY Senate investigation into the May 13 shooting incident inside the Senate premises should concentrate on preventive measures and institutional reforms instead of determining criminal liability, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Friday. Lacson said the criminal aspect of the incident should be left to law enforcement agencies, and it would be “awkward” for the Senate to investigate itself. “I will suggest that we let the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) or Philippine National Police (PNP), or even the Department of Justice, do the investigation,” Lacson said in a mix of English and Filipino during a radio interview. “Limit the Committee of the Whole inquiry into coming up with remedial legislation or administrative remedies so there will be no repeat of what happened last May 13.” The lawmaker and former PNP chief said senators should avoid assigning blame or identifying who should face charges, because doing so could turn the proceedings into a public spectacle. “For me, it’s really awkward for us to be investigating ourselves,” Lacson said in a separate interview. “We would become a spectacle again if we point fingers at each other, so it’s better to have a focused and positive approach.” He said he intends to raise the matter when the Senate resumes session on Monday. As part of efforts to establish a clear timeline of events, Lacson said he wants senators to review closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage beginning May 11, when Senator Ronald Dela Rosa reportedly entered the Senate building, until his departure before dawn on May 14. According to Lacson, reviewing the complete footage would address allegations that previously released video clips were “spliced” and clarify how agents from the NBI attempted to serve an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court against Dela Rosa. “We will stick to the facts as it happened and unfolded,” Lacson said. He also questioned the manner in which the NBI attempted to implement the warrant, noting that only two female agents were reportedly assigned to approach Dela Rosa. Dela Rosa was able to evade the agents and proceed to the session hall on May 11. “If the NBI had assigned five bigger agents, what happened last May 11 might not have happened,” Lacson said. He also addressed allegations involving Sen. Robinhood Padilla, who has been accused by critics of helping Dela Rosa evade authorities. He said any effort to hold Padilla accountable must go through the Senate Ethics Committee. Lacson clarified that the ethics panel cannot initiate an investigation on its own. “A complaint has to be filed, and it has to be sufficient in form and substance for the ethics committee to act on it,” he said. He added that it may be preferable for a civilian complainant to file the case because any senator who files a complaint would have to inhibit himself or herself from the proceedings.

- [Cayetano ‘fell short’ of Atenean ethical leadership](#) (2026-05-22 16:09)

THE Ateneo de Manila University Law School Student Council said Thursday that Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano has “fallen short” of the ethical leadership expected of him as an alumnus of the school. This comes after Cayetano’s law school batchmates issued a similar

statement regarding his role in last week's Senate incident that saw his ally, fugitive senator Ronald dela Rosa, evade arrest by virtue of a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Dela Rosa is being implicated as the chief implementer of the bloody drug war of former president Rodrigo Duterte that has allegedly resulted in extrajudicial killings. "When our alumni serve in public office, their conduct inevitably reflects upon the values their alma mater claims to uphold. Consequently, when Atenean lawyers appear to defend impunity or undermine the great mechanisms of accountability, it behooves the Ateneo community to express our disappointment," the student council said. "In this light, the Ateneo Law Student Council believes that Senator Alan Cayetano fell short of the ethical leadership expected of him as an Atenean. His actions disappoint those students who look to alumni of this institution for examples of principled leadership. Furthermore, his commitment to impunity is a mockery of the Ignatian values that we were all taught to hold dear to the core of our hearts," it added. Ateneo student leaders called on the Senate president to reflect on his actions. "We call on Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano, an alumnus, to reflect on whether the conduct now being defended in the Senate is truly worthy of the principles of Truth (Veritas), Integrity (Integritas), and Justice (Justitia) that Ateneo Law stands for," they said. The student council also called on Sen. Ronald dela Rosa to "cease his evasion of international legal processes and to submit himself fully to the lawful mechanisms designed to address the allegations against him." "We call on the Philippine Senate to honor its constitutional mandate, to resist the temptation of institutional solidarity at the expense of institutional integrity, and to refuse to become a sanctuary against accountability," they said. "The rule of law is not self-enforcing. It depends on institutions that take it seriously, on lawyers who live it, and on communities who demand it. The Ateneo Law School Student Council exists within that chain of responsibility. We are not naive about the limits of a student statement. But we are equally clear about the cost of silence. To say nothing in a moment like this is itself a choice, and not one we are willing to make," they added. In a related development, poets and artists under Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda's Kislap Diwa cultural project voiced their displeasure with their patron's actions, dissociating themselves from the senator. "A senator who invokes the language of culture has now joined a bloc whose inaugural act was to shield an individual from international justice. She has done so in silence. Whatever her reasons, the effect is plain: she has lent her name and through her, a portion of ours, to a Senate that has chosen to be a refuge rather than a forum... Championship of the arts is not measured by past patronage. It is measured by the courage to stand against political convenience when it is costly to do so. On this, the Senator has failed," they said in a statement. "We therefore formally disassociate ourselves from Senator Loren Legarda. We do not consent to our names, participation, or work under Kislap Diwa being used as part of her cultural legacy or in support of her political conduct. We will not accept further invitations to appear, read, or be honored in any capacity associated with her office," they added. Last week, Legarda's photo was taken down from the Wall of Women Empowerment at her high school alma mater, Assumption College San Lorenzo in Makati City.

- [Passage of Healthy Food Environment Bill sought](#) (2026-05-22 16:08)

LAWMAKERS and health experts called for the swift passage of the Healthy Food Environment Bill, which mandates food companies to put front-of-package warning labels on unhealthy food products. "Prevention begins long before a patient enters a hospital. It addresses one of the hidden drivers of hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease: excess sodium in the food that Filipinos eat every day," Iloilo 2nd District Rep. Kathryn Joyce Gorriceta said in a press conference led by ImagineLaw in Quezon City on Friday. Gorriceta noted that the measure aims to address the rise of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and obesity in the country by regulating sodium levels, improving food labeling, and curbing the aggressive marketing of unhealthy food products. According to the Philippine Heart Association, 37 percent of Filipinos suffer from hypertension, yet only half are aware of their condition. The "silent epidemic" has been linked to high sodium consumption, with Filipinos consuming more than double the World Health Organization's recommended daily limit of 2 grams of sodium. Gorriceta said the bill was created using a science-based approach to reducing sodium in processed foods, sauces, and condiments, while also advocating for front-of-pack warning labels and responsible food marketing. "This is not about removing freedom of choice. It is about making the healthy choice the easy choice," she said. Meanwhile, Akbayan Partylist Rep. Perci Cendaña underscored the importance of clear food labeling, likening it to relationships. "If there's anything we learn from love, it's that red flags are dangerous. The same applies to food. High sodium, sugar, and fat content should come with clear warnings," he noted. He said the bill is not anti-business but pro-family and pro-health. "The cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of reform. We cannot wait for more strokes, heart attacks, and kidney failures. We must act now while prevention is still possible," said Gorriceta. The bill has since garnered support from about 87 lawmakers and is supported by members of the Healthy Food Environment Coalition, including the Philippine Society of Hypertension, Alliance for Improving Health Outcomes, Philippine Society of Public Health Physicians, Quezon City Health Department, and World Vision Philippines.

- [Fuel prices up for second straight week](#) (2026-05-22 16:07)

DIESEL and gasoline prices are expected to go up again next week as global markets continue to react to developments in the Middle East, and a lack of supply, local oil industry sources said Friday. Diesel prices will go up by around P1.00 to P1.30 per liter, while gasoline prices are expected to jump between P1.20 and P1.50 per liter. These estimates are based on the four-day trading of Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis of refined goods in Southeast Asia. This will be the second consecutive week where diesel and gasoline prices increased. Sources noted, however, that crude prices have been trending lower by the end of the week due to reports saying that the ceasefire negotiations between the US, Israel and Iran are heading toward the final stages; and also because of the recent extension of a waiver allowing countries to temporarily procure Russian crude. "Based on the first four trading days of MOPS, diesel prices were initially elevated due to high crude prices and unresolved supply disruptions, all due to the uncertainty in the Middle East. Meanwhile, gasoline prices were also higher, with supplies from Asia possibly moving to other regions amid reduced production in Europe, and

demand from the US accelerating with the onset of the peak summer season," a source said. "However, by the end of the week, crude and refined products prices have eased down recently due to positive developments in the peace talks, with signals that negotiations are in the final stages. Nevertheless, volatility can be expected as uncertainty and tensions in the Middle East continue to linger. Other factors in the recent decline in prices are the extension of sanctions waiver on Russian oil, and the limited movements through the Strait of Hormuz, which in turn sparked hopes of normalization in the route," the source added. This week, diesel prices spiked by up to P2.82 per liter, while gasoline prices increased by up to P1.21 per liter.

- [AICS available to middle-class Filipinos](#) (2026-05-22 16:06)

THE Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said that the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) program is not exclusive to indigents but also available to middle-class Filipinos facing emergencies. DSWD Crisis Intervention Program Director Edwin Morata said Friday that the agency is continually improving the program to respond to the changing needs of people affected by various crises. Morata said that the AICS is designed to assist individuals and families whose financial capacity is overwhelmed by unexpected situations. "The AICS program is really not just for the poor," he added. Morata noted that disasters, health emergencies, and economic shocks can affect anyone regardless of social or economic status. "Crises do not choose whether you are rich or poor, employed or unemployed, middle class or low-income, because everyone can be affected by disasters, energy emergencies, and health shocks," he said. "When a person or family faces a need that they were unprepared for and their financial capacity cannot meet that need, that is why we have this program, and it is open to everyone," Morata added. The DSWD said it has streamlined the AICS application process, reducing it to three major steps: queuing, assessment and interview, and release of assistance. Applicants are required to present valid identification cards and supporting documents such as medical certificates, prescriptions, treatment protocols, statements of account, or laboratory requests with price quotations.

- [Aquino opposes proposed ad permit](#) (2026-05-22 16:05)

SEN. Bam Aquino voiced strong opposition Friday to a proposed regulation by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) that would require businesses to secure permits before releasing advertisements and sales promotions. Aquino warned that such a measure could further burden micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and online sellers already grappling with rising operational costs. Under the proposed Department Administrative Order (DAO), businesses would be required to obtain permits and submit applications at least 30 working days before publishing advertisements or launching promotional campaigns. The proposal covers both traditional and digital advertising platforms, including sponsored social media posts, online videos, billboards, and other promotional materials. "Our small businesses have not yet recovered from the impact of the oil crisis, and we are planning to impose another burden on them," Aquino said. Aquino, who authored and sponsored the Go Negosyo Act during his first

term as chairman of the Senate Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, stressed that MSMEs remain the backbone of the Philippine economy, accounting for about 99 percent of businesses and jobs nationwide. The Go Negosyo Law was enacted to improve MSMEs' access to financing, markets, training programs, and streamlined business registration processes aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship and economic growth. "Instead of allowing small businesses to strategize to increase their profits, we are creating additional burdens and processes that will hinder their market entry and growth," Aquino added. The senator argued that while consumer protection is a legitimate government function, the proposed DAO imposes what he described as excessive bureaucracy that could hamper legitimate businesses rather than effectively address deceptive advertising practices. "Consumer protection is one of the main functions of the DTI, but regulation must be targeted, practical, and appropriate," he said. Aquino raised concerns over the proposed 30-day approval period, saying it is incompatible with the fast-paced nature of modern commerce, particularly in the digital marketplace, where businesses rely on timely marketing campaigns and online promotions to remain competitive. "In this day and age where business is fast, especially online, it is unfair for businesses to wait a month before they can issue advertisements or promotions," he said. The senator warned that the additional compliance costs could discourage aspiring entrepreneurs and smaller enterprises from entering or expanding in the market. "It is no joke that the proposed fees will add further hardship to our businesses, especially those that are just starting. Maybe instead of encouraging them to do business, they might back down because of the additional costs and lengthy process," Aquino said. Under the proposal, permit fees for advertisements could reportedly range from P975 to P9,295 per advertisement, an amount Aquino said could significantly affect MSMEs and online sellers operating on limited capital. Aquino noted that existing laws, including the Consumer Act of the Philippines, already provide mechanisms to regulate deceptive advertisements and sales promotions. He said the proposed DAO appears to substantially broaden government oversight, particularly in the digital space, and may require further review to ensure consistency with existing ease-of-doing-business policies. The senator also raised possible constitutional concerns, saying the proposal could be interpreted as a form of prior restraint because it would require government approval before commercial advertisements are released to the public. Aquino cited the Internet Transactions Act, which grants the DTI authority over internet-based electronic commerce, but argued that the law does not expressly authorize a blanket permit requirement for all advertisements. He urged the DTI to reconsider the proposal and focus instead on strengthening enforcement mechanisms against fraudulent and misleading advertisements without imposing additional burdens on legitimate businesses.

- [Remolona: BSP eyeing off-cycle rate increase](#) (2026-05-22 16:04)

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Nicholas Torre III on Friday said early May rains exposed gaps in Metro Manila's flood control readiness, and moved to tighten inspections of drainage systems, pumping stations, and private infrastructure linked to flooding incidents. Torre admitted that the initial downpours revealed vulnerabilities in

flood preparedness, with several areas inundated even after relatively light rainfall despite pre-season desilting and estero cleanup operations. He said the initial downpours effectively served as a “de facto audit” of the system, revealing areas where waterways remain undersized or clogged, drainage systems are blocked, and some pumping stations may be underperforming or non-operational. Torre said the agency is now applying a “surgical” inspection approach, targeting specific flood-prone locations to determine whether the cause lies in waterways, drainage systems, or pumping station capacity. He also flagged issues involving private concessionaires and infrastructure developers, saying some projects were found improperly discharging water from downspouts directly onto roads instead into drainage systems. He said the MMDA has already called meetings with concerned parties to demand rectification, warning that continued non-compliance could lead to public call-out and penalties. “If they still fail to comply with connecting their downspouts to the drainage system, we will publicly call them out,” Torre said. He said the agency is also coordinating with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on compliance checks, particularly on wastewater discharge requirements into waterways. He added that enforcement efforts and tight compliance monitoring focus on establishments and larger entities, not only individuals. On waste management, Torre also blamed persistent garbage dumping for worsening floods in Metro Manila, and that waterways cleared by the MMDA are often clogged again within a week, underscoring recurring garbage problems that worsen flooding. He said the agency collects about 1,000 tons of garbage monthly from waterways and pumping stations combined, or an estimated 12,000 tons annually — consisting of roughly 7,000 tons from waterways and 5,000 tons from pumping stations. Torre also confirmed that around 80 pumping stations are being monitored in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, saying that two previously identified defective units are undergoing repair, commissioning, and testing.

- [MMDA says early May rains exposed flood control gaps, warns private firms over drainage compliance](#) (2026-05-22 16:04)

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- [Leviste shows portrait of mom Loren in his office](#) (2026-05-22 16:03)

BATANGAS 1st District Rep. Leandro Leviste hangs a portrait of his mother, Sen. Loren Legarda, on a wall in his office. He posted a picture of it on Facebook, saying with a heart emoji, “There is a beautiful portrait in my office.” The post came several days after the Assumption Student Council encouraged the college’s community to sign a petition to remove a portrait of the senator from the Wall of Empowered Women. “This position is issued in light of the Senate leadership change on May 11, 2026...,” it said in a statement posted on Facebook. Legarda voted for Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano for Senate president. Before the student council issued the statement, the board of trustees of the Assumption Alumnae Association, in a statement, called on all Assumption alumnae “to return to the women they were formed to be.” The leadership change in the Senate, which solely has the power to conduct an impeachment trial under the 1987 Constitution, came before the House of Representatives impeached Vice President Sara Duterte on the same day. The Senate convened as an impeachment court on May 18, 2026, and ordered the issuance of a writ of summons directing her to file an answer on the impeachment complaints sent to the Senate by the House, which, under the Constitution, solely has the power to initiate impeachment cases. The Office of Vice President Sara Duterte later confirmed receipt of the summons. She has denied the allegations in the two impeachment complaints against her, which the House Committee on Justice heard to determine whether there was probable cause to impeach her. The committee sent the articles of impeachment to the House plenary and, later, the House, voting 257-25 with nine abstentions, impeached Duterte. Earlier this month, Leviste told his mother that he loved her very much while greeting her with a “Happy Mother’s Day.”

- [Manila councilor faces raps for ‘harassment’](#) (2026-05-22 16:02)

A MANILA councilor was recommended by the Manila Office of the City Prosecutor (OCP) on charges for violation of the Safe Spaces Act. The OCP, in a nine-page resolution released Friday, recommended that Ryan Ponce be charged with three counts of violating Section 16, Paragraph (c) of the Safe Spaces Act over separate incidents that allegedly occurred on Aug. 18, 2025; Sept. 18, 2025; and Sept. 29, 2025. In her privilege speech back on Oct. 9, 2025, councilor Eunice Castro accused Ponce of repeatedly harassing her with inappropriate jokes and malicious messages. Ponce supposedly sent messages to Castro, saying he is anticipating seeing what she wears for work, and asking her to send photos of what she is wearing in the morning. Manila City Vice Mayor Chi Atienza then referred the issue to the city council's Committee on Ethics for investigation. The OCP lamented that Ponce's messages were sexual in nature and unwelcome. "It should be noted that the respondent, a married man, directed the messages containing sexual undertones toward the complainant, a single woman," it said. The OCP further argued that Castro experienced "offense, humiliation, and distress" caused by Ponce's behavior, which is "inappropriate and unacceptable within the professional standards."

- [DOH corrects previous HIV data](#) (2026-05-22 16:01)

THE Department of Health (DOH) clarified on Friday cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) decreased by 9 percent in the first quarter of 2026 compared to the same period last year. This comes after the agency reported there was an increase in HIV cases in the country. According to its website, as of March 2026, the reported cases was at 4,633 in the first quarter of the year, compared with 5,101 cases in the same period in 2025. The DOH told The Manila Times that it would update its website to provide the corrected version. "The DOH will upload a corrected version of the report from the HIV/AIDS Registry Operations and Surveillance of the Philippines to replace the previously released file. The corrected version is expected to be uploaded within today or by Monday of next week," the agency said. Data show that of the total number of cases in the first quarter of the year, 4,381 HIV cases, or 95 percent, were males, while 252 were females. Despite the increase, the average number of cases recorded per day declined by 11 percent from the previous quarter, with a daily log of 51 cases. The National Capital Region saw the highest number of HIV infections with 989 cases, followed by Calabarzon with 808, Central Luzon with 551, Soccsksargen with 277, and the Davao Region with 263. Earlier this week, DOH Secretary Ted Herbosa and Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, or UNAIDS, Deputy Executive Director Angeli Achrekar met to discuss strategies to fortify HIV/AIDS prevention and management mechanisms.

- [Plunder complaint filed vs Sen. Marcoleta, Mike Defensor](#) (2026-05-22 15:50)

MANILA, Philippines — Field investigators from the Office of the Ombudsman filed a complaint for alleged plunder against Sen. Rodante Marcoleta, former lawmaker Michael Defensor, and two other people before the said office which later ordered the respondents to file counter-affidavits. In an Order dated May 21, 2026, the Office of the Ombudsman gave the respondents 15 days from receipt of its order to make the filing. In the complaint, filed last May

18, the investigators said that "Marcoleta's acceptance of gifts with an aggregate amount of PhP75 Million on three separate occasions constitute the crime of Plunder". It allegedly happened when he was a member of the House of Representatives. The investigators said that Marcoleta on Jan. 6, 2025 received P30 million from Defensor which, they said, was "evidenced by a Donor's Tax Return and a... deposit slip showing that Defensor paid the donor's tax on" Dec. 17, 2025. The investigators said that Marcoleta on Jan. 8, 2025 received P25 million from Joseph Varias Espiritu which was "evidenced by a Donor's Tax Return and a... deposit slip showing that Espiritu paid the donor's tax on" Dec. 15, 2025. The investigators said that Marcoleta on Jan. 9, 2025 received P20 million from Aristotle Baluyut Viray. "Aside from the lack of a clear purpose or pending transaction for which the amounts received may be a consideration, there is no showing that the gifts would still be given were it not for Respondent's position on government. Hence it cannot be denied that the P75 Million was given by Respondents Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray by reason of Respondent Marcoleta's office", the investigators said. Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray "belatedly filed the donor's taxes for the gifts. However, the payments were merely their afterthought and were intended to invoke good faith and make it appear that the gifts were legally accepted", the investigators said. Under the National Internal Revenue Code, the return of the donor shall be filed within 30 days after the date the gift was made. "In this case, all the donor's taxes for the gifts given in January 2025 were paid in December 2025, or almost 12 months thereafter", the investigators said. Aside from wanting the Ombudsman's office to file a plunder case in court against Marcoleta, Defensor, Espiritu, and Viray, the investigators wanted the same office to file three indirect bribery cases against Marcoleta. "Undoubtedly, Respondent Marcoleta should also be charged for Indirect Bribery for accepting the gifts from the private individuals, which although not given as consideration for a specific act, were actually given because of his position or potential influence as a public officer", they said. "To reiterate, while Respondent Marcoleta admitted accepting the gifts and characterized them as 'donations', the disposition of which rests upon his discretion, there is no indication as to his relationship with the givers and as to why he would be given such excessive amounts of money. The amounts given were of such magnitude and reason dictates that it can no longer be considered as an ordinary act of generosity, but rather a corrupt act done to gain unwarranted favors from the recipient", they said.

• [A grieving father buries his 6-year-old after a land mine kills 3 children in Syria's Idlib](#)
(2026-05-22 15:49)

IDLIB, Syria — Idris al-Ridah wept as he carried the lifeless body of his 6-year-old son Amir, wrapped in a yellow and brown blanket, in northwest Syria. The father collapsed to the ground as he laid his son to rest, his small body lowered into a grave next to two other young children who were siblings, Aya al-Fankih, 4, and Rayan al-Fankih, 6. The three children were killed on Thursday in the village of Abu Habbah, in the countryside in the northwestern province of Idlib, when a land mine left behind from Syria's war exploded while they were playing near a well. The deaths are the latest reminder of the dangers posed by unexploded war remnants scattered across the country years after the conflict began. Mines and booby traps have killed and

maimed hundreds of Syrians since Syria's conflict began in March 2011, leaving about half a million people dead. The Syrian Civil Defense said four other children who were near the well were also wounded in the blast. "We heard a very loud explosion next to our house," one resident, Mahmoud al-Alewi. He added that "when we got to the location there were a number of children's bodies thrown around the well." He said one of the children was thrown 300 meters (984 feet) away by the explosion and was found on the roof of a house. At a nearby hospital, wounded children cried as family members tended to them. One child had shrapnel wounds across his face and body, his legs wrapped in bandages. Another lay in bed with blood visible through bandages wrapped around his head. Ten-year-old Ibrahim al-Suwadi was injured last month in a separate explosion caused by unexploded ordnance inside a damaged school in the town of al-Habit in Idlib's southern countryside. Sitting beside his father inside their home, al-Suwadi described how he was playing with his friends at the school when they went inside a room and found the mine. "Two brothers picked it up and took it to the bathroom," the boy said. "We thought it was an exploded mine so we started throwing rocks at it. All of a sudden, an older boy grabbed my hand and we ran, the mine exploded and I lost consciousness then I don't remember anything." His father said the family had fled their village in 2013 during fighting and spent years living in displacement camps before returning after the fall of Bashar Assad's government in December 2024. Humanitarian organizations say unexploded ordnance remains one of the deadliest legacies of Syria's war. "Syria has ranked among the top contaminated countries around the world over the past years," said Jakub Valenta, head of humanitarian disarmament and peace building for the Danish Refugee Council in Syria. He added that according to the data from the United Nations, around 14.3 million people are in danger of explosive ordnance in the country. Valenta said the explosive hazards include anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines and other unexploded devices left behind in residential and agricultural areas. "We're estimating that around 1,200 people and probably more have been affected by explosive ordnance accidents directly," he said. "Out of those 1,200 people there were around 740 fatal casualties. The vast majority of these people are men and children." According to the Danish Refugee Council, around 60% of contaminated areas in Syria are agricultural lands, complicating efforts by displaced families to return home and rebuild livelihoods. In Damascus's southern suburb of Kisweh earlier this month, Syrian trainees working with Danish Refugee Council teams carefully removed and destroyed unexploded ordnance during training exercises aimed at expanding local demining capacity. The organization says it has recruited and trained new Syrian explosive ordnance disposal teams to help clear contaminated areas and educate communities about the risks. "The number of the casualties is among the highest worldwide in terms of explosive accidents and victims," Valenta said. "These people suffer lifelong injuries, physical like losing a limb or their vision and suffer mental health problems," he said. "These people also lose their jobs and livelihoods."

- [The game's afoot as armchair detectives mark Sherlock Holmes Day](#) (2026-05-22 15:37)

SCHATTENHALB, Switzerland — From 221B Baker Street in central London to a cliffside waterfall in the Swiss Alps, generations of armchair detectives are celebrating International Sherlock

Holmes Day on Friday. Fans will mark Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's birthday in tribute to the author and his most famous character whose adventures continue to shape popular culture around the world. The celebrations began earlier this month when — sporting Victorian capes, deerstalker hats and period gowns — enthusiasts from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London traveled to Switzerland's Reichenbach Falls to reenact one of literature's most famous fictional death scenes. The fateful confrontation between Sherlock Holmes and his nemesis Professor James Moriarty shocked readers of "The Final Problem" and appeared to bring one of literature's most beloved detectives to an end. In the original 1893 story, Holmes disappears over the edge of the falls with Moriarty, leaving his sidekick, Dr. John Watson, to discover a farewell letter near the water. Conan Doyle — who was born on May 22, 1859 — intended the scene to permanently kill off Holmes because he feared the detective stories were overshadowing what he considered his more serious historical writing. At the time, readers canceled magazine subscriptions, wore black armbands in mourning and protested against Holmes' death. A decade later, Conan Doyle reversed the decision and brought Holmes back in "The Adventure of the Empty House," revealing that the detective had staged his death and survived the falls. The Sherlock Holmes stories helped establish many of the conventions of modern detective fiction. Between 1887 and 1927, Conan Doyle wrote four Holmes novels and 56 short stories, introducing techniques such as forensic deduction, close observation and logical analysis that later became standard elements of crime fiction. The stories have since been adapted for the stage, screen and in comic books around the world, with Jeremy Brett, Basil Rathbone, Christopher Lee, Robert Downey Jr. and Benedict Cumberbatch starring in portrayals. British actor Hero Fiennes Tiffin stars in the latest iteration in Amazon Prime's new prequel series "Young Sherlock," created by Guy Ritchie and released earlier this year. A second season is in the works. At 221B Baker Street, the Sherlock Holmes Museum has drawn visitors since it opened in 1990 with curiosities including Holmes' violin and chemistry set, as well as a revolver resting inside a hollowed-out book. Holmes, according to the stories, lived at the Georgian townhouse between 1881 and 1904 and shared the residence with Watson. But 221B didn't actually exist when Conan Doyle was writing: Baker Street numbers didn't reach that high at the time. The museum, physically located between 237 and 241, had to be granted special permission by Westminster City Council to bear the renowned number. "It has to be the most famous address in the world, I would say," tour guide Paul Leharne said. "No matter what reincarnation Sherlock Holmes is going to take, he's always going to be living at 221B Baker Street." With theatrical poses, exaggerated acting and black cloaks billowing in the mountain spray, members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London on May 3 reenacted the struggle between Holmes and Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls. Founded in 1951, the society brings together readers, collectors, academics and enthusiasts of Conan Doyle's work. The trip to the Reichenbach Falls followed part of the route described in "The Final Problem." Members traveled through Switzerland in vintage buses before boarding a cog railway that climbs steeply toward the waterfall. The Reichenbach Falls became one of the most famous locations in detective fiction after Conan Doyle visited the area during an 1893 trip. Philip Porter, an author and publisher who starred as Sherlock Holmes in the society's reproduction, said the setting itself remains central to the stories' appeal. "It's a pilgrimage," he said. "It's a very

dramatic setting: The sound, the backdrop, the music behind us of the cascading water.” Peter Horrocks, who played Moriarty, said the return to normal life after spending several days in a villain’s costume can be tough. “It’s a strange feeling, getting out of these clothes,” he said. “You do start to inhabit the character that you’re playing after a while.”

- [Giant inflatable artworks have taken over The Hague](#) (2026-05-22 15:32)

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — There is a giant stew pot in a small lake in the center of The Hague. Floating in the water in front of the prestigious Mauritshuis museum, home to the “Girl with a Pearl Earring,” the 7-meter (23-foot)-tall pan is part of monthlong, open-air art exhibition. The BlowUp Jubilee features 24 inflatable artworks installed in parks, on buildings and even in a train station in the Dutch city. The project is the brainchild of curator Mary Hessing.

“What I really wanted to do is show the area and show arts to everybody,” she told The Associated Press. In 2021, the Dutch government began a massive renovation project on the Binnenhof complex, which includes the Mauritshuis as well as the Parliament building. The historic site, which dates to the 13th century, was closed to the public and the city wanted to organize art events while it was inaccessible. The first BlowUp Art exhibition in 2022 included works from six artists, installed near the Binnenhof. Subsequent events also showcased a handful of inflatable works, but for the 2026 jubilee edition, all of the previous installations have returned plus new ones have been added. “For me it was important to show the real Curacao in this artwork, and that is our parties, our food, and our lifestyle,” artist Eugenie Boon told AP. The 21-year-old is from the former Dutch Caribbean colony and her work, *Koncha pa dilanti*, referring to a board game played on the island, features scenes from local life. British artist Steve Messam is known for his large-scale inflatable works that have been installed in locations in the United Kingdom, China and The Hague. *Crested*, a mass of red spikes, has been affixed on top of the entrance to a parking garage nestled between 100-year-old buildings on a tree-lined boulevard. “The idea was that this piece would hold its own amongst this wonderful architecture that we see around us,” he said.

- [Detached wall on Tramo flyover blocks lane in Pasay, MMDA installs warning devices](#) (2026-05-22 15:32)

MANILA, Philippines — A detached wall section from the Tramo flyover in Pasay City partially blocked one lane on Friday evening, prompting the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways for immediate assessment and response. The MMDA said the road hazard was reported at around 7:16 p.m. along the southbound portion of the Tramo flyover beside Winston Hotel. One lane remained occupied as authorities secured the area with safety lines and plastic barriers to prevent accidents. The MMDA said its Road Safety Unit installed additional reflectorized markings and early warning devices at around 8:54 p.m. to improve visibility for motorists passing through the affected area. The agency said it coordinated with the DPWH for further inspection and response operations following the incident.

- [Slow Food founder and advocate of clean eating Carlo Petrini dies in Italy at 76](#)

(2026-05-22 13:55)

MILAN — Carlo Petrini, the founder of the Slow Food global grassroots movement promoting sustainable food production and local, traditional cuisine, died Friday at the age of 76 in his hometown in Italy's northwestern Piedmont region, the organization announced. Slow Food called him "a visionary leader and a public intellectual with a profound commitment to the common good, human relationships and the natural world." Slow Food, initially called Arcigola, grew out of opposition to the arrival of fast food in Italy, with a 1986 protest on the steps of the newly opened McDonald's at Rome's Spanish Steps announcing their mission. Petrini was elected president on Dec. 9, 1989, in Paris, when more than 20 delegations from around the world signed the Slow Food Manifesto. He held the position until 2022. The movement was shaped around the philosophy that food should be "good, clean and fair," and it spread quickly throughout Italy and to more than 160 countries. Restaurants adhering to the principles display Slow Food stickers, recognizable by the snail logo and formally called the Snail of Approval. Key Slow Food initiatives included the 2004 founding of Terra Madre, which created communities of farmers, fishers, chefs and academics to spread the mission. Petrini also founded the University of Gastronomic Sciences, touted as the first academic institution dedicated to the multidisciplinary study of food and food culture — an approach that was recognized when the Italian government established a Bachelor's degree in gastronomic sciences in 2017. The university, located in northern Italy, has trained some 4,000 food professionals from 100 countries, Slow Food said. Petrini also founded the Laudato Si' Communities with the bishop of Verona, Monsignor Domenico Pompili, in 2017, which applied the principles of Pope Francis' environmental encyclical through a network of some 80 local groups. Petrini's books include "Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean and Fair," and "Slow Food: The Case for Taste," which includes a foreword by Alice Waters, a pioneer of the farm-to-table movement in the United States.

- [Shell clashes with climate activists in Dutch Supreme Court](#) (2026-05-22 13:43)

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Shell and climate activists went head-to-head in the Dutch Supreme Court on Friday, the latest hearing in a long-running legal battle over whether the fossil fuel giant should be forced to cut its carbon emissions. Pressure group Milieudefensie wants judges to impose a legally binding target for emissions reduction, a measure Shell says would be ineffective and counter-productive. Shell and Milieudefensie have spent years battling each other in the courts. Milieudefensie won the first round in 2021 when a lower court ordered Shell to reduce carbon emissions by 45 percent by 2030, a ruling seen as historic at the time. The case then went to the Appeals Court, which struck down the lower court ruling in 2024 and said Shell was "already doing what is expected of them". The Appeals Court said Shell must make an "appropriate contribution" to the Paris climate objectives, but did not set a clear emissions reduction target. The Paris deal committed all nations to cut carbon emissions to limit warming to 2C above pre-industrial levels and encouraged them to aim for 1.5 degrees. Milieudefensie has now taken the battle to the Supreme Court, which is expected to make a ruling in the case

in the first half of next year. Addressing the judges directly, Milieudefensie lawyer Roger Cox said courts had a crucial role in the fight against climate change. "Judges have a major role to play in ensuring... that the responsibility resting on states and large corporations is taken seriously," he said. "An emissions reduction order against Shell will make a significant and urgently needed contribution to combatting major climate risks and will thus help to protect human rights and the environment." Shell lawyer Freerk Vermeulen countered it was up to governments, not courts, to regulate emissions. "Court-imposed reduction pathways and supply restrictions for arbitrarily selected individual companies are harmful and, at the very best, ineffective," said Vermeulen. "They lead to inconsistent outcomes and legal uncertainty. They lack nuance, flexibility, coordination and the scale which regulation at European and national level can offer." In a separate case, Milieudefensie is suing Shell in a bid to stop the company investing in new oil and gas fields.

- [Leviste gives rice in Batangas](#) (2026-05-22 13:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The distribution of 1 million sacks of rice from Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Leviste in the province has started, a post on his Facebook page said. "This is Cong. Leandro's personal help without any expense for the government...", it said. It stated that last Monday, Leviste turned over 20,000 sacks of rice in parishes in Batangas City. The post stated in Filipino and English that on Thursday, he turned over 20,000 sacks of rice for barangay (village) health workers, watchmen, and other barangay functionaries in his district.

- [Bad Bunny kicks off European leg of tour in Barcelona](#) (2026-05-22 13:23)

BARCELONA — Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny kicked off the European leg of his world tour on Friday in the Spanish city of Barcelona, launching a run of 29 concerts across the continent through to late July. His world tour began last year with a 31-concert residency in San Juan in support of his latest album, "Debi Tirar Mas Fotos" ("I Should Have Taken More Photos"), which blends traditional Puerto Rican music with reggaeton and trap. The European tour includes two nights in Barcelona and two in Lisbon before moving to Madrid for 10 concerts at Atletico Madrid's Metropolitano Stadium. The tour will then continue through Germany, the Netherlands, Britain, France, Sweden, Poland and Italy before concluding in Brussels on July 22. It has already taken in Latin America, Australia and Japan but he did not play in the United States to shield fans from potential raids by immigration authorities. Bad Bunny appeared in the Super Bowl halftime show in the US in February, but supporters of US President Donald Trump criticised him for performing only in Spanish. The 32-year-old rose from the Puerto Rican underground music scene to become one of the world's biggest acts, helping push reggaeton and Latin trap into the global mainstream. He took home three Grammy awards in February including for album of the year.

- [Pag-IBIG, DHSUD officials visit Laguna project](#) (2026-05-22 13:17)

Officials from the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) and the Home Development Mutual Fund, also known as the Pag-IBIG Fund, conducted a site inspection

in Cabuyao, Laguna on Thursday and turned over housing units under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s Expanded Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino Program (4PH). A ceremony was conducted on Thursday and, according to Pag-IBIG, highlighted the government's "continuing efforts to help more Filipino families gain access to decent and affordable housing." Housing Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling and Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Marilene Acosta, along with other government officials and representatives from the private sector, inspected Pasinaya Heights, which is described as "one of the pioneering condominium developments in South Luzon under the Expanded 4PH Program." At the ceremonial turnover, Aliling said this event reflected the Marcos administration's "commitment to make homeownership more accessible to more Filipinos." "President Marcos has been clear in his directive: decent and affordable housing must be brought closer to Filipino families, especially workers who need government support the most. Pasinaya Heights shows what can be achieved when government, Pag-IBIG Fund, and responsible private developers work together. Through the Expanded 4PH Program, we are turning the President's housing directive into actual homes that Filipino workers can afford," Aliling said during the event. According to Pag-IBIG, 300 of its members bought units in Pasinaya Heights through its home financing program. Pag-IBIG said Pasinaya Heights is a 2.5-hectare socialized condominium development consists of four seven-story residential towers with more than 2,700 housing units, and also features amenities that includes a swimming pool, covered basketball court, playground, day care center, health care center, and open spaces for its residents. Acosta said the new condominium project under the Pag-IBIG Fund shows how the Expanded 4PH Program and the agency's Housing Loan work together in helping Filipino workers getting their own their homes by means of "affordable" monthly payments. "Every peso saved from monthly housing payments matters to our members. It can help pay for food, education, health care, utilities and other daily needs of the family. Through the Expanded 4PH Program and Pag-IBIG Fund's subsidized Housing Loan rate for socialized homes, Filipino workers now have a real and practical path to owning a safe and decent home. In doing so, we help ease the monthly burden of Filipino families, bring homeownership within their reach, and allow them to build a better future under a Bagong Pilipinas," she said.

- [House okays bill expanding VAWC law](#) (2026-05-22 09:24)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives approved a bill which aimed to expand the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act. House Bill 8420 hurdled third and final reading on Wednesday with about 260 lawmakers voting for its passage. Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Sarah Elago, in a statement posted on Facebook, said in Filipino and English that the bill was "an important step to align the law with the worsening form of violence against women and children, especially in online spaces." In 2004, then-president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, now the congressional representative of Pampanga's second district, signed the Anti-VAWC Act into law. "But while times change, the form that violence takes also changes. So it is time to strengthen and amend the law to address the worsening online abuse, harassment, and other new forms of abuse against women and children", Elago said. The bill defines technology-facilitated violence against women and their children. Elago said the bill recognized

unauthorized dissemination of sensitive images and creation of fake accounts as crimes. Sound clips of a sensitive nature are also covered by the bill. Elago said the bill recognized "online harassment, stalking, and hacking as forms of violence." The lawmaker also said the bill has stricter penalties for violators. She said these included a P500,000 fine and imprisonment. The bill gives women 20 days of paid leave which, it said, "shall cover the days when" they have to "attend to medical, legal, and other valid concerns related to the pending case." Under the bill, they are entitled to this benefit during "the application of any protection order, investigation, prosecution, and/or trial of the criminal case".

- [Senate sergeant-at-arms' 26 shots when there was no attack on Senate 'overkill,' says probers](#) (2026-05-22 09:15)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) on Friday said the 26 shots fired by then Sergeant-At-Arms Mao Ablasca during the May 13 Senate shooting was an "overkill." In a press briefing at Camp Crame on Friday, Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II, CIDG director, said that their investigation traced 39 of the 44 spent shells to three firearms issued to Office of the Sergeant-At-Arms (OSAA) personnel. Asked to describe the amount of gunshots fired by the OSAA, Morico said, "Sobra-sobra yung pinaputok doon ng OSAA nang wala namang umaatake sa kanila (The OSAA fired too many bullets when no one was attacking them)..." I can say that is overkill." Meanwhile, five fired gun cartridge cases were traced to a caliber 5.56 rifle from National Bureau of Investigation agent Darwin Francisco. The CIDG said it recommended filing of raps against Ablasca and two other OSAA personnel since they have "no basis" to use their firearms under Republic Act 11917 or the Private Security Services Industry Act. Mel Oragon, an NBI volunteer driver was arrested during the shooting after he was caught with multiple munitions. He later tested positive for gunpowder nitrates.

- [Public warned: Help Bato dela Rosa and face arrest](#) (2026-05-22 09:06)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) warned that anyone who would attempt to help, protect or block the arrest of Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa would suffer the same fate and face charges. "If there's a warrant and you aid a fugitive from evading justice [that's] obstruction of justice. We will also be filing charges and we will be arresting people from resorts, houses or subdivisions who will prevent us from serving the warrant," Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander A. Morico II told reporters in a briefing at Camp Crame on Friday. "Do not prevent us because we have the warrant of arrest," Morico added. The CIDG now has a copy of the arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) which will be shown to the senator upon his arrest, Morico said. During the Senate shooting, Dela Rosa was seen exiting the premises and CCTV clips showed him with fellow Sen. Robinhood Padilla who admitted that he kept the former PNP chief in his car. Morico said that portion of the footage remained part of their investigation but that it would be different if Dela Rosa were to be found in Padilla's home, which would constitute obstruction of justice. Padilla denied that he was escaping with dela Rosa who only asked to ride with him after the shooting. He also defended that the entire Senate complex was

heavily secured by police who did not prevent them from leaving since there was no local warrant against the former PNP chief. A manhunt is now on as the PNP mobilized tracker teams nationwide to locate and arrest dela Rosa. Morico also said that the senator was still in the Philippines.

- [Batangas lawmaker Leviste hangs portrait of mom in office](#) (2026-05-22 08:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Leviste showed a portrait of his mother, Sen. Loren Legarda, on a wall in his office. He posted it on Facebook, saying with a heart emoji, "There is a beautiful portrait in my office." The post came several days after the Assumption Student Council encouraged the college's community to back a petition to remove a portrait of the senator from the Wall of Empowered Women. "This position is issued in light of the Senate leadership change on May 11, 2026 ...," it said in a statement posted on Facebook. Legarda voted for Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano to replace then incumbent Sen. Tito Sotto. Before the student council issued the statement, the board of trustees of the Assumption Alumnae Association, in a statement, called on all Assumption alumnae "to return to the women they were formed to be." The leadership change in the Senate, which solely has the power to conduct an impeachment trial under the 1987 Constitution, came before the House of Representatives impeached Vice President Sara Duterte on the same day.

- [Pinoy employees second happiest in workplace in Asia-Pacific — report](#) (2026-05-22 07:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Employees in the Philippines are the second happiest in the workplace in the Asia Pacific region, according to a Jobstreet SEEK report. The Workplace Happiness Index: Philippines 2025 report said that 77 percent of Filipino employees were "extremely and somewhat happy" in their workplace. Separately, the index said that 44 percent were "somewhat happy" while 33 percent, "extremely happy". Meanwhile, 18 percent are "neutral," 3 percent are "somewhat unhappy" while 2 percent are "extremely unhappy." By region, respondents in the Visayas are the happiest (82 percent), followed by those in the National Capital Region (77 percent), while Luzon and Mindanao are tied at last place (76 percent). "Interestingly, happiness at work is similar across Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao, suggesting that workers in the Philippines are broadly united in their sentiment towards workplace happiness," the report read. According to the Jobstreet report, employees "increasingly associate their workplace happiness with their sense of purpose, learning and development opportunities, and day-to-day responsibilities". "The latest report found that 77 percent of respondents feel valued at work, while 74 percent described their jobs as fulfilling, revealing widespread positivity and satisfaction within the workplace," it said. "Despite broad happiness levels, Jobstreet by SEEK reports that stress and burnout are having an impact on workers. Only two in five (41 percent) report being in control of their stress levels, while 38 percent said they are burnt out or extremely exhausted with their jobs," it added. Also, 41 percent of workers are concerned about the impact of artificial intelligence in their line of work. "The report only shows how employee preferences are evolving and how their work environment shapes their overall happiness and sense of purpose. Jobstreet by SEEK, through

this study, seeks to empower hirers in navigating these shifts and creating workplaces that foster talent engagement and long-term growth,” said Dannah Majarocon, Managing Director of Jobstreet by SEEK in the Philippines. At 82 percent, Indonesia topped the list of the happiest workplace in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the report.

- [MMDA says early May rains exposed flood control gaps, warns private firms over drainage compliance](#) (2026-05-22 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Nicholas Torre III on Friday said early May rains exposed gaps in Metro Manila’s flood control readiness, as the agency moved to tighten inspections of drainage systems, pumping stations, and private infrastructure linked to flooding incidents. Torre admitted that the initial heavy downpours revealed vulnerabilities in flood preparedness, with several areas inundated even after relatively light rainfall despite pre-season desilting and estero cleanup operations. He said the initial downpours effectively served as a “de facto audit” of the system, revealing areas where waterways remained undersized or clogged, drainage systems were blocked, and some pumping stations may be underperforming or non-operational. Torre said the agency was now applying a “surgical” inspection approach, targeting specific flood-prone locations to determine whether the cause lies in waterways, drainage systems, or pumping station capacity. He also flagged issues involving private concessionaires and infrastructure developers, saying some projects were found improperly discharging water from downspouts directly onto roads instead of connecting to drainage systems. He said the MMDA has met with concerned parties to demand rectification, warning that continued non-compliance could lead to public call-out and penalties. “If they still fail to comply with connecting their downspouts to the drainage system, we will publicly call them out,” Torre said. Torre said the agency was also coordinating with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on compliance checks, particularly on wastewater discharge requirements into waterways. He added that enforcement efforts were also focused on establishments and larger entities, not only individuals, as part of broader compliance monitoring. On waste management, Torre also blamed persistent garbage dumping for worsening floods in Metro Manila, waterways cleared by the MMDA were often clogged again within a week, underscoring recurring garbage problems that worsen flooding. He said the agency collected about 1,000 tons of garbage monthly from waterways and pumping stations combined, or an estimated 12,000 tons annually — consisting of roughly 7,000 tons from waterways and 5,000 tons from pumping stations. Torre also confirmed that around 80 pumping stations were being monitored in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, with two previously identified defective units now undergoing repair, commissioning, and testing.

- [Bato dela Rosa still in PH as police deploy tracker teams](#) (2026-05-22 05:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) on Friday confirmed that Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa was still in the country as law enforcement intensified efforts to locate and arrest him. “Just like Atong Ang,

Sen. Bato is still in the country,” Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II told reporters in a press briefing at Camp Crame. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. announced that the manhunt for the senator was now on as tracker teams have been deployed to serve the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant following greenlight from the Department of Justice (DOJ) even without the issuance of a red notice from the International Criminal Police Organization. The PNP chief said all units involved had been ordered to apply maximum tolerance and professionalism throughout the operation. As soon as he gets arrested, the PNP will turn over the senator to the DOJ. "Our mandate is clear, but I am emphasizing to our personnel that operational discipline is paramount. There will be no shortcuts and every movement will be heavily aligned with existing protocols to protect constitutional rights and maintain public trust," Nartatez said in a statement.

- [NBI says search for dela Rosa ongoing, urges senator to surrender](#) (2026-05-22 04:36)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on Friday said it was actively tracking down Sen. Ronald dela Rosa and would immediately enforce orders from the Department of Justice (DOJ) once the senator is found. During a media briefing, NBI Director Melvin Matibag said law enforcement authorities have ongoing operations to find dela Rosa following developments related to the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant and Interpol red notice. “We are right now looking for him. If we will see him today, we will arrest him today. If we will see him tomorrow or next week, we will arrest him,” Matibag said. Matibag stressed that the NBI was acting under orders from the DOJ, which he said would address legal questions surrounding the implementation of the warrant. “There’s an order from the Department of Justice to arrest Senator Bato. As a law enforcement group, we will enforce the order of the Department of Justice,” he said. Pressed on whether authorities would wait for the complete ruling of the Supreme Court before implementing the arrest order, Matibag said the matter of legal interpretation should be addressed by the DOJ, while the NBI’s role was to enforce lawful directives. The NBI chief also acknowledged that there was a “valid warrant that can be enforced,” although he referred questions regarding the issuance and timing of an Interpol red notice back to the DOJ. Matibag said there was still no official report from the Bureau of Immigration indicating that dela Rosa had left the country. “If you will base on the records of the Bureau of Immigration, walang records pa (there are no records yet),” he said, while noting that the Philippines’ geography presents numerous possible exit points. The NBI director publicly appealed to dela Rosa to surrender peacefully. “Mas maganda siguro, sumuko na lang siya. Kasi dalawang bagay naman yan—arestuhin ka o sumuko ka (Perhaps it would be better if you just surrender. There are only two options — you are arrested or you surrender),” Matibag said. He also urged the public to cooperate with authorities by providing information that could help law enforcement locate the senator, warning that individuals who knowingly assist fugitives could face charges such as obstruction of justice or harboring a fugitive. “Pag mayroong knowledge na puwedeng itulong sa (If there is knowledge that will help) law enforcement, I urge you to help the law enforcement to locate him,” he said. Matibag added that once Dela Rosa was arrested, the senator would be turned over to the

DOJ, which would then determine the next legal steps, including matters related to the ICC proceedings connected to the Duterte administration’ s anti-drug campaign.

- [DOH reports 9% increase in HIV cases in Q1 of 2026](#) (2026-05-22 03:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) reported a 9 percent increase in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the first quarter of 2026 compared to the same period last year. According to its latest report, the DOH recorded about 4,633 cases. Of that number, 4,381—or 95 percent—were males, while 252 were females. Despite the increase, the average number of cases recorded per day declined by 11 percent from the previous quarter, with 51 cases logged daily.

- [Cayetano gets more flak from alma mater, this time from its student council](#) (2026-05-22 03:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The student council of the Ateneo de Manila University Law School on Thursday said that Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano “fell short” of the ethical leadership expected of him as an alumnus. Its statement came a few days after Cayetano’ s batchmates sent a similar statement regarding his role in last week’ s Senate standoff that saw his colleague and ally, Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, escape from the chamber, to evade the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court. “When our alumni serve in public office, their conduct inevitably reflects upon the values their alma mater claims to uphold. Consequently, when Atenean lawyers appear to defend impunity or undermine the great mechanisms of accountability, it behooves the Ateneo community to express our disappointment,” the law student council said. “In this light, the Ateneo Law Student Council believes that Senator Alan Cayetano fell short of the ethical leadership expected of him as an Atenean. His actions disappoint those students who look to alumni of this institution for examples of principled leadership. Furthermore, his commitment to impunity is a mockery of the Ignatian values that we were all taught to hold dear to the core of our hearts,” they added. Just like his law school classmates, the current generation of Ateneo student leaders called on the Senate President to reflect on his actions. “We call on Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano, an alumnus, to reflect on whether the conduct now being defended in the Senate is truly worthy of the principles of Truth (Veritas), Integrity (Integritas), and Justice (Justitia) that Ateneo Law stands for,” they said. The law students also called on dela Rosa to “cease his evasion of international legal processes and to submit himself fully to the lawful mechanisms designed to address the allegations against him” . “We call on the Philippine Senate to honor its constitutional mandate, to resist the temptation of institutional solidarity at the expense of institutional integrity, and to refuse to become a sanctuary against accountability,” they said. “The rule of law is not self-enforcing. It depends on institutions that take it seriously, on lawyers who live it, and on communities who demand it. The Ateneo Law School Student Council exists within that chain of responsibility. We are not naive about the limits of a student statement. But we are equally clear about the cost of silence. To say nothing in a moment like this is itself a choice, and not one we are willing to make,” they added. Sen. Loren Legarda also

came under fire from her alma mater, Assumption College, following the events that transpired in the Senate last week. The school took down Legarda's photo from among its outstanding alumnae.

- [Marcos raises minimum access volume for pork meat](#) (2026-05-22 03:41)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) 116 increasing the minimum access volume (MAV) for pork meat to address the existing supply gap, ensure adequate and affordable food for consumers, and mitigate inflationary pressures. Marcos, through Executive Secretary Ralph Recto, signed EO 116 on May 19, raising pork import access from 54,210 metric tons (MT) to 204,210 MT. Under the EO, the MAV Management Committee (MMC) is directed to ensure that the allocation of the volume importation is fair and open to all qualified importers. The MMC has recommended the increase in the MAV for pork by 150,000 MT annually for a period of two years "to address prevailing supply constraints and price pressures, in order to ensure the continued availability and affordability of pork and processed meat products and mitigate further inflationary pressures on basic commodities."

- [Police have a job to enforce the law, says former PNP chief on dela Rosa arrest order](#) (2026-05-22 02:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Philippine National Police chief Nicholas Torre III on Friday said it was the duty of police officers to implement lawful warrants amid the possible arrest of Sen. Ronald dela Rosa in connection with the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into the Duterte administration's drug war. Speaking to media at The Manila Hotel, Torre said the issue should not be treated as a personal conflict between officials or politicians, but as part of the legal process that law enforcers were sworn to carry out. "It's not about me or Senator Bato. It is about a process. It is about a system. It is about a law. And it is about a job," Torre said. His remarks came as some Filipinos questioned whether dela Rosa would have been arrested if Torre were still serving as PNP chief. Without directly addressing the criticism against the current PNP leadership, Torre said police officers could not selectively enforce or choose whether to implement a warrant or not. "The job of the police is not to judge the case but to implement the processes and in this case, the warrant," he said. Torre added that several lawyers and legal authorities have stated that the warrant against dela Rosa was legal and enforceable. He said authorities should "protect the process" and allow the legal system to "roll in its natural course," stressing that institutions and the interests of the country must come first. Dela Rosa himself was a former PNP chief under the administration of former president Rodrigo Duterte. The senator, who has since been branded a fugitive by government after the Supreme Court denied his petition to stop an arrest order by the ICC, has been considered an enforcer of Duterte's war on drugs, which is the cornerstone of the former leader's case as he stands trial before the world court for alleged crimes against humanity.

- [Palace declares May 27 a holiday for Eid' l Adha](#) (2026-05-22 02:30)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday issued a circular declaring next Wednesday, May 27, a regular holiday throughout the country in observance of Eid'l Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice. Proclamation 1264 was issued to allow Filipino Muslims the opportunity to properly observe the occasion. The date of the observance was chosen based on the recommendation of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos following the Hijrah Islamic Lunar Calendar. Eid' l Adha is recognized as one of the two greatest feasts of Islam, the other being Eid' l Fitr or the end of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting.

- [Padilla denies helping Dela Rosa escape](#) (2026-05-22 02:25)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Robinhood Padilla on Friday denied allegations that he helped Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa evade authorities by secretly leaving the Senate building in the early hours of Thursday morning. In a television interview, Padilla dismissed circulating claims that dela Rosa "escaped" from the Senate premises, stressing that they left openly and without interference despite the heavy presence of police and security personnel. "How are we going to escape? There are a lot of police inside and outside the Senate, and there is CCTV. No one stopped us," Padilla said. Padilla disclosed that he had remained at the Senate for three days to accompany dela Rosa amid rising tensions that began earlier in the week after the senator returned to attend sessions following a six-month absence. Padilla said the atmosphere inside the Senate complex became increasingly tense on Wednesday due to rumors of a possible leadership change in the body and the expected transmission of articles of impeachment against Vice President Sara Duterte. "You can feel the atmosphere is different. There are armed men outside. There are rallies, there are heated discussions," he said. The senator also recounted reports of gunfire near the lower portion of the Senate building, which allegedly intensified fears among those inside the premises. Padilla and dela Rosa were reportedly in their offices on the fifth floor at the time. "Some senators were really scared. It was dark, there was no light, and the situation was tense. Some were crying. So, I went down to see if everything was okay," Padilla said. Padilla added that dela Rosa appeared more concerned about the safety of senators, members of the media, and civilians gathered around the Senate complex than about his own situation. "I saw Sen. Bato thinking about how to diffuse the situation. He is a policeman," he added.

- [No winners in Super Lotto 6/49, Lotto 6/42 draws for May 21](#) (2026-05-21 21:28)

There were no winners in the Super Lotto 6/49 and Lotto 6/42 draws on Thursday night, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) said. The winning combination for the Super Lotto 6/49 was 09-28-21-02-37-23, with a jackpot prize of P25,000,000. No winners were also recorded in the Lotto 6/42 draw, which had the combination 33-08-05-17-18-41 and a jackpot prize of P20,654,909.15.

- [Ronaldo strikes twice to end long wait for Saudi title](#) (2026-05-21 20:55)

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice as Al Nassr clinched the Saudi Pro League title with a 4-1 win over Damac on Thursday, ending his long wait for domestic

silverware. A trademark free-kick and a close-range finish, both in the final half-hour, sealed the win Al Nassr needed on the last night of the season, with Al Hilal finishing just two points behind. Ronaldo, 41, who was without a major club trophy since winning Serie A with Juventus in 2020, arrived in the oil-rich desert kingdom to great acclaim in 2023, wept as he watched the final minutes from the bench. He adds the Saudi championship to his English, Spanish and Italian titles and five Champions League medals. Al Nassr took a 2-0 lead but were back to 2-1 before Ronaldo's free-kick on 63 minutes evaded the goalkeeper and a forest of legs to find the far corner. He struck again nine minutes from time, receiving a cut-back on the edge of the six-yard box and smashing high into the net. Next up for the all-time leading men's international goalscorer, with 143 goals, is a sixth crack at the World Cup after he was named in Portugal's squad this week. - Desert trailblazer - Ronaldo opened the door to a series of big-money Saudi signings when he joined Al Nassr in January 2023 following an unhappy second spell at Manchester United. Neymar and Karim Benzema were among those to follow after Ronaldo inked a two-and-a-half-year deal estimated at 200 million euros, extended for two years in June 2025. The stated aim was to turn the Pro League into one of the world's top five football competitions measured by the quality of players, stadium attendances and commercial success. International interest has been muted, however. In December 2024, Saudi Arabia was confirmed as host of the 2034 World Cup, a coup as it pushes to decouple its economy from oil and attract business and tourists, partly via the buzz of sports. With a record 664 million Instagram followers, Ronaldo has been a highly-visible ambassador as Saudi Arabia tries to turn the page on the ultra-conservative image that has defined it for decades. The world's biggest oil exporter and home of Islam has been accused of "sportswashing" -- using sport to deflect human rights criticism -- as it has invested in Formula 1, golf, boxing and tennis alongside football. Some of the more outlandish spending on economic diversification, including sprawling tourist developments and NEOM, a futuristic city in the desert, is being reined in. This month, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund said it was exiting the breakaway LIV Golf tour, after reportedly ploughing more than \$5 billion into a venture that split the sport. Expensive football signings have also waned with the stream of big-money transfers slowing to a trickle. - Tears and a protest - Ronaldo was the Pro League's top scorer in his first two seasons, with his career tally now at 973 -- tantalisingly close to the 1,000-goals milestone. His Saudi stint has not always been smooth. In 2024, he was left in floods of tears when Al Nassr lost the King's Cup final to Al Hilal on penalties, denying him his first Saudi title. This season, he disappeared from Al Nassr's line-up for three games in an apparent protest at Benzema's transfer to rival team Al Hilal. Al Hilal and Al Nassr were among the stable of Saudi teams owned by the Public Investment Fund, the country's \$900 billion sovereign wealth fund. Before Thursday, Ronaldo's only silverware with Al Nassr was the 2023 Arab Club Champions Cup. He was also disappointed on Saturday, when Al Nassr lost to Gamba Osaka in the AFC Champions League Two final.

- [UK offers cheaper chocolate and tickets to the zoo in bid to ease cost of living squeeze](#)
(2026-05-21 20:49)

LONDON — The British government is offering cheaper chocolate and discounted entry to theme parks as it seeks to ease a cost-of-living squeeze and win back voters. Treasury chief Rachel Reeves on Thursday announced modest handouts to help alleviate rising costs sparked by the Iran war, including a reduction in import tax on cookies, chocolate and about 100 other supermarket products. U.K. inflation fell to 2.8% in April, down from 3.3% in March, but is expected to spike again on the back of higher prices for fuel, heating gas and electricity. To ease the impact, the government has postponed a planned increase in fuel duty and given truckers a yearlong reprieve from road tax to help offset soaring gasoline prices due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil transit route. But Reeves did not commit to broader support for household heating bills. She announced measures designed to boost the summertime economy, including free bus travel for children in August. During the summer, tax on tickets for attractions including zoos, theme parks and museums will be slashed from 20% to 5%. Reeves said she would pay for the cost-of-living support by closing tax loopholes for oil and gas companies with overseas operations. “This summer I want every family to be able to enjoy themselves,” Reeves said. “As the war in Iran pushes prices up at home, my economic plan is the right one. I will continue to make the right choices, to protect households and businesses, and build a stronger and more secure Britain.” The announcements came as Prime Minister Keir Starmer tries to keep calm and carry on while rivals in the governing Labour Party seek to oust him after a set of disastrous local election results. The last two weeks have been devastating for Starmer, who led the party to a landslide victory less than two years ago. Scores of Labour lawmakers have called for him to resign, and he is widely expected to face a leadership challenge. Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham is aiming to win a seat in Parliament in a June 18 special election, and then challenge Starmer for the prime minister’s job. Starmer insists he will not resign and will fight for his job. Under U.K. political rules, whoever took over from Starmer as party leader would also become prime minister, without the need for a national election.

- [Mexico will discuss drug trafficking and migrant deaths during visit by US security official Mullin](#) (2026-05-21 20:22)

MEXICO — President Claudia Sheinbaum said Thursday that she hopes to strengthen bilateral security cooperation during U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin’s visit to Mexico, including on issues of combating drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and arms trafficking, and to facilitate intelligence sharing. Mullin arrives in the capital for a two-day visit following tensions in recent weeks over the deaths of two CIA agents at Mexico’s northern border and U.S. drug trafficking indictments against 10 Mexican officials. Sheinbaum’s administration, which took office in October 2024, has toed a fine line with the Trump administration as it has emphasized bilateral cooperation, while also maintaining Mexico’s sovereignty in the face of threats of U.S. military intervention. “What we want is for us to continue working within the framework of that (security) understanding,” Sheinbaum said at her morning news conference, referring to past dialogues with the Trump administration. Mullin, who assumed the position in March after Kristi Noem’s departure, is

also scheduled to meet with Mexico's Security Cabinet. Sheinbaum said Thursday that she would also speak with Mullin about the 15 Mexican migrants who have died in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers since 2025, which prompted diplomatic protests from her government. Sheinbaum has instructed consulates to make daily visits to the detention centers, and Mexico announced in March that it would bring the cases before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Mexican president ruled out discussing the cases of the 10 indicted officials, some of whom belong to the governing Morena party, during her meeting with Mullin. In late April, the New York Attorney General's office indicted Sinaloa Gov. Rubén Rocha, Culiacan mayor Juan de Dios Gámez, and eight other active and retired officials on charges including drug trafficking and illegal possession of firearms. Rocha and Gámez temporarily stepped down from their posts to facilitate the investigation opened by Mexico's Attorney General's Office, while the former Sinaloa government officials, Gerardo Mérida and Enrique Díaz, surrendered to U.S. authorities last week. Bilateral relations became strained after the deaths of two CIA agents on April 19, along with two officials from the Chihuahua Attorney General's Office, when the vehicle they were traveling in plunged into a ravine in the mountains between Chihuahua — which borders Texas — and the state of Sinaloa, where a clandestine synthetic drug lab had been dismantled. The incident prompted a formal protest from the Sheinbaum administration to Washington that it hadn't been informed of the presence of the two U.S. agents in Mexico, or of their activities in the opposition-governed state of Chihuahua.

• [Government to exhaust all means to enforce warrant vs. Bato —Palace](#) (2026-05-21 19:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The government will exhaust all means available, within the bounds of the law, to enforce the arrest order issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sen. Ronald Bato Dela Rosa, Malacañang said on Thursday. Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro's remarks came after Justice Secretary Frederick Vida tasked the National and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to enforce dela Rosa's arrest after the Supreme Court denied the lawmaker's petition to block the implementation of the ICC warrant. "The DOJ clearly stated that the arrest warrant against Sen. Bato is enforceable. Appropriate action in accordance with the law is expected from the government," Castro said in a statement in Filipino. "Our officials will do everything to provide justice to all," she added. The ICC named Dela Rosa as an "indirect co-perpetrator" of former president Rodrigo Duterte who is facing charges of crimes against humanity in connection with the Duterte administration's bloody anti-drugs campaign. The senator has gone back to hiding after being last seen at the Senate premises in the early hours of May 14.

• [Ang lawyer says relatives sought meeting on missing 'sabungero' case](#) (2026-05-21 18:43)

MANILA, Philippines — A top executive of a foundation linked to fugitive gambling tycoon Charlie 'Atong' Ang on Thursday confirmed there were meetings that took place with the families and relatives of the missing 'sabungeros' (cockfight enthusiasts) because they

approached her. Interviewed by The Manila Times, lawyer Caroline Cruz, Ang's legal counsel and Pitmaster Foundation executive director, admitted that she personally gave them money "but as a form of support for their causes." "I did not ask for anything in return for the financial support that I gave them. They signed nothing that would, in any way, be useful in the case," Cruz said. Saying her conscience is clean as she has nothing to hide, Cruz said she is more than willing to answer all the charges they levelled against her "if and when required by the proper legal forum." The top foundation executive likewise challenged the victims' relatives to make public about their claim that they had an audio recording of their conversations. Saying the first meeting took place at her Mandaluyong City office on April 20, Cruz clarified that she gave the members of the group she met with P20,000 each and not P40,000 as they claimed. "I was surprised by their visit, but I welcomed them. It was a cordial meeting, if I am to describe it," Cruz explained. She recalled that the group was led by one Diane Loyola, a victim's relative, who told her that they were meeting her in the hope that she could lead them to the truth about the case. "I told them I am also in search of the truth, and honestly, that is the only reason why I allowed that unscheduled meeting to happen," Cruz said. Contrary to the group's statement, she maintained she did not call them or ask anybody to arrange the meeting on her behalf. But in the course of her conversation with the group, Cruz said she was surprised that they didn't know she was initially among those charged in the case. "I was stunned by their reply when I offered that information to them. But since I also seek the truth, I became more convinced to set another meeting," Cruz added. She said she chose Edsa Shangri-La, located also in the city, to be the venue of their succeeding meeting because it's a public place. She said she had already noticed that someone was secretly taking pictures of them but just ignored it since she was not hiding anything. At the same time, she denied claims by the group that she arranged the trips of other members of the victims' families to casinos and to a resort in Iba, Zambales. While noting that some were complainants' family members but not witnesses, Cruz said that as a lawyer, she knew that the victims' relatives were not necessarily parties to the case. "To ask for their recantation is not something that a sensible lawyer would even ask at this point. They are not even witnesses to the case, to begin with," she pointed out. This "blatant fact," according to her, belies the group's assertion that the money she gave was meant to silence them. "When almost all of them started to talk about how difficult their lives are now after what they've been through, that's the time when I offered them help without asking for anything," Cruz said. Moreover, she said she was surprised when they were showing P1,000 bills supposedly contained in the brown envelope when she could remember giving them money all in P500-peso denominations. Asked about the group's decision to reveal their meeting in public, Cruz said: "It could be part of continuing efforts by self-proclaimed whistleblower Julie Patidongan to muddle the case."

- [Heat wave empties roads and markets in north India as some farmers turn to night time work](#) (2026-05-21 17:50)

NEW DELHI — Roads and markets have emptied during afternoons and some farmers have switched to nighttime work to avoid scorching temperatures as a heat wave grips large parts of India. The India Meteorological Department forecast maximum temperatures Thursday of around 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) in the capital, New Delhi, where authorities have opened temporary “cooling zones” to help people cope. The weather department warned conditions will likely persist across several northern regions in the coming days, with temperatures staying well above seasonal averages. Authorities urged people to stay indoors during the hottest hours and take precautions against heat-related illnesses. India declares a heat wave whenever temperatures are above 40 C (104 F) in the plains and 30 C (86 F) or more in its hilly regions. Severe heat disrupts daily life. The extreme heat has disrupted daily life across several northern states. In some parts of Uttar Pradesh state, India’s most populous, roads and markets have closed in the afternoons as people stayed indoors while some traders shifted work to early mornings. Farmers began working at night because daytime conditions became unbearable. The heat also disrupted schools, with authorities in several areas announcing early summer vacations and suspending classes as the maximum temperature shot up to 48.2 C (118.8 F) on Tuesday in the city of Banda. Health authorities urged people to avoid going outdoors during peak afternoon hours, stay hydrated and seek medical help if they experience symptoms such as dizziness or high fever. Cooling shelters offer relief. In New Delhi, residents and tourists sought relief from the heat inside cooling shelters set up across the capital. The shaded space provides air coolers, fans, drinking water and oral rehydration solutions to help people deal with the extreme heat. Inside one tent on Wednesday, people rested beside air coolers as officials distributed cups of water mixed with rehydration salts. “We had come here for outing. But it is too hot here. The cooling system here is good for us,” said Basharat Ahmad Malla, a 25-year-old tourist. Extreme heat tied to global warming. Climate experts say India’s rising temperatures are part of a broader global pattern linked to climate change. India has faced more frequent and intense heat waves in recent years, with all of its warmest years on record occurring in the last decade. “India has warmed considerably as a result of anthropogenic (human-made) climate change in the last decade compared to previous years. Northwestern India has warmed much faster than many other parts of the country,” said Anjal Prakash, author of several United Nations climate reports and professor of public policy at Pune-based Flame University. Prakash said India is accustomed to summer heat but “climate change is loading the dice towards extreme and pervasive episodes like those we see now.” Studies by public health experts found that up to 1,116 people have died every year between 2008 and 2019 due to heat. Public health experts say the true number of heat-related deaths is likely in the thousands, but because heat is often not listed on death certificates, many deaths are not counted in official figures.

- [PNP to perform due process on arrest of Bato](#) (2026-05-21 17:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday said it will perform due process following the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) green light on law enforcement agencies to effect the arrest of Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa. “The Philippine National Police

(PNP) takes note of the directive issued by the Department of Justice (DOJ) directing the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to effect the warrant of arrest against Senator Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa,” PNP chief PGen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a statement. Nartatez said the PNP respects the process of the judicial system and recognizes the authority of competent government agencies in the implementation of lawful orders. “As a law enforcement agency, the PNP shall perform its mandate in accordance with existing laws, due process, and established operational procedures,” Nartatez said. Earlier, DOJ Secretary Fredderick Vida ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the PNP to enforce dela Rosa’s arrest after the Supreme Court denied the senator’s request to block the implementation of the ICC warrant. The PNP also assured the public that “all actions undertaken shall remain impartial, professional, and within the bounds of the law, with full respect for the constitutional rights of all parties concerned.” The PNP and even Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla earlier said they cannot arrest Dela Rosa since they do not have a copy of the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court. However in today’s earlier briefing, the PNP said they were only awaiting for the DOJ’s order before making any action. Shortly after, the DOJ instructed both NBI and PNP to effect the warrant. PGen. Randolph T. Tuaño however clarified that the PNP will only be providing assistance to the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) Manila who is the primary agency tasked to perform the arrest. “The only role that the PNP and the NBI will play is to assist Interpol Manila. So purely assistance and PNP-CIDG and NBI to Interpol Manila, they will be the ones to implement if there is a warrant,” Tuaño said.

- [Gatchalian wants govt to stop buying fuel-fed vehicles](#) (2026-05-21 16:21)

A SENATOR is studying a proposal for government agencies to put a “hard stop” to the purchase of fuel-fed vehicles starting 2028. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian is pushing instead for the wider adoption of new energy vehicles (NEVs) such as electrified or hybrid cars. Delivering his keynote speech at The Manila Times Automotive Forum held at the Heritage Hotel on Thursday, Gatchalian said only 10 percent of government vehicles are electric vehicles (EVs). Gatchalian said switching to EVs helps reduce the country’s dependence on oil. The Philippines imports nearly all of its oil requirements, while the transportation sector accounts for 52 percent of total consumption. “And that’s why events like this are very important, so that we will know the problems, we will know the ways forward, and we will continue to educate motorists on adoption,” he said, referring to The Times automotive forum. Gatchalian said there are amendments in Republic Act 11697, or the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act, to improve the deployment and financing of EVs, increasing by 20 percent the EV infrastructure including charging points and parking slots, and more electrified vehicle utilization in the commercial sector. “Of course, the other sectors are much more complicated, like the commercial and industrial sectors. Those are technologies that have yet to become feasible at this time. But if we manage to electrify the transportation sector, that’s already half the battle won,” he said. Only 1 percent of registered vehicles in the country are electrified, placing it near the bottom among Southeast Asian nations in EV adoption. “If you compare it to the

Comprehensive Roadmap for the EV Industry, it's still far off from the target. That's why I'm saying that while we have a law, I'm not satisfied with the way we are adopting EVs in our country and how we compare ourselves with the targets," Gatchalian said. Gatchalian was the principal sponsor and author of the Evida Law. He also acknowledged that fiscal incentives are difficult to implement, prompting the government to focus more on non-fiscal incentives aimed at improving the EV ownership experience. He said that declining battery prices — which account for around 30 to 40 percent of an EV's total cost — are helping narrow the price gap between EVs and ICE vehicles. There is no investment environment to attract capital for battery EV battery manufacturing, he said. "We don't have that incentive setup yet. In fact, the Philippines has the second-largest nickel deposits in the world, and nickel is a very important component of batteries," he said. "We're shipping nickel to China to make batteries. Why not make the batteries here? Those are the things that we need to look at," Gatchalian said. Antonio Zara, the CEO of Vinfast Southeast Asia, told the forum there are impediments to wider EV adoption in the commercial sector, although technological advances in electrified vehicles favor the consumer. Zara said the current technology favors the adoption of electrified taxis compared to jeepneys. "EV development has not yet reached development for jeepney-like operations," he said. "EV cars can generate 30-percent savings, but not yet for jeepney-like operations." Zara sees developments in the automotive industry lowering the price points for EVs. "What's even more exciting is EV prices will go down as economies of scale are achieved," he said. Fuel-fed vehicles could see production costs rise as regulators impose stricter standards for emissions, Zara said. WITH CONRAD CARIÑO AND RAYMOND TRIBDINO

- [VP Duterte impeachment trial to start on July 6](#) (2026-05-21 16:20)

SEN. Erwin Tulfo said the Senate is looking at July 6 as the start of the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte, following an all-members caucus on Tuesday. In an interview on Thursday, Tulfo outlined the tentative timeline and proposed schedule for the trial, saying the proceedings could extend late into the evening. He said the Senate president will first grant Duterte 10 days to respond to the articles of impeachment, after which the prosecution will be given five calendar days to file its reply. The pretrial phase will follow, which will involve the marking of evidence, submission of statements and other procedural matters. "It seems like the trial will actually start on July 6 after our break," he said. Tulfo said senators are considering a schedule that would allow the chamber to continue its legislative work while conducting the impeachment proceedings. Under the proposed arrangement, Senate sessions would be held in the morning, followed by impeachment hearings in the afternoon and evening. "The plan, if I remember correctly, is that every Monday morning, we will have a session so that we don't run out of time," Tulfo said. "We have a session from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., then after a one-hour break, we go straight to the trial from 2 p.m. until the end — maybe until 11 p.m. or 12 midnight." The trial is also expected to continue on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, while Thursdays may be allotted for regular committee hearings and legislative matters. Tulfo said the Senate leadership is considering making the proceedings more accessible to the public through live broadcasts and online coverage. "We suggested it yesterday to the Senate President so that

the public can see it, so that the trial can be seen on social media and through coverage,” he said. “The Senate President and the majority agreed that we would publish it very soon.” Although Congress is officially on a break until after the president’s State of the Nation Address (SONA), Tulfo noted that senators may reconvene earlier than scheduled for the trial. “We need to start on July 6,” he said. “Post-SONA, we will really have to dedicate time to the trial.” Under the tentative work setup, senators may devote three days each week to the trial and another day to regular hearings and committee work. Fridays could also be used for committee hearings if necessary. On Thursday, the House’s impeachment spokesman Zia Alonto Adiong said the 11-member prosecution panel was ready to proceed on any schedule the Senate will come up with. Adiong said the House has not been officially notified by the Senate about the trial schedule.

- [Investigation pressed on Escudero, Romualdez](#) (2026-05-21 16:19)

THE Office of the Ombudsman’s investigation of Sen. Francis Escudero and former House speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez was at the preliminary stage, Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said on Thursday. In a radio interview, Clavano said an order to submit a counter-affidavit has been received by the office of Escudero. “I believe... our panel is just waiting for his counter-affidavit so that the preliminary investigation can proceed,” he said. The probe of Romualdez’s money laundering cases is “also at the preliminary investigation stage,” Clavano said. Last April, Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla said cases of plunder related to flood control projects are being prepared against Romualdez and Escudero, who is a former Senate president. The cases touch on “the way that the budget was passed by the two houses and how many things happened to have been implemented because of that,” Clavano said. Romualdez has denied taking part in bicameral and small committee budget deliberations. “I have never authorized, instructed or allowed anyone to engage in any conduct that would betray the people or taint my name,” he said. Last year, former Public Works undersecretary Roberto Bernardo alleged that Escudero was a bagman for kickbacks to senators related to public works projects. Escudero has denied Bernardo’s allegations. Romualdez said he welcomed the investigation as a chance to clear his name. “I personally appeared before the proper authorities. I voluntarily submitted my affidavit to the ICI (Independent Commission for Infrastructure). I provided the information and documents asked of me. I did not hide. I did not run. I did not evade scrutiny. I faced it head-on, within the proper channel, because I know there is no evidence that proves I committed plunder, conspiracy to commit plunder or any similar offense”, he said. “If I were truly involved in a fraudulent scheme of this nature, then the first place one would expect to see that pattern would be in my own district, in the projects most easily associated with me. You would have seen it in Tacloban. But I say this with absolute certainty: you won’t see it in my district. My district has zero ghost and zero substandard flood control projects. Zero. And that is verifiable,” he said. Romualdez said he has authorized his staff to share with the public the list of projects in his district that authorities “may deem attributable to” him. Romualdez stepped down as speaker on Sept. 17, 2025, calling it a duty to restore public trust. The crafting of the 2026 national budget was marked with reforms in the

budget process that included the livestreaming of the deliberations of the bicameral conference committee that finalized the budget measure.

- [DA charges DPWH officials, contractors](#) (2026-05-21 16:18)

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Thursday filed charges against officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and contractors in connection with P94-million farm-to-market road (FMR) projects in Davao Occidental. Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. filed eight cases before the Office of the Ombudsman following a seven-month case buildup. Named in the complaints were DPWH Davao Occidental district engineer Rodrigo Larete, project engineer and officer in charge (OIC)-chief of construction section Joel Lumogdang, OIC-assistant district engineer Michael Awa, quality assurance officer Jafel Faunillan, Acting Finance Chief Czar Ryan Ubungen and a private contractor. They were charged with corrupt practices, malversation, falsification of public documents, grave misconduct and serious dishonesty in connection with the FMR project in Barangay Caburan, Jose Abad Santos, which was allegedly paid in full despite not being implemented. The respondents reportedly falsified Statements of Work Accomplished, certificates of payment and disbursement vouchers to make it appear that the project had been completed. In an interview, Tiu Laurel assured a strong case against the DPWH officials and contractors. “They can get good lawyers. So, we really have to prepare a case. Ngayon, nandito tayo after pitong buwan, I can say na medyo maganda at solid lahat ng ebidensya, solid ang lahat ng kaso (Now, we’re here after seven months, I can say that somehow, we have good and solid evidence, all of the cases are solid),” he said. The projects, which were supposed to be constructed in 2021, could have helped local farmers bring down production and logistics costs, Tiu Laurel said. He said no construction had taken place. There was just a dirt road where people and tricycles can pass. Another complaint was filed against the same DPWH officials and Masulot Construction, represented by Maligamama Medtamak, over the Barangay Caburan Small FMR in Jose Abad Santos. The P11.92-million project was allegedly certified as completed, resulting in the disbursement of government funds. The DA Internal Audit Service (IAS) later found that the project had not been implemented. Additional complaints involve DPWH officials Larete, Lumogdang, Villaver, Awa, Faunillan, Ubungen and seven contractors. The cases concern FMR projects in Barangay Culaman, Datu Danwata, Demoloc, Tical and Manuel Peralta, with contract values ranging from P10.02 million to P14.92 million. WITH PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY Tiu Laurel said more complaints involving ghost projects will be filed in the next few months. He said a case buildup is being done for a project in Guinobatan, Albay. DA spokesman Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said 20 out of the 1,241 FMR projects in Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Bicol, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao and Davao region were not implemented, based on the latest report of the IAS. The DA has earmarked P33 billion for 1,600 FMR projects in 2026, totaling 2,300 kilometers in length, with an estimated cost of P14 million per kilometer. In total, there are 6,428 FMR projects worth P109.53 billion from 2021 to 2026, according to the FMR watch transparency portal of the Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering. At least 3,135 of the projects were reportedly completed nationwide.

- [Marcos Jr. emphasizes education as a right, empowers students through scholarships](#) (2026-05-21 16:17)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday urged students to take advantage of the support of the government as he reminded them that education is not a privilege but a right of every Filipino. Speaking before presidential scholars at the Obando Central School in Bulacan, Marcos stressed the government's commitment to help Filipino youth complete their studies. "For the government, education is not a privilege, it is the right of every youth that must be taken care of and guaranteed that is good," he said. The president also reminded the students that education is a lifelong investment that can help uplift their lives, their families, and their communities. He challenged the scholars to study hard and prepare for future leadership roles in society, saying today's students would eventually become the country's teachers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and public servants. "Education is a treasure. It cannot be taken away from you, it cannot be stolen. It is there for a lifetime and you can use it to improve your life and the lives of your family," he said. The president met with Presidential Scholars from 11 barangay (villages) in Obando, with a total of 55 scholars receiving financial assistance at Obando Central. The scholarship initiative is part of the Socio-Civic Projects Fund, under which each barangay receives a P200,000 special support fund, half of which is allocated to educational assistance, with the remainder intended for community development projects. Under the initiative, each barangay receives P200,000, with P100,000 allocated for five scholars who will each receive P20,000. Marcos said that with more than 42,000 villages nationwide, the initiative could potentially assist more than 210,000 students. "Look for those who are about to graduate but are struggling because they don't have enough money to pay, or need to work," the president told local leaders. The "Bawat Bayan Makikinabang" program was launched on Feb. 23 and has since expanded across several provinces and cities, including Eastern Visayas, Cagayan, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Pasay, Makati, and Manila. So far, more than 8,700 villages have benefited from the program.

- [US, PH to reach deal on economic security zone soon – US official](#) (2026-05-21 16:16)

SINGAPORE — The United States is expected to reach a deal on the long-term framework for an economic security zone with the Philippines "sooner rather than later," a senior US official said on Thursday. As Washington aggressively expands its technology supply chain alliance known as "Pax Silica," the official, Jacob Helberg, said both countries have a two-year window to work out the arrangements under a pact they signed last month. Both parties will also set sectoral industrial priorities for the kinds of economic activities in the zone, Helberg, the US undersecretary of state for economic affairs, told Reuters in an interview. "I expect the United States and the Philippines to reach a deal sooner rather than later," he said, adding, "There's an enormous amount of momentum behind this." Last month's agreement makes the Philippines the 13th country to join Pax Silica, a program seeking to safeguard the full technology supply chain, from critical minerals and advanced manufacturing to computing and data infrastructure. Helberg said the alliance has since grown rapidly to 15 members from seven founding members last September. "We will most likely be at 16 by the end of next month,

because we're probably going to add one or two members over the next four weeks," he added. While Washington is pushing ahead with the framework, the Philippines has not agreed to its request seeking diplomatic immunity for the zone, the Philippines' development authority chief told Bloomberg on Monday. Helberg visited a proposed 4,000-acre (1,620-hectare) site in New Clark City north of the capital Manila on Monday, joined by representatives of more than a dozen US companies, such as 8VC, Agility Robotics, Joby Aviation and Valar Atomics. Young Liu, chairman of the world's largest contract electronics maker Foxconn, was also among the delegation, a photograph posted on X showed. Helberg told Reuters that while it was early, there was a high level of interest, both from the companies which attended and other US firms. He was speaking at the ATX summit in Singapore, where he met digital ministers for the 11-member regional grouping, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Helberg said he talked to the Singaporeans and "a number of others" on opportunities in minerals and logistics.

- [NBI urged to probe foreign control of Philippines' driver's license system](#) (2026-05-21 16:13)

FLAG Maharlika, an advocacy organization, urged the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to investigate the Land Transportation Office's (LTO) driver's license system, which is allegedly being run outside the country by a German information technology (IT) firm. In a May 19, 2026 letter to NBI Director Melvin Matibag, a copy of which was obtained by The Manila Times, Salvador Piamonte, head of community affairs for Flag Maharlika, raised major sovereignty and national security concerns over the alleged foreign-operated access to the country's public identity infrastructure. In an interview, Piamonte told members of the Quezon City Press Club that his group's request was based on an Ombudsman resolution citing an internal LTO Management Information Division (MID) report. The LTO's own technical experts explicitly warned that IT contractor Dermalog, a German-based company, has full "access and control" over the five-year Driver's License Inventory and Printing Application Modules. According to the LTO-MID report, the system poses a national security threat because the foreign contractor can secretly print Philippine driver's license cards outside the country at any given time without LTO's knowledge. The group mentioned a "ridiculous system flaw" wherein local LTO employees could not even transfer physical card inventory from one district to another within the Philippines without asking a Dermalog employee based in Malaysia to do it remotely. "Our national identity system is compromised. Why are we allowing a foreign-based entity to hold the keys to the data and licenses of millions of Filipino drivers?" Piamonte said. "This is a direct slap to the face of our national sovereignty," he added. Piamonte said his group wants the NBI's Cybercrime and Counter-Intelligence divisions to look into potential violations of Republic Act 10175, or the Cybercrime Prevention Act, specifically Illegal Access and System Interference, and check if public officials' administrative failures facilitated this anomaly under RA 3019, or the Anti-Graft Law. He said a parallel complaint is being sent to the National Privacy Commission regarding data privacy violations. The Office of the Solicitor General has already petitioned the Supreme Court to nullify the multibillion LTO-Dermalog IT contract, renewing its

push for a temporary restraining order, he added. The Times tried to reach the IT company for comment but received no reply. Meanwhile, an unnamed LTO official denied such a practice, but added that the leadership should address the matter.

- [2 police officers relieved over missing sabungeros](#) (2026-05-21 16:12)

TWO police officers who allegedly facilitated unauthorized negotiations with the families of the missing sabungeros (cockfight enthusiasts) have been relieved from duty, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Thursday. On Wednesday, families of the missing sabungeros trooped to the National Police Commission (Napolcom) to report that a police lieutenant and a police major assisted them to meet with detained police officers involved in the case at the PNP Custodial Center. The reason for the meeting was that the implicated officers tried to convince the families that they had no involvement in the case. An administrative case was thereafter lodged by the families against the two police officers before the Napolcom. The complainants identified the police lieutenant as Highway Patrol Group (HPG) spokesman Lt. Nadame Malang and the police major as PNP Custodial Center officer-in-charge Maj. Reynaldo Pañebe Jr. The HPG said that the special order for the two officers' relief was effective May 20 along with the filing of an incident report from the Headquarters Support Service (HSS). In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Thursday, HPG director BGen. Rommel Batangan said Malang had been asked by three individuals to take them inside the PNP headquarters and to the custodial center. Meanwhile, HSS director BGen. Manuel Abrugena said Pañebe defended that he was unaware that the individuals taken to the custodial center were the complainants of the sabungeros case. Abrugena said they have yet to secure closed-circuit television footage of the PNP Custodial Center. PNP spokesman BGen. Randulf Tuaño said that the officers' relief does not constitute guilt, but compliance with standard operating procedure of investigation within their ranks. "We did their immediate relief so that it wouldn't affect the ongoing investigation, both criminal and administrative, of the two offices we mentioned," he said. The supposed secret meeting with the detained police officers was said to be part of an agreement being negotiated by Caroline Cruz, lawyer of fugitive gambling tycoon Charlie "Atong Ang," with the families of the missing sabungeros. From the 34 initial cases, only five were left attending court hearings as most of the families are allegedly now under the payroll of the billionaire gambling lord in exchange for their nonappearance in court hearings and dropping of cases against him. A complainant alleged that the nonparticipating families are now getting P40,000 monthly allowance from Ang along with regular outings, travels and even entry into casinos. The Napolcom ordered an investigation of the allegations. Meanwhile, Cruz, Ang's legal counsel and his firm's Pitmaster Foundation executive director, said that she personally gave families of the missing sabungeros money "but as a form of support for their causes." "I did not ask for anything in return for the financial support that I gave them. They signed nothing that would, in any way, be useful in the case," Cruz told The Manila Times, noting her conscience is clean because she has nothing to hide. She added that she is willing to answer all allegations against her at a proper legal forum. Cruz challenged her accusers to make public the audio recording of their conversations. She said the first meeting took place at her Mandaluyong City office on April

20, adding she gave the representatives of the families P20,000 each, not P40,000 as they have claimed. “I was surprised by their visit, but I welcomed them. It was a cordial meeting, if I am to describe it,” Cruz added. She recalled that the group was led by one Diane Loyola, a victim’s relative, who told her that they were meeting her in the hope that she could lead them to the truth about the case. “I told them I am also in search of the truth, and honestly, that is the only reason why I allowed that unscheduled meeting to happen,” Cruz said. Contrary to the group’s statement, she maintained that she did not call them to arrange the meeting, noting that in the course of her conversation with the group, she was surprised to learn that they didn’t know she was initially among those charged in the case. “I was stunned by their reply when I offered that information to them. But since I also seek the truth, I became more convinced to set another meeting,” Cruz added. She said she chose Edsa Shangri-La, located also in the city, to be the venue of their succeeding meeting because it’s a public place. She denied claims by the group that she arranged the trips of other members of the victims’ families to casinos and to a resort in Iba, Zambales. Cruz said that as a lawyer, she knew that the victims’ relatives were not necessarily parties to the case. “To ask for their recantation is not something that a sensible lawyer would even ask at this point. They are not even witnesses to the case, to begin with,” she said. Cruz belied the group’s assertion that the money she gave was meant to silence them. “When almost all of them started to talk about how difficult their lives are now after what they’ve been through, that’s the time when I offered them help without asking for anything,” she said. Cruz said she was surprised when they were showing P1,000 bills supposedly contained in the brown envelope when she could remember giving them money all in P500-peso denominations. Asked about the group’s decision to reveal their meeting in public, Cruz said: “It could be part of continuing efforts by self-proclaimed whistleblower Julie Patidongan to muddle the case.”

- [Victims call for arrest of En Nouri](#) (2026-05-21 16:11)

ALLEGED human trafficking victims have urged the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking to locate and arrest London-based Italian entrepreneur Adel En Nouri, who is facing multiple criminal charges in the Philippines, including qualified human trafficking, large-scale illegal recruitment, estafa, and serious illegal detention. In a letter addressed to Acting Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida, two alleged victims of En Nouri, through their lawyer Rex Lampa, asked the DOJ to coordinate with authorities in the United Kingdom and Italy to determine the businessman’s whereabouts and facilitate his arrest. The victims urged the DOJ to initiate extradition proceedings to bring En Nouri back to the Philippines to face the charges filed against him. “We believe that a government-to-government initiative and discussion will bring a more expeditious resolution on this matter,” Lampa said in his May 12 letter to the DOJ. Court records showed that on March 4, the Bacoor City Regional Trial Court issued arrest warrants against En Nouri and several co-accused in connection with a non-bailable qualified human trafficking case under Republic Act 9208, or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, as amended by Republic Act 10364. Another arrest warrant was issued on April 10 after the same court ordered the arrest of En Nouri and his co-accused over

charges of serious illegal detention and large-scale illegal recruitment, also based on complaints filed by the DOJ. In a separate resolution dated April 16, the DOJ recommended the filing of additional non-bailable cases for large-scale illegal recruitment and estafa against En Nouri and another foreign national. Lampa said the continued evasion of En Nouri poses a threat to the victims. “My clients are deeply distressed to know that the person responsible for their suffering remains free and beyond the reach of authorities,” the lawyer said. “Unless he is immediately apprehended, my clients’ lives are in perpetual danger as Mr. Adel En Nouri is capable of committing criminal acts despite being abroad through his Filipino conspirators,” he added. Lampa wrote to Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking Executive Director Hannah Lizette Manalili seeking similar assistance for the alleged victims. Earlier, the lawyer appealed to the British and Italian embassies to cancel En Nouri’s United Kingdom resident visa and provide information regarding his whereabouts, arguing that he should be considered an undesirable alien. The alleged victims have likewise sought assistance from the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to secure the issuance of an Interpol Red Notice against En Nouri.

- [House OKs waste-to-energy bill](#) (2026-05-21 16:10)

THE House of Representatives has approved the waste-to-energy (WtE) bill, a priority measure. House Bill (HB) 9157 passed on third and final reading Wednesday night with over 250 lawmakers voting for it. Six lawmakers voted against it and three abstained. “This is not simply an energy measure or a waste management proposal. It is a national development measure that will help build cleaner, safer and more resilient communities for future generations,” House Majority Leader and Ilocos Norte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Alexander Marcos said in a statement. The bill aimed to “establish a national framework for the development, regulation and operation of facilities utilizing WtE and other waste treatment technologies,” and “seeks to reduce dependence on open dumpsites.” HB 9157 “establishes strict environmental and public health safeguards governing the establishment and operation of WtE facilities,” it said. It will require continuous emissions monitoring systems approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and compliance with the Clean Air Act, Renewable Energy Act, Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act, and other environmental laws. Operators are mandated to adopt “best available technologies and practices for pollution prevention and emissions control.” WtE projects that comply with strict operational and environmental standards are eligible for fiscal and non-fiscal incentives under the measure.

- [PNP denies CCTV tampering in Senate probe](#) (2026-05-21 16:09)

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) on Thursday defended the integrity of its investigation into the May 13 shooting incident at the Senate, rejecting claims that CCTV footage presented to the public had been manipulated. “The integrity of our investigative process is paramount and the footage we presented is authentic, time-stamped, and direct from the source, leaving no room for claims of manipulation,” PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a statement. Nartatez issued the statement after suspended Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms

(OSAA) chief Mao Aplasca was quoted in news reports as claiming that the CCTV footage presented by authorities during a Malacañang press conference on Tuesday had been "spliced" to alter the narrative of the confrontation. Nartatez said investigators remain open to further technical review if needed to preserve public trust in the ongoing probe. "We remain fully transparent and welcome any objective, expert validation of these files, as our only objective is to present the unvarnished truth of the events that transpired at the Senate," he said. The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group earlier said it would recommend the filing of charges against Aplasca and two other OSAA personnel over the incident. Alert vs possible dela Rosa exit Nartatez, meanwhile, said personnel from the Maritime Group and the Aviation Security Group had been alerted against any attempt by Sen. Ronald dela Rosa to leave the country. Dela Rosa, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), left Senate custody on May 14, hours after the commotion in the chamber, prompting speculations that the shooting incident may have been staged. Nartatez said coordination with the Bureau of Immigration showed no record of dela Rosa traveling outside the country. Police forces, however, were instructed to remain vigilant and intensify intelligence monitoring at all exit points, including the country's southern backdoor routes. The Supreme Court has denied dela Rosa's petition for a temporary restraining order against the implementation of the ICC arrest warrant. Nartatez said the PNP would defer to the Department of Justice for further direction.

- [Lacson feels 'double relief' after giving up Blue Ribbon leadership](#) (2026-05-21 16:08)

SEN. Panfilo Lacson said he felt relieved that he will no longer lead the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee even as he reiterated he will not ease up in his efforts to fight corruption. The Blue Ribbon chairmanship was normally given to a member of the majority bloc. Lacson now belongs to the minority group following a change in the Senate leadership on May 11. Lacson was succeeded by Sen. Pia Cayetano. "Double relief. I feel relieved that I am now relieved of my duties as the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee chairman," Lacson wrote on X on Thursday. He led the investigation on the flood control scandal that implicated former and incumbent legislators and personnel of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) who allegedly received kickbacks from flood control fund budget. Lacson said that under his chairmanship, the committee has contributed to the case buildup efforts against some personalities linked to the flood control mess. He said that quitting the Blue Ribbon chairmanship will not diminish his long-standing fight against corruption. "I will continue to fight a corrupt and rotten system in the misuse and abuse of public funds as I have consistently done in the course of my long years in public service," he said. Before his ouster from the Blue Ribbon panel, Lacson said he will verify flood control projects in the Visayas and Mindanao and letter requests from some legislators asking "allocables" for infrastructure projects. He said the committee has sent teams in Visayas and Mindanao to find out the extent of corruption in flood control projects. "We will zero in on allocables given due course by the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways). We'll zero in on projects that are defective and substandard," he said. "Allocables are not illegal per se but I personally believe it's not appropriate for legislators to request projects from the implementing agency," Lacson said. The senator said he intended to transmit to the

Department of Justice and the Office of the Ombudsman the evidence the committee gathered in its investigation into the flood control fund scandal. Lacson said that while he did not make the evidence public before his planned privilege speech because it could violate the rules of the Senate, his speech paved the way for the evidence to be used by the DOJ and Ombudsman in their case-building efforts.

- [PH global ranking improved due to anti-sexual abuse law](#) (2026-05-21 16:07)

THE strict enforcement of laws penalizing online sexual abuse of children and the institutionalization of a helpline for distressed children have propelled the Philippines to the 15th spot globally in the 2026 Out of the Shadows Index, marking a breakthrough in protecting minors from sexual violence. Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) Undersecretary Angelo Tapales said Thursday the country's rise to 15th out of 60 evaluated nations is a big leap from 2022, when the Philippines was at the 25th spot. Tapales said the country's aggressive legislative and institutional reforms against both online and offline sexual violence served as the primary drivers for the international index upgrade. "So, it's a recognition of the good things that government is really doing for children, sexual violence, whether online or offline," Tapales said in a Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon interview. "As I always say during my interviews, the Philippines is a pathfinding country for violence against children, and we have been since 2016," he said. The CWC highlighted Republic Act (RA) 11930, or the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (Osaec) Act, enacted in July 2022, as the foundational legislation that tilted the international rating in favor of the Philippines. "It's a trailblazing law in the sense that it really addresses online sexual abuse. Hindi lahat ng bansa ay mayroon ganoong klaseng batas kaya medyo ito ay ginagaya at kinainggitan ng ating mga ibang kapitbahay (Not all countries have this type of legislation, which is why it is being emulated and envied by some of our neighboring nations)," Tapales said. Reinforcing the legal framework is Executive Order (EO) 79, Series of 2024, which institutionalized the Makabata Helpline 1383 as the government's centralized, real-time reporting portal for children. EO 67, meanwhile, created the Presidential Office for Child Protection that appoints a dedicated presidential adviser to ensure child protection initiatives are delivered directly from the executive level to the grassroots. For a decade, the country has been recognized as a global benchmark in the children's sector, with Valenzuela City being declared the world's first pathfinding city for violence against children in 2019. Despite the global recognition generated by RA 11930 and the Makabata Helpline, Tapales admitted that systemic challenges remain, such as clogged court dockets and understaffed law enforcement units. While the anti-Osaec law mandates special prosecutors for cases, more funding is required to fully equip the Department of Justice, the Philippine National Police Anti-Cybercrime Group, and the Women and Children Protection Center with modern technological disruption equipment. To sustain the country's improved ranking, the government is moving to amend RA 11930 to explicitly cover artificial intelligence (AI) and modern gaming platforms. "Based on data, 1,325 percent increase kasi iyan globally noong 2024. So, we are watching out for AI at saka siyempre iyong sinasabi nilang quantum technology na problematic din (because that is global back in 2024. So, we are watching out for

AI, as well as what they call quantum technology, which is also quite problematic),” Tapales said. “So, kaya po kailangang i-amend iyong batas so that even AI-generated pictures or videos na malalaswa ng bata, iyan po talaga ay mapaparusahan po natin at mapo-prosecute nang maayos (that is why the law needs to be amended so that we can effectively penalize and properly prosecute individuals involved even with obscene, AI-generated pictures or videos of children).”

- [MMDA expands discipline campaign in Pateros](#) (2026-05-21 16:06)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) announced Thursday the expansion of its “Yes to Ayos” discipline campaign in Pateros. The initiative aims to involve environmental groups to widen the campaign’s reach in Metro Manila. The drive’s second rollout was held at Pateros Elementary School, where the MMDA formalized its partnership with Mother Earth Foundation and the EcoWaste Coalition. MMDA Chairman Don Artes said the joint venture aims to bring the campaign beyond government-led activities and into communities through public engagement and environmental programs. This includes the promotion of reusable and refill systems as alternatives to single-use plastics under the MMDA’s “4R’s” campaign — refuse; reduce; reuse; and recycle. On the same occasion, the MMDA unveiled the “Lola Daisy Plina Eco TINGIndahan,” a refill station where residents may exchange recyclable materials for points that can be used to refill products such as rice and condiments. MMDA Deputy Chairman Frisco San Juan Jr. said the campaign encourages residents to observe discipline in daily activities, including proper garbage disposal, compliance with traffic rules, and maintaining public spaces. “Real change begins not only with large projects, but with the simple discipline that we practice every day — proper waste disposal, following traffic laws, respecting others, protecting the environment, and being responsible in public places,” San Juan said. Pateros Mayor Gerald German expressed support for the campaign, while Barangay Sta. Ana officials cited cleanup drives, canal clearing, misting operations, and installation of pedestrian lane markings conducted in the area. MMDA General Manager Nicolas Torre III later led local officials and partner organizations in a pledge of commitment for the campaign.

- [Pasig launches law school for poor students](#) (2026-05-21 16:05)

THE Pasig City government announced Thursday the establishment of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasig (PLP) School of Law for students from low-income families. Former International Criminal Court judge and former University of the Philippines College of Law dean Raul Pangalangan was appointed as the founding dean of the law school. The city government described the move as a “historic step” for both PLP and Pasig City, noting the law school will be built on the principles of integrity, public service, good governance, and transformative justice. The appointment of Pangalangan was formally accepted during the PLP Board of Regents meeting on Wednesday, May 20, after an invitation from Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto, who chairs the university’s Board of Regents. Pangalangan, a Pasig resident since the 1960s, said he hopes to help establish a law school that would serve as a “beacon of hope” at a time when the country faces many challenges.

- [Hontiveros: Rule of law should 'always prevail'](#) (2026-05-21 16:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Risa Hontiveros on Thursday said the rule of law should "always prevail" as she reiterated her appeal to fellow Sen. Ronald dela Rosa to respect the law. The senator said the respect for law and legal should always prevail amid the pronouncement of Justice Secretary Fredrick Vida said the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court against dela Rosa can now be enforced. The Supreme Court had earlier rejected dela Rosa's request to stop any arrest linked to the ICC warrant. This ruling removed any legal barrier to the implementation of the warrant, the Department of Justice said. "I reiterate our appeal to Senator Dela Rosa: respect the law, and submit and cooperate to authorities and process of law," Hontiveros said in Filipino. "I pray for the peaceful and lawful resolution of this situation which has already affected multiple institutions, and the entire country itself. May justice be served," she added.

- [Malonzo files complaint vs Asistio](#) (2026-05-21 16:04)

FORMER Caloocan Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo on Thursday filed a complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman against Rep. Dean Asistio of the city's third district. Malonzo, who accused Asistio and his co-respondents of graft and malversation, said records showed "that substantial government funds were released for projects that" were non-existent, grossly deficient or substandard, and "unsupported by credible and consistent proof of accomplishment." Also named in the complaint were Ruel Umali, Fermerindo Angelo Besabe, Florita Villanueva, Dan Rupert Cham, Romanito Juatco, Mark Allan Arevalo, and Roland Radcliffe Imperio. Asistio denied there was ghost projects in his district. "All projects went through the proper process and implementation," he said in a Facebook post. The projects Malonzo cited included the rehabilitation of roads and drainage in Barangay 187 for P6.74 million; construction of a flood control structure in Barangay 187 (P19.2 million); a road construction project in Barangay 159 (P11.72 million), and the construction of several multipurpose buildings. The contracts, Malonzo alleged, were "manifestly and grossly disadvantageous to the" government, "as evidenced by the stark disparity between the amounts released and the absence or insufficiency of actual project deliverables." Malonzo said Umali "bears primary accountability. His position vested upon him the duty to ensure that public funds are disbursed only for legitimate and properly implemented projects. His approval of disbursements despite patent irregularities constitutes either intentional misappropriation or gross negligence tantamount to malversation." Malonzo said Asistio was "liable as a co-conspirator. His repeated public association with the projects, as evidenced by tarpaulins and project signages, and the fact that the projects were implemented within his congressional district, strongly indicate his participation in the identification, endorsement, and facilitation of funding." Malonzo said the contractors were "equally liable" as co-conspirators. "By executing the contracts, certifying accomplishments, and receiving payment despite evident irregularities, they actively participated in the unlawful scheme," he said.

- [Dimasalang Bridge rehabilitation to begin](#) (2026-05-21 16:02)

MANILA City Mayor Isko Moreno announced that Phase 2 of the rehabilitation of the Dimasalang Bridge northbound lane will begin on Saturday, May 23. Moreno said the project is targeted for completion by the second week of October 2026, in time for the preparation for the annual commemoration of All Saints' Day in November. The bridge is a crucial route for motorists and citizens traveling to the Dangwa Flower Market and the Manila North Cemetery. "We need to fix that by then because millions of people will be coming to the North Cemetery," Moreno said in Filipino in a Facebook Live broadcast on Thursday. Moreno added that the city government has prepared an alternate route plan for motorists and commuters who will be affected by the temporary closure of the northbound lane while the rehabilitation is underway. He said that Phase 1 of the project — which rehabilitated the southbound lane — was completed on time, noting that the Department of Public Works and Highways kept its promise. "They fulfilled the deadline to complete this project in accordance with their assessment and compromise with our people in Manila," Moreno added.

- [Go leads relief operations for Navotas fire victims](#) (2026-05-21 16:01)

SEN. Bong Go personally led the relief operation Tuesday for fire victims in Barangay Tangos South in Navotas City. A fire struck the community on May 14. Go told families who lost their loved ones to remain hopeful despite the tragedy. "I always go visit fire victims to sympathize with them. Let us pray for the victims. It hurts me when someone gets hurt, when someone dies," Go said in Filipino. "That's why I'm here to bring a little help during your time of mourning." He added that while material possessions can be replaced, lives lost can never be recovered. Before the aid distribution, Go joined Navotas City Mayor John Rey Tiangco and barangay officials in inspecting the area where the fire reportedly started to assess the extent of the damage and the needs of affected residents. The relief effort, conducted in coordination with local officials, benefited 45 affected families who received grocery packs, snacks, vitamins, water containers, shirts, and basketballs. Financial assistance was also distributed, while selected beneficiaries received additional items such as shoes, a bicycle, and a mobile phone. Authorities recorded four fatalities in the incident. Go emphasized the need to strengthen disaster preparedness and response systems nationwide. He said Republic Act (RA) 12076, or the Ligas Pinoy Centers Act, mandates the construction of permanent, disaster-resilient evacuation centers in all cities and municipalities, while RA 11589, or the Bureau of Fire Protection Modernization Act of 2021, aims to improve firefighters' operational readiness through upgraded equipment, enhanced training, and stronger institutional support. "As long as we live, let's not lose hope. Just keep going. We believe that service to people is service to God," Go said.

- [Govt manhunt on for fugitive senator](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Justice (DOJ) on Thursday said the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa is now "valid and enforceable" after the Supreme Court denied Dela Rosa's petition to prevent his arrest. Justice Secretary Frederick Vida confirmed that the Philippine National police (PNP) and

the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) have been ordered to arrest the senator. Vida said the warrant was transmitted to Philippine authorities last year. The ICC unsealed it last May 12. He said the warrant was not enforced earlier because of the “protective custody” extended to Dela Rosa by the Senate and the petition for a temporary restraining order (TRO) before the Supreme Court. Vida confirmed that law enforcement agencies have information about Dela Rosa’s whereabouts, but refused to elaborate. “There are definitely leaks,” he said. “I cannot discuss them. Let law enforcement agencies handle them.” He rejected claims that the warrant bypassed proper channels. “There was coordination among different branches,” Vida said. Dela Rosa, who served as PNP chief under former president Rodrigo Duterte, was the enforcer of the drug war that killed thousands of people. He was elected to two successive six-year terms in the Senate after retiring from the force. Dela Rosa is on the run after fleeing the Senate building last week, hours after a shooting incident between government agents and Senate security personnel. After a dramatic chase up the Senate stairs on the same day, government agents who failed to arrest him later paused the effort as the Senate leadership gave him sanctuary. PNP chief Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the Maritime Group and the Aviation Security Group had been alerted against any attempt by Dela Rosa to flee the country. Nartatez said the Bureau of Immigration has no record of Dela Rosa leaving the country. Just the same, police were instructed to step up the monitoring of exit points. Presidential Communications Office Undersecretary Claire Castro said on Thursday the government will exhaust all legal means to arrest Dela Rosa. The ICC named Dela Rosa as an “indirect co-perpetrator” of Duterte, who is himself facing charges of crimes against humanity in connection with his administration’s bloody anti-drugs campaign. Former Senate president Franklin Drilon on Thursday criticized the NBI for saying it was “awaiting a directive” before enforcing the warrant against Dela Rosa. “Directive from whom? From the President? From the Department of Justice? This is a simple service of a warrant. It is something authorities do every day,” Drilon said in a radio interview. He also criticized Malacañang and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) for distancing themselves from responsibility. “Now Malacañang is saying the service of the ICC warrant is an operational matter dependent on the DOJ. Then we have a DILG saying the DOJ is the lead agency and not them,” Drilon said. He noted that in previous high-profile operations involving former president Duterte and televangelist Apollo Quiboloy, it was the DILG, through the PNP and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, that took the lead in making the arrest. “There’s no obstacle in serving the warrant, and it is provided under the Rome Statute. But the reactions of our officials are laughable,” Drilon said. The Nagkaisa Labor Coalition on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court’s decision to deny the TRO on the ICC warrant against Dela Rosa. The court voted 9 for and 5 against, with one abstention, in denying the petition. “A warrant recognized as valid by the President must be enforced without delay. The rule of law cannot be placed on hold like a pending playlist,” the labor groups said. “There is no arbitrary arrest in enforcing the ICC warrant. It was issued by a judge who personally found reasonable grounds to believe that crimes were committed — a standard substantially equivalent to probable cause under Philippine law and jurisprudence,” it said. Nagkaisa Chairman Sonny Matula said the country is “dealing with the surrender of a person covered by a valid warrant

of arrest, issued by an independent judicial authority, for alleged crimes against humanity before the International Criminal Court — an international tribunal with which our own law, Republic Act (RA) 9851, recognizes cooperation.” In a Messenger chat with The Manila Times, Panagutin Network-Netherlands spokesman Joel Vega said the denial of the TRO was expected. “The Solicitor General has made a clear case not only against the TRO but also spoke on the validity of the ICC warrant and gave her opinion on the ICC jurisdiction. Republic Act 9851 (the Philippine Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity) is also unequivocal about this case and any argument saying the opposite is simply going into further technicality that needlessly complicates what has already been provided in our laws. The case of Bato is actually a mockery of our laws because what has happened in the Senate should not have happened if Cayetano has not provided the so-called protective custody,” Vega said. The NBI Retirees and Ex-Employees Association Inc. (NBI-Rexei) on Thursday expressed support for NBI Director Melvin Matibag and his agents, amid the controversies surrounding the Senate standoff last week. The group commended the NBI for its “steadfast commitment to upholding the rule of law and their efforts to execute” the ICC warrant against Dela Rosa. “Despite the undue challenges posed by certain members of the Philippine Senate, we recognize and applaud their determination in the face of adversity. It is disheartening to witness the coddling of Senator Dela Rosa and his subsequent evasion of accountability, particularly during his time in ‘protective custody,’ ” it said. The group also condemned the “reckless actions” of the Senate’s security personnel led by Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca, who “unjustifiably discharged their firearms at the NBI and within the Senate premises.” “Such behavior not only endangers the lives of our agents, the press and other people in the Senate, but also undermines the very fabric of law and order that we strive to uphold,” the NBI-Rexei said. It condemned Sen. Imee Marcos’ attempts to influence her brother, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., to suspend Matibag and his agents. In another statement, the NBI Investigators Mutual Benefit Association also affirmed its support for Matibag. “In the face of damaging and perilous accusations, false allegations and politically motivated attacks aimed at discrediting the Bureau and its personnel, the members of the organization consistently remained resilient, upholding their commitment to professionalism and maintaining their actions within the bounds of legality and propriety, demonstrating unwavering dedication to their duties regardless of external pressures,” the association said. “They emphasized that, in the face of ongoing political volatility and uncertainty, it is essential to vigorously uphold and protect the core values of the National Bureau of Investigation. These values include its unwavering integrity, honor, credibility and the independence of its institutional operations, which are vital for maintaining public trust and effective law enforcement,” it said. WITH AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, PNA, BERNADETTE TAMAYO AND ARIC JOHN SY CUA

- [Communists aware of dwindling forces – NTF-Elcac](#) (2026-05-21 16:00)

THE remaining communist insurgents are well aware of their weakening offensive capabilities, as well as their capacity to influence communities, a ranking National Task Force to End Local

Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-Elcac) official said on Thursday. "We have to understand that the CPP-NPA-NDF (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front) has recognized na (that their capabilities are already) dwindling, in terms of manpower, influenced barangays, and number of firearms," NTF-Elcac Executive Director Undersecretary Ernesto Torres Jr. said in a media briefing at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. The decrease in the communist insurgents' capabilities has been attributed to the government's focused military and civic operations, which include livelihood and integration assistance for those interested in surrendering. "It has been consistently dwindling ever since. And the latest report was that they only have 800 NPAs, a little over 800 all over the country, down to (their peak of) about 25,000 in the late 80s," Torres said. Proof of these dwindling capabilities, he said, was the CPP's "3rd Rectification Movement" on Dec. 26, 2023. "Meaning, it's an acknowledgement that they need to rectify, politically, militarily, and all the other mechanisms (of their movement)." He noted that at its peak, the communist rebels had influenced more than 9,500 barangay (villages), or about 20 percent of the country's barangay. "And it was painstakingly cleared by our security forces, foremost, with the support of local chief executives and other agencies," he said. Torres said the government has come up with an integrated territorial defense system and a barangay intelligence net. "So, when these two things are functioning in a barangay to ward off any threat group, hindi lamang insurgents, pati na rin mga addict, mga kriminal, naii-relay kaagad sa security sector kaya mabilis ang interaction, mabilis ang action (not only insurgents, but also addicts, criminals, the presence of these groups can be relayed immediately to the security sector, so that interactions are faster). So multiply that 9,000 times. So that is our way in preserving and sustaining our peace gains," Torres said. Efforts are also being made to enable local government officials to deliver basic services to their barangay. At the same briefing, the Negros Island Region PNP's Regional Forensic Unit chief Col. Reynaldo Calaoa said 11 out of the 19 NPA rebels killed in the April 19 clash in Toboso, Negros Occidental, tested positive for gunpowder residue. "Out of the 19 bodies, 11 of them were found out to be positive for gunpowder nitrates," Calaoa said. This indicates that the 11 indeed fired their weapons at troops of the Philippine Army's 19th Infantry Battalion, he said.

- [Rami Malek explores art, love and death in Ira Sachs' Cannes entry 'The Man I Love'](#) (2026-05-21 15:58)

CANNES, France — In Ira Sachs' 1980s-set drama "The Man I Love," Rami Malek finds the most well-tailored role since his Oscar-winning portrayal of Freddie Mercury in "Bohemian Rhapsody." While Sachs' film, which is a competition entry at this year's Cannes Film Festival, likewise centers on a performer dying of AIDS, it's otherwise an altogether different and dramatically more personal tale about art, love and death. "It took me a minute to realize it was more about life," Malek said in an interview alongside Sachs on a terrace in Cannes. "There's a threat looming throughout, but it's an undercurrent. Throughout the film there's a cacophony of sound and imagery and beauty that is filling your soul." The film, which is for sale in Cannes, has earned Malek — an actor who has sometimes struggled to find well-suited roles since his breakout in "Mr. Robot" — some of the best reviews of his

career. Sachs, the New York indie filmmaker of “Passages” and “Love Is Strange,” knew he wanted an actor with an ineffable star quality. “What I saw in ‘Mr. Robot’ was a very natural actor and someone who has an ability where you don’t know how they get from one word to the next.” In “The Man I Love,” Malek plays Jimmy George, a New York performance artist who’s trying to continue performing despite his illness. His partner (Tom Sturridge) diligently cares for him while a man (Luke Ford) who moves into the same building immediately falls for Jimmy. It’s not a movie filled with medication and hospital visits. Instead, it captures a performer desperately trying to continue on. Sachs said he wanted “a rapturous film.” “I wanted to make a film that contained all the things that I’ll miss when I’m gone,” said the filmmaker. “I wanted it to be suffused with emotion and pain and skin. It’s a sexy film. It has color and music. You could say it’s a list of pleasures or sins.” Some of the movie’s most overwhelming scenes are of Jimmy rehearsing or performing. In a heartbreaking showstopper, he sings the 1970 Melanie hit “What Have They Done to My Song Ma” to his family. “It came straight from my soul,” says Malek. “It’s a moment in the film when Jimmy has some sense of clarity as to what’s coming. There is this stubborn refusal to keep creating in the most desperate of times that emanates through this film. It imbued me with this sense of, ‘Oh, I can be dangerous. I can take things to a limit that I haven’t before.’ ” The 1980s has deep importance to the 60-year-old Sachs, who began working in New York in 1984. He was inspired by the stories of performance artists like John Kelly and John Jesurun “They’re the ones who told me about the last night that the comedian Frank Maya was on stage and he lost the ability to finish his act,” Sachs says. “John Kelly told me about Ethyl Eichelberger performing and having sweat drenching his face.” Malek calls Sachs “a library,” whose connection to the time of “The Man I Love” fueled his curiosity.” . “That confidence generated a performance in me that I didn’t know I was giving,” Malek says. “But I knew I was doing something unique. I didn’t know it would translate.”

- ['Fired and festive' 'Late Show' host Stephen Colbert bows out](#) (2026-05-21 15:18)

NEW YORK — "The Late Show" frontman Stephen Colbert will host the final edition of the 33-year-old US cultural institution on Thursday night, after it was cancelled by CBS as the network courted President Donald Trump. The show, which Colbert has hosted since 2015, was axed after he mocked the broadcaster for a \$16 million settlement with Trump for allegedly "maliciously" editing an interview with his Democratic election rival Kamala Harris. Colbert called it a "big fat bribe." CBS has insisted the decision to cancel "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," the ratings leader in the time slot, was purely financial -- and that it was a coincidence the move came as CBS parent company Paramount lobbied for government approval of its \$8.4 billion merger with Skydance Media. Around that time CBS brought in Bari Weiss, a right-wing journalist without significant TV experience, to run its news division. In the weeks leading to Thursday's curtain call, 62-year-old Colbert has at times cut a subdued figure, lacking some of his usual cheerful flair. "Sometimes you only truly know how much you love something when you get a sense you might be losing it," Colbert said while accepting an Emmy award last year. The identity of the final night's guests remained a closely held secret early Thursday. On the penultimate

night, rock legend Bruce Springsteen joined the "Late Show" to sing his "Streets of Minneapolis" anti-Trump protest song and to attack the Republican leader. "You're the first guy in America who's lost his show because we've got a president who can't take a joke," Springsteen told Colbert on Wednesday. And Colbert was clearly moved when he was joined in his studio by fellow late night hosts Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, Seth Meyers and John Oliver, who paid tribute in the final days. Kimmel was briefly taken off the air in September 2025 by his network ABC after complaints about a remark he made over the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. Trump has repeatedly attacked media and press freedom since returning to office, using lawsuits and regulatory threats to retaliate for unflattering news coverage and jokes. The US president has long been a fierce critic of late-night talk show hosts and their jabs at him. Trump has called Colbert a "pathetic trainwreck" who should be "put to sleep." One late night host bidding a less fond farewell was Greg Gutfeld of right-wing Fox News. Asked in November about both the cancellation and Kimmel's suspension, Gutfeld said, "Why did it take so long?" - 'Can't take a man's voice' - Colbert made his name playing a fictitious version of himself, embodying the type of conservative blowhard beloved by Fox News viewers -- and derided by the left. He first played the sharp-suited but dim-witted character on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" before getting a spin-off, "The Colbert Report." Colbert ascended to the pinnacle of US late-night TV when he was named host of the CBS flagship, shedding the character and employing his own voice. In the weeks leading to Thursday, Colbert auctioned off a raft of props and costumes featured on the show, as well as pieces of set including a giant illuminated sign. Proceeds will go to World Central Kitchen. Colbert has been coy about his next steps but announced he will be a writer on a forthcoming "Lord of the Rings" movie -- as well as lying down and taking a breather. Details of the last broadcast were scant, with show insiders tight-lipped when contacted by AFP. One guest has eluded Colbert: the pope. The host, a devout Catholic, has called the pontiff his "white whale." While an impromptu trip to New York seems unlikely, Pope Leo XIV's public schedule is clear on May 21. Colbert's fellow late-night hosts were all due to air re-runs Thursday out of respect for Colbert's swansong. And the theme of the after-party? "Fired and festive!" Ahead of the final show, Colbert brought back former "Late Show" host David Letterman who steered the ship from 1993 until 2015. The pair ascended to the roof of the show's Ed Sullivan Theater to throw furniture at a giant logo of CBS, describing it as "wanton destruction of CBS property." "You can take a man's show," said Letterman. "You can't take a man's voice."

- [Human rights alliance calls for Marcoleta removal from Senate committee](#) (2026-05-21 15:15)

The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Pahra) strongly condemned Senator Rodante Marcoleta's election as chairman of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights, calling it a "blatant insult to victims of human rights violations and their families." The alliance said in a statement on Thursday that this committee should not be led by allies of human rights violators. Marcoleta is known to be an ally of detained former president Rodrigo Duterte, who is accused of crimes against humanity before the International Criminal Court

(ICC). “A committee on Justice and Human Rights should never be led by a staunch ally of human rights violators,” said Edgar Cabalitan, Secretary-General of Pahra. “You do not deserve to sit in a position meant to defend rights and accountability when your political record consistently protected impunity and attacked institutions seeking justice,” he added. The group cited Marcoleta’s move in 2017 to slash the budget of the (CHR) to only P1,000 after it investigated killings linked to the Duterte administration’s “war on drugs”, while the current senator was serving at the House of Representatives. Pahra also condemned Marcoleta’s repeated dismissal of drug war killings as “collateral damage” and his “rejection of international accountability efforts”, including the ICC’s investigation into possible crimes against humanity against Duterte. “You cannot lead a committee like this when you attacked the CHR, defended the drug war, and most recently moved to shield Bato dela Rosa from accountability through Senate protective custody,” Cabalitan said. The group also said that Marcoleta’s recent move to place Senator Ronald dela Rosa under Senate protective custody amid ICC proceedings further proves that his appointment is “about protecting political allies rather than defending justice and human rights.” The human rights alliance also warned that Marcoleta’s appointment in his new Senate reflects a “dangerous form of institutional capture, where institutions meant to regulate abuses and uphold accountability are instead being occupied and controlled by those aligned with the very violations they are supposed to investigate.” “Your record shows that you were never concerned about victims, accountability, or human rights,” Cabalitan said. The rights organization called for Marcoleta to immediately relinquish the position, or ask Senate leadership to remove him from the committee chairmanship. “The Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights cannot become a safe space for enablers of impunity... If the Senate is serious about justice and accountability, Marcoleta has no place leading that committee,” Cabalitan said.

- [Walmart reports solid results but sees some consumers struggling](#) (2026-05-21 14:58)

NEW YORK — Walmart reported increased profits Thursday as it capitalized on affordability concerns at a time of soaring gasoline prices, but shares fell sharply on disappointment over the retailer’s sales forecast. The company pointed to strong growth in e-commerce following hefty technology investments, but cautioned that an even more prolonged shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz due to the Middle East war could send retail prices higher. “I think it’s possible that if fuel prices persist at this level, you may see some upward pressure on average retail prices,” Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey said on a conference call with analysts. Net income for the first quarter ending April 30 came in at \$5.3 billion, up 18.8 percent from the year-ago period. Revenues rose 7.3 percent to \$177.8 billion. The closely watched level of comparable sales growth at US stores was 4.1 percent. Walmart notched growth across consumer cohorts but again cited particular gains among upper-income households. The retail giant also pointed to higher revenues from advertising and membership fees. On the downside, Walmart flagged higher costs from fuel and employee health care as elements that pinched profit margins. Rainey described a bifurcated US shopper, where “the high income customer is spending with confidence into many categories while the lower income consumer is more

budget conscious and perhaps navigating financial distress."As an indication of stress, Rainey told analysts on a conference call that the average number of gallons customers buy at gasoline stations fell below 10 for the first time since 2022.Rainey called the sharply reduced activity in the Strait of Hormuz could lift food prices in addition to gasoline costs, because of the importance of the waterway to fertilizer deliveries.- Speedy deliveries -But executives touted investments such as drone deliveries and increased automation at warehouses as components that are boosting its capacity to satisfy shoppers. The company's infrastructure means it can reach 60 percent of US households within 30 minutes."While there are certainly pressures on the consumer, let me reiterate our business is strong," Rainey said.At Walmart US, which accounts for about two-thirds of revenues, the big-box chain scored a 26 percent increase in e-commerce sales, while pointing to higher levels of "expedited" deliveries of under three hours to consumers.Walmart achieved its highest level of gains in five years in "General Merchandise," a category that includes apparel and electronics.Walmart confirmed its full-year financial forecast of leading earnings including, including net sales growth between 3.5 percent and 4.5 percent for the full year.Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, said the maintained forecast was a likely factor as to why Walmart shares fell Thursday."We take a slightly different view," Saunders said in a note. "Despite a serious deterioration of consumer finances -- largely because of gas prices and inflation, to which Walmart's core customer is very sensitive -- Walmart has retained guidance for the full fiscal year."Walmart's sales outlook still represents a " healthy rate of expansion," Saunders said, adding that achieving such sales growth "would be another impressive advance."Shares fell about seven percent in early trading.

- [Three Canadian police officers arrested in Spain over sexual assault](#) (2026-05-21 14:36)

MADRID — Three off-duty Canadian police officers have been arrested in Spain over the alleged assault of a woman while on holiday in Barcelona, officials said Thursday.Two men were arrested on May 13, while a third was detained two days later on the Spanish island of Mallorca, where he had flown after the alleged assault, a spokesman for the Catalan regional police said.The alleged assault took place in the early hours of May 13 while the three men were in a taxi with a prostitute in the historic centre of Barcelona, he added, saying the men groped and hit the woman.Barcelona-based daily El Periodico de Catalunya, which first reported the story, said the men allegedly tried to force the woman to have sex with all three of them and, when she refused, the trio became aggressive.Catalan police gave no details about the men, but a spokesman for the Toronto's municipal police confirmed reports they were off-duty officers with the force. He told Canadian media they would be suspended.Of the two men arrested in Barcelona, one has been charged with sexual assault and bodily harm, while the other was released, the Catalan police spokesman said. He returned to Canada but remains under investigation.Charges for the man arrested in Mallorca have not yet been specified.Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow said that if the officers are found guilty, they "should be punished," calling the allegations "serious"."Public trust in policing is fundamental," she told a news conference in Toronto on Tuesday.The case comes as Toronto's police force reels from a series of corruption investigations involving allegations that officers took bribes and assisted drug traffickers,

damaging its reputation.

- [Chinese authorities demolish villager's madcap 10-storey home](#) (2026-05-21 14:06)

BEIJING, China — Authorities have razed a ramshackle 10-storey home that for years defied demolition notices and building restrictions to become an off-beat tourist attraction in southwestern China, footage from the owner showed. Chen Tianming spent almost eight years and 200,000 yuan (\$29,402) turning his family's humble stone bungalow into a towering pyramid-shaped warren of rickety staircases, balconies and other add-ons. The structure drew comparisons from media and tourists to the fantastical creations of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki. But local authorities took just hours to bring down all but the first floor on Wednesday, said 43-year-old Chen. Officials have claimed for some time that the building lacked permits and was potentially dangerous. "I don't feel regret, because regret is useless," Chen told AFP. "I also don't blame myself for failing to protect it -- it's just that the force driving its destruction was simply too powerful." When AFP visited last summer, the structure of faded plywood and contorted wooden beams was unmissable, soaring high above the surrounding farmland. Videos filmed after the demolition by Chen and sent to AFP showed the structure was now mostly gone, with piles of building materials remaining around it. Early Wednesday, around a dozen people from the local law enforcement and public security bureaus arrived at Chen's home, he said, before they escorted him and his parents away and confiscated his phone. Chen said he saw dozens more people around his house as he was taken to a local government office, where he was kept until late in the evening. - Legal battle - Authorities razed most of Chen's home village of Xingyi, in Guizhou province, in 2018. Their goal was to build a lucrative tourist resort in a region known for its spectacular rice paddies and otherworldly mountain landscapes. Chen refused to leave, and after the tourism project faltered, he continued to build his family's bungalow higher and higher. But even as he forged ahead, completing the fifth floor in 2019, the sixth in 2022 and the seventh in 2023, he constantly battled threats of demolition. In August 2024, his home was labelled an illegal construction, and he was ordered to destroy everything except the original bungalow within five days. He appealed that designation, which he claimed was "illegal", and has repeatedly petitioned the local government and courts. On May 18, Chen received a final notice from the Xingyi City Bureau of Coordinated Administrative Law Enforcement, which told him to leave the "illegal construction" by 9 am on Wednesday ahead of the demolition. Blocking the bureau's work would bring legal repercussions, the notice warned. "I still want to defend my rights," Chen said a day after his unique construction was torn down. "But my house has been identified as an illegal construction, and it's very difficult to overturn." Chen is seeking legal help to have the forced demolition designated illegal. "Then I will have a chance to restore it," he said.

- [Alex Marquez out of Italy, Hungary MotoGP races after crash](#) (2026-05-21 13:47)

MADRID — Spanish rider Alex Marquez will be sidelined for at least the next two MotoGP races after suffering two fractures in a horror crash at the Catalan Grand Prix last weekend, his Gresini Racing team said Thursday. "Alex Marquez will miss the Mugello and Balaton Grands

Prix," Gresini said on social media, alongside a photo of the rider with his right arm in a sling and wearing a neck brace. Marquez fractured a vertebra and his right collarbone in Catalonia after flipping off his bike, which was totally destroyed after a collision with a wall. While battling with Pedro Acosta for the race lead, Marquez ran into the back of his compatriot, who experienced a technical problem and suddenly slowed down. After missing the Italian GP, May 29-31, and the Hungarian race, June 5-7, Marquez could return in the Czech Republic, for the Grand Prix from June 19-21, depending on his recovery. Marquez had surgery on his collarbone fracture on Sunday and is awaiting a re-evaluation of his fracture of the C7 cervical vertebra. His older brother and reigning MotoGP champion Marc Marquez is also currently out injured and likely to miss the Italian Grand Prix.

- [Denmark to autopsy 'Timmy' the whale](#) (2026-05-21 13:25)

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Scientists will conduct an autopsy on "Timmy", the humpback whale whose ordeal to return to the open seas captured Germany's hearts and sparked a media frenzy, Denmark's environmental protection agency said on Thursday. Dubbed "Timmy" in Germany, the whale died after being transported into the North Sea off Denmark aboard a barge and released on May 2 in a last-ditch rescue operation to save the cetacean, which had struggled since beaching near the German coast. Its carcass was spotted off the Danish island of Anholt, with the authorities confirming Timmy's death on May 16. Since then, Timmy's corpse has been lying in shallow waters near a popular beach, causing "significant disturbance", Jane Hansen, an official at the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, told AFP in an email. The whale will therefore be moved on Thursday to the eastern port of Grenaa, "where conditions are better suited for the continued work with the whale". "In Grenaa, researchers and veterinarians will carry out the examinations and sample collection procedures that have previously been conducted in connection with other strandings of larger whales," Hansen said. If all goes well with the transfer -- a delicate operation involving several ships -- the post-mortem will be carried out on Friday. If the operation fails, work will continue on the island of Anholt instead. Some of the whale's samples and fragments will become part of museum collections. After Timmy was first spotted stricken on a sandbank on March 23, the marine mammal's travails gripped Germany for weeks, with media flocking to the Baltic coast to follow the various attempts to get the whale swimming again. But after several failed attempts, some experts criticised the continued rescues -- privately financed by wealthy entrepreneurs -- as pointless. Rescuers said they received death threats and the police had to keep onlookers at a distance day and night.

- [Lacson counters Pia Cayetano's lament vs minority bloc](#) (2026-05-21 08:08)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Sen. Pia Cayetano longed for some concern from the minority bloc during the May 13 shooting incident at the Senate and yet the majority group, where she belonged had tried to link them to the episode. This was Lacson's response to Cayetano's lament that none of her colleagues checked on her and fellow majority bloc members during the incident. "How can anyone check on the members of the majority bloc

when they - or some of them - were busy trying to link the minority bloc to a shooting incident inside the Senate building last May 13," Lacson said on Thursday. He was referring to Cayetano's emotional response to Sen. Risa Hontiveros' call for the Senate leadership to investigate the incident. Lacson said Hontiveros urged the Senate leadership to "act quickly and appropriately" to probe the chaotic situation that led to last week's shooting incident and not act as if nothing happened. Cayetano took offense and accused the now-minority bloc for "trivializing the incident." Lacson last week rejected the unfair and malicious insinuations by some majority bloc members - including Cayetano's brother Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano and Sen. Imee Marcos - that the minority bloc members left the Senate early on the day of the shooting, because they knew something would happen. At the time, Lacson said the minority members, including himself, left early because the session ended early and a planned all-senators' caucus had been converted into a majority caucus. "It is an unfair and malicious insinuation that we in the minority bloc went home early and left them behind because we knew something would happen. That is quite far from the truth. There is no basis for that because no one knew what would happen that night," Lacson said in a recent radio interview. Relieved Lacson also said he felt relieved that he would no longer lead the Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) even as he reiterated he would not ease up in his efforts to fight corruption. The BRC chairmanship is normally given to a member of the majority bloc. Lacson now belongs to the minority group following the Senate leadership on May 11. The BRC or Senate Committee on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations tasked to probe anomalies and wrongdoings in government in aid of legislation. Pia Cayetano succeeded Lacson as BRC chairman. She already held the same post in the 19th Congress. "Double relief. I feel relieved that I am now relieved of my duties as the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee chairman," Lacson wrote on X on Thursday. Lacson led the investigation on the reported flood control fund scandal wherein some former and incumbent legislators and personnel of the Department of Public Works and Highways allegedly took "kickbacks" from flood control fund budget. Lacson said that all chairmen of the Senate committees were elected by their peers and thus served at the pleasure of their colleagues. He said that under his chairmanship, the BRC has contributed to the case buildup efforts against some personalities linked to the flood control mess. But he also said that vacating the BRC chairmanship would not diminish his long-standing fight against corruption and other forms of wrongdoing. "I will continue to fight a corrupt and rotten system in the misuse and abuse of public funds as I have consistently done in the course of my long years in public service," Lacson said in a separate statement.

- [House okays waste-to-energy bill that cuts dependence on open dumpsites](#) (2026-05-21 07:12)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives approved on third and final reading the waste-to-energy (WTE) bill, which seeks to "reduce dependence on open dumpsites." Over 250 lawmakers voted for the passage of House Bill 9157 on Wednesday night. Six voted against it and another three abstained. The bill aimed to "establish a national framework for the development, regulation and operation of facilities utilizing WTE and other waste treatment

technologies", according to a statement.

- [Phase 2 of Manila bridge rehabilitation begins Saturday](#) (2026-05-21 06:52)

MANILA, Philippines—Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno announced that Phase 2 of the rehabilitation of the Dimasalang Bridge Northbound Lane will begin on Saturday. Speaking at his Facebook live broadcast on Thursday, Moreno said the project was targeted for completion by the second week of October this year, in time for the preparation for the annual commemoration of All Saints' Day in November. The bridge is a crucial route for motorists traveling to the Dangwa Flower Market and the Manila North Cemetery. Moreno added that the city government has prepared an alternate route plan for motorists and commuters who will be affected by the temporary closure of the northbound lane while the rehabilitation is underway.

- [Marcos vows stricter monitoring after Navotas landfill fire](#) (2026-05-21 06:21)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday said the government would strictly monitor landfill areas to prevent another fire similar to the one that erupted at the Navotas Sanitary Landfill. In his speech during the launch of the "Bawat Bayan Makikinabang" initiative in Obando, Bulacan, Marcos raised concern over the harmful effects of smoke produced by burned garbage, particularly plastic wastes. "That smoke is really dangerous because it's not like ordinary smoke coming from burning wood or similar materials. There are all sorts of things underneath it," Marcos said. "From now on, we really have to carefully monitor situations like this. There is not much we can do because, as you know, during the dry season, it gets extremely hot. Apparently, these fires can ignite on their own," he added.

- [MMDA expands environmental discipline campaign in Pateros](#) (2026-05-21 06:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority on Thursday expanded its "Yes to Ayo" discipline campaign to Pateros, bringing in environmental groups as part of efforts to widen the campaign's reach in Metro Manila. The campaign's second rollout was held at Pateros Elementary School, where the MMDA partnered with Mother Earth Foundation and the EcoWaste Coalition for activities promoting waste reduction and environmental responsibility. MMDA Chairman Don Artes said the partnerships aimed to bring the campaign beyond government-led activities and into communities through public engagement and environmental programs. The participating environmental groups promoted reusable and refill systems as alternatives to single-use plastics under the MMDA's "4R's" campaign — refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle. The MMDA also unveiled the "Lola Daisy Plina Eco TINGIndahan," a refill station where residents may exchange recyclable materials for points that can be used to refill products such as rice and condiments. MMDA Deputy Chairman Frisco San Jr. said the campaign encouraged residents to observe discipline in daily activities, including proper garbage disposal, compliance with traffic rules, and maintaining public spaces. "Real change begins not only with large projects, but with the simple discipline that we practice every day — proper waste disposal, following traffic laws, respecting others, protecting the environment, and being responsible in public places," San said. Pateros Mayor Gerald German

expressed support for the campaign, while Barangay Sta. Ana officials cited cleanup drives, canal clearing, misting operations, and installation of pedestrian lane markings conducted in the area. MMDA General Manager Nicolas Torre III later led local officials and partner organizations in a pledge of commitment for the campaign.

- ['Education is a right' as Marcos urges students to utilize govt support](#) (2026-05-21 05:27)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday urged students to take advantage of the support of the government, as he reminded them that education is not a privilege but a right of every Filipino. Speaking before presidential scholars at the Obando Central School in Bulacan, Marcos encouraged the students to persevere in their studies and strive for success, stressing that education is a lifelong asset that cannot be lost, stolen, or taken away. "For the government, education is not a privilege, it is the right of every youth that must be taken care of and guaranteed that is good," Marcos said. "It is there for a lifetime and you can use it to improve your life and the lives of your family," he added. A total of 55 scholars from Obando's 11 barangay (villages) are set to receive P20,000 each under the Socio-Civic Projects Fund initiative. The scholarship assistance forms part of the "Bawat Bayan Makikinabang" program, under which every barangay receives P200,000 in assistance from the national government.

- [Bato Dela Rosa can now be arrested after Court affirms ICC warrant— DOJ](#) (2026-05-21 05:23)

MANILA, Philippines — Justice Secretary Frederick Vida announced on Thursday that the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sen. Ronald dela Rosa is now enforceable, following the Supreme Court's decision to deny his petition for a temporary restraining order (TRO). Vida made the statement after the High Court rejected Dela Rosa's request to stop any arrest or enforcement actions linked to the ICC warrant, effectively clearing the way for domestic authorities to recognize and act on the international legal instrument. According to the Department of Justice (DOJ), the ruling removes any legal barrier previously sought by the senator to halt implementation while the case was pending before the judiciary. The Supreme Court's decision came after Dela Rosa asked for a TRO or a status quo ante order to prevent enforcement of the ICC warrant and related actions. The Court, however, did not grant the relief sought. With the TRO petition dismissed, Vida said the DOJ considered the ICC warrant actionable under existing legal mechanisms and coordination frameworks involving law enforcement agencies.

- [Drilon blasts govt hesitation on Bato Dela Rosa arrest warrant](#) (2026-05-21 04:56)

MANILA, Philippines -- Former Senate president Franklin Drilon criticized the government's hesitation to serve the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sen. Ronald dela Rosa. Drilon on Thursday questioned the responses of concerned government agencies over the implementation of the ICC arrest order against dela Rosa for his involvement in the Duterte administration's anti-drug campaign. He said that in a simple serving of warrant

of arrest, concerned authorities were passing the buck on who should implement it. “It is a collective failure of leadership.” The former justice secretary slammed the National Bureau of Investigation for saying it was “awaiting a directive” before acting on the warrant. “Directive from whom? From the President? From the Department of Justice (DOJ)? This is a simple service of a warrant. It is something authorities do every day,” Drilon said in a radio interview. He also criticized Malacañang and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) for distancing themselves from responsibility. “Now Malacañang is saying the service of the ICC warrant is an operational matter dependent on the DOJ. Then we have a DILG saying the DOJ is the lead agency and not them,” Drilon said. He noted that in previous high-profile operations involving former president Rodrigo Duterte and preacher Apollo Quiboloy, it was the DILG, through the Philippine National Police and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, that took the lead in implementing the operations. “There’s no obstacle in serving the warrant and it is provided under the Rome Statute. But the reaction of our officials are laughable,” Drilon said in Filipino.

- [Senate eyes July 6 start of Duterte impeachment trial](#) (2026-05-21 04:52)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Erwin Tulfo said the Senate was targeting July 6 for the start of the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte following discussions held during an all-members caucus after Tuesday’s session. In an interview on Thursday, Tulfo outlined the tentative timeline and proposed schedule for the proceedings, saying senators are preparing for an intensive trial calendar that could extend late into the evening. According to Tulfo, the Senate president will first grant Duterte’s camp 10 days to respond to the articles of impeachment, after which the prosecution panel will be given five calendar days to file its reply. “After the Senate President gives 10 days to VP Sara’s camp, the prosecution also needs to respond, five calendar days. And then we will move on to the pre-trial,” Tulfo said. The senator said that the pre-trial phase would involve the marking of evidence, submission of statements, and other procedural matters ahead of the formal hearings. “It seems like the trial will actually start on July 6 after our break,” he added. Tulfo said senators were considering a schedule that would allow the chamber to continue its legislative work while conducting the impeachment proceedings. Under the proposed arrangement, Senate sessions would be held in the morning, followed by impeachment hearings in the afternoon and evening. “The plan, if I remember correctly, is that every Monday morning, we will have a session so that we don’t run out of time,” Tulfo said. “We have a session from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., then after a one-hour break, we go straight to the trial from 2 p.m. until the end — maybe until 11 p.m. or 12 midnight.”

- [DA files complaints with Ombudsman vs Public Works officials, private contractors over ghost road projects in Davao Occidental](#) (2026-05-21 04:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) has filed complaints with the Office of the Ombudsman against several Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) officials and private contractors over ghost farm-to-market road (FMR) projects in Davao Occidental. The complaint covers eight FMRs totaling approximately P94 million. The DA alleged that the

respondents cited in the complaints falsified Statements of Work Accomplished, Certificates of Payment, and Disbursement Vouchers to claim that the FMR projects were completed to facilitate the release of public funds. However, the agency said field validation showed that the projects were not implemented.

- [Quezon City boosts transparency, accountability in ‘QCitizen Data platforms’](#)

(2026-05-21 04:33)

MANILA, Philippines – ‘QCitizens’ will now have direct access on local government data and monitor city projects with the launch of new digital platforms, Mayor Joy Belmonte announced on Thursday. Belmonte said this would be a major step toward strengthening transparency and public accountability as the initiative reflects the city government’s continuing commitment to open governance and citizen-centered public service. By giving residents direct access to information and creating more channels for engagement and feedback, the city chief executive said the local government hoped to strengthen public trust, encourage civic participation, and improve the delivery of services across communities. “Our goal is to make government easier to understand and easier to engage with for every QCitizen. These platforms give our residents real visibility into how the city works—from programs and budgets to projects and services,” Belmonte told The Manila Times. “When people can see what the government is doing and track how it responds, it creates a stronger sense of trust and shared responsibility,” she added. According to the Public Affairs and Information Service Department (PAISD), the launch marks the city’s pioneering effort to institutionalize transparency by making an initial set of government data on programs and services publicly accessible through user-friendly digital platforms. At the center of the launch are three key platforms: the QCitizen Data Dashboards, the QC Open Infra Dashboard, and QC iReport—digital tools designed to provide residents with greater visibility into government operations, public spending, and service delivery. The QCitizen Data Dashboards serve as a centralized source of information on city services, programs, and demographic data, transforming complex government information into easy-to-understand visuals and data stories. Among the information currently available through the platform are data on QC Helpline 122, QCID, PWD Community, Free Maintenance Medicine, Pangkabuhayang QC, and the QC Scholarship Program. Meanwhile, the QC Open Infra Dashboard is a centralized digital project billboard that allows residents to track locally-funded infrastructure projects across the city. Through the platform, users can access key information such as project locations, budgets, implementation timelines, completion targets, current status, and actual project photos covering infrastructure projects from 2019 to the present. The 3rd key platform is the QC iReport which allows users to file reports, upload supporting photos, and monitor the progress and response time of their submissions through an integrated tracking system, PAISD said. PAISD said the platform covered a wide range of non-emergency community concerns, including busted streetlights, clogged drainage, uncollected garbage and potholes, as well as violations of city ordinances and regulations like illegal parking, illegal structures and businesses operating without permit. “QC iReport complements Helpline 122 by serving as an alternative digital channel for non-urgent concerns,” Belmonte said. The local government

stressed that emergency situations would continue to be handled through its emergency hotline while concerns reported through Helpline 122 may also be monitored within the platform using assigned ticket numbers.

- [Ombudsman probe on Chiz Escudero, Romualdez at 'preliminary stage'](#) (2026-05-21 04:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman's investigation on Sen. Francis Escudero and Leyte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez is at the preliminary stage, Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said on Thursday. "Sen. Chiz Escudero's is at the preliminary investigation stage already. There was an order to submit counter-affidavit which was received by the office of Senator Chiz Escudero....I believe...our panel is just waiting for his counter-affidavit so that the preliminary investigation can proceed," Clavano said in an interview over DZBB. "Former speaker Martin Romualdez's is also at the preliminary investigation stage already too. His money laundering cases were the first to reach that stage," Clavano said. Last April, Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla said that "we have been seriously preparing a case of plunder against" Escudero and Romualdez. It was in connection with the budget process. Escudero is a former Senate president and Romualdez a former speaker of the House of Representatives. "Flood control related in so many ways," Remulla said of what his office was preparing at the time. "It's actually the way that the budget was passed upon by the two houses and how many things happened to be have been implemented because of that," he said. Romualdez has said he was not part of the bicameral and small committee budget deliberations. He has also said that "I have never authorized, instructed, or allowed anyone to engage in any conduct that would betray the people or taint my name." Last year, former Public Works undersecretary Roberto Bernardo alleged Escudero had a bagman. Escudero denied this.

- [PH urged to pursue arrest, extradition of Italian businessman linked to trafficking, illegal recruitment cases](#) (2026-05-21 03:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) have been urged to intensify efforts to locate and arrest London-based Italian entrepreneur Adel En Nouri, who is facing multiple criminal charges in the Philippines, including qualified human trafficking, large-scale illegal recruitment, estafa, and serious illegal detention. In a letter addressed to Acting Justice Secretary Frederick Vida, two alleged victims of En Nouri, through their lawyer Rex Lampa, asked the DOJ to coordinate with authorities in the United Kingdom and Italy to determine the businessman's whereabouts and facilitate his arrest. The victims also urged the DOJ to initiate extradition proceedings to bring En Nouri back to the Philippines to face the charges filed against him. "We believe that a government-to-government initiative and discussion will bring a more expeditious resolution on this matter," Lampa said in his May 12 letter to the DOJ. Court records showed that on March 4, the Bacoor City Regional Trial Court issued arrest warrants against En Nouri and several co-accused in connection with a non-bailable qualified human trafficking case under Republic Act 9208, or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, as amended by Republic Act No. 10364. Another arrest warrant was issued on April 10 after the same court ordered the arrest of

En Nouri and his co-accused over charges of serious illegal detention and large-scale illegal recruitment, also based on complaints filed by the DOJ. In a separate resolution dated April 16, the DOJ recommended the filing of additional non-bailable cases for large-scale illegal recruitment and estafa against En Nouri and another foreign national. Lampa said the continued evasion of En Nouri posed a threat to the victims. “My clients are deeply distressed to know that the person responsible for their suffering remains free and beyond the reach of authorities,” the lawyer said. “Unless he is immediately apprehended, my clients’ life is in perpetual danger as Mr. Adel En Nouri is capable of committing criminal acts despite being abroad through his Filipino conspirators,” he added. Lampa also wrote to Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking Executive Director Hannah Lizette Manalili seeking similar assistance for the alleged victims. The lawyer appealed to the British and Italian embassies to cancel En Nouri’s United Kingdom resident visa and provide information regarding his whereabouts, arguing that he should be considered an undesirable alien. The alleged victims have likewise sought assistance from the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to secure the issuance of an Interpol red notice against En Nouri.

- [NBI pressed to investigate ‘national security threat’ in LTO’s license system run from abroad](#) (2026-05-21 03:01)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) must immediately take the initiative to conduct a thorough investigation over the Land Transportation Office’s (LTO) driver’s license system, which is allegedly being run remotely outside the country by a German information technology (IT) firm. In a May 19, 2026 letter to NBI director Melvin Matibag, a copy of which was obtained by The Manila Times, Salvador Piamonte, head of the community affairs of Flag Maharlika - an advocacy organization - raised major sovereignty and national security alarms over the alleged foreign-operated access to the country’s public identity infrastructure. Piamonte, interviewed by the members of the Quezon City Press Club, said that his group’s request was based on an Ombudsman resolution which cited an internal LTO Management Information Division (MID) report. The LTO’s own technical experts explicitly warned that IT contractor Dermalog, a German-based company, has full “access and control” over the five-year Driver’s License Inventory and Printing Application Modules. According to the LTO-MID report quoted by the anti-graft office, the system poses a “national security threat” because the foreign contractor can secretly print Philippine driver’s license cards outside the country at any given time without LTO’s knowledge. The group also cited a “ridiculous system flaw” where local LTO employees could not even transfer physical card inventory from one district to another within the Philippines without begging a Dermalog employee based in Malaysia to do it remotely. “Our national identity system is compromised. Why are we allowing a foreign-based entity to hold the keys to the data and licenses of millions of Filipino drivers?” Piamonte said. “This is a direct slap to our national sovereignty,” the group’s director said. Piamonte said his group wants NBI’s Cybercrime and Counter-Intelligence divisions to look into potential violations of Republic Act 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act), specifically Illegal Access and System Interference, and check if public officials’ administrative failures

facilitated this mess under the Anti-Graft law (R.A. 3019). The civic group, according to Piamonte, also revealed that a parallel complaint is being sent to the National Privacy Commission regarding data privacy violations. The issue is currently heating up as the Office of the Solicitor General has petitioned the Supreme Court to nullify the multi-billion LTO-Dermalog IT contract, renewing its push for a temporary restraining order, it added. This newspaper tried to reach the IT company for comment, in vain while an unnamed LTO official initially denied such a practice but he let the leadership address the matter.

- [NBI retirees, ex-employees support incumbent chief](#) (2026-05-21 02:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The NBI Retirees and Ex-Employees Assn. Inc. (NBI-Rexei) on Thursday said they supported the leadership of NBI Director Melvin Matibag and his agents, amid the controversies surrounding the Senate standoff last week that led to the escape of Sen. Ronald dela Rosa. Dela Rosa has a warrant of arrest from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his role in the war on drugs of former president Rodrigo Duterte. “We commend their steadfast commitment to upholding the rule of law and their efforts to execute the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant of arrest against Senator Ronald 'Bato' de la Rosa,” the group said. “Despite the undue challenges posed by certain members of the Philippine Senate, we recognize and applaud their determination in the face of adversity. It is disheartening to witness the coddling of Senator de la Rosa and his subsequent evasion of accountability, particularly during his time in ‘protective custody,’ ” they added. The group also condemned the “reckless actions” of the guards in the Senate under the leadership of now-suspended Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca, who “unjustifiably discharged their firearms at the NBI and within the Senate premises.” “Such behavior not only endangers the lives of our agents, the press and other people in the Senate, but also undermines the very fabric of law and order that we strive to uphold,” the NBI-Rexei said.

- [China concerned over citizens' welfare in PH after arrest of 69 legal workers in steel firm raid](#) (2026-05-21 02:08)

MANILA, Philippines -- The Chinese Embassy in Manila on Wednesday said the 69 detained Chinese workers have valid work permits as it complained of "discriminatory law enforcement practice." The concerned Chinese were arrested, on suspicion of being illegal workers, after authorities raided a steel factory in Misamis Oriental last week. Deputy Chief of Mission Zhou Zhiyong said the Chinese were all legal workers with valid visas or special work permits. "These are not illegal workers." "Our paramount concern is the safety and welfare of our citizens here in the Philippines," Zhou said in a briefing. He urged the concerned "law enforcement or Filipino authorities to clarify the legal ground of their continued detention" at the National Bureau of Investigation. He noted that there were about 400 workers in the steel firm but it was only the Chinese workers who were arrested and flown to Manila in a "military plane." The Filipino workers were released on the same day "and somebody from the Philippine law enforcement even said they went there to rescue [the Filipino workers]." "What's the logic? This to us raises the suspicion of discriminatory law enforcement practice," Zhou said. He said the embassy did

not file any diplomatic protest but has written to relevant government agencies to address their concerns with regard to the safety of their nationals. Zhou said their citizens have complained of being detained in a small detention cells. "They can't sleep. Our citizens are not receiving humane treatment." "Harassment packaged as law enforcement" Meanwhile, the Philippine Sanjia Steel Corporation, the company operating the controversial P800-million steel manufacturing plant raided by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Misamis Oriental denounced the operation as "harassment packaged as law enforcement" and demanded the reopening of the facility and release of detained workers. In a statement, the company rejected allegations that the Tagoloan-based plant was involved in illegal Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations (POGOs), hazardous industrial activities, and the production of substandard steel products, saying authorities relied on "unverified allegations" and sensationalized claims. The raid was conducted at the company's 22.7-hectare steel manufacturing facility inside the Phividec Industrial Estate and led by PAOCC Executive Director Benjamin Acorda Jr.. Authorities alleged that the plant was involved in hazardous industrial operations, the production of substandard steel products, and possible links to illegal POGOs. Sanjia Steel denied the accusations and questioned the use of search warrants and detention of personnel, arguing that the alleged violations involved administrative and regulatory matters rather than criminal offenses. "These alleged infractions fall strictly under the regulatory supervision of civilian agencies," the company's legal counsel, Julia Chu, said in the statement. "Legitimate compliance issues are ordinarily addressed through a Notice of Violation process—not by serving criminal search warrants, shutting down an industrial complex, and detaining technical personnel." Following the operation, authorities ordered the temporary closure of the facility pending legal proceedings. The company said the closure displaced more than 300 Filipino workers and triggered protests in parts of Mindanao, where employees and their families called for the reopening of the plant amid concerns over lost income. Sanjia also disputed allegations that it manufactured substandard steel products, noting that representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry–Bureau of Philippine Standards were allegedly not present during the operation. The firm maintained that its products complied with engineering and dimensional standards and said it held valid Product Standard certifications. The company likewise rejected allegations involving uranium and "nuclear waste," describing the claims as baseless and sensationalized. According to Sanjia, its operations use imported Japanese scrap metal processed under an Environmental Compliance Certificate issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It added that the imported materials entered the country with complete certifications and complied with Japanese industrial standards. The company warned that public references to "nuclear waste" involving Japanese industrial materials could affect trade relations and damage investor confidence. Sanjia also defended the 69 foreigners apprehended during the operation, saying they were specialized engineers and technical personnel necessary for machinery operations and technology transfer. "All foreign personnel possess valid immigration documents and active Alien Employment Permits issued by the Department of Labor and Employment," Chu said. The company further alleged that authorities barred its legal team from entering the facility during the operation, leaving workers

and foreign personnel without legal representation for nearly 24 hours. Sanjia argued that the alleged restriction may constitute a violation of constitutional rights and could affect the integrity and admissibility of evidence obtained during the raid. The steel manufacturer also questioned the absence of other regulatory agencies during the operation, including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Bureau of Immigration, and the Securities and Exchange Commission. “If the objective was truly regulatory compliance, then the proper agencies should have been present from the beginning,” Chu said. The company likewise denied alleged ties to businessman Tony Yang, saying corporate records filed before the SEC show that Yang had already divested from the corporation. Sanjia also rejected allegations linking the company to illegal POGO activities, claiming authorities failed to recover servers, gaming systems, or communication infrastructure during the search. “We find it deeply troubling that broad and highly publicized allegations were used to justify an operation of this magnitude despite the apparent absence of evidence supporting claims of illegal gaming activities,” Chu said. Despite the controversy, the company said it would invite independent international auditors and Japanese suppliers to assess the facility and validate its compliance and operational standards. The company maintained that it remains a legitimate industrial manufacturing enterprise and said the allegations had already caused significant reputational and economic damage to its operations, workers, suppliers, and business partners.

- [Senate sets June 1 deadline for Sara Duterte reply to charges as more drama unfolds](#)
(2026-05-21 01:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate, acting as an impeachment court, gave Vice President Sara Duterte until June 1, 2026 to answer the charges that have been leveled against her even as it grapples with the shooting incident in the Senate last May 13, following a foiled attempt by authorities to arrest Sen. Ronald dela Rosa on the strength of a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his role in the anti-drug campaign of his former boss, then president Rodrigo Duterte. At the same time, Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano on Wednesday called for restraint and prudence in discussing the shooting incident, saying the matter remains emotionally charged and sensitive not only for lawmakers but for the entire country. Speaking before the Senate plenary, Cayetano acknowledged the strong emotions surrounding the attack on the Senate and appealed to his colleagues to allow ongoing investigations to proceed before drawing conclusions. “This is an emotional issue, not only for us but for the whole country, given this is the Senate of the Philippines,” Cayetano said. “It’s a sensitive issue because there are words that have been used. That’s why I have tried to be deliberate.” The Senate President said multiple members of the majority bloc wanted to speak on the matter but urged lawmakers to defer lengthy interpellations to allow the body to address other pressing concerns, including preparations related to the impeachment proceedings. Cayetano informed the Senate that the summons had been served earlier in the day to Duterte and was asked to submit her reply, given 10 calendar days from receipt of the summons to file her answer. Since the original deadline fell on a Saturday, the final deadline was moved to Monday, June 1, 2026. He added that the prosecution panel would then have five

calendar days from receipt of Duterte’ s response to file a reply should they choose to do so. Cayetano emphasized the need to carefully balance the Senate’ s impeachment responsibilities with its legislative work, committee hearings, and regular session schedule. “We have to discuss the impeachment calendar vis-a-vis the legislative calendar, committee hearings, and session,” he said. The Senate chief also appealed for cooperation among senators, warning that extended privilege speeches and interpellations on the shooting incident could stretch deliberations late into the night. Meanwhile, Sen. Pia Cayetano, sister of the Senate president, broke down during the session after Sen. Risa Hontiveros remarked in a privilege speech that it was “as if nothing had happened,” referring to the May 13 melee. In her speech, Hontiveros lamented what she described as an apparent lack of accountability and urgency after the violent incident, saying it seemed that the institution, its employees, and even the Filipino people had been disregarded. Cayetano immediately rose to respond, strongly disputing the statement and insisting that the incident had deeply affected those who were present during the shooting. Fighting back tears, Cayetano recounted how terrified she was, saying she even called her children to say goodbye because she feared for her life. “It is painful to hear that it was as if nothing happened,” Cayetano said, noting that only two doors separated her from the area where the shooting took place.

- [Broadcast journalist slammed over 'rape' jokes, apologizes for 'insensitive' comments](#) (2026-05-21 01:20)

MANILA, Philippines—A women’ s rights group slammed a broadcast journalist for uttering rape jokes on air, stressing that his remarks violate the Safe Spaces Act. In a statement Wednesday, Gabriela Women’ s Party condemned K5 News FM Bacolod 101.5 anchor Jean Paul Generoso for repeatedly asking a fellow female journalist to “rape her” while they were reporting on cases of abuse against women and children. “What’s even more outrageous is that this happened while discussing a sensitive issue of abuse. Instead of showing respect and sensitivity to the victims, it was used as an opportunity to make fun of them, which only further normalizes rape,” the group lamented. Generoso has since apologized for his remarks, admitting he made the comment “carelessly.” “During our discussion regarding the reported incident of a father physically abusing his minor daughter in public, I carelessly made an on-air joke referencing “rape.” While it was never my intention to mock or trivialize the suffering of victims, I now fully realize that using this term in a humorous context, especially on live radio, was deeply insensitive, irresponsible, and entirely unacceptable,” Generoso said in a statement.

- [Trump’ s portrait hits New Delhi traffic as US Embassy rolls out 'Happy Birthday America!' rickshaws](#) (2026-05-20 21:26)

INDIA — In New Delhi’ s chaotic traffic, where the backs of auto-rickshaws sometimes double as mobile billboards, some commuters are now being greeted by an unlikely face: U.S. President Donald Trump. Splashed beneath his portrait is the slogan, “Happy Birthday America!” About 100 auto-rickshaws carrying large images of Trump and the Statue of Liberty

have appeared across the Indian capital in recent weeks. In a city where the backs of thousands of three-wheelers are routinely covered with ads for little-known fertility clinics, English-speaking courses and herbal remedies, the American branding stands out. The unusual advertising campaign was unveiled last month by Sergio Gor, the U.S. ambassador to India. It is part of a broader push by the U.S. to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence, with celebrations, cultural events and public outreach campaigns planned in several countries. Announcing the initiative on social media last month, the U.S. Embassy posted, “Freedom is on the move ... literally!” And it urged people in the capital to flag down the auto-rickshaws, saying, “Catch them if you can — they’ll be popping up all over Delhi soon.” Washington is seeking to stabilize relations with India after ties soured over Trump’s tariff policies, which raised duties on several Indian exports. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is also expected to visit New Delhi this weekend. For many auto-rickshaw drivers, though, the campaign carries little meaning. Driver Ganesh Kumar, whose vehicle carried one of the Trump posters, said he initially refused when organizers approached him. “I told them I didn’t want it,” Kumar said. But he relented after organizers offered him a valuable inducement. “They said, ‘Please let us put (the poster). We’ll give you a packet of tea,’ ” he said. Another driver, Pradeep Kumar, said he agreed to carry the poster mostly because the canopy of his auto-rickshaw was torn and needed covering. Asked if he knew what the advertisement said, Kumar replied: “I know he is Trump. Don’t know much other than that.”

- [UN agency warns Hormuz block could trigger global food crisis](#) (2026-05-20 21:20)

ROME, Italy — The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned Wednesday that the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz could “trigger a severe global food price crisis” in the coming months. Hormuz accounted for a fifth of global oil shipping before the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran, which prompted Tehran to effectively shut down the strait to tanker and cargo traffic. A third of the world’s fertiliser supply also passed through the strait before the war, and officials have warned that farmers could face shortages during the summer growing season. The Rome-based FAO said there should be more attention on alternative land and sea routes, including across the Arabian peninsula to the Red Sea. It also called for countries to avoid export restrictions on energy and fertilisers and to exempt food aid from trade curbs. The time has come to “start seriously thinking about how to increase the absorption capacity of countries, how to increase their resilience to this choke”, the FAO’s chief economist Maximo Torero said in a podcast published Wednesday. In a statement, the agency said the Hormuz blockage was “not a temporary shipping disruption” but “the beginning of a systemic agrifood shock”. It warned a full-blown global food crisis could come within six to 12 months. “The shock is unfolding in stages: energy, fertiliser, seeds, lower yields, commodity price increases, then food inflation,” it said. The FAO said its global food price index had risen for three consecutive months since the start of the conflict.

- [Arizona executes inmate who set a man on fire, killing him, in 2002 attack](#) (2026-05-20 20:55)

FLORENCE — An Arizona prisoner convicted of killing another man by throwing gasoline at him and lighting a match was put to death Wednesday, the first of three executions planned this week around the U.S. Leroy Dean McGill, 63, was pronounced dead at 10:26 a.m. PDT following a lethal injection at the Arizona State Prison Complex in Florence. McGill was convicted of murder in the death of Charles Perez, who was attacked with his girlfriend in a north Phoenix apartment on July 13, 2002. It was the first lethal injection carried out this year in Arizona, and McGill didn't appear to be resisting at any point during the procedure. After a lethal dose of pentobarbital began flowing, he began breathing heavily and made a snoring sound. And, about 21 minutes after the IV insertion process began, he was pronounced dead. While the state was criticized for having difficulty in inserting IV lines during executions in 2022, it took just one attempt on each of McGill's arms to successfully insert IVs. "Today's process went according to plan," said John Barcello, deputy director of the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry. Barcello quoted McGill's last words as: "I just want to thank everyone for being so accommodating and nice." Before the injection began, McGill looked at the witnesses, smiled and nodded. Media witness Josh Kelety from The Associated Press said he heard McGill at one point say: "I'm going home soon." Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes, whose office pressed for the execution to be carried out, said her thoughts were with the victims. Media witness Sean Rice from Phoenix television station KPN said the execution was carried out smoothly. "I didn't see any issue at all finding a vein on either arm," he said. Rice said he also observed a slight twitching on the right side of McGill's head about four minutes before the inmate was pronounced dead. Authorities said that in 2002 McGill threw gasoline at Perez and Perez's girlfriend, Nova Banta, as they sat on a sofa in the apartment, setting them on fire. Perez and Banta had accused McGill of stealing a gun from the apartment before the attack. At the time, McGill was using methamphetamine and hadn't slept in several days. Banta survived, but Perez died. Twelve people have been executed so far this year in the United States. Tennessee and Florida each are scheduled to carry out an execution Thursday. At the Arizona trial, Banta testified that McGill had told her and Perez not to talk behind people's backs. Before they could respond, McGill lit them on fire, authorities said. Perez and Banta ran out of the apartment. Another man who lived in the apartment used a blanket to put out the flames on Banta, who suffered third-degree burns over three-quarters of her body. Perez died later at a hospital in extreme pain, prosecutors said. Banta identified McGill as the attacker at trial. Jurors deliberated for less than an hour before convicting McGill of murder in Perez's death in October 2004. He also was convicted of attempted murder for attacking Banta, arson and endangerment of people who escaped without injuries when the fire forced them to flee the apartment and a nearby unit where flames spread. McGill's lawyers had argued for leniency by presenting evidence about abuse he suffered as a child as well as mental impairment and psychological immaturity. The jury ultimately returned the death sentence. This spring, McGill's lawyers made a last-ditch bid to get him resentenced, but a lower-court judge rejected it. The Arizona Supreme Court also declined a request from McGill's lawyers to postpone the execution. McGill, who declined an interview request from The Associated Press, waived his right to seek clemency. Arizona last applied the death penalty in 2025, executing Richard Kenneth Djerf for the 1993 killings of four members of a Phoenix family and Aaron

Gunches for the 2002 fatal shooting of his girlfriend's ex-husband. The state carried out three executions in 2022 following a nearly eight-year hiatus brought on by difficulties obtaining execution drugs and by criticism that a 2014 execution was botched. In that 2014 execution, Joseph Wood was injected with 15 doses of a two-drug combination over two hours, leading him to snort repeatedly and gasp hundreds of times before he died. The state's current execution protocol calls for administering two syringes of pentobarbital, a powerful sedative.

- [North Korean soccer team beats South Korean hosts in rare match between divided countries](#) (2026-05-20 20:52)

SUWON, South Korea — Drenched in rain, hundreds of South Koreans cheered the North Korean visitors during a rare soccer match between the divided countries Wednesday as Pyongyang-based Naegohyang Women's FC defeated host Suwon 2-1 against the backdrop of political tensions. The win locked Naegohyang into another match in South Korea, a final Saturday against Tokyo Verdy Beleza, which defeated Melbourne City 3-1 in the other semifinal of the Asian Football Confederation Women's Champions League. "I trusted our team's strength. If all of us stay united firmly as one, neither the semifinals nor the final would be a problem for us," said Naegohyang goal-scorer Choi Kum Ok. While athletes from North and South Korea have previously competed on combined teams and marched together in Olympic ceremonies during periods of warmer ties, such exchanges have largely disappeared in recent years as relations between the rivals deteriorated over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Naegohyang has drawn intense media attention since its 39 players and staff arrived in South Korea on Sunday on a flight from China. North Korea last sent athletes to the South in December 2018 for a table tennis event, part of a brief period of diplomatic engagement that included the participation of North Korean athletes and a high-level delegation at that year's Winter Olympics in the South. The brief period of inter-Korean detente collapsed after U.S.-led negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program broke down in 2019 amid disputes over international sanctions. Since then, North Korea has conducted a flurry of weapons tests aimed at expanding its nuclear arsenal and rejected South Korean and U.S. efforts to revive diplomacy. Hundreds show up in rain-soaked match The liberal government of South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, which has pushed for improved ties with North Korea, said it would financially support civic groups that had planned to organize a 3,000-member squad to cheer both sides at Wednesday's match. It wasn't immediately clear whether that many people showed up for the rain-soaked match, although at least hundreds filled the stands in raincoats, pounding balloon sticks and loudly chanting "Naegohyang" to drumbeats, appearing especially enthusiastic about the North Korean team. Some held signs reading "We welcome the Naegohyang Women's FC team" and other similar messages. Ri Yu Il, Naegohyang's coach, brushed aside questions about South Korean supporters cheering for his team, saying at a Tuesday news conference that he and his players were focused "solely on tomorrow's match and the match after that." North Korea is a powerhouse in women's soccer and the defending Under-17 and Under-20 World Cup champion. While Ri's team defeated Suwon 3-0 in the group stage in Myanmar in November, Wednesday's match was much more closely

contested and forced his team to stage a comeback. North Koreans rally Naegohyang played aggressively out of the gate, pressing Suwon's defense early with long passes and runs on the flanks, but struggled to finish and had an offside goal disallowed in the fourth minute. Suwon responded with counterattacks as the North Koreans struggled to clear crosses into the box, with a header from home forward Haruhi Suzuki bouncing off a post in the 21st. Teammate Milena Barreto de Oliveira squandered another chance in the 30th when her close-range attempt also struck the post. Suzuki gave Suwon the lead in the 49th, pouncing on a deflected ball in the box and chipping it past Naegohyang goalkeeper Pak Ju Gyong. Naegohyang equalized five minutes later when Choe Kum Ok headed in from a set piece, then grabbed the lead in the 67th after Kim Kyong Yong collected a high-arching clearance from a Suwon defender to nod home. Suwon had an opportunity to tie the match in the 79th but Ji So-Yun's penalty went wide. Naegohyang will return to the Suwon Sports Complex on Saturday for the final.

- [Airbnb expands into hotels, cars, groceries](#) (2026-05-20 20:35)

SAN FRANCISCO, United States — Airbnb, facing tighter local regulations on short-term home rentals, announced Wednesday it is adding boutique hotels, car rentals and grocery delivery to its app in a bid to transform itself into a one-stop travel shop. The rollout marks the latest step in Airbnb's push to capture more of the travel spending that currently flows to competitors like Booking.com and Expedia. This evolution -- 18 years after the company's scrappy beginnings in San Francisco -- is one of Airbnb's answers to increasingly tough restrictions on short-term rentals in key markets. In December, Spain hit the company with a 65-million-euro (\$75 million) fine over more than 65,000 non-compliant listings, and Barcelona decided not to renew thousands of rental licenses when they expire in 2028. New York has banned nearly all short-term private rentals since 2023, and Paris stepped up its crackdown on illegal listings in 2026. "Travel shouldn't just be convenient. It should be meaningful," CEO Brian Chesky said in a statement. "The best trips help you explore, learn, and come home a little different than when you left." The updated app adds grocery delivery through Instacart in more than 25 US cities, as well as airport and train station transfers and luggage storage services in more than 160 cities worldwide. The platform will also offer car rentals, though the company has not yet named its partners. The app is also getting a range of artificial intelligence features, including a virtual support assistant available in 11 languages. Airbnb posted revenue of \$2.68 billion in the first quarter of 2026, up 18 percent from a year earlier.

- [Probers recommend charges vs Senate sergeant-at-arms over shooting](#) (2026-05-20 16:25)

THE Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday recommended filing charges against suspended Senate sergeant-at-arms Mao Aplasca and two others over the shooting incident at the Senate last week. In a press briefing at Camp Crame, Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II, CIDG director, was firm that Aplasca and two other Senate security personnel had "no basis" to use their firearms under Republic Act 11917 or the Private Security Services Industry Act. Morico said they would transmit their findings to the Department of Justice (DOJ), which would decide on their recommendations. In a

press briefing at Malacañang Palace on Tuesday, Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla and Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., PNP chief, presented CCTV footage showing Aplasca and the two other security were the first to fire gun shots on the night of May 13 after seeing National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents at the Government Service Insurance System premises adjacent to the Senate. Remulla also debunked Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano's remark that the Senate was under attack. "For the record, all evidence points [to the fact] that there was no attack on the Senate," he said. Remulla also wondered why Mao Aplasca had to gather the Senate's Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA) personnel, as well as Marines and even the police assigned to the Senate in full view of the media and why he did not clear the entire floor if there was indeed an encounter. Critics have suggested the shooting was just a "diversionary tactic" for Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity, to slip out of the Senate to evade arrest. More OSAA personnel questioned On Wednesday, more personnel from the OSAA were scheduled to appear before the CIDG as part of the investigation into the shooting incident. Among those issued subpoenas were OSAA Officer-in-Charge Manuel Parlade, a Senate CCTV operator, and several other OSAA staff members. Parlade assumed the role of officer-in-charge following the suspension of Aplasca in the aftermath of the shooting incident. The CIDG had issued subpoenas on Tuesday to former Senate secretary Mark Llandro Mendoza, Aplasca, and other OSAA personnel connected to the case. CIDG officials confirmed that some of the individuals summoned appeared before investigators on Tuesday but declined to give more details. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) previously disclosed that Aplasca failed to appear before investigators despite being summoned. Authorities continue to review CCTV footage, witness accounts, and other pieces of evidence to determine the circumstances surrounding the shooting inside the Senate premises. The May 13 incident prompted heightened security measures within the Senate complex and raised concerns regarding internal security protocols at one of the country's key government institutions. Sen. Robinhood Padilla defended Aplasca, saying his actions during the shooting incident helped prevent further harm to personnel and civilians inside and outside the building. In a post on his social media page, Padilla said Aplasca's decision to fire a warning shot, along with the presence and response of NBI personnel, helped de-escalate tensions. Padilla said the warning shot allowed both parties involved to recognize that they were "friendly forces," preventing what could have escalated into a more dangerous confrontation. "Had there been no warning shot, the situation could have worsened," Padilla said.

- [VP's husband files case vs Trillanes for perjury](#) (2026-05-20 16:24)

LAWYER Manases Carpio, husband of Vice President Sara Duterte, has filed a criminal complaint for perjury against former senator Antonio Trillanes IV before the Pasig City Prosecutor's Office over statements made during a House impeachment inquiry against the vice president. The complaint stemmed from an 11-page notarized sworn statement submitted by Trillanes before the House Committee on Justice on April 22, 2026, in connection with impeachment proceedings against Duterte. In his affidavit, Trillanes alleged that Carpio and the

Vice President maintained joint bank accounts amounting to P111,634,144.05 as of April 2016 and claimed the funds were linked to alleged drug-related transactions involving a person identified as “Sammy Uy.” Carpio categorically denied the allegations, describing them as “downright false, malicious, perjurious, defamatory and pure black propaganda.” “To reiterate, I do not have P100 million in my bank accounts. I have vehemently denied and continue to deny any involvement in illegal drugs in any form. I also deny receiving any drug money or proceeds from any alleged drug personality, including Sammy Uy,” Carpio said in his complaint-affidavit. He said that Trillanes violated Article 183 of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by Republic Act 11594, by allegedly making false statements under oath on a material matter before a competent authority. Carpio’s camp also invoked the Supreme Court ruling in Garrido vs. Gadon, arguing that sworn statements anchored on hearsay and unsupported by personal knowledge may expose a person to perjury liability when presented as factual claims. “He failed to present any proof that the alleged bank accounts exist or that any funds came from illegal sources,” Carpio said, adding that Trillanes’ accusations were based on “hearsay and double hearsay.” The complaint further cited the 2017 Senate Blue Ribbon Committee Report 168, which Carpio said cleared him and his brother-in-law, Davao City First District Rep. Paolo Duterte, of earlier allegations linking them to illegal drugs due to lack of evidence. Carpio also noted that Trillanes himself had voted during the Senate inquiry to excuse him and Paolo Duterte from further testimony after no evidence allegedly connected them to drug smuggling activities. The complaint also referenced a 2018 Ombudsman fact-finding report that dismissed complaints against Carpio for “utter lack of basis.” Under Republic Act 11594, the penalty for perjury carries imprisonment ranging from six to eight years for private individuals and up to 12 years for public officers. Carpio, in his affidavit, also described Trillanes’ allegations as politically motivated and damaging to his family’s reputation.

- [DOJ to decide if Padilla acted as an accomplice](#) (2026-05-20 16:22)

THE Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Wednesday said it is up to the Justice department to decide whether Sen. Robinhood Padilla could be tagged as an accomplice in the escape of fugitive Sen. Ronald dela Rosa. “That’s up to the SOJ (Secretary of Justice) to determine. They are now gathering the facts. Whatever charges will be filed will be up to the SOJ,” DILG Secretary Jonvic Remulla told Palace reporters in a phone interview. The official issued the statement after the release of closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage which showed Padilla accompanying dela Rosa and an unidentified woman as they boarded his SUV,

“proceeded outside unimpeded, and headed towards Makati” in the early morning of May 14, several hours after a shooting incident inside the Senate building the night before. Padilla on Wednesday defended dela Rosa from criticism surrounding his departure from the Senate complex, saying the senator merely acted out of concern for his safety. Padilla said the situation at the time was tense and unclear, prompting those inside the building to immediately seek safety as armed personnel from different groups became involved in the confrontation. The senator also emphasized that dela Rosa was not avoiding responsibility or abandoning the situation, but was responding to what appeared to be a potential threat during the

disturbance. No vote. Meanwhile, a senator who requested anonymity said dela Rosa cannot vote virtually on the passage of Senate bills or other important matters unless the Rules of the Senate are amended. "He cannot participate virtually [if there is a need to vote]," the senator said in a text message when asked if dela Rosa would be allowed to vote electronically. The senator said Sen. Rodante Marcoleta raised the matter "but we didn't tackle [it]." "Under our rules you need one day before considering the amendment. These motions and manifestations were all referred to the Committee on Rules," he said. The senator clarified that the particular rule if amended refers only to Senate voting and does not affect the impeachment rules. The Senate on Monday convened as impeachment court to try the articles of impeachment against Vice President Sara Duterte.

- ['Missing sabungero families paid to skip court hearings'](#) (2026-05-20 16:21)

FAMILIES of the missing sabungeros (cockfight enthusiasts) trooped to the National Police Commission (Napolcom) Wednesday to report that most of the complainants were allegedly now under the monthly payroll of fugitive gambling tycoon Charlie "Atong" Ang for P40,000 in exchange for their non-appearance in court hearings and dropping of cases. Initially, there were 34 cases, but only five families were left fighting for justice. According to a complainant, 18 families were no longer appearing in hearings after striking a deal with Caroline Cruz, Ang's legal counsel, who has been negotiating with the families on her client's behalf. "In our case in Sta. Cruz, Laguna, victims' families were gradually not attending anymore. Only a few of us are attending, and we are wondering what happened to them and why they are not attending anymore," Diane Loyola, whose husband Ferdinand Dizon disappeared in Sta. Cruz, Laguna in 2022, said in a briefing. "They said that they already talked to all of the families, that's why they were no longer attending. For the price of P40,000 a month, they agreed not to attend the hearing," Loyola said. According to Loyola, Cruz attempted to talk to her because Ang's camp would like to provide "financial assistance" to the families of the missing sabungeros. She added that the promise was an initial amount given as a form of apology for the "hassles" of the case and, if they agree, a monthly provision of P20,000 given every 15th and 30th of the month totaling P40,000 per month. Quoting Cruz's supposed statement, Loyola said the non-participation of the families will weaken the case against Ang. Thereafter, Ang will show up and a big amount will be given to all families.

- [DND rejects Chinese claim on Pag-asa, Lawak islands](#) (2026-05-20 16:20)

THE Department of National Defense (DND) rejected Wednesday the Chinese Ministry of National Defense's claim on Pag-asa and Lawak islands in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), stressing the Philippines' ownership of the islands is backed by local and international laws. This comes after Chinese defense spokesman Jiang Bin said Beijing "firmly opposes" Philippine construction on islands and reefs in the South China Sea it claims were "illegally occupied" by the Philippines, adding that China has "indisputable sovereignty" over the Nansha Islands, its name for the Spratly Islands. He added that China opposes construction activities on "all illegally occupied Chinese islands and reefs, including Zhongye Dao (Pag-asa

Island) and Mahuan Dao (Lawak Island),” even warning that Beijing would take “necessary measures” to safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests. In a statement, the DND emphasized that Pag-asa and Lawak islands form part of the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) administered as the municipality of Kalayaan in the province of Palawan. “The legitimate exercise of Philippine authority in these areas, including the conduct of improvement and development activities, is intended to support the welfare, safety, and livelihood of Filipinos residing and working therein,” DND spokesman Arsenio Andolong said in a statement. Andolong reiterated that China’s claim of “indisputable sovereignty” over nearly the entire South China Sea, including areas within the WPS, as reflected in its so-called “nine-dash line,” has no legal basis under international law. The 2016 Arbitral Award, rendered under the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) — to which both the Philippines and China are States Parties — found no legal basis for China’s claims to historic rights within the nine-dash line. The Award remains final and legally binding on the parties. The Tribunal likewise found that China’s large-scale land reclamation and construction activities on several features in the South China Sea caused severe harm to the marine environment and that certain Chinese actions unlawfully interfered with the Philippines’ exercise of sovereign rights within its Exclusive Economic Zone. Continued interference with lawful Philippine activities, including in the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc, undermines regional stability and the rules-based international order, the DND said.

- [New PNP spokesman named](#) (2026-05-20 16:18)

THE National Police Commission (Napolcom) announced Wednesday the designation of Col. Marlon Santos as acting spokesman of Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. Nartatez also serves as Ex-Officio Commissioner of the Napolcom. Santos holds the rank of Senior Police Assistant to the Ex-Officio Commissioner. Santos previously served as Provincial Director of the Cavite Provincial Police Office and Regional Chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group’s Regional Field Units 4A and 7. Napolcom Commissioner Rafael Vicente Calinisan expressed confidence that Santos would be instrumental in strengthening public trust in the police organization through credible and people-centered communication. “Colonel Santos has been instrumental in advancing reforms and strengthening the relationship between Napolcom and the PNP. I believe he will bring to his new role the integrity, professionalism, and dedication to public service that are needed to bring the police force closer to the people,” Calinisan said. Santos thanked the PNP and the Napolcom for the trust and opportunity given to him, reaffirming his commitment to uphold responsive and people-centered public service. “Rest assured that we will do our job well and continue to provide fast, honest, and compassionate service to our countrymen,” he said.

- [Comelec: Party-list resignations ‘normal’](#) (2026-05-20 16:17)

COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia said Wednesday that resignations of party-list representatives are common occurrences expected under the party-list system. Garcia made the statement after confirming that the poll body had been informed of

the resignations of Nathaniel Oducado of 1-Tahanan and Franz Legazpi of Pinoy Workers Party-list. “This is a normal occurrence, especially in the party-list system. Often, you expect that there are always those who resign, those who will leave their party-list,” Garcia told reporters. He said the Commission had received a letter from House Secretary General Cheloy Garafil confirming that Legazpi’s resignation had been accepted and his position officially declared vacant. He noted that the House of Representatives is now asking the Comelec whether it has already issued a Certificate of Proclamation and who will replace the top nominee. Garcia clarified that the Comelec has yet to receive any official communication from the House regarding the vacancy involving 1-Tahanan. “As far as our records are concerned, we have not officially received anything yet from their end,” he said. “We are still waiting for the official communication from the House of Representatives regarding the said party-list,” Garcia added. The poll chief stressed that the Comelec is prepared for such developments since all party-list groups are required to submit a complete lineup of nominees before the elections. Once a vacancy arises, Garcia said the Commission only needs to process the necessary paperwork, including certifications and the removal or updating of names in official records. Under Comelec rules, every party-list organization must submit 10 nominees from which its representatives will be chosen. “Nomination of less than 10 nominees shall not be accepted and shall not be given due course by the Commission,” the guidelines state. Under the 1987 Constitution and Republic Act 7941, party-list representatives must comprise 20 percent of the total membership of the House of Representatives, which currently consists of 254 district representatives and 64 party-list seats.

- [Australian barrister joins Duterte defense team](#) (2026-05-20 16:16)

THE International Criminal Court’s (ICC) Registry has appointed Kate Gibson as Associate Counsel for former president Rodrigo Duterte, according to a notification released Tuesday. The appointment, formalized on May 18, 2026, came at the request of Peter Haynes KC, who was named as Duterte’s lead counsel on May 15. Haynes requested Gibson’s assistance for the defense team in the proceedings before the court. Gibson has accepted the mandate and confirmed to the Registry that she has no conflicts of interest or impediments to representing Duterte, in compliance with the ICC’s Code of Professional Conduct. She had previously executed the required solemn undertakings, which remain valid throughout the proceedings. The appointment follows the departure of Nicholas Kaufman, who was granted leave to withdraw as Duterte’s counsel by Trial Chamber III on May 11. Gibson is an Australian barrister and Associate Tenant at Doughty Street Chambers in London, specializing in international criminal and human rights law. She holds a Masters in International Law from Cambridge University and has practiced before international tribunals since 2005. She is best known for her role in the defense team of former Congolese vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba, which secured an acquittal from the ICC Appeals Chamber in 2018 — a rare reversal at the court. That team was led by Haynes, now Duterte’s lead counsel. Gibson has also represented Bosco Ntaganda, the Congolese warlord convicted of war crimes; Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony; former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadžić on appeal; and former Liberian

president Charles Taylor on appeal. She also represented Rohingya victims in the ICC's Bangladesh/Myanmar situation and served as a legal consultant to the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. Gibson is a former president of the Association of Defense Counsel practicing before the International Courts and Tribunals and a member of the ICC Bar Association.

• [Ebola, hantavirus show world's risk preparedness lagging – expert](#) (2026-05-20 16:15)

GENEVA — The deadly hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks show that while the response to declared public health crises has improved, awareness of pandemic risks still lags, a leading pandemic expert warned Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila). Over six years after the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 pandemic, global efforts to revamp public health crisis response have improved the reaction to the hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks, said Helen Clark, a former New Zealand prime minister and the co-chairman of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. "The new international health regulations are working," she told Agence France-Presse in an interview in Geneva. As soon as the alert was sounded last Friday over the new Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and once the world learned a few weeks ago of the rare hantavirus outbreak on the MV Hondius cruise ship in the Atlantic, "the response has gone quite well," she said. "Our issue is now really upstream from that," she said, insisting that far more work needs to go into identifying risks and how "these outbreaks get away." "I think we need a lot more knowledge around risk-informed preparedness," she said, urging more focus on knowing your risk and "what could crop up," and "be ready to deal with that." "Those basic issues of surveillance, early detection.... We're not there yet," Clark said. The hantavirus species behind the cruise ship outbreak that triggered a global health scare after three people died was known to be endemic in the area of Argentina where the ship departed from. "But we're not clear how much was known about that by ships who depart regularly from there," she said. Meanwhile, the outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, believed to have killed more than 130 people in a remote province of DRC, seems to have spread under the radar for weeks, with tests focused on another strain showing up negative. "How could this have gone for four to six weeks... spreading while not getting the testing results that we needed to show that it was a particular variant?" Clark asked. She called for a thorough investigation of "the chain of events here, and what we can learn from it, and what it says about the capacities we need." "Perfect storm" Clark highlighted that the Ebola outbreak had especially laid bare the dire impact dramatic global aid cuts had on disease prevention efforts. "There's a perfect storm," she warned, pointing to how countries had been "very suddenly expected to make up a lot of investment in the health system, which previously came from donors." "With the best will in the world, the poorest and most fragile countries just haven't got money sitting in the bank to do that, so things will get neglected across a range of areas." Clark insisted that "global solidarity remains extremely important." "We're talking global public goods," she stressed, pointing to a confirmed Ebola case in a US national and how hantavirus had "popped up in places where people (disembarked) from the ship." "We're in this together, and so we have to look to ways of financing preparedness or response which reflect

our shared interests."

- [Attractive Nuisance Doctrine](#) (2026-05-20 16:14)

Dear PAO, My family checked in at XXX Hotel for my seven-year-old son's birthday. When Edward went to the kiddie pool, he slipped and bumped his head on the kiddie slide, resulting in a bleeding contusion on his head and several bruises on his arm and body. He was then treated at the hotel clinic. However, one month after the incident, Edward began experiencing nausea and had seizures. This required hospitalization and laboratory tests, leading to further expenses. Can the hotel be held liable for damages? Debbie Dear Debbie, Yes, the hotel may be liable for damages for the injuries sustained by Edward and his consequent hospitalization. Under Article 2176 of the New Civil Code, whoever by act or omission, causes damage to another, there being fault or negligence, is obliged to pay for the damage done. The basis for the hotel's liability is its failure to diligently undertake protective measures to ensure the safety of children. Under the Attractive Nuisance Doctrine, one who maintains on his premises dangerous instrumentalities or appliances of a character likely to attract children in play, and who fails to exercise ordinary care to prevent children from playing therewith or resorting thereto, is liable to a child of tender years who is injured thereby, even if the child is technically a trespasser in the premises. (Karlos Noel R. Aleta v. Sofitel Philippine Plaza Hotel, GR 228150, Jan. 11, 2023, citing Hidalgo Enterprises, Inc. v. Balandan, 91 Phil. 488 (1952), Ponente: Associate Justice Mario Victor Leonen) While the swimming pool alone may not automatically be classified as an attractive nuisance, the fact that kiddie slides were installed therein made it attractive to children. Being an attractive nuisance, the hotel is responsible for maintaining a safe environment in the pool area to protect children from unforeseen danger. The establishment of these safeguards should have prevented the incident. Failure to do so constitutes negligence for which it may be held liable for damages. In the above-mentioned Aleta case, the high court even applied the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur* in conjunction with the Attractive Nuisance Doctrine, holding that "by reason of the swimming pool's nature as an attractive nuisance, respondent is duty bound to guarantee that it had installed sufficient precautionary measures to ensure the safety of its guests, particularly the children. The establishment of these safeguards should have prevented the incident. Accordingly, it could be inferred that petitioner's children would not have sustained their injuries were it not for respondent's negligence." This created a presumption that the hotel management acted negligently unless it could show that it took sufficient precautionary measures. Overall, by maintaining an attractive nuisance in the premises, it is incumbent upon the hotel management to ensure that safety features are strictly enforced in its vicinity. Falling short of this responsibility makes them negligent and, therefore, liable for damages. We hope that we were able to answer your queries. This advice was solely based on the facts you have narrated and our appreciation of the same. Our opinion may vary when other facts are changed or elaborated. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

- [Philippines, US to strengthen ties in economy, security, and regional cooperation](#) (2026-05-20 16:14)

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel Romualdez met with incoming Ambassador of the United States to Manila Lee Lipton ahead of the latter's departure for his tour of duty in the Philippines. Romualdez and Lipton on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) discussed the longstanding and enduring alliance between the Philippines and the US, the Philippine Embassy in Washington said. They tackled opportunities to further strengthen bilateral economic engagement, security cooperation, people-to-people ties, and regional collaboration, the embassy posted on X. Romualdez expressed confidence that Philippine-US relations would "continue to grow under their shared commitment to advancing the interests of both countries and peoples," the embassy said. This year, the Philippines and the US are commemorating 80 years of diplomatic relations, and the 75th anniversary of the Philippines-United States Mutual Defense Treaty. Both envoys underscored the importance of expanding cooperation in emerging strategic sectors such as in the processing of critical minerals, energy cooperation, advanced manufacturing, and resilient supply chains. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments, including the Philippines' chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2026 and its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council this coming June.

- [VP Sara has until June 1 to submit impeachment reply](#) (2026-05-20 16:13)

The Senate Impeachment Court gave Vice President Sara Duterte until June 1, 2026 to respond to the summons issued in connection with the impeachment complaints filed against her. During the Senate's regular plenary session on Wednesday, Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano announced that the summons related to the articles of impeachment had been duly served. A copy was likewise furnished to the prosecution panel. "Under the applicable rules, the respondent is given 10 calendar days from the service of summons within which to file her answer," Cayetano said. He explained that counting 10 calendar days from May 20 would place the original deadline on Saturday, May 30, 2026. However, because the deadline falls on a weekend, the filing period is automatically extended to the next working day. "Accordingly, the deadline for the respondent to file her answer is on Monday, June 1, 2026," Cayetano said. The Senate chief clarified that once the prosecution panel receives Duterte's response, prosecutors will be given five calendar days to submit a reply should they choose to do so.

- [Marcos appoints new PNOC president](#) (2026-05-20 16:12)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has appointed former Palawan 1st District representative Franz Josef George Alvarez as the new acting president and chief executive officer of the Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC). This was confirmed by Malacañang on Wednesday. Marcos signed Alvarez's appointment letter on May 13, 2026. Alvarez will replace Joel Caminade. Alvarez also served as president and CEO of PNOC Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of PNOC. The PNOC is the primary government corporate entity overseeing the exploration and development of the country's various energy resources to ensure sufficient and stable energy supply.

- [Court bars unilateral workday reductions](#) (2026-05-20 16:11)

THE Supreme Court has ruled that employers cannot unilaterally reduce workdays and impose worker rotation schemes without complying with labor rules, declaring that such actions may amount to constructive dismissal. In a decision penned by Associate Justice Amy Lazaro-Javier, the Court held Fiber Textile Manufacturing Corp. (FMC) liable for constructively dismissing seven workers after cutting their six-day workweek to only two to three days and implementing a work rotation scheme without their consent. FMC maintained that it had conducted a meeting with production supervisors and workers to discuss the raw material shortage and the temporary work rotation arrangement, claiming that employees agreed to the setup. The workers, however, filed a complaint for constructive dismissal, arguing they had effectively been dismissed after being told not to return to work. A Labor Arbiter ruled in favor of the workers, but the National Labor Relations Commission and the Court of Appeals sustained FMC's actions as a valid exercise of management prerogative. The Supreme Court reversed those rulings. The tribunal said that while employers may adopt flexible work arrangements during economic hardship or emergencies, such measures must comply with the requirements under Department of Labor and Employment Department Advisory 2, Series of 2009. Under the advisory, employers must first consult affected workers and secure the voluntary support of the majority of employees. Companies are likewise required to notify the DOLE before implementing such arrangements and must prove they are suffering from actual or reasonably imminent economic difficulties. The Court found that FMC failed to establish that the workers agreed to the reduced workdays and rotation scheme. "The act of informing employees of the arrangement does not equate to securing their consent," the Court said. The Court said employers may resort to flexible work arrangements to avoid business losses, but these measures must be carried out in good faith and with due regard for workers' rights. According to the ruling, FMC's reduction of workdays unlawfully diminished the workers' salaries, making continued employment unreasonable and constituting constructive dismissal.

- [Gatchalian urges DepEd to expedite hiring of over 32,000 teachers](#) (2026-05-20 16:10)

SEN. Sherwin Gatchalian renewed Wednesday his call to the Department of Education (DepEd) to hasten the hiring of new teachers. This comes following the approval by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) of more than 32,000 new teaching positions for school year 2026-2027. Under the 2026 national budget, the government allocated P42.4 billion for the hiring of 32,916 teaching positions nationwide. Of the total number, 32,047 positions are classified as Teacher I items, aimed at strengthening the country's public school workforce and easing classroom congestion. Gatchalian emphasized that while the creation of additional teaching positions is a major step toward improving the education sector, delays in the recruitment process continue to hamper efforts to address learning gaps and classroom shortages. During previous national budget deliberations, the senator said that DepEd's hiring process could take as long as six months because of coordination requirements involving other government agencies, including the DBM and the Civil Service Commission. To address delays in recruitment and deployment, DepEd earlier issued DepEd Order 021, series of 2024, which seeks to ensure the timely and efficient filling of vacant teaching positions across public

schools. “The education crisis cannot be addressed if there is a shortage of teachers who shape the future of our youth. When our schools are short of teachers, what is directly affected is the quality of learning for each student,” Gatchalian said. The senator has consistently pushed for reforms in the education sector, particularly measures aimed at reducing classroom overcrowding, improving teacher welfare, and addressing learning poverty among Filipino students. Education advocates have long emphasized that the lack of teachers contributes to larger class sizes, heavier workloads for educators, and limited individualized instruction for students, especially in underserved and rural communities.

- [Philippine Sanjia Steel Corp. questions raid, claims legal, compliance missteps](#) (2026-05-20 16:09)

PHILIPPINE Sanjia Steel Corp., the company operating the controversial P800-million steel manufacturing plant raided by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Misamis Oriental, has denounced the operation as “harassment packaged as law enforcement.” The firm demanded the reopening of its facility and release of its detained workers. In a statement, Philippine Sanjia Steel Corp. rejected allegations that the Tagoloan-based plant was involved in illegal Philippine offshore gaming operations (POGOs), hazardous industrial activities, and the production of substandard steel products, saying authorities relied on “unverified allegations” and sensationalized claims. The raid was conducted at the company’s 22.7-hectare steel manufacturing facility inside the Phividec Industrial Estate and led by PAOCC Executive Director Undersecretary Benjamin Acorda Jr. Authorities earlier alleged that the P800-million plant was involved in hazardous industrial operations, the production of substandard steel products, and possible links to illegal POGO. Sanjia denied the accusations and questioned the use of search warrants and detention of personnel, arguing that the alleged violations involved administrative and regulatory matters rather than criminal offenses. “These alleged infractions fall strictly under the regulatory supervision of civilian agencies,” the company’s legal counsel, Julia Chu, said in a statement.

“Legitimate compliance issues are ordinarily addressed through a Notice of Violation process — not by serving criminal search warrants, shutting down an industrial complex, and detaining technical personnel.” Following the operation, authorities ordered the temporary closure of the facility pending legal proceedings. The company said the closure displaced more than 300 Filipino workers and triggered protests in parts of Mindanao, where employees and their families called for the reopening of the plant amid concerns over lost income. Sanjia also disputed allegations that it manufactured substandard steel products, noting that representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry–Bureau of Philippine Standards were not present during the operation. The firm maintained that its products comply with engineering and dimensional standards and said it holds valid Product Standard certifications. The company likewise rejected allegations involving uranium and “nuclear waste,” describing the claims as baseless and sensationalized. According to Sanjia, its operations use imported Japanese scrap metal processed under an Environmental Compliance Certificate issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It added that the

imported materials entered the country with complete certifications and complied with Japanese industrial standards. The company warned that public references to “nuclear waste” involving Japanese industrial materials could affect trade relations and damage investor confidence. Sanjia also defended the 69 foreign nationals apprehended during the operation, saying they were specialized engineers and technical personnel necessary for machinery operations and technology transfer. “All foreign personnel possess valid immigration documents and active Alien Employment Permits issued by the Department of Labor and Employment,” Chu said. The company claimed that authorities barred its legal team from entering the facility during the operation, leaving workers and foreign personnel without legal representation for nearly 24 hours. Sanjia argued that the alleged restriction may constitute a violation of constitutional rights and could affect the integrity and admissibility of evidence obtained during the raid. The steel manufacturer also questioned the absence of other regulatory agencies during the operation, including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Bureau of Immigration, and the Securities and Exchange Commission. “If the objective was truly regulatory compliance, then the proper agencies should have been present from the beginning,” Chu said. The company likewise denied alleged ties to businessman Tony Yang, saying corporate records filed before the SEC show that Yang had already divested from the corporation. Sanjia also rejected allegations linking the company to illegal POGO activities, claiming authorities failed to recover servers, gaming systems, or communication infrastructure during the search. “We find it deeply troubling that broad and highly publicized allegations were used to justify an operation of this magnitude despite the apparent absence of evidence supporting claims of illegal gaming activities,” Chu said. Despite the controversy, the company said it would invite independent international auditors and Japanese suppliers to assess the facility and validate its compliance and operational standards. The company maintained that it remains a legitimate industrial manufacturing enterprise and said the allegations had already caused significant reputational and economic damage to its operations, workers, suppliers, and business partners.

• ['Arrested Chinese have work permits'](#) (2026-05-20 16:09)

MINISTER Counselor Zhou Zhiyong, deputy chief of mission of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Philippines, held a press conference in Makati City on Wednesday, May 20, 2026. The Chinese Embassy in Manila on Wednesday said the 69 detained Chinese workers have valid work permits as it complained of “discriminatory law enforcement practice.” The Chinese were arrested on suspicion of being illegal workers when authorities raided a steel factory in Misamis Oriental last week. Deputy Chief of Mission Zhou Zhiyong said the Chinese have valid visas or special work permits. “These are not illegal workers,” he added. “Our paramount concern is the safety and welfare of our citizens here in the Philippines,” Zhou said in a briefing. He urged the concerned “law enforcement or Filipino authorities to clarify the legal ground of their continued detention” at the National Bureau of Investigation. He noted that there were about 400 workers in the steel firm, but it was only the Chinese workers who were arrested and flown to Manila in a “military plane.” “What's the logic? This to us raises the

suspicion of discriminatory law enforcement practice," Zhou said. He said the embassy did not file any diplomatic protest but already wrote to relevant government agencies to address their concerns with regard to the safety of their nationals. Zhou said the Chinese complained of being detained in a small detention cell.

- [Globe boosts mobile connectivity for ASEAN events in the Philippines](#) (2026-05-20 16:08)

GLOBE extended its support to the government by providing free mobile signal enhancements during the holding of Asean-related events in the Philippines recently. Joel Agustin, Globe's senior vice president for service planning and engineering, said that the telecommunications company stood with the government in enabling meaningful participation and collaboration during engagements held by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. "By ensuring reliable connectivity, we aim to support the country's role in fostering stronger regional partnerships," Agustin said. To ensure that the country's hosting of regional engagements was backed by reliable, high-quality connectivity, he said Globe partnered with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), and the Asean National Organizing Council. Agustin said the initiative supported events in Metro Manila as well as in Cebu, Bohol, Iloilo, and Boracay. He said Globe carried out extensive preparations ahead of the events. "The company conducted readiness checks across dozens of venues and worked alongside government partners to anticipate connectivity requirements and strengthen network capacity in advance," he added. Globe deployed dedicated teams on the ground to continuously monitor network performance and respond quickly to any issues. This allowed delegates, organizers, and participants to stay connected and focused on advancing regional cooperation, it said. Globe also rolled out targeted enhancements and improved 5G coverage in select locations which supported high-traffic venues such as hotels and function spaces during the events. "These efforts resulted in stronger, more consistent mobile signals and faster data speeds, helping ensure a seamless digital experience for all attendees," Agustin said. He said the company would continue to work alongside government and industry partners in strengthening the country's digital infrastructure, supporting initiatives that promote national development and reinforce the Philippines' position in the regional and global community.

- [Tulfo calls for independent probe into Senate chaos](#) (2026-05-20 16:08)

Sen. Erwin Tulfo called Wednesday for an impartial and transparent investigation into the recent Senate incident. Speaking during the plenary session, Tulfo described the events that unfolded last week inside the Senate as "deeply alarming," regardless of political affiliation, and raised concerns over the conflicting narratives surrounding the incident. "Millions of Filipinos, and even the whole world, watched this unfold in disbelief," Tulfo said. "They saw conflicting authorities, conflicting narratives, and an atmosphere that appeared closer to disorder than democratic governance." The senator noted that multiple accounts of the confrontation have emerged, including claims that the Senate was "under attack," while the Executive branch reportedly denied conducting any offensive operation. Allegations have also

circulated linking the incident to recent leadership changes in the Senate, as well as speculation involving the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the circumstances surrounding the gunfire. Tulfo rejected insinuations that members of the Minority bloc were connected to the incident simply because some senators had already left the premises before the confrontation escalated. He said the newly installed Senate leadership informed senators on May 12 of plans to hold an all-senators caucus. However, on May 13 — the day of the incident — the meeting was changed into a “Majority-only” caucus at 5:02 p.m., prompting Minority members who were no longer included in the discussions to leave the building. “To suggest that the mere fact that some senators had already gone home meant they were responsible for what later transpired is speculative, irresponsible, and unsupported by evidence,” he said. Beyond the political controversy, Tulfo emphasized the plight of ordinary Senate employees, security personnel, maintenance workers, media members, and staff who were caught amid the confusion and danger. “Some were traumatized. Some feared for their safety,” the senator said, stressing that employees should never be treated as “scapegoats” or “collateral damage.” Tulfo outlined several key questions he said the public deserves answers to, including the legal basis for authorities entering Senate grounds, whether proper coordination was made with Senate leadership, what triggered the exchange of gunfire, and what measures were implemented to protect senators, employees, and members of the media during the incident. He sought clarification on what evidence has been gathered to determine what truly transpired. “When law enforcement operations intersect with the authority, privileges, and internal security protocols of another branch of government, there must be clarity — not confusion, restraint — not escalation,” Tulfo said. While acknowledging that both the Senate and the NBI have initiated separate investigations, Tulfo said there is growing public demand for an independent and fact-based inquiry to ensure credibility and transparency.

- [Warrant issued against Mabanta for extortion](#) (2026-05-20 16:07)

A PASIG Regional Trial Court (RTC) has issued a cyber warrant authorizing the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to examine several mobile devices seized from Franco Mabanta and other individuals in connection with a robbery with intimidation or extortion case allegedly directed at former House speaker Martin Romualdez. In a May 13 order, Pasig RTC Branch 71 Judge Elisa Sarmiento-Flores granted the Warrant to Examine Computer Data (WECD), allowing the NBI’s Office of the Cybercrime Division (OTCD) and Digital Forensics Laboratory to conduct a forensic examination of six mobile devices confiscated during the suspects’ arrest on May 5, 2026. Authorities arrested Mabanta and several others in connection with an alleged extortion scheme that reportedly involved intimidation and the use of electronic communications to demand money from Romualdez. The arrests led to the filing of an application for a cyber warrant to access and preserve digital evidence from the seized devices. The devices included a Samsung Galaxy Z Fold, iPhone 17 Air, Samsung S23 Ultra, iPhone 13, and iPhone 17 Pro Max. Authorities said the gadgets were seized from Mabanta, an alias “Jimmy,” and an individual identified as Ericson. The court said probable cause “existed” to believe that Mabanta and others committed extortion under Article 293 in relation to Article 294(5) of the Revised Penal

Code, in connection with Section 6 of Republic Act 10175, or the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012. Under the warrant, the NBI is authorized to examine data covering the period from April 25 to May 5, 2026, including call logs, text messages, chat messages, electronic communications, and other files allegedly related to extortion activities directed at Romualdez. The order also permits limited interception activities under Section 6.5 of the Rule on Cybercrime Warrants. Pursuant to Section 15 of the Cybercrime Prevention Act, the court directed the respondents to provide passwords or biometric authentication to access the seized devices. The NBI was also ordered to submit an initial return within 10 days from May 13 and a final return within 48 hours after the court-prescribed examination period expires.

- [Greater access to mental health services pushed](#) (2026-05-20 16:06)

House Majority Leader and Ilocos Norte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Alexander Marcos filed a bill creating a voucher system to help low- and middle-income Filipinos access mental health services. “Mental health care should not be a privilege available only to those who can pay for it out of pocket,” Marcos said. House Bill 9327, filed last May 19, aimed to expand mental health coverage under the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, a statement said. Under the proposed system, preapproved subsidies for mental health services and medicines would be provided to registered PhilHealth members and their dependents diagnosed with a mental health condition. The approved voucher would show the benefit package, authorized services, and the validity period, which would be six to 12 months. It could be renewed yearly, subject to reevaluation “and submission of an updated assessment certificate,” the statement said. The basic package would cover six to 10 psychiatric consultations yearly, six or more therapy sessions, “and a monthly medication subsidy,” it said, adding that the standard package would cover 10 to 15 psychiatric consultations, 12 or more therapy sessions, “expanded medication coverage and access to psychological testing and diagnostics.” “The comprehensive package would provide psychiatric consultations, the number of which shall be determined by PhilHealth, at least 20 therapy sessions, full or substantially expanded medication support, rehabilitation and other necessary mental health services,” it said.

- [DENR: Cutting of trees allowed in Manila](#) (2026-05-20 16:06)

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) said on Wednesday that cutting down trees along Quirino Avenue in Manila was legal and permitted, adding that the cut trees will be replaced. Recent public backlash arose regarding the cutting of trees around the area to make way for the Southern Access Link Expressway Project, a new highway intended to connect the Skyway to Roxas Boulevard. The agency said the activity was covered by Permit 2026-02-24-TCEBP-1609, which its office issued to the Southern Access Link Expressway Corp. It also cited Presidential Decrees 705 and 953, along with other forestry and environmental regulations, which state that these laws allow cutting or earth-balling trees when necessary for infrastructure projects, public works, and other development activities, provided the necessary permits are obtained and environmental safeguards are closely followed. It added that the permit requires the project proponent to conduct large-scale

replacement planting to compensate for the trees cut for the project. Based on the Memorandum on Seedling Replacement Uniform Ratio, the project proponent must plant 50,700 seedlings in the City of Manila during the next planting season. Planting locations will be identified in coordination with the local government of Manila for the area's ecological benefit. DENR-NCR also assured the public that tree cutting is not automatically permitted, and that all applications undergo evaluation, technical assessments, and coordination with local government units, and are subject to compliance with environmental laws to mitigate environmental impacts.

- [Valenzuela allocates P2.5B for road, drainage projects](#) (2026-05-20 16:05)

VALENZUELA City has lined up several road and drainage projects for implementation this year, with a P2.5 billion budget, Mayor Wes Gatchalian said. Gatchalian, interviewed by The Manila Times on Wednesday, said he presented the infrastructure plans at the City Development Council (CDC) meeting, attended by representatives from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), village chairmen and key stakeholders. During the meeting, Gatchalian said he presented the city government's accomplishments in roads and drainage projects from 2023 to 2025 under the City Development Fund (CDF), which covered a total of 10.30 kilometers (km) across 56 roads and 20.71 km of drainage systems, amounting to P565 million. These initiatives reflect the local government's continued efforts to improve mobility and mitigate flooding in various communities, according to the city's chief executive. In total, Gatchalian said there would be 45.85 km of road length and 87.70 km of drainage length across 175 roads, and 5.42 km of creek length across 13 waterways, amounting to roughly P2.5 billion in several road and flood mitigation projects for 2026. Construction of some of these projects has already started, the local government said. To further improve public safety and security, Gatchalian said it has been continuously implementing its streetlighting and CCTV (closed-circuit television) projects, which cover approximately 105 km with 3,662 streetlights and 342 CCTV units installed across multiple phases, as well as the implementation of comprehensive flood control initiatives, which reached 67 communities from August 2025 to April 2026. For flood mitigation, the DPWH reported the upgrading of nine pumping stations. "These efforts, complemented by ongoing rehabilitation and installation projects, have 18 pumping units amounting to P776.8 million," the mayor said. Citing coordination between the local and national governments, Gatchalian said Valenzuela has a standing ordinance which calls for a consistent coordination among concerned government agencies "whenever applicable programs or projects are underway." "It is clear that every project undertaken by the City of Valenzuela is neither rushed nor based on mere speculation. Each step follows the proper process — from listening to the community's requests, to thorough inspection and assessment by our offices, to coordination with the villages, among others," Gatchalian said. Reaffirming the city government's commitment to these projects, he said: "Let us continue to act, to plan, to follow the right process, and to implement solutions that have lasting impact — for a Valenzuela that is more ready to face the challenges of the times, safer for everyone, and more progressive for the next generation."

- [Marcos inspects drainage improvement work in QC](#) (2026-05-20 16:03)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday led the inspection of a drainage improvement project in Quezon City as part of the government's flood mitigation initiatives ahead of the rainy season. Marcos, along with Public Works and Highways Secretary Vince Dizon and local officials, checked the G. Araneta Drainage Improvement Project, one of the city's critical flood-prone areas. "We are checking the measures we are implementing to mitigate flooding," Marcos said in English and Filipino following the inspection. The chief executive witnessed the pipe-laying works that will channel rainwater from G. Araneta Avenue toward the San Juan River. The project features the installation of large high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipes, upgraded water inlets, and improved outfall structures to increase drainage capacity and ensure fast flow of water during heavy rainfall. He also observed the operation of a temporary pumping unit deployed to expedite the drainage of floodwaters into the San Juan River. Funded with almost P500 million under the Fiscal Year 2024 General Appropriations Act, the project began in March 2025 and is now 96.75 percent complete as of May 18, with full completion targeted within the month. Located near Talayan Creek and the San Juan River, G. Araneta Avenue is notoriously known for having one of the worst flooding during the monsoon season. "This is one of the critical areas; that's why we're here. But it is not the only place where we are doing this kind of intervention to make sure that we find a way to release the water so that it doesn't flood too much," the president said.

- [Nepomuceno bares Customs reform plan](#) (2026-05-20 16:02)

BUREAU of Customs (BOC) Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno has unveiled a sweeping reform plan, detailing the agency's push to modernize Customs operations, facilitate trade, and improve ties with the business sector. Speaking before members of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham) on Tuesday, Nepomuceno said the bureau is accelerating reforms centered on digital transformation, operational efficiency and transparency. He emphasized that technology-driven modernization remains at the heart of the agency's push to improve government services and curb corruption. Among the key reforms discussed was the rollout of the Customs Processing System (CPS), which is expected to streamline customs procedures, reduce processing delays, and improve transaction monitoring. Nepomuceno also highlighted the bureau's adoption of advanced technologies to strengthen anti-smuggling operations and tighten border enforcement. He said the reforms are aligned with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s broader modernization agenda aimed at improving the country's economic competitiveness and ease of doing business. "We are committed to modernizing the bureau through technology-driven reforms that will strengthen transparency, improve operational efficiency, and make Customs processes more responsive to stakeholders," Nepomuceno said. The Customs chief also revealed plans to establish a dedicated Top Importers Office to provide more focused and efficient services to major industry players. At the same time, the BOC is ramping up maritime enforcement capabilities to intensify its crackdown on smuggling and illegal trade activity. Nepomuceno stressed that structural reforms within customs operations are also underway to make the agency more responsive and

accountable. He assured business leaders that the BOC is committed to maintaining open communication and stronger collaboration with stakeholders to improve trade facilitation. "We will continue to engage sincerely with our stakeholders because the Bureau of Customs must be partners in helping businesses grow, not an obstacle to their operations," he said. The dialogue with AmCham reinforced the Bureau's Integrity, Accountability, and Modernization (IAM) Program to build a more transparent, efficient, and business-friendly customs environment, while supporting the country's economic growth goals.

- [Garbage buildup halts Pasig ferry service; Torre calls for discipline](#) (2026-05-20 16:01)

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Nicholas Torre III on Wednesday called for public discipline in solid waste disposal after a massive buildup of garbage in the Pasig River forced the temporary suspension of the Pasig River Ferry Service. In an advisory, the MMDA said ferry operations were temporarily suspended on Tuesday, May 19, due to a severe increase in the volume of garbage in the river, which stalled several boats and caused malfunctions. "It's really infuriating when a few undisciplined people make life difficult for so many others. A single plastic thrown anywhere, when combined, clogs esteros, worsens flooding, disrupts traffic flow, and puts entire communities in danger," Torre said. The MMDA official said clean-up operations alone are not enough to address recurring flooding and garbage problems in Metro Manila. "The real battle is discipline and accountability. As long as there are Filipinos who think 'it's OK to throw garbage here,' we will keep returning to the same problem," he said. Torre added that cleanliness, flooding and traffic problems are not solely government concerns but also reflect public discipline and responsibility. "If we want an orderly city, we must learn to become responsible even when no one is watching," he said.

- [House okays bill for 5-year PRC license validity](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives on Wednesday night approved a bill seeking to extend the validity of Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) identification cards to five years. House Bill 8876, which proposes extending the validity of PRC licenses from three years, hurdled third and final reading after more than 260 lawmakers voted in favor of its passage. "Our professionals deserve a government that values their time and hard work. This measure cuts red tape, reduces unnecessary expenses, and makes public service more responsive to the realities faced by millions of Filipinos," House Majority Leader and Ilocos Norte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Alexander Marcos said in a statement. Leyte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, one of the bill's authors, said the proposal aims to ease the burden on professionals. "If the validity of their PRC IDs is longer, they can focus more on their jobs, families, and more productive service to the nation," Romualdez said. "This proposal is a recognition of the sacrifice and contribution of our professionals," he added. "This reform is about efficiency, convenience, and respect for the Filipino workforce," Marcos said. Under the bill, professional identification cards issued by the PRC shall be valid for five years, subject to compliance with existing laws, continuing professional development requirements, and other regulatory standards.

- [SC rejects fugitive senator's TRO petition](#) (2026-05-20 16:00)

(UPDATE) THE Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to block the arrest of fugitive Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his role in the Duterte administration's deadly drug war. "The Supreme Court, in a vote of 9-5-1, denied the prayer for a temporary restraining order and/or status quo ante order filed by Sen. Ronald 'Bato' M. dela Rosa," a court statement said. The ICC last week unsealed an arrest warrant against dela Rosa, accused along with Duterte and other "co-perpetrators" of the crime against humanity of murder. Government agents tried to arrest dela Rosa on the same day, but the pro-Duterte Senate leadership foiled the attempt and gave him sanctuary. Dela Rosa later left the Senate for an unknown location following a shooting incident between government agents and Senate security personnel on Wednesday that sent senators scurrying for cover in their offices. Duterte was arrested in March last year and is awaiting trial by the ICC in The Hague on charges stemming from the drug crackdown. "For now, we can say that the warrant of arrest is valid against Senator Bato dela Rosa," Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro, the Palace spokesman, told reporters. It was not immediately known if the police will now try to enforce the arrest. Castro said Manila will let Justice Secretary Frederick Vida interpret and evaluate the Supreme Court ruling. Vida had said last week that government agents would pause efforts to serve the ICC warrant to allow the Supreme Court to resolve all the issues raised by dela Rosa. Still unresolved In a press statement released after a special session held Wednesday, the Supreme Court said it had acted only on dela Rosa's prayers for interim relief. The main constitutional issues raised by petitioners former president Rodrigo Duterte and dela Rosa — including whether an ICC warrant may be enforced in Philippine territory without a domestic judicial warrant — remain unresolved in the main case. Dela Rosa had sought a TRO and/or status quo ante order to prevent the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Justice (DOJ), Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Bureau of Immigration, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) from arresting him on the basis of any ICC warrant, Interpol Red Notice or diffusion, or any foreign judicial instrument "without a Philippine judicial warrant." In a 117-page reply filed just two days before the Court's special session, petitioners warned that allowing the executive branch to enforce an ICC warrant without prior judicial authorization would reduce the Bill of Rights to "a matter of executive suppressor, rather than a binding limitation on governmental power." With the TRO denied, dela Rosa remains subject to arrest based on the ICC warrant, though the legal basis for such an arrest remains hotly contested before the Court. Arrest order valid The Palace said the validity of the ICC arrest order against dela Rosa was further strengthened by the Court's decision. In a Palace press briefing, Castro noted that the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) said there was no need to go through a local court. "So, since there is no TRO, we are saying that the warrant of arrest is valid," she said. Earlier this month, Solicitor General Darlene Berberabe countered dela Rosa's petition by saying the lawmaker is manipulating the legal system to evade the ICC arrest warrant issued on Nov. 5, 2025, and unsealed on May 11, 2026. The OSG brushed off dela Rosa's claim that his arrest may only be

facilitated through a local court as it cited Section 17 of Republic Act 9851, which says the state has “the discretion to determine whether a person accused of crimes punishable under the law should be surrendered to an international tribunal or foreign court, such as the ICC.” Dela Rosa resurfaced after months of hiding last May 11 to throw his support behind the former minority bloc that propelled Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano to the Senate presidency. Cayetano gave dela Rosa protection against the NBI agents who tried to arrest him that day. Two days later, dela Rosa, aided by Sen. Robinhood Padilla, slipped out of the Senate complex several hours after the shooting incident initiated by the Senate sergeant-at-arms. Castro noted that the OSG has declared dela Rosa a fugitive from the law. WITH AFP

- [US test fires mobile rocket system near Mount Fuji in rapid 'shoot and scoot' drill](#) (2026-05-20 15:54)

GOTEMBA, Japan — U.S. Marines test fired a dozen rockets from a mobile launcher on Wednesday at a range in the foothills of Japan's iconic Mount Fuji, in an exercise to keep sharp on weapon that is a growingly important component of the American military's arsenal. The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) is a launcher mounted on the back of a military truck that can be rapidly brought out from concealment, fire its rockets, then move quickly to a new location to avoid counter-battery fire. The so-called “shoot and scoot” tactics are becoming increasingly important with the proliferation of drones over the battlefield, which make static positions more vulnerable. The system has been used by U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and most recently U.S. Central Command said it was employed in the opening attack on Iran where it launched a new precision-guided rocket that could reach targets hundreds of miles away. That is particularly meaningful in the Pacific, where the U.S. hopes to deter a possible Chinese invasion of the island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own and has not ruled out taking by force. HIMARS systems with the latest missiles could easily reach targets in the Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and mainland China, if deployed on Japanese or other islands nearby. The HIMARS is generally equipped with shorter-range rockets, however, and the exercise at the U.S. military's Camp Fuji, about a two-hour drive from Tokyo, involved only dummy projectiles. The exercise, only the second time the HIMARS was tested at Camp Fuji, was done in close coordination with Japanese military forces. A public road that ran between where the rockets were fired and where they landed was closed as a precaution during the exercise.

- [Lone bettor wins ₱115M in the Grand Lotto 6/55 draw for May 20](#) (2026-05-20 15:49)

A lone bettor won the ₱115,358,791.87 jackpot prize in the Grand Lotto 6/55 draw on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office announced. The winning combination was 41-08-45-27-09-10. Meanwhile, the Mega Lotto 6/45 draw yielded the combination 16-45-11-32-23-37, with a jackpot prize of ₱18,546,872.34.

- [Shanghai restaurant knife attack injures 2 Japanese citizens and a Chinese national](#) (2026-05-20 15:25)

BEIJING — A knife attack at a restaurant in Shanghai on Tuesday injured three people, including two Japanese citizens and a Chinese national, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said, calling it an isolated case. The suspect described as a person with a mental disorder was detained and the victims were taken to a hospital for treatment, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said Wednesday. The two Japanese are men, including a senior employee of a Japanese company with an office in the building where the attack occurred, while the Chinese citizen is a woman, and the Japanese consulate in the city said the injuries of both men are not life-threatening, Japan's Kyodo News Agency reported. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Wednesday his government has extended support for the injured men, adding that Japan demanded a thorough investigation and a clear explanation by Chinese officials, severe punishment for the suspect, preventive measures and the protection of Japanese nationals in China. Japan's Foreign Ministry issued a safety advisory for Japanese citizens in China to be cautious and attentive, avoid going out alone and take care when accompanying children. Guo of the Chinese Foreign Ministry said authorities were investigating and media outlets and others should not make "groundless speculation" about the case. The attack comes at a time of rising tensions between China and Japan. Ties between Beijing and Tokyo have been strained since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's comment in November that any Chinese military action against self-ruled Taiwan could be grounds for a Japanese military response. China imposed diplomatic and economic measures against Japan. The Chinese Embassy in Japan said in April it had received multiple threats and accused Japanese authorities of failing to take effective measures despite repeated reports to the police.

- [Sales personnel nabbed for stealing laptop](#) (2026-05-20 15:19)

A sales personnel of a trading company was arrested for allegedly stealing a laptop worth P30,000 from their office the other day in Pasig City. Police Col. Hendrix Mangaldan, Pasig City police chief, identified the suspect only as "Arc," 23, a sales personnel residing in Barangay Bagong Ilog, Pasig City. The qualified theft case stemmed from a complaint filed by an employee of Mr. Billy Trading located along R. Jabson Street in Barangay San Joaquin, Pasig City. Mangaldan said that on May 18, 2026, complainant Ms. Domingo, an administrative staff member of Mr. Billy Trading, reported to the Pasig City Police that her laptop went missing at around 7 p.m. that same day. She said her ASUS Vivobook laptop and charger, valued at P30,000, suddenly disappeared after being left plugged in inside their office for some time. After reviewing CCTV footage, the complainant identified the suspect as alias "Arc," one of their sales personnel. Immediately after the incident was reported, personnel from the San Joaquin Police Sub-Station, together with the complainant, conducted a follow-up operation that resulted in the arrest of the suspect and the recovery of the stolen laptop. A case for qualified theft is now being prepared against the suspect. Mangaldan commended the Pasig City police team for the swift arrest and immediate recovery of the laptop.

- [South Korean oil tanker transits Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-05-20 15:04)

SEOUL — A South Korean oil tanker safely transited the Strait of Hormuz, the country's foreign ministry said Wednesday, marking the first passage by a South Korean vessel through the waterway since the Iran war began. One South Korean oil tanker "transited the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday, May 20, and is continuing its voyage," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "Approximately 10 South Korean crew members are on board the vessel." The announcement followed earlier comments by Foreign Minister Cho Hyun, who told the National Assembly that the tanker was "passing through" the strategic waterway at the time of his remarks. "It is the first South Korea-flagged ship to pass through the Strait of Hormuz since the Iran war began," a foreign ministry official told AFP earlier. The ministry said Seoul had repeatedly urged Iran to ensure the safety and freedom of navigation for all vessels, including South Korean ships, through multiple diplomatic channels -- including four phone calls between the South Korean and Iranian foreign ministers since the outbreak of the war. Ship-tracking site MarineTraffic earlier showed the South Korea-flagged tanker Universal Winner on the eastern side of the Strait of Hormuz near the entrance to the Gulf of Oman, bound for the southeastern South Korean city of Ulsan after departing Kuwait's Mina Al Ahmadi port. The passage comes weeks after a South Korean-operated vessel was hit by airborne objects near the Strait of Hormuz, heightening concerns in Seoul over the safety of South Korean shipping in the region. HMM Namu was struck by "two unidentified aircraft" on May 4, hitting the outer plate of the vessel's port-side ballast tank near the stern and causing a fire in the engine room. The Panama-flagged cargo vessel, operated by South Korean shipping firm HMM Co., arrived in Dubai after the incident for investigation. Tehran has denied responsibility, with its embassy in Seoul posting a statement on its website in the days following the attack, saying it "firmly rejects and categorically denies any allegations regarding the involvement" of its forces. Seoul strongly condemned the attack and said it hoped to identify those behind it through a thorough investigation. South Korea, Asia's fourth-largest economy, relies heavily on Middle Eastern fuel imports, most shipped via the Strait of Hormuz during peacetime.

- [Oil retreats, stocks rise on cautious Mideast war hopes](#) (2026-05-20 14:50)

LONDON, United Kingdom — Oil prices slid and stock markets advanced Wednesday as Iran said it had allowed around two dozen ships to transit the Strait of Hormuz, easing concerns about the apparent impasse on ending the war in the Middle East. While Asian markets mostly fell in the wake of losses on Wall Street Tuesday, US and European indexes gained as bond yields fell back from inflation-driven highs. Investor focus was also on Wednesday's results update from AI chip giant Nvidia, due after the Wall Street close, that should offer a fresh assessment of a sector that has driven market optimism this year. But despite dropping nearly three percent, the international benchmark Brent North Sea crude remained close to \$110 a barrel, far above pre-war levels. That has spurred worries that inflation could remain elevated even if a swift resolution to the Middle East war is found. Government bond rates have reached the highest levels in decades on worries that the Middle East war will keep energy prices high well into this year, potentially derailing economic growth and pressuring government finances. "Oil remains the central macro pressure point," said Sucden Financial analyst Viktoria

Kuszek. "We expect the combination of higher yields, a firm dollar and unresolved energy risk to keep risk appetite constrained, with Nvidia earnings the next key test for equity sentiment," she added. Earlier Wednesday, a South Korea-flagged tanker transited the Strait of Hormuz, one of 26 that Iran's Revolutionary Guards later said it had allowed to pass over the past 24 hours. Since the United States and Israel began their war with Iran, the Strait of Hormuz -- an energy corridor through which 20 percent of global crude usually transits -- has been effectively closed to shipping. A ceasefire on April 8 brought a halt to a conflict that has roiled the global economy, but with Washington and Tehran seemingly reluctant to resume the fighting a war of words has taken its place. In France, the chief of Credit Agricole, one of the country's biggest banks, told investors Wednesday that given the economic and geopolitical turmoil "nothing is arguing for optimism". Olivier Gavalda warned at the bank's shareholder meeting of likely interest rate hikes in Europe to counter growing inflation pressures, "which could lead to a decline in both consumer spending and investment." "The internal data we analyse suggests a steep drop in the business climate and a significant erosion in household confidence," he added.

- Key figures at around 1340 GMT - Brent North Sea Crude: DOWN 2.6 percent at \$108.35 a barrel West Texas Intermediate: DOWN 2.4 percent at \$101.62 a barrel New York - DOW: UP 0.2 percent at 49,460.29 points New York - S&P 500: UP 0.3 percent at 7,375.23 New York - Nasdaq: UP 0.5 percent at 26,002.20 London - FTSE 100: UP 0.3 percent at 10,361.43 Paris - CAC 40: UP 0.7 percent at 8,033.91 Frankfurt - DAX 30: UP 0.3 percent at 24,471.53 Tokyo - Nikkei 225: DOWN 1.2 percent at 59,804.41 (close) Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: DOWN 0.6 percent at 25,651.12 (close) Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.2 percent at 4,162.18 (close) Euro/dollar: DOWN at 1.1592 from \$1.1606 on Tuesday Pound/dollar: DOWN at 1.3391 from \$1.3401 Dollar/yen: UP at 159.08 from 159.04 yen Euro/pound: DOWN at 86.57 from 86.60 pence

- [Spanish director Almodovar calls Trump, Netanyahu and Putin 'monsters'](#) (2026-05-20 14:37)

CANNES, France — Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar called Donald Trump, Benjamin Netanyahu and Vladimir Putin "monsters" on Wednesday at the Cannes Film Festival where he is presenting his latest film "Bitter Christmas" in competition. "As Europeans, we are also obliged to become a kind of shield against these monsters like Trump, Netanyahu, or the Russian," the director told a press conference, referring to the US, Russian and Israeli leaders. An outspoken critic of Israel's war in Gaza, the maker of "Talk to Her" and "Volver" wore a "Free Palestine" pin on his lapel. Almodovar's remarks echoed those of Spanish star actor Javier Bardem who slammed the "toxic masculinity" of the three leaders in an expletive-laden tirade on Sunday. "Bitter Christmas", which has had mixed reviews in Spain, is a highly personal project focused on a film director who is out of ideas and decides to steal stories from those close to him.

- [Sandro Marcos pushes mental health voucher system for low, middle income Filipinos](#) (2026-05-20 14:08)

MANILA, Philippines — House Majority Leader and Ilocos Norte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Alexander Marcos filed a bill creating a voucher system to help low- and middle-income Filipinos access mental health services. "Mental health care should not be a privilege available only to those who can pay for it out of pocket," Marcos said. House Bill 9327, filed last May 19, aimed to expand mental health coverage under the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, a statement said. Under the proposed system, pre-approved subsidies for mental health services and medicines would be provided to registered PhilHealth members and their dependents diagnosed with a mental health condition. The approved voucher would show the benefit package, authorized services, and the validity period which would be six months to 12 months. It could be renewed yearly, subject to reevaluation "and submission of an updated assessment certificate", the statement said. The basic package would cover six to 10 psychiatric consultations yearly, six or more therapy sessions "and a monthly medication subsidy", it said, adding that the standard package would cover 10 to 15 psychiatric consultations, 12 or more therapy sessions, "expanded medication coverage and access to psychological testing and diagnostics." "The comprehensive package would provide psychiatric consultations, the number of which shall be determined by PhilHealth, at least twenty (20) therapy sessions, full or substantially expanded medication support, rehabilitation and other necessary mental health services", it said.

- [Norway reports Europe's first case of bird flu in a polar bear](#) (2026-05-20 14:03)

OSLO, Norway — Norwegian authorities on Tuesday announced that avian influenza has been documented in a polar bear for the first time in Europe, in the Svalbard region in the Arctic. The H5N5 variant of the virus was detected in samples taken from a male bear about one year old and a walrus found dead in mid-May on the icy archipelago, around 1,000 km (600 miles) from the North Pole, the Norwegian Veterinary Institute said. "The results are part of a trend in which highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses are increasingly being detected in mammals in Europe," noted Ragnhild Tonnessen, bird flu coordinator at the Veterinary Institute, quoted in a press release. "At the same time, in recent years, the virus has spread to new regions, including the Arctic, where it can have consequences for vulnerable populations and ecosystems," she added. The governor of Svalbard said separately that the presence of the virus in brain samples from both animals "is consistent with the hypothesis that it was very likely the cause" of their deaths. A walrus that died of bird flu had already been found in Svalbard in 2023, and the virus was also documented the same year in a polar bear that died in Alaska. From January 2025 to March 2026, 140 million animals died or were culled because of avian influenza in nearly 70 countries, according to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). That is well below a peak seen in 2021–2022, but since then, the virus has spread widely among non-avian species, increasing the risk of transmission to humans.

- [Woman dies after manhole plunge on busy New York street](#) (2026-05-20 13:51)

NEW YORK — A 56-year-old woman died after falling down an uncovered manhole on a bustling Manhattan street, police said Tuesday. The victim had parked her car late Monday just before

inadvertently stepping into the manhole, according to US media reports, which said she fell around 10 feet (three meters). The NYPD said its officers found the woman unconscious and unresponsive inside the manhole. She was pronounced dead at a hospital. "There are no arrests at this time, and the investigation remains ongoing," an NYPD spokesperson said. Video from the scene showed a parked black Mercedes with the driver's door directly next to a manhole, which had since been cordoned off. New York energy firm Con Edison said it is probing why the manhole was uncovered. "We are deeply saddened to confirm that a member of the public has died after falling into an open manhole," a spokesperson said.

- [King Charles III bangs drum for Irish music, eyes hip-hop lesson](#) (2026-05-20 13:46)

BELFAST, United Kingdom — Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla joined in with traditional Irish musicians Tuesday when they beat bodhrans, a type of drum and the monarch requested a hip-hop lesson, on a visit to Belfast. The royal couple picked up the instruments for the performance at Thompson Dock, one of the city's main tourist attractions and the last place that the Titanic stood on dry ground before her doomed maiden voyage in 1912. The ship was built at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in the city before being finished at Thompson Dock. "We happened to have a couple (of bodhrans) sitting on the seat, and the king and queen realised they were there, and they decided to join in with us at the end, it was wonderful," said Irish music specialist Niall McClean. McClean is a branch head of the CCE national cultural organisation that is hosting the all-Ireland Fleadh, the world's largest festival of traditional Irish music, in Belfast in August. The showcase from August 2-9 is expected to attract over 800,000 people. After the performance, the king and queen chatted to young musicians and dancers and expressed an enthusiasm for both the bodhran and the uilleann pipes, McClean said. Dancer Sarah McGarry, 24, said it had been "lovely to give him a bit of a taste of the Irish culture". The couple, who braved rain and unseasonably chilly temperatures for the visit, later watched a hip-hop performance by nine students. The king "wants us to teach him how to do hip-hop," said King's Trust ambassador Jamie Fagan. "He wants a royal hip-hop lesson, in his words." Charles and Camilla also met Northern Ireland's First Minister Michelle O'Neill. Charles, 77, who is still undergoing treatment for an undisclosed cancer, has made numerous trips to Northern Ireland over the years both as king and heir to the throne before the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, in 2022. Camilla later visited a primary school known for having the most diverse make-up of any school in the region. The 285 pupils at Fane Street Primary School in Belfast speak 47 different languages between them. Charles meanwhile met young people and representatives of businesses supported by his King's Trust charity which supports people aged 11-30 to build confidence, skills and employment opportunities. The visit comes a day after Irish President Catherine Connolly said Charles had "graciously" accepted an invitation to Ireland after the two heads of state met at Buckingham Palace, in London. That trip is expected to take place next year and would only be the second such visit by a British monarch since Ireland's independence in 1921. The late queen made a landmark state visit to Ireland in 2011 -- the first by a British monarch since Ireland gained independence from Britain more than a century earlier. Connolly met Charles on Monday on the first day of an official visit to England.

- [House bill allowing faster gov't response vs fuel-driven inflation hurdles 2nd reading](#)
(2026-05-20 13:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved on second reading the proposed Kalinga Act, which seeks to enable a faster government response to fuel-driven inflation and other economic shocks. House Majority Leader and Ilocos Norte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Alexander Marcos said in a statement in Filipino and English that the bill “is about preparedness, but preparedness with compassion.” “Under the leadership of President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. and Speaker Bojie Dy, we want government to be ready with direct, targeted and time-bound help when fuel prices begin to hurt families, workers, farmers, fisherfolk, drivers, riders and small businesses,” Rep. Marcos said. House Bill 9305 seeks to institutionalize the Komprehensibong Alalay sa Livelihood, Inflation, Negosyo at Goods Assistance (KALINGA) program. The measure would allow the president to declare a state of national energy emergency upon the recommendation of the Kalinga National Response Council if, according to the statement, “Dubai crude oil prices reach or exceed \$80 per barrel for 30 days, domestic fuel prices rise by at least 30 percent within 30 days, or national fuel inventory falls below 30 days of supply.” “Once a national energy emergency is declared, the President may exercise limited and time-bound emergency powers to implement KALINGA interventions, including the release, realignment or augmentation of available funds for emergency relief measures, subject to constitutional, budgetary, procurement and audit rules,” the statement read. “The bill also allows emergency procurement for fuel, energy, transport, logistics, food security, social protection and other urgent program requirements, with transparency requirements and post-audit by the Commission on Audit (COA),” it added. Rep. Marcos said the bill was designed to prevent slow and fragmented responses. “When the price of oil increases, it is not only gasoline stations that are affected. This bill recognizes the chain reaction on food prices, fares, electricity, livelihood, small businesses and the daily cost of living, and it gives government the tools to respond before the burden reaches Filipino families,” he said. According to the statement, the KALINGA program would cover “low-income and near-poor households, minimum wage earners, displaced and underemployed workers, informal workers, public transport drivers and operators, delivery riders, logistics and freight service providers, commuters, farmers, fisherfolk, MSMEs, overseas Filipino workers and their families, and other vulnerable sectors.” MSMEs refer to micro, small and medium enterprises. “For households, the bill authorizes emergency cash transfers, food assistance, transport support, fuel-related relief, vouchers and temporary augmentation of existing social protection programs,” the statement said. “It also provides electricity bill assistance of up to P500 through a bill deduction or credit for qualified beneficiaries whose average monthly electricity consumption exceeds 100 kilowatt-hours but does not exceed 150 kilowatt-hours,” it added. “For agriculture and fisheries, the measure allows fuel subsidies, fuel vouchers, fuel cards, fuel discount mechanisms, fertilizer, seed, feed and crop protection support, as well as cold-chain, hauling, trucking, post-harvest, warehousing and market linkage assistance to reduce the pass-through of fuel costs to food prices,” the statement read. “For public transport, the bill authorizes fuel subsidies, vouchers, fuel cards, direct financial

assistance, fare subsidies, service contracting and other commuter support programs to protect drivers, operators and the riding public from extraordinary fuel price increases,” it added. “The proposal also provides support for platform-based transport drivers and delivery riders through possible fuel-linked assistance, temporary commission reductions, incentive rebates and mandatory disclosure of commission rates, deductions, incentives and fuel assistance programs during the emergency period,” the statement said. “For MSMEs and cooperatives, the measure authorizes emergency credit, concessional financing, working capital support, credit guarantees, debt relief, subsidies, vouchers, digitalization support, market access assistance and other measures to prevent closures, protect jobs and maintain the supply of essential goods and services,” it added. The bill also includes worker protection measures such as flexible work arrangements, emergency employment, temporary wage support, cash-for-work programs, livelihood assistance, skills upgrading, reskilling, upskilling, entrepreneurship support and job matching. In addition, the proposal authorizes the president to suspend the value-added tax, excise tax on petroleum products, or both for a limited period of up to 60 days, subject to reports to Congress on foregone revenues, inflation impact, fuel price effects, cost-benefit analysis and possible market distortions.

- [Robredo envisions Naga as a pilot city in health initiatives](#) (2026-05-20 13:22)

NAGA, Philippines — Naga City Mayor Leni Robredo hopes to lead by making the city a model for other local government units (LGUs) across the country to follow in addressing public health gaps. In an interview with the Manila Times on Wednesday, Robredo said she hopes that the city can spearhead innovative programs and provide a “proof of concept” that can be replicated by other LGUs nationwide. She noted that implementing programs on a national scale can be difficult without successful local examples to demonstrate that initiatives are feasible and effective. “So it’s very difficult to start programs on a national level without proof of concept. That’s our desire here in Naga,” she said. When the topic of the public pushing her to vie for another national position in the 2028 elections came up, Robredo candidly said, “We don’t talk about that here in Naga.” The city government launched the Cervical Cancer Elimination Summit, with the hopes of eradicating cervical cancer deaths in the city by scaling up human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination drives. VIDEO BY ALLEN LIMOS

- [Marcos names new PNOC head](#) (2026-05-20 11:17)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. appointed former Palawan 1st District Representative Franz Josef George Alvarez as the new acting president and chief executive officer of the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC). This was confirmed by Malacañang on Wednesday after Marcos signed Alvarez’s appointment letter on May 13, 2026. Alvarez will be taking over the PNOC’s reins from Ma. Cristina Sheila Canag Cabaraban. Prior to his new position, Alvarez also served as president and CEO of PNOC Exploration Corporation, a subsidiary of PNOC. The PNOC is the primary government corporate entity overseeing the exploration and development of the country’s various energy resources to ensure sufficient and stable energy supply.

- [EU economic package to make PH 'digital connectivity hub' in Southeast Asia](#) (2026-05-20 11:10)

MANILA, Philippines -- Finland underscored the deepening economic partnership between Manila and Helsinki, including regional initiatives such as the European Union's Global Gateway and Digital Economy Package, which aims to make the Philippines a "digital connectivity hub" in Southeast Asia. Permanent State Secretary Jukka Salovaara of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs highlighted the improved economic cooperation between the two countries during the inauguration of the Philippine embassy in Helsinki. Salovaara also emphasized the need for like-minded states to uphold the rules-based international order, the embassy added. Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro on Tuesday led the inauguration of the Philippine Embassy in the historic Wuorio building at Unioninkatu 30. The Philippine embassy in Finland reopened in October 2024. In 2025, the Philippines and Finland celebrated the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations. The event commemorated the re-establishment of the Philippine embassy in Finland and symbolized the renewed partnership between the two countries, the embassy said. Lazaro cited the connections between the Philippines and Finland through personal and everyday interactions as well as the strengthening of cooperation in various areas including smart and digital solutions. She thanked Finland for its support for the proposed Philippines-EU Free Trade Agreement. Lazaro underscored the role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), with the Philippines as its chairman in 2026, in promoting regional stability, economic integration, and multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. She also recognized the flourishing Asean-EU partnership and looked forward to the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Asean-EU relations in 2027.

- [Marcos, first lady declare P475M net worth in SALN](#) (2026-05-20 10:54)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his wife, first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, declared a net worth of P475,931,289.93 as of Dec. 31, 2025 in the Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN) they jointly filed. In their previous SALN, the couple declared a net worth of P389,357,463.14. Under Republic Act 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, public officials and employees have the duty to "submit declarations under oath of... their assets, liabilities, net worth and financial and business interests including those of their spouses and of unmarried children under" the age of 18 who live in their households. The law required the documents to be filed within 30 days after assuming office; on or before every April 30 after that; and within 30 days after separating from the service.

- [Atong Ang bought silence of 18 families of missing cockfighters for P40K each monthly, police told](#) (2026-05-20 10:44)

MANILA, Philippines — Families of the missing sabungeros (cockfight enthusiasts) came to the National Police Commission (Napolcom) on Wednesday to report that most of the complainants were now under the monthly payroll of fugitive gambling tycoon Charlie "Atong" Ang for P40,000 in exchange for their non-appearance in court hearings and dropping of cases against

the alleged mastermind. Of the 34 initial cases of missing sabungeros, five families were left fighting for justice. According to Diane Loyola, whose husband Ferdinand Dizon disappeared in Sta. Cruz, Laguna in 2022, 18 families were no longer appearing in Sta. Cruz hearings after striking a deal with lawyer Caroline Cruz, Ang' s legal counsel who, the families said, has been offering each one "financial assistance" disguised as a foundation. The victims presented the money used to bribe them. Loyola showed P30,000 cash, two other families showed envelopes of cash allegedly from Cruz. Loyola said the promise was an initial amount given in the form of apologies for the "hassles" of the case and if they agreed, a monthly provision of P40,000 split into P20,000 every 15 and 30th. "Lahat daw po ng pamilya ay nakausap na kaya po pala wala na mga umaattend. Sa halagang 40k a month pumayag po sila na hindi umattend ng hearing," Loyola said. (They said that they already talked to all of the families, that's why they were no longer attending. For the price of 40k a month, they agreed not to attend the hearing)," Loyola said. Quoting Cruz' s supposed statement, Loyola said the non-participation of the families would weaken the case against Ang, who was expected to reappear to give a big amount to all families.

- [House okays anti-political dynasty bill on 2nd reading](#) (2026-05-20 10:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives approved House Bill 8389 or the proposed Anti-Political Dynasty Act I second reading through a voice vote. A statement from Speaker Faustino Dy's office said the bill sought to prohibit relatives by blood or affinity within the second degree from holding or running for an elective position in the same national, provincial, city, town, or barangay (village) government, or from seeking House posts within the same district. The measure is top priority under the Marcos administration.

- [OVP receives impeachment court's summons](#) (2026-05-20 10:07)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Vice President on Wednesday received the summons of the Senate sitting as an impeachment court. The court ordered the issuance of a writ of summons directing her to file an answer on the impeachment articles sent by the House of Representatives. "We will comply and file the appropriate response in accordance with the Constitution and applicable rules," Duterte's defense team said last May 18, 2026.

- [New spokesman for PNP chief named](#) (2026-05-20 09:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Police Commission (Napolcom) on Wednesday welcomed a new acting spokesman for Philippine National Police Chief Jose Melencio Nartatez, who also serves as its ex-officio commissioner. Colonel Marlon R. Santos, who also serves as the senior police assistant to the ex-officio commissioner, will work closely with the Commission in advancing reforms focused on accountability, discipline, strategic communication, and stronger coordination between the Napolcom and the PNP. Santos previously served as provincial director of the Cavite Provincial Police Office and regional chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group' s Regional Field Units 4A and 7. In his current tasks, Santos conveys the directives, policies, and official positions of Nartatez to the public and the media, while helping

communicate key programs, operational developments, and reform initiatives of the PNP. Napolcom Commissioner Rafael Vicente R. Calinisan expressed confidence that Santos would be instrumental in strengthening public trust in the police organization through credible and people-centered communication. “Malaki ang naitutulong ni Col Santos sa pagsusulong ng mga reporma at sa pagpapalakas ng ugnayan ng Napolcom at PNP. Naniniwala ako na dadalhin niya sa bago niyang tungkulin ang integridad, professionalism, at malasakit sa serbisyo publiko na kailangan upang lalo pang mapalapit ang kapulisan sa taumbayan,” Calinisan said. (Col Santos has been instrumental in advancing reforms and strengthening the relationship between Napolcom and the PNP. I believe he will bring to his new role the integrity, professionalism, and dedication to public service that are needed to bring the police force closer to the people.) For his part, Santos thanked the PNP leadership and the Napolcom for the trust and opportunity given to him and reaffirmed his commitment to uphold responsive and people-centered public service.

- [SC denies Dela Rosa plea to stop ICC arrest order; Palace passes ruling to DOJ](#) (2026-05-20 08:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court has denied the request for a temporary restraining order (TRO) and/or status quo ante order (SQAQO) filed by Sen. Ronald Dela Rosa in connection with possible arrest actions linked to an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant, an Interpol red notice or diffusion, or any similar foreign-issued legal instrument in the absence of a Philippine court-issued warrant. In a 9-5-1 vote during a special session on Tuesday, the High Court denied the petition seeking interim relief that would have prevented the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Justice, Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Immigration, Armed Forces of the Philippines, and Criminal Investigation and Detection Group from acting on or assisting in the implementation of such foreign-issued arrest requests. Importantly, the high tribunal emphasized that this was not a final ruling on the main legal questions in the case. It only decided on the “interim relief,” or the request for immediate protection. The core constitutional and legal issues raised by both sides remain pending and will be resolved later when the Court decides the main case. Meanwhile, Malacanang, through Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro, said the Supreme Court order strengthened the validity of the ICC arrest warrant and that it would “pass all possible interpretations and evaluations of the said resolution from the Supreme Court to Secretary Frederickrick Vida.” Dela Rosa resurfaced after months of hiding last May 13 to throw his support behind the majority bloc that propelled Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano to the Senate presidency. It was on the same day that a shooting incident happened within the upper house’s premises which triggered an investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). Dela Rosa, aided by Sen. Robin Padilla, left the Senate complex several hours after. He is now considered a fugitive. “That is also the view of the OSG (Office of the Solicitor General), that he is considered a fugitive,” Castro said.

- [P8.3-M shabu hidden in imported gear bearings seized at Pasay cargo hub](#) (2026-05-20 06:12)

MANILA, Philippines — Authorities conducting a drug interdiction operation on Tuesday, May 19, intercepted an abandoned shipment at a Pasay City cargo facility and found suspected shabu concealed among auto gear bearings. The illegal substance, weighing 1,234 grams and valued at P8,391,200, originated from Uganda and was bound for a consignee in Cavite. The shipment underwent cargo X-ray screening by the Bureau of Customs, followed by K9 sniffing by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and a subsequent manual inspection. The PNP Aviation Security Group said two aluminum gear bearings concealed eco bags, which contained transparent plastic sachets filled with the illicit items which were turned over to the PDEA.

- [Garbage buildup halts Pasig River ferry service; Torre calls for discipline](#) (2026-05-20 06:03)

MANILA, Philippines — Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Nicholas Torre III on Wednesday called for public discipline in waste disposal after massive garbage buildup in the Pasig River forced the temporary suspension of its ferry service. In an advisory, the MMDA said ferry operations were temporarily suspended on Tuesday, May 19, due to the severe increase of garbage in the river that damaged several ferry boats and caused operational malfunctions. “It’s really infuriating when a few undisciplined people make life difficult for so many others. A single plastic thrown anywhere, when combined together, clogs esteros, worsens flooding, disrupts traffic flow, and puts entire communities in danger,” Torre said. The MMDA official said cleanup operations alone are not enough to address recurring flooding and garbage problems in Metro Manila. “The real battle is discipline and accountability. As long as there are Filipinos who think ‘it’s okay to throw garbage here,’ we will keep returning to the same problem,” he said. Torre added that cleanliness, flooding, and traffic problems are not solely government concerns but also reflect public discipline and responsibility. “If we want an orderly city, we must learn to become responsible even when no one is watching,” he said.

- [Vice President Sara Duterte’s husband files perjury complaint vs Trillanes](#) (2026-05-20 05:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Lawyer Manases Carpio, husband of Vice President Sara Duterte, has filed a criminal complaint for perjury against former senator Antonio Trillanes IV before the Office of the City Prosecutor in Pasig City. The complaint stemmed from an 11-page notarized statement Trillanes submitted on April 22, 2026, before the House of Representatives’ Committee on Justice during an impeachment inquiry against the vice president. In the affidavit, Trillanes alleged that Carpio and his wife maintained joint bank accounts amounting to P111,634,144.05 as of April 2016, and linked the funds to alleged drug-related transactions, naming an individual identified as “Sammy Uy.” Carpio denied the allegations, calling them false, malicious, and part of a smear campaign against his family. “To reiterate, I do not have P100 million in my bank accounts. I have vehemently denied and continue to deny any involvement in illegal drugs in any form. I also deny receiving any drug money or proceeds from

any alleged drug personality, including Sammy Uy,” Carpio said in his affidavit. He also cited previous findings, including the 2017 Senate Blue Ribbon Committee Report 168 and a 2018 Ombudsman fact-finding report, which he said cleared him and his brother-in-law, Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte, of previous drug-related accusations due to lack of evidence. The complaint argued that Trillanes committed perjury under Article 183 of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by Republic Act 11594, by allegedly making false statements under oath on a material matter before a competent authority. Carpio’s camp also invoked jurisprudence, citing the Supreme Court en banc ruling in Garrido vs. Gadon, to argue that sworn statements based on hearsay and lacking personal knowledge may give rise to perjury liability when presented as factual assertions. “He failed to present any proof that the alleged bank accounts exist or that any funds came from illegal sources,” Carpio said, adding that the claims were “hearsay and double hearsay.” In his affidavit, Carpio further described Trillanes’ allegations as politically motivated and damaging to his family’s reputation.

- [Suspended Senate sergeant-at-arms, 2 others face charges in shooting incident](#)
(2026-05-20 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday recommended the filing of charges against suspended Senate Sergeant-At-Arms Mao Aplasca and two others over the controversial Senate shooting last week. In a press briefing at Camp Crame on Wednesday, Maj. Gen. Robert Alexander Morico II, CIDG director, was firm that Aplasca and two other Senate security personnel had “no basis” to use their firearms under Republic Act 11917 or the Private Security Services Industry Act. Morico said the CIDG would be “transmitting our findings to the DOJ (Department of Justice)” for its assessment. In a press briefing hosted by the Malacañang Palace on Tuesday, Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla and PGen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., PNP chief, presented CCTV footage showing Aplasca and two security staff firing the first gun shots on the night of May 13, 2026 after seeing National Bureau of Investigation agents at the Government Service Insurance System premises adjacent to the Senate. Remulla also debunked Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano’s irate remark that the Senate was under attack. “For the record, all evidence points that there was no attack on the Senate. I would like to repeat, all evidence points that there was no attack on the Senate,” said Remulla. Remulla also doubted why Aplasca had to gather the Senate’s Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms personnel, as well as Marines and even the police assigned to the Senate in full view of the media and why he did not clear the entire floor if there was indeed an encounter. Critics claim that shooting was just a “diversionary tactic” for Sen. Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa to “escape” his arrest. Meanwhile, more OSAA personnel are scheduled to appear before the PNP-CIDG as part of its ongoing investigation. Among those issued subpoenas were OSAA Officer-in-Charge Manuel Parlade, a Senate CCTV operator, and several other OSAA staff members. Parlade assumed the role of officer-in-charge following the suspension of Aplasca. The CIDG subpoenaed on Tuesday former Senate secretary Mark Llandro Mendoza, Aplasca, and other OSAA personnel connected to the case.

- [Valenzuela sets aside P2.5B for road, drainage projects for 2026](#) (2026-05-20 05:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The administration of Valenzuela Mayor Wes Gatchalian lined up several road and drainage projects for implementation within the year across the city amounting to P2.5 billion. Gatchalian, interviewed by The Manila Times on Wednesday, said that he presented the infrastructure plans himself during the City Development Council (CDC) meeting which were attended by representatives from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), village chairmen and other key stakeholders. During the same meeting, Gatchalian said he took time presenting the city government's accomplishments in roads and drainage projects from 2023 to 2025 under the City Development Fund (CDF) which covered a total of 10.30 kilometers (kms) across 56 roads and 20.71 kilometers of drainage systems, amounting to P565-million. These initiatives reflect the local government's continued efforts to improve mobility and mitigate flooding in various communities, according to the city chief executive. Summarizing different road and flood mitigation projects for 2026 which were prepared by the City Engineering Department, Gatchalian said there would be a total of 45.85kms of road length and 87.70kms of drainage length across 175 roads, and 5.42kms of creek length across 13 waterways amounting to roughly P2.5-billion. Construction of some of these projects has already started, the local government said. To further improve public safety and security, Gatchalian said it has been continuously implementing its streetlighting and CCTV (closed-circuit television) projects, which cover approximately 105kms with 3,662 streetlights and 342 CCTV units installed across multiple phases as well the implementation of comprehensive flood control initiatives, which have reached 67 communities from August 2025 to April 2026. In terms of flood mitigation, the DPWH reported the upgrading of nine pumping stations. "These efforts are complemented by ongoing rehabilitation and installation projects with a total of 18 pumping units amounting to P776.8 million," the Valenzuela mayor said. Citing the coordination between the local and national governments, Gatchalian said Valenzuela has a standing ordinance which calls for a consistent coordination among concerned government agencies "whenever applicable programs or projects are underway." "It is clear that every project undertaken by the City of Valenzuela is neither rushed nor based on mere speculation. Each step follows the proper process—from listening to the community's requests, to thorough inspection and assessment by our offices, to coordination with the villages, among others," Gatchalian said. Reaffirming the city government's commitment to these projects, he said: "Let us continue to act, to plan, to follow the right process, and to implement solutions that have lasting impact—for a Valenzuela that is more ready to face the challenges of the times, safer for everyone, and more progressive for the next generation."

- [More workers turn to DOLE hotline for wage, benefit complaints](#) (2026-05-20 04:54)

MANILA, Philippines — More Filipino workers are turning to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for fast assistance on wages, benefits, and workplace disputes, with Hotline 1349 handling more than 48,000 labor-related concerns in the first quarter of 2026 alone. According to DOLE, the surge in inquiries showed the growing reliance of the public on the government's labor assistance system as workers sought immediate help on delayed

salaries, unpaid benefits, illegal practices, and employment concerns. The hotline initiative, it said, supported President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s push to make government services more accessible, responsive, and people-centered. From January to March 2026, Hotline 1349 received 46,526 assistance requests through voice calls, emails, and Facebook direct messages, generating a total of 48,381 labor-related queries nationwide. Emails emerged as the most used platform with 23,024 inquiries or nearly half of all requests, followed by 14,505 voice calls and 8,997 Facebook messages. DOLE noted that digital inquiries through email and Facebook reached 32,021, surpassing voice calls by more than 120 percent — a clear sign that workers now prefer faster, more convenient, and documented online communication channels. Most concerns centered on labor standards, which accounted for 15,647 or 62 percent of all recorded queries.

- [Marcos inspects drainage improvement works in Quezon City](#) (2026-05-20 04:45)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday led the inspection of a drainage improvement project in Quezon City as part of the government's flood mitigation initiatives ahead of the coming rainy season. Marcos, along with Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Vince Dizon and local officials, checked on the G. Araneta Drainage Improvement Project, one of the critical flood-prone locations in the city. "As you know, we're here at G. Araneta Avenue, we are checking the measures we are implementing to mitigate flooding," Marcos said in English and Filipino following the inspection. "These are the strategies we are employing... This is just one of them. We are doing a lot around Metro Manila and throughout the Philippines for flood control," he added. The G. Araneta Drainage Improvement Project spans 758 meters from Kaliraya Street to E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue and includes the installation of two 1.50-meter-diameter HDPE pipes beneath the roadway, supplementing the existing 0.91-meter-diameter drainage line beneath the sidewalk. Located near Talayan Creek and the San Juan River, G. Araneta Avenue is notoriously known for having one of the worst flooding during monsoon season. "This is one of the areas that are critical, that's why we're here. But it is not the only area where we are doing this kind of interventions to make sure that we find a way to bring the water – to release the water so that it doesn't flood too much," the president said.

- [Chavit Singson denies fugitive senator used yacht to flee](#) (2026-05-20 04:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Ilocos Sur governor Luis "Chavit" Singson has denied allegations that Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa used his yacht to flee following the shooting incident at the Senate on May 13. Singson dismissed reports alleging that his yacht, identified online as "Happy Life," was used to transport dela Rosa from Manila to Batangas, where the senator supposedly boarded a helicopter bound for Mindanao. The former governor said the allegations were baseless and could easily be disproven through records and monitoring procedures maintained by yacht clubs and port authorities. He also denied any participation in dela Rosa's "escape" from the Senate.

- [Dizon fires 2 provincial public works officials over Benguet road tragedy](#) (2026-05-20 04:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon removed two officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways-Cordillera Administrative Region (DPWH-CAR) following a fatal road accident in La Trinidad, Benguet blamed on glaring safety lapses. Dismissed from their posts were District Engineer Isagani Cayme and Engineer III Marjory Banao after a cyclist plunged into a ravine and died along a damaged section of road in Beckel, La Trinidad. The tragedy exposed the absence of critical road safety measures at the site, including warning signages, traffic control devices, and concrete barriers that could have prevented endangering motorists and cyclists. Dizon said the collapsed portion of the road had been left exposed without adequate protection, putting lives at serious risk. The DPWH chief stressed that negligence and complacency within the agency would not be tolerated, especially when public safety is at stake.

- [Padilla defends Dela Rosa exit in Senate shooting incident](#) (2026-05-20 03:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Robinhood Padilla on Wednesday defended fugitive colleague Ronald dela Rosa over criticisms surrounding his departure from the Senate complex during the reported shooting incident involving its security personnel and operatives of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Padilla said dela Rosa's actions during the incident should not be interpreted negatively, stressing that the senator merely acted out of concern for his safety amid the confusion that unfolded inside the Senate premises. According to Padilla, the situation at the time was tense and unclear, prompting those inside the building to immediately seek safety as armed personnel from different groups became involved in the confrontation. The senator also emphasized that dela Rosa was not avoiding responsibility or abandoning the situation, but was responding to what appeared to be a potential threat during the security disturbance. Padilla added that the incident exposed serious lapses in coordination and communication between Senate security personnel and law enforcement authorities conducting operations within the compound. The controversy stemmed from the May 13 incident in which members of the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms (OSAA) and NBI personnel reportedly figured in a confrontation that allegedly involved warning shots inside the Senate complex. The incident triggered alarm among Senate employees and officials and prompted an investigation by the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG). Dela Rosa became the subject of public discussion after reports circulated regarding his immediate departure from the Senate during the commotion.

- [Lights out for Cuban students as blockade bites](#) (2026-05-20 03:01)

HAVANA, Cuba — It's the middle of the night in Havana, but Alejandro Benitez is just getting down to work. The power is back on for the first time in 15 hours and Benitez, a fourth-year architecture student, needs to get his assignment in fast before the electricity cuts out again. Desperate times call for desperate measures in crisis-hit Cuba, where a US fuel blockade -- part of a pressure campaign which Havana fears will culminate in a military intervention -- has aggravated an energy crisis, leaving people without power for up to 20 hours a day. In February the government moved university classes online, part of a raft of measures aimed at conserving

electricity. But distance learning has proven challenging in a country with patchy internet and dwindling power supplies. Students struggle in fields like architecture, which require regular feedback and direction from instructors. "Having direct contact with the teacher is really important," said 28-year-old Benitez, who has to ask all of his questions via WhatsApp or Telegram. With only one oil tanker mooring in Cuba in the last four months, the situation is rapidly deteriorating. The government announced that it had run out of diesel and fuel oil needed to power the generators that supplement the output of its seven dilapidated power plants. And as public transport grinds to a halt, so too have students' social lives. Benitez, who cooks over an open charcoal fire, hasn't left his neighborhood of Punta Brava since February. Self-starters required Shalia Garcia, a 19-year-old second-year industrial design student, is also struggling to adapt. Some courses which are central to her degree have been suspended or pared back. Teachers send around agendas, course material and submission dates for assignments. Then the responsibility is on the students in a system that requires them to be self-starters. "This type of teaching puts the onus on the student, which I find hard to manage," Garcia said. Even the most zealous pupils face multiple hurdles. The discounted mobile data packages available to students do not have the capacity to download large folders, and it can take time for teachers to respond to questions. Teachers, too, say they feel hamstrung by the lack of face time with students. Benitez's partner, Alfredo Rodriguez, a 34-year-old industrial design professor, told AFP there were entire sections of the syllabus that his students "simply have not seen" because they need to be taught in person. He also has to regularly extend students' deadlines. "We cannot make the same demands when we know that some students have no electricity or internet connection," he said. Garcia's mother, a doctor, worries that her daughter's education is suffering as a result. "I'm very concerned but I have no choice but to face the situation," Luisa Odalys Destrade said with a sigh. Benitez, for his part, feels his future is being held hostage by Havana's standoff with Washington. "What sort of architect will I become?" he wondered.

• [NATO's top officer doesn't expect more American drawdowns beyond the 5,000 troops Trump announced](#) (2026-05-20 02:57)

BRUSSELS — NATO's top military officer said Tuesday that he does not expect any more drawdowns of American troops from Europe — at least not anytime soon — beyond the 5,000 that U.S. President Donald Trump announced would leave the continent. The remarks by U.S. Lt. Gen. Alex Grynkeiwich follow Trump's surprise announcement of the move early this month, which came as the U.S. leader has bickered with allies over the Iran war and called for changes. The Pentagon has canceled deployments to Poland and Germany to draw down thousands of troops in Europe as opposed to yanking out forces already stationed there. "It will be 5,000 troops coming out of Europe," Grynkeiwich told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels, where top officers from the 32-nation military organization met. "It's all that I'm expecting in the near term." Remarks could allay fears of more cuts. Grynkeiwich's remarks could allay initial fears that more cuts might be coming. The reductions have drawn blowback from both Democratic and Republican U.S. lawmakers, who said the move sent the wrong

message to close allies and that Congress was not consulted about the changes. Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said Tuesday that the military reduced the number of brigade combat teams assigned to Europe from four to three, “resulting in a temporary delay of the deployment of U.S. forces to Poland, which is a model U.S. ally.” The Pentagon “will determine the final disposition of these and other U.S. forces in Europe based on further analysis of U.S. strategic and operational requirements, as well as our allies’ own ability to contribute forces toward Europe’s defense,” Parnell said on social media. He said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth spoke to Polish Defense Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz on Tuesday and that the U.S. will ensure it “retains a strong military presence in Poland.” US military changes surprised allies in Europe. Trump’s announcement blindsided NATO allies and came despite U.S. promises to coordinate military moves with its allies and avoid creating security gaps. Trump was notably angry at Germany, after Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the United States was being “humiliated” by the Iranian leadership and criticized what he called a lack of U.S. strategy in the war. Some 4,000 troops from the Army’s 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division are no longer going to Poland as planned, and the deployment to Germany of personnel trained to fire long-range rockets and missiles has been halted. Much of the detail is still being worked out. Some U.S. troops from the brigade bound for Poland were told not to get on a plane to Europe shortly before departure. About 1,000 soldiers and 1,700 pieces of equipment from that brigade had already arrived in Europe shortly before their deployment was canceled, a U.S. military official told The Associated Press on Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military deployments. Grynkeiwich said he spoke earlier in the day to military chiefs from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland about “some of the options and how we might array capabilities on the eastern flank,” along NATO’s border with Russia. Concerns arise about effects on the Baltic states. The cancellation of the deployment to Poland has wider effects because some U.S. troops based in the Baltics, including Estonia, were supposed to come from the brigade meant to arrive in Poland, said Jonatan Vseiovi, secretary-general at Estonia’s Foreign Ministry. He described the development as “a hiccup,” but one that “in and of itself is not going to collapse NATO deterrence in the Baltic states.” Alluding to the sudden decision to pull troops, Estonia’s Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur told Estonian media Tuesday that “there is not much information” about what is happening. “What we do know is that U.S. forces are in Estonia and will remain there,” he said, adding that “no one has told me that any kind of lowering of the U.S. flag in Estonia is going to happen.” Lithuania’s Foreign Minister Kęstutis Budrys, told AP that the deployment of 1,000 U.S. troops to Lithuania is also linked to the canceled rotation. He said he viewed any issues connected to the deployment to be a “technical issue,” which hopefully will be resolved with American troops remaining in Lithuania. The U.S. military official said officials are looking at how to bridge any gaps in the Baltic nations with other forces already deployed in Europe. Grynkeiwich insisted that security in Europe would not be compromised but warned that allies should expect more drawdowns in coming years. “Over the long term, we absolutely should expect additional redeployments as Europe continues to build capability and capacity and step up to provide more of the conventional defense of Europe,” Grynkeiwich said. “It’s going to be an ongoing process for several years,” he said, but added, “We’re going to stay

well-synchronized with our allies moving forward."

- [Indian pharma fuels Africa's 'zombie drug' and opioid crisis](#) (2026-05-20 02:48)

NEW DELHI, India — They come in blister packs of 10 like any normal painkiller and you can buy them easily in roadside kiosks and street pharmacies across west Africa. Millions of tapentadol tablets from India are helping drive a deadly opioid epidemic ravaging the region, with officials and researchers telling AFP that they are also being added to the "zombie drug" kush. The cheap pills are so strong that no regulatory authority in the world has approved them. Yet an AFP investigation found Indian pharmaceutical firms were flooding west Africa with the pills despite New Delhi vowing to crack down on the trade. Some shipments were even labelled "Harmless Medicines for Human Consumption". Customs records show millions of dollars' worth of the high-strength synthetic opioid being shipped from India every month to Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ghana, where even low doses of the drug are not permitted. With opioids now heavily regulated in wealthier nations after being linked to one million deaths in the United States alone, some manufacturers in India -- the world's biggest producer of generic drugs -- are pushing hard into Africa. And in a frightening development, tapentadol is now being added to the "zombie drug" kush, health chiefs and researchers told AFP. Kush, infamous for the speed with which it hollows out its victims, has already been declared a national emergency in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Bodies on the streets The tapentadol twist on the ferociously addictive synthetic cocktail is "very alarming", Ansu Konneh, director of mental health at Sierra Leone's social welfare ministry told AFP. Bodies are being picked up from "the streets, markets and slums on a daily basis", he said -- with more than 400 corpses collected over three months in the capital Freetown alone. "They grind and mix it with kush," Freetown-based public health researcher Ronald Abu Bangura told AFP, with tapentadol now "being misused all over the place". The impoverished nation is struggling to tackle the death and misery. AFP visited addicts in informal detox houses who are sometimes chained up for months to go cold turkey. Konneh said 90 percent of those admitted to the country's few official rehab centres had smoked kush mixed with tapentadol or other powerful opioids such as nitazenes. New Delhi declared a "zero-tolerance" crackdown on illegal drug trading in February 2025, banning export of tablets that mixed tapentadol with the muscle relaxant carisoprodol after a BBC investigation exposed the damage they were doing in Ghana. India's drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), later said it was withdrawing all export clearances for "combinations of tapentadol... which are not approved by an importing country". But the main trade was always in pure tapentadol tablets, say researchers. Shipment records reviewed by AFP show that millions of dollars worth of the high-strength pills are still being exported from India to west Africa every month. The vast bulk are so strong India officially does not even allow their production without special permission. Yet AFP matched high-strength tapentadol tablets seized in at least four west African countries with Indian export records through their makers' licence numbers. This was established using commercial shipment data, government seizure records, interviews and documents obtained under India's Right to Information transparency law. Labelled 'harmless medicines' Tapentadol tablets seized in Sierra Leone in December marked "

Made in India" had a manufacturing licence number that corresponds to Gujarat Pharmaceuticals, a company based in Godhra, Gujarat, according to images of the boxes photographed by AFP. The firm was listed in the export monitoring database Volza as an exporter of tapentadol to west Africa. Its manufacturing licence number appeared on tablets seized last June in Guinea. A second licence number on tablets seized in the same Guinean operation corresponds to Merit Organics, another Gujarat-based company in the database. Senegalese authorities seized high-strength 250mg tapentadol tablets in November with a licence number registered to McW Healthcare, a Madhya Pradesh-based company. A fourth company, PRG Pharma, also made several shipments after New Delhi's ban last February, labelling them as "harmless medicines". Its director Manish Goyal is a shareholder in Maiden Pharmaceuticals -- a company controlled by his father -- whose cough syrup Gambian authorities blamed for the death of 69 children in 2023. The Volza database shows McW Healthcare shipped dozens of consignments of 250mg tablets worth more than \$1 million to Sierra Leone and Nigeria after the February crackdown. AFP found a camera repair shop at the Nigerian importer's address in Lagos. Health authorities there said it had no pharmaceutical permit and called the imports "illegal". Kuwait Customs intercepted tapentadol tablets in January carried by a Beninese traveller. Their packaging bore the licence number of Syncom Formulations. AFP's analysis identified the company as the largest tapentadol exporter to west Africa by value, having shipped consignments worth nearly \$15 million after February, many declared as "Harmless Medicines for Human Consumption". Benin is among the declared destinations for Syncom's shipments. The Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association -- the largest industry body -- defended the trade, saying "a legitimate manufacturer who has followed the procedures cannot be held responsible for what happens later in the supply chain." But government officials in Nigeria and Sierra Leone told AFP tapentadol was illegal, while Ghana said it has never been permitted there.

Get people hooked Most people in Africa take tapentadol not to get high but to do brutal back-breaking work, experts say. It "energises my body to ride day and night", said motorbike taxi rider Abubakar Sesay, who earns a pittance bumping over the bone-rattling backroads of Freetown. "Without it, I can't survive." Market porters and gold miners from Lagos to Mali use tapentadol pills to push through the pain, according to NGOs. "It's used as a performance enhancer to enable people to do long hours of hard work," said medical anthropologist Axel Klein of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. Opioids are now the second most used drug in Nigeria after cannabis. Femi Babafemi of the country's NDLEA anti-drug agency said it had seized two billion high-strength pills in 2023 and 2024 alone. "Kidnappers, terrorists and bandits use these drugs so they can carry out their nefarious activities," he added, with police saying jihadist fighters like Boko Haram also take it "for courage". The pills are also used as a form of currency in ransoms for kidnappings, Babafemi said. A tablet is cheaper than a meal in the poor and dusty suburb of the capital Abuja where Boluwatife Owoyemi of YouthRISE Nigeria works with drug users. As well as "giving them lots of strength... they are those who use it as an appetite suppressant... until they have the money to get food," she said. With brands like TramaKing, Super Royal 200 and Tamol-X, the pills are "made to look like a medicine", said Klein. "Consumers (in west Africa) are much more naive than in other parts of the world," he said, and there is little government regulation or enforcement

on the ground to protect them."This creates opportunities for unscrupulous Indian companies to sell products that are problematic, dangerous, harmful or outright illegal to African countries," Vanda Felbab-Brown, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, who has long studied opioid flows, told AFP."Africa is a market that provides opportunities at a low end," she said."It's a prime situation for trafficking networks from India to try to get people hooked."A 'sense of impunity'Ninety percent of the world's seizures of tramadol over the last decade have been in west and central Africa, according to a new report by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.India declared the opioid a controlled narcotic in 2018.But the report said tapentadol has now "replaced or supplemented" tramadol in many west African countries. Lab tests showing pills sold as tramadol in Sierra Leone were all tapentadol.While tapentadol is often sold on the streets as tramadol, it is actually two to three times stronger and even more dangerous, experts say."Indian pharmaceutical companies began exporting vast quantities of tramadol to west Africa, often at potency levels far beyond what was considered safe for human consumption" about 15 years ago, said Felbab-Brown."Domestically they could not sell such potent tramadol but they were indifferent to what was well known to stimulate substance-use disorders in their export markets."Now the pattern is being repeated with even stronger tapentadol, she added, driven by "poor law enforcement and regulatory controls" and a "sense of impunity".Tapentadol's tongue-twister name and the confusion with tramadol has further helped it slip under the radar.Bypassing restrictionsNearly three-quarters of tapentadol exports to west Africa since India's crackdown have been high-strength 225mg and 250mg pills, according to AFP's analysis.Andrew Somogyi, professor of pharmacology at the University of Adelaide, told AFP he did not know of any country that had approved 225mg tapentadol tablets. He questioned "why a country would want that strength except to bypass regulatory and commercial restrictions".Dr Viranchi Shah of the Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association said there was a "shared responsibility of all key stakeholders" to stop misuse of the drug.India's drug regulator, the CDSCO -- which is responsible for issuing export clearances -- told AFP it had "no record" of issuing them for consignments of 225 and 250mg tapentadol. It did not respond to follow-up queries.Jaydip Patel, of Gujarat Pharmaceuticals, whose tapentadol tablets were seized in Sierra Leone, said their exports were conducted legally."The importer gave us an authorisation letter," he said. "After that we got the permission here."He said Indian manufacturers had switched from exporting tramadol to tapentadol because "tapentadol is easier to export because it is not classified as a narcotic".When AFP visited Gujarat Pharmaceuticals' premises in Godhra in January, the building appeared deserted and charred tablets lay scattered on the ground alongside piles of ash from a fire.The other Indian firms did not reply to AFP's questions.Children now taking itGhana's Food and Drugs Authority told AFP it had "never issued any permit for the manufacture or importation of tapentadol of any strength".Nigeria's National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) said tapentadol was neither registered nor approved in the country. "Any tapentadol product found within Nigeria is unauthorised and illegal," it added.Sierra Leone's Health Minister Austin Demby told AFP that only 50mg tramadol administered in recognised health facilities was legal."Anything outside of that is illegal," he added.Yet police there said there had been an "unprecedented increase" in tapentadol use by young people, including schoolchildren and

university students. "The suffering is too much," said Hassan Kamara, a traditional healer who runs an informal detox house an hour from Freetown where kush addicts -- who are sometimes psychotic -- lie chained to the floor for months. Manso Koroma, 31, started taking the "zombie drug" for the pain when he lost his leg after a traffic accident, his body haggard and scarred. "When I came here I was really violent," he told AFP last year. "I am OK with the treatment," he said, chained to the bed, the windows and doors barred. "I've recovered. I'm just waiting for my sister to come and I can leave here." In a country where the scars of a long civil war marked by terrible atrocities are still to heal, even the very young are now taking tapentadol, said mental health chief Ansu Konneh. "What is worrying is that young children in primary schools are now taking the pills," splitting them into two or four pieces to "mix with energy drinks to increase potency". The fact that tapentadol looks like a medicine and is sold as one, masks its danger. The tragedy, said Konneh, is that even addicts seeking help "tell us, 'I've stopped taking kush, I'm just taking tapentadol tablets.' They don't see that to be a problem to their health."

- [Duterte's lead counsel picks former team member to assist in ICC trial](#) (2026-05-20 02:44)

MANILA, Philippines — The International Criminal Court's (ICC) Registry has appointed a new lawyer for former president Rodrigo Duterte, according to a notification released on Tuesday. The appointment of Kate Gibson as associate counsel, formalized on May 18, 2026, came at the request of Peter Haynes KC, who was named as Duterte's lead counsel just three days earlier on May 15. Haynes requested Gibson's assistance for the defense team in the proceedings before the court. Gibson has accepted the mandate and confirmed to the Registry that she has no conflicts of interest or impediments to representing Duterte, in compliance with the ICC's Code of Professional Conduct. She had previously executed the required solemn undertakings, which remained valid throughout the proceedings. The appointment follows the departure of Nicholas Kaufman, who was granted leave to withdraw as Duterte's counsel by Trial Chamber III on May 11. 'A seasoned international lawyer' Gibson is an Australian barrister and associate tenant at Doughty Street Chambers in London, specializing in international criminal and human rights law. She holds a Masters in International Law from Cambridge University and has practiced before international tribunals since 2005. She is best known for her role in the defense team of former Congolese vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba, which secured an acquittal from the ICC Appeals Chamber in 2018 — a rare reversal at the court. That team was led by Haynes, now Duterte's lead counsel. Gibson has also represented Bosco Ntaganda, the Congolese warlord convicted of war crimes; Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony; former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadžić on appeal; and former Liberian president Charles Taylor on appeal. Beyond defense work, Gibson has represented Rohingya victims in the ICC's Bangladesh/Myanmar situation and served as a legal consultant to the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. Gibson is a former president of the Association of Defense Counsel practicing before the International Courts and Tribunals and a member of the ICC Bar Association.

- [New US Ambassador to Philippines meets Romualdez, to start tour of duty soon](#)

(2026-05-20 02:23)

MANILA, Philippines -- Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel Romualdez met with incoming Ambassador of the United States to Manila Lee Lipton ahead of his departure for his tour of duty in the Philippines. Romualdez and Lipton on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) discussed the longstanding and enduring alliance between the Philippines and the US, the Philippine Embassy in Washington said. They tackled opportunities to further strengthen bilateral economic engagement, security cooperation, people-to-people ties, and regional collaboration, the embassy posted on X. Romualdez expressed confidence that Philippine-US relations would "continue to grow under their shared commitment to advancing the interests of both countries and peoples," the embassy said. This year, the Philippines and the US are commemorating 80 years of diplomatic relations, and the 75th anniversary of the Philippines-United States Mutual Defense Treaty. Both envoys underscored the importance of expanding cooperation in emerging strategic sectors such as in the processing of critical minerals, energy cooperation, advanced manufacturing, and resilient supply chains. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments, including the Philippines' chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2026 and its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council this coming June.

- [Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon kill 19, including children and women, officials say](#)

(2026-05-20 01:52)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon Tuesday killed at least 19 people, including four women and three children, Lebanon's Health Ministry said, the latest in near-daily attacks from both sides that have not stopped despite the fragile U.S.-brokered cease fire in the Israel-Hezbollah war. Israel's military did not immediately comment on the casualties or specific incidents, but said that between Monday afternoon and Tuesday afternoon, it had targeted more than 25 sites of Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon. The Israel-Hezbollah latest fighting began on March 2 with the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group firing rockets at Israel, two days after the United States and Israel attacked Iran. In Beirut, the government said a single strike on the village of Deir Qanoun al Nahr in the coastal Tyre province killed 10 people, including three children and three women. Three were wounded, including a child. The ministry provided no further details about the strike but state-run National News Agency said it destroyed a house, leaving several people under the rubble. Their bodies were pulled out later in the day. According to the ministry, another airstrike — this one on the southern city of Nabatieh — killed four people and wounded 10 others, including two women. A third strike in the nearby village of Kfar Sir killed five people, including one woman. The latest deaths came a day after the death toll in the latest round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah surpassed 3,000, and two days after the U.S.-brokered truce that has been in place since April 17, was extended for 45 days. Israel has since invaded southern Lebanon and bombarded its capital, Beirut, and other areas, saying it is targeting Hezbollah infrastructure. Hezbollah, both a militant group and a powerful political

organization in Lebanon, has resisted pressure to disarm, including by the Lebanese government. More than a million people have been displaced in Lebanon by the fighting, with some sheltering in tents along roads and the Mediterranean Sea in Beirut. Israel, meanwhile, has struggled to halt frequent Hezbollah drone attacks targeting its troops on Lebanese soil and northern Israeli border towns. Israel's military said one of its soldiers was killed on Tuesday in battle in southern Lebanon, raising the Israeli troops' death toll to 21 since the latest conflict started.

• [Bone appetit: Paris pups lap up treats at dog-centric spots](#) (2026-05-20 01:45)

PARIS, France — An elegant, white-haired Parisian savours a biscuity cloud of cream and apple down to the last crumb at one of the French capital's many bakeries -- but this client has four legs not two. Loulou, a fluffy Pomeranian dog, lets out a satisfied "woof" after polishing off a five-euro (\$5.90) "Le Merveilleux" made from banana puree, cream cheese, apple and beef. The one-year-old pup is a regular at this dog bakery, where the treats lined up under a glass counter -- like the heart-shaped "Le Mignon" made with sweet potato, cream cheese and blueberry -- look almost good enough for humans to eat. French owner Clara Zambuto said that adopting Hulk, her three-year-old Pomeranian, inspired her to open the canine-friendly patisserie, where dogs and their humans can indulge side-by-side. "I'd often go for walks with him... pop into a cafe like a proper Parisian, but he'd soon get bored," said the 26-year-old owner of Casa del Doggo. "I thought it was a shame there weren't places in Paris where, while you're having a quick coffee, you can also treat your pet," she added. "Nowadays our dog is really like our child... we want to be able to take him everywhere," she said. The bakery is one of several dog-centric establishments popping up in the French capital -- home to an estimated 100,000 canines -- where some say pets' needs remain overlooked. No chocolate Zambuto started preparing the treats at home herself, before enlisting the help of a trained pastry chef. "No chocolate, no avocado, no grapes and no onion," she said, as they are toxic to dogs. Like for humans, moderation also remains key to avoid excessive weight gain, said Lolita Sommaire, a veterinarian specialising in canine and feline nutrition. "If they've been to a patisserie, you need to adjust their next meal, cut back a little, or get them doing more exercise," she said. "But if it's once a month, it's not a big deal," she added. At another dog cafe, pups roam on a bench-lined terrace, some munching on four-euro croissant- and baguette-shaped treats. Marley, a beret-wearing American shepherd, lapped up the remnants of a chantilly-based "pup cup" from the pavement. For Rebecca Anhalt, the decision to open her "dog-first" cafe came after being hit with a hefty fine for letting Napoleon, her five-year-old whippet, off the leash in a park. "I wanted to create a place where people could come and not fear... being scolded for having your dog," said the US-born owner of Le Bone Appart, a play on French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's last name. Really good connector While Paris has more than 40 off-leash spaces for dogs, one advocacy group, Paris Condition Canine, argues that those on offer are "insufficient, unevenly distributed and sometimes ill-suited". Dogs even emerged as a niche issue ahead of March's mayoral race, with new Paris mayor Emmanuel Gregoire dedicating an Instagram account to photos with canine companions, while rival Rachida Dati organised a dog-centric "

apero" or aperitif, a sacred evening ritual in many French households. For Loulou the Pomeranian's owner and self-described "mother", Sarah Elgamal, trips to the Casa del Doggo bakery offer more than just treats but an opportunity to bond with her pooch. It "improves our connection, because we're both in a third place that's neither work nor home", said the 32-year-old pharmacist. And though dogs come first at her cafe, Anhalt said many visitors also come for the chance to socialise with fellow pet owners. "Dogs are a really good connector," she said. One regular and his 17-year-old dachshund, newly arrived in Paris, now come every day to "be part of the group and meet people", she added. After all, "you'll talk to anybody about your dog."

- [Former Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero is under investigation linked to airline bailout](#) (2026-05-20 01:41)

MADRID — A Spanish court is investigating former Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero for alleged influence peddling and other possible crimes tied to a government airline bailout. The National Court in Madrid is probing possible financial wrongdoing in connection with the Spanish government's rescue of the Plus Ultra airline, which in 2021 received 53 million euros (now \$62 million) in public money as part of COVID-19 recovery funds. The court said in a statement that the investigation was widened to include Zapatero, who was summoned to answer a judge's questions on June 2. Police with warrants from the investigating judge searched Zapatero's office on Tuesday. Zapatero, 65, was prime minister from 2004 to 2011 and had been out of public office for a decade when Plus Ultra received the bailout. He is a member of the Socialist party headed by current Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, whose party has been rocked by other corruption scandals over the past two years. Zapatero denied any wrongdoing. "All of my public and private activities have always been conducted in full compliance with the law," he said in a statement to Spanish media. "My private activities and the income and compensation I have received have been declared via income tax with absolute transparency and legality." Plus Ultra is a Spanish-owned airline with investors from Venezuela. It specialized in flights between Spain and Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador. Since leaving office, Zapatero has focused a large part of his activity on maintaining dialogue with the government in Venezuela, which was largely isolated from Western countries after it cracked down on the democratic opposition. When asked about Zapatero on Tuesday, Spanish government spokesperson Elma Saiz told reporters that the administration is "approaching the news with calm, confidence, prudence and respect for the law."

- [Israeli forces intercept the remaining activist flotilla vessels headed for Gaza](#) (2026-05-20 01:31)

JERUSALEM — Israeli forces on Tuesday intercepted all remaining vessels from an activist flotilla attempting to challenge Israel's naval blockade of Gaza, the latest effort to highlight the grim conditions for nearly 2 million Palestinians with severe shortages of housing, food and medicine. A live feed on the Global Sumud Flotilla website showed armed Israeli soldiers boarding the vessels as activists in life vests put their hands up. Soldiers then destroyed

cameras mounted on the vessels. Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani called for an urgent review of Israel's use of force after Italian activists said soldiers fired rubber bullets at vessels. Flotilla organizers claimed Israeli soldiers fired on five boats during the interdictions, with some damage. Israel's Foreign Ministry said that no live ammunition was fired. In a statement late Tuesday, it added that "non-lethal means" were aimed toward the vessels as a warning, but without targeting or injuring protesters. Israeli forces had begun stopping the flotilla around 167 miles (268 kilometers) from the Gaza coastline, according to the flotilla's website. The vessels departed last week from Turkey. Israel has called the flotilla "a provocation for the sake of provocation" with no real intent to deliver aid to Gaza. The boats carry a symbolic amount of aid. Detained activists being 'forcibly transported,' group says. On Monday, the Israeli navy stopped some 41 boats from the flotilla in international waters off Cyprus and detained those on board. The flotilla said late Tuesday that 428 detained activists from over 40 nations remain "unaccounted for" as they have had neither contact with lawyers nor access to consular help and their families haven't been informed of their whereabouts. Israel's Foreign Ministry Office said Tuesday night that "all 430 activists" had been transferred to Israeli vessels. The post on X, which called the flotilla "a PR stunt at the service of Hamas," added that they were "making their way to Israel, where they will be able to meet with their consular representatives." More than a dozen Irish nationals were aboard the flotilla, including the sister of Irish President Catherine Connolly. Ireland's Prime Minister Micheál Martin has called Israel's interception of the boats in international waters "absolutely unacceptable." The flotilla urged governments and world leaders to demand the activists "immediate and unconditional release" and to ensure they get legal and consular help without delay. Earlier Tuesday, the activist group said that the detainees were "being forcibly transported" by an Israeli ship to an unnamed port. It also warned of "grave and immediate concerns" about the activists' physical safety after others detained during an April 30 interdiction detailed "patterns of torture, severe physical abuse and invasive sexual violence" by Israeli forces. Israel denies the allegations. Turkey and the Palestinian militant group Hamas have called the interdictions an act of "piracy." Italy, Spain and Indonesia called on Israel to release activists and ensure their safety. The U.S. Treasury, however, imposed sanctions against European activists Saif Abu Keshek, Jaldia Abubakra Aueda, Hisham Abdallah Sulayman Abu Mahfuz and Mohammed Khatib, who were aboard the flotilla, which Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called "pro-terror." The Israeli defense body overseeing humanitarian aid to Gaza claims that sufficient aid is entering the territory, with around 600 trucks delivering assistance daily, similar to prewar levels. But according to a U.N. World Food Program report, the number of humanitarian and commercial trucks entering Gaza declined sharply in March compared with previous months following the start of the Iran war. A daily average of 112 trucks entered in March. Activist says they are determined to carry on. Italian activist Daniele Gallina was with six others aboard a sailboat that diverted to a harbor in Cyprus because of technical issues. He said he and his fellow activists saw their mission as an attempt to open Gaza to the world. "What matters is not only the aid itself, important as it is, but the structural change it represents. It is also about challenging the collaboration of our own governments with these policies," Gallina told The Associated Press. Even though the Flotilla's mission was "entirely pacifist," Gallina said, the Israeli

military' s actions demonstrated how international law is now "openly disregarded," notably against "peaceful civilian missions carrying no weapons." He said he and fellow activists remained determined to continue their protests "until Gaza is reached." Israel has blockaded Gaza's coast for nearly two decades. Israel has maintained a sea blockade of Gaza since Hamas took control of the territory in 2007. Israeli authorities intensified it after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attacks on Israel that killed around 1,200 people and saw more than 250 taken hostage. Critics say the blockade amounts to collective punishment. Israel has said the blockade is meant to prevent Hamas from arming. Egypt, which has the only border crossing with Gaza not controlled by Israel, has also greatly restricted movement in and out. Gaza' s Health Ministry says Israel' s retaliatory offensive following the Oct. 7 attack has killed more than 72,700 people. The ministry, part of Gaza' s Hamas-run government, does not give a breakdown between civilians and militants. It is staffed by medical professionals who maintain and publish detailed records viewed as generally reliable by the international community.

- [Hot weather, only isolated rain expected over PH in 24 hours](#) (2026-05-19 21:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Most parts of the country would be again experiencing hot weather while isolated downpours would only be likely during late afternoon or at night, the state-run weather agency said on Wednesday. Weather specialist Chenel Dominguez of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said it has not monitored any low pressure area forming inside or outside the archipelago' s area of responsibility in the coming days. She reiterated in a 5a. m. briefing that fair weather conditions would prevail in most areas over the next 24 hours due to the easterlies – winds that pass through the Pacific Ocean and carry humid and warm weather. The same weather system, however, would be bringing partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms over the Visayas, MIMAROPA (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), and Bicol Region, according to the Pagasa forecaster. Meanwhile, Metro Manila and the rest of the country would be experiencing a similar weather pattern but due to the localized thunderstorms, the national weather bureau said. It said in the same advisory that the National Capital Region would likely have a heat index of 41 degrees Celsius, which falls under extreme caution category, while the highest could be over San Ildefonso, Bulacan at 45 degrees Celsius, falling under danger level.

- [More than 17,000 under evacuation orders as Southern California wildfire threatens homes](#) (2026-05-19 21:14)

SIMI VALLEY, California — More than 17,000 people were under evacuation orders in Southern California on Tuesday as a wildfire threatened suburban homes. The wind-driven Sandy Fire was reported Monday in the hills above Simi Valley, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles. By Tuesday morning, it had consumed more than two square miles (five square kilometers) of dry brush and destroyed at least one home, according to the Ventura County Fire Department. The flames were initially pushed by gusts that topped 30 mph (48 kph), but firefighters were aided by calmer winds overnight, said department spokesperson Andrew

Dowd. "We've made a lot of progress against this fire with those improved weather conditions," Dowd said. Crews hoped to make further progress before winds increased again, he said. The fire was 5% contained. The cause is under investigation. Evacuation orders and warnings were still in place for several neighborhoods in Simi Valley, a city of more than 125,000 people that was shrouded in smoke as aircraft made water drops. Meanwhile, firefighters were battling a 23-square-mile (59-square-kilometer) blaze on Santa Rosa Island, off the Southern California coast. The fire destroyed a cabin and an equipment shed and forced the evacuation of 11 National Park Service employees. There was no containment as of Tuesday morning. Santa Rosa, a popular destination for camping and hiking, is home to island foxes, spotted skunks and elephant seals.

• [All systems go for 'All Aboard Expo 2026' - Belmonte](#) (2026-05-19 19:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte revealed on Tuesday that the local government in partnership with the Gaming Library - the country's premier board game retailer, publisher and community hub is now ready for the four-day All Aboard Expo 2026. Expecting over 15,000 attendees - bigger than last year's 10,000 attendees - Belmonte said the project was in line with the city government's commitment to deliver programs that are both engaging and educational. Inviting the public to experience the "dynamic, family-oriented event that blends learning with play," Belmonte said it would be held at M.I.C.E. Center at the City Hall Complex and admission is free for QC citizens while children aged 12 and below may also enter free of charge. Non-residents are welcome to join for a minimal fee of ₱150, keeping the event open and affordable to a wider audience, according to Giana Aira Barata, acting City Tourism Department head. To further encourage participation, the city government will provide free QC City Bus rides to and from the QC MICE Center. Shuttle services will be available from key pickup points including Cubao, Litex, General Luis, Mindanao Avenue, Gilmore, C5 (Ortigas Exit), and Muñoz, ensuring convenient and reliable transport for attendees. Noting the value of 'slowing down' and spending more time indoors with family, the city chief executive cited outdoor board games in South Korea which have been effective in sharpening the Koreans' critical thinking. City Administrator Michael Victor Alimurung said the event is not only a form of games but creating a space for the family. "There's really something new for everyone. One of our objectives is to provide an opportunity to children to something different," he said as he added that the local government intends to hold the event once a year. Some publishers and 280 volunteers in the Quezon City Bayanihan portal will be there during the four-day event to help and assist those who are not yet familiar with the games. Hans Kenner Fernandez, Gaming Library CEO and project manager, said the event marks a special day "because All Aboard will evolve to something." "This year's theme is 'Kalikasan' which features five animals in the Philippines. Our goal is to promote children play and the players in Kalikasan will teach them to build their own habitat," he said. To enhance the overall experience, the city government has partnered with select hotels, including Seda, to offer discounted room rates for guests traveling from outside the city, Barata said. "These partnerships aim to provide comfortable and convenient accommodations throughout the multi-day event," Barata said.

- [Army slams ‘fact fighting mission’ report as communist terrorist propaganda](#) (2026-05-19 19:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Army on Tuesday slammed the "National Fact-Finding and Solidarity Mission" labeling it as merely a cheap worn-out propaganda out of sheer desperation to change the narratives of their defeat. "The result of the "National Fact-Finding and Solidarity Mission" is nothing more than a time-worn propaganda peddled by the Communist Terrorist Group (CTG) to cover-up their irreversible defeat," Col. Louie Dema-ala, spokesman of the Philippine Army said in a statement. The Army had two recent operations in Toboso and Cauayan, Negros Occidental. Both operations delivered significant blows to the struggling remnants of the New People's Army who, the Philippine Army said, are still clinging on to their former strongholds in a desperate bid to still show influence. "We challenge these groups to answer one critical question they have been evading for so long: Why do your members consistently end up in combat zones, wielding firearms against government forces?" Dema-ala said. The Philippine Army has been greatly criticized in both operations as several sectors claimed civilian victims which the military has repeatedly debunked. "The Toboso and Cauayan encounters expose the CTG's pattern of deception that ultimately results in the tragic demise of their members. We emphasize that beyond the body count lies a greater tragedy: the CTG's terror-grooming scheme robs the deceived students of the chance to abandon the armed struggle and build peaceful, productive lives," Dema-ala.

- [House prosecution panel confident about proving allegations](#) (2026-05-19 18:59)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives' panel of prosecutors for the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte was confident it can prove the allegations against her. Batangas 2nd District Rep. Gerville Luistro, the House's lead public prosecutor, said in a press conference on Tuesday that "we cannot discuss anymore on the merits because we have entered our appearance already as public prosecutors yesterday and we are bound by the prohibition which is included in the Senate rules on impeachment. Nonetheless, we are expressing, we are reiterating our confidence in establishing and proving these four articles of impeachment." Article I alleged that Duterte committed culpable violation of the Constitution, graft and corruption, and betrayed public trust "through the systematic misuse, misappropriation, and irregular liquidation of confidential funds amounting to" P500 million "released to the Office of the Vice President and" P112.5 million "released to the Department of Education." Duterte served as Education secretary before she resigned from that post in 2024. Article II alleged that she committed culpable violation of the Constitution and betrayed public trust when "she: allegedly amassed "unexplained wealth manifestly disproportionate to her lawful income and earnings during her incumbency as a public official;" allegedly failed "to fully and truthfully disclose all her and her spouse's assets, liabilities, and net worth in her Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth ('SALN'), including in her SALN for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024;" and allegedly failed "to divest, and instead, willfully continued, all her business interests during her tenure as" vice president "for the years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025." Article III alleged that she "committed bribery, graft and corruption, culpable violation of

the Constitution, and betrayed public trust when she gave monetary gifts or payments to" certain people "to induce the violation and circumvention of procurement and other related laws."The last article, Article IV, alleged that Duterte "committed culpable violation of the Constitution, high crimes, and betrayed public trust by contracting for the assassination of" President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and Leyte 1st District Rep. and former speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez "by making grave threats, and by actively inciting sedition against the" republic.Duterte has denied making an assassination threat.In her answer to the complaints, she said that the complaints failed to show "any shred of proof" that a contract to kill ever existed. "Instead, complainants rely on exaggerated conclusions dressed up as fact", it read."Absent any statement of ultimate facts in any of these Impeachment Complaints, there is nothing for respondent to answer. Respondent thus only admits averments therein insofar as they allege her election, assumption to the Office of the Vice President, appointment as Secretary of Education, and her prior offices as Mayor and Vice Mayor of Davao City", Duterte's answer to the complaints read."The rest of the allegations, including the annexes and so-called evidence attached to the Impeachment Complaints, are specifically denied for being false, misleading, impertinent, and mere conclusions of fact and law", it read.

• [Zubiri: Review dual citizenship law to simplify citizenship process](#) (2026-05-19 18:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Migz Zubiri raised the need to amend the dual citizenship law so that individuals with Filipino parentage should automatically be granted Filipino citizenship.The senator cited the case of American wrestler Matthew James Ramos whose father hailed from Pangasinan.Sen. Kiko Pangilinan on Tuesday sponsored House Bill (HB) 6639 and HB 6644 granting Philippine citizenship to Ramos and basketball player Bennie Francois Boatwright III.Pangilinan, Senate Committee on Justice chairman, said the two athletes can help strengthen Philippine sports on the international stage.Zubiri expressed his support for the granting of Philippine citizenship to Bennie Francois Boatwright III and Ramos. "Hopefully, they're all Filipino citizens, but one of them happens to be a son of a Filipino, Mr. Ramos, the wrestler," Zubiri said.He said that under the law, a cutoff period limited applications of those who were already adults seeking to reacquire or retain Philippine citizenship. "I think it's about time we revisit that law and let's amend it. Let's just make it automatic," Zubiri said.Zubiri said overseas Filipino workers he met in Japan were unable to apply for dual citizenship due to the cutoff period despite existing online processes.He said citizenship should be granted automatically as long as one can prove that either parent is Filipino.Pangilinan said Ramos and Boatwright "are world-class athletes who, despite the many opportunities and paths available to them elsewhere, have chosen to cast their lot with the Filipino people."Pangilinan said Ramos chose to represent the Philippines despite opportunities in the United States where he built a decorated wrestling career.Ramos was runner-up in the 2023 US National Collegiate Athletic Association Championships and won the 2022 US Open title in the 57-kilogram category.Pangilinan also recognized Boatwright for helping lead the San Miguel Beermen to the 2023 Philippine Basketball Association Commissioner's Cup championship. "As people have moved since the beginning of time, citizenship is also defined by choice. Citizenship is also

defined by choosing to carry the Philippine flag with pride and honor before the world,” the senator said. Pangilinan said the proposed measures recognize not only the athletes’ achievements but also their commitment to represent the Philippines before the world.

- [Rescuers search for 3 missing after German building collapse possibly caused by gas explosion](#) (2026-05-19 18:19)

GÖRLITZ, Germany — Rescue teams in eastern Germany searched Tuesday morning for three people who were missing after a building collapsed in the eastern city of Görlitz near the Polish border. Police said a gas explosion may have been the cause for the collapse of the building, which took place Monday night. Emergency responders proceeded with great caution at the scene in case of gas leaks, German news agency dpa reported. After unsuccessful attempts to locate the missing under the rubble with the help of search dogs, rescuers began clearing debris with an excavator and by hand around 2 a.m. Tuesday. Initial concerns that up to five people may have been buried under rubble turned out to be wrong, police said. A man who feared his wife and cousin might be trapped under the rubble said Monday they had arrived that day for a vacation in the rented house. While shopping at nearby supermarket, he heard an explosion and returned to the house to find nothing but a large pile of rubble, dpa reported. The collapsed building in the historic Wilhelminian style contained rental and vacation apartments, police said. Görlitz is Germany’s easternmost city with a population of 57,000. The historic, undamaged old town district is a popular location for international film productions.

- [Lettuce introduce you to the live frog found in this grocery store salad bag](#) (2026-05-19 18:15)

MELBOURNE, Australia — When Australian farmer Rhys Smoker announced he’d found a live frog in a bag of lettuce, his housemates didn’t believe him. Smoker had been preparing a steak and salad dinner on Saturday for the three people who share his house in Esperance in Western Australia state when he spotted the frog among the leaves inside the sealed plastic bag he’d bought from a supermarket, housemate Laura Jones said on Tuesday. “He’s like, ‘Oh Bro, there’s a frog in the lettuce.’ And we’re like, ‘No, you’re taking the mick, like that’s not real,’ ” Jones told AP. Taking the mick is a slang term for attempting to fool someone. Smoker brought the bag into the lounge room to show Jones and her partner Billy Le Pine. “Obviously there’s a little frog hiding out and, yeah, we all had a little laugh about it,” Jones said. Le Pine said they named the frog Greg before releasing it at a pond near the house. “We thought we’d give him a wee send off tune as we played Crazy Frog for him,” Le Pine told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Crazy Frog is a Swedish CGI-animated character and Eurodance musician. Smoker and his partner Lilli Ashby had bought the lettuce at a Woolworths supermarket in Esperance the same day Greg was discovered. Five years ago, a shopper confronted a 3-meter-long (10-foot-long) nonvenomous diamond python on a shelf of a Woolworths supermarket in Sydney. Also in 2021, a shopper discovered a venomous pale-headed snake wrapped in plastic with lettuce in an ALDI Sydney supermarket. Woolworths said the frog in the salad was an isolated incident and there had been no other similar cases

reported. “Our teams are investigating this with our suppliers as a priority,” a Woolworths statement said. Woolworths apologized to the household and provided a replacement bag of lettuce.

• [Lawyers for the man accused of killing Charlie Kirk ask to seal evidence and parts of a key hearing](#) (2026-05-19 17:05)

PROVO, Utah — Lawyers for the man accused of killing Charlie Kirk were in court Tuesday, making their case to bar reporters and the public from parts of a key upcoming hearing and seal some evidence after the judge rejected their request to ban news cameras from the courtroom. Tyler Robinson's defense has argued that broadcasts of the proceedings create a media frenzy that often misrepresent him and could bias potential jurors. They hope to restrict access to parts of his preliminary hearing, scheduled for July 6-10, when prosecutors must show they have enough evidence to warrant a trial. That hearing will mark the most significant presentation of evidence to date in a case that has focused largely on public access in its first eight months. The defense began Tuesday by urging the judge to punish prosecutors for comments that one of them, Christopher Ballard, made outside of court. Richard Novak, an attorney for Robinson, said Ballard essentially went on a “media tour” in which he made “expressions of opinion as to Mr. Robinson’s guilt.” Prosecutors responded that Ballard had a right to speak to news outlets to correct misinformation about an inconclusive, preliminary finding by ballistics experts, which led to speculation about Robinson’s possible exoneration.

“Here he was representing the true nature of that report” and did not make a statement of opinion about guilt, Deputy Utah County Attorney Ryan McBride said. Prosecutors intend to seek the death penalty if Robinson, 23, is convicted. He is charged with crimes including aggravated murder in the Sept. 10 assassination of the conservative activist on the Utah Valley University campus. Robinson has not yet entered a plea. Prior to his death, Kirk and the conservative youth movement he founded, Turning Point USA, emerged as a major force in U.S. politics and helped President Donald Trump win a second term. As public attention has swirled, state District Judge Tony Graf has taken steps to protect Robinson’s rights in court, but he declined earlier this month to bar cameras. During the preliminary hearing, prosecutors say they plan to introduce forensic analyses, surveillance video, recordings of witness statements, autopsy findings and alleged messages from Robinson admitting to the crime. Defense attorneys have asked the judge to seal dozens of those exhibits to “prevent infecting the potential jury pool,” according to a court document filed Monday. Prosecutors argue that the preliminary hearing should remain open, but they agree that media should be restricted from viewing or copying some exhibits that could be used in a future trial. Prosecutors have said Robinson left a note for his romantic partner hidden under a keyboard that said, “I had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk and I’m going to take it.” They have also said he wrote in a text message about Kirk: “I had enough of his hatred. Some hate can’t be negotiated out.” Authorities have said DNA consistent with Robinson’s was found on the trigger of the rifle used to kill Kirk, the fired cartridge casing, two unfired cartridges and a towel used to wrap the rifle. Deputy Utah County Attorney Chad Grunander said in court documents that some evidence prosecutors plan to

present in July is “reliable hearsay,” or statements made outside of court that are considered highly trustworthy. Such statements are typically allowed in preliminary hearings but not at trial, where standards are stricter. Robinson’s attorneys worry the statements will spread widely after the preliminary hearing, harm their client and then not be admissible at a trial. Prosecutors disagree, saying in a court filing, “There is nothing to suggest that the substance of the evidence is inadmissible.”

- [Ombudsman seeks list of journalists at the Senate during shooting](#) (2026-05-19 16:11)

THE Office of the Ombudsman has asked the Senate for a list of media personnel who were on the premises during the shooting incident on May 13 while Sen. Risa Hontiveros commended the journalists for their bravery and professionalism under fire. “In relation to the fact-finding investigation of this office on the shooting incident/armed confrontation, leading to the lockdown of the Senate on 13-14 May 2026, may we request your office to submit...[a] list of names of media personnel who were at the Senate premises on 13-14 May 2026,” said Maria Melinda Mananghaya-Henson, director of the Ombudsman’s Field Investigation Bureau, in a letter to the Senate Public Relations and Information Bureau. She said the requested documents would be part of its fact-finding investigation on the incident. Many journalists were in the Senate building before and during the shooting incident and some stayed until the early hours of the next morning. “Rest assured that any documents and information to be submitted will be treated with utmost confidentiality,” Mananghaya-Henson said. Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla earlier urged “friends from the media to submit their own affidavits” to narrate what took place during the shooting incident “together with the footage that they took.” Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca admitted he was first to fire warning shots after seeing a National Bureau of Investigation agent near the Senate building. Meanwhile, Hontiveros said in her resolution: “Despite being trapped in a building with a potential active shooter, the members of the Senate media exhibited remarkable personal bravery, prioritizing the public’s right to information over their own immediate safety by continuing to cover the incident as it occurred.” “In an information landscape increasingly compromised by systemic online disinformation, covert influence operations, and coordinated inauthentic behavior, the impartial reporting of the Senate media serves as an essential pillar of truth, protecting the integrity of our democracy during times of national crisis,” Hontiveros said.

- [Pag-IBIG Q1 profit up 11% to P16.78B](#) (2026-05-19 16:10)

THE Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) or Pag-IBIG Fund has revealed its year-on-year growth in its net income for the first quarter of 2026, growing by 11 percent or P1.7 billion to reach P16.772 billion compared to the same period last year. Pag-IBIG Fund CEO Marilene Acosta said in a statement that the growth has further strengthened its capacity to protect members’ savings, provide affordable home financing, and support more Filipino workers in their journey toward homeownership. “The agency’s strong asset base and fiscal standing allow it to continue providing members with competitive savings returns and affordable home financing,” she said. Housing Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling and Acosta attributed the growth to

strong collections and steady earnings from Pag-IBIG' s housing loan, short-term loan and investment portfolios. Higher investment returns have also contributed to the income growth, the top officials said. HDMF' s income from investments rose 51 percent to P3.033 billion, from P2.013 billion in the same period last year. Aliling, who chairs Pag-IBIG' s board of trustees, said the agency' s strong fiscal position enables it to serve as the primary source of financing for the expanded Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino' (4PH) program of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. "This performance shows that Pag-IBIG Fund remains strong, stable, and ready to support President Marcos' directive to open more opportunities for Filipino families to own decent and affordable homes," the housing czar said. "As the key financing arm of the expanded 4PH, Pag-IBIG Fund plays a vital role in turning the national housing agenda into real homes for our workers. We shall continue to manage our members' funds prudently, so that more Filipino families may benefit from housing finance that is affordable, accessible, and sustainable," he said. Acosta said Pag-IBIG' s total assets stood at P1.276 trillion as of March 2026, reflecting a 3-percent or P41.735 billion increase from P1.234 trillion recorded at year-end 2025. Saying Pag-IBIG' s performance directly benefits its members, the top agency official said it returns at least 70 percent of its annual net income to members in the form of dividends, which are credited to their savings every year. "Pag-IBIG Fund is owned by its members, the Filipino workers. That is why we remain committed to growing and protecting their savings while ensuring that they have access to affordable home financing," Acosta said. Acosta emphasized that its strong fiscal standing allows the agency to sustain its subsidized housing loan rates under 4PH, including the 3-percent rate for qualified socialized housing borrowers. "This is how we help make homeownership more affordable for more Filipino workers, while keeping Pag-IBIG Fund financially sound and sustainable for the long term," she added.

- [Blockchain a powerful tool to strengthen public trust'](#) (2026-05-19 16:10)

TECHNOLOGY stakeholders on Tuesday said political leaders need to adopt a mindset that values transparency and accountability before blockchain technology can take root at the national level and in local governments. This was the consensus that emerged from The Manila Times Blockchain Roundtable at the Asian Institute of Management, organized to discuss developments in a technology that provides a decentralized, immutable ledger that provides a publicly verifiable and tamper-proof record of every transaction across a peer-to-peer network. The Philippines made history on Jan. 15, 2026, by becoming the first country in the world to integrate its entire national budget into a blockchain system to provide greater transparency in the budgeting process in the wake of the flood control bribery scandal. "Blockchain is not a magic solution, but it is one of the powerful tools we have today to strengthen public trust," said Qadena Foundation Executive Director Gail Cruz-Macapagal. "It will only do its work if the people managing are accountable, and if citizens understand how to engage with it." "Perhaps the better question is not whether blockchain, or other technologies, is the ultimate tool, but whether we are ready to build systems and policies, and if we have the culture to use it responsibly. If implemented thoughtfully, it can help transform accountability

from something promised to something probable," she added. National ICT Confederation of the Philippines board member Mary Joy Abueg agreed, saying a change of mindset was needed to grow as a nation. "As we push for e-governance and ease of doing business, we also explore blockchain's potential for transparent and accountable governance as well. This is no longer about just technology or just nation-building, it is also about creating an economy where no one in the country is left behind," Abueg said. National Association of Data Protection Officers of the Philippines founding president Sam Jacoba, Fintech Alliance PH Trustee Imelda Tiongson and Traxion Tech CEO Ann Cusia highlighted that public trust was a key ingredient if the Philippines wants to grow as a First-World digital nation. "If we are serious about becoming a First-World digital nation, we must recognize that truth and public trust are now critical to digital infrastructure. Without them, digital transformation stalls, innovation becomes resistant, and institutions weaken as you all have seen recently. Blockchain can help with this, but alone, it, or other technologies, will not be enough," Jacoba said. Cusia added: "When the citizens and markets cannot clearly verify where public money goes, procurement becomes harder, investments become cautious, and even honest institutions absorb the cost of systematic distrust." Tiongson said they are believers in blockchain technology and know it can help, but said it alone is not enough. "The success of this and other integration of technologies ultimately depends on the collective will of the government and the citizens to uphold transparency, accountability, and integrity. This is not just about how technology can help, it is really about the people and the Philippines," she said. Novarte founder and CTO William Emmanuel Yu and Coins.ph Business Development and Marketing Manager Emmanuel Ignacio said that along with transparency, the participation of all stakeholders, including ordinary Filipinos, in using the technology would be needed to initiate a change in culture. "We have a lot of open data from agencies that is available, but they have to be in a useful state that could be understood by everyone, including ordinary Filipinos. Even if blockchain is used, participation is important so it can be understood by all. Technology must be used in a proper context, proper time, and [supported] with proper resources," Yu said. "Filipinos are highly digital, mobile, and very quick to adopt [technology] and we have seen that through the last few years with recent technologies, but I think we should go beyond that and increase knowledge and participation among them," Ignacio said. "Inclusive finance should not end with giving people access to online payments or digital wallets, it should also include giving more people the opportunity to participate in wealth generation and blockchain and similar technologies can help with that," Ignacio added. In her opening remarks at the roundtable, The Manila Times Chief Executive Officer Anna Marie Ang-Thompson emphasized that strategic evolution is necessary in the modern digital economy. She warned that "there is also a very real risk of superficial adoption. As the immutable ledger becomes a policy priority, agencies may adopt the language of the technology without embracing its actual principles." The Manila Times President and Chief Operating Officer Blanca Calilung Mercado said the new roundtable format was part of an ongoing commitment to inclusive and multi-stakeholder dialogue on digital transformation.

- [After coup, Senate committees get new chairmen](#) (2026-05-19 16:09)

THE Senate committee chairmanships have been reorganized following the change in leadership on May 11 that saw Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano and his allies in the minority bloc unseat Sen. Vicente Sotto III as Senate president. The fugitive Sen. Ronald dela Rosa and four members from Sotto's majority bloc helped Cayetano secure 13 votes to make him Senate president. Dela Rosa, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity, surfaced after a six-month absence in the Senate to help Cayetano secure victory. Those who brought the "swing votes" were Sens. Pia Cayetano, Loren Legarda, Camille Villar, and Mark Villar. The following is the list of committees and their new chairmen: Culture and Arts – Loren Legarda, Ways and Means – Pia Cayetano, Health – Bong Go, Higher, Technical and Vocational Education – Joel Villanueva, National Defense and Security – Jinggoy Estrada, Sports – Bong Go, Sustainable Development Goals – Pia Cayetano, Basic Education – Loren Legarda, Public Services – Rodante Marcoleta, Public Information and Mass Media – Robin Padilla, Cultural Communities and Muslim Affairs – Robin Padilla, Games and Amusement – Jinggoy Estrada, and Energy – Pia Cayetano. The chairmanship of major committees such as the Blue Ribbon, which investigates anomalies in government, and Finance have yet to be assigned. It was rumored that Sen. Pia Cayetano, the Senate president's elder sister, will replace Sen. Panfilo Lacson, as Blue Ribbon Committee chairman. Lacson, who led the investigation on the multibillion-peso flood control bribery scandal, was able to present his chairman's report before the Senate shakeup. It contained a recommendation to conduct further investigation on the alleged involvement of some fellow senators in the flood control fund mess. Sen. Bam Aquino, now a member of the minority bloc after Sotto's ouster, lost the chairmanship of the basic education panel. Aquino said that under his watch, a 10-year National Education and Workforce Development Plan (2026-2035) framework was established to help address the woes hounding the country's education system. There are 41 Senate committees to be farmed out to both majority and minority blocs. However, it is the practice to assign the perceived major committees to the majority group. The so-called "less challenging" committees are normally given to senators in the minority group.

• [Bong Go urges focus on public service amid Senate leadership tensions](#) (2026-05-19 16:08)

SEN. Bong Go urged government leaders Tuesday to focus on public service, as political tensions rose amid the volatile Senate leadership and the impending impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. "Don't lose hope. Let's just help each other. Who else can help but us, fellow Filipinos? Let's just make sure we take precautions," Go said in a video message as he dispatched his team to Barangay BF Homes in Parañaque City on Wednesday to provide assistance to families displaced by a recent fire. The relief operation, held at Fourth Estate Elementary School, benefited 176 families. Each received cash aid, grocery packs, snacks, vitamins, shirts, balls, and water containers. Selected beneficiaries received shoes, mobile phones, and bicycles. Go acknowledged the efforts of national government agencies that conducted on-site assessments to ensure that displaced families receive sufficient and sustained support. The senator authored and co-sponsored measures aimed at strengthening disaster response and fire prevention capabilities, including Republic Act (RA) 11589, or the

Bureau of Fire Protection Modernization Act of 2021, and RA 12076, or the Ligtas Pinoy Centers Act, which mandates the establishment of permanent, disaster-resilient evacuation centers in every city and municipality nationwide.

- [Animal welfare groups say 3 South African zoo elephants are depressed and sue to move them](#) (2026-05-19 16:07)

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — The mental well-being of three elephants in a zoo in South Africa is the subject of an unusual court case, with animal welfare groups saying they are depressed and should be moved to a larger conservation park where they can be happy. The case this week will ask a South African court to decide if the state is meeting its legal obligations with regard to the welfare of the animals and the conditions in which they are kept, according to David Bilchitz, a board member at Animal Law Reform South Africa, one of the groups bringing the case. Experts would show in court that the elephants are unhappy, Bilchitz said. The animal welfare groups said a part of the South African Constitution puts an obligation on authorities to look after animals. The zoo in question in Johannesburg is publicly owned and has defended its management of the elephants, saying they are well cared for. Bilchitz said elephants have highly complex social structures and specific physical and mental needs, and generally live in herds of 20-50 animals that roam large areas in the wild. He said that the three elephants at the zoo — named Lammie, Ramadiba and Mopane — live in an enclosure not much bigger than a soccer field with none of the typical stimulation that elephants need, like trees to forage from and mud pools to bathe in. “They are sad, depressed and frustrated,” Bilchitz told The Associated Press. “They are listless and stand around.” He said the elephants had shown signs of psychological distress, like standing and rocking and other “repetitive compulsive behavior.” Johannesburg Zoo said in a statement that there had been a “media scourge” over the condition of the elephants and maintained they were healthy and also popular with zoo staff and visitors. It also said that relocating elephants from zoos to semiwild sanctuaries is not always successful. There is a kind of precedent for the case. In 2024, an old bull elephant called Charley was relocated from another South African zoo to a game reserve after he outlived his elephant companions at the zoo and animal experts believed he was lonely. The zoo agreed that Charley should be taken to the reserve to retire after he spent decades in captivity, including around 16 years in a circus.

- [Seven out of 10 Filipinos trust AFP – survey](#) (2026-05-19 16:07)

SEVEN out of 10 Filipinos continue to trust and are satisfied with the performance of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), a survey conducted by independent pollster OCTA Research showed. In the Tugon ng Masa survey conducted from March 19–25, 2026, 72 percent of adult Filipinos said they trust the AFP, while only 11 percent did not, for a net trust rating of +61. Trust in the AFP was highest in Visayas at 75 percent, as well as among class E at 77 percent. Meanwhile, 70 percent of Filipinos were satisfied with the performance of the AFP, while only 14 percent expressed dissatisfaction, for a net performance rating of +56. Performance was highest also in Visayas at 73 percent and Balanced Luzon at 70 percent. Class E respondents were also the most satisfied at 75 percent. OCTA said that the

results showed that the AFP continues to enjoy broad institutional legitimacy and public confidence among geographic regions and socioeconomic classes. “The consistently high trust and performance ratings reflect strong public recognition of the AFP’s role in national defense, territorial security, disaster response, and public service,” it added. The survey had 1,200 respondents and a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent.

- [Estrada calls DOJ resolution baffling, unjust](#) (2026-05-19 16:04)

SEN. Jinggoy Estrada described as “baffling and unjust” the Department of Justice (DOJ) resolution recommending the filing of plunder and graft charges against him in relation to his alleged link to the flood control fund scandal. In a resolution transmitted to the Office of the Ombudsman, the DOJ said it found probable cause to indict Estrada, former Public Works secretary Manuel Bonoan and six others for plunder, violations of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, direct bribery, and corruption of public officials. “This is an unfortunate development,” Ejercito said in a statement on Tuesday. He said that the Senate Legislative Budget Research and Monitoring Office “categorically stated that there is no record showing that I introduced any insertions into the 2025 national budget.” Estrada said that even Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Blue Ribbon Committee chairman, “took cognizance of this development as a vital piece of information regarding the issues being raised against me.” That was why on May 15, Estrada said he filed before the DOJ an omnibus motion to “reopen the preliminary investigation into the cases filed by the National Bureau of Investigation concerning the flood control projects.” The senator said the motion sought to “allow the presentation and consideration of additional evidence and matters crucial to a fair and objective determination of the complaints.” “Due process and fairness demand that all relevant evidence and official findings be fully considered before conclusions are drawn,” Estrada said. “Nonetheless, I remain committed to addressing these allegations through the proper legal processes, and I am confident that the truth, supported by facts and official records, will ultimately prevail,” he added.

- [‘Health reason for quitting’](#) (2026-05-19 16:02)

1TAHANAN Party-list Rep. Nathaniel Oducado said that health, not his vote for the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte, is the main reason he stepped down from his post at the House of Representatives. Oducado, alongside Pinoy Workers Party-list Rep. Franz Legazpi, was among the lawmakers who tendered their resignation after they were announced by the House plenary on Monday. In a statement, Oducado said that he leaves knowing that he filed 115 bills that carried the voices of workers, commuters, consumers, and families who are too often ignored. In an interview with reporters, Oducado said he resigned to “take it easy,” taking care of his health and his family. He added that his party is deliberating on the new nominee; among the candidates 1Tahanan counts are Geraro Joseph Alino, Raul del Prado, Elmer Catulpos, Ymeir Shann Catulpos, Yelcy Catulpos, Alden Bacal, Crescenciano Pedrola Jr., Erine Gale Dejecacion, and Reymon Bunag. Catulpos, the party’s chairman, is also the founder of media network Brigada Mass Media Corporation. On his vote on the impeachment trial,

Oducado admitted that some of their supporters in Cebu and Mindanao were frustrated by his move. “We have to stand by difficult positions and it’s one of the things that I accepted when I decided to run for this [position],” Oducado said. Among the bills Oducado filed is House Bill (HB) 6980 or the Credit Cards and Loans Penalties and Surcharges Regulation Act, which seeks to protect Filipinos from predatory lending by capping abusive charges, requiring clear disclosure rules, and giving borrowers legal remedies against unfair penalties.

- [Board of Peace will ask the UN Security Council to press Hamas to disarm](#) (2026-05-19 16:01)

GENEVA — The body overseeing the U.S.-brokered ceasefire in Gaza will ask the United Nations Security Council to press the Hamas militant group to disarm, according to a report seen by The Associated Press on Tuesday. The report by the Board of Peace, an international body set up by U.S. President Donald Trump and tasked with overseeing the fragile ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, is expected to be discussed by the Security Council on Thursday when it meets on the situation in the Middle East. “At this stage, the principal obstacle to full implementation (of the ceasefire) remains Hamas’ refusal to accept verified decommissioning, relinquish coercive control, and permit a genuine civilian transition in Gaza,” the report said. Hamas in a statement rejected the report and said it contains “fallacies.” A diplomat familiar with the report confirmed its authenticity, speaking on condition of anonymity because it has not been made public. Trump’s 20-point ceasefire plan calls on Hamas to surrender its weapons and destroy its vast network of tunnels. It also envisions Israeli forces withdrawing from Gaza, the arrival of a new technocratic Palestinian government, deployment of an international security force and the rebuilding of the battered Palestinian enclave after more than two years of war. Board of Peace head has said the ceasefire has stalled. Last week, the head of the Board of Peace, former U.N. Mideast envoy Nickolay Mladenov, acknowledged that the truce had stalled since taking effect in October, saying the deadlock over disarming Hamas had paralyzed progress. “Reconstruction cannot commence where weapons have not been laid down,” the board’s report to the Security Council says. “The critical variable — the single factor that unlocks every other element of the plan — is the conclusion of an agreement on the Roadmap for the full implementation of the plan that includes full decommissioning by Hamas and all armed groups in Gaza.” The Palestinian militant group, which led the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, has accused Israel of failing to meet its obligations under the first phase of the ceasefire and has sought to link any demilitarization to Israeli troop pullbacks. Israel’s military has expanded its control of Gaza since the truce took effect and now controls some 60% of the territory. The new report calls on the Security Council to “reiterate publicly, clearly and consistently that the decommissioning of weapons in Gaza is not merely a requirement (of the UN’s resolution to end the war) but critical for reconstruction to begin, for a timebound Israeli forces withdrawal, and for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood to be pursued.” The Security Council endorsed the Board of Peace in a resolution in November. Hamas says the report tries to derail the ceasefire. Hamas said the report “contains a number of fallacies that absolve the occupying

government of its responsibilities for the daily violations of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza.” The group said the report ignored Israel’s “failure to uphold the majority of its commitments” in the ceasefire deal, including the continued restrictions on crossings into the Palestinian territory and preventing the entry of material and equipment needed to repair basic infrastructure and shelter for the largely displaced population. “The report’s adoption of the occupation’s conditions regarding disarmament is a dubious attempt to muddy the waters and derail the ceasefire agreement,” Hamas said in a statement. It called on the Security Council and Mladenov to compel Israel to fulfill its commitments under the ceasefire deal’s first phase, “foremost among them the cessation of the daily aggression against our Palestinian people in Gaza.” The ceasefire has seen numerous violations. The report noted near-daily ceasefire violations, “some of which are serious, and their human consequences — civilians killed, families living in fear, and continued impediments to humanitarian access — cannot be minimized.” Israel’s military still carries out airstrikes in Gaza despite the ceasefire and has pushed deeper into the territory, where it now controls more than it was granted under the ceasefire agreement. Living conditions are dire, with most of the territory’s 2 million people living in tent camps lacking basic services. Mladenov last week said his office is addressing violations by both sides on a daily basis. But he repeatedly cited the disarmament issue as a central sticking point, saying Hamas’ obligation to give up its arsenal is “not negotiable” and that progress on all other issues was being held up.

- [NCR officials lead governance survey](#) (2026-05-19 16:01)

QUEZON CITY Mayor Joy Belmonte and Navotas Rep. Toby Tiangco topped their respective categories in the latest “Index of Governance” (IOG) survey conducted by the RPMD Foundation Inc., which ranked local officials in the National Capital Region (NCR) based on combined trust and performance ratings. The RPMD Foundation Inc. released the latest IOG survey results, identifying top-performing mayors and district representatives in NCR based on combined trust and performance scores. The survey was conducted from April 1 to 8, 2026, through face-to-face interviews with 3,500 randomly selected respondents, with a margin of error of ± 2 percent. In the mayoral rankings under the Tier One category, Belmonte placed first with an IOG score of 88.3 percent, driven by 87.5 percent trust and 89.2 percent performance ratings. Malabon City’s Mayor Jeannie Sandoval followed Belmonte with 87.4 percent (86.3 percent trust, 88.5 percent performance), then Navotas City Mayor John Rey Tiangco with 86.5 percent (85.7 percent trust, 87.3 percent performance), and Valenzuela City Mayor Wes Gatchalian with 86.4 percent (85.8 percent trust, 87.1 percent performance). The RPMD said the four mayors were statistically grouped in the same tier due to closely clustered scores, indicating comparable levels of governance performance and public trust. Rounding out the top-performing NCR mayors were Caloocan City Mayor Along Malapitan with 85.9 percent, Pasay City Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano with 85.7 percent, Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto with 85.6 percent, and Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno with 85.1 percent. In the district representative rankings, Tiangco led the Top Tier with an 88.2 percent IOG score, backed by 87.9 percent trust and 88.6 percent performance ratings. Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo closely followed Tiangco with

87.9 percent (87.5 percent trust, 88.3 percent performance), then Quezon City Rep. Ralph Tulfo with 86.7 percent (86.3 percent trust, 87.1 percent performance). The RPMD said the three lawmakers were placed in the same tier due to the narrow margins in their scores, reflecting strong constituent confidence and legislative performance. Trailing closely were Parañaque Rep. Brian Yamsuan with 86.1 percent, Quezon City Rep. Patrick Michael Vargas with 85.8 percent, and Caloocan Rep. Oca Malapitan with 85.1 percent. Also among NCR's top-performing district representatives were Marikina Rep. Marivic Co-Pilar with 84.8 percent; Caloocan Rep. Dean Asistio with 84.2 percent; Valenzuela Rep. Edward Galang, 84.6 percent; Manila Rep. Benny Abante, 83.8 percent; Manila Rep. Ernix Dionisio, 81.7 percent; and Manila Rep. Giselle Maceda, 80.9 percent. Dr. Paul Martinez, RPMD executive director, said the IOG has become a comprehensive governance assessment tool that measures leaders not only by popularity but also by service delivery, responsiveness and public confidence. He said mayors were evaluated based on governance and public service indicators, and district representatives were assessed on legislative performance, district representation, responsiveness, accessibility, visibility and constituent service, with all indicators integrated with public trust ratings to generate final IOG scores.

- [Lawmaker pushes mental health services in SUCs](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

PARAÑAQUE 2nd District Rep. Brian Yamsuan has filed a bill seeking to establish accessible mental health services in all state universities and colleges (SUCs) to address the rising cases of anxiety and depression among young Filipinos. Under his House Bill 7354, a mental health office (MHO) will be established in every SUC. In a statement on Tuesday, Yamsuan said that while the Department of Education has been focused on ensuring the mental well-being of students in the basic education sector, no such initiative has been institutionalized at the tertiary level for college students, who are as vulnerable to emotional stress, depression and bullying. The lawmaker was referring to the nationwide launch of its Learner's Telesafe Contact Center helpline #337733, which would bring immediate mental health support to elementary and high school students by providing them a direct connection to the National Center for Mental Health Crisis Hotline. "Our proposed legislation will address these gaps in the implementation of government programs aimed at effectively responding to the growing mental health crisis among the youth," Yamsuan said. He expressed concern over a nationwide survey conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute in 2021, which found that 7.5 percent of Filipino youths ages 15–24 have experienced suicidal thoughts, double that of the 3 percent recorded in 2013. Under Yamsuan's bill, the MHOs he proposes will set up hotlines supervised by trained and dedicated guidance counselors who can assist not just students but all members of the SUC community. Once the bill becomes a law, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) will be tasked with requiring all SUCs to establish an MHO in all their campuses, subject to the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). CHED and SUCs, through their own MHOs, shall initiate and sustain a heightened campaign to raise the collective consciousness about mental health, especially among students. The campaign shall give special emphasis to issues of suicide

prevention, stress handling, mental health and nutrition, and guidance and counseling. They are also mandated under HB 7354 to implement mental health programs and projects, and man their respective MHOs with trained mental health professionals. To address the lack of personnel in the mental health field, the bill tasks the CHED, in coordination with the DBM, CSC, Department of Health, and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), to prepare a professional and career development plan for mental health professionals. These should include provisions on personal wellness, merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training, graduate scholarships, research grants, and an incentive awards system. Yamsuan urged his fellow lawmakers to recognize the urgency in passing the measure, which would institutionalize mental health services in SUCs. "The lack of mental health support not only affects academic outcomes but also one's personal well-being and, sadly, could sometimes lead to self-harm," he said.

- [Local, intl firms express strong interest in MRT-3 expansion](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

TOP local and international private companies have expressed interest in the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) Capacity Expansion, Operations, and Maintenance (CEOM) Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Project, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said. Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez said that the strong interest shown by 74 companies from 14 countries signaled robust investor confidence in the government's flagship rail modernization initiative, following recent joint market-sounding activity conducted by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). According to Lopez, investors' interest reflects a growing private-sector confidence in the project and its potential impact on daily commuters. "With the help of the private sector, we can carry out the expansion of MRT-3. We are doing this for a hassle-free journey for commuters, and we are pleased that many companies are interested in the project," Lopez said. DOTr Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan said the turnout of the market sounding activity demonstrates the project's viability, pointing to sustained passenger demand along the rail line. Batan said the MRT-3 system has historically accommodated from 620,000 to 630,000 passengers daily, making it one of the country's most heavily used rail corridors. "This MRT-3 PPP is a very viable and promising project. This is an existing line, and historically, its ridership could serve 630,000 people daily. That level of demand is why several companies attended the market sounding," Batan said, adding that the participation of firms from multiple countries signals strong international confidence in the government's infrastructure pipeline. Under the MRT-3 CEOM PPP Project, the winning private proponent will take over operations and maintenance of the existing rail line, ensure uninterrupted service, manage the MRT-3 Common Station area, and implement improvements, including the integration of Dalian trains into commercial service, procurement of additional rolling stock, and upgrades to signaling, depot, power and communications systems. The MRT-3 is expected to benefit from expanded capacity and improved reliability under the proposed PPP arrangement, which is part of the government's broader transport modernization program.

- [DOJ knows culprit in Senate shooting](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Justice (DOJ) on Tuesday said it has identified the “culprit” in the May 13 shooting in the Senate building but did not want to preempt the ongoing investigation by naming the perpetrator prematurely. At a press briefing, Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida said they have determined who might have given the order to Acting Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca to fire the first “warning shots.” He added that both the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) have submitted their findings, which would be turned over to the DOJ panel of prosecutors, which would determine what charges to file. Vida said the facts that were unearthed were “compelling” but “we still need to verify and validate.” “The DOJ will not take it as is. We will check on the timelines, we will check on the source of the videos. At the end of it, what we will need is the truth,” he said in English and Filipino. In the same briefing, Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla refuted claims made by Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano that the shooting occurred because the institution was “under attack” as he insisted that NBI agents “never set foot inside” its premises. “All evidence points that there was no attack on the Senate... Please take note that none of the NBI agents had tactical gear with them. They were dressed as NBI agents clearly identified,” Remulla said. This was corroborated by PNP chief Jose Melencio Nartatez, who said that based on the trajectory of the bullets, all the shots were “coming from inside, going outside.” “Take note of... the SOCO (Scene of the Crime Operatives) report, that... there’s no bullet hole going inside the Senate building,” Nartatez said in Filipino and English. Nartatez said investigators retrieved 44 fired cartridges after the shooting, which ballistic examinations showed came from four guns. He said three of the shooters were members of the OSAA, including Aplasca and one was from the NBI. Command responsibility

Meanwhile, NBI Director Melvin Matibag said Cayetano should also be suspended for the May 13 shooting incident if “command responsibility” is used as the basis for accountability. Speaking during a media forum in Manila, Matibag pushed back against calls for his preventive suspension following the May 13 commotion that led to the arrest of NBI volunteer driver Mel Oragon and a subsequent investigation into the discharge of a firearm within Senate premises. “If command responsibility will be the basis, then the first one who should be suspended is Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano,” Matibag said. The NBI chief pointed to the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms, saying it falls under the supervision of Senate leadership and that Senate security personnel were also involved in the events surrounding the incident. “Who has command responsibility over the sergeant-at-arms? Who is the head of the Senate right now?” Matibag said. Matibag maintained that he was not directly involved in the incident and said he was prepared to face any investigation. “First of all, I was not the one who fired a gun there,” he said. “If I will be found to have committed any wrongdoing, I am willing to accept whatever penalty will be imposed.” He added that he preferred to allow the investigation being conducted by a committee formed by Remulla and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to proceed without interference. The controversy stemmed from the May 13 unrest at the Senate compound, where gunfire erupted and an NBI volunteer driver, Mel Oragon was later arrested. On Monday, the Senate confirmed receiving a preventive suspension order against Aplasca, along with a subpoena seeking copies of CCTV footage related to the incident. During the same forum, Matibag also defended Oragon, insisting that the

volunteer driver did not possess a firearm despite yielding a positive result in a ballistic examination. Matibag said the presence of gunpowder residue on Oragon's hands did not automatically prove he had fired a weapon, saying nitrate traces could be transferred through contact with contaminated surfaces or individuals. "In the chain of custody, you should recover the firearm first, then subject it to examination. That is where you can initially determine if a gun was fired," he said. The NBI chief noted that no firearm was recovered from Oragon and said the volunteer driver had been apprehended on the fifth floor of the GSIS building while the shooting incident occurred elsewhere. Matibag said Oragon was later brought to the Senate grounds and made to lie near the area where gunfire had erupted, which could have exposed him to gunpowder residue. "There is video showing that area where shots were fired. There was definitely gunpowder there," he said. "That is a possibility. I'm not saying that is exactly what happened, but it is a reasonable possibility because he did not have a firearm," he added. Matibag also suggested that the residue may have come from law enforcement personnel who handled Oragon after the incident. "Remember, the OSAA personnel fired shots, and they handled him," he said. Asked whether the NBI helped post bail for the volunteer driver, Matibag said Oragon's handler, lawyer Rick Espino, managed the matter.

- ['Voting is the people's strongest weapon for change'](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia urged Filipinos to reject calls for revolution and instead use the power of the ballot to bring about change in the country. This comes as political discourse intensifies on the change of leadership in the Senate and the impeachment case against Vice President Sara Duterte. Garcia stressed that democracy remains the strongest weapon of the people, insisting that meaningful reforms can only be achieved through elections and active participation in the democratic process. In an ambush interview after Monday's end of voters' registration for the upcoming Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE), the Comelec chief dismissed suggestions that unrest and instability could be solved through rebellion or violent action. "What many people used to say before — that we should just start a revolution because of all the chaos in our country — the Comelec has only one answer: revolution is not the solution. The ballot is the solution," Garcia said. He emphasized that the country's electoral system gives every Filipino a direct voice in shaping the nation's future, regardless of political affiliation or social status. Garcia reminded voters that every election is an opportunity to demand accountability from leaders and push for policies that respond to the people's needs. "As I always tell every voter, you hold the vote, you hold the power of the vote," he added. The Comelec chairman's remarks come as political debates continue to intensify nationwide, fueled by issues ranging from governance concerns to economic pressures and social divisions. Despite the noise in the political arena, Garcia maintained that democratic institutions must remain strong and respected. He underscored the importance of peaceful participation in elections, saying that change achieved through ballots carries legitimacy and reflects the true will of the people. Garcia called on Filipinos, especially first-time and young voters, to remain vigilant, informed, and active in future elections, noting that democracy thrives when citizens participate

responsibly. The poll chief reiterated Comelec's commitment to protecting the integrity of elections and ensuring that every legitimate vote is counted fairly and accurately. As the Comelec prepares for the upcoming BSKE, Garcia said the Comelec remains firm that the path to reform and national change is not through violence or revolution, but through the ballot box.

- [5.4 million apply for BSKE registration](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has processed more than 5.4 million voter registration applications following the close of the registration period for the Nov. 2 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE). Data released by the poll body showed that as of May 18, 2026, a total of 5,470,889 applications had been received nationwide, more than double Comelec's original target of 2 million new voters. Comelec Chairman George Erwin Garcia described the turnout as a major success, attributing it to aggressive information drives and easier access to registration services. Garcia clarified that those who filed forms are not yet officially registered voters, stressing that all applications will be reviewed and approved by local Election Registration Boards.

- [Vico back from Europe trip, pushes 'open spaces' for Pasig](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

PASIG City Mayor Vico Sotto has returned after nearly three weeks of official travel abroad, where he said he studied European Union governance and accountability systems and reinforced the city's push for expanded public open spaces. Speaking during the city government's flag-raising ceremony on Monday, Sotto said his trip included participation in Bloomberg CityLab 2026 in Madrid, Spain, followed by meetings in Belgium under the European Union Visitors Program (EUVP). He said he met with officials from the European Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office, and the European Parliament Committee on Budgetary Control, where he said he learned about governance and budget accountability practices that could be studied for application in the Philippines. Sotto said the EUVP was originally scheduled separately but was moved to follow his Bloomberg CityLab engagement at his request, allowing both activities to be completed in one overseas trip. At Bloomberg CityLab 2026, Sotto said Pasig City was among 24 winning cities in the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge 2025–2026, selected from more than 600 cities worldwide. He said the recognition was tied to the city's floating parks initiative and broader efforts to address the lack of public open spaces in the densely built-up city. Sotto said the initiative is not limited to proposed floating parks in Barangay Sumilang and San Joaquin, but is part of a wider effort to expand and improve parks, playgrounds and public plazas across Pasig. He said developed countries tend to have more open spaces, which he said should also be prioritized in urban development in highly urbanized cities like Pasig. He added that the city government is working with various offices, including the City Parks Office and the City Environment and Natural Resources Office, on ongoing rehabilitation projects, including improvements at the Maybunga Rainforest Park.

- [DPWH eyes long-term solution to Parañaque flooding](#) (2026-05-19 16:00)

PUBLIC Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Vince Dizon personally surveyed the flood-ravaged areas in Parañaque City as the government stepped up efforts to address recurring flooding. Among the areas Secretary Dizon visited were the Manila Memorial Park along Dr. A. Santos Avenue and Barangay Moonwalk near Don Galo Creek, both known for severe flooding impacting communities every year. Residents said communities have been complaining of floodwaters that inundate roads, damage homes, and disrupt daily life whenever heavy rains hit the city. During the inspection, Dizon noted the worsening condition of drainage systems and waterways, contributing to massive flooding in low-lying areas of Parañaque. The DPWH chief also raised concerns about dirty water overflowing from the creek and entering houses in communities, and warned that contaminated water could cause diseases and other health risks. Dizon's site visit was prompted by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to accelerate flood mitigation efforts in vulnerable communities in the country. Dizon later met with Parañaque 2nd District Rep. Brian Yamsuan and local community leaders to discuss immediate and long-term solutions to the flooding problem. The meeting focused on identifying critical infrastructure projects needed to prevent creeks from overflowing during heavy downpours. Officials also discussed possible drainage improvements, desilting operations, and flood-control measures to prevent water buildup in affected barangay. Community leaders urged the national government to fast-track interventions, saying residents continue to suffer from recurring floods every rainy season. Some residents reportedly endure knee-deep and waist-deep flooding during heavy rain coinciding with high tide, leaving roads impassable and forcing families to evacuate. Dizon assured local officials and residents that the DPWH would coordinate closely with the local government to implement lasting flood control solutions. The inspection is part of Marcos administration's stronger push to strengthen disaster preparedness and protect communities vulnerable to severe flooding and water-related health hazards.

- [Women's group condemns professor's transphobic remarks towards Awra Briguela](#)
(2026-05-19 15:45)

MANILA, Philippines — A women's rights group condemned the alleged transphobic remarks received by actress Awra Briguela from her Universidad de Manila professor. This comes after Briguela's professor left a transphobic remark on her beach photos she posted. In a statement Tuesday, women's group Gabriela said the incident shows the need to pass the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression, and Sex Characters (SOGIESC) Equality bill, stressing that no person deserves to be discriminated based on their gender identity. "It is alarming that, until now, there are still teachers spreading transphobia and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. It is never acceptable to make a person a subject of ridicule or humiliation because of their gender identity or expression," Gabriela Women's Party Representative Sarah Elago said in Filipino.

- [Bodies of 2 Italian divers are recovered from deep in a Maldives underwater cave](#)
(2026-05-19 15:35)

MALE, Maldives — Divers on Tuesday recovered the bodies of two of the four remaining Italians who died deep inside an underwater cave in an atoll in the Maldives last week, a spokesperson for the Indian Ocean nation said, while describing “very challenging” conditions like poor visibility and strong currents. The bodies were located on Monday as searches resumed after a suspension following the death of a local military diver during a perilous retrieval attempt. The bodies were at a depth of around 60 meters (200 feet), twice as deep as the legal depth for recreational diving in the island nation. Five Italian divers went missing on Thursday. The body of the Italian diving instructor was recovered earlier outside the cave. The two remaining bodies are expected to be recovered on Wednesday. The Maldives government has said Finnish divers doing the recovery work spotted the bodies in the cave's innermost area. Government spokesperson Ahmed Shaam said the four bodies were found “pretty much together.” The five Italians had been exploring a cave in Vaavu Atoll. Initial teams had dived to identify and mark the entrance system where they disappeared. The cave has been dived in the past by local experts and foreign divers, presidential spokesperson Mohamed Hussain Shareef told The Associated Press. While the divers had a permit, authorities didn't know from their proposal the exact location of the cave they were exploring, and at least two of the dead were not on the list of researchers that had been submitted, “so we didn't know they were part of the expedition,” Shareef said. “Actually a very challenging dive, you know,” he added. “Number one, because of the depth, number two, because of actual terrain, because that specific channel has strong currents, strong downdrafts down toward, and the conditions down there, the visibility, for example, once you enter the cave would be almost zero.” He said the weather was challenging, with an alert having been issued, and investigators must determine whether the divers took adequate precautions. The Divers' Alert Network Europe, which deployed the Finnish divers, described them as technical and cave divers with experience in search and recovery missions, including operations in “deep overhead environments, confined spaces and high-risk scenarios.” The team is using closed-circuit rebreathers, a system that recycles exhaled breathing gas and removes carbon dioxide through a chemical scrubber, allowing for “significantly longer dives,” the organization said. Shareef said the Maldives has a strong reputation and infrastructure for safe diving and called the incident unfortunate and tragic, but noted the difference between this kind of technical diving and the recreational kind that many visitors enjoy. The cause of death of the Maldivian military diver was still under investigation, but colleagues have suggested he may have died from nitrogen narcosis or decompression at depth.

- [Thai beer heir sacked after brother's abuse accusations](#) (2026-05-19 15:33)

BANGKOK — One of Thailand's richest men dismissed his cousin from the Singha beer business empire on Tuesday, the company said, after days of controversy over allegations the man had sexually abused his own brother. Environmental activist Siranudh Scott, a scion of the Bhirombhakdi family who control the beer brand ubiquitous in Thailand, posted an emotional video on his Facebook page this month accusing his elder brother of repeatedly abusing him in his teenage years. “Everyone in my family knows it because they listened to the tape I recorded of his confession” but no one took action, he said, declaring that he no longer wanted to be

referred to as a "Singha heir". "I don't want to stay in a family that doesn't value me or have empathy for me," he added through tears. "I can't live with this kind of people." The 29-year-old, whose father is Scottish, is a prominent and sometimes controversial marine conservationist, who founded a group called Sea You Strong active in the seas off southern Thailand. His declarations prompted days of headlines in Thai media. Siranudh's brother Sunit had been "dismissed" from all his positions, the conglomerate's parent company Boonrawd Brewery Company said in a statement. The company "would like to express its deepest regret to Siranudh Scott for what happened", it said, adding it was cooperating with authorities in their investigations. It was signed by CEO Bhurit Bhirombhakdi -- the two men's cousin. He also posted online a letter from Sunit in which the accused man said: "In order to ensure fairness for all parties, I hereby resign from my duties as an employee and executive... until the matter is clarified and conclusively proved." Sunit previously denied the accusations of sexual abuse, but acknowledged roughhouse play between boys. The Bhirombhakdi family are listed as Thailand's 15th richest by Forbes, which estimates their net worth at \$1.75 billion. As well as Singha Beer, the group's other interests include food manufacturing, hotels, power and property.

- [House impeachment prosecutors unafraid of next elections](#) (2026-05-19 15:19)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives' prosecution panel for the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte is unafraid of the next elections. "We are not worried. We are fulfilling our constitutional duty as House prosecutors, as congressmen, as representatives of our constituents ...", San Juan City Rep. Ysabel Zamora said in Filipino and English in a press conference on Tuesday when asked whether they were worried that their being impeachment prosecutors may affect them in the next elections. "We are not afraid of the next elections because we believe that the people will see the evidence and we believe that the senators themselves will see the evidence ...", Zamora said.

- [Beijing says China, US should work together to promote AI governance](#) (2026-05-19 14:58)

BEIJING — China and the United States "should work together to promote the development and governance of AI", Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said on Tuesday. Cooperation on artificial intelligence was discussed by US President Donald Trump and China's Xi Jinping at talks in Beijing last week, both sides say, despite their countries' fierce rivalry over the fast-evolving technology. "The two heads of state held constructive discussions on AI-related issues and agreed to launch an intergovernmental dialogue on artificial intelligence," Guo told a news briefing, confirming previous remarks by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. As major powers in the field, the countries should also work together "to ensure that AI better serves the progress of human civilisation and the common well-being of the international community", Guo added. Analysts said before the summit that fears over autonomous AI weapons, cybersecurity and the threat of new AI-designed bioweapons were mutual concerns for Xi and Trump. In 2024, Xi agreed with Trump's predecessor Joe Biden that humans must remain in control of the decision to fire nuclear weapons. But with China set on narrowing the United States' lead in the strategic sector, until now little further cooperation has

followed. The White House recently accused Chinese entities of "industrial-scale" efforts to steal US technology, while Beijing blocked the acquisition of a Chinese-founded AI agent tool by tech giant Meta. But at the same time, the AI cybersecurity threat has been highlighted by Mythos, a powerful new model that US startup Anthropic withheld from public release to stop it from being exploited by hackers. Bessent told CNBC on Thursday that Washington and Beijing would set up a "protocol" on the path forward on AI, particularly "to make sure non-state actors don't get a hold of these models". The world's "two AI superpowers are going to start talking", Bessent said. While details on what will be discussed are so far scarce, Sun Chenghao, a senior fellow at Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy, told AFP that "compared with 2024, the topics to be discussed this time might be broader". "The two sides could share some best practices and exchange experiences on how to address and manage" AI's impact on society, for example on youth employment, he said. "Even though China and the United States are in competition in the field of AI, the impact of AI technologies on the entire world -- and on all kinds of actors, whether states, societies, or businesses -- is extremely significant." However, keeping thorny issues such as the export of high-end US chips that can train and power AI systems for separate meetings "may help create a better atmosphere for talks between the two sides", Sun added.

- [Chinese nationals arrested in Vietnam gold smuggling bust](#) (2026-05-19 14:55)

HANOI — Authorities in Vietnam arrested five Chinese nationals accused of smuggling more than \$45 million worth of gold in Hanoi, police said on Tuesday. One Vietnamese national was also nabbed in the bust, which police said took down "the largest gold smuggling ring ever dismantled" in the capital. The Vietnamese have a long tradition of holding their wealth in gold, which trades at a premium in the communist country due to strict controls on how it can be bought and sold. The smuggling ring, believed to be led by a Chinese national, was caught "red-handed" with five kilograms of raw gold in Hanoi, the police statement said. According to police, the men had smuggled the gold from Hong Kong, "disguising it among shipments of electronic equipment to evade detection by authorities". Before selling it, the ring used chemicals to cleanse the gold, melting and casting the precious metal into bars for clients in Hanoi and neighbouring Bac Ninh province. The Vietnamese accomplice -- who accepted cryptocurrency in exchange for the gold and transferred it as instructed by the Chinese ringleader -- told police he received up to 200 million dong (\$7,600) per month as payment. Police said the ring had traded approximately 300 kilograms of gold worth more than \$45 million between March and their arrest on an unspecified date. Vietnam does not have a national gold exchange, and domestic banks do not offer individuals access to online trading platforms for precious metals. However, people can buy gold at private and state-owned jewelry shops.

- ['Fortnite' game returns to Apple App Store](#) (2026-05-19 14:44)

PARIS, France — Massively popular online shooter "Fortnite" was again available on Apple's online App Store, developer Epic Games said Tuesday, adding that it was "confident" of

prevailing in a court battle with the iPhone maker. Epic has been battling in court against both Apple and Google -- which develops the Android operating system -- over the sizeable fees they charge to allow software makers to sell to users. "Fortnite is back on the App Store around the world," the company posted on X Tuesday. "We are confident that once Apple is forced to show its costs, governments around the world will not allow Apple junk fees to stand," it added. "Fortnite" was removed from both the Apple and Google stores in 2020 when Epic Games attempted to circumvent their payment systems. Its return last year to Apple's US App Store followed a first favourable court ruling. It also returned to the American Google store after Epic struck a deal with the web giant. "We see this as the beginning of the end of the Apple Tax worldwide," Epic chief Tim Sweeney posted on X. "Fortnite" is nevertheless unavailable for Australian users to download -- despite a victory last summer in courts there, where Epic had accused Apple and Google of abusing their market position. Epic said in March that it was laying off more than 1,000 people, blaming a fall in the flagship game's popularity as well as the financial impact of its various legal cases.

- [No winners in Ultra Lotto 6/58, Super Lotto 6/49, Lotto 6/42 draws for May 19](#) (2026-05-19 14:43)

There were no winners in the Ultra Lotto 6/58, Super Lotto 6/49, and Lotto 6/42 draws on Tuesday night, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) said. The winning combination for the Ultra Lotto 6/58 was 06-38-09-26-48-14, with a jackpot prize of P75,000,000. No winners were also recorded in the Super Lotto 6/49 draw, which had the combination 49-35-44-04-14-05 and a jackpot prize of P25,000,000.00. Meanwhile, the Lotto 6/42 draw yielded the combination 15-06-31-16-22-25, with a jackpot prize of P17,376,838.36.

- [5.4 million apply for BSKE registration — Comelec](#) (2026-05-19 13:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has processed more than 5.4 million voter registration applications following the close of the registration period for the Nov. 2 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE). Data released by the poll body showed that as of May 18, 2026, a total of 5,470,889 applications had been received nationwide — more than double Comelec's original target of 2 million new voters. Comelec Chairman George Erwin Garcia described the turnout as a major success, attributing it to aggressive information drives and easier access to registration services. Garcia clarified, however, that those who filed forms are not yet officially registered voters, stressing that all applications must still undergo review and approval by local Election Registration Boards (ERBs). "The city or municipal Election Registration Board will determine during its meeting whether the applications will be approved or disapproved," Garcia said. The Comelec chief explained that the ERB process is meant to cleanse and validate the voters' list before the elections. This includes checking every new application, removing duplicate registrants, delisting deceased voters, and reviewing records of individuals previously removed from the voters' list for failing to vote in two consecutive elections.

- [De Lima proposes Anti-Ticket Scalping Act](#) (2026-05-19 13:53)

MANILA, Philippines — House Senior Deputy Minority Leader and Mamamayang Liberal Rep. Leila de Lima filed House Bill 9171 or the proposed Anti-Ticket Scalping Act. De Lima said in an explanatory note that the bill was "a necessary response to protect consumers and ensure fair access to entertainment events." "It seeks to curb exploitative practices by prohibiting the unauthorized buying and selling of tickets, particularly those resold at prices exceeding 10% above face value without proper authorization. It also imposes penalties on related acts such as ticket hoarding, selling through unauthorized channels, and failure to disclose accurate pricing information", she said. De Lima filed the bill last May 11.

- [Fake news among 'biggest challenges' for House impeachment prosecutors](#) (2026-05-19 13:26)

MANILA, Philippines — One of the biggest challenges for the House of Representatives' impeachment prosecutors is fake news, Iloilo 3rd District Rep. Lorenz Defensor said. "One of the biggest challenges that we face is fake news, trolls who disseminate false news, who are drilling wrong evidence in the minds of our countrymen", Defensor said in Filipino and English in a press conference on Tuesday. Responding to another query earlier in the same press conference, Batangas 2nd District Rep. Gerville Lustrero, the House's lead public prosecutor for the impeachment trial, said, "Evidence and public opinion are very much intertwined. If you will be able to present strong evidence, ... you will be able to get a favorable public opinion."

- [Parlade to head Senate security force](#) (2026-05-19 12:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Manuel Parlade has been designated as officer-in-charge of the Office of Senate Sergeant-at-Arms following the suspension of retired Police major general Mao Aplasca. Parlade will temporarily lead the Senate security force until Aplasca's six-month suspension is lifted. Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla ordered Aplasca suspended for six months over his handling of the shooting incident at the Senate on May 13. He said the preventive suspension aims to prevent him from influencing the investigation of the shooting incident. Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano on Monday said his legal team was eyeing three legal options to address the Ombudsman's suspension order on Aplasca. "There are three options. There is a legal memo[redacted] prepared for me to discuss with the legal team," Cayetano said when asked about Aplasca's status. He cited some legal opinions that there is separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. "And then, there are certain officials who can be suspended or not [by the Ombudsman]," Cayetano said in Filipino and English during a press briefing. In a chance interview, Aplasca said he was thankful that no one was hurt during the "violent" incident.

- [Health, not politics, reason for partylist lawmaker's resignation](#) (2026-05-19 12:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Resigned 1 Tahanan Partylist Rep. Nathaniel Oducado said that health, and not politics or his vote for the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte, was the main reason he resigned from the House of Representatives. Oducado, alongside Pinoy Workers Partylist Rep. Franz Legazpi, was among the lawmakers who tendered their resignations during

the House plenary on Monday. In an interview with reporters on Tuesday, Oducado said that he stepped down to focus on his health and to take care of his family. He further said that his party was now deliberating on who will be the new nominee to represent the partylist.¹ Tahanan counts Oducado, Geraro Joseph Alino, Raul del Prado, Elmer Catulpos, Ymeir Shann Catulpos, Yelcy Catulpos, Alden Bacal, Creseciano Pedrola Jr., Erine Gale Dejecacion, and Reymon Bunag as its nominees. Elmer Catulpos is the party chairman. He is also the founder of media network Brigada Mass Media Corporation. Oducado addressed rumors that Catulpos may succeed him. "These rumors that's also a possibility will just wait for the party decision. But I trust that the party decision namin will be fair," Oducado said. He further clarified that his resignation was not connected to his vote on the impeachment trial, though Oducado said that some of their supporters in key bailiwicks such as Cebu and Mindanao were "frustrated" by his decision to vote yes. "We have to stand by difficult positions and it's one of the things na in-accept ko naman (that I accepted) when I decided to run for this [position]," Oducado said.

- [Ateneo Law classmates, rival UP slam Cayetano for abuse of Senate powers](#) (2026-05-19 12:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The law school classmates of Senate President Alan Peter Cayetano from the Ateneo de Manila University have called on him to “pause and reflect” on his actions at the chamber last week. In a statement by 25 of his batchmates on Sunday, the group said the Senate went beyond its powers over the change of leadership and the standoff that involved the alleged escape of Sen. Ronald dela Rosa. “In our current situation, the Senate has clearly gone beyond its powers, abrogated powers reserved for the two other departments and, by doing so, disturbed the balance of these three co-equal branches of government. Furthermore, it has unilaterally decided to disobey the lawful request of the Ombudsman despite receipt of a valid subpoena,” Cayetano’s batchmates said. “Regrettably, at the helm of this crisis is a member of the Ateneo Law Class of 1997. We, therefore, appeal to our batchmate, Senate President Alan P. Cayetano, to remember what we were taught in Ateneo and to adhere to our oath as lawyers and officers of the court,” they added. Cayetano’s batchmates urged him to be “mindful of the law and the decisions of the Supreme Court and avoid interpretations for convenience and accommodation.” “We urge the Senate President to carefully study his own case of Pangilinan vs Cayetano (G.R. No. 238875) as the pronouncements therein belie the credibility of his dispositions and decisions as Senate President on the ICC (International Criminal Court) controversy,” they wrote. “Recognize the limited applicability of parliamentary immunity against arrest as not extending to those with penalties beyond six years. Its act of giving refuge to Senator dela Rosa was, in reality, a criminal offense of harboring a fugitive from justice dressed up with convoluted legal jargon to make it appear like the supposed tradition of ‘protective custody’. Please note that the term is made up of two words and that the latter word ‘custody’ means that you are responsible to produce the person under your ‘protection’ when so required by the Executive or the Judiciary — a responsibility that has been conveniently overlooked by the Senate President especially now that the fugitive senator is nowhere to be found,” they added. Cayetano was

also urged to “honor the constitutional provision that the Ombudsman can suspend any public official and request the Senate ‘for assistance and information necessary for the discharge of its responsibilities’ by turning over to the former all CCTV recordings for a proper determination of the alleged ‘attack’ on the Senate.” “Every Ateneo lawyer should live by the guidance of our alma mater and our patron, St. Thomas More: to be men and women for others while being the servant of God above all else. We urge the Senate President to pause and reflect on the law and be reminded of the counsel of Justice Pompeyo Diaz to all Ateneo law graduates to be true acolytes of the law with a passion for truth and justice,” Cayetano’s batchmates said. Over the weekend, rival groups in the University of the Philippines (UP), the SAMASA and Nagkaisang Tugon, called on the Senate President’s resignation because of a “grave failure of leadership, judgment, and institutional responsibility.”

- [Civil society leaders call for calm in BARMM educational fund controversy](#) (2026-05-19 11:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Leaders and representatives from the civil society, academe, labor, and business on Tuesday called for sobriety and unity in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) after its education minister is facing ouster over corruption allegations involving over P2 billion in "disbursement lapses" in his office. “We, leaders and representatives from civil society, academe, labor, and business —sectors that have long supported and contributed to sustaining peace in Mindanao, express deep concern and sadness over the growing tensions and public exchanges involving senior leaders of the Bangsamoro Government at this critical period for the peace process and regional transition,” according to opposition-led Tindig Pilipinas in a post on its Facebook page. “At this sensitive moment, we appeal to all concerned leaders and stakeholders to exercise sobriety, restraint, and wisdom. We urge all parties to step back from escalating actions and rhetoric, and to seek a principled and peaceful way of resolving differences—one that honors the decades of sacrifice, comradeship, and collective struggle for the Bangsamoro people’s right to self-determination and just peace,” the multisectoral group said. It called on BARMM Interim Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua and Basic, Higher and Technical Education Minister Mohagher Iqbal, being the leaders of the Bangsamoro transition, to “exhaust all avenues for dialogue and internal resolution in the spirit of unity, mutual respect, and collective responsibility.” “At this critical time, all sides must avoid actions that may deepen polarization or create conditions that could inflame tensions on the ground,” the groups said. “We strongly urge all parties to refrain from interference, divisive political maneuvering, and actions that have weakened Bangsamoro unity and undermined confidence in the peace process. The continuing resurgence of divide-and-rule dynamics within and around the Bangsamoro transition risks deepening internal fractures, eroding hard-won trust, and delaying the realization of a just and lasting peace for the Bangsamoro people,” the group added. The groups called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and the national government to give “urgent attention” to the situation and ensure that the gains of the Bangsamoro peace process were protected. “In particular, we reiterate the urgent need for the immediate reconstitution and full activation of the GPH-MILF (Government of the

Philippines-Moro Islamic Revolutionary Front) Peace Implementing Panels to address emerging concerns and ensure the full implementation of the CAB (Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro)," the group said. Apart from Tindig Pilipinas, other groups who signed the letter included the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society, International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance, Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa, and several individuals that included for presidential peace adviser Teresita Deles.

- [Impeachment articles divided among prosecution members](#) (2026-05-19 11:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The assignments for the four articles of impeachment has been divided among the 11 members of the prosecution team as it gears up for the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. During the press briefing on Tuesday, lead prosecutor and Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro said that preparations by the prosecutors were now in "full swing" for both the pre-trial and the trial. "So come the pre-trial and the trial, you will expect that the 11 prosecutors will be there to appear before the impeachment court," she added. Aside from Luistro, other members of the prosecution panel include Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Terry Ridon, 1-Rider Party-list Rep. Ramon Rodrigo Gutierrez, San Juan City Rep. Ysabel Maria Zamora, Iloilo 3rd District Rep. Lorenz Defensor, Akbayan Party-list Rep. Jose Manuel Diokno, Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Rep. Leila de Lima, Dinagat Islands Rep. Kaka Bag-ao, Bukidnon 2nd District Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores, Cagayan de Oro 1st District Rep. Lordan Suan and Manila 3rd District Rep. Joel Chua. Luistro said that the prosecution panel organized teams corresponding to the four impeachment articles: threats and destabilization, bribery, unexplained wealth, and confidential funds. The article on threat and destabilization, which stems from allegations that Duterte publicly threatened President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and former speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, will be handled by Defensor, De Lima, Zamora and Luistro. The article on bribery, involving allegations the distribution of cash envelopes during her time at the Department of Education, will be handled by Chua, Gutierrez, Bag-ao and Zamora. The article on unexplained wealth, which centers on allegations involving Duterte's alleged accumulation of wealth disproportionate to her declared income, including financial records and bank transaction reports discussed during House hearings, will be handled by Ridon, Diokno, Bag-ao, Gutierrez, Luistro, Chua, de Lima, Suan and Flores. Meanwhile, the article on Duterte's alleged misuse of confidential funds will be led by Luistro, with Chua, Defensor, Gutierrez, Suan, Flores, Diokno and Ridon as members. The House prosecution also welcomed the move of the Senate to convene as an impeachment court, stressing that the Constitution requires the trial to proceed forthwith. "As we witnessed yesterday, the impeachment court already convened, and we commend the action of the Senate of the Philippines for responding to the mandate of the Constitution,"

- [DOJ says 'culprit' behind Senate shooting identified but won't preempt probe](#) (2026-05-19 10:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Tuesday said it has identified the "culprit" in the Senate shooting incident last May 13, 2026 but did not want to "preempt" the

ongoing investigation by identifying the perpetrator. “We have already identified, but I don’t want to preclude ‘yung panel natin (our panel)--- As to kung sino ‘yung culprit, ayoko muna i-preempt (As to who the culprit is, I do not want to preempt). As to the type of cases that will be filed, again, I don’t want to preempt my panel,” said Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida in a press conference. Vida likewise noted that they have pinpointed personalities who might have given the order to then Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca to fire the “warning shots.” Vida said both the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation submitted their findings, which would be turned over to the DOJ panel of prosecutors. Vida said the facts that were unearthed were “compelling” but “we still need to verify and validate.” “The DOJ will not take it as is. We will check on the timelines, we will check on the source of the videos. Sa dulo nito, kailangan ‘yung katotohanan lang (At the end of it, what we will need is the truth),” he said.

- [House spokesmen in Sara impeach trial named](#) (2026-05-19 09:19)

MANILA, Philippines — Lanao del Sur 1st District Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong and Kabataan Rep. Renee Co were named as the House of Representatives' spokesmen in the impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. Batangas 2nd District Rep. Gerville Luistro, the House's lead public prosecutor, made the announcement in a press conference on Tuesday. In a statement, Adiong extended his “heartfelt gratitude to the distinguished 11-member prosecution panel and to the House of Representatives for the trust and confidence they have reposed in me.” “I am grateful for this opportunity to serve the Filipino people in upholding the rule of law and the principles enshrined in our Constitution,” Adiong said in a statement. “Together with my colleagues in the prosecution panel, we remain steadfast in our resolve to present the evidence with clarity, fairness, and transparency. We are guided solely by the pursuit of justice and the public interest, ensuring that this historic process strengthens our democratic institutions,” he said.

- [Jinggoy calls recommended plunder and graft charges against him 'baffling and unjust'](#) (2026-05-19 08:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Jinggoy Estrada described as “baffling and unjust” the Department of Justice (DOJ) resolution recommending the filing of plunder and graft charges against him in relation to his alleged link to the flood control fund scandal. In a resolution transmitted to the Office of the Ombudsman, the DOJ said it found probable cause to indict Estrada, former Public Works secretary Manuel Bonoan and six others for plunder, violations of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, direct bribery, and corruption of public officials. “This is an unfortunate development,” Ejercito said in a statement on Tuesday. He said that the Senate Legislative Budget Research and Monitoring Office “categorically stated that there is no record showing that I introduced any insertions into the 2025 national budget.” Estrada said that even Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Blue Ribbon Committee chairman, “took cognizance of this development as a vital piece of information regarding the issues being raised against me.” That was why on May 15, 2026, Estrada said he filed before the DOJ an omnibus motion to “reopen the preliminary investigation into the cases filed by the National Bureau of Investigation concerning the flood

control projects."The senator said the motion sought to "allow the presentation and consideration of additional evidence and matters crucial to a fair and objective determination of the complaints.""Due process and fairness demand that all relevant evidence and official findings be fully considered before conclusions are drawn," Estrada said."Nonetheless, I remain committed to addressing these allegations through the proper legal processes, and I am confident that the truth, supported by facts and official records, will ultimately prevail," he added.

- [WHO chief says 'deeply concerned' by 'scale and speed' of DR Congo Ebola outbreak](#) (2026-05-19 08:39)

GENEVA, Switzerland — The World Health Organization chief said Tuesday he was "deeply concerned" by an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo which has spilt into Uganda, believed to have killed 131 people.WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Sunday declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) — the second-highest level of alert under international health regulations."I did not do this lightly... I'm deeply concerned about the scale and speed of the epidemic," he told the World Health Assembly in Geneva.He added that he would convene the agency's emergency committee later Tuesday "to advise us on temporary recommendations."The DRC's health minister said the suspected toll from the outbreak declared late last week had risen to 131 deaths and 513 cases.Tedros said that so far, 30 cases had been confirmed to be Ebola in the DRC's northeastern Ituri province."Uganda has also informed WHO of two confirmed cases in the capital of Kampala, including one death among two individuals who travelled from DRC," he told the WHO's annual meeting of its decision-taking body.In addition, he said, there was "one US citizen confirmed positive and transferred to Germany, as reported by the US."The total number of confirmed and suspected cases "will change as field operations are scaling up, including strengthening surveillance, contact tracing and laboratory testing", Tedros stressed.There were a number of reasons to worry, he said.He pointed out that cases had been reported in urban areas, including Kampala, as well as the Congolese city of Goma, and also that there was "significant population movement in the area.""The province of Ituri is highly insecure," he said, pointing out that intensifying conflict in recent months had seen more than 100,000 people newly displaced in the region.He also said that deaths had been reported among health workers, "indicating healthcare-associated transmission."Tedros highlighted that the epidemic had been shown to be caused by the Bundibugyo strain, "a species of Ebola virus, for which there are no vaccines or therapeutics."

- [AFP says Misamis Oriental illegal steel operations may be part of foreign deceptive activities](#) (2026-05-19 07:24)

MANILA, Philippines —The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Tuesday said it was looking into the possibility that the alleged illegal steel manufacturing plant in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental where 69 undocumented Chinese and one Filipino were arrested could be part of a bigger web of foreign deceptive activities being done in the country. Operatives of the National

Bureau of Investigation, Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission and the AFP recovered highly explosive and prohibited urban hazardous materials like urotropine and tungsten. “As to the possibility that this could be part of a bigger web, we have to step back and look at it on a macro level,” Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad, AFP spokesman for the West Philippine Sea, told reporters in a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo. Trinidad noted that in the past, authorities have repeatedly caught foreigners, particularly Chinese, who were doing illegal activities in the country. “Chinese nationals with fake identities who were trying to pose off as Filipinos. We have apprehended alleged spies who were conducting mapping operations who had equipment that were not authorized to be with them plus all other incidents of foreign nationals mainly suspected to be Chinese operating in the country,” he said. “This could be another similar activity which we are trying to check if this is part of foreign interference malign influence operations considering that Chinese nationals were involved, Filipinos were part of the labor force and this could be part of the united front works for all we know,” he said. Trinidad said the issue should be looked at in a holistic perspective and connecting surrounding circumstances could shed light on the existence of the operation. The Department of National Defense is establishing a massive 300-hectare Naval Operating Base and dockyard within the PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental. Set to be the Philippine Navy’s largest facility in Mindanao, the base will serve as the primary operations hub for the Visayas and Northern Mindanao. According to Teodoro, the plant, Phil. Sanjia-Steel Corp. is owned by Chinese businessman Tony Yang, also known as Yang Jian Xin, who had earlier admitted during a Senate hearing that he was not a legitimate Filipino citizen. The plant operates within the Phividec Industrial Estate. “Again, we have to look at it from a macro level. As SND [Secretary of National Defense] mentioned, if there is an angle of economic sabotage, if there is an angle of the environment of labor, it becomes a national security issue,” Trinidad said. Yang was linked to Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations. He is currently detained in Cagayan de Oro, where he is said to be facing falsification of public documents, perjury, and anti-alias law violations in local courts..However, he also faces a deportation case for undesirability for allegedly misrepresenting himself as a Filipino.

- [House panel okays bill for P3K World Teachers' Day incentive](#) (2026-05-19 06:24)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives' Committee on Basic Education and Culture approved a bill aiming to increase the World Teachers' Day incentive to P3,000 from P1,000. Eastern Samar Rep. Christopher Sheen Gonzales, an author of House Bill 4531, said in a statement on Tuesday that he was deeply grateful to the committee, which is led by Pasig Rep. Roman Romulo. “Our teachers play a vital role in shaping the nation's future. Increasing the WTDIB is not only about extending financial support — it is also a meaningful recognition of the dedication, hard work, and sacrifices our educators make every day,” Gonzales said. The statement said the bill also sought to institutionalize the World Teachers' Day Incentive Benefit (WTDIB), “which Congress first granted to public school teachers in 2019 through a provision” in the General Appropriations Act. The incentive is given every Oct. 5, 2026. The bill still has to undergo consideration at the House plenary level.

- [Ombudsman seeks list of journalists present during May 13 shooting incident at Senate](#) (2026-05-19 06:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Ombudsman wants a list of media personnel present during the May 13 shooting incident at the Senate while Sen. Risa Hontiveros commended them for their bravery and professionalism during their coverage of the alleged standoff. The Ombudsman is asking for the "logbook entries indicating the time of log-in and log-out of the media personnel, if any" on May 13 and 14. Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla urged "friends from the media to submit their own affidavits" to narrate what took place during the shooting incident "together with the footages that they took." Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Mao Aplasca admitted that he was the first one who made the warning shots after seeing a National Bureau of Investigation agent near the Senate building. In her May 15 letter to Michael Caber, Public Relations and Information Bureau director, Maria Melinda Mananghaya-Henson Ombudsman field investigation bureau director, said the requested documents would be part of its fact-finding investigation on the incident that led to the lockdown of the Senate on the days indicated. "In case the requested documents are not available, may we request a certification under oath explaining the reason/s thereof," Mananghaya-Henson said. "Rest assured that any documents and information to be submitted will be treated with utmost confidentiality," she added. In filing Resolution 400, Hontiveros said the "gunfire lasted approximately three minutes, causing widespread panic among Senate staff, and members of the media covering the standoff at the Senate." "Despite being trapped in a building with a potential active shooter, the members of the Senate media exhibited remarkable personal bravery, prioritizing the public's right to information over their own immediate safety by continuing to cover the incident as it occurred," she said. "In an information landscape increasingly compromised by systemic online disinformation, covert influence operations, and coordinated inauthentic behavior, the impartial reporting of the Senate media serves as an essential pillar of truth, protecting the integrity of our democracy during times of national crisis," Hontiveros said.

- [Seven out of 10 Filipinos trust, satisfied with AFP — survey](#) (2026-05-19 06:12)

MANILA, Philippines — Seven out of 10 Filipinos continue to trust and are satisfied with the performance of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), according to a survey conducted by independent pollster OCTA Research. In its Tugon ng Masa survey for the first quarter conducted from March 19-25, 2026, 72 percent of adult Filipinos trust the AFP, while only 11 percent distrust it, for a net trust rating of +61. Trust in the AFP is highest in the Visayas at 75 percent, as well as among class E at 77 percent. Meanwhile, 70 percent of Filipinos were satisfied with the performance of the AFP, while only 14 percent expressed dissatisfaction, for a net performance rating of +56. Performance is highest also in the Visayas at 73 percent and Balanced Luzon at 70 percent. Class E respondents were also the most satisfied at 75 percent. OCTA said that the results showed that the AFP continued to enjoy broad institutional legitimacy and public confidence among geographic regions and socioeconomic classes. "The consistently high trust and performance ratings reflect strong public recognition of the AFP's role in national defense, territorial security, disaster response, and public service," it added. The

survey had 1,200 respondents and has a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.

• [Marcos to tackle security in meeting with Japanese prime minister](#) (2026-05-19 02:12)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is looking to discuss strengthened security cooperation, among other things, when he meets with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in his upcoming state visit to Japan. In his roundtable interview with the Japanese media in Malacañang last Monday, Marcos mentioned the cross-servicing agreement sealed by Manila and Tokyo earlier this year— a deal between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to exchange vital logistical support, and noted wanting a stepped-up cooperation and assistance especially in maintaining maritime order. He pointed out how both countries “experienced the same difficulties in terms of coercive acts” in the South China Sea and a ramped-up dialogue would benefit not just the Philippines but also the whole Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). “I will also bring up to see what it means in terms of further cooperation and assistance, not only to the Philippines but to Asean as well,” Marcos said. “And as Japan and the Philippines have experienced the same difficulties in terms of coercive acts, in terms of different gray zones, shall we say, tactics that are being exercised in the South China Sea and in all of the South China Sea. So, that is something that we will certainly be discussing,” he added. The president likewise mentioned Japan’s participation in the recent Balikatan 2026 exercises, where it deployed over 1,000 combat troops and advanced equipment, including its Type 88 surface-to-ship missiles and large warships. Marcos viewed Japan’s involvement as a “significant development in terms of our continuing cooperation and training our personnel for further and better interoperability.” “This is all in the context of Japan’s new posture in terms of defense and security, and that Japan is now allowing itself to participate in those – in such exercises. And that is important because that changes the playing field, as it were. It changes it significantly,” he said. “We would like to hear more about what exactly does Japan intend to do and what they are willing to do. At least I’m sure that it’s going to be phased. It’s not going to happen in one phase, but I think it will be a phased development of that relationship and with maybe further exercises, further exchanges,” he added.

• [Senate revamps committee chairmanships; finance, blue ribbon still vacant](#) (2026-05-19 02:04)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate committee chairmanships have been reorganized, an expected outcome whenever there is a change in leadership. The following is the list of senators and their respective committees to lead: * Culture and Arts - Loren Legarda * Ways and Means - Pia Cayetano * Health - Bong Go * Higher, Technical and Vocational Education - Joel Villanueva * National Defense and Security - Jinggoy Estrada * Sports - Bong Go * Sustainable Development Goals - Pia Cayetano * Basic Education - Loren Legarda * Public Services - Rodante Marcoleta * Public Information and Mass Media - Robin Padilla * Cultural Communities and Muslim Affairs - Robin Padilla * Games and Amusement - Jinggoy Estrada * Energy - Pia Cayetano The chairmanship of major committees such as the Blue Ribbon, which investigates anomalies in government, and Finance have yet to be assigned.