



PHILIPPINES SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: March 26, 2026 - April 02, 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 and significant diplomatic maneuvering from March 26 to April 02, 2026. Tensions in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) remained critical, marked by multiple aggressive actions from Chinese maritime forces, including near-collisions and harassment of Filipino vessels and fishermen. Concurrently, Manila actively diversified its defense partnerships by signing a landmark Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA) with France and preparing for major joint military exercises with the United States and Japan, emphasizing cyber defense. Domestically, cybersecurity threats were elevated to a national security priority, while diplomatic overtures with China for joint oil and gas exploration were initiated amidst a declared national energy emergency, signaling a complex and evolving strategic landscape.

Key Security Developments

- Maritime Incidents and Chinese Aggression in WPS

The National Maritime Council (NMC) on April 2, 2026, strongly condemned a series of "aggressive and dangerous" actions by Chinese maritime forces throughout March in the West Philippine Sea. These incidents included a near-collision on March 26 near Pag-asa Island (Thitu Island), where a Philippine Navy vessel was forced to take evasive action after an unsafe maneuver by a Chinese warship. Other incidents involved a Chinese Coast Guard vessel subjecting a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources vessel to hazardous maneuvers near Paredes Reef (Discovery Great Reef), and harassment of Filipino fishermen near Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) on March 17. The NMC reported a total of five incidents on March 7, 17, 20, and 26. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) also reported monitoring at least 90 unauthorized Chinese vessels in the WPS throughout March, including those from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLA-N) and China Coast Guard (CCG), across Bajo de Masinloc, Pag-asa Island, Ayungin Shoal, and Escoda Shoal. These actions are seen as undermining international law and regional peace.

- Diplomatic Protest and Naming of WPS Features

Following the aggressive actions, the Philippines announced it would file diplomatic protests and engage in bilateral dialogue mechanisms with Beijing. On March 26, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order No. 111, directing local authorities to use local names for 131 features in the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in

the West Philippine Sea in government documents and official maps. China firmly opposed this move on April 1, stating it infringes upon China's sovereignty and goes against international law.

- France-Philippines Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA)

On March 26, 2026, the Philippines and France signed a landmark Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA) in Paris. Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and French Minister for the Armed Forces and Veterans Catherine Vautrin formalized the pact, which allows their forces to train together. This agreement marks the Philippines' first such defense pact with a European country and is seen as a significant step in Manila's strategy to build security alliances amidst increasing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.

- Resumption of Philippines-China Oil and Gas Exploration Talks

The Philippines and China held the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC) and the 11th Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) on the South China Sea in Quanzhou, China, on March 27-28, 2026. During these meetings, both sides engaged in "initial exchanges" on potential oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea. This development came days after President Marcos Jr. signaled a "reset" in relations with Beijing and declared a state of national energy emergency on March 24, driven by global supply uncertainties from the Middle East conflict.

- Upcoming Balikatan 2026 Exercises with Expanded Participation

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced that the Balikatan 2026 exercises, involving the Philippines, the United States, and other allies, are scheduled to open on April 20. For the first time, Japanese combat troops are set to participate in these drills. AFP chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. stated that this year's Balikatan will place a stronger focus on cyber defense drills, drawing lessons from modern conflicts.

- Cope Thunder 26 Air Force Exercise

Cope Thunder 26, a Pacific Air Forces-sponsored exercise, is scheduled to begin on April 6th, with primary flight operations over Basa Air Base, Philippines, and will run through April 17th. This exercise aims to facilitate bilateral fighter training with the Philippine Air Force, enhancing alliance readiness and combined interoperability between the Philippine and United States air forces.

- Cybersecurity Elevated to National Security Priority

Cybersecurity threats are now officially treated as national security risks in the Philippines. During the GovMedia Summit 2026 in Manila, officials stated that cyber incidents are being escalated to Cabinet level and, in critical cases, reported directly to the President. This elevation is linked to ongoing geopolitical tensions, with nation-state actors believed to be behind some attacks targeting government systems. The "I AM SECURE 2026" program was launched on March 26, emphasizing

the urgent need for organizations to evolve against increasingly sophisticated and intelligent cyber risks.

- Chinese Espionage Network Addressed

In early March 2026, the National Security Council (NSC) confirmed the uncovering and dismantling of a Chinese espionage network operating within Philippine government agencies. The NSC assured the public that the operation of these individuals, acting at the behest of Chinese intelligence, had been "addressed and terminated." This highlights persistent intelligence threats to national security.

- Defense Budget and Modernization Program Push

The Department of National Defense (DND) is advocating for the removal of restrictions on both foreign and local financing for defense acquisitions and the elimination of the 15-year timeline for the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) modernization program. This push is part of accelerating Horizon 3 of the Revised AFP Modernization Program, with a proposed 16% increase in the 2026 defense budget to PHP 299.3 billion (approximately USD 5.2 billion) to acquire multirole fighter aircraft, airborne early warning platforms, and aerial refueling tankers.

- US Flags Corruption as Trade Barrier

The United States, in its National Trade Estimate (NTE) report released on March 31, 2026, once again flagged corruption as a major barrier to trade and investment with the Philippines. The Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) stated that corruption remains a "pervasive and longstanding problem" in doing business in the country, potentially impacting trade and investment flows between the two allies.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

The Philippines' security developments during this period underscore its increasingly pivotal role in the Indo-Pacific's strategic landscape, particularly concerning the South China Sea. The persistent and aggressive actions by Chinese maritime forces, as condemned by the National Maritime Council, directly challenge the rules-based international order and escalate regional tensions. These incidents, occurring in disputed areas like Pag-asa Island and Bajo de Masinloc, reinforce the narrative of China's assertive territorial claims and its willingness to employ coercive tactics. This dynamic compels the Philippines to strengthen its defense posture and diversify its alliances, directly impacting regional stability.

The signing of the SOVFA with France is a significant step in the Philippines' multi-vector defense diplomacy, marking its first such agreement with a European nation. This move, alongside existing pacts with the US, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Canada, signals a broader strategy to engage diverse partners in

deterring Chinese aggression and upholding maritime security. The upcoming Balikatan 2026 exercises, with the unprecedented participation of Japanese combat troops and a focus on cyber defense, further solidify the Philippines' alliance network and enhance interoperability with key regional and global powers. These exercises serve as a clear signal to China regarding the collective commitment to freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea.

However, the simultaneous "reset" talks with China on oil and gas exploration, initiated amidst a national energy emergency, introduce a layer of complexity to the Philippines' foreign policy. While driven by domestic energy security needs, these discussions occur against a backdrop of continued Chinese maritime assertiveness and strong opposition from some Philippine officials regarding joint ventures in disputed areas. This diplomatic hedging reflects Manila's delicate balancing act between strategic alignment with Western allies and the pragmatic need for economic engagement with its largest neighbor, China. The US flagging corruption as a barrier to trade and investment also highlights internal governance challenges that could affect the Philippines' attractiveness as a reliable partner.

Military and Defense Analysis

The Philippines is actively pursuing a rapid and comprehensive military modernization program, primarily driven by the escalating tensions in the West Philippine Sea. The proposed 16% increase in the 2026 defense budget to PHP 299.3 billion (USD 5.2 billion) underscores the urgency of this effort, focusing on accelerating Horizon 3 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program. This funding is earmarked for critical acquisitions such as multirole fighter aircraft, airborne early warning platforms, and aerial refueling tankers, which are essential for extending detection ranges, enhancing air superiority, and reinforcing deterrence across contested maritime zones.

The Department of National Defense's push to remove the \$300-million ceiling on foreign loans and the 15-year timeline for the modernization program indicates a strategic intent to acquire high-cost, advanced defense systems more efficiently. This flexibility in financing and procurement is crucial for the Philippines to bridge existing capability gaps and respond effectively to evolving threats. The acquisition of two new corvettes from South Korea, expected by 2026, further bolsters the nation's naval capability with anti-ship, anti-submarine, and anti-air warfare missions.

In terms of force posture, the Philippines is increasingly integrating with its allies through joint exercises and agreements. The SOVFA with France will facilitate joint training, while the upcoming Balikatan 2026 and Cope Thunder 26 exercises with the US and Japan will enhance interoperability and collective defense capabilities,

particularly in maritime and cyber domains. The emphasis on cyber defense in Balikatan 2026 reflects a recognition of modern warfare's evolving nature and the need to protect critical infrastructure from nation-state actors. The confirmed dismantling of a Chinese espionage network also highlights the ongoing need for robust counter-intelligence and cybersecurity measures within the AFP and government agencies.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months):

In the immediate future, tensions in the West Philippine Sea are likely to remain elevated, with continued assertive actions from Chinese maritime forces. The Philippines will likely continue to document and publicly condemn these incidents, filing further diplomatic protests. The upcoming Balikatan 2026 (April 20 - late May) and Cope Thunder 26 (April 6-17) exercises will be closely watched, particularly the unprecedented participation of Japanese combat troops and the focus on cyber defense. These drills will likely elicit strong reactions from China, potentially leading to increased surveillance or counter-demonstrations in the disputed waters. The "initial exchanges" on oil and gas exploration with China may continue, but significant breakthroughs are unlikely given the deep-seated territorial disputes and the Philippines' firm stance on its sovereign rights.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas:

The West Philippine Sea, particularly around Pag-asa Island (Thitu Island), Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal), and Ayungin Shoal (Second Thomas Shoal), remains the primary flashpoint. The risk of accidental collisions or escalatory incidents between Philippine and Chinese vessels is high, especially during Philippine resupply missions or patrols. The increased presence of unauthorized Chinese vessels and the use of fire-control radar pose significant dangers. Cybersecurity threats, linked to geopolitical tensions and nation-state actors, will also remain a critical risk area, targeting government systems and critical infrastructure. The domestic political debate surrounding potential joint oil and gas exploration with China in disputed areas could also become a flashpoint, given strong nationalistic sentiments and legal constraints.

Indicators to monitor:

Key indicators to monitor include the frequency and nature of Chinese maritime actions in the WPS, particularly any increase in the use of force or direct confrontation. The outcomes and statements from the Balikatan and Cope Thunder exercises, especially regarding interoperability and new defense capabilities, will be

important. Progress or setbacks in the Philippines-China oil and gas exploration talks, and any shifts in the Philippines' public stance on these negotiations, should be closely observed. Domestically, the advancement of defense modernization legislation, particularly regarding financing and timelines, will indicate the pace of capability development. Furthermore, any new reports or official statements regarding cybersecurity incidents or foreign espionage activities will be crucial.

Strategic recommendations:

The Philippines should continue its multi-vector defense diplomacy, actively pursuing and deepening alliances with like-minded partners beyond traditional allies, as demonstrated by the SOVFA with France. It should also accelerate its defense modernization program, prioritizing maritime domain awareness, naval and air capabilities, and robust cyber defense systems to enhance deterrence. While engaging in dialogue with China on economic matters like energy, the Philippines must maintain a firm and consistent stance on its sovereign rights in the WPS, ensuring any cooperation adheres strictly to Philippine law and the 2016 arbitral ruling. Strengthening domestic cybersecurity infrastructure and counter-intelligence capabilities is paramount to protect against nation-state threats. Finally, continued international advocacy and transparency regarding Chinese aggressive actions will be vital to maintain global support for a rules-based international order in the South China Sea.

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## ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

### Source: GMA Network

- [Cardinal Advincula to priests suffering from mental health: Feel it to heal it](#) (2026-04-02 04:58)

Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula on Maundy Thursday raised concern about the rising number of priests who are suffering from mental difficulty and emotional burden, urging them to acknowledge the issue and learn to reconnect with others and renew their identity as God's beloved.

- [DOLE: Double pay for workers on duty on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 03:21)

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) reminded employers to grant double pay, or 200% of the regular daily wage, to workers on duty on Maundy Thursday.

- [De Lima pushes for comprehensive compensation for Filipino comfort women](#) (2026-04-02 02:59)

A full compensation for Filipino comfort women or the sex slaves of the Japanese soldiers during the World War II has been proposed in the House of Representatives.

- [Marcos on Maundy Thursday: 'Leadership begins with service'](#) (2026-04-02 01:47)

As the Catholic faithful commemorate Maundy Thursday, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. said the holy day is a reminder for leaders to put the needs of other people before their own.

- [No tsunami threat to PH after Indonesia earthquake --PHIVOLCS](#) (2026-04-02 00:56)

There is no tsunami threat to the country following a strong earthquake that hit Indonesia Thursday morning, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) said.

- [LOOK: Long lines at bus terminal in Cubao, QC; light traffic along NLEX](#) (2026-04-01 23:54)

Passengers going to Bulacan and Nueva Ecija flocked to a bus terminal along EDSA in Cubao,

Quezon City early morning of Maundy Thursday.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 2, 2026\)](#) (2026-04-01 22:46)

LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East (April 2, 2026)

- [PNP: P11B in illegal drugs seized, 16k drug suspects nabbed in Q1 2026](#) (2026-04-01 17:51)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has arrested over 16,000 drug suspects and recovered more than P11 billion in illegal drugs in the first quarter of 2026.

- [LTFRB to observe 4-day work week starting April 6](#) (2026-04-01 17:30)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) will implement a four-day work schedule starting Monday, April 6, 2026 in accordance with the government's energy-saving policy.

- [BI warns passengers vs fake eTravel sites amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-04-01 16:04)

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) on Wednesday reminded travelers to be vigilant against scammers who take advantage of the surge in passenger traffic by operating fraudulent websites that charge fees for eTravel, or the government's electronic travel declaration system.

- [PCSO: No jackpot winners for April 1 major lotto draws](#) (2026-04-01 14:35)

No one won the jackpot prizes in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Wednesday, April 1.

- [Tinambac LGU: Due process underway amid barangay kagawad's alleged abuses](#) (2026-04-01 14:06)

The local government unit (LGU) of Tinambac, Camarines Sur on Wednesday said the alleged abuses of a barangay official and his sons have already been acted upon even before the viral letter of a young girl to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

- [Customs takes custody of Zaldy Co's 8 luxury cars in Manila compound](#) (2026-04-01 13:58)

The Bureau of Customs on Wednesday took custody of eight out of 18 luxury cars linked to former Ako Bicol Rep. Zaldy Co and, which were seized in January.

- [Can the US and Trump be held liable for economic costs of Middle East conflict?](#) (2026-04-01 13:41)

Countries grappling with the economic fallout from the US-Israel attacks on Iran may file a lawsuit against the US government and its present leader, Donald Trump, for allegedly violating international law, a report on "24 Oras" said Wednesday.

- [NLEX traffic exceeds daily average amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-04-01 13:22)

The number of vehicles traversing the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) has exceeded its daily average as the Holy Week exodus has gotten underway.

- [DSWD gears up for Holy Week with 4.5M emergency food packs](#) (2026-04-01 12:54)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has placed all field offices on alert to ensure a rapid response to emergencies during the Holy Week observance.

- [Elder sister of girl who wrote Marcos among rape victims of barangay kagawad's son](#) (2026-04-01 12:29)

The sister of a young girl who wrote to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to report the alleged abuses of a barangay official in her community in Tinambac, Camarines Sur is a person with disability (PWD) who was allegedly raped by one of the local official's sons.

- [PH asks Iran to grant 'non-hostile country' status for safe passage in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-04-01 12:12)

The Philippines has asked Iran to designate it as a “non-hostile country” and ensure the safe passage of Philippine-flagged vessels along the Strait of Hormuz amid the tensions in the Middle East.

- [High fuel prices push Holy Week travelers to public transport](#) (2026-04-01 12:05)

Rising fuel prices are pushing more travelers to leave their private vehicles behind and opt for public transportation, with terminals such as the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) seeing a surge in passenger volume.

- [NLEX reports light traffic on Holy Wednesday amid travelers' exodus](#) (2026-04-01 10:53)

Light vehicular traffic was observed along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) on Wednesday evening, April 1 amid the exodus of travelers for the Holy Week break.

- [De Lima seeks expansion of PUV driver income program](#) (2026-04-01 10:46)

House Senior Deputy Minority Leader Leila de Lima on Wednesday called for the expansion of the service contracting program for the public transport sector, which provides drivers with a fixed income, amid continued increases in oil prices.

- [DepEd to roll out orientations for three-term school calendar](#) (2026-04-01 10:41)

DepEd to roll out orientations for three-term school calendar

- [China threatens 'measures' vs. PH renaming Kalayaan features in West PH Sea](#) (2026-04-01 10:34)

China accused the Philippines of breaking international law and threatened "measures" to protect its sovereignty after Manila said it would rename island features in the West PH Sea.

- [Philhealth: New payment policy for self-paying members starting April 1](#) (2026-04-01 09:47)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth) will implement a new payment policy for self-paying members starting April 1.

- [PH eyes 'deepening cooperation' with Iran on energy --DFA](#) (2026-04-01 09:06)

The Philippines is committed to "deepening cooperation" with Iran, the DFA said as the import-dependent nation jockeys with other countries for desperately needed oil.

- [Port travelers may be fewer than expected amid oil price effects --PPA](#) (2026-04-01 08:53)

The volume of passengers at the ports for Holy Week may not reach the projected 2.46 million due to the effect of the oil price hikes, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) said Wednesday.

- [DA assures stable fertilizer supply amid Middle East tensions](#) (2026-04-01 08:48)

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Wednesday allayed concerns about the country's fertilizer supply, saying the Philippines maintains a secure supply chain despite the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [Win Gatchalian pushes fuel rationing to extend PH fuel supply](#) (2026-04-01 08:06)

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian has urged the Department of Energy (DOE) to explore the possibility of implementing a fuel rationing scheme amid tight global supply driven by heightened tensions in the Middle East.

- [Sandigan upholds denial of bail for 9 ex-DPWH execs in flood control mess case](#) (2026-04-01 08:05)

The Sandiganbayan has upheld its decision denying the bail petition of nine former Department of Public Works and Highways officials facing malversation charges in connection with the alleged substandard P289-million flood control project in Oriental Mindoro.

- [DepEd highlights reforms for teacher support, student achievements in SY 2025-2026](#) (2026-04-01 07:53)

The Department of Education marked the closing of School Year 2025-2026 by highlighting ongoing efforts to support teachers and improve learning outcomes while recognizing student achievements across the country.

- [BOC says negotiated sale of 2 Bugatti Chiron vehicles completed](#) (2026-04-01 07:35)

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) said Wednesday that it had successfully completed the negotiated sale of a 2017 blue Bugatti Chiron and a 2019 red Bugatti Chiron, which were seized in 2024.

- [DOE issues anti-hoarding rules amid nat'l energy emergency](#) (2026-04-01 07:35)

The Department of Energy (DOE) on Wednesday said it has issued new operating guidelines to curb the hoarding of petroleum products following the declaration of a State of National Energy Emergency (SNEE).

- [Quimbo: Gov't may tap loans to fund Bayanihan 3 amid price hikes](#) (2026-04-01 07:14)

Securing loans remains an option for the government in funding the proposed Bayanihan 3 measure, which aims to provide aid packages to the public amid rising oil prices, House ways and means panel chairman and Marikina 2nd District Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Wednesday.

- [PDEA: Some PUV drivers tested positive for drugs amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-04-01 06:52)

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on Wednesday said some public utility vehicle drivers tested positive for illegal drugs in surprise screenings across the country amid the Holy Week

exodus.

- [Dizon sees swift DOJ, Ombudsman action on flood control mess](#) (2026-04-01 05:21)

Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon on Wednesday expressed confidence that the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman will swiftly file cases against those behind the alleged flood control kickback scheme.

- [Accused in Camarines Sur child's letter to Marcos already detained -- PNP](#) (2026-04-01 05:01)

The accused who allegedly abused the girl who recently sought the help of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has been in detention since 2023, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Wednesday.

- [DOLE prepares P1.2-B standby fund for income augmentation of public transpo drivers](#) (2026-04-01 04:21)

DOLE prepares P1.2-B standby fund for income augmentation of public transpo drivers

- [Experts call for vaccinations ahead of flu season](#) (2026-04-01 03:51)

Healthcare experts advised Filipinos to be on top of their flu vaccinations due to an anticipated rise in cases during the rainy season.

- [PNP unveils over 5,000 newly procured equipment, vehicles](#) (2026-04-01 02:45)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday presented more than 5,000 newly procured equipment including vehicles and operational gear to boost police visibility and response nationwide.

- [DOJ plantilla positions climb to almost 4k in 2026](#) (2026-04-01 02:31)

The plantilla positions in the Department of Justice have increased to almost 4,000 in 2026 to ensure the proper delivery of its services, Justice Secretary Frederick Vida said.

- [Mandatory gov't support for children with autism pushed in House](#) (2026-04-01 02:06)

A bill providing mandatory government financial support to the private sector and non-government organizations for a comprehensive assistance for children diagnosed with autism, as well as their families and carers has been filed in the House of Representatives.

- [Filipino religious devotion: How traditions evolve with generational shifts](#) (2026-04-01 00:30)

Filipinos have long been known for their deep religious devotion, vividly expressed in Holy Week traditions--from the Pabasa and Senakulo to Visita Iglesia, culminating in the solemn commemoration of the Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Yet as a new generation emerges and social media becomes ever more influential, questions arise: Do these traditions still hold the same meaning today? Or are Filipinos finding new ways to express their faith and devotion in a rapidly changing world?

- [Long lines, fully booked trips greet travelers on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-04-01 00:29)

Long lines and fully booked trips were reported as travelers rushed to bus terminals, seaports, and airports on Holy Wednesday amid the Holy Week exodus.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(April 1, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-31 22:55)

Here are the latest news and updates on the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [Understanding Visita Iglesia: Deciding between 7 or 14 church visits?](#) (2026-03-31 22:00)

Traditionally done during Maundy Thursday, Fr. Francis Gustilo, president of Don Bosco School of Theology in Parañaque City, said Visita Iglesia is a time for the faithful to keep vigil and welcome Jesus Christ.

- [DOJ gives visa relief for affected foreigners amid Middle East conflict](#) (2026-03-31 19:49)

Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida announced that he signed an order granting visa relief to foreigners whose outbound flights were cancelled amid the conflict in the Middle East.

- [LTFRB OKs bus company's 10% fare discount from Good Friday to Easter Sunday](#) (2026-03-31 17:57)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has granted the request of a large bus company to grant a 10% discount to all passengers travelling from Good Friday to Easter Sunday.

- [LTFRB to PUV drivers: Keep calm, avoid road rage](#) (2026-03-31 16:58)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday reminded drivers of public utility vehicles (PUVs) to observe discipline and restraint as they journey to their destinations during the Holy Week.

- ['Angry' Marcos vows help for girl who bared local official's alleged abuses](#) (2026-03-31 16:29)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the deployment of policemen to a community in Camarines Sur after reading the letter of an 11-year-old girl who detailed the alleged harassment that she and other children suffered at the hands of a barangay official.

- [Free, discounted bus rides soon, says DOTr](#) (2026-03-31 15:21)

Commuters could get some relief as the Department of Transportation (DOTr) will implement discounted fares or free rides in the coming weeks.

- [PCSO: No jackpot winner for major lotto draws, but bettor wins P5M in 6D Lotto](#) (2026-03-31 14:24)

A lucky bettor won the P5 million prize in the 6D Lotto draw of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Tuesday, March 31.

- [Long queues at NAIA check-in counters amid Holy Week rush](#) (2026-03-31 14:08)

Long lines were observed at baggage check-in counters at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 on Tuesday as passengers flocked to the airport for the Holy Week exodus.

- [Marcos mandates local names for 131 Kalayaan Island features in Palawan, WPS](#) (2026-03-31 13:53)

A total of 131 Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) features will have local names as President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order No. 111, which aims to strengthen government control and sovereignty in Palawan and the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

- [ICI completes six-month probe into anomalous flood control projects](#) (2026-03-31 13:49)

The Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) wrapped up its operations on Tuesday after six months of investigating the anomalies in the country's flood control projects.

- [PNP: Almost 100k cops deployed for Holy Week 2026 security](#) (2026-03-31 11:41)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has deployed almost 100,000 personnel nationwide as part of its full alert measures to maintain peace and order during the country's observance of Holy Week.

- [Marcos: PH has 51-day oil supply amid Middle East conflict](#) (2026-03-31 10:37)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Tuesday assured that the country has a 51-day oil supply as the government continues to secure fuel stocks amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [BFP relieves NCR fire safety inspectors amid kickback claims](#) (2026-03-31 10:23)

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) has relieved all fire safety inspectors (FSIs) in Metro Manila as part of its major reforms following allegations of kickbacks within the agency.

- [P611 million in cash, assets returned to DOJ in flood control probe](#) (2026-03-31 10:21)

Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida said Tuesday the government recovered P611 million in cash and assets from state witnesses in its probe on anomalous flood control projects.

- [SEC files complaint vs 'Maharlika' group over 'Marcos gold' scam](#) (2026-03-31 10:09)

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Tuesday said it has filed a criminal complaint against the Royal Kingdom of Maharlika Pearl of the Orient Organization Inc. (RKOM) and its armed wing, Royal Vanguard Transnational Intelligence Group Inc., over an alleged investment scheme built on claims of the Marcos family's hidden wealth.

- [How to find more affordable tourist spots amid fuel price hikes, according to DOT](#) (2026-03-31 09:51)

As vacation season begins this summer, the Department of Tourism (DOT) on Tuesday advised budget-conscious travelers with alternatives and cost-saving tips for those planning trips amid surging fuel prices.

- [DOJ: Resolutions on plunder complaints vs Estrada, Revilla out by mid-April](#) (2026-03-31 09:49)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) will be releasing the resolutions on the plunder complaints against Senator Jinggoy Estrada and former Senator Ramon “Bong” Revilla by mid-April.

- [DOH staff file complaint vs. Herbosa, officials over alleged medicine, vaccine waste](#) (2026-03-31 09:14)

A group of Health department officials on Tuesday filed graft complaints against Health Secretary Ted Herbosa and 15 other DOH officials before the Office of the Ombudsman.

- [Imee Marcos sorry to Sara Duterte for pushing her to run for VP](#) (2026-03-31 08:53)

Senator Imee Marcos has apologized to Vice President Sara Duterte for supposedly causing her misfortune by encouraging her to run during the 2022 elections and allowing her to be subjected to “brutal” national politics.

- [PPA expects 2.46M Holy Week travelers amid no terminal fee hike](#) (2026-03-31 08:40)

The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is expecting passenger traffic to reach 2.46 million this Holy Week, a slight increase from last year, even as fuel prices remain elevated.

- [Palace responds to Imee Marcos apology to dad over rift with brother Bongbong](#) (2026-03-31 08:37)

Malacañang on Tuesday responded to Senator Imee Marcos' apology to her father, the late president Ferdinand Marcos Sr., over her rift with her brother, President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr.

- [DOTr probes 8 bus firms over alleged illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-31 08:08)

At least eight bus companies are under investigation for allegedly imposing unauthorized fare increases, with transport authorities giving them 72 hours to explain before penalties are imposed, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said Tuesday.

- [House eyeing Bayanihan 3, ayuda to prioritize transport sector --Rep. Miro Quimbo](#) (2026-03-31 07:37)

The House of Representatives is looking into having a comprehensive Bayanihan 3 measure, similar to the COVID-19 pandemic aid laws, to address the impact of rising oil prices, Representative Miro Quimbo said Tuesday.

- [MTRCB reminds PUVs: Show only 'G' and 'PG' content](#) (2026-03-31 07:24)

The Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) has ordered public utility vehicle (PUV) operators to show only “G” (General Patronage) and “PG” (Parental

Guidance) films on their vehicles amid the expected surge of passengers during the Holy Week.

- [Ateneo suspends travel for students, staff amid global energy crisis](#) (2026-03-31 07:23)

Ateneo de Manila University has imposed temporary restrictions on international and domestic travel for its higher education community, citing ongoing disruptions linked to the global energy crisis.

- [DTI eyes more talks with manufacturers to avoid price hikes after April 16](#) (2026-03-31 05:47)

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is eyeing more discussions with manufacturers to prevent price increases of basic consumer goods even after April 16, Malacañang said Tuesday.

- [PNP cracks down on illegal fare hikes amid fuel price surge](#) (2026-03-31 05:07)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has intensified operations against unauthorized fare increases, deploying personnel to assist transport regulators in monitoring public utility vehicles as fuel prices continue to rise.

- [Palace: Half day WFH for gov't workers on Holy Wednesday; afternoon off](#) (2026-03-31 04:05)

Malacañang on Tuesday announced that government employees will observe a half-day work-from-home (WFH) arrangement on April 1, Wednesday, in line with the Holy Week observance.

- [Marcos eyes talks with Iran for safe passage of PH-bound vessels in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-31 03:56)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. wants high-level discussions with Iran to ensure the safe passage of Philippine-bound vessels through the Strait of Hormuz amid the Middle East conflict.

- [Holy Week 2026: DOTr logs more land passengers amid fuel price hikes](#) (2026-03-31 03:49)

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) reported Tuesday more travelers on public land transport on Holy Week 2026 compared to last year amid soaring fuel prices due to the Middle East crisis.

- [CLLEX Aliaga-Cabanatuan segment toll free until December --Marcos](#) (2026-03-31 03:13)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced that the Aliaga-Cabanatuan segment of the Central Luzon Expressway would be toll free until December.

- [90 unauthorized Chinese vessels spotted in WPS in March 2026 --AFP](#) (2026-03-31 03:01)

At least 90 unauthorized Chinese vessels were monitored in the West Philippine Sea in March, the Armed Forces of the Philippines said Tuesday.

- [Marcos to spend Holy Week in Ilocos Norte](#) (2026-03-31 02:00)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said Tuesday that he would be spending the Holy Week in his hometown, Ilocos Norte.

- [Carpio warns PH-China joint oil, gas explorations in WPS could be a trap](#) (2026-03-31 01:27)

Retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has warned that the joint oil and gas explorations between the Philippines and China in the West Philippine Sea could be a trap.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 31, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-30 23:13)

LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East (March 31, 2026)

- [PNP: More than P2B in smuggled cigarettes seized in Q1 2026](#) (2026-03-30 19:55)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has confiscated more than P2 billion worth of smuggled cigarettes from January 1 to March 29 of this year.

- [PNP: 740 personnel faced admin sanctions from Jan to March 2026](#) (2026-03-30 18:54)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday vowed to sternly enforce discipline and uphold integrity in its ranks amid President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s call for the PNP not to tolerate corruption and human rights abuses.

- [DSWD: 256k PUV drivers in Metro Manila received P1.28B cash aid](#) (2026-03-30 18:34)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Monday said it has distributed P1.28 billion in cash aid to more than 256,000 public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers in Metro Manila.

- [Senior citizen who won 6/58 jackpot waited 8 days before claiming P100M prize](#) (2026-03-30 17:14)

A senior citizen from Cebu City won the P100,331,631.91 jackpot prize in the Ultra Lotto 6/58 draw last March 17.

- [LTFRB summons 8 bus companies over alleged illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 16:14)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has issued a show cause order (SCO) against eight bus companies for allegedly implementing fare increases without the government's approval.

- [PCSO: No jackpot winners for March 30 major lotto draws](#) (2026-03-30 14:29)

No one won the jackpot prizes in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Monday, March 30.

- [SWS: Pinoys' personal well-being scores dipped to record low in Nov. 2025](#) (2026-03-30 14:08)

The Social Weather Stations on Monday reported a record low in the mean scores of adult Filipinos in the Anamnestic Comparative Self-Assessment (ACSA), a personal well-being indicator that includes the best and worst times in a person's life.

- [Lawyers group to file impeachment complaint vs. Comelec commissioners](#) (2026-03-30 12:25)

A group of lawyers urges the impeachment of the Comelec chairperson and commissioners, accusing them of betrayal of public trust, violation of the Constitution and other high crimes.

- [LTFRB: P651M in fuel subsidy given to transport workers so far](#) (2026-03-30 12:22)

Over P651 million in cash assistance has been distributed so far to drivers and operators of public utility vehicles as part of the government's fuel subsidy program amid rising pump prices due to the Middle East conflict, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said on Monday.

- [GMA News renews commitment to 'Serbisyon Totoo'](#) (2026-03-30 12:03)

In a bold move to strengthen its legacy and sharpen its identity in an evolving media landscape, GMA News ushers in a renewed era this 2026, reaffirming its enduring commitment to its core

mission: delivering truthful, balanced, and credible journalism to Filipinos around the world.

- [Iloilo City, San Fernando \(Pampanga\) among UN's 20 Cities Towards Zero Waste](#) (2026-03-30 11:29)

Iloilo City and San Fernando, Pampanga have been named among the United Nations' 20 Cities Towards Zero Waste, recognizing local governments that have demonstrated ambitious and innovative approaches to reducing waste.

- [NTC targets uninterrupted communications for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-30 11:03)

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has mobilized nationwide public assistance operations as it targets reliable and uninterrupted communications during Holy Week.

- [GUIDE: Key PH government acronyms to know](#) (2026-03-30 10:30)

Government acronyms such as DepEd, DOH, and DPWH are frequently mentioned in news reports, school discussions, and public advisories.

- [Duterte supporters submit third batch of signatures to SC](#) (2026-03-30 10:25)

Senator Robin Padilla, along with other supporters of former President Rodrigo Duterte, on Monday submitted the third batch of their signature campaign to the Supreme Court (SC).

- [Imee Marcos apologizes to dad for rift with Bongbong](#) (2026-03-30 09:58)

Senator Imee Marcos is seeking forgiveness from her father, late president Ferdinand Marcos, for not being able to watch over her brother, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., whom she has had a falling-out with over issues on politics and alleged drug use.

- [DPWH ramps up road projects in Quezon, Davao ahead of Holy Week rush](#) (2026-03-30 09:27)

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is accelerating key road projects in Luzon and Mindanao to ease travel and support local livelihoods ahead of the Holy Week exodus.

- [Palace: No PH interest will be lost in possible joint oil exploration with China](#) (2026-03-30 08:31)

Malacañang on Monday ensured that the government would protect the country's national interests in the possible joint oil and gas exploration with China amid present energy challenges.

- [Recto: Marcos wants gov't offices taking lead in energy saving measures](#) (2026-03-30 07:48)

Malacañang has rolled out energy austerity measures, directing all government agencies to significantly reduce power and fuel consumption amid the recent oil price shocks brought by the Middle East tension.

- [MMDA notes leaner Holy Week travel amid rising oil prices](#) (2026-03-30 07:34)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said Monday it has observed a decline in passenger volume at terminals and along major thoroughfares, as rising fuel prices appear to have dampened this year's Holy Week exodus.

- [Angara to Class of 2026: 'Resilience will matter beyond the classroom'](#) (2026-03-30 07:21)

Education Secretary Sonny Angara on Monday urged graduating students to carry the resilience they built in school into the next stage of their lives, as nearly 48,000 public schools hold end-of-school-year (EOSY) rites nationwide.

- [SC junks Harry Roque's petition vs House QuadComm](#) (2026-03-30 07:08)

The Supreme Court (SC) has dismissed former presidential spokesperson Harry Roque's petition challenging his arrest during the House of Representatives' Quad Committee (QuadCom) investigation into alleged illegal Philippine offshore gaming operations (POGO) in 2024.

- [SC admits for review petition vs. Comelec ruling on Chiz campaign donation](#) (2026-03-30 06:39)

The Supreme Court has admitted for review a petition seeking to nullify a Commission on Elections department ruling that cleared Senator Francis “Chiz” Escudero in connection with a P30-million campaign donation from a contractor.

- [DSWD: 10,000 TNVS, motorcycle taxi riders miss P5,000 aid as firms withhold lists](#) (2026-03-30 06:27)

More than 10,000 motorcycle taxi and transport network vehicle service (TNVS) drivers failed to receive the government's P5,000 cash assistance after some ride-hailing companies did not

fully submit their driver lists, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said on Monday.

- [Sara Duterte's SALNs as Davao City exec 'irrelevant' to impeachment -lawyer](#) (2026-03-30 06:04)

The Statements of Assets, Liabilities, and Networth (SALNs) of Vice President Sara Duterte during her tenure as mayor and vice mayor in Davao City are not relevant to the ongoing impeachment proceedings, Atty. Michael Poa said Monday.

- [PAGCOR voids P310M in casino winnings of gov't officials in 2025](#) (2026-03-30 05:59)

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) has voided around P310 million in winnings of public officials from gaming venues in 2025, chairperson Alejandro Tengco said Monday.

- [7 cases filed vs hoarding, other violations amid rising fuel prices --PNP](#) (2026-03-30 05:35)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has filed seven cases related to alleged fuel hoarding and other violations amid rising fuel prices due to the tensions in the Middle East.

- [PNP eyes posthumous awards for 5 cops killed in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-30 05:31)

Posthumous awards will be given to five police officers who were killed in an ambush in Maguindanao del Sur, the Philippine National Police said on Monday.

- [DOJ, PAGCOR sign pact to curb officials' presence in gambling venues](#) (2026-03-30 05:26)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and its attached agencies signed an agreement with the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to share employee information, in order to help prevent government workers from going to gambling venues.

- [Ex-Usecs. Bersamin, Olaivar face complaint over alleged flood control kickback](#) (2026-03-30 05:07)

Complaints for graft and violation of Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials complaints, among others, were filed Monday against former Presidential Legislative Liason Office undersecretary Adrian Bersamin and former Education undersecretary Trygve Olaivar for allegedly collecting money off anomalous flood control projects.

- [CAAP places airports on heightened alert for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 04:29)

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) has placed all its operated airports on heightened alert, as it said it expects 550,000 passengers across all its operated airports during the Holy Week period.

- [PNP on heightened alert for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-30 04:07)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has placed its organization on heightened alert in anticipation of a surge in travelers during the Holy Week.

- [Sara Duterte's camp won't object if House has enough numbers to impeach VP](#) (2026-03-30 03:56)

The defense team of Vice President Sara Duterte will not oppose should the House of Representatives gather sufficient votes to impeach her and transmit the complaints to the Senate for the trial proper, Atty. Michael Poa said Monday.

- [DSWD keeps manual payout for PUV aid, cites verification issues](#) (2026-03-30 03:50)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it is prioritizing verification over speed in the rollout of cash assistance for public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers, explaining why payouts have yet to be fully digitized.

- [PNP: Closed gas stations due to rising fuel prices down to 365](#) (2026-03-30 03:34)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday said the number of gas stations that have temporarily closed amid rising fuel prices has gone down to 365.

- [MMDA allows provincial buses on EDSA for Holy Week 2026 exodus](#) (2026-03-30 03:16)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will temporarily allow provincial buses to use EDSA during the Holy Week period to accommodate the surge of passengers traveling to the provinces.

- [PITX: 8 bus operators reported to LTFRB over unauthorized fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 02:56)

Eight bus operators have been reported to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) for allegedly increasing fares without approval, an official of the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) said Monday.

- [Sara Duterte underscores Middle East OFWs' sacrifices on Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 02:43)

As Catholics observe this year's Holy Week, Vice President Sara Duterte underscored the sacrifices made by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the Middle East amid the heightened tensions in the region.

- [Marcos says CAVITEX-C5 segment 3B toll free this April](#) (2026-03-30 02:01)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Monday announced that the new CAVITEX-C5 segment would be toll free for travelers for the month of April.

- [Travelers face crowds, higher fares at terminals on Holy Monday](#) (2026-03-30 00:13)

A surge of passengers was observed flocking to ports, airports, and bus terminals on Holy Monday during the Holy Week exodus despite rising fuel prices and travel costs.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 30, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-29 23:07)

Here are the latest news and updates regarding the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [BI to Holy Week travelers: Arrive at airports early, have docs ready](#) (2026-03-29 18:50)

Anticipating increased passenger traffic this Holy Week, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) on Sunday reminded travelers to arrive at the airport at least three hours before their flight and ensure that all travel documents are in order to avoid delays.

- [NAPOLCOM: Better disciplinary, investigative action vs corruption, abuses](#) (2026-03-29 17:49)

The National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) on Sunday vowed to continue strengthening its disciplinary mechanisms and investigative processes in support of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s order for the Philippine National Police (PNP) to enforce a zero tolerance policy against corruption and human rights abuses.

- [PCSO: 6/49 prize now at P151M with no jackpot prize winners in March 29 draws](#) (2026-03-29 14:11)

The prize for the Superlotto 6/49 has grown to over P151 million after no one won the jackpot in the major lotto draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on Sunday night, March 29.

- [Holy Week exodus underway amid higher fuel prices and fares, fewer trips](#) (2026-03-29 13:09)

Filipinos headed to the roads, the airports, the seaports and the bus terminals on Sunday for trips back their hometowns for Holy Week, amid rising fuel prices and trip cancellations.

- [China conducts patrol around Bajo de Masinloc](#) (2026-03-29 11:37)

China conducted naval, air and coast guard patrols around the Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea on Sunday, its military and Coast Guard said.

- [PCSO to deploy landing craft in Batanes to improve patient mobility](#) (2026-03-29 09:18)

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) announced a plan to provide a landing craft vessel (LCV) for Batanes to improve patient transport in the island province, with deployment scheduled later this year.

- [Ridon: SC likely to junk TRO bid vs VP Sara impeachment](#) (2026-03-29 09:07)

Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Terry Ridon on Sunday said he believes the Supreme Court will likely dismiss a petition seeking to stop the House of Representatives from proceeding with impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Erwin Tulfo pushes for WFH setup in gov't, private workplaces amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-29 08:52)

Senator Erwin Tulfo has raised the idea of bringing back work-from-home arrangements in both private and government offices amid rising oil prices.

- [Marcos orders smooth Holy Week travel amid Maharlika Highway repairs](#) (2026-03-29 08:32)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered authorities to ensure smooth and safe travel along the Maharlika Highway as thousands of Filipinos are expected to head to the provinces for the Holy Week break.

- [Bong Go seeks prayers for ex-ES Medialdea's recovery](#) (2026-03-29 07:36)

Senator Christopher “Bong” Go on Saturday sought prayers for Salvador Medialdea, who served as executive secretary to former president Rodrigo Duterte, after the former official was

hospitalized.

- [PH saves 145.43 MW energy in Earth Hour 2026](#) (2026-03-29 06:54)

The Department of Energy (DOE) said Sunday the Philippines recorded a 145.43 megawatt reduction in electricity consumption during the observance of Earth Hour 2026.

- [DOLE looking into possible assistance for drivers via TUPAD program](#) (2026-03-29 06:46)

The Department of Labor and Employment is checking what assistance may be extended to public utility vehicle drivers affected by the rising cost of fuel as a result of the war in the Middle East, its spokesperson said Sunday.

- [Cardinal Advincula urges Catholics to surrender to God amid Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 05:47)

Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula on Sunday challenged the faithful to shift their perspective on surrender, as doing so to God is a form of redemption, not defeat.

- [Loan moratorium, penalty condonation being studied to ease economic burdens, says SSS](#) (2026-03-29 03:35)

The Social Security System (SSS) said Sunday that it is actively studying the feasibility of offering a loan moratorium for members and a condonation program for contribution penalties for employers as relief measures amid economic challenges.

- [PCG: 3 million passengers expected in seaports for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-29 03:09)

The Philippine Coast Guard is operating around the clock in seaports across the country as about 3 million passengers are expected to travel for the Holy Week, spokesperson Commodore Noemi Cayabyab said Sunday.

- [Pulong Duterte, supporters celebrate Rodrigo Duterte's birthday in The Hague](#) (2026-03-29 02:44)

Davao City 1st District Representative Paolo “Pulong” Duterte joined supporters gathered outside the International Criminal Court Detention Center on Saturday to mark the 81st birthday of former President Rodrigo Duterte.

- [CAAP: Airports have enough fuel in case of power interruptions](#) (2026-03-29 01:59)

Airports under the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines have enough reserve fuel in case of

power interruptions, CAAP spokesperson Eric Apolonio said Sunday amid the surging fuel prices due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

- [Pinoy Catholics observe Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 00:59)

Filipino Catholics trooped to churches around the country to observe Palm Sunday, the start of the Holy Week.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 29, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-28 23:38)

Here are the latest news and updates on the US-Israel war against Iran and related developments.

- [Holy Week: Catholics encouraged to experience Jesus's presence in churches](#) (2026-03-28 22:00)

The Holy Week is the time to commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which begins on Palm Sunday and concludes on Easter Sunday.

- [Marcos highlights compassion, service for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-28 22:00)

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday underscored the values of compassion and service as he welcomed the observance of Holy Week.

- [How does crude oil become petroleum?](#) (2026-03-28 16:40)

In response to the ongoing global oil price surge, the Philippines recently received over 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil that arrived in Bataan.

- [Bettor in Pampanga wins P10M Lotto 6/42 jackpot](#) (2026-03-28 16:26)

A bettor in Pampanga clinched the Lotto 6/42 jackpot worth P10 million on Saturday.

- [Filipinos join Earth Hour 2026 amid energy supply concerns](#) (2026-03-28 15:01)

Filipinos participated in the annual Earth Hour on Saturday amid concerns about the world's energy supply due to the Middle East conflict.

- [DOJ commits to zero GCTA application backlogs](#) (2026-03-28 13:32)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has vowed to eliminate backlogs in the review of Good Conduct

Time Allowance (GCTA) applications of persons deprived of liberty (PDLs).

- ['Cicada' COVID-19 variant not yet detected in PH - DOH](#) (2026-03-28 11:07)

The Philippines has not yet recorded a COVID-19 case linked to the strain known as "Cicada," which has been found in several nations, including the United States, the Department of Health (DOH) said Saturday.

- [PH committed to peaceful approaches on WPS, senior officials say](#) (2026-03-28 09:56)

The Philippines is strengthening a multi-layered strategy with its allies to protect its rights in the West Philippine Sea, combining diplomacy, legal action, and expanded security cooperation amid rising tensions in the region.

- [DTI: No price hike of basic goods until April 16](#) (2026-03-28 09:06)

Amid concerns over the effects of rising oil prices due to the Middle East crisis, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said Saturday the prices of basic consumer goods have remained steady but might start rising in the second half of April.

- [Win Gatchalian urges DOE, DTI to consider price cap on LPG](#) (2026-03-28 07:33)

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday called on the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to consider imposing a price cap on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) amid the fuel price shocks due to the Middle East crisis.

- [House justice panel's Zamora on votes to impeach VP Sara: 'We have the numbers'](#) (2026-03-28 06:58)

House Committee on Justice Vice Chairperson and San Juan City Representative Ysabel Zamora on Saturday expressed confidence that the lower chamber has enough numbers to impeach Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Over 1.35M passengers to pass through NAIA for Holy Week travel --NNIC](#) (2026-03-28 06:44)

New NAIA Infra Corp., operator of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), on Saturday said it is expecting over 1.35 million passengers to pass through the country's main gateway during the peak travel period during Holy Week -- March 28 to April 5, 2026.

- [PPA issues reminders for fur parents, plantitas for Holy Week 2026 travel](#) (2026-03-28 04:57)

Thinking of bringing your fur pet or plant companion on a sea trip for the Holy Week? Before setting sail, read the government's reminders for fur parents, plantitos, and plantitas.

- [Quiboloy camp to appeal ocular inspections of KOJC properties](#) (2026-03-28 02:59)

The camp of preacher Apollo Quiboloy will appeal the Pasig court's order directing ocular inspections of Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KOJC) properties in relation to his qualified trafficking case.

- [VP Sara Duterte calls for vigilance on dad Rodrigo Duterte's birthday celebration](#) (2026-03-28 02:51)

Vice President Sara Duterte, on the occasion of the birthday of her father, former president Rodrigo Duterte on Saturday, called for vigilance against what she calls "weaponization of the law" and the "intrusion of foreign bodies" allegedly seeking to bypass Philippine courts.

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 28, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-28 02:02)

Here are the latest news and updates on the Middle East conflict and related developments.

- [LTFRB grants special permits to 1,297 buses for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-28 01:53)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said Saturday it granted special permits to 1,297 passenger bus units across the country to ensure adequate supply for the expected influx of passengers during the Holy Week break.

- [NLEX ready for traffic volume due to Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-28 01:12)

The operator of North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) on Saturday said it is ready for the influx of vehicles as Filipinos head to provinces for the Holy Week exodus to their hometowns.

- ['GAS-AND-RUN': Drivers flee after filling tank without paying](#) (2026-03-27 14:20)

Two incidents of gas-and-run were reported in Quezon City and Bacolod City as the nation reels from the high prices of fuel brought about by the Middle East conflict.

- [Philippines-China cooperation talks resume amid ongoing oil crisis](#) (2026-03-27 14:13)

The Philippines and China have resumed talks under the 11th Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) in Fujian to discuss issues in the West Philippine Sea and negotiations on a Code of Conduct (COC) in the area, amid the conflict in the Middle East and the steep rise in the price of oil globally.

- [Women in politics face harm from non-physical violence, advocates warn](#) (2026-03-27 13:35)

Advocates belonging to liberal parties in Asia have called for an end to the non-physical violence against women in politics.

- [DOH on Code White alert for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-27 13:24)

The Department of Health (DOH) will activate its Code White alert for the Holy Week.

- [VP Sara impeachment hearings continue amid Supreme Court petition](#) (2026-03-27 12:50)

The House Committee on Justice will continue its hearings on the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte even after a petition questioning its legality was filed before the Supreme Court, its members said on Friday.

- [DOH monitors drug prices amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-27 11:14)

The Department of Health (DOH) on Friday said it is closely monitoring medicine prices amid the oil crisis.

- [Pasig court orders ocular inspections of KOJC properties](#) (2026-03-27 10:41)

A Pasig court on Friday ordered ocular inspections of Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KOJC) properties in Davao, Quezon City, and Pasig City to gain a clearer understanding of the premises identified in the qualified trafficking case against the religious group's founder, Apollo Quiboloy, and other co-accused.

- [Imee: Suspend SSS, GSIS, Pag-IBIG, PhilHealth contributions amid price hikes](#) (2026-03-27 09:05)

Senator Imee Marcos on Friday called on concerned government agencies to temporarily suspend the collection of monthly mandatory government contributions amid the increasing prices of fuel and other basic commodities due to the Middle East crisis.

- [PH first to declare energy emergency? Palace cites Marcos admin's swift response](#) (2026-03-27 08:57)

The Philippines' declaration of a state of national energy emergency--the first of its kind in the world amid the ongoing Middle East crisis--showed the Marcos government's swift action to address challenges confronting the country during these times, Malacañang said Friday.

- [BOC auction of 11 seized luxury cars stalled as no bidders registered](#) (2026-03-27 08:28)

The Bureau of Customs' (BOC) scheduled public auction of 11 seized luxury vehicles on Friday, March 27, 2026, did not proceed because no bidders registered for the event.

- [Marcos urged to take 'decisive actions' on CAB implementation](#) (2026-03-27 08:27)

An alliance of peace advocates on Friday warned the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) is at risk of “drift and deterioration,” urging President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to take decisive action to restore direction to its implementation more than a decade after it was signed.

- [Lawyers seek TRO vs. Sara Duterte's impeachment proceedings](#) (2026-03-27 08:22)

Several lawyers on Friday asked the Supreme Court (SC) to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) preventing the House of Representatives from proceeding with the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Gov't can save up to P170B by cutting non-essential expenses -Gatchalian](#) (2026-03-27 07:59)

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Friday said the government could save up to P170 billion if it would reduce expenses for non-essential activities by 20%.

- [PH talking to India, Argentina, Canada for oil sources --Palace](#) (2026-03-27 07:43)

The Philippine government is talking with India, Argentina, and Canada for possible alternative petroleum sources amid the oil price shocks brought by the conflict in the Middle East, Malacañang said Friday.

- [Luistro insists House justice panel mandated to hear impeach raps vs VP Sara](#) (2026-03-27 07:31)

Batangas Representative Gerville Luistro insisted Friday that it is within the mandate of the

House committee on justice to conduct a hearing and subpoena documents and witnesses to determine probable cause in the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte.

- [Marcos ordered removal of tarp with his photo in cash aid payout --Palace](#) (2026-03-27 07:02)

Malacañang on Friday said President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has instructed the removal of a tarpaulin bearing his photo, which was placed during a distribution of assistance amid the energy challenges faced by the country.

- [Over 1,400 SHS, ALS grads land jobs in gov't job fair](#) (2026-03-27 06:51)

Over 1,400 SHS, ALS grads land jobs in gov't job fair

- [EXPLAINER: How Russian crude oil could impact fuel supply in PH](#) (2026-03-27 06:36)

A fresh shipment of crude oil from Russia has arrived in the Philippines, offering some relief as global supply tightens and fuel prices remain volatile.

- [House leader eyes pause of non-essential projects, select GAD activities](#) (2026-03-27 06:30)

A House leader has called for the suspension of non-essential projects, as well as certain Gender and Development (GAD) activities, in government agencies amid the exponential oil price hikes brought about by the conflict in the Middle East.

- [PH, Japan sign 2 loan agreements for infra projects in NCR, Mindanao](#) (2026-03-27 06:01)

Amid continued concerns over rising petroleum prices and transport efficiency, the Philippines and Japan on Friday signed major loan agreements for two infrastructure projects aimed at improving connectivity in Metro Manila and Mindanao.

- [Nationwide transport strike generally peaceful so far -- PNP](#) (2026-03-27 05:48)

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said Friday morning the two-day nationwide transport strike amid tensions in the Middle East has remained generally peaceful despite reports of stranded commuters in Metro Manila.

- [Closed gas stations due to fuel price hikes now 425](#) (2026-03-27 05:18)

Closed gas stations due to fuel price hikes now 425

- [Marcos to PNP: No room for cops who break the law](#) (2026-03-27 04:53)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. called on Friday the Philippine National Police to ensure a zero tolerance policy for corrupt practices as well as human rights abuses in the organization.

- [Madriaga not a 'polluted source,' Luistro says](#) (2026-03-27 04:50)

Madriaga not a 'polluted source,' Luistro says

- [LIST: Tips to safeguard your home during a Holy Week vacation](#) (2026-03-27 03:45)

LIST: Tips to safeguard your home during a Holy Week vacation

- [Marcos: ASEAN Summit to push through in May, to focus on oil, food, migrant workers](#) (2026-03-27 03:45)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said Friday the scheduled ASEAN Leaders' Summit in May would push through despite energy challenges brought by the Middle East conflict.

- [Robin Padilla calls for revival of PH's claim over Sabah amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-27 03:33)

Senator Robin Padilla has urged President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. to revive the Philippines' claim over Sabah--a Malaysian state known to be rich in oil and gas--as prices of petroleum products continue to shoot up due to the Middle East crisis.

- [EXPLAINER: How long will PH oil supply last amid Middle East tensions?](#) (2026-03-27 03:30)

As the conflict in the Middle East continues to affect global petroleum flows, concerns have been raised about the Philippines' fuel security, particularly how long its oil supply can meet consumer and industry demand.

- [PNPA Class 2026 top cadet driven by promise to late mother](#) (2026-03-27 03:01)

A 24-year-old female cadet from Baybay City, Leyte has emerged as the top graduate of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) “Silang Paglaom” Class of 2026.

- [Teves wants Madriaga dead? Sara Duterte's lawyer says claim 'comical'](#) (2026-03-27 02:31)

A lawyer of Vice President Sara Duterte on Friday dismissed the allegation that former Negros Oriental representative Arnolfo “Arnie” Teves was supposedly behind the threats to Ramil

Madriaga's life.

- [Marcos: PH has enough crude oil until June 30, 2026](#) (2026-03-27 00:58)

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said Friday that the country has sufficient crude oil supply until June 30, 2026.

- [Transport strike vs fuel price surge resumes on Day 2](#) (2026-03-27 00:34)

Transport strike vs fuel price surge resumes on Day 2

- [LIVE UPDATES: Conflict in the Middle East \(March 27, 2026\)](#) (2026-03-27 00:11)

Here are the latest news and updates on the conflict in the Middle East and related developments.

- [Duterte's defense team dismisses concern over confidential information](#) (2026-03-26 21:21)

A public redacted version of the response of former President Rodrigo Duterte's legal team regarding the issues of the prosecution on confidential information was released by the International Criminal Court (ICC) early Friday morning.

- [Cardinal David presides over Mother Ignacia's cause for beatification relaunch](#) (2026-03-26 19:18)

The cause for the beatification and canonization of the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) congregation foundress, Venerable Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, was relaunched on Wednesday, according to a CBCP News report.

- [PH Navy vessel avoids collision with China's PLA Navy ship --WESCOM](#) (2026-03-26 16:32)

The Philippine Navy's BRP Benguet escaped a potential collision near Pag-asa Island after a People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy missile frigate of China performed a dangerous maneuver on Wednesday, March 25, the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Command (WESCOM) said.

- [No tsunami threat following strong Japan quake, says PHIVOLCS](#) (2026-03-26 16:21)

There is no tsunami threat to the country following the recorded magnitude 6.5 earthquake off the coast of Sanriku in Japan, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS)

reported.

- [VP Sara announces cost-cutting measures to aid public amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-26 15:37)

The Office of the Vice President (OVP) will take cost-cutting measures to ensure that more funds will be redirected to programs that would help the public amid the rising prices of commodities, said Vice President Sara Duterte on Thursday.

- [PPA expects more passengers in Holy Week despite high fares](#) (2026-03-26 14:07)

The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is expecting that there will be more sea-bound passengers leaving for the provinces this year for the Holy Week despite the fare hike.

- [DOE faces criticism from Marcoleta over lax fuel price monitoring](#) (2026-03-26 13:05)

Senator Rodante Marcoleta on Thursday fumed over the Department of Energy's (DOE) supposed inadequate monitoring of the soaring prices of fuel products.

- [Langis na mula sa Russia, dumating sa Pilipinas na nahaharap sa 'energy emergency'](#) (2026-03-26 12:41)

Isang barko na may kargang mahigit 700,000 bariles ng krudong langis mula Russia ang dumating sa Pilipinas, ayon sa isang source na may nalalaman sa usapin ang nagsalita sa Agence France-Presse nitong Huwebes. Nangyari ito ilang araw matapos ideklara sa bansa ang national energy emergency dahil sa nangyayaring kaguluhan sa Middle East.

- [Philippines urged to cut ASEAN hosting budget to P10B amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-26 12:04)

Batangas Representative Leandro Leviste has called on President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. to reduce the budget for the country's hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) Summit and other related meetings this year from P22 billion to P10 billion.

- [VP Sara impeachment hearings part of due process SC required, says solon](#) (2026-03-26 11:17)

The hearings on the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte are part of the due process the Supreme Court required from the House of Representatives when it declared her impeachment in 2025 unconstitutional, a member of the House Committee on Justice said on Thursday.

- [72-year-old jeepney driver meets DSWD chief after viral ayuda exclusion incident](#) (2026-03-26 10:58)

Jaime Ricafrente, the 72-year-old jeepney driver who went viral online after his name was not included in the list of cash assistance beneficiaries, met Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) chief Rex Gatchalian on Thursday.

- [House rolls out Suporta sa Bayan public assistance desk](#) (2026-03-26 10:07)

The House of Representatives has rolled out a public assistance program that aims to help individuals seeking assistance from certain government agencies.

- [Marcos bares successful testing of Camago-3 well](#) (2026-03-26 10:06)

Amid the energy challenges, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Thursday announced the successful drilling and testing of the Camago-3 well, a second major milestone under the \$893 million Malampaya Phase 4.

- [DepEd eyes direct farm-to-school supply to feed students, help farmers](#) (2026-03-26 09:23)

Education Secretary Sonny Angara on Thursday pushed for a simpler idea: buy vegetables directly from farmers and serve them in public schools.

- [Marcos may issue EO on reduced fuel tax by mid-April, says DOF](#) (2026-03-26 08:46)

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. may issue the executive order whether to suspend or reduce the excise tax rate on petroleum products by April 12 or April 13, the Department of Finance (DOF) said Thursday.

- [SC affirms conviction of ex-Agusan del Norte mayor for malversation](#) (2026-03-26 08:17)

The Supreme Court (SC) has affirmed the conviction of a former mayor of a municipality in Agusan del Norte for malversation of public funds due to her failure to liquidate cash advances from municipal development funds.

- [Palace defends DOE's Garin amid energy challenges](#) (2026-03-26 08:03)

Malacañang on Thursday defended Department of Energy Secretary Sharon Garin amid the energy challenges in the country brought about by the Middle East crisis.

- [Ombudsman moves to end 'parking' of cases involving high-ranking officials](#) (2026-03-26 07:54)

The Office of the Ombudsman is cracking down on the alleged “parking” of cases after discovering at least 350 complaints involving high-ranking officials pending before the agency prior to Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla's assumption of office in October 2025, Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said Thursday.

- [Wealth tax? Palace says all suggestions being considered](#) (2026-03-26 07:34)

Wealth tax? Palace says all suggestions being considered

- [Universities shift to hybrid classes, work setups to save energy](#) (2026-03-26 07:17)

Universities across Metro Manila are rolling out energy conservation measures--from hybrid learning to compressed workweeks--as global fuel supply pressures linked to the Middle East conflict begin to affect operations in the Philippines.

- [LIST: Who are qualified for coding, truck ban exemption amid fuel disruption](#) (2026-03-26 07:03)

LIST: Who are qualified for coding, truck ban exemption amid fuel disruption

- [Russian oil arrives as Philippines battles 'energy emergency'](#) (2026-03-26 06:55)

A ship carrying more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil has arrived in the Philippines, a source with knowledge of the matter told Agence France-Presse Thursday, days after the country declared a national energy emergency over the Middle East war.

- [PNP urges public to stay safe from drowning during summer vacation activities](#) (2026-03-26 06:48)

PNP urges public to stay safe from drowning during summer vacation activities

- [UP, Ateneo, La Salle hold ground in 2026 QS rankings](#) (2026-03-26 06:10)

Philippine universities held steady positions in the 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject, with leading institutions maintaining their global brackets in English and improving placements in broader fields such as Arts and Humanities.

- [Ombudsman Remulla on filing flood control raps: Ngayong tag-init, iinit](#) (2026-03-26 05:32)

Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla said Thursday that his office is set to file high-profile flood control related cases that would make the dry season even hotter.

- [Ombudsman: Assets of flood control kickback suspects remain frozen](#) (2026-03-26 05:10)

Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla on Thursday assured the public that the assets of individuals allegedly involved in the flood control kickback scheme remain frozen.

- [Ombudsman to comply with House subpoena on VP Duterte SALNs](#) (2026-03-26 04:04)

The Office of the Ombudsman will comply with the House Committee on Justice's subpoena for documents requiring the submission of Vice President Sara Duterte's Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALNs) covering all her years in public office, Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said Thursday.

- [Recto to essential offices: Ensure uninterrupted services](#) (2026-03-26 03:13)

Malacanang on Thursday reminded public offices rendering essential services to ensure that their operations would be uninterrupted amid the present challenges caused by the Middle East conflict.

- [HPG names Rommel Batangan as new acting director](#) (2026-03-26 03:09)

Police Brigadier General Rommel Batangan is the new acting director of the Philippine National Police (PNP) - Highway Patrol Group (HPG), according to police officials.

- [Gov't lacks capacity to take over oil firms -- DOE's Garin](#) (2026-03-26 02:43)

Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said Thursday it is not a good idea for the government to temporarily take over the operations of oil companies in the country, even as fuel prices continue to rise amid tensions in the Middle East.

- [PH-China oil exploration talks made 'positive progress,' embassy says](#) (2026-03-26 02:12)

PH-China joint oil exploration talks made 'positive progress,' embassy says

- [Transport groups kick off two-day nationwide strike vs rising fuel prices](#) (2026-03-26 00:08)

Transport groups kick off two-day nationwide strike vs rising fuel prices

## Source: PhilStar Global

- [Maundy Thursday weather: Easterlies to bring rain across Philippines](#) (2026-04-02 01:05)

Easterlies will bring isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms across most of the country on April 2, says PAGASA.

- [Lava fountaining detected in Mayon](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Several lava fountaining activities have been recorded at Mayon Volcano in Albay, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

- [SUV rams 4 vehicles; 6 injured](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Six people were injured when a sport utility vehicle (SUV) rammed a tricycle, a motorcycle and two cars in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan on Tuesday night.

- [Bulacan shrine cancels procession to help save fuel](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

The Diocesan Shrine and Parish of San Isidro Labrador in Pulilan, Bulacan will cancel its traditional procession today to avoid creating traffic and help motorists save fuel.

- [Baguio logs 50% drop in tourist arrival](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

The number of people visiting Baguio has decreased by 50 percent, which city officials attributed to surging fuel prices.

- [BBC: El Nidamong world's best beach escapes](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

El Nido in Palawan has been named one of eight best beach escapes in the world by the London-based news organization BBC.

- [P300,000 offered for info on suspects in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

The governor of Maguindanao del Sur has offered a reward of P300,000 in exchange for information that may lead to the arrest of the gunmen who ambushed and killed five policemen in Shariff Aguak town on Saturday.

- [PCSO: Lotto games resume on Sunday](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Lotto and other digit games are suspended today until Saturday in observance of Holy Week, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office said yesterday.

- [P38.6 million shabu intercepted at NAIA](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Shabu with a street value of P38.6 million was intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Tuesday.

- [Marikina shoulders 8,000 public school graduates](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

To ease the financial burden on families amid the energy crisis, the Marikina government will shoulder all graduation expenses of around 8,000 public school students in the city.

- [8 PITX bus operators revert fares](#) (2026-04-01 16:00)

Unauthorized fare hikes have been rolled back by eight bus operators at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange.

- [Baguio tourism suffers 50-percent decline](#) (2026-04-01 09:48)

Tourist arrivals to this mountain city may have declined by as much as 40–50% amid rising fuel prices, Mayor Benjamin Magalong confirmed, with the slowdown weighing on the local hospitality sector.

- [Trafficker wounded, P3.4-M worth of shabu seized in PDEA 9 operation](#) (2026-04-01 09:38)

Anti-narcotics agents seized P3.4 million worth of shabu from two traffickers, one wounded in a shootout, during an entrapment operation late Tuesday, March 31, in Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay, which went haywire.

- [2 bomb blasts trigger panic in a Maguindanao del Sur town](#) (2026-04-01 09:09)

Two explosions, one in a residential area and the other targeting a vehicle carrying policemen, ripped through a town in Maguindanao del Sur on Wednesday morning, April 1, causing panic among villagers

- [Marcos deploys cops after child's letter exposes alleged rape by CamSur official](#) (2026-04-01 07:04)

Authorities said a rape case cited in the letter is already in court.

- [P300,000 reward offered for identities of Bangsamoro cops' ambushers](#) (2026-04-01 03:20)

The governor of Maguindanao del Sur has offered P300,000 cash in exchange for information that could lead to the arrest of the gunmen behind the fatal ambush of five policemen in Shariff Aguak town on Saturday night, March 28.

- [Soldiers seize hidden NPA combat weapons](#) (2026-04-01 01:11)

Soldiers seized in separate operations combat rifles that New People's Army guerrillas covered with soil and dry forest tree leaves in hinterlands in San Miguel and Marihatag towns in Surigao del Sur before retreating to areas far from reach by pursuing military forces.

- [Go calls for prayer, unity on Duterte' s 81st birthday](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Sen. Bong Go urged Filipinos to remain united and continue praying for former president Rodrigo Duterte during the celebration of the latter' s 81st birthday in Davao City on Saturday.

- [3 drown in irrigation canal](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

A farmer and two security guards drowned in an irrigation canal in the Science City of Muñoz in this province on Monday.

- [Gunmen attack boat off Sulu; 3 dead](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Three people were killed while two others were wounded when unidentified men opened fire at a speedboat that was sailing in the waters off Sulu on Monday night.

- [Bacolod expands conversion of used cooking oil into biofuel](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

To address surging fuel prices, Bacolod Rep. Alfredo Abelardo Benitez is expanding an initiative involving the conversion of used cooking oil into biofuel, which will be sold to small-scale fishermen.

- [New CLLEX segment opened to motorists](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

President Marcos yesterday opened a new segment of the Central Luzon Link Expressway in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, which is expected to cut travel time between Tarlac and Cabanatuan City from 1.5 hours to just 20 minutes.

- [2 ex-DPWH officials convicted over ROW payments](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

The Sandiganbayan has convicted two former officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways based in Soccsksargen, in connection with spurious payments for the right-of-way of government projects in South Cotabato.

- [Corruption pulls down Manila in Smart Cities](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Amid persistent corruption concerns, Manila's ranking dropped in the latest Smart City Index of Switzerland-based Institute for Management Development's World Competitiveness Center.

- [Driver yields after fleeing with unpaid P5,000 fuel](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

A transport network vehicle service driver who left a Quezon City gasoline station with unpaid fuel of more than P5,000 has surrendered to police.

- [Stranded foreigners' visa Extended](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

The DOJ ordered the Bureau of Immigration to extend the visa relief, removing payment of fees, fines and penalties.

- [902 BFP inspectors axed](#) (2026-03-31 16:00)

Over 900 Bureau of Fire Protection personnel in Metro Manila were relieved from their posts yesterday as part of an internal cleansing to rid the BFP of corruption.

- [Farm worker found dead in General Santos City](#) (2026-03-31 10:45)

Policemen are searching for a farm worker who killed a drinking buddy in Barangay Katangawan in General Santos City late Monday, March 30.

- [Manila raises aid for jeepney drivers to P3,500](#) (2026-03-31 06:27)

The Manila local government increased the assistance to jeepney drivers who conduct "libreng sakay" to P3,500.

- [Meralco: Reports of 3-month brownouts not true](#) (2026-03-31 05:08)

Manila Electric Co. debunked circulating claims about supposed prolonged power outages, warning the public against the spread of false information online.

- [Price Watch: Diesel up P12 per liter as oil firms impose new hikes](#) (2026-03-30 23:00)

Diesel prices rise by over P12 per liter as oil firms implement new hikes.

- [11,100 cops to secure Calabarzon, Mimaropa](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Around 11,100 police personnel and force multipliers have been deployed to ensure the safety of travelers and motorists this Holy Week across the Calabarzon and Mimaropa regions.

- [P9.5 million shabu seized in Lucena, Zamboanga stings](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Police operatives seized P6.1 million worth of shabu in Lucena City on Sunday and another P3.4 million worth in Zamboanga City yesterday, authorities said.

- [PNP probes lapses in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

The Philippine National Police is investigating possible administrative lapses on the part of the Maguindanao del Sur provincial PNP chief after Saturday night's ambush in Shariff Aguak that left five policemen dead and three others wounded.

- [DOJ workers' data sent to PAGCOR](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Enforcing the gambling ban on state officials and employees, the Department of Justice will submit the data of DOJ personnel to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

- [LTFRB: P651 million released for fuel subsidy](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board has released over P651 million in fuel subsidies to public utility vehicle drivers affected by the energy crisis.

- [Point-to-point carpooling in MetroManila eyed](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority yesterday proposed a point-to-point and time-restricted carpooling after the Lenten break.

- [44 airports on Holy Week alert](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

Forty-four airports operated by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines are on heightened alert as passenger traffic is expected to surge during Holy Week.

- [Police corporal, companion killed in Lanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-30 10:36)

Gunmen killed a police corporal and his male civilian companion in an ambush in Barangay Paglamatan, Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur, before dawn on Saturday, March 28.

- [Special probe group formed for ambush of BARMM cops](#) (2026-03-30 10:28)

Police in the Bangsamoro region have organized a special group to probe the fatal ambush of five patrolmen in an attack on Saturday night, March 28, in Barangay Mother Poblacion, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur.

- [WATCH: Inside Metro Manila Subway's Camp Aguinaldo station](#) (2026-03-30 07:31)

Philstar.com was among those given access to the site, where excavation and structural works are progressing.

- [Fuel supply issues shut more than 300 gas stations](#) (2026-03-30 07:11)

Fuel supply disruptions force hundreds of gas stations to close nationwide.

- [New CAVITEX link seen to cut Taguig-Parañaque travel to 15 minutes](#) (2026-03-30 04:26)

A new CAVITEX segment is expected to cut travel time between Taguig and Parañaque to just 15 minutes.

- [500 Bilibid inmates transferred to Palawan's Iwahig facility](#) (2026-03-30 03:25)

The Bureau of Corrections has transferred 500 inmates to a Palawan penal facility.

- [Fishing boats have sat idle since fuel price spikes](#) (2026-03-30 02:56)

Small fisherfolk have halted operations as diesel prices surge, with groups warning of rising production costs.

- [Price Watch: Oil, fuel monitor for Mar. 30](#) (2026-03-29 23:45)

Pump prices differ sharply across Metro Manila as oil volatility continues.

- [Free trike rides in Caloocan set](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Free tricycle rides in Caloocan City will start on April 6 amid the impact of soaring fuel prices on commuters and the transport sector.

- [San Juan flagship programs cited](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

San Juan Mayor Francis Zamora highlighted his administration's flagship housing, health care and education programs during his State of the City Address on Friday.

- [Stronger mental health programs sought](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Prompted by an alarming surge in suicide cases in Metro Manila, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian is calling for the immediate and intensified rollout of comprehensive mental health programs to protect vulnerable Filipinos.

- [40 Celsius heat index seen](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Four areas in the country are expected to experience heat indices of 40 degrees Celsius and above, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

- [Boy, 8, hurt in grenade attack near airbase](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

An eight-year-old boy was wounded and a taxi was damaged when a disgruntled laborer and his uncle fired a shotgun and lobbed a grenade near Lumbia Airbase here on Saturday evening.

- [CHED to build P159.8 million Zamboanga dormitory](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

The Commission on Higher Education will build a P159.8-million, six-story dormitory to provide students in Zamboanga accommodation while they complete their studies, the CHED said.

- [Pag-asa Island breaks ground for first Catholic church](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

A Catholic chapel will open on Pag-asa Island in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), with Puerto Princesa Bishop Socrates Mesiona leading the groundbreaking ceremony over the weekend.

- [President Marcos declares local holidays](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

President Marcos has declared special non-working days in five municipalities and one province to allow residents to fully participate in the celebration of their founding anniversaries in April.

- [5 cops killed, 3 wounded in Maguindanao Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Five policemen were killed while three others were wounded in an ambush in Barangay Mother Poblacion on Saturday night, the Philippine National Police said.

- [NNIC sees 1.35 million Holy Week travelers](#) (2026-03-29 16:00)

Over 1.35 million passengers are expected at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport during Holy Week, according to the New NAIA Infra Corp.

- [3 shabu dealers linked to Dawlah terror group remnants arrested](#) (2026-03-29 09:20)

Agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency arrested three more shabu peddlers, who were remitting earnings to remnants of the now-defunct Dawlah Islamiya terror group, in an entrapment operation in Barangay Poblacion, Datu Paglas, Maguindanao del Sur, on Friday, March 27.

- [P11.7M unregistered cooking oil seized in Benguet capital](#) (2026-03-29 07:21)

Authorities seized about P11.7 million worth of unregistered cooking oil and apprehended four men during a raid in Puguis, La Trinidad, Benguet, on Thursday, March 26.

- [Nationwide communications support activated for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 07:00)

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has mobilized nationwide public assistance operations to ensure reliable and uninterrupted communications during the Holy Week observance.

- [Aetas benefit from multi-phase outreach program by reservists, PAF](#) (2026-03-29 04:00)

Nearly 300 Aeta-Indigenous Peoples (IPs) received more than what they wished for during the multi-phase outreach program organized recently by Association of the Reservists and Reservist Administrators of the Philippines Inc.

- [5 cops killed, 3 wounded in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-29 03:34)

Five policemen were killed, while three others were wounded in an ambush in Barangay Mother Poblacion in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur on Saturday night, March 28.

- [PhilHealth paid P15.8 billion for pneumonia last year](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. has paid P15.8 billion for pneumonia, the top medical condition it reimbursed in 2025, the PhilHealth said.

- [UP releases study on robotic assisted stroke rehabilitation](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

Researchers achieved an 86-percent response accuracy rate for a hand orthosis for stroke rehabilitation, using surface electromyography signals, a study released by University of the Philippines Diliman Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs showed.

- [Quezon City cop sacked over illegal discharge of firearm](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

A policeman was relieved from his post after he illegally discharged his firearm in Barangay Payatas A on March 16, the Quezon City Police District said yesterday.

- [Pasig court orders inspection of KOJC sites](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

To verify accuracy and dismiss ambiguity in testimonies, some properties of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in Pasig, Quezon and Davao cities will be inspected by a Pasig court as part of the trial against KOJC founder Apollo Quiboloy and five others.

- [More passengers expected at PITX](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

With many people opting to travel by bus to save fuel, the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange said more passengers might use PITX this Holy Week.

- [DILG urges consumers to use Kadiwa stores](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

As people continue to look for ways to deal with soaring prices of fuel and basic commodities, the Department of the Interior and Local Government urged consumers to purchase goods from Kadiwa ng Pangulo outlets nationwide.

- [Philippines, US troops to construct school building in Palawan](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

Filipino and American soldiers are working together for the construction of a two-classroom building in El Nido, Palawan, as part of this year's Balikatan Exercise.

- [2,000 cops to secure Lent, summer vacation in Central Luzon](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

Up to 2,000 police officers will be deployed across Central Luzon starting today, to secure travelers and motorists who will spend the summer and Holy Week in the provinces.

- [2 community workers' conviction for terror financing affirmed](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

A trial court in Tacloban, Leyte has affirmed its earlier ruling finding community journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio and church worker Mariel Domequil guilty of terror financing.

- [2 die as river sweeps SUV away](#) (2026-03-28 16:00)

Two photojournalists died while four others were rescued after their sport utility vehicle was swept away by the current in a river in this town on Friday.

- [Soccksargen residents get aid to ease effects of rising fuel costs](#) (2026-03-28 09:48)

Local government units and private firms are now distributing cash grants and extending “food-for-work” assistance to marginalized workers in parts of Region 12 as a remedy to lack of income caused by the spiraling prices of petroleum products that are sold in their towns and cities.

- [Cotabato province earned P1.1-billion revenue surplus in 2025](#) (2026-03-28 09:21)

The provincial government of Cotabato has generated a P1.1 billion revenue surplus in 2025 and officials are expecting bigger tax collections this year via extensive initiatives supported by the Muslim, Christian and non-Moro indigenous communities.

- [PNP probes cop moonlighting as Chinese fugitive's escort](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

A policeman is in hot water for allegedly moonlighting as a security escort for a Chinese arrested in Makati on Wednesday for telecom fraud abroad.

- [President Marcos opens NAIAX](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

President Marcos led the opening yesterday of the westbound off-ramp of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway (NAIAX) along Andrews Avenue leading to NAIA Terminal 3 in Pasay City.

- [MMDA eyes carpooling to reduce fuel use](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

To help people cope with rising costs and reduce the consumption of fuel, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has proposed a carpooling and shuttle service scheme to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board.

- [PDP marks Duterte's birthday with 81 cakes](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

Members of the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino (PDP) based in this city will celebrate today the 81st birthday of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

- [Baguio City named 'Resilience Hub'](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has named Baguio City as a "Resilience Hub."

- [Lava, pyroclastic flows detected at Mayon Volcano](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

State volcanologists yesterday detected a collapse of lava deposits on the summit crater of Mayon Volcano in Albay, which generated incandescent lava flows and pyroclastic density currents.

- [P47.44 million smuggled food products seized in Subic](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

Smuggled frozen and processed food products worth P47.44 million have been seized at the port of Subic, according to the Bureau of Customs.

- ['Farmers, fisherfolk can buy fuel in portable containers'](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

Amid surging fuel prices and to prevent hoarding, the Department of Energy (DOE) has allowed farmers and fisherfolk to use portable containers to purchase petroleum products.

- [House bill seeks to broaden economic crisis response amid oil price surge](#) (2026-03-27 13:26)

A measure has been filed in Congress Friday, March 27, aiming to establish a more comprehensive and permanent system for faster, more proactive economic crisis response.

- [Cannabis greenhouse raided in Benguet](#) (2026-03-27 10:14)

Authorities overran a suspected marijuana greenhouse in Tublay, Benguet, on Thursday, March 26.

- [Cops seize P12.8-M worth smuggled cigarettes in Lanao del Sur](#) (2026-03-27 09:58)

Policemen seized P12.8 million worth of cigarettes from Indonesia in an anti-smuggling operation in the seaside town of Malabang, Lanao del Sur, late Wednesday, March 25.

- [Gunmen behind P3.2-million heist in Cotabato City arrested](#) (2026-03-27 09:43)

Policemen promptly arrested three robbers who stole P3.2 million worth of gold jewelry and cash at gunpoint from a Moro family in a daring heist in Barangay Bagua 2, Cotabato City, on

Thursday afternoon, March 26.

- [Moro villagers surrender 17 more combat weapons to Army](#) (2026-03-27 09:13)

Residents of Mamasapano town in Maguindanao del Sur surrendered assault rifles, B40 rocket launchers, and mortars on Thursday, March 26, as part of a disarmament program led by the Army and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity in the province.

- [Tagle to preside over Fulton Sheen beatification](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the Vatican's pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, will represent Pope Leo XIV and preside over the beatification mass for US Bishop Fulton Sheen in September.

- [No foul play in Pasig teen death](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

The Pasig City police has ruled out foul play in the death of a 15-year-old Grade 9 student, whose body was found in a private compound after she went missing for nearly a week.

- [Missing Chinese national found dead](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

A Chinese national earlier reported missing was found dead in Datu Piang, Maguindanao del Sur on Wednesday.

- [P6.6 million expired food items seized in Central Luzon](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

Expired food products worth P6.6 million have been seized from a Chinese businessman and a barangay kagawad in separate police operations in Central Luzon.

- [Marcos inspects post-harvest facilities in Isabela](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

President Marcos yesterday visited the province of Isabela to oversee ongoing efforts aimed at assisting farmers and enhancing access to health services.

- [Tagbilaran residents get free rides](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

The city government of Tagbilaran in Bohol is offering free rides to cushion the impact of high fuel prices on the riding public.

- [‘Energy woes may affect BARMM poll preparations’](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

The energy problem brought by the war in the Middle East may affect preparations for the conduct of the first parliamentary elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, according to the Commission on Elections.

- [40 degrees Celsius heat index seen in 4 areas](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

Four areas in the country are expected to experience heat indexes of 40 degrees Celsius and above, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services

Administration.

- [DOH: Hospitals ready for heat-related illnesses](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

Hospitals are prepared to attend to patients suffering from heat-related illnesses, especially heat stroke, the Department of Health said yesterday.

- [UP Diliman chancellor gets another term](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

University of the Philippines Diliman chancellor Carlo Vistan II will serve for three more years after the Board of Regents voted to continue his leadership.

- [Cops seize P6.8 million worth of shabu in Lanao operation](#) (2026-03-26 10:41)

Policemen seized P6.8 million worth of shabu from three dealers, one of them a woman, entrapped in Lumbatan town in Lanao del Sur on Tuesday afternoon, March 24.

- [Missing Chinese national found buried in Maguindanao](#) (2026-03-26 10:19)

Policemen and barangay officials exhumed on Wednesday, March 25, from a shallow grave in Barangay Masigay in Datu Piang, Maguindanao del Sur a male Chinese national who was reported missing two days before.

- [Free ride routes on March 26 amid transport strikes](#) (2026-03-26 02:59)

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) on Thursday deployed free rides amid nationwide transport strikes due to soaring fuel prices driven by the United States-Israel's war on Iran.

- [BARMM execs upbeat amid election reset law](#) (2026-03-26 01:00)

Key officials in the Bangsamoro region expressed support and optimism following the signing of Republic Act No. 12317 by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., which resets the historic parliamentary elections here to September 2026.

## Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer

- [Samar stretch of Maharlika Highway reopens for Holy Week](#) (2026-04-02 14:00)

TACLOBAN CITY — The Samar section of the Maharlika Highway has been reopened to two-way traffic on Wednesday, April 1, restoring unimpeded travel just in time for the expected surge of travelers during the Holy Week, the regional office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said. The reopening, covering key portions of

- [NCRPO: P4-M shabu seized, 72 suspects arrested in Metro Manila sweep](#) (2026-04-02 13:14)

MANILA, Philippines — More than P4 million worth of illegal drugs were seized and 72 suspected drug offenders were arrested in a sweeping one-day anti-drug operation across

Metro Manila. The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) conducted coordinated operations from 6 a.m. on April 1 to 5:59 a.m. on April 2. This led to the

- [8 seized luxury cars tied to Zaldy Co transferred to BOC compound](#) (2026-04-02 13:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The eight luxury cars worth P143 million allegedly linked to former lawmaker Zaldy Co were transferred to the compound of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) on Wednesday after being temporarily placed at the facility of the Independent Commission on Infrastructure (ICI). The vehicles were stored at the compound of ICI in Taguig

- [Jellyfish spotted along Zambales coast, authorities warn](#) (2026-04-02 13:07)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Local authorities have issued a warning to beachgoers in San Felipe town after several jellyfish were spotted along parts of the coastline on Holy Thursday, April 2, as tourists continue to flock to the area's beaches for the Holy Week break. In an advisory, officials said multiple jellyfish were seen along

- [EcoWaste's Holy Week reminder: Don't litter at pilgrimage sites](#) (2026-04-02 13:00)

MANILA, Philippines — This Holy Week, waste and pollution watchdog EcoWaste Coalition has urged the public not to litter at pilgrimage sites or commit other acts that can harm the environment, emphasizing that “cleanliness is next to godliness.” READ: Black veils, bare feet: Holy Week women embody grief “Pilgrimage sites are not dumpsites,” the group

- [UPLB Bio-N exclusivity deal blamed for biofertilizer program's failure](#) (2026-04-02 12:44)

MANILA, Philippines — With fertilizer prices rising as conflict in the Middle East rattles global supply, farmer advocates said a locally developed biofertilizer meant to help cut farming costs has failed to cushion Filipino farmers largely because the University of the Philippines Los Baños granted a private firm exclusive rights to commercialize and distribute Bio-N.

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of April 2, 2026](#) (2026-04-02 11:56)

MANILA, Philippines – As Filipinos observe Maundy Thursday, attention is also focused on unrelenting rising costs of fuel, which continues to weigh heavily on transport workers and household budgets. Motorists and commuters alike are bracing for a possible adjustments next week amid the ongoing Middle East crisis. Below are the prevailing prices monitored and gathered

- [Puerto Galera: Fare hikes, new protocol impact tourist arrivals](#) (2026-04-02 11:45)

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro – The recent fare increases brought by the rising prices of petroleum products had heavily impacted tourist arrivals in this popular summer destination, a resort manager said. Gloria Basconcillo of the White Beach Resort Bar and Restaurant said that compared to last year, arrivals this summer of 2026 are lesser. “Compared

- [Cardinal Advincula to priests: Tackle mental health struggles](#) (2026-04-02 11:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula encouraged fellow members of the clergy to confront and address their mental and emotional challenges, noting that about 18 percent of Filipino priests reported psychological distress in a recent survey. “Recently, many priests have reported episodes of depression, anxiety, loneliness, grief, burnout and compassion fatigue,” he said

- [M/V Starlite Saga given special permit to operate on Batangas-Calapan](#) (2026-04-02 11:38)

MANILA, Philippines — The M/V Starlite Saga has been granted a special permit by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) to service the Batangas-Calapan route and vice versa to address the shortage of vessels following the suspension of operations of OceanJet vessels on the same route. Marina said it approved the special permit for the vessel

- [De Lima pushes expansion of free PUV rides amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-04-02 11:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The service contracting program for public utility vehicles (PUVs), which provides commuters free rides, should be expanded to ease the impact of the fuel price crisis on both drivers and passengers, Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Rep. Leila de Lima said. In a statement released on Wednesday, De Lima said she has filed House Resolution

- [From US, Filipina grandma always returns to uphold Holy Week tradition](#) (2026-04-02 11:10)

MANILA, Philippines — A 75-year-old Filipina grandmother is now living a comfortable life with her family in New York City, United States. But as the season that welcomes Holy Week arrives, she always finds a way to come home to the Philippines and continue their tradition — a way to show faith and love for

- [Marcos reminds faithful of selfless service on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 10:44)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. highlighted the importance of selfless services as the Filipino faithful observe Maundy Thursday. “On this Holy Thursday, we are reminded that leadership begins with service. Caring for others and putting their needs before our own,” Marcos said in a social media post Thursday morning. READ: WATCH:

- [CICC: Possible Roblox ban in PH hinges on April 7 meeting](#) (2026-04-02 10:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine government may push through with its threat of shutting down popular gaming platform Roblox in the country if it fails to meet stricter child safety requirements during a scheduled meeting with authorities on April 7, an official said on Wednesday. In an interview on state-run PTV, Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center

- [DepEd to conduct orientations on the new 3-term school calendar](#) (2026-04-02 10:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Education (DepEd) will hold orientation sessions among school heads, teachers, and other stakeholders about the implementation of the three-term school calendar. The shift will be implemented among public schools beginning

School Year 2026-2027. Under this new three-term school calendar, there will only be three grading periods instead of the

- [Dole tells employers: Comply with pay rules for April holidays](#) (2026-04-02 09:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) has reminded all employers to comply with proper payment rules in observance of the regular holidays and special non-working holiday for the month of April this year. This is in line with Labor Advisory No. 05, Series of 2026, or the Payment of Wages for

- [WATCH: Churches hold special Maundy Thursday services](#) (2026-04-02 09:07)

MANILA, Philippines – Filipino Catholics are expected to flock churches on Maundy Thursday to observe the Last Supper and the traditional washing of the feet. Many Christian sects are also observing this Holy tradition. Churches across the country are set to hold afternoon and evening liturgies. Some will remain open for extended hours to accommodate

- [Phivolcs: No tsunami threat to PH after a 7.4M quake hits Indonesia](#) (2026-04-02 08:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology on Thursday said there is no tsunami threat to the Philippines following a strong offshore earthquake in Indonesia. “There is no tsunami threat to the Philippines from this earthquake,” Phivolcs said. A magnitude 7.4 quake struck eastern Indonesia early Thursday, according to the United States

- [Pagasa: Easterlies to bring warm, mostly fair weather on Maundy Thursday](#) (2026-04-02 07:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Warm and generally fair weather will prevail across much of the country on Maundy Thursday due to easterlies, with brief isolated rains possible, according to the state weather bureau. In its latest weather bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the easterlies are currently affecting Southern Luzon, Visayas,

- [Dole: No minimum wage hike for May 1](#) (2026-04-02 05:41)

MANILA, Philippines — There will be no minimum wage increase on May 1, Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) Undersecretary Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio Jr. said on Wednesday as he stressed that future adjustments will remain under the authority of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs). Absent a new law that mandates an across-the-board

- [Where priests train for battles of ‘Liberation’](#) (2026-04-02 05:41)

MANILA, Philippines — At first glance, the white three-story structure along St. Bernardino Street at Barangay Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City, looks just like any other modern office building, with its large windows and glass doors that open to a spacious lobby. But within its walls is a training ground for a spiritual battle that has

- [PH rice tariff policy may slow down imports](#) (2026-04-02 05:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Industry sources said the government’s recent price-index tariff policy may weaken rice imports, triggering market speculation and resulting in higher prices, a report from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said. The USDA report titled “Philippines: Grain and Feed Annual” was released in March and said rising farm input costs, particularly for

- [DSWD offers aid to girl who wrote to Marcos](#) (2026-04-02 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian said on Wednesday that authorities have already located the 11-year-old girl from Tinambac, Camarines Sur, who asked President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for protection against the alleged abuses committed by a barangay councilor and his sons. “In accordance with the directive of the President, we will assist the

- [Marcos: All Kalayaan Island Group features must have Filipino names](#) (2026-04-02 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the adoption of Philippine names for the 131 maritime features in the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) to reinforce its sovereignty in the area. KIG lies on the western section of the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, but

- [Chavez claims prompt reflection on history of Filipino farmworkers in US](#) (2026-04-02 05:34)

CALIFORNIA — Filipino and Mexican American farmworkers united in 1965 to strike against California grape growers, under the stewardship of Filipino labor leader Larry Itliong and one of the founders of the National Farm Workers Association, César Chavez. It was a pivotal moment that has been highlighted in books, monuments and even a stage musical.

- [Iran asked to count PH as ‘nonhostile’ nation](#) (2026-04-02 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The government has asked Iran to classify the Philippines as a “nonhostile” country in relation to the Middle East conflict, as Manila initiated talks to secure safe passage for Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway crucial to global supply lines now controlled by Tehran. The request was made

- [200 bullets seized from Holy Week travelers in airports](#) (2026-04-02 05:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 200 bullets have so far been confiscated in airports across the country from passengers traveling during Holy Week, according to the Office for Transportation Security (OTS). OTS Administrator Undersecretary Gilberto Cruz reported this on Wednesday as he conducted a security inspection at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 on

- [Senate panel pushes fuel rationing, other crisis measures](#) (2026-04-02 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The head of the ad hoc Senate committee formed in the wake of the Middle East conflict said the panel had recommended several measures to help Filipinos cope with the war's economic impact, such fuel rationing, price caps and a monthly financial aid for minimum wage earners, among others. Quoting the panel's

- [In Pangasinan, grand views of nature, faith in Holy Week](#) (2026-04-02 05:15)

ALAMINOS CITY, PANGASINAN, Philippines — Climbing the 263-step stairway leading to the 16.76-meter statue of Jesus Christ the Savior on Pilgrimage Island can be physically demanding, especially under the scorching sun. But despite the sweat and fatigue, the ascent is rewarding as atop, one is treated to a spectacular 360-degree view of Hundred Islands National

- [House asked to pass bill formalizing support for Filipinos with autism](#) (2026-04-01 23:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A lawmaker has asked his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass a bill that would formalize the support system for Filipinos with autism, as the country commemorates World Autism Awareness Day on April 2. In a statement on Wednesday, Quezon City Rep. Patrick Michael Vargas said that he has filed

- [Mayon Volcano's lava fountaining continues](#) (2026-04-01 23:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano on Wednesday continued to exhibit lava fountaining, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). According to Phivolcs in an advisory, Mayon's latest "short-lived" spew of lava occurred at 05:49 p.m. Meanwhile, Phivolcs declared that Mayon Volcano's effusive eruption has now entered its 85th consecutive day. An effusive eruption

- [Guimaras braces for crowds in 'Taltal sa Balaan Bukid' on Good Friday](#) (2026-04-01 23:32)

JORDAN, GUIMARAS, Philippines — The local government of Jordan town in Guimaras province has said it is fully prepared for the staging of the "Taltal sa Jordan, Guimaras," scheduled to take place next week on Good Friday, April 3. According to Jordan Mayor John Edward Gando, the religious activity will commence at noon on Good Friday.

- [LGU in Lucban, Quezon scraps Easter Sunday festival due to energy crisis](#) (2026-04-01 23:15)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — The local government of Lucban in Quezon province has canceled its annual "Buhusan Festival," a popular Easter Sunday event, in support of the declared national energy emergency. In a public notice posted on its official Facebook page, the municipal government said the move was made "in compliance with the current

- [Probable cause stage of Duterte impeachment hearings may end in April](#) (2026-04-01 23:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The House committee on justice could complete the probable cause stage of the impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte as early as April and elevate the case to the plenary once Congress resumes session, Bukidnon 2nd District Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores said. Flores, vice chair of the justice panel, said the

- [When prayer takes color: A Holy Week encounter with God through art](#) (2026-04-01 23:02)

CALAPAN CITY, ORIENTAL MINDORO, Philippines — “Sometimes, prayer is not only spoken—it is painted.” In a quiet corner of Barangay Suqui during Holy Week, prayer will take on a different form—one that does not rely on words, but on colors, lines, and silence. On Holy Monday, the Oriental Mindoro Medical Society Building and St. Augustine

- [Apo Ino: The story of faith, devotion in Zambales town](#) (2026-04-01 22:32)

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES, Philippines — In this coastal town, where traditions pass gently from one generation to the next, Holy Wednesday brings a powerful expression of faith as families and neighbors gather to honor the image of the Nazarene, one of the central figures in Holy Week processions. Each year, the Asinas-Rivera clan in Barangay

- [DepEd celebrates triumph over adversity in inspiring graduation stories](#) (2026-04-01 22:32)

MAKATI CITY, Philippines — From a 33-year-old mother mastering her ABCs alongside her child to a visually impaired lawyer returning to his alma mater, this year’s graduation season has become a canvas for stories of radical resilience. The Department of Education (DepEd) highlighted these milestones as proof that age and disability are no barriers to

- [Roadside explosive incident in Maguindanao del Sur ‘under control’ – PNP](#) (2026-04-01 22:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday assured the public that the roadside explosive incident in Maguindanao del Sur is already “under control.” The PNP issued the statement after a roadside bomb set off by still unidentified men caused minor damage to a police patrol car in Rajah Buayan, Maguindanao del Sur,

- [PCSO’s Grand, Mega jackpots roll over in April 1 draw](#) (2026-04-01 22:20)

MANILA, Philippines — No bettor won the jackpot prizes for Grand Lotto 6/55 and MegaLotto 6/45 in the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office draw on Wednesday, April 1. According to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the winning combination for Grand Lotto 6/55 was 32-42-17-55-50-19 for a jackpot of P45 million. No ticket matched all six numbers.

- [Groups, fishers in Verde Island Passage seek fuel subsidy](#) (2026-04-01 22:11)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Fisherfolk and environmental advocates on Wednesday called on the national government to provide immediate fuel subsidies to fishermen in the Verde Island Passage (VIP) amid rising fuel costs. “We urge the national government not to turn a blind eye to the struggles of the fisherfolk sector and to provide immediate and

- [Tawi-Tawi town declares state of emergency over fuel shortage](#) (2026-04-01 21:57)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — Mayor Jasper Que of Bongao town in Tawi-Tawi province on Wednesday declared a state of local emergency following a crippling shortage of fuel that has disrupted transport, fishing and the delivery of essential services. The declaration, contained in Executive Order No. 22, Series of 2026, signed on April 1,

- [Nordeco workers seek co-existence, oppose Davao Light takeover](#) (2026-04-01 21:15)

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur — In a move to safeguard jobs and public service, organized workers of the Northern Davao Electric Cooperative (Nordeco) are pushing for a peaceful co-existence arrangement with Davao Light and Power Company (DLPC), rejecting a full takeover as proposed by Davao del Norte Gov. Edwin Jubahib. The Nordeco Employees Care

- [Church, NGOs oppose private takeover of hydro plants](#) (2026-04-01 20:53)

ILIGAN CITY – The leadership of the Catholic Church here has joined nongovernment organizations in sounding the alarm bells about the national government’s plan to hand over operations of the Agus and Pulangi hydroelectric power plants. In a position paper obtained by the Inquirer, which was circulated for signatures of support, Bishop Jose Rapadas III,

- [38 families relocated to Laguna for NSCR Extension project](#) (2026-04-01 20:28)

MANILA, Philippines — Thirty-eight families affected by the construction of the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) Extension project have been relocated to San Pedro, Laguna, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Wednesday. According to the DOTr, the families welcomed their new homes on Tuesday. The DOTr noted that they are the first batch of the

- [LOOK: Holy Week exodus in Iloilo City](#) (2026-04-01 20:19)

Thousands queue for buses en route to northern Panay. READ: PNP tells motorists: Keep your cool on the road amid Holy Week rush The massive influx of commuters comes as many head back to their respective hometowns for the Holy Week. They are expected to be back in droves on Sunday. /jpv

- [Pagasa: 2 areas may reach ‘danger’ heat index Thursday](#) (2026-04-01 20:10)

MANILA, Philippines — At least two areas in the country — Virac, Catanduanes and Mambusao, Capiz — are expected to reach “danger” level heat indices on Maundy Thursday, the state weather bureau said. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), heat index is defined as the “measure of the contribution that

- [Pagasa: Virac, Catanduanes logs 47°C heat index for second straight day](#) (2026-04-01 19:57)

MANILA, Philippines – A peak heat index of 47°C was recorded in Virac (Synop), Catanduanes on Holy Wednesday, the state weather bureau said. Heat index, as defined by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), is the “measure

of the contribution that high humidity makes with abnormally high temperatures in reducing the body's

- [Ridon warns vs fuel rationing talks: Might scare people into hoarding](#) (2026-04-01 19:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Terry Ridon has sounded an alarm over discussions of fuel rationing, as it may prompt people into panic-buying or hoarding gasoline and diesel even if supplies were reported to be enough for at least 50 days. Ridon in an online interview on Wednesday was asked regarding Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian's

- [MRT-3 offers free rides to Filipino veterans from April 6-11](#) (2026-04-01 19:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metro Rail Transit (MRT-3) will offer free rides to all Filipino veterans from April 6-11, 2026. READ: 'Solution to war is not more war,' Marcos says in Day of Valor speech In line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s Proclamation No. 727, April 9 or Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) is

- [Pagasa urges water conservation amid dry season](#) (2026-04-01 19:32)

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on Wednesday urged the public to conserve water as the country enters the dry season. READ: Pagasa announces start of 'warm and dry season' On March 23, Pagasa officially announced the onset of the warm and dry season, marked by reduced rainfall and higher

- [Pangasinan, UNDP join hands to build community resilience](#) (2026-04-01 19:24)

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan – The provincial government of Pangasinan inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the implementation of a project aimed at building the resilience of communities and institutions to disasters and climate change. Pangasinan is one of the 10 provinces selected under the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering

- [Flood control case: Sandiganbayan upholds denial of bail for DPWH execs](#) (2026-04-01 18:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Sandiganbayan has denied the appeals of nine former public works officials from the Mimaropa region seeking reconsideration of their bail application in the malversation case involving resigned fugitive Ako Bicol Rep. Elizaldy Co over a substandard flood control project in Oriental Mindoro. In a 27-page resolution dated March 31, the Sandiganbayan's

- [La Mesa Ecopark taps youth power for Int' l Day of Forests 2026](#) (2026-04-01 18:48)

MANILA, Philippines – La Mesa Ecopark, in partnership with Make Difference (MAD) Earth and the Sangguniang Kabataan officials from five barangays in Quezon City, recently celebrated the International Day of Forests at the Eco Academy in La Mesa Ecopark. Established by the United

Nations in 2012, the International Day of Forests highlights the vital role

- [PNP: 16,784 arrested in anti-drug ops in first 3 months of 2026](#) (2026-04-01 18:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday said it has so far made 16,784 arrests in anti-illegal drug operations in 2026, seizing over P11 billion worth of illegal drugs. According to the PNP, the arrests stemmed from the 14,550 anti-illegal drug operations conducted from January 1 to March 30, 2026. READ: 172

- [232 cops dismissed in Q1 as PNP intensifies internal purge](#) (2026-04-01 18:28)

MANILA, Philippines – A total of 232 police officers were dismissed from service in the first three months of the year over various infractions, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Wednesday, as it stepped up internal disciplinary measures. READ: Over 2,500 PNP personnel dismissed, suspended in 2025 The dismissals were part of administrative sanctions imposed on

- [Duterte impeachment: Public should monitor ‘overdue’ hearings — Cendaña](#) (2026-04-01 18:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Akbayan party-list Rep. Percival Cendaña has urged the public to monitor the upcoming House hearings on the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte, saying the proceedings have been “long overdue” due to the respondent’s repeated evasion of accountability measures. In an interview on Wednesday, Cendaña said they expect Ramil Madriaga, Duterte’s former

- [12 hours in line, one year apart: A mother’s journey home](#) (2026-04-01 18:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Even if a 40-year-old passenger had to wait for over 12 hours at a terminal in Quezon City, she could not hide her excitement to reunite with her children in the province after a year. Catherine Nano had been at the Superlines terminal as early as 6:30 a.m. to catch a ride

- [DA: PH has fertilizer supply, alternatives amid Middle East tension](#) (2026-04-01 17:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday assured the public that the country has sufficient fertilizer supply and viable alternatives, amid fears of a potential shortage caused by rising prices and threats to global supply routes stemming from the conflict in the Middle East. In a statement, Agriculture Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel

- [Bataan cops held for failing to recapture 2 suspects who escaped custody](#) (2026-04-01 16:49)

MANILA, Philippines — Two Bataan police officers were arrested for failing to recapture two carjacking suspects who escaped custody, the Police Regional Office Central Luzon (PRO 3) reported. The two cops, a police chief master sergeant and a police senior master sergeant, confessed during their station’s inspection on Tuesday morning that they lost the two

- [Instead of fare hike, Kidapawan grants trike drivers P1,000 fuel subsidy](#) (2026-04-01 16:35)

KORONADAL CITY, South Cotabato – The Kidapawan City government in Cotabato province rejected calls for a fare hike, but will extend a P1,000 monthly fuel subsidy for each tricycle driver until December this year to help them parry the blows of skyrocketing fuel prices caused by the war in the Middle East. Kidapawan Mayor Jose

- [Teen rushes to return home to reunite with ailing grandma](#) (2026-04-01 16:01)

MANILA, Philippines — As many Filipinos return to their provinces for Holy Week this year, an 18-year-old student is eager to go home to spend time with her ailing grandmother. In an interview with the Inquirer on Holy Wednesday, Princess Dianela said she was not supposed to return to Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, until Saturday, April 4, but

- [PNP finds P38.6-M drugs inside ‘abandoned’ parcels at Pasay mail hub](#) (2026-04-01 15:50)

MANILA, Philippines — Packs of suspected shabu (crystal meth) worth P38.6 million were discovered inside three “abandoned” inbound parcels at the Central Mail Exchange Center in Pasay City, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Wednesday. The parcels were flagged during an inspection by the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Inter-agency Interdiction Task Group on Tuesday,

- [33 PUV drivers test positive for drug use amid Holy Week rush](#) (2026-04-01 15:47)

MANILA, Philippines — At least 33 public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers in four regions have tested positive for drug use during the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency’s (PDEA) random drug testing for the Holy Week rush. In separate statements on Wednesday, PDEA regional offices reported the following numbers of PUV drivers who were tested and those

- [Massage therapist nabbed for filming client in Parañaque](#) (2026-04-01 15:34)

MANILA, Philippines — A 29-year-old massage therapist was arrested Tuesday in Parañaque for allegedly attempting to secretly video-record a female client undressing inside a mall spa. Police identified the suspect, known by the alias “Jun-Jun” and a resident of Pasay City, who was apprehended around 2:30 p.m., at a spa on the second floor of

- [Caap urges air travelers to follow dangerous goods regulations](#) (2026-04-01 15:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (Caap) on Wednesday urged all air travelers to comply with dangerous goods regulations to ensure a safe flight and avoid penalties during Holy Week. According to Caap, dangerous goods are globally regulated by the International Civil Aviation Organization. These items may pose risks to the

- [PNP tells motorists: Keep your cool on the road amid Holy Week rush](#) (2026-04-01 15:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has urged motorists to “keep their cool” while traveling during this year’s Holy Week rush. “Don’t let road rage ruin your

plans for the Holy Week. Let us all set a good example on the road, especially since most motorists are traveling with their children and family,”

- [Passenger surge seen on Holy Wednesday with half-day work](#) (2026-04-01 15:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Two bus terminals in Quezon City are expecting more passengers from Wednesday afternoon to evening after Malacañang ordered a half-day work schedule in government offices in observance of the Holy Week. At Victory Liner, dispatcher John Peter Ranches said 82 buses had been deployed, carrying about

- [PNP: Suspect in alleged rape of CamSur student's sister jailed in 2023](#) (2026-04-01 14:48)

MANILA, Philippines — A suspect in the alleged rape of a Camarines Sur student's sister had already been jailed for the incident in 2023, according to the Philippine National Police (PNP). The case gained traction after the sister, an 11-year-old student, walked out of her graduation on Monday to petition the town's vice mayor to

- [Influx of last-minute travelers seen to boost PITX ridership](#) (2026-04-01 14:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Travelers are urged to arrive early at the bus terminal to avoid heavier crowds on Holy Wednesday, the last working day of Holy Week, as last-minute travelers are expected to push ridership at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) to 200,000. Millions from Metro Manila are expected to return to their hometowns during

- [Cops escape roadside bombing in Maguindanao del Sur](#) (2026-04-01 14:06)

COTABATO CITY — A roadside bomb set off by still unidentified men caused minor damage to a police patrol car responding to a reported bomb explosion in Rajah Buayan, Maguindanao del Sur, on Wednesday morning, April 1. Capt. Steffi Salanguit, speaking for the Police Regional Office-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO-BAR), said no police officers on board

- [PNP tells commanders: Clear road obstructions or be relieved](#) (2026-04-01 14:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Police commanders who fail to clear major thoroughfares from obstructions amid the travel rush this Holy Week will be relieved from their posts, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Wednesday. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. gave the instruction after inspecting the areas surrounding the Baclaran and Quiapo churches and

- [Authorities find girl who sought Marcos' help vs village councilor](#) (2026-04-01 14:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Authorities have located the 11-year-old girl from Camarines Sur who wrote to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. seeking help against an abusive village official, Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian said Wednesday. Gatchalian said he met with the girl and the head of the Redeemer Homeless Mission, the nonprofit currently caring for her and other

- [PH maternal mortality declines, but still short of SDG target](#) (2026-04-01 14:01)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has made measurable gains in maternal health in recent years, but experts say progress remains fragile and uneven, especially for newborns and young children whose earliest years shape a lifetime of outcomes. At the center of the conversation is a growing consensus: Without stronger alignment across policies, programs and providers,

- [Gatchalian: Fuel saving must start with politicians not using convoys](#) (2026-04-01 14:01)

MANILA, Philippines – Politicians should stop using convoys to help reduce fuel consumption in the face of global supply shortage due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. “Stop doing convoys and using escorts. I think they should conserve for now and avoid having escorts,” Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, chairman of the Senate proactive

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of April 1, 2026](#) (2026-04-01 14:00)

MANILA, Philippines – Fuel prices continue to soar as the Middle East conflict escalates at the start of the Holy Week. Oil companies on Monday announced price increases for diesel (P12.50 to P12.90 per liter) and gasoline (P1 to P2.50 a liter). Below are the prevailing prices monitored and gathered by the Inquirer team as

- [P15.75-M undocumented cigarettes seized in Mobo, Masbate — PCG](#) (2026-04-01 13:45)

LEGAZPI CITY — The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) District Bicol seized 630 boxes of undocumented cigarettes worth an estimated P15.75 million during a routine inspection at Mobo Port in Masbate. Commodore Ivan Roldan, PCG District Bicol commander, told the Inquirer in a Viber message on Wednesday that the seizure took place on Tuesday (March 31)

- [17 hurt as vehicle plunges into ravine in Kalinga](#) (2026-04-01 13:42)

ROXAS, Isabela – Seventeen people, including six minors, were injured after a utility vehicle plunged into a 30-meter ravine in Lubuagan town, Kalinga province on Tuesday, March 31. Investigators said on Wednesday that the vehicle, driven by Arcadio Accoy, suffered a brake malfunction and fell at around 4 p.m. while negotiating the Poway-Ag-agama Upper Uma

- [Sara Duterte impeachment: Madriaga’ s security now more crucial — Adiong](#) (2026-04-01 12:57)

MANILA, Philippines — The security of Ramil Madriaga, Vice President Sara Duterte’ s former aide, is now more crucial as he is set to face impeachment proceedings as a possible witness, according to Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong. In a Wednesday statement, Adiong said they expect a report from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)

- [PNP chief inspects churches, trains for Holy Week travel rush](#) (2026-04-01 12:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Wednesday conducted inspections of the police’ s preparations in several areas across Metro Manila amid the influx of travelers for this year’ s Holy Week. Nartatez made the rounds first at Baclaran Church in Pasay City, then the Light Rail Transit Line 1

- [172 rape, sexual abuse suspects arrested in a month — CIDG](#) (2026-04-01 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines—The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested 172 individuals accused of rape and sexual abuse in a nationwide March crackdown marking National Women’ s Month. It resulted in the capture of fugitives facing charges such as rape, statutory rape, acts of lasciviousness, and qualified rape of a minor through sexual assault. CIDG Director Maj.

- [Gatchalian bats for continued MRT, LRT discounts, Libreng Sakay](#) (2026-04-01 12:21)

MANILA, Philippines — Both the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) and the Light Rail Transit Line 2 (LRT-2) should continue providing discounts to commuters so that their expenses would be reduced amid high fuel prices and calls for fare hikes, Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said on Wednesday. Gatchalian, in the preliminary report he made after two

- [Over 3,000 personnel deployed to ensure safe Eastern Visayas summer](#) (2026-04-01 12:19)

TACLOBAN CITY — Over 3,000 security and support personnel have been deployed across Eastern Visayas as part of intensified measures to ensure public safety during the peak summer travel season, the Philippine National Police (PNP) regional office here said. The Police Regional Office 8 (PRO-8), led by Brig. Gen. Jason Capoy launched the annual Ligtas

- [35 gas stations in Bicol temporarily closed amid several issues](#) (2026-04-01 12:01)

LEGAZPI CITY — At least 35 gasoline stations across the Bicol region were temporarily closed as of Wednesday, March 31. Data from the Police Regional Office showed that 35 of the 835 monitored gas stations in the region have ceased operations due to depleted fuel supply, permit issues, and ongoing renovations. Brig. Gen. Erosito Miranda,

- [April Fools: Best pranks leave everyone laughing with – not at – you](#) (2026-04-01 11:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Every year on April 1, people around the world take part in April Fools’ Day. It is a day dedicated to jokes, playful tricks, and harmless mischief—or so they say… Not all pranks are funny, and some can have real consequences. For instance, fake pregnancy announcements can hurt feelings or spread confusion.

- [Surigao Sur restricts travel, consolidates trips to cut fuel use](#) (2026-04-01 11:10)

BUTUAN CITY – The provincial government of Surigao del Sur has implemented cost-saving protocols amid the ongoing increase in fuel costs, with measures covering official travel and moderation of costly activities to mitigate the effects of the energy crisis, officials announced Wednesday. “Guidelines were already approved on Tuesday that outline measures to ease the impacts of

- [200 bullets confiscated in PH airports so far this Holy Week, says OTS](#) (2026-04-01 11:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 200 bullets have been confiscated in airports across the country so far during this year's Holy Week, according to the Office for Transportation Security (OTS). OTS Administrator Usec. Gilbert Cruz said this as the agency conducted a security inspection at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 on Holy Wednesday,

- [Dole: No nationwide wage hike for May](#) (2026-04-01 10:58)

MANILA, Philippines – Minimum wage earners will not see a nationwide pay hike on May 1, as future adjustments remain region-based under the authority of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs), the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) secretary clarified Wednesday. Dole Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma explained that unless Congress enacts a law mandating

- [NCRPO sees no direct threat to security so far for Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 10:30)

MANILA, Philippines — No direct threats to security in Metro Manila have been monitored so far amid the observance of Holy Week, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Wednesday. NCRPO director, Maj. Gen. Anthony Aberin made this assessment as he, together with Quezon City Police District director Brig. Gen. Randy Silvio, inspected

- [Gatchalian pushes P1,500 monthly aid for minimum wage earners](#) (2026-04-01 10:19)

MANILA, Philippines — A P1,500 monthly aid for minimum wage earners, instead of an across-the-board wage hike, is being pushed by the Senate ad hoc committee chairperson as workers' purchasing power have significantly decreased amid the crisis brought by the Middle East conflict. In his preliminary report, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian who heads the Senate's proactive response

- [PNP gets P506-M new personnel carriers, motorcycles, tools](#) (2026-04-01 09:54)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has procured new vehicles, including personnel carriers, motorcycles and equipment worth a total of P506,996,656 for law enforcement operations. PNP Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. oversaw the blessing and turnover of the equipment in a ceremony in Camp Crame, Quezon City on Wednesday. Data shared by

- [PNP deploys team to probe abuse allegations vs CamSur local exec, sons](#) (2026-04-01 09:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has deployed a team to investigate a student's claims that her sisters were sexually abused at the hands of a Tinambac, Camarines Sur barangay kagawad (councilor) and his sons. In a statement on Wednesday, PNP chief, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. detailed that he ordered a specialized

- [Over 44,000 passengers in ports early Holy Wednesday, says PCG](#) (2026-04-01 09:16)

MANILA, Philippines – Passenger traffic surged in ports nationwide on Holy Wednesday, April 1, as the Semana Santa exodus continued, following the high volume recorded the previous day. From midnight to 6 a.m., the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported 22,135 outbound passengers and 22,503 inbound travelers, totaling over 44,000 individuals moving through ports across the

- [Possible fuel price cap, rationing raised in Senate’ s initial report](#) (2026-04-01 09:06)

[Updated April 1, 2026, 10:46 a.m.] MANILA, Philippines — A possible price cap on petroleum products and the rationing of fuel were among the several proposed policy responses raised by the Senate’ s ad hoc committee’ s chairperson, in response to the crisis caused by the Middle East conflict. In the preliminary report released on Wednesday by Senate’ s

- [Black veils, bare feet: Holy Week women embody grief in Pampanga, Camarines Sur](#) (2026-04-01 08:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Across the Philippines, women have long played a central role in expressing sorrow. They wear black vestidas, veil themselves with manto, and sometimes give voice to pain through chants. But this role extends beyond personal loss. Every Holy Week, as the church remembers the death of Jesus, women in places such as

- [Fair, hot weather expected nationwide this Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-04-01 07:30)

MANILA, Philippines – Fair but hot and humid weather will prevail across the country this Holy Wednesday, April 1, according to the state weather bureau. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said a ridge of a high-pressure area continues to extend over Northern Luzon. “The ridge of a high-pressure area is part

- [Most local governments underspend on primary healthcare – study](#) (2026-04-01 05:35)

Most local government units (LGUs) in the country are not spending enough to deliver basic but comprehensive primary healthcare (PHC) to their constituents, despite having sufficient fiscal resources arising from higher national tax shares, a state-run think tank found. In a recent study, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) said LGUs spend only about

- [Shipping firms can hike fares, cargo rates by only up to 30%](#) (2026-04-01 05:30)

Domestic shipping operators may increase passenger fares and cargo rates only by up to 30 percent, the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) said in an advisory on Monday. The new limit is higher than the 20-percent increase granted by the agency on March 6. Marina said it will release every week an advisory on rate adjustments

- [Terminal case: As fuel cost soars, car owners taking bus instead](#) (2026-04-01 05:25)

There has been an increase in passenger numbers during the Holy Week holidays amid the apparent trend of motorists choosing to travel by bus instead, according to the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX). Fare discounts and other incentives to travelers have also

been introduced by various stakeholders in the transportation sector, as fuel costs continue

- [BFP sacks Metro fire safety inspectors in antigraft drive](#) (2026-04-01 05:20)

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) has relieved all fire safety inspectors (FSIs) in the National Capital Region (NCR) in line with an ongoing crackdown on corruption within the agency. “This move aims to set a new standard for transparency before expanding the program to other regions,” the BFP said in a statement on Tuesday.

- [Gov’ t sets P50 price cap for imported rice](#) (2026-04-01 05:00)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced a price ceiling of P50 per kilo for imported rice as part of government efforts to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs caused by the conflict in the Middle East. “When the price of oil goes up, food prices are next. That’ s something we don’ t want

- [PNP: Motorists who gas up and run face charges](#) (2026-04-01 04:55)

The Philippine National Police on Tuesday warned motorists against resorting to the “gas and run” scheme, saying they would face charges like the ride-hailing app driver who fled after gassing up in Quezon City but later surrendered to authorities. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said that the case, while it involved a single

- [‘Concerned employees’ sue DOH chief, other officials over P1.5-B expired drugs, vaccines](#) (2026-04-01 04:50)

Unidentified complainants calling themselves “concerned Department of Health [DOH] personnel” have again filed criminal and administrative cases against Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa and 16 other officials and personnel of the agency, this time over P1.5 billion worth of vaccines and medicines that expired and were considered “dead stock.” The 33-page complaint accusing Herbosa and the

- [Zambales forestlands set for rehabilitation](#) (2026-04-01 04:35)

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES— More than 74 hectares of degraded forestlands in San Marcelino and Subic towns are set for rehabilitation under a new five-year partnership between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Gala Aeta Kulihiig Association Inc. (Gakai), and AP Renewable Energy Corp. (Aprec). The three parties signed a memorandum of agreement to

- [Tighter security set at Quezon pilgrimage site during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 04:30)

LUCENA CITY — Pilgrims visiting the Kamay ni Hesus (KNH) shrine in Lucban, Quezon, this Holy Week will subjected to tighter security measures amid escalating tensions in the Middle East. “Due to ongoing conflict and potential retaliatory threats, including from terrorist groups, stricter security measures have been implemented,” said Fr. Joey Faller, shrine administrator, in

- [Catholic education leaders raise concerns over 3-term school calendar](#) (2026-04-01 00:02)

MANILA, Philippines — Catholic education leaders have raised doubts over the Department of Education’s (DepEd) planned transition to a three-term school calendar, citing risks to learning quality and system preparedness. In a recent statement, the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) and the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines Episcopal Commission on Catholic Education

- [With surge in fuel cost, Agusan Sur trike drivers’ income drop by half](#) (2026-03-31 22:49)

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur – The ongoing oil crisis is putting a strain on the livelihood of tricycle drivers in this town, with their daily earnings dropping by almost half. Roel Gaano, a tricycle driver plying the Zone 1 route, which covers the six barangays in the town center, shared that before the fuel

- [No jackpot winners in 3 PCSO lotto draws on March 31, 2026](#) (2026-03-31 22:18)

MANILA, Philippines—No bettor won the jackpot in the Ultra Lotto 6/58, SuperLotto 6/49 and Lotto 6/42 draws held Tuesday, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. Ultra Lotto 6/58: 36-07-29-26-58-09; ₱75 million jackpot. SuperLotto 6/49: 22-42-18-28-08-17; ₱157.95 million jackpot. Lotto 6/42: 16-22-03-30-36-04; ₱10 million jackpot. In the minor games, PCSO said the 6D Lotto winning

- [Mayon Volcano’ s effusive eruption enters 84th day](#) (2026-03-31 22:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano’ s effusive eruption is on its 84th consecutive day, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said Tuesday. An effusive eruption is defined by Phivolcs as a type of eruption “dominated by the outpouring, fountaining or ejection of fluid lava.” Phivolcs made the pronouncement in an advisory after recording another

- [11-year-old asks Marcos: How can we read if we are being raped?](#) (2026-03-31 21:55)

MANILA, Philippines — “Mr. President, how will we read if we are being raped?” This was the question posed by an 11-year-old student to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. as she sought protection and redress from sexual and other forms of injustices allegedly perpetrated by a barangay kagawad (village councilor) and his sons in Tinambac, Camarines Sur.

- [Town in Iloilo declares state of calamity over energy crisis](#) (2026-03-31 21:35)

ILOILO CITY—The municipality of Ajuy in Iloilo province has been placed under a state of calamity due to an energy emergency that has disrupted essential services and affected residents’ daily lives, local officials said. Ajuy Mayor Loida Espinosa announced the declaration on her social media page on Tuesday, March 31, citing Sangguniang Bayan Resolution No.

- [Suspected shabu lab discovered in Puerto Galera](#) (2026-03-31 21:06)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — The Police Regional Office (PRO) in Mimaropa has intensified its anti-drug operations after discovering a suspected illegal drug laboratory in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, where authorities recovered shabu and materials linked to its manufacture. The operation began on March 29, when the Puerto Galera municipal police station received a report

- [Kuwait dream cut short: OFW returns home amid Middle East tensions](#) (2026-03-31 20:20)

MANILA, Philippines — A 27-year-old overseas Filipino worker (OFW) from La Union who sought work in Kuwait in hopes of giving his family a better life was forced to return to the Philippines after only five months due to ongoing tensions in the Middle East. Mark Deleña is among the 99 Filipinos who were safely

- [Bayanihan 3 not just aid as crisis differs from pandemic — Quimbo](#) (2026-03-31 20:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The new version of the Bayanihan bill will differ from its two predecessors because the current fuel price crisis is unlike the COVID-19 pandemic, which required total lockdowns, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Tuesday. During an online press briefing, Quimbo clarified that under House Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III’s vision, Bayanihan 3

- [E-disbursement, better crisis response eyed in Bayanihan 3 bill](#) (2026-03-31 19:49)

MANILA, Philippines — One reform that the third Bayanihan bill may address is the tedious process of delivering financial assistance to the people, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Tuesday. During a press briefing, Quimbo explained that not all problems during crises involve finding funding sources; issues also arise once funds are available, such as determining

- [P611 M ‘people’ s money’ recovered from flood control scam – DOJ](#) (2026-03-31 19:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The government has successfully recovered over P611 million in public funds linked to anomalous flood control projects. Justice Secretary Fredderick Vida made the announcement Tuesday during his report to the people. “As of today, a total of P611,381,500 has been recovered as part of the people’s money in our attempt to recover

- [Holy Week returnee takes bus instead of car to save on fuel](#) (2026-03-31 19:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Garry Lorega and his wife will return to Naga City this Holy Week for the first time in four years. He is among the millions of Filipinos in Metro Manila who are expected to return to their hometowns during this major religious holiday. But unlike before, when he and his family traveled

- [LTFRB: Drivers without fuel subsidy can now register via QR code](#) (2026-03-31 18:49)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday said drivers who have yet to receive their fuel subsidy may now register via a QR code to claim their payout. “In this way, it is no longer necessary to personally go to the agency’s

office to register,” the LTFRB said

- [Expanded water sources strengthen Manila Water’s 24/7 supply for summer](#) (2026-03-31 18:48)

Manila Water Company assures its customers of continuous and reliable water service across the East Zone this Holy Week, supported by sustained investments in new and diversified water sources that strengthen system capacity during periods of high demand. With summer conditions coinciding with increased household water use during the Holy Week break, Manila Water confirms

- [ICI leaving it up to Marcos to release final report — Leviste](#) (2026-03-31 18:40)

The Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) has submitted its final report to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., leaving it to him to decide whether to release it to the public, Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste said. Leviste also thanked ICI Chairman Andy Reyes for meeting with him at the commission’s offices, noting that ICI

- [Highway Patrol Group to deploy 170 cops for 48th Asean Leaders’ Summit](#) (2026-03-31 18:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group (PNP HPG) will be deploying 170 personnel for the 48th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Leaders’ Summit to be held in Cebu. The HPG’s personnel will “support security and traffic management operations,” the unit said in a statement on Tuesday. It further detailed that

- [PNP internal watchdog vows to intensify probes into erring cops](#) (2026-03-31 18:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Internal Affairs Service (PNP IAS) has vowed to intensify its investigations into erring police officers as part of a crackdown on personnel violating law enforcement rules and procedures. “The Internal Affairs Service fully supports the Chief PNP’s zero-tolerance policy. Our responsibility is to ensure that accountability is enforced

- [DPWH says Edsa rehab to go full swing from April 1 to 6](#) (2026-03-31 18:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The continued rehabilitation of the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (Edsa) will run full swing starting Wednesday night, Public Works and Highways Secretary Vince Dizon announced on Tuesday. The road works will begin at 10 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1 and will run until 4 a.m. on Monday, April 6, Dizon detailed in

- [Heat index in Virac, Catanduanes forecast to hit 45°C on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-03-31 18:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Dozens of areas are expected to log high levels of heat indices on Holy Wednesday, with Virac, Catanduanes forecast to hit a “danger” level peak of 45°C, the state weather bureau said. Heat index, as defined by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and

Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), is the “measure of the contribution

- [Adiong on impeach raps: Crisis not an excuse to stop constitutional duty](#) (2026-03-31 18:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The crisis on fuel prices should not be used as an excuse to skip constitutional duties, Lanao del Sur Rep. Zia Alonto Adiong said, reiterating the stand of several lawmakers that the House of Representatives can balance addressing problems and tackling impeachment complaints. Adiong, in a statement on Tuesday, said that the House

- [Marina raises price increase limit for ship fares, cargo rates to 30%](#) (2026-03-31 17:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Domestic shipping companies and operators may now impose a price increase of up to 30 percent for passenger fare and cargo freight rates amid rising fuel costs, according to an advisory by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina). In an advisory issued on Monday, the maritime agency said it is allowing a maximum

- [Kababaihan lauds Sally Ujano’ s acquittal, urges wider justice access](#) (2026-03-31 17:38)

Kababaihan partylist welcomed the acquittal of women’ s and children’ s rights advocate Ma. Salome “Nanay Sally” Ujano on March 26, calling the Court of Appeals’ decision a meaningful step toward justice for individuals who struggle to be heard within the legal system. The group reiterated its ongoing support for women who face barriers in accessing justice,

- [Marcos approves P50/kilo price cap on imported rice](#) (2026-03-31 17:35)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced the approval of the proposed P50 per kilo price cap on imported rice, with an executive order set to follow. READ: Price council pushes P50 per kilo cap on imported rice “When the price of oil goes up, food prices follow. That’ s what we don’ t want

- [Maguindanao del Sur gov offers bounty for killers of 5 cops in ambush](#) (2026-03-31 17:34)

COTABATO CITY – Maguindanao del Sur Gov. Datu Ali Midtimbang has offered a P300,000 cash reward for anyone who can provide information leading to the identification and arrest of the suspects in the ambush-slay of five police officers in Shariff Aguak town on March 28. READ: 5 cops killed in Maguindanao del Sur ambush Speaking

- [Legarda boosts Congress-Bangsamoro coordination, advances reforms](#) (2026-03-31 17:30)

Sen. Loren Legarda reaffirmed her commitment to advancing peace, development, and inclusive governance in the Bangsamoro as she co-chaired the 4th Meeting of the Philippine Congress–Bangsamoro Parliament Forum (PCBPF), where key milestones were achieved to deepen institutional cooperation between the national government and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). A central outcome

- [Pamalakaya: Holy Week demand, oil costs to push fish prices up](#) (2026-03-31 17:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Fish prices may climb even higher during Holy Week, driven not only by increased demand but also by rising production costs linked to the ongoing oil price surge, according to the fishers' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) on Tuesday. "The government's failure to address the oil crisis will

- [DA counters concerns over potential spike in food prices](#) (2026-03-31 17:22)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) on Tuesday countered concerns over spikes in prices of food, stating that current projections tied to runaway prices of fuel do not reflect government interventions. In a statement, Agriculture Sec. Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. described such scenarios as being based "on extreme assumptions and excluded mitigating measures." READ:

- [Legarda lauds Filipina women's resilience amid climate crisis](#) (2026-03-31 17:21)

At the conclusion of National Women's Month, Sen. Loren Legarda praised the crucial role of Filipina women in holding communities together, especially during trying times caused by extreme weather. Legarda pointed out that Filipina women have long strived to make their families better, but have been faced with difficult challenges exacerbated by natural disasters

- [DILG warns public: Avoid swimming while drunk this summer](#) (2026-03-31 17:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Interior and Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Tuesday warned the public against swimming while under the influence of alcohol while on vacation during the Holy Week and summer season. "We won't arrest them. Having fun over the Holy Week isn't a crime. Just don't be intoxicated while swimming. Either one is

- [PH joins global initiative for school feeding programs](#) (2026-03-31 16:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has officially joined a global support initiative for school feeding programs, making the country among beneficiary nations of its support mechanisms intended to end worldwide child hunger. The Department of Education (DepEd) on Tuesday announced the Philippines' membership to the Governance Committee of the School Meals Accelerator (SMA), an initiative

- [BFP relieves all Metro Manila fire inspectors in anti-graft crackdown](#) (2026-03-31 16:39)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) relieved all fire safety inspectors (FSIs) in the National Capital Region (NCR) in a bid to crack down on corruption in the agency. "This move aims to set a new standard for transparency before expanding the program to other regions," the BFP said in a statement

- [Pangilinan: Supplemental budget for aid, support to agri sector needed](#) (2026-03-31 16:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The government needs to have a supplemental budget that would allow the provision of aid for sectors affected by the fuel price crisis — including the agricultural sector which may suffer from higher fertilizer costs — Sen. Francis Pangilinan said on Tuesday.

In an interview, Pangilinan said he is supporting a Bayanihan-type supplemental

- [Castro to Paolo Duterte: Don't blame Marcos for past corruption](#) (2026-03-31 16:17)

MANILA, Philippines — Palace Press Officer Claire Castro on Tuesday told Davao City Rep. Paolo Duterte not to pin on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. the alleged corruption committed by his predecessor. This came in response to the congressman's social media post, where he said he finds it "ironic" that Marcos is worried about anyone undoing his

- [PhilHealth to collect premiums despite calls to pause amid crisis](#) (2026-03-31 15:59)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on Tuesday acknowledged calls to temporarily suspend premium payments but affirmed that contributions will continue to fund member benefits. In an advisory on Tuesday, PhilHealth said it recognizes the pleas of many Filipinos to temporarily suspend premium payments as relief amid rising fuel costs, which affect

- [House to craft Bayanihan 3, but won't use loans to fund aid – Quimbo](#) (2026-03-31 15:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives' super committee tasked to come up with a response to the crisis caused by the Middle East conflict will likely form a new version of the Bayanihan bills used during the COVID-19 pandemic, but without resorting to loans, Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo said on Tuesday. Quimbo, in an online

- [BFAR extends fuel aid to 900 Biliran fishers](#) (2026-03-31 15:45)

TACLOBAN CITY — More than 900 municipal fishers in Biliran province received fuel assistance from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to support small-scale fishers who are heavily affected by the wild fluctuations in petroleum prices. The fuel aid distribution was held under the Fuel Discount Program for Farmers and Fisherfolk (FDPFF) caravan

- [Close to 2,000 tricycle drivers in Iloilo City to get aid](#) (2026-03-31 15:36)

ILOILO CITY—Apart from jeepney drivers, the Iloilo City government on Tuesday said that it will begin distributing fuel subsidies to tricycle drivers and operators on April 8, after the Holy Week. The subsidy distribution is funded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), with the local government facilitating documents and organizing the distribution process.

- [Rising fuel prices push fishers, farmers deeper into debt](#) (2026-03-31 15:31)

MANILA, Philippines—Small fishers are docking their boats. Farmers are cutting back on irrigation. Across the country, rising fuel prices are squeezing the sectors that keep food on Filipino tables. In separate statements, fisherfolk group Pamalakaya and farmers' group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) warned that persistent oil price hikes are pushing producers deeper into debt,

- [PNP cracks down on illegal bus fare hikes amid Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-31 15:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) vowed to strictly monitor fare hikes after eight bus companies were found to have allegedly raised prices illegally during the Holy Week exodus. “This must not be tolerated, otherwise, this will encourage others to do the same,” PNP Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a

- [Holy Week 2026: PNP on full alert, increases deployment of cops](#) (2026-03-31 15:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is now on full alert and is increasing its deployment of law enforcers for security measures during Holy Week. The alert level status came into effect at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, March 31, and will stay in effect until 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 5, PNP Chief

- [3 gas stations in Tagbilaran City flagged for overpricing fuel](#) (2026-03-31 15:23)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Several gasoline stations in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, will be issued show-cause orders after authorities found possible unjustified increases in fuel prices during a surprise inspection. The move came after the Tagbilaran City government conducted surprise inspections of gasoline stations on Tuesday following another round of fuel price hikes. READ: 8 Bohol gas

- [DOTr: LRT, MRT to pause ops; Edsa bus carousel open for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 15:17)

MANILA, Philippines — Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2 (LRT-1 and 2) and Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) will be closed from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said. In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Tuesday, DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez said the train lines’ suspension of operations

- [LOOK: Police mascots roam Naia, share fliers for safe vacation](#) (2026-03-31 15:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Police officers, along with police mascots, roamed the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) on Tuesday, March 31, to share fliers for a safe summer vacation. The police mascots and officers from the Police Community Affairs Group greeted passengers and handed them fliers entitled “Ligtas SumVac (summer vacation) 2026,” containing safety reminders for

- [Herbosa hit with new raps over alleged P1.5B expired meds, vaccines](#) (2026-03-31 14:51)

MANILA, Philippines – Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa is facing fresh criminal and administrative complaints before the Office of the Ombudsman, this time over the alleged P1.5 billion worth of expired medicines and vaccines classified as “dead stock.” The 33-page complaint, filed Tuesday by a group identifying themselves as “concerned Department of Health personnel,” accused Herbosa

- [BOC-Naia seizes P38.6-M worth of illegal drugs in March 2026](#) (2026-03-31 14:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Illegal drugs from several inbound shipments worth P38.6 million have been seized by the Bureau of Customs – Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-Naia) through a series of operations in March 2026, the agency said on Tuesday. According to the agency, the suspicious shipments were seized inside the warehouse facilities in Pasay City.

- [BARMM has enough fuel for April, reg' l energy agency says](#) (2026-03-31 14:24)

COTABATO CITY—The top energy official of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has assured that the region has enough fuel to last for the entire month of April. READ: BARMM energy office assures public of ample fuel supplies The assurance came as several gas stations in some parts of the country temporarily closed

- [Palace: Marcos wants anti-corruption probe to continue beyond his term](#) (2026-03-31 14:20)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. wants the investigation into the corruption issues plaguing the government to continue even after his term ends, according to Palace press officer Claire Castro. These remarks followed a recent Pulse Asia Ulat ng Bayan survey, which found that 28.6 percent of respondents cited Marcos' efforts to fight government corruption

- [DTI urges firms to keep basic goods prices stable past April 16](#) (2026-03-31 14:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will hold weekly meetings with manufacturers and retailers to extend their commitment not to raise the prices of basic commodities even after mid-April, according to Malacañang. In a briefing on Tuesday, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Trade Secretary Cristina Roque informed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

- [Hatiran: Cardona, Rizal' s quiet procession that opens Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 14:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Holy Week began on Palm Sunday, March 29, with a silent yet deeply moving display of devotion in Cardona, Rizal, as residents carried religious images depicting the Passion and death of Jesus Christ through the streets. Delicately kept in homes throughout the year, the images are brought out and paraded one by

- [Parents miss son' s graduation amid Holy Week travel rush](#) (2026-03-31 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Commuters flocked to bus terminals in Cubao on Holy Tuesday, not only to beat the Holy Week travel rush, but also to attend graduation and moving-up ceremonies. Among them was Jocelyn Calongcagong, who traveled from Alaminos, Pangasinan to Cubao to meet her husband at the Victory Liner terminal in Quezon City. READ:

- [Fuel hikes push car owners to buses, boost PITX ridership](#) (2026-03-31 13:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Rising fuel prices have prompted some car owners to shift to public transportation, contributing to an increase in passenger volume at the Parañaque Integrated

Terminal Exchange (PITX), an official said Tuesday. According to PITX spokesperson Jason Salvador, the uptick in passengers this Holy Week may be linked to motorists opting not to

- [DOTr awaits release order for P1-billion service contracting program](#) (2026-03-31 13:33)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) is waiting for the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) special allotment release order (SARO) for P1 billion to fund the government's service contracting program. In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Tuesday, DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez noted that their department had requested for the SARO

- [Palace to critics: Wake up, flood control probe still ongoing](#) (2026-03-31 13:16)

MANILA, Philippines — “Hoy, gising (Hey, wake up)!” This was the response of Palace press officer Claire Castro to critics claiming the administration's probe on anomalous flood control projects did not come to fruition. According to Castro, the government has not forgotten the investigation and is still pursuing individuals involved in the flood control scandal,

- [Palace on Imee Marcos' failure to guide her brother: 'Who misbehaved?'](#) (2026-03-31 13:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The Holy Week may be a time for reflection and forgiveness, but not for the long-estranged siblings – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Senator Imee Marcos. Malacañang hit back at the president's sister for allegedly dragging their father's name into their falling out over political and personal issues. In a briefing on Tuesday,

- [Leviste unfazed by 'DDS' tag: Only DDS want final report from ICI](#) (2026-03-31 12:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste is unbothered by any tags or accusations that he is among the supporters of former President Rodrigo Duterte, as Duterte-aligned lawmakers were the only ones asking for the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI) reports. Leviste on Tuesday was asked if he was not afraid of being associated to

- [PCG on full alert, deploys 17,000 personnel for Holy Week 2026 — DOTr](#) (2026-03-31 12:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coast Guard is now on full alert and has deployed around 17,000 personnel for security at transport hubs and along sea travel routes for the Holy Week exodus, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said on Tuesday. “Our Coast Guard is ready to help and assist our countrymen,” DOTr Secretary Giovanni

- [DPWH pauses road work projects to give way to Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-31 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) ordered all its offices to pause construction projects across the country to give way for travel during the Holy Week exodus. “Our instruction to all district engineers and regional offices is that there should be no ongoing projects. No one should build. No one

- [INQToday: Volume of passengers builds up in Cubao bus stations, Naia on Holy Tuesday](#) (2026-03-31 12:23)

Volume of passengers builds up in Cubao bus stations on Holy Tuesday As early as 8 a.m. on Holy Tuesday (March 31), passengers have started flocking to bus terminals in Cubao, Quezon City opting to travel early to their provinces ahead of the expected Holy Week travel rush. NAIA passenger volume on Holy Tuesday slightly

- [DOTr to expand road clearing ops for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-31 12:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) will be expanding its road clearing operations starting on Wednesday ahead of the influx of travelers for the Holy Week. While authorities usually cleared the country’s expressways and the Maharlika Highway, in a press briefing in Camp Crame on Tuesday, DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez said the initiative

- [Palace: Gov’t employees to be on half-day, work-from-home setup Holy Wed](#) (2026-03-31 11:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Government employees will be on a half-day work-from-home arrangement on Holy Wednesday, Palace Press Officer Claire Castro announced on Tuesday.

“On April 1, all government employees will work from home from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon. From 12:01 PM to 5:00 PM, there will be no work,” Castro told reporters. Work arrangements for

- [2 drug suspects held, P867,000 worth of shabu seized in Lucena City](#) (2026-03-31 11:46)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Police seized suspected shabu worth an estimated P867,000 from two alleged drug pushers in separate buy-bust operations here on Monday. Col. Romulo Albacea, Quezon police chief, said in a report Tuesday that operatives of the Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit (PDEU) arrested a suspect identified only as “Opaw,” 28, at around 7:50

- [Faith, creativity meet in Holy Week art retreat in Calapan](#) (2026-03-31 11:45)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Faith took on color, texture, and form as artists and participants gathered for a reflective “Holy Week Art Retreat” on Holy Monday (March 30), transforming a quiet space into what organizers described as a “sacred encounter” through art. The retreat, dubbed “Articulating Prayer Experience through Art,” was held at the

- [Faith thrives in Philippines as social tensions persist, data show](#) (2026-03-31 11:43)

MANILA, Philippines — As Lent calls Filipinos to prayer, sacrifice and reflection, new global data suggest the country’s deepest divides may lie not in belief itself, but in how it is lived alongside others. Drawing on data from the Pew Research Center, Dr. Rogelio Alicor Panao, an associate professor at the University of the Philippines

- [3 dead in Nueva Ecija irrigation canal drowning](#) (2026-03-31 11:38)

GUIMBA, Nueva Ecija — Three people died after reportedly attempting to swim in an irrigation canal in Barangay Naglabrahan on Monday afternoon. The victims were identified as cousins Ruben Benavidez, 31, and Elmer Benavidez, 47, both residents of the village, and Jomar Gobrin, 29, a native of Matnog, Sorsogon City. The incident was reported around

- [Group seeks conversion of faithful to ‘sustainable practices’](#) (2026-03-31 11:30)

TACLOBAN CITY — As the country observes Holy Week, the nongovernmental organization BAN Toxics is urging the Filipino faithful to adopt sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, citing rising energy costs, water scarcity, and the intensifying climate crisis. In a statement released on March 29, the group highlighted the impact of extreme heat, noting that last

- [BARMM chief creates oil crisis task force](#) (2026-03-31 11:22)

COTABATO CITY – Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) interim Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua has formed the inter-agency Bangsamoro Oil Crisis Impact Task Force (BOCITF) to monitor the impact of the oil crisis in communities throughout the region. Macacua said the effort seeks to hedge against profiteering and opportunistic traders as well as address the socioeconomic impact of

- [1 dead, 5 injured in four-vehicle crash in Tacloban City](#) (2026-03-31 11:12)

TACLOBAN CITY — A 61-year-old man died while five others were injured in a four-vehicle collision along Maharlika Highway in Barangay 93, Bagacay, Tacloban City, on Monday. Police identified the fatality only as “Terry” , of Jaro, Leyte, who was driving a Skygo motorcycle. He was declared dead on arrival at the Eastern Visayas Medical Center

- [Process to sainthood begins for Bishop Guerrero](#) (2026-03-31 11:05)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — The Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan has launched its diocesan inquiry for the beatification cause of Bishop Cesar Maria Guerrero, who pioneered dioceses, established seminaries, and promoted Marian devotions. The ceremony at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Dagupan City on March 27 followed approval from the Dicastery for

- [Makabayan lawmakers urge decisive action on rising fuel prices](#) (2026-03-31 10:59)

MANILA, Philippines — Lawmakers from the Makabayan bloc on Tuesday urged the House of Representatives to ensure that upcoming joint hearings on the oil crisis result in substantive measures rather than stopgap or “publicity-driven” actions. In a statement, ACT Teachers party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio, Gabriela party-list Rep. Sarah Elago, and Kabataan party-list Rep. Renee

- [‘Stranded’ helper gets job hours after online plea](#) (2026-03-31 10:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Job offers came flooding in for a household helper who had been stranded in a Quezon City bus terminal after her ordeal went online. Several social media users, whether in Facebook comments and private messages to this reporter, have expressed their willingness to hire Carmen Pepito Dela Cruz, 53, after her failed job

- [Mt. Banahaw fire affects grassland areas in Quezon – DENR](#) (2026-03-31 10:50)

LUCENA CITY — A brush fire that broke out atop Mt. Banahaw in Quezon province on Sunday, March 29, burned approximately 1,000 square meters of grassland, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported. In a report submitted Monday to DENR Calabarzon director Nilo Tamera, park superintendent Josephine Barrion said the fire affected areas

- [Cardinal David’ s new book shows Jesus’ ‘humanity and compassion’](#) (2026-03-31 10:32)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — “Get to know Jesus as a human being.” This was how Cardinal Pablo Virgilio S. David opened the Pampanga-leg launch of his book Yeshua (Son of Man) here recently. David, a native of Betis, Guagua, cautioned the audience about the challenge of this approach, noting that Yeshua—Jesus in Hebrew—has

- [Marcos to observe Holy Week in Ilocos Norte](#) (2026-03-31 10:32)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will spend Holy Week in Ilocos Norte but will continue to monitor and issue directives to government agencies responding to the Middle East conflict. In a brief media interview in Nueva Ecija on Tuesday, Marcos said he plans to observe Lent in his home province before returning to the city.

- [Marcos on opening of CLLEX in Nueva Ecija: It will be toll-free until Dec](#) (2026-03-31 10:30)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced that the newly opened San Juan Interchange of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija will be toll-free until December 2026. This expressway is expected to cut travel time between Tarlac and Cabanatuan to just 20 minutes. In a brief media statement during

- [Drivers urged to stay disciplined, avoid road rage this Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 10:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Tuesday encouraged all drivers and motorists to exercise discipline and avoid road rage as they hit the roads this Holy Week. LTFRB chairperson Atty. Vigor Mendoza III emphasized the importance of drivers keeping their cool, noting past road rage incidents

- [Iloilo City to distribute additional fuel aid to PUJ drivers](#) (2026-03-31 10:13)

ILOILO CITY— The Iloilo City government will continue distributing fuel subsidy coupons to public utility jeepney (PUJ) drivers on April 9 as part of efforts to ease the impact of rising fuel prices on the transport sector. The city announced on Tuesday, March 31, that a total of 1,600

PUJ drivers and operators qualified for

- [LOOK: Thousands of travelers show up at Naia; most got tickets in advance](#) (2026-03-31 10:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Thousands of passengers have showed up at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) in Pasay City for this year’ s Holy Week, according to the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA). In an interview with the Inquirer, MIAA General Manager Eric Jose Ines said that the arrival and departure of travelers have been going

- [Kidapawan villagers line up for P20 per kilo rice](#) (2026-03-31 09:58)

KIDAPAWAN CITY — Villagers flocked to the National Food Authority (NFA)–Cotabato warehouse early Monday morning to avail themselves of rice priced at P20 per kilogram. To accommodate demand, NFA-Cotabato increased the purchase limit per individual from 10 kilos to 30 kilos, giving better access to residents coming from far-flung barangays. Despite the adjustments, some villagers

- [Over 600 cops deployed across Zambales for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 09:57)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — More than 600 police officers have been deployed across the province as part of heightened security measures for the observance of Holy Week, the provincial police office said Monday. According to the Zambales Police Provincial Office (PPO), personnel were deployed to various municipalities starting Palm Sunday, with security boosted in churches

- [No price spike yet in Bicol food markets amid fuel crisis — DA](#) (2026-03-31 09:31)

LEGAZPI CITY — Prices of basic food items in the Bicol region have remained stable despite the ongoing petroleum products crisis. Lovella Guarin, Department of Agriculture regional information officer, told the Inquirer in a private message that retail prices across major public markets have so far shown no unusual spikes. “We have not yet observed

- [Donsol cancels Butanding Festival amid oil price surge](#) (2026-03-31 09:22)

LEGAZPI CITY — The local government of Donsol in Sorsogon province has canceled this year’ s Butanding Festival, originally set from April 24 to 30, citing the impact of rising oil prices. Desiree Abitria, municipal tourism officer, said the decision was reached during an emergency meeting with the town’ s tourism committee. “We unanimously agreed that everyone

- [Biodiesel project expanded across Bacolod villages](#) (2026-03-31 09:09)

BACOLOD CITY—Deputy House Speaker and Bacolod Rep. Alfredo Abelardo Benitez announced on Monday the expansion of a biodiesel project to more barangays in Bacolod City, aiming to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs while creating livelihood opportunities. Biodiesel, a renewable alternative to fossil fuels, is produced from vegetable oils, animal fats, used cooking oil,

- [3 former communist rebels surrender in Masbate](#) (2026-03-31 08:57)

LEGAZPI CITY — Three alleged members of a communist group in Masbate voluntarily surrendered to the authorities in the province on Sunday in the town of Baleno, police reported on Monday. Police Brigadier General Erosito Miranda, chief of the Bicol police, said the surrender resulted from coordinated efforts among units under the Masbate Police Provincial

- [LOOK: Volume of passengers builds up in Cubao bus stations on Holy Tuesday](#) (2026-03-31 08:54)

MANILA, Philippines — As early as 8 a.m. on Holy Tuesday (March 31), passengers have started flocking to bus terminals in Cubao, Quezon City opting to travel early to their provinces ahead of the expected Holy Week travel rush. Here are some images.

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 31, 2026](#) (2026-03-31 08:53)

MANILA, Philippines – Local fuel prices are set to end the month with no reprieve in sight, as motorists face another round of increases this Tuesday, March 31, driven by rising global oil costs. Oil firms on Monday announced that they would implement price increases for diesel, reaching P12.50 to P12.90 a liter while gasoline

- [Manhunt on for gunmen in killing of police corporal in Lanao del Sur](#) (2026-03-31 08:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The police are now on the hunt for the gunmen behind the killing of a police corporal and his companion in Lanao del Sur. “Hot pursuit operations are ongoing and we are confident that those responsible will be caught. We will not stop until we hold them accountable,” Philippine National Police (PNP)

- [Irrigation project enables 3rd cropping in Iloilo town](#) (2026-03-31 07:24)

ILOILO CITY — For the first time, 517 farmer-members of the Agbato Calinog Irrigators Association Inc. in the municipality of Calinog in Iloilo embarked on a third cropping, or double dry season cropping. This comes following the successful delivery of irrigation waters from the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II). Steve Cordero, officer-in-charge for

- [Heat index in Cotabato City may hit 41°C; 70 areas on alert](#) (2026-03-31 07:10)

MANILA, Philippines — The heat index in Cotabato City is expected to hit 41 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, March 31, placing it under the “extreme caution” category, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. PAGASA classifies heat index levels between 33°C and 41°C as “extreme caution,” where heat cramps and heat exhaustion

- [Cloudy weather expected over PH on Tuesday, March 31](#) (2026-03-31 07:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Partly cloudy to cloudy weather is expected over the whole country on Tuesday, March 31, the state weather bureau said. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and

Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) reported that Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies. There is a chance of thunderstorms in

- [Carpooling eyed in Metro under strict guidelines](#) (2026-03-31 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) will soon release special permits to individuals or companies seeking to enroll in the government's carpooling program, as a way to provide alternative transportation to commuters. At a briefing on Monday, officials of the LTFRB, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Land Transportation Office

- [Lawyers' group: 80% of travelers won't benefit from airport fee cuts](#) (2026-03-31 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — A group of lawyers has criticized the rollout of airport fee discounts scheduled in April, saying around 80 percent of travelers cannot benefit from the measure since it does not cover Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), which is now under a private operator. The Department of Transportation recently announced the reduction of

- [Marcos: New Cavite segment toll-free this April](#) (2026-03-31 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — The newly opened Manila-Cavite Expressway (Cavite) C-5 Link Segment 3B will be free for use by motorists until the end of April to help those traveling during the Holy Week, according to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The President on Monday led the opening of the six-lane, 2-kilometer connector road, which is expected

- [DOJ, Pagcor sign MOA barring all department personnel from casinos](#) (2026-03-31 05:05)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) on Monday entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to include all DOJ officials and employees to the list of persons banned from casinos. Pagcor chair and CEO Alejandro Tengco said the MOA was the first to be signed

- [8 bus firms face probe for illegal fare increases](#) (2026-03-31 05:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Monday reminded bus companies not to take advantage of passengers headed home to their provinces during the Holy Week break, as it received a report about bus firms that had raised their fares illegally. Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez also issued a similar reminder,

- [Woman stranded at QC bus terminal after failed job hunt](#) (2026-03-31 04:50)

MANILA, Philippines — A 53-year-old woman has been waiting patiently since the weekend at the Victory Bus Liner terminal in Quezon City, not for a bus ride but for a job offer. "I am just here to look for a job as a house helper," Carmen Pepito dela Cruz told the Inquirer on Monday. She

- [Social media ban pushed anew for kids 16 and below](#) (2026-03-31 04:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Monday renewed his call for a social media ban on individuals aged 16 and below after the Indonesian government blocked children below 16 years old from high-risk platforms. In a press statement, Gatchalian cited the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment, which found that for

- [Local terrorist group eyed in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-03-31 04:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is investigating the possible involvement of a local terrorist group in the deadly ambush in Maguindanao del Sur that killed five police officers and wounded three others last Saturday night. PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño said in a press briefing at Camp Crame on Monday that

- [In Zamboanga City, island folk finally get safe water](#) (2026-03-31 04:35)

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines — For years, residents of Barangay Tumulutab Island began their mornings lining up with empty containers, waiting for water deliveries by boat from the city's mainland. At P50 to P70 per five-gallon container, clean water was a daily financial burden for families in the island barangay. That routine has begun to change.

- [Repatriated OFW lands job at Bulacan fair](#) (2026-03-31 04:30)

CITY OF MALOLOS, BULACAN, Philippines — One of Bulacan's eight repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from the Middle East has already secured employment through a job fair organized by the Bulacan provincial government, just three days after returning home. Provincial Public Employment Service Office (Peso) head Engr. Egbert Robles said the OFW, from San Jose

- [Mayon Volcano continues to spew lava fountains – Phivolcs](#) (2026-03-31 00:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano continued to produce lava fountains on Tuesday evening, this time reaching 250-meters above its crater, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said. According to Phivolcs in an advisory, lava fountaining in Mayon was recorded at exactly 07:42 p.m. “These events produced 250 m-tall incandescent fountains and ash plumes

- [Fuel shortage cuts local passenger ferries by 10% – DOTr](#) (2026-03-31 00:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez confirmed that fewer inter-province ships have been sailing across the country due to fuel supply problems caused by the ongoing war in the Middle East. Lopez told reporters in Parañaque City on Monday that he ordered the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to deploy ships to ferry stranded passengers,

- [NGO warns vs coal expansion amid energy crisis](#) (2026-03-30 23:58)

MANILA, Philippines — A non-governmental organization on Monday called on the government to prioritize renewable energy over boosting coal-fired power generation, as such measures could only undermine the country's long-term energy transition. Climate Conflict Action Asia

(CCAA) issued the call after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared a state of national emergency and ordered the

- [PCSO: No jackpot winners in March 30 lotto draws](#) (2026-03-30 22:59)

MANILA, Philippines — No bettor won the jackpot prizes for Grand Lotto 6/55 and Megalotto 6/45 in Monday's (March 30) Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) draws. Grand Lotto 6/55 produced the combination 27-34-31-54-23-03 for a jackpot of P45 million, with no winner. Megalotto 6/45 drew 03-27-24-07-43-13 for a P15 million jackpot, also with no winner,

- [DOTr urges Holy Week travelers to report illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 22:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Giovanni Lopez on Monday urged Filipinos, especially those traveling back to their provinces for the Holy Week, to report to authorities bus companies that raised their fares despite the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. indefinitely suspending such hikes. Lopez said personnel of the Land Transportation Franchising

- [De Lima files resolutions seeking to probe surge in diesel prices](#) (2026-03-30 22:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Mamamayang Liberal party-list Rep. Leila de Lima has filed measures seeking to probe the surge in diesel prices in the country, as well as assess and address its impact on public transportation. In filing House Resolution (HR) No. 914, De Lima stressed the need to determine why the country has emerged as

- [Driver in 'gas and run' case now in police custody](#) (2026-03-30 20:58)

MANILA, Philippines — The driver who fled from a gas station without paying for fuel worth P5,000 is now in police custody. Quezon City Police District (QCPD) spokesperson Maj. Jennifer Gannaban on Monday night confirmed to the Inquirer in a text message that the suspect was taken into the custody of the La Loma Police

- [SSS, GSIS urged to immediately release Easter bonus for pensioners](#) (2026-03-30 20:48)

MANILA, Philippines — SSS-GSIS Pansyonado party-list Rep. Rolando Macasaet on Monday called for the immediate release of an "Easter Emergency Bonus" to help pensioners of the Social Security System (SSS) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) cope with rising prices. Macasaet noted that pensioners remain among the most vulnerable sectors during the crisis. READ: SSS

- [Manila Water advises customers to schedule septic tank desludging this summer](#) (2026-03-30 20:45)

As the summer months begin, Manila Water calls on its customers to take proactive steps to maintain their septic tanks to safeguard household comfort, public safety, and community health. With higher temperatures and increased water consumption typical of the summer months, septic systems experience greater stress, making desludging a critical precaution to

prevent overflows and

- [Lawyers to SC: Resolve petition vs hike in airport fees](#) (2026-03-30 20:38)

MANILA, Philippines – An urgent motion was filed by a group of lawyers on Thursday asking the Supreme Court (SC) to resolve their pending application for a restraining order against increased airport fees which was filed last year. The lawyers, led by Atty. Joel R. Butuyan, Antonio G.M. La Viña, Soledad Deriquito Mawis, Roger R.

- [Angara challenges Class of 2026 to maintain resilience beyond graduation](#) (2026-03-30 20:32)

MAKATI CITY, Philippines — Education Secretary Sonny Angara on Monday challenged graduates nationwide to maintain their spirit of resilience as they transition out of the basic education system, as nearly 48,000 public schools hold their end-of-school-year (EOSY) ceremonies. In his message for the graduation and moving-up ceremonies, Secretary Angara reminded the graduating batch that their

- [AI drone project to detect banana disease in Davao Region farms](#) (2026-03-30 20:19)

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Agriculture in Davao Region (DA-11) signed a memorandum of understanding Monday with Japanese firm E-Supportlink Co., Ltd. to launch an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered drone pilot project for banana plant counting and early disease detection. The banana industry is a major contributor to the Philippine agricultural economy, particularly in Mindanao. However,

- [Meralco: No scheduled 3-month long brownouts](#) (2026-03-30 19:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Manila Electric Company (Meralco) on Monday denied claims circulating online about a supposed three-month power outage, explicitly tagging the posts as fake. READ: Meralco to review fuel costs as Middle East war pushing up power rates Meralco issued the clarification through a “fake news alert” posted on its official social media

- [PhilHealth enforces ‘No SPA, No Payment’ for self-paying members](#) (2026-03-30 19:22)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) will implement the “No SPA, No Payment” policy for self-paying members beginning April 1 as part of digitalization and service efficiency efforts. In a news release on Monday, the state insurer said the digital system aims to ensure that contributions are accurately recorded and credited without

- [Sara Duterte impeachment: SALNs used to convict Corona — Zamora](#) (2026-03-30 19:21)

MANILA, Philippines — House justice committee vice chair Ysabel Maria Zamora on Monday said the scrutiny of Vice President Sara Duterte’s statements of liabilities and net worth (SALNs) has a precedent: the impeachment case of Chief Justice Renato Corona, who was convicted. “The non-disclosure of certain assets or even just one asset in the SALNs

- [No practical effect: SC dismisses Harry Roque's petition](#) (2026-03-30 19:17)

MANILA, Philippines – The Supreme Court (SC) has dismissed the petition of former presidential spokesperson Harry Roque to stop the House of Representatives' Quad Committee (Quadcomm) from arresting him and requiring him to attend hearings and submit documents related to the Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs). In a decision made public Monday, the SC, through

- [LTO summons driver, vehicle owner involved in Rizal road rage](#) (2026-03-30 18:27)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Office (LTO) on Monday said it summoned a motor vehicle driver who allegedly brandished a firearm during a road rage incident in Taytay, Rizal. The LTO said it also summoned the registered owner of the vehicle, a Nissan Navara, along with the driver, and ordered both to appear before

- [PCSO to deploy landing craft vessel to boost patient mobility in Batanes](#) (2026-03-30 17:25)

BASCO, Batanes — In line with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to make healthcare accessible for everyone, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has announced its plan to provide a landing craft vessel (LCV) for Batanes to improve patient transport across the province's island municipalities, with deployment scheduled later this year. PCSO General Manager Melquiades

- [Legarda stresses peacebuilding as lifelong mission at PAMANA MOA signing](#) (2026-03-30 17:14)

Sen. Loren Legarda stressed her lifelong mission of peacebuilding, recalling her decades of work mediating in conflict areas, negotiating the release of captives, and championing programs that transform peace agreements into development dividends for communities long deprived of basic services. She delivered this message as Guest of Honor and Speaker at the signing of the

- [PNP vows stricter monitoring of prices of basic goods during Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 17:08)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) will be more strict on monitoring the prices of basic goods during this year's observance of Holy Week in anticipation of an influx of travelers and tourists. In a statement on Monday, PNP Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the law enforcement agency was coordinating with

- [BFP to deploy 40,000 firefighters for Holy Week 2026 – DILG](#) (2026-03-30 17:00)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) will be deploying around 40,000 firefighters as part of safety measures during this year's observance of the Holy Week, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said on Monday. In a statement, the DILG, which supervises the BFP, noted that the fire bureau will

- [Legarda asserts women's central role in water governance](#) (2026-03-30 16:59)

Sen. Loren Legarda urged stronger enforcement of environmental and water laws, stressing that women's leadership and grassroots innovation are central to securing water, building climate resilience, and promoting inclusive development. Speaking at the Water and Women Forum PH 2026 held on March 23 in Quezon City, in celebration of World Water Day and National Women's

- [QC police tracks down owner of vehicle in 'gas and run' case](#) (2026-03-30 16:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Quezon City Police District (QCPD) has identified the owner and confirmed the plate number of the vehicle whose driver recently fled a gas station without settling his fuel bill of over P5,000. "Authorities immediately coordinated with the Land Transportation Office and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, resulting in a clearer image

- [Bam Aquino pushes bill to allow gov't to cap gasoline, diesel prices](#) (2026-03-30 16:49)

MANILA, Philippines — As oil prices continue to rise, Senator Bam Aquino has filed a bill seeking to classify gasoline, diesel, and other petroleum products as basic necessities, placing them under government price controls. In filing Senate Bill No. 2011, Aquino explained that the proposed measure intends to address a gap in Republic Act No.

- [PITX: 39 extra trips to Bicol region added due to high demand](#) (2026-03-30 16:40)

Passengers board a bus bound for Catanduanes at the PITX on Monday afternoon. (INQUIRER.net / Keith Clores) MANILA, Philippines — Thirty-nine additional trips to the Bicol region have been added and scheduled at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) on Monday afternoon. In a message to reporters, PITX Senior Corporate Affairs Officer Kolyn Calbasa said

- [Thousands of TNVS drivers excluded by operators from aid list – DSWD](#) (2026-03-30 16:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Some transport network vehicle service (TNVS) drivers were not able to receive P5,000 cash aid from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) because their companies excluded them from the list of beneficiaries, according to Secretary Rex Gatchalian. In a press conference on Monday, Gatchalian said they are currently in the

- [PNP tightens Maguindanao del Sur security after ambush kills 5 cops](#) (2026-03-30 15:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has tightened security measures in Maguindanao del Sur following an ambush in Shariff Aguak town, which killed five cops and injured three more during patrol operations over the weekend. "The internal protocols for field operations are now under strict review to prevent similar tactical lapses. Additional rapid

- [Number of Holy Week travelers likely to peak on Wednesday – PITX spox](#) (2026-03-30 15:20)

MANILA, Philippines – The number of people traveling to their provinces for the Holy Week will likely peak on Wednesday, Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) spokesperson Jason Salvador said. Salvador shared this projection on Monday afternoon in an interview with the media. “Historically speaking, our peak is Wednesday. That is the last working day of

- [Highway Patrol Group deploys 755 cops for Holy Week 2026 security](#) (2026-03-30 15:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG) has deployed 755 personnel as part of security measures for this year’s observance of Holy Week. In an interview with reporters at Camp Crame on Monday morning, HPG spokesperson Lt. Nadame Malang said the 755 personnel were deployed in 92 teams roving across the

- [Carpooling program eyed in Metro Manila to counter fuel price surge](#) (2026-03-30 14:56)

MANILA, Philippines—The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is set to release a memorandum circular next week for the proposed carpooling initiative in Metro Manila amid rising fuel prices. In a press briefing on Monday, officials from the MMDA, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), and the Land Transportation Office (LTO) presented the proposed guidelines

- [Another illegal mining operation dismantled in South Cotabato](#) (2026-03-30 14:49)

KORONADAL CITY – Authorities dismantled another illegal “banlas,” or sluice mining operation, in the mountains of Tampakan, South Cotabato, as part of an intensified crackdown against illegal mining in the area. Tampakan Mayor Leonard Escobillo said Monday that the local government, together with police forces, raided a banlas site in Sitio Kampo Kilot, Barangay Pulabato,

- [Maguindanao del Sur village head, driver hurt in another ambush](#) (2026-03-30 14:31)

COTABATO CITY – Another ambush struck Maguindanao del Sur on Monday morning, with the target narrowly escaping death. Capt. Steffi Salanguit, spokesperson for the Police Regional Office–Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (PRO-BAR), said Hadji Mansor Mangelen, village chairperson of Barangay Damalusay, Paglat, Maguindanao del Sur, was slightly injured in the 8:30 a.m. ambush in Barangay Malangit, Pandag

- [Lanao Sur officer slain hours before Maguindanao Sur ambush of 5 cops](#) (2026-03-30 14:20)

COTABATO CITY– Before the ambush in Maguindanao del Sur on March 28 that killed five policemen, a police corporal was killed in a separate ambush in Saguieran, Lanao del Sur, police in the Bangsamoro Region said Monday. READ: PNP eyes retaliatory attack in terror group’s Maguindanao ambush of cops Capt. Steffi Salanguit, spokesperson for the

- [Traffic delays some Bicol trips from PITX](#) (2026-03-30 14:16)

MANILA, Philippines – Some passengers at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) reported delays in their scheduled trips to the Bicol region on Monday. In a text message to the Inquirer, PITX Senior Corporate Affairs Officer Kolyn Calbasa said the delays of the buses going to Bicol is caused by “usual traffic.” The Inquirer surveyed

- [PNP beefs up deployment to 59,000 cops for Holy Week 2026](#) (2026-03-30 14:12)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) has deployed 59,416 law enforcers for security measures during this year’s observance of Holy Week, an increase from the 55,000 personnel it previously said it would deploy. In a press briefing at Camp Crame on Monday, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño said the police force deployed

- [2 lawyers filing impeachment complaint vs. Comelec chief, commissioners](#) (2026-03-30 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Two lawyers are set to file an impeachment complaint against Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia and six commissioners over alleged institutional misconduct in the May 2022 and 2025 elections. Eldrige Marvin Aceron, founding partner of Aceron & Attorneys and founder of the Aceron Public Interest and Legal Association, and Sikini

- [Fisherman reported missing in Zambales returns home safely](#) (2026-03-30 13:41)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — A fisherman reported missing in Cabangan town in this province was later found safe, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Zambales confirmed on Monday (March 30). According to PCG reports, 59-year-old Condrado del Rosario left for a fishing trip on March 28 and was expected to return the following day, March 29,

- [Tagbilaran City launches ‘Libreng Sakay’ program for commuters](#) (2026-03-30 13:38)

TAGBILARAN CITY — The city government has launched its “Libreng Sakay” program, providing free transportation to help commuters cope with rising costs and ongoing transport challenges. Six buses have been deployed across various routes, offering free rides to residents from Monday to Saturday. The service operates during peak hours: 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and

- [Fuel hoarding, profiteering cases rise to 6 after Albay buy-bust ops](#) (2026-03-30 13:31)

MANILA, Philippines – The number of fuel hoarding and profiteering cases has risen to six after police operatives entrapped a man in Ligao City last week for allegedly possessing fuel worth P2 million, the Philippine National Police said Monday. The suspect was arrested on Thursday and allegedly found with storage containers holding about 1,200 liters

- [450 Iloilo City cops deployed for Holy Week, summer](#) (2026-03-30 13:18)

ILOILO CITY — As Holy Week begins, the Iloilo City Police Office (ICPO) has activated extensive security measures, deploying 450 personnel to ensure the safety of residents and visitors throughout the city. The deployment is part of the Philippine National Police’s (PNP)

nationwide “Ligtas SUMVAC 2026,” a security operation running from March 29 to May

- [Pilgrims find healing at Calapan’ s Benedictine abbey](#) (2026-03-30 13:08)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — In the quiet hills of Barangay Salong here, where the wind moves gently through trees and prayer seems to linger in the air, the Our Lady Mother of Divine Providence Abbey has become more than a monastery. For many, especially during Holy Week, it is a refuge — a place

- [PNP seizes P2-billion smuggled cigarettes in Q1, crackdown continues](#) (2026-03-30 12:39)

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine National Police (PNP) confiscated over P2 billion worth of smuggled cigarettes nationwide in the first quarter of 2026, with efforts ongoing to identify those behind the illegal tobacco trade. There were 3,153 anti-smuggling cigarette operations, conducted from January 1 to March 29, 2026, led to the arrest of 1,187 individuals.

- [PCG rescuers save boy who fell overboard in Zambales](#) (2026-03-30 12:21)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — A three-year-old boy who accidentally fell from a boat about five meters off Baracca Pier in Subic town on Sunday was successfully rescued. According to a report from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Zambales, the boy’ s 61-year-old father was engaged in recreational fishing aboard the FBCA Ariman Express with his two

- [Gatchalian revives call for social media ban for 16-year-olds and under](#) (2026-03-30 11:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Monday renewed his call to ban social media for minors 16 years old and under, following Indonesia’ s move to block children from high-risk platforms. In a press release, Gatchalian cited results from the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment. This study found that every additional hour 15-year-old Filipino students

- [Mindoro lawyers bring legal aid, healing programs to women, kids](#) (2026-03-30 11:57)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Oriental Mindoro Chapter conducted a series of legal aid and community outreach activities in observance of National Women’ s Month, reaching vulnerable sectors across the province. On Saturday afternoon, March 29, at Bahay Kanlungan, a shelter for abused women and children, volunteer

- [Fire guts construction establishment, 9 houses in Calapan City](#) (2026-03-30 11:45)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Two days before the end of Fire Prevention Month, a fire of undetermined origin gutted the warehouse, office, and canteen of a construction company in Barangay Lumangbayan, along with at least nine nearby houses, early morning on Sunday. Dennis Escosora, head of the Calapan City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 30, 2026](#) (2026-03-30 11:42)

MANILA, Philippines – Local fuel prices are once again under close watch as the Philippines braces for potential increases at the end of the month, though motorists may catch a brief respite. Based on the first four trading sessions this week, diesel prices are projected to rise by P11 to P12 per liter, while gasoline

- [After failed job hunts, 53-year-old helper ‘stranded’ at QC terminal](#) (2026-03-30 11:40)

MANILA, Philippines – Early travelers gathered at a bus terminal in Quezon City on Monday, heading to their provinces as early as possible to avoid the Holy Week rush. Among them was Carmen Pepito Dela-Cruz, 53, who has been staying at the Victory Liner Terminal Cubao since the weekend. But unlike most passengers, she has

- [Army officer killed, 2 soldiers hurt, NPA rebel caught in Mindoro clash](#) (2026-03-30 11:31)

LUCENA CITY — A junior Army officer was killed, two soldiers were wounded, and an alleged New People’s Army (NPA) rebel was captured during an encounter in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, on Sunday. In a report sent to the Inquirer Monday morning, the Army’s 2nd Infantry Division, based at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, said

- [PNP probes local police chief over possible lapses in Maguindanao ambush](#) (2026-03-30 11:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is investigating whether the Maguindanao del Sur police chief had any lapses in connection with the ambush in Shariff Aguak town that killed five police officers and wounded three others. In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Monday, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño noted that

- [8 bus firms to face sanctions over illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-30 11:22)

MANILA, Philippines — Eight bus companies are facing possible sanctions after they were found to have illegally implemented a fare increase amid rising fuel prices, authorities said Monday. The Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) reported that the bus firms, all operating routes to the Bicol Region, imposed unauthorized fare hikes over the weekend. PITX Senior

- [Juvenile grass owl set free in Apayao during Earth Hour](#) (2026-03-30 11:16)

TUGUEGARAO CITY — In a symbolic celebration of Earth Hour last week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources–CENRO Calanasan released a juvenile Philippine Grass Owl (*Tyto longimembris amaurotata*) back into its natural habitat on Saturday, March 28, at 8 p.m. Dubbed the “Earth Owl” conservation action, the release coincided with the global Earth Hour

- [Gas station closures drop to 365 as supply improves, says PNP](#) (2026-03-30 11:07)

MANILA, Philippines — The number of gas stations that have closed due to supply constraints has dropped to 365, according to the Philippine National Police’s (PNP) monitoring as of Monday, March 30. READ: Fuel shortage forces 425 gas stations to close temporarily – PNP Data presented by the PNP to the media in a briefing

- [New clash reported in Occidental Mindoro after March 24 encounter](#) (2026-03-30 11:02)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Government forces clashed anew with suspected communist rebels in Sitio Salapay on Sunday afternoon, just days after a similar encounter in another village in the same town, authorities said. In a report, the Occidental Mindoro Police Provincial Office said the latest firefight broke out at 2:20 p.m. in Barangay Monteclaro

- [Holy Week is an opportunity to visit family, most PITX passengers say](#) (2026-03-30 10:56)

MANILA, Philippines – Visiting families are among the motivators of those traveling via buses at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) for the Holy Week. With many going to their provinces as early as Holy Monday, the Inquirer spoke to a couple of individuals awaiting to board their respective buses. Among them was Nilay, who

- [PNP eyes retaliatory attack in terror group’s Maguindanao ambush of cops](#) (2026-03-30 10:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The ambush that killed five police officers and wounded three more in Maguindanao del Sur over the weekend may have been a retaliation from a local terrorist group (LTG), the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Monday. In a press briefing in Camp Crame, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño detailed that

- [P651M of P2.5B subsidy to drivers, operators given – LTFRB](#) (2026-03-30 10:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Over P651 million of the P2.5 billion fuel subsidy has already been disbursed to public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers and operators nationwide, according to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). In a press release on Monday, the LTFRB said chairperson Atty. Vigor Mendoza II has instructed all regional directors to ensure

- [New voter registrations in Negros Island Region reach 172,680](#) (2026-03-30 10:52)

BACOLOD CITY—New voter registrants in the Negros Island Region (NIR) have reached 172,680 as of March 28, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) NIR reported on Sunday. The figure reflects 7,313 new applications processed across Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor from March 23 to 28, the Comelec said. Negros Occidental remains the largest contributor, accounting

- [Biodiesel project offers Bacolod fishers relief from rising fuel costs](#) (2026-03-30 10:44)

BACOLOD CITY— Deputy House Speaker and Bacolod Rep. Alfredo Abelardo “Albee” Benitez launched a pioneering biodiesel project to support local fisherfolk at the Community Center of Las Palmas Subdivision in Barangay Taculing, Bacolod City, on Monday. “As fuel prices continue to rise, we need practical solutions that can help ease costs at the community level,”

- [Tacloban gas station halts operations due to fuel shortage](#) (2026-03-30 10:35)

TACLOBAN CITY — A gasoline station in this city ceased operations on Sunday, after reportedly running out of fuel supply. The station, located in one of the city's busiest areas, did not indicate when it would resume operations. "Our fuel supply has temporarily run out. We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your understanding," the

- [Fire erupts atop Mount Banahaw; probe underway](#) (2026-03-30 10:25)

LUCENA CITY – A fire of still undetermined origin broke out atop Mount Banahaw in Quezon province late Sunday afternoon. "We do not yet have verified information because we only learned about it through social media last night," said Magtanggol Barrion, a forest ranger of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in an

- [New Cavitet C5 Link-Segment 3B to be toll-free in April, says Marcos](#) (2026-03-30 10:05)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday announced that the newly opened Cavitet C5 Link-Segment 3B will be toll-free for the entire month of April. The two-kilometer connector road is expected to reduce travel time from Taguig City to Parañaque City to just 15 minutes from 1.5 hours. It is projected to serve around

- [P6.1-M 'shabu' seized, 2 'high-value' targets nabbed in Lucena City](#) (2026-03-30 10:04)

LUCENA CITY — Anti-narcotics operatives seized over P6.1 million worth of suspected shabu (crystal meth) as well as arrested two alleged high-value targets in a buy-bust operation in this capital city of Quezon province on Sunday afternoon. Lt. Col. Ryan Hernandez, Lucena City police chief, identified the suspects in a spot report by their aliases

- [PITX logs over 51,000 passengers on Holy Monday morning](#) (2026-03-30 09:54)

MANILA, Philippines — On Holy Monday morning, a total of 51,030 individuals were recorded at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX). The figure was logged as of 9 a.m., according to PITX Senior Corporate Affairs Officer Kolyn Calbasa. Some passengers were seen carrying luggage as they prepared to return to their provinces for the Holy Week. However,

- [New direct ferry links Pola and Batangas, cuts travel time](#) (2026-03-30 09:41)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — A new direct sea route linking the town of Pola and Batangas City has begun operations, with additional trips set for early April to meet rising travel demand ahead of the summer season. The ferry service, operated by Island Water, launched its initial trip on March 28, departing Batangas City

- [DOTr warns bus firms: illegal fare hikes may lead to suspension](#) (2026-03-30 09:04)

MANILA, Philippines — A show cause order and the possible suspension of licenses may be imposed on bus companies that hiked fares despite the suspension of the increase, Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez warned on Monday. This came after reports that some bus companies at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) implemented fare

increases. READ: Marcos orders

- [Currimao, Ilocos Norte suspends fest activities, cites energy emergency](#) (2026-03-30 08:25)

CURRIMAO, Ilocos Norte — The municipal government of Currimao in Ilocos Norte has announced the suspension of some activities of the annual Dinaklisan Festival, traditionally held on the last week of April. This move is in compliance with the national government's directive under Executive Order No. 110 declaring a state of national energy emergency. In a

- [Hot, humid weather to prevail on Monday, March 30](#) (2026-03-30 07:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Hot and humid conditions with chances of isolated rain showers or thunderstorms are expected to prevail over the country on Monday, March 30, according to the state weather bureau. In its morning weather forecast, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the ridge of the high-pressure area (HPA) currently

- [Pool cave in Dinagat Islands temporary closed to visitors](#) (2026-03-30 07:00)

BUTUAN CITY — The local government of Libjo in Dinagat Islands has ordered the temporary closure of the Miracle Pool Cave in Barangay Plaridel, citing conservation and site management needs. The closure begins on Friday and will stay in effect until further notice, according to the Libjo tourism office. “The temporary closure aims to conserve the

- [1M barrels of diesel expected this week, good for 5 days](#) (2026-03-30 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The first batch of the more than 1 million barrels of diesel procured by the government is expected to arrive this week and would be enough to cover domestic demand for five days, according to Executive Secretary Ralph Recto. “[T]he oil diplomacy ably conducted by energy officials led by Secretary Sharon Garin

- [SSS considers relief plans for employers, members](#) (2026-03-30 05:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Social Security System (SSS) is considering a moratorium on loan payments for its members, along with a condonation program for employers, as part of its relief measures amid the country's economic challenges. According to SSS President Robert Joseph de Claro, the measures being considered aim to provide immediate relief to members

- [Rights group seeks probe of antiterror law abuses](#) (2026-03-30 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Amnesty International Philippines has urged the government to conduct a “prompt, independent, impartial and transparent” investigation of alleged abuses in the implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Act after women and child rights activist Ma. Salome “Sally” Crisostomo-Ujano was cleared of rebellion charges. The rights group also called for a halt to any form

- [PH celebrates 32 years of internet connectivity](#) (2026-03-30 05:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) on Sunday vowed to further expand free internet access across the Philippines as it marked the 32nd year of its first connection to the internet on March 29, 1994. “Under the leadership of the DICT, efforts continue to expand free internet access to more

- [Explain corruption charges, lawmakers urge VP Sara Duterte](#) (2026-03-30 05:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Deputy Speaker Paolo Ortega on Sunday warned Vice President Sara Duterte that her trust rating may decline further if she continues to refuse to address the corruption allegations against her. Ortega made the prediction after a Pulse Asia survey result, which showed that over half—or 51.5 percent—of those who distrusted her pointed

- [Ex-lawmaker undeterred by criminal conviction, online attacks](#) (2026-03-30 05:05)

MANILA, Philippines — While she may be keeping a lower public profile these days, former ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro still has her Facebook account set to private to spare her children from all the harassment and abuse directed at her on social media. “My children can see that ... so until now, my Facebook

- [Pasig-Marikina river project rolls out new tech to boost flood control](#) (2026-03-30 05:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Amid the still unresolved scandal over the government’s flood control projects, a project by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)—the agency in the center of that controversy—is introducing new technology to bolster the flood defense of Metro Manila. The department’s Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (PMRCIP), which had been ongoing

- [P1.2B in Dole aid out after Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 04:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) will roll out P1.2 billion after the Holy Week as assistance to “most vulnerable” workers, particularly those from the transport sector, affected by the fuel crisis. The agency’s spokesperson and Assistant Secretary Lennard Serrano said Dole is studying proposals to place it under the department’s

- [DPWH opens more bypass roads](#) (2026-03-30 04:50)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to open more bypass roads in the country to help reduce gasoline consumption amid the oil price hikes. In a statement on Friday, DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon said aside from saving on gasoline, opening bypass roads would also

- [BARMM execs condemn ambush that killed 5 cops](#) (2026-03-30 04:45)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — Authorities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) condemned the deadly ambush in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur, that left five police officers dead and three others critically injured last Saturday night. Capt. Steffi Salanguit, spokesperson for the Police Regional Office BARMM, identified the slain officers

as Patrolmen

- [‘Palaspas’ costs rise amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-30 04:40)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — As church bells tolled for Palm Sunday and devotees raised woven palm fronds in blessing rites across the country, this year’s quiet ritual of buying “palaspas” came at a higher cost. Filipino Catholics marked the start of Holy Week yesterday with the traditional blessing of palms, commemorating Jesus Christ’s triumphant

- [Subsidized rice program benefits 5,000 in Leyte town](#) (2026-03-30 04:35)

TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE, Philippines — At least 5,000 residents in Palo town, Leyte, benefited from the expanded rollout of the government’s “Benteng Bigas Meron Na” program last Friday, as part of ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of rising food prices. The distribution, spearheaded by the regional office of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in

- [DA eyes Subic Freeport for biosecurity facility](#) (2026-03-30 04:30)

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is exploring the establishment of a Bio-Safe examination facility inside this freeport, to bolster the country’s defenses against agricultural smuggling and prevent the spread of animal diseases. In a statement last Friday, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) said officials from the DA-Inspectorate and Enforcement

- [No jackpot winners in Ultra, Super Lotto draws on March 29](#) (2026-03-29 21:57)

MANILA, Philippines—No bettor won the jackpot prize for Ultra Lotto 6/58 and SuperLotto 6/49 draws on Sunday, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. The Ultra Lotto 6/58 draw had the combination 45-49-34-52-09-28 with a jackpot prize of ₱75 million, The SuperLotto 6/49 drew came out with the 15-09-33-18-22-06 combination which had a jackpot of

- [Iloilo malls adjust operating hours amid energy conservation drive](#) (2026-03-29 21:53)

ILOILO CITY — Major shopping malls across Iloilo are implementing shorter and adjusted operating hours beginning Monday, March 30, aligning with the national government’s intensified energy conservation campaign. Mall operators including Festive Walk Iloilo, SM City Iloilo, Robinsons Iloilo and Jaro, Gaisano Capital branches, and Vista Mall Iloilo announced revised schedules that generally reduce weekday

- [CDO supporters mark ex-president Duterte’s birth anniversary](#) (2026-03-29 21:46)

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Festivities, food and entertainment marked the 81st birth anniversary celebration here of detained former president Rodrigo Duterte as close to a thousand supporters gathered on Saturday night. Amid chants and cheers, Duterte’s supporters listened to Talaandig musician Rodelio “Waway” Saway and other local performers until 10 p.m. at the Kiosko Kagawasan in

- [Palm Sunday Mass in Valencia, Bukidnon highlights faith amid crisis](#) (2026-03-29 21:24)

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon — Catholics here gathered on Palm Sunday for a Holy Mass to commemorate Jesus Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem, signaling the start of Holy Week. Rev. Fr. Jojo Sumastre of St. Bernadette Parish in Barangay Batangan, Valencia City, celebrated Mass at a chapel inside a private subdivision, which included a reenactment of

- [Loan relief for PUV, TNVS operators pushed](#) (2026-03-29 19:15)

MANILA, Philippines — Senior Citizens party-list Rep. Rodolfo “Ompong” Ordanes on Sunday called on President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to direct the government to extend payment reliefs on loans incurred by public utility vehicle (PUV) and transportation network vehicle service (TNVS) operators from April to June. Ordanes made the appeal as transport operators grappled with

- [Mayon Volcano update: Effusive eruption on its 83rd day](#) (2026-03-29 19:08)

MANILA, Philippines — Mayon Volcano produced ash clouds on Sunday and has reached its 83rd day of effusive eruption, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said. READ: Mayon Volcano emits lava fountain The Phivolcs, in an advisory, said minor strombolian activities were recorded in Mayon Volcano at exactly 12:30 a.m. and 6:46 a.m.,

- [500 prisoners moved from Bilibid to new Iwahig facility](#) (2026-03-29 18:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) on Sunday reported the transfer of 500 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) from New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City to the newly constructed dormitory at Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. BuCor Director General Gregorio Catapang Jr. said the 500 PDLs arrived at

- [House panel hearing on Sara Duterte impeach case seen until end of May](#) (2026-03-29 18:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives hearing on the impeachment case of Vice President Sara Duterte may wrap up by the end of May, said the lower chamber’s committee on justice vice chair San Juan City Rep. Ysabel Zamora on Sunday. Zamora made the pronouncement as the House committee on justice continued to hold

- [Solon sees further decline in Sara Duterte’s trust rating](#) (2026-03-29 18:21)

MANILA, Philippines — Deputy Speaker Paolo Ortega V on Sunday warned Vice President Sara Duterte that her trust rating may decline further if she continues to refuse to address the corruption allegations against her. Ortega made the prediction after citing Pulse Asia survey results which showed that over half—or 51.5 percent—of those who distrusted her

- [Medialdea hospitalized, to undergo ‘medical procedure’ – Sen. Bong Go](#) (2026-03-29 16:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Christopher “Bong” Go on Saturday said Salvador Medialdea, former President Rodrigo Duterte’s executive secretary, was hospitalized and is set to undergo a medical procedure. Go bared Medialdea’s condition in a Facebook statement, after asking the public to pray for him. “Nananawagan si Senator Bong Go sa mga kababayan natin na sama-sama

- [3 nabbed as PDEA dismantles Subic drug den](#) (2026-03-29 15:54)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Authorities dismantled a makeshift drug den in Barangay Calapacuan in Subic, Zambales on Saturday and seized suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) valued at about P136,000. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in Region 3 reported that a buy-bust operation was conducted at around 5:40 p.m. in the area led to the arrest

- [Asean AIPA preparatory meetings to be conducted online – Speaker Dy](#) (2026-03-29 15:01)

MANILA, Philippines — Speaker Faustino Dy III on Sunday announced that the country will be scaling down Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) meetings by shifting all preparatory meetings to virtual platforms. Dy, in a statement, said in-person activities for the AIPA meetings will only be limited to the General Assembly in

- [Dutertes’ backers launch Isda Bohol, celebrate ex-president’s 81st birthday](#) (2026-03-29 14:08)

TAGBILARAN CITY — Supporters of former President Rodrigo Duterte gathered in large numbers at Plaza Rizal in this city on Saturday, March 28, for the formal launch of the Inday Sara Duterte Alliance (Isda)-Bohol. The occasion coincided with the former president’s 81st birthday. The gathering opened with a motorcade at around 4 p.m., followed by

- [Lawmaker urges gov’t to build coastal petroleum storage facilities](#) (2026-03-29 13:53)

MANILA, Philippines—The government should establish petroleum storage facilities so that the country can have buffer stocks in times of crisis, a lawmaker said on Sunday. In a statement, House Minority Leader Marcelino “Nonoy” Libanan called on the state-owned Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) to invest in coastal petroleum storage facilities. He believes this situation will

- [Intensified mental health programs pushed amid rising suicide cases](#) (2026-03-29 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Sunday called on the government to intensify mental health programs amid a rise in cases of suicide in Metro Manila. Gatchalian made the appeal after the National Capital Region Police Office recorded 111 cases of suicide from January 1 to March 23, 2026. READ: Suicide cases in NCR

- [9,000 cops deployed for Lent in Central Luzon](#) (2026-03-29 13:33)

MABALACAT CITY, Pampanga — Around 9,000 police officers have been deployed across Central Luzon for public safety during the observance of Holy Week, the Police Regional Office 3 (PRO3) said on Sunday, March 29. In a statement, PRO3 said its personnel will be augmented by about 1,000 officers from other police units and more than

- [DICT vows wider free internet as Ph marks 32nd connectivity anniversary](#) (2026-03-29 12:45)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has pledged to expand free internet access across the country. The pronouncement comes on Sunday as the Philippines marks its 32nd anniversary of its first connection to the internet. According to the DICT, this year's celebration reaffirms the agency's mission "where no Filipino is

- [SSS eyes loan relief, condonation amid economic challenges](#) (2026-03-29 12:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The Social Security System (SSS) said it is eyeing a loan moratorium for its members, along with a condonation program for employers, as part of its relief measures amid the country's economic challenges. According to SSS President Robert Joseph de Claro, the measures under consideration aim to provide immediate relief to members

- [Robbery at Catbalogan terminal turns deadly; 1 suspect killed, another hurt](#) (2026-03-29 11:48)

TACLOBAN CITY — A robbery at a transport terminal in Catbalogan City escalated into a deadly shootout on Saturday evening, March 28, leaving one suspect dead, another wounded, and a third still at large, police said. In a report, the Police Regional Office 8 based in Palo, said the incident occurred at 7:35 p.m. at

- [Manhunt on for killers of 5 cops in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-29 10:41)

MANILA, Philippines — A manhunt was ordered on Sunday following an ambush in Maguindanao del Sur that left five police officers dead and three others seriously injured. The victims from the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company were returning from patrol operations on March 28 when unidentified assailants attacked them in Shariff Aguak town. Police and

- [LTFRB orders inspection of buses, PUVs ahead of Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-29 10:25)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on Sunday directed all its regional offices to hold roadworthiness inspections of buses and public utility vehicles (PUVs) ahead of the influx of travelers during Holy Week. READ: LTFRB: Over 1,200 passenger buses granted special permits for Holy Week According to the LTFRB chair

- [Rising fuel costs lift 'palaspas' prices this Palm Sunday](#) (2026-03-29 10:02)

LUCENA CITY — Vendors of "palaspas" (woven palm fronds) raised prices this year, passing on higher production and transport costs fueled by continuing oil price hikes amid the war in

Middle East. “All prices have gone up, so we were also forced to increase the price of palaspas,” said Maria Sembrano, 65, who has been

- [Iloilo City forms crisis council amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-29 09:46)

ILOILO CITY — The city government has created a Crisis Management Council to safeguard the supply of essential goods and stabilize public services. The formation of the panel comes as the country grapples with rising fuel prices and energy shortage linked to the Middle East war. Mayor Raisa S. Treñas signed Executive Order No. 035,

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 29, 2026 \(Sunday\)](#) (2026-03-29 09:10)

MANILA, Philippines — Fuel prices across the country are expected to rise again at the end of March. A source told Inquirer that the per-liter-price of diesel could go up by P11 to 12. There might be a P3 per-liter hike in gasoline or no change for the moment. Oil companies schedule price adjustments on

- [Ang Paglilibing: The solemn cast of Good Friday processions](#) (2026-03-29 08:00)

MANILA, Philippines — As the sun sets on Good Friday, thousands — sometimes millions — of Filipinos join a solemn candlelight procession called Sto. Entierro, which depicts Christ’s final journey from the cross to his tomb. The procession, a central component of Holy Week, or Semana Santa, in the Philippines, is held after the liturgical

- [Sugar mills urged to increase trucking allowance for farmers](#) (2026-03-29 07:24)

BACOLOD CITY — An official of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) on Wednesday called on sugar mills to increase the trucking allowance for sugar farmers amid rising fuel prices. In a statement, board member David Andrew Sanson, the planters representative, said he issued an appeal through a letter sent to sugar mills nationwide. “We respectfully request

- [Marcos urges unity, selfless service among Filipinos this Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 06:00)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called on Filipinos to embrace unity and help one another during the observance of Holy Week as countries around the world face crises due to the ongoing war in the Middle East. “May this Holy Week strengthen our resolve to become a nation guided by faith, united in

- [14-year-old qualifies as candidate for US state governor](#) (2026-03-29 05:42)

STOWE, Vermont — Looking back, gubernatorial candidate Dean Roy says his political ambitions started in the eighth grade. And by that he means, last year. After working as a legislative page at the Vermont Statehouse, the 14-year-old freshman at Stowe High School now has his sights set on the corner office. In November, he’ll be

- [Passenger surge still seen despite conflict in Middle East](#) (2026-03-29 05:41)

MANILA, Philippines — There may still be a surge of travelers at the country's main gateway, Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), over the Holy Week period, despite the expected upward pressure on airline tickets due to the war in the Middle East. This is according to private operator New Naia Infra Corp. (NNIC), which projects

- [Noted Baguio citizen, Inquirer lensman die in river tragedy](#) (2026-03-29 05:40)

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines — The smiling faces of grade school children would be the last images captured by a group of Baguio photographers before a fatal off-road accident claimed two lives on Friday afternoon. Rodolfo “Ompong” Tan, a prominent Baguio lensman, 2022 Outstanding Citizen of Baguio awardee and community pillar, died from severe head injuries

- [A quiet sanctuary of prayer, hope grows in Mindoro](#) (2026-03-29 05:39)

VICTORIA, ORIENTAL MINDORO, Philippines — What began as a simple farmhouse meant for family rest has quietly grown into a sanctuary of prayer, healing and renewal in the heart of Mindoro. Nestled in the rural village of Canaan in the town of Victoria, the Ilang Sanctuary of Prayer stands today not as a commercial retreat

- [Pag-asa Island soon to have its first Catholic church](#) (2026-03-29 05:39)

MANILA, Philippines — Work will soon begin for the construction of a Catholic church on Pag-asa (Thitu) Island for its permanent residents, as the government continues to reinforce Filipino presence in the West Philippine Sea. “The primary objective is to fulfill and nurture the spiritual needs of our local residents,” Rear Adm. Jay Tarriela of

- [Court to inspect Quiboloy sect's properties in Davao, NCR](#) (2026-03-29 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — A Pasig City court has ordered the inspection of six properties, including two in the National Capital Region (NCR), belonging to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KOJC), the sect founded by televangelist and alleged sex offender Apollo Quiboloy. In a nine-page order on Friday in connection with the pastor's human trafficking case,

- [Duterte spends 2nd consecutive birthday in ICC detention](#) (2026-03-29 05:37)

MANILA, Philippines — Former President Rodrigo Duterte marked his 81st birthday in detention at The Hague, the Netherlands, on Saturday as the International Criminal Court (ICC) continued to deliberate on his case for alleged crimes against humanity over his deadly “war on drugs”. The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I is set to rule not later than

- [House execs assert power to impeach](#) (2026-03-29 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — While they respect the Supreme Court as the “final arbiter of constitutional and legal questions,” Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro reiterated that the power to initiate an impeachment complaint and decide whether it should proceed to a Senate trial rests on the House of Representatives alone. “This is a responsibility we do not

- [Seminars, book forums, shows to mark National Literature Month](#) (2026-03-29 05:35)

MANILA, Philippines — Hot on the heels of the Philippine Book Festival, which drew throngs of readers—and which gives the lie to the oft-repeated statement that Filipinos don't read—is April as National Literature Month, as proclaimed by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Literature is one of the seven major arts which

- [Lopez Inc. family feud explodes into leadership battle](#) (2026-03-29 05:34)

MANILA, Philippines — A leadership battle has erupted within the Lopez family after a court blocked efforts to remove Federico “Piki” Lopez as president of Lopez Inc., the group's holding firm. In a writ of preliminary injunction dated March 26, a Mandaluyong City court barred the enforcement of the board resolutions passed on Feb. 27

- [DOE, DTI urged to consider price cap on LPG](#) (2026-03-29 05:33)

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday urged the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to impose a price cap on liquified petroleum gas (LPG) as its price may increase amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. Gatchalian noted the impending price increase of LPG and warned

- [Dole readies P1.2-B fund to help workers during crisis](#) (2026-03-29 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) has prepared P1.2 billion in standby funds to help workers who may lose income or jobs as a result of the ongoing energy crisis. The labor department said the fund will be used to “further intensify” its support programs as the government deals with a

- [Gov't urged: Ask Iran to let PH-bound oil tankers pass](#) (2026-03-29 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday said there should be no disruption in oil supply for the country and called on the Marcos administration to open “high-level” talks with Iran to ensure the safe transit of Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, as the tension in the Middle East continues. The

- [Biliran province cancels annual festival amid fuel crisis](#) (2026-03-29 00:03)

TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE, Philippines — The provincial government of Biliran has cancelled its annual Hudyaka Festival for May 2026, citing the ongoing fuel crisis and global uncertainties affecting oil prices. Governor Rogelio Espina, in announcing the decision, said funds originally intended for the province-wide cultural celebration will instead be redirected to address the more urgent

- [Calaca City in Batangas scraps two festivals due to energy emergency](#) (2026-03-28 23:59)

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON, Philippines — The mayor of Calaca City in Batangas province has canceled two major festivals in support of the declared state of national energy emergency. “The City of Calaca stands in solidarity with the national government in implementing

responsive and coordinated measures to address the risks posed by disruptions in the global

- [5 cops killed in Maguindanao del Sur ambush](#) (2026-03-28 23:47)

COTABATO CITY, BARMM, Philippines — Five police officers were killed while three others were injured in an ambush along Barangay Mother Poblacion of Shariff Aguak town, Maguindanao del Sur province, at around 9 p.m. on Saturday, March 28. Captain Steffi Salanguit, spokesperson for the Police Regional Office Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (Probar), confirmed that the five

- [Agoo town in La Union converts fiesta spending into fuel subsidy](#) (2026-03-28 23:21)

CALASIAO, PANGASINAN, Philippines — The town of Agoo, in La Union province scaled down its celebration of the “21st Agoo Dinengdeng Festival and Patronal Town Fiesta” in May amid the current energy crisis. With it, the local government reallocated the budget to fuel subsidy for affected sectors like tricycle drivers and operators, fisherfolk and farmers.

- [Loreto town in Agusan del Sur rolls out fuel subsidy for trike drivers](#) (2026-03-28 22:48)

SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL SUR, Philippines — Tricycle drivers in the remote town of Loreto in Agusan del Sur received a fuel subsidy equivalent to seven liters per week for one month, as local officials moved to cushion the impact of rising oil prices on public transport operators. The assistance, considered the first of its kind

- [Crowds rush to NFA-Bukidnon for cheap-priced rice](#) (2026-03-28 22:31)

MARAMAG, BUKIDNON, Philippines — Crowds have been flocking to the National Food Authority (NFA) warehouse here, with some residents lining up overnight and even sleeping along the streets to secure access to subsidized rice under the government’s “Benteng Bigas, Meron Na” program. A video posted by a local police officer showed people arriving as early

- [Lotto 6/42 bettor wins P10M in March 28 draw](#) (2026-03-28 22:17)

MANILA, Philippines — A lone bettor won the jackpot prize in the Lotto 6/42 draw on Saturday, March 28, 2026. Meanwhile, no one got the numbers right for the Grand Lotto 6/55. According to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the winning combination for Lotto 6/42 was 11-23-09-05-01-03, yielding a jackpot of P10 million. One ticket

- [DOE summons 8 Bohol gas stations over alleged overpricing](#) (2026-03-28 21:39)

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol — The Department of Energy (DOE) has issued show-cause orders to eight gasoline stations in Bohol province following complaints of unusually high fuel prices, Governor Erico Aristotle Aumentado confirmed. The development was disclosed after a meeting among leaders of local and national agencies led by Aumentado, where they tackled the rising cost

- [Warring Moro clans in Maguindanao del Sur surrender weapons to Army](#) (2026-03-28 21:24)

COTABATO CITY – Seventeen high-powered firearms were turned over to the military by Moro families in Maguindanao del Sur locked in clan wars, the Army said. The firearms were presented to Brig Gen. Edgar Catu, commander of the Army’s 601st Infantry Brigade in Mamasapano, Maguindanao del Sur on Friday. Catu said the surrender has reduced

- [QC police intensifies probe into viral ‘gas and run’ incident](#) (2026-03-28 19:59)

MANILA, Philippines — The Quezon City Police District (QCPD) on Saturday said that it is stepping up its investigation into a viral “gas-and-run” incident involving a motorist who fled without paying for a full tank of diesel in Quezon City. The QCPD reported that the incident, now being treated as an estafa case, took place

- [Orchid hybrid named after late Speaker Jose De Venecia Jr.](#) (2026-03-28 19:51)

DAGUPAN CITY, Pangasinan — An orchid hybrid has been named after the late House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., adding a floral tribute to the legacy of one of the country’s most prominent political figures. The hybrid, Dendrobium Jose de Venecia Jr., is a cross between Dendrobium discolor and Dendrobium Neo’s Gift. It was officially

- [BARMM vows to protect gains as Mindanao marks 12th year of peace deal](#) (2026-03-28 19:44)

COTABATO CITY – Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) interim Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua vowed to protect the gains of the Bangsamoro struggle as Mindanao marks the 12th anniversary of a landmark peace deal between the government and erstwhile separatist group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). “We will protect the gains of our struggle

- [Ridon: Anti-impeach petition to further fuel distrust in Sara Duterte](#) (2026-03-28 19:36)

MANILA, Philippines – House Committee on Public Accounts chairperson and Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Terry L. Ridon on Saturday said Vice President Sara Z. Duterte is facing deepening public distrust driven by her continued evasion of serious corruption allegations and her reliance on legal efforts to halt the impeachment proceedings against her. Ridon cited a

- [Iloilo City joins Earth Hour 2026, pushes energy-saving measures](#) (2026-03-28 18:31)

ILOILO CITY — Iloilo City is calling on residents to take part in this year’s Earth Hour by switching off lights and unplugging non-essential devices for one hour tonight, March 28, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. In an advisory, the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) said the initiative is part of the

- [Abuyog, Leyte farmers’ group seeks urgent gov’t aid amid oil price hikes](#) (2026-03-28 18:26)

TACLOBAN CITY — A farmers-irrigators group in Abuyog, Leyte is calling on Pres. Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to expand government assistance beyond the transport sector and likewise give urgent attention to those in the agriculture sector as fuel prices continue to surge amid the ongoing oil crisis. Rodrigo Alumbro, president of the Canmarating, Odiongan, Pagsang-on,

- [Pandi, Bulacan execs pool salaries to aid transpo workers](#) (2026-03-28 18:19)

PANDI, Bulacan—The mayor and nine councilors of this municipality pooled their monthly salary for March and April and raised more than P1.5 million which was used to purchase 10-kilo packs of rice for distribution to 4,000 transportation sector workers. The intended recipients are tricycle, jeepney and transport network vehicle service (TNVS) drivers whose incomes are being

- [Cops seize P690,000 cigarettes in Nueva Ecija](#) (2026-03-28 17:34)

CAMP GEN. MARIANO N. LLANERA, Cabanatuan City — Police seized 30 master cases of undocumented cigarettes worth about P690,000 and arrested three individuals during an “Oplan Sita” operation in Barangay Calumbitin, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija early Saturday morning. Police Col. Richie Claravall, director of the Nueva Ecija Police Provincial Office (NEPPO), said operatives from the Cuyapo

- [Speaker Dy scales down AIPA hosting amid global tensions](#) (2026-03-28 17:26)

MANILA, Philippines – Speaker Faustino G. Dy III on Saturday announced that Philippines’ hosting of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) meetings this year will be scaled down by limiting in-person activities to the General Assembly in October and the Interface Meeting in November, while shifting all preparatory meetings to virtual platforms. Dy said the move

- [Sara Duterte camp called out for ‘mixed signals’ in impeach proceedings](#) (2026-03-28 17:16)

MANILA, Philippines — More House of Representatives leaders on Saturday rebutted Vice President Sara Duterte’ s camp for what they described as mixed signals over the ongoing impeachment proceedings. The criticism comes as lawyers, headed by Israelito Torreon, filed a petition before the Supreme Court (SC) seeking to restrain the House of Representatives from proceeding

- [New Tagbilaran bishop’ s episcopal ordination, installation set on May 26](#) (2026-03-28 15:57)

TAGBILARAN CITY, Bohol — Fr. Gerardo “Jingboy” Saco formally announced that his episcopal ordination and installation as bishop of this city will be held on May 26, 2026, at the St. Joseph the Worker Cathedral-Shrine here. In a message to the clergy and faithful, Saco expressed profound humility as he accepted the responsibility of leading

- [Ilocos fishers' fuel expense almost doubles amid oil crisis – Pamalakaya](#) (2026-03-28 15:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Small-scale fishers in the Ilocos region are now spending an average of P2,040 on fuel for every voyage, a sharp increase driven by soaring oil prices, a regional fisherfolk group said. In a report, the Ilocos chapter of Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said this reflects a 77.1 percent

- [Group seeks release of journalist in terrorism financing case](#) (2026-03-28 15:20)

MANILA, Philippines — Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has renewed its call for President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to secure the release of community journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio who was convicted of financing terrorism. RSF made the appeal after the Tacloban Regional Trial Court Branch 45 affirmed its ruling in convicting Cumpio for financing terrorism and as

- [Col. Mikee Romero leads major livelihood program for Aeta families](#) (2026-03-28 15:04)

CAPAS, Tarlac— Nearly 300 Aeta families now have community farm plots, a permanent marketplace, and free medical and dental services following the turnover of a multi-phase livelihood and humanitarian program at Colonel Ernesto Ravina Air Base (CERAB). “This is about dignity and opportunity—giving our Aeta brothers and sisters the tools to stand on their own

- [Legarda to file Bayanihan 3 bill for coordinated oil crisis response](#) (2026-03-28 14:52)

MANILA, Philippines – Senator Loren Legarda will file the Bayanihan Power to the People Act, or Bayanihan 3 Law, to establish a decisive government framework in addressing the impacts of the global oil crisis on Filipino households and the national economy. Legarda stressed that Executive Order 110 declared a national energy emergency and outlined measures

- [BOC nets over P205 M from negotiated sale of 2 seized luxury cars](#) (2026-03-28 14:48)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has collected over P205 million from the negotiated sale of two seized luxury vehicles. The BOC on Thursday conducted the negotiated sale for two forfeited Bugatti Chiron units, which were seized in February 2024 over lack of importation documents. Elite Garage Corporation both acquired the blue Bugatti

- [Rep. Zamora sees enough votes, solid impeachment case vs Sara Duterte](#) (2026-03-28 14:44)

MANILA, Philippines – San Juan City Rep. Ysabel Maria Zamora on Saturday said there are enough votes and a solid case to move forward with the impeachment of Vice President Sara Z. Duterte despite political concerns. “I believe we have the numbers,” Zamora, vice chair of the House Committee on Justice, said during the Saturday

- [Emergency powers mean little without a roadmap–labor coalition](#) (2026-03-28 14:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Labor groups and progressive organizations criticized President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s declaration of a state of national energy emergency, saying the move lacks a clear plan, does not address the drivers of rising fuel prices, and could lead to the misuse of expanded executive powers. Their statements came days after Malacañang issued Executive

- [DOE, DTI urged to consider price cap on LPG](#) (2026-03-28 14:22)

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday urged the Department of Energy (DoE) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to consider imposing a price cap on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. Gatchalian noted the impending price increase of LPG, and how it may affect many

- [DepEd: Palarong Pambansa to proceed despite energy emergency](#) (2026-03-28 14:20)

PROSPERIDAD, Agusan del Sur — Amid circulating rumors and false claims of its cancellation, Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Cane, Jr. welcomed the Department of Education's (DepEd) confirmation that the Palarong Pambansa 2026 will proceed as scheduled despite the recent declaration of a State of Energy Emergency by President Marcos, Jr. The governor's statement followed

- [Pagadian City forms task force to regulate prices amid global oil crisis](#) (2026-03-28 14:06)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — Pagadian City Mayor Samuel Co has signed Executive Order No. 6, Series of 2026, creating the Price Regulatory Task Force of Pagadian City, a body mandated to monitor and enforce fair pricing of basic goods and petroleum products in the city. The task force is tasked with conducting regular

- [Fisherfolk skip fishing, join strike over rising fuel prices](#) (2026-03-28 13:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Some fisherfolk from Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay skipped their usual trips out to sea on Friday, choosing instead to join a nationwide transport strike as surging fuel prices continue to hit their livelihoods. The action, organized alongside transport groups protesting rising oil costs, shows how the impact has extended beyond

- [Over 1,000 prisoners released to ease crowding, facilitate reintegration](#) (2026-03-28 13:49)

MANILA, Philippines—The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) has released a total of 1,239 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs), most of whom have finished serving their prison term, from national penitentiaries in the past month. According to the latest data issued by BuCor on Saturday, 501 PDLs were released as a result of the expiration of their

- [Zambales town named top tourist destination in Central Luzon](#) (2026-03-28 13:30)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Known for its quiet coves and island-hopping destinations, this coastal town has earned regional recognition after being named Top Tourist Destination – Municipality at the Tourism Recognition for Enterprises and Stakeholders (TRES) Awards of the

Department of Tourism—Central Luzon. San Antonio Mayor Arvin Antipolo, who received the award on Friday (March

- [Dole sets aside P1.2B aid as energy crisis threatens jobs](#) (2026-03-28 13:21)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) has prepared P1.2 billion in standby funds to help workers who may lose income or jobs as a result of the ongoing energy crisis. The labor department said the fund will be used to “further intensify” its support programs as the government deals with a

- [De Lima files bill strengthening anti-rape law](#) (2026-03-28 13:15)

MANILA, Philippines — House of Representatives Senior Deputy Minority Leader Leila De Lima has filed a measure seeking to strengthen protections for women and children against rape and sexual violence. House Bill No. 8716, filed on March 23, proposes expanding the definition of rape to emphasize the absence of consent, recognizing grooming as a form

- [Fuel price spike ripples through local businesses in Zambales](#) (2026-03-28 12:34)

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales — Rising fuel prices are rippling far beyond transport costs, placing increasing pressure on small businesses in this province that are now struggling to stay afloat. For one canteen owner, Joseph Angelo Mora, 35, the ongoing surge has meant making difficult choices— balancing affordability for customers with the reality of higher operating

- [Marcos’ message for Earth Hour 2026: Conserve energy, limit fuel usage](#) (2026-03-28 12:30)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has encouraged all Filipinos to join Earth Hour this year, emphasizing the need for energy preservation and limiting fuel consumption amid the crisis due to tensions in the Middle East. This year’s World Wide Fund for Nature’s Earth Hour is scheduled from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. local

- [Mount Maculot closed for rehabilitation, tourism planning](#) (2026-03-28 11:27)

LUCENA CITY — The municipal government of Cuenca, Batangas has temporarily closed Mount Maculot, a popular hiking destination, as it rolls out new tourism and environmental management measures. In an advisory, the local government said hiking activities on the 3,107-foot mountain will remain prohibited “for the foreseeable future” to support efforts toward responsible and sustainable

- [PNP: March 26-27 transport strike ‘generally peaceful’](#) (2026-03-28 11:09)

MANILA, Philippines — The two-day transport strike held on March 26-27 was “generally peaceful,” with the Philippine National Police (PNP) recording over 1,900 participants joining the protest. The PNP released the statement on Saturday following the transport strike launched by the No to Oil Price Hike Coalition to protest against the oil price hike amid tensions

- [Filipinos still happy, but with fewer highs](#) (2026-03-28 11:08)

MANILA, Philippines — In the latest Social Weather Stations survey, Filipinos continued to describe their lives in positive terms. But within those responses, fewer placed themselves at the highest end of the happiness scale, with more clustering in the middle. The nationwide survey, conducted Nov. 24-30, 2025, found that 33% of adult Filipinos said they

- [7,500 inmates eyed for transfer in 2026 to decongest Bilibid](#) (2026-03-28 10:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The government plans to transfer around 7,500 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) this year as part of efforts to ease chronic overcrowding at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) and move toward its planned closure by 2028. The push comes as 500 inmates were moved on Friday from Bilibid to the Iwahig Prison

- [Farmers decry delayed aid amid soaring fuel costs](#) (2026-03-28 10:25)

MANILA, Philippines — A farmers' group has warned that delays in government cash aid are worsening the burden on food producers as fuel prices rise and production costs climb nationwide. In a statement, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) on Thursday urged the government to immediately release cash assistance for farmers and fisherfolk, saying conditions have

- [BOC fast-tracks fuel imports, tightens checks amid price hikes](#) (2026-03-28 10:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has implemented measures to expedite the processing of fuel imports in the country, as well as daily monitoring and fuel marking, to ensure a steady fuel supply amid oil price hikes due to tensions in the Middle East. BOC Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno, through Memorandum No. 36-2026 dated

- [LTFRB: Over 1,200 passenger buses granted special permits for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-28 09:20)

MANILA, Philippines — A total of 1,297 passenger buses across the country were granted special permits to operate during Holy Week, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said on Saturday. According to LTFRB chairperson Vigor Mendoza II, the agency granted these buses special permits to ensure that there are enough passenger buses, as

- [Bulacan town to hit 41°C heat index; 66 areas under extreme caution](#) (2026-03-28 08:11)

MANILA, Philippines — San Ildefonso town in Bulacan is forecast to experience the highest heat index on Saturday, while 66 other areas are also placed under the extreme caution level, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa). In its latest heat index bulletin, Pagasa said that San Ildefonso may experience a

- [Easterlies bringing warm, humid weather in most of PH on Sunday](#) (2026-03-28 07:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Warm and humid weather will prevail in most parts of the country on Saturday due to easterlies, but chances of localized thunderstorms and isolated rainshowers are not ruled out, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said. In its 5 a.m. weather forecast, weather specialist Loredin de la Cruz-Galicia said

- [Easterlies bringing warm, humid weather in most of PH on Saturday](#) (2026-03-28 07:26)

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- [Raps filed over fuel hoarding, profiteering](#) (2026-03-28 05:48)

MANILA, Philippines — After the national emergency President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared on Wednesday, the Philippine National Police has begun filing criminal cases for hoarding and profiteering amid the expected oil supply crisis driven by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The PNP released data at a press briefing in Camp Crame, showing at

- [Lawyers seek to stop impeachment hearings vs Sara Duterte](#) (2026-03-28 05:42)

MANILA, Philippines — A group of lawyers led by Israelito Torreon asked the Supreme Court on Friday to declare as unconstitutional the impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte at the House of Representatives. In a 186-page petition, Torreon and lawyers Victor Rodriguez, Martin Delgra III, Jimmy Bondoc, Raul Lambino, Luna Acosta-Manlitoc and four others

- [Malls reducing store hours to help save energy](#) (2026-03-28 05:36)

MANILA, Philippines — Major shopping malls are reducing their business hours starting next Monday as their way of contributing to power conservation efforts following President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s declaration of a national energy emergency on March 24. Beginning March 30, weekday store hours at SM Supermalls will be from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., while

- [Boosted Malampaya supply welcomed amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-28 05:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The promise of additional natural gas from new Malampaya wells could help shield the Philippines from the volatility of the global oil market, as currently seen in the Middle East crisis, analysts said on Friday. Juan Paolo Colet, managing director at investment bank China Bank Capital Corp., said the development of a

- [Marcos: Crude oil supply good till end of June](#) (2026-03-28 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday assured the nation that the government had secured a sufficient supply of crude oil until the end of June, plus up to 45

days' worth of various other fuel products. The president said the Philippines, a petroleum importer, has been exploring alternative fuel sources from other

- [Cordillera securing rice stocks amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-28 05:06)

BAGUIO CITY—As conflict rages in the Middle East, highland communities in the Cordillera have been urged to prioritize food security, officials said during the Cordillera Regional Development Council's first quarterly session on Thursday—coinciding with the 26th day of hostilities involving US, Israeli and Iranian forces. The crisis has disrupted shipping routes through the Strait of

- [Eastern Visayas farmers, fishers get fuel access boost](#) (2026-03-28 05:04)

TACLOBAN CITY — Small-scale farmers and municipal fisherfolk in Eastern Visayas can now purchase diesel and gasoline using portable containers, such as jerry cans or drums, provided the fuel is used for legitimate livelihood activities. The move comes under a joint initiative by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Energy (DOE). The

- [In Zambales, youth lead parish preparations for Palm Sunday](#) (2026-03-28 05:02)

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES — In a quiet corner of the Holy Child Parish here, the next generation of churchgoers is busy at work. On Friday, local youth took the lead in cleaning and preparing palm leaves, a key tradition for the upcoming Palm Sunday celebrations. For parish priest Fr. Alexis Santiago, the involvement

- [Manila to pay for free jeepney rides](#) (2026-03-28 04:46)

MANILA, Philippines — The city of Manila will subsidize the operations of jeepney drivers, giving them around P3,000 each per day for providing free rides to commuters in the city, Mayor Francisco “Isko” Domagoso announced Friday. According to Domagoso, more than 1,400 jeepney drivers are expected to participate in the program, which is part

- [Mayon Volcano emits lava fountain](#) (2026-03-28 04:31)

MANILA, Philippines — State volcanologists observed lava fountaining at Mayon Volcano on Friday night. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the lava fountaining occurred at 8:23 p.m. and 8:40 p.m. “These events produced ash clouds that rose 400 meters before drifting west-southwest,” Phivolcs said. “Effusive eruption at Mayon Volcano continues for the

- [2 photojournalists die as SUV swept away by swollen Benguet river](#) (2026-03-27 22:41)

BAGUIO CITY — Two photojournalists died after the sport utility vehicle (SUV) they were riding was swept away by the swollen Agno River while attempting to cross in Itogon, Benguet, on Friday afternoon, March 27, authorities said. The Police Regional Office–Cordillera (PRO-CAR) said the incident occurred around 1:20 p.m. in Sitio Tabu, Barangay Dalupirip, when

- [No jackpot winner in March 27 PCSO Ultra Lotto, MegaLotto draws](#) (2026-03-27 22:02)

MANILA, Philippines — No jackpot winner was recorded in the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office’s major lotto draws on Friday, March 27, 2026, with both Ultra Lotto 6/58 and MegaLotto 6/45 going without a winning ticket. According to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the winning combination for Ultra Lotto 6/58 was 12-57-16-01-42-51 for a jackpot prize

- [Pasig court allows ocular inspections of KJC properties](#) (2026-03-27 22:01)

MANILA, Philippines — The Pasig City Regional Trial Court (RTC) on Friday granted a motion to conduct ocular inspections of Kingdom of Jesus Christ (KJC) properties associated with televangelist Apollo Quiboloy. The inspections aim to “verify facts that are not easily captured by photographs or testimonial evidence alone,” the court said. READ: FBI renews call

- [Bulacan LGUs rush to submit list of tricycle drivers for cash aid](#) (2026-03-27 21:58)

BULAKAN, Bulacan — Local governments in Bulacan province raced to meet the Friday deadline to submit a list of qualified tricycle drivers eligible for the P5,000 Cash Relief Assistance (CRA) from the national government. Marievic Morelos, Bulacan municipal social welfare and development officer, said the regional office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development

- [Student pantry donors ‘give back’ to drivers for ‘school service’](#) (2026-03-27 21:52)

MANILA, Philippines — Not charity, but solidarity. College students who dropped by their local community pantry in Maginhawa Street in Quezon City on Friday live up to this mutual aid adage as they brought groceries for public utility vehicle drivers who are reeling from huge drop in take home pay after weeks of big-time oil

- [Piston, Bayan say Marcos’ emergency powers ‘useless’ amid oil price hike](#) (2026-03-27 21:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and transport group Piston have criticized the emergency powers given to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. amid his declaration of national energy emergency, saying that the powers are useless as many drivers and operators continue to suffer from the oil price hike. Bayan secretary general Mong Palatino and Piston

- [Missing passenger of SUV swept away by river found dead in Benguet](#) (2026-03-27 21:06)

BAGUIO CITY — A passenger who went missing after a sport utility vehicle (SUV) was swept away by the Agno River in Itogon, Benguet on Friday afternoon, March 27, was later found dead, authorities said. The Police Regional Office–Cordillera (PRO-CAR) said the incident happened at around 1:20 p.m. in Sitio Tabu, Barangay Dalupirip, when the

- [House measure preparing country for future crises filed](#) (2026-03-27 20:53)

MANILA, Philippines — A measure that seeks to prepare the country for future crises, like the current fuel price hikes brought by the Middle East conflict, has been filed by Negros Occidental

Rep. Javi Benitez. In a statement on Friday, Benitez said that he has filed the proposed Resilient Economy and Stabilization for Crisis and Urgent

- [March 26-27 transport strike a ‘success,’ says Piston \(2026-03-27 20:44\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines — The two-day transport strike held on March 26-27 has been declared successful following the participation of drivers and operators of several modes of transportations, and the support it gathered from different sectoral organizations, transport group Piston said on Friday. Piston president Mody Floranda said that the transport strike paralyzed some routes across

- [Cendaña says Sara Duterte just afraid to see evidence against her \(2026-03-27 20:27\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President Sara Duterte is just afraid to face evidence related to the impeachment complaints against her after some of her allies asked the Supreme Court (SC) to stop the proceedings, Akbayan party-list Rep. Percival Cendaña said on Friday. Cendaña in a tweet said that only corrupt public officials would prefer not to

- [Tacloban court affirms Cumpio conviction, stands by witness testimonies \(2026-03-27 20:22\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines — A local court of Tacloban City affirmed its ruling convicting community journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio and church worker Marielle Domequil of financing terrorism as it stood by the testimonies of the prosecution’s key witnesses that the two accused “knowingly provided” funds and supplies to a group tagged as a terror organization. This

- [Manila Water Foundation pushes community oral health, hygiene \(2026-03-27 20:12\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Water Foundation (MWF), the social development arm of Manila Water Company, recently marked World Oral Health Day with a multi-site celebration throughout March that brought together partners, educators, and students to promote lifelong oral hygiene practices, reinforcing this year’s global theme, “A Happy Mouth is a Happy Life.” The main event

- [1 missing, 5 injured as SUV swept away by river in Benguet \(2026-03-27 19:41\)](#)

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines — One person has been reported missing while five others were injured after a sport utility vehicle (SUV) was swept away by Agno River in Sitio Tabu, Barangay Dalupirip, Itogon, Benguet, on Friday afternoon, March 27, authorities said. The Itogon Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO) reported that the incident

- [7 manufacturers to hike product prices by April 1 – supermarkets group \(2026-03-27 19:15\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines — Seven manufacturers that reach the national scale are set to increase the prices of some of their products starting April 1, due to the continuous oil price hike amid ongoing Middle East tensions, according to a supermarkets group. In an interview with the INQUIRER on Friday, Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Association Inc. president

- [Luistro: We respect SC, but power to impeach rests on House alone](#) (2026-03-27 18:06)

MANILA, Philippines — While they respect the Supreme Court (SC) as the “final arbiter of constitutional and legal questions,” Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro reiterated that the power to initiate an impeachment complaint and decide whether it would prosper rests on the House of Representatives alone. Luistro, in a statement on Friday, hours after lawyers supportive of

- [PNP seizes P25-M counterfeit bags, nabs 6 individuals in Manila](#) (2026-03-27 17:57)

MANILA, Philippines — Alleged counterfeit bags worth P25 million were confiscated in Manila, leading to the arrest of six individuals, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Friday. In a statement, the PNP detailed that the bust was carried out at a condominium complex in Barangay 292, Binondo on Thursday night. READ: CIDG’ s Bulacan, Valenzuela

- [Cop nabbed over links to illegal drug trade in Camarines Sur](#) (2026-03-27 17:47)

MANILA, Philippines — An active-duty police patrolman in Camarines Sur was arrested for his alleged involvement in illegal drug activities, the Philippine National Police Integrity Monitoring and Enforcement Group (PNP IMEG) said on Friday. The officer was caught in Sitio Tagongtong, Barangay Agdangan, Baaon on the night of March 20 through the implementation of two

- [PNP nabs 3 for illegally selling fuel in Davao del Sur](#) (2026-03-27 17:42)

MANILA, Philippines — Three individuals were arrested in Davao del Sur for allegedly illegally selling fuel, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Friday. In a press briefing in Camp Crame, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño detailed that the suspects were entrapped in Tagabuli, Santa Cruz, but he did not immediately say when. Operatives

- [Leviste: PH headed for debt crisis unless gov’ t cuts wasteful spending](#) (2026-03-27 17:39)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste warned that the Philippines is heading towards a debt crisis worse than the current oil crisis if the government does not end wasteful spending and make serious budget cuts. “This year, the Philippines will lose an estimated ₱300 billion from higher oil prices, but our

- [Over 1,400 SHS, ALS graduates hired in Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair](#) (2026-03-27 17:18)

MANILA, Philippines — The nationwide Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF) rollout has resulted in the immediate hiring of at least 1,488 graduating Senior High School (SHS) and Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners, delivering on a mandate from President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to bridge the gap between graduation and employment. The joint initiative by the

- [House lawmakers slam SC petition on Sara Duterte impeachment](#) (2026-03-27 17:16)

MANILA, Philippines — House lawmakers on Friday slammed a petition filed before the Supreme Court (SC) questioning the actions of the lower chamber’ s panel during the proceedings for the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte. On Friday,

pro-Duterte lawyer Israelito Torreon accused the House Committee on Justice of “procedural overreach” in their conduct of

- [Solons slam petition filed on SC vs Sara Duterte impeachment](#) (2026-03-27 17:16)

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- [Palace: No energy lockdown expected at the moment](#) (2026-03-27 16:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang said on Friday that no energy lockdown is expected at the moment, following Iran’s denial of any dialogue or negotiations with the United States to end the war. According to Palace Press Officer Claire Castro, the government is preparing for possible worst-case scenarios if tensions persist. READ: Marcos: PH has enough

- [Man nabbed for illegal refilling of LPG cylinders in Nueva Ecija](#) (2026-03-27 16:53)

MANILA, Philippines — A man in Nueva Ecija was arrested for allegedly illegally refilling liquified petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Friday. The suspect was tracked down by operatives to Barangay Pacac, Guimba town on Wednesday, according to PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño in a press briefing. “They were

- [Jeepney driver halts trips over fuel hike: ‘It’s like pandemic again’](#) (2026-03-27 16:52)

MANILA, Philippines – A jeepney driver has likened the current state of his livelihood to what it went through during the COVID-19 pandemic, as he has stopped plying his routes once again – this time due to the rising cost of fuel. Reggie Manlapig, a 46-year-old jeepney driver from Calumpit, Bulacan, and a member of

- [Marcos called on DSWD to remove tarpaulin bearing his photo in an event](#) (2026-03-27 16:46)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has called out the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and ordered the removal of a tarpaulin bearing his photo at a cash aid distribution site, according to Palace Press Officer Claire Castro. Castro said this move is in line with Marcos’ commitment to the “anti-epal” provision of

- [NCRPO: No untoward incidents on Day 2 of transport strike](#) (2026-03-27 16:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) on Friday said the second day of the transport strike went without any untoward incident. “The negotiations went well, and chances were given to the rallyists so they could air their grievances,” NCRPO spokesperson Maj. Hazel Asilo told reporters in a phone interview. She noted

- [Lanao del Sur cops recover P12.8-M in smuggled cigarettes](#) (2026-03-27 16:40)

COTABATO CITY – Police seized a haul of unattended boxes containing imported cigarettes along the coastline of Malabang town, Lanao del Sur, on Thursday. Colonel Caesar Cabuhat, Lanao del Sur police director, said operatives from the provincial mobile force company and Malabang municipal police office were conducting shoreline patrol at 1:30 a.m. along Barangay Bunkhouse when they

- [Ateneo allots ‘digital days’ for classes amid oil price surge](#) (2026-03-27 16:28)

MANILA, Philippines — The Ateneo de Manila University will shift to scheduled online classes from April 6 to May 16, allotting one to two “digital days” per week as part of its contingency measures in bracing for the current energy crisis. The Office of the Vice President for Higher Education issued a memorandum on March

- [BOC: P47.4M smuggled agri-products blocked at Subic port](#) (2026-03-27 16:24)

MANILA, Philippines — Over P47.4 million worth of smuggled frozen and processed food products were blocked at the Port of Subic in Ilongapo City, Zambales, according to the Bureau of Customs (BOC) on Friday. In a statement on Friday, the BOC said the shipments were declared to be carrying “assorted shabu-shabu balls.” However, a physical

- [P2M worth of petroleum products seized in Ligao City entrapment](#) (2026-03-27 16:06)

LEGAZPI CITY — A businessman was arrested in Ligao City after allegedly selling fuel to an undercover police operative, authorities said. The suspect was apprehended on Thursday during an entrapment operation conducted by the Ligao City Police and the Albay Police Provincial Office, in coordination with the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the

- [Pool cave in Dinagat temporary closed to visitors](#) (2026-03-27 15:51)

BUTUAN CITY – The local government of Libjo in Dinagat Islands has ordered the temporary closure of the Miracle Pool Cave in Barangay Plaridel, citing conservation and site management needs. The closure begins on Friday and will stay in effect until further notice, according to the Libjo tourism office. “The temporary closure aims to conserve the

- [Solons say justice panel like a prosecutor, can summon more evidence](#) (2026-03-27 15:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Just like a prosecutor in the country’s criminal procedure, the House of Representatives’ committee on justice can summon additional evidence that could make the case against Vice President Sara Duterte stronger—or also dispute allegations against her—two lawmakers said on Friday. In separate interviews, committee chairperson and Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro and Manila

- [5 Eastern Samar gas stations shut amid fuel shortage](#) (2026-03-27 15:32)

TACLOBAN CITY — At least five gasoline stations in Eastern Samar have halted operations amid the ongoing fuel supply crisis, as the Philippine National Police in Eastern Visayas stepped up its monitoring of fuel price compliance among retailers. Lt. Col. Analiza Armeza, spokesperson for Police Regional Office-8 (PRO-8), said three of the closures were directly

- [PNP orders probe into cop allegedly moonlighting for Chinese fugitive](#) (2026-03-27 15:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. ordered the agency to investigate a police master sergeant who allegedly served as a private security personnel for a Chinese fugitive caught in Makati City. “The Southern Police District (SPD) will be asking the immediate supervisor to explain,” PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen.

- [Mixed trend in Iloilo City fish prices; premium seafood remains costly](#) (2026-03-27 15:13)

ILOILO CITY — Prices of key fishery products in Iloilo City showed a mixed trend during the fourth week of March, with staple fish remaining relatively affordable while high-value seafood such as shrimp and crabs continued to command steep prices, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Western Visayas reported. In its March

- [VP Sara Duterte to Leyte school grads: Stay away from illegal drugs](#) (2026-03-27 15:11)

TACLOBAN CITY — Vice President Sara Duterte attended the graduation ceremony of Kananga National High School in Kananga, Leyte, on Friday, serving as the event’s guest speaker. Duterte was warmly welcomed by education officials, including Leyte Schools Division Superintendent Mariza Magan, along with school administrators. In her address, the Vice President commended the 300 graduates

- [Lawyers to SC: Restrain House ‘fishing expedition’ vs Sara Duterte](#) (2026-03-27 15:04)

MANILA, Philippines — A petition has been filed before the Supreme Court questioning the unconstitutional acts by the House Committee on Justice and restraining it from proceeding with the impeachment case against Vice President Sara Duterte. “When constitutional boundaries are crossed, someone must go to Court,” Atty. Israelito Torreon said in a press conference Friday.

- [Malls shorten operating hours amid national energy emergency](#) (2026-03-27 14:41)

MANILA, Philippines — Several mall operators announced that they will shorten their hours of operation in response to the government’s declaration of a national energy emergency. Among them are SM Supermalls, Robinsons Malls and Ayala Malls. The move comes as authorities push for energy conservation measures amid uncertainties in fuel supply linked to tensions in

- [4 nabbed in Zamboanga del Sur anti-illegal mining raid](#) (2026-03-27 14:37)

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur — Four individuals were arrested early Thursday during an anti-illegal mining operation under Oplan Kalikasan in Barangay Dulop, Dumingag town in this

province. Around 1:30 a.m., operatives from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group–Regional Special Operations Team IX (CIDG RSOT IX), in coordination with the Dumingag Municipal Police Station and

- [Manila LGU to shoulder jeepney drivers’ earnings to offer free rides](#) (2026-03-27 14:36)

MANILA, Philippines — The Manila local government unit (LGU) will subsidize jeepney drivers, giving them around P3,000 each per day in exchange for providing free rides for commuters in the metro’s capital, Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso announced Friday. According to Domagoso, more than 1,400 jeepney drivers are expected to participate in the program, which

- [Onion traders in spotlight as Senate probe opens in Nueva Ecija](#) (2026-03-27 14:29)

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ, Nueva Ecija — The Senate committee on agriculture, food, and agrarian reform on Thursday vowed to expose alleged unscrupulous traders manipulating onion prices, as farmers raised concerns during a hearing held at the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) here. The inquiry, presided over by Sen. Francis Pangilinan, gathered municipal agriculture officers and

- [Over 53,000 cops, 2,900 vehicles deployed for Day 2 of transport strike](#) (2026-03-27 14:22)

MANILA, Philippines — A total of 53,789 personnel and 2,907 vehicles have been deployed by the Philippine National Police (PNP) for the second day of the transport strike across the country on Friday, March 28. “The PNP’s deployment continues on the second day,” the agency’s spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Randulf Tuaño, said in a press briefing

- [Cagayan grandpa set to graduate senior high at 77, eyes college next](#) (2026-03-27 14:15)

TUGUEGARAO CITY — While most people his age are slowing down, 77-year-old Mario Resurreccion starts his days like any other senior high school student—reviewing lessons, doing chores, and preparing for class. In Barangay Sampaguita in Solana, Cagayan, “Lolo Mario,” as he is fondly called, has become an unlikely inspiration after a video showing his daily

- [Marcos tells PNPA graduates: Be the reason Filipinos feel safe](#) (2026-03-27 14:09)

CAVITE, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday challenged the new graduates of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) to be the reason Filipinos feel safe, stressing how “fragile” peace and order are. In his keynote address at the 47th Commencement Exercises for the “SILANG PAGLAOM” Class of 2026 at the PNPA campus in

- [LOOK: Groups march to Mendiola on transport strike’ s Day 2](#) (2026-03-27 13:53)

MANILA, Philippines — Several transport and sectoral groups on Friday marched towards Mendiola in Manila to register their calls for the government to abolish the Oil Deregulation Law and remove the excise tax and value added tax on fuel products. READ: Transport strikes, protests to continue until demands met — Piston This is part of

- [PNP seeks tighter coordination with fuel stations over ‘gas-and-run’ cases](#) (2026-03-27 13:32)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) will intensify its coordination with fuel stations after some reports of motorists filling up and driving off to evade payment. READ: Driver flees after getting full tank of gas worth P5,000 in Quezon City In a press briefing in Camp Crame on Friday, PNP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Randulf

- [Chua: Impeachment not far from crisis as wars caused by unfit leaders](#) (2026-03-27 13:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte should not be treated as an issue far from the oil crisis because the wars that triggered it are caused by leaders whose fitness to serve is being questioned, Manila Rep. Joel Chua said. Chua, in an online interview on Friday, said it is

- [P12.9M marijuana, P1.3M illegal logs seized in Cagayan Valley](#) (2026-03-27 13:23)

TUGUEGARAO CITY — Authorities seized at least P12.9 million worth of marijuana and P1.3 million in illegal logs, while arresting 169 individuals during the Simultaneous Anti-Criminality Law Enforcement Operations (SACLEO) conducted across Cagayan Valley from March 19 to 25, police said Friday. Police Brig. Gen. Antonio Marallag Jr., Cagayan Valley regional police director, said authorities

- [Gov’ t agencies to formalize carpooling guidelines amid fuel price surge](#) (2026-03-27 13:22)

MANILA, Philippines — Government transport agencies are set to craft formal guidelines for carpooling and company shuttle services as rising fuel prices continue to strain commuters in Metro Manila. Aside from the government’ s free rides, recommending alternative modes of transport such as biking, and the implementation of the work-from-home scheme, one of the most common

- [Driver flees after getting full tank of gas worth P5,000 in Quezon City](#) (2026-03-27 12:43)

MANILA, Philippines — The driver of a Toyota Innova got a full tank of fuel worth around P5,000 at a gas station in Quezon City but drove off to evade payment, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Friday. The incident took place at a gas station along Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (Edsa)

- [INQToday: Marcos: PH has enough crude oil supply until June 30](#) (2026-03-27 12:41)

Marcos: PH has enough crude oil supply until June 30 President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday said the country has sufficient crude oil supply until June 30, 2026. “We already have a supply of crude oil, a sufficient supply of crude oil until June 30. But we are still looking for supply, we are still

- [Firms facing fuel hoarding, profiteering cases now at 5, says PNP](#) (2026-03-27 12:29)

MANILA, Philippines — The number of fuel hoarding and profiteering cases is now at five as of Friday morning, March 27, according to the Philippine National Police's (PNP) monitoring. Data shared by the PNP in a press briefing in Camp Crame showed the following cases were recorded in these areas: Hoarding Profiteering READ: PNP warns

- [Marcos: Repeal of oil deregulation law not off table](#) (2026-03-27 12:11)

CAVITE, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday said “nothing is being discounted” in relation to proposals to repeal the oil deregulation law and remove value-added tax on fuel imports, but the government's focus right now is immediate solutions on the impacts of rising fuel prices caused by Middle East conflict. These remarks came

- [Fuel shortage forces 425 gas stations to close temporarily – PNP](#) (2026-03-27 12:03)

MANILA, Philippines — Four hundred and twenty-five of the country's 14,485 gas stations have temporarily closed due to supply constraints as of Friday morning, March 27, according to the Philippine National Police's (PNP) monitoring. Data shared by the PNP in a press briefing in Camp Crame showed the gas station closures in the following regions:

- [‘Everything’ s unconstitutional’ : Chua says Duterte team ‘hallucinating’](#) (2026-03-27 12:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President Sara Duterte's legal team appears to be “hallucinating” when they presented their issues with the impeachment proceedings as the House of Representatives' committee on justice is following every rule stated, Manila Rep. Joel Chua said on Friday. Chua in a statement said that Duterte camp's claims of the impeachment proceedings being

- [BOC luxury car auction fails as no bidders register](#) (2026-03-27 11:19)

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Customs' (BOC) public auction of 11 seized luxury cars set on Friday did not push through as there were no interested bidders who registered for the event. This was announced by the BOC-Port of Manila on Friday as it scheduled the public auction through sealed bidding on the same

- [15,000 lanterns to light Pampanga lake in Guinness bid](#) (2026-03-27 11:14)

MEXICO, Pampanga — Pampanga, through Central Country Estate Inc. (CCEI) here, will vie for the Guinness World Record (GWR) for the “largest display of water lanterns” in the world during the Lumina Water Lantern and Music Festival on May 10, organizers announced on Thursday. “It's a modern tribute to tradition,” said Maricar Pangilinan, CCEI communications

- [Green groups cite Canada trash fiasco in opposing Cuna's DENR appointment](#) (2026-03-27 11:04)

MANILA, Philippines — Environmental groups are questioning the appointment of Juan Miguel Cuna as acting secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),

citing his past involvement in the Canada trash shipment fiasco and urging greater accountability as he takes the agency's top post. In a joint statement, five environmental and public interest

- [PNP: No untoward incident during March 26 transport strike](#) (2026-03-27 11:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) reported no untoward incidents during the first day of the transport strike on Thursday, March 26. In a statement on Friday, as the strike entered its second day, PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said of the protest action, “There were some minor disruptions, but this

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of March 27, 2026](#) (2026-03-27 09:43)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. may decide by April 12 or 13 whether to suspend or reduce the excise tax on petroleum products, a move aimed at easing the impact of rising oil prices driven by the Middle East crisis, the Department of Finance (DOF) said Thursday. Business groups have welcomed the new

- [Marcos: PH has enough crude oil supply until June 30](#) (2026-03-27 09:07)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday said the country has sufficient crude oil supply until June 30, 2026. “We already have a supply of crude oil, a sufficient supply of crude oil until June 30. But we are still looking for supply, we are still supporting our commuters,” Marcos said in a

- [DSWD to release P240-M fuel subsidy for 48,000 Negros tricycle drivers](#) (2026-03-27 08:48)

BACOLOD CITY — The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will begin distributing P240 million in fuel subsidies to around 48,000 tricycle drivers across 22 local government units on Negros Island starting April 8. Under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) program, each qualified driver will receive P5,000 to help ease the

- [Earth Hour turns 20, pushing action beyond the switch](#) (2026-03-27 08:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Every year, millions of people around the world pause for 60 minutes of collective action for the planet through World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)'s Earth Hour. More than a symbolic “lights off” campaign, Earth Hour has evolved into what organizers describe as a “moment of unity,” bringing people together to confront

- [Gov't adds more routes for free rides on Day 2 of transport strike](#) (2026-03-27 08:14)

MANILA, Philippines — The government has added more routes for its free ride initiative across key areas in Metro Manila on Friday for the second day of a nationwide transport strike of several transport groups. READ: TNVS sector makes rare participation in transport strike In an advisory, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said that commuters

- [Pagasa: Hot, humid Friday with isolated rains likely](#) (2026-03-27 07:34)

MANILA, Philippines — Warm and humid conditions will continue across the country over the next several days due to the prevailing easterlies, the state weather bureau said Friday. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the easterlies will continue to affect the country in the next five days. The easterlies, or

- [Price council pushes P50 per kilo cap on imported rice](#) (2026-03-27 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) has adopted the Department of Agriculture's (DA) proposal to impose a price ceiling of P50 per kilogram on imported rice, endorsing the measure to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for approval. In a statement on Thursday, the NPCC said the proposed cap will cover imported rice with

- [PhilHealth launches online records check for members](#) (2026-03-27 05:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) launched on Thursday the PhilHealth Check Utility (PCU), an online tool that members can use to verify their records and eliminate false claims. The PCU was launched with the support of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), which, according to PhilHealth President and CEO Edwin Mercado, “reflects

- [BJMP buys P46-M fresh food for inmates](#) (2026-03-27 05:48)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) reported on Thursday that the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) has procured P46.1 million worth of fresh, locally grown produce directly from farmers to provide healthier meals for prisoners nationwide. The initiative is part of the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and

- [TNVS sector makes rare participation in transport strike](#) (2026-03-27 05:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The transport strike triggered by rising oil prices and growing discontent over the government's response saw the rare participation of a relatively young sector: TNVS or transport network vehicle service drivers. Around 150 TNVS vehicles formed a convoy and made their presence felt by honking their horns in solidarity with their counterparts in

- [Fare hike suspension, fuel subsidies lauded](#) (2026-03-27 05:38)

MANILA, Philippines — A group promoting the interest of commuters welcomed the suspension of the planned fare increase for jeepneys, buses, airport taxis and ride-booking services, as well as the release of fuel subsidies for drivers, saying both measures had helped ease the burden on the riding public. The Coalition of Filipino Commuters (CFC-PasaHero) said

- [PNP: No foul play in teen's death](#) (2026-03-27 05:31)

MANILA, Philippines — The police have ruled out foul play in the death of 15-year-old Isabelle Sophia Tablate, a Grade 9 student whose body was found on a lot in Pasig City, days after her father reported her missing. “There was no sign that she was killed or subjected to any form of violence,” Capt.

- [DOF: Price cuts due to fuel tax law felt by mid-April](#) (2026-03-27 05:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The administration could suspend or reduce the excise on fuel as early as April 12, with the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) set to make this recommendation to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. next week, a Department of Finance (DOF) official said. Finance Undersecretary Karlo Fermin Adriano on Thursday told a newly formed

- [Locals take lead in saving turtles in Zambales](#) (2026-03-27 05:04)

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES—Along the shores of Masinloc-Oyon Bay, a protected landscape and seascape, hope persists for one of the ocean’s most vulnerable creatures—the “pawikan” or marine turtles. A 7,000-hectare sanctuary of sandy beaches, mangroves and coastal waters, the bay is the first and only marine protected area in Central Luzon established under Republic Act No.

- [Ex-communist rebels top amnesty seekers](#) (2026-03-27 05:02)

KORONADAL CITY—Former communist rebels turned in the largest number of applications for amnesty, official records show. At the close of filing on March 13, the National Amnesty Commission (NAC) counted a total of 13,633 applicants who used to belong to the ranks of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front-New People’s Army

- [2 suspects in ‘illegal investment scheme’ arrested in Laoag](#) (2026-03-27 00:01)

MANILA, Philippines — Two suspects allegedly involved in an “illegal investment scheme” were arrested in an entrapment operation in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) reported Thursday. According to the NBI, its Laoag District Office, in coordination with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Laoag Extension Office, conducted the operation in

- [March 26: No jackpot winners in SuperLotto, Lotto 6/42](#) (2026-03-26 22:03)

MANILA, Philippines — No bettor won the jackpots for SuperLotto 6/49 and Lotto 6/42 in Thursday’s draw, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. March 26, 2026, fell on a Thursday, when those two major games are scheduled for draws. PCSO said the winning combination for SuperLotto 6/49 was 46-04-19-25-33-02, but no ticket matched all

- [Jeepney driver thankful as passenger pays P200, takes no change](#) (2026-03-26 21:50)

MANILA, Philippines — A jeepney driver was touched when a passenger paid a P200 fare and walked away without taking the change. Caught on CCTV inside the jeepney, a masked passenger, who appears to be male, was seen alighting the vehicle at Commonwealth Ave. corner Pearl Drive in Fairview, Quezon City, after paying his fare.

- [Community pantries return for PUV drivers amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-26 21:43)

MANILA, Philippines — As the nationwide transport strike paralyzed key routes on Thursday, March 26, public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers continue to bear the brunt of rising fuel prices. With an approved fare hike still stuck in the pipeline, drivers are bearing the brunt of a global oil crisis—one that has found a local answer

- [Clark Water marks World Water Day by empowering next generation](#) (2026-03-26 21:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Clark Water, a Non-East Zone operating unit of Manila Water Company, celebrated World Water Day this year through the Katubig Youth Caravan. The annual two-day flagship youth engagement program highlights the importance of water sustainability while empowering young leaders to become responsible stewards of this vital resource. Now on its second year,

- [Ombudsman Remulla cites ‘problem’ with AMLC amid flood mess probe](#) (2026-03-26 21:00)

MANILA, Philippines — Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla on Thursday said his agency is having a “problem” with the Anti Money Laundering Council (AMLC) related to their investigation into the multibillion flood control corruption scandal. Remulla made this remark a day after AMLC Executive Director Matthew David announced his resignation. David, who requested a transfer to

- [Taguig police seize drugs, firearm, grenade; 4 in custody](#) (2026-03-26 20:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Taguig City police arrested a suspected robbery group member and three others during an early morning anti-criminality operation in Barangay Pembo on Tuesday, seizing illegal drugs, a firearm, and a grenade. The operation took place around 3 a.m. Tuesday along Tanaquin Street in Barangay Pembo, involving a coordinated effort by local police

- [Angara pushes stronger farm-to-school links during Batangas school visit](#) (2026-03-26 20:38)

LIPA CITY, Batangas — Education Secretary Sonny Angara on Thursday underscored the role of agriculture in improving student nutrition and strengthening local communities as he met with farmer cooperatives during a visit in Batangas. Angara joined farmers, school officials, and education stakeholders in a dialogue aimed at strengthening the connection between schools and local agriculture

- [Castro defends Garin: She works so hard, now looks sleepless](#) (2026-03-26 20:35)

MANILA, Philippines — It is wrong to judge and label the Department of Energy (DOE) as slackers just because they do not report to office regularly, as the agency has been in the thick of finding solutions to the high price of fuel, Palace press officer and Undersecretary Claire Castro said on Thursday. During the Malacañang

- [31 arrested in ‘anti-drug crackdown’ in Laguna](#) (2026-03-26 20:32)

MANILA, Philippines — Thirty-one individuals were arrested in San Pedro, Laguna, following the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)' s anti-drug crackdown operation on Wednesday. According to the NBI, 28 of those apprehended tested positive for illegal drug use. READ: NBI confiscates P23M worth of narcotics in Davao City During the enforcement of the warrants in Barangays

- [Security guard nabbed for illegal gun discharge in front of Cubao mall](#) (2026-03-26 20:23)

MANILA, Philippines — A security guard, 28, was arrested for allegedly illegally firing his gun in his front of a mall in Cubao, Quezon City, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Thursday. “At around 5:45 a.m. [on March 24], a gunshot rang out at the mall entrance, causing alarm among civilians present in the

- [National 911 center logs over 3,300 VAWC calls from Jan. to Feb.](#) (2026-03-26 20:17)

[Trigger warning: Mentions of domestic violence] MANILA, Philippines — The Emergency 911 National Office recorded a total of 3,392 calls related to violence against women and their children (VAWC) from January 2025 to February 2026. In a statement on Thursday, the Emergency 911 National Office said 2,533 of the calls logged during the said period

- [Marcos, Dy push farm productivity with new Isabela agri projects](#) (2026-03-26 20:17)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. and Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III on Thursday led the inspection and inauguration of key agricultural facilities here, marking a P168.3-million investment aimed at boosting farm productivity, cutting post-harvest losses, and raising farmers’ incomes. Joining them were Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. and Isabela Governor Rodolfo

- [Albee Benitez to push for automated national policy for crises](#) (2026-03-26 20:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The huge fuel price increases due to the Middle East conflict has exposed the country’ s need for an automated policy during crises, so that national and local government units would no longer scramble for solutions, House of Representatives Deputy Speaker Albee Benitez said. Benitez, in an interview on the sidelines of the

- [Man with explicit photos of classmates nabbed, 3 rescued by local gov’ t](#) (2026-03-26 19:59)

MANILA, Philippines — A man was arrested for allegedly possessing materials showing him engaging in sexual activities with some classmates when they were still minors, the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Center (PNP WCPC) said on Thursday. An undercover agent discovered the explicit materials on the suspect’ s phone, leading to his arrest in

- [Man caught trying to sexually exploit 3 victims online for pay](#) (2026-03-26 19:35)

MANILA, Philippines — A 36-year-old man was arrested in Davao City for allegedly offering to sexually exploit three male individuals online, according to the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Center (PNP WCPC) on Thursday. The suspect was caught on March 19, after being tracked down by operatives online, WCPC Chief Brig. Gen. Maria

- [Dy says admin' s post-harvest facility helps food security push](#) (2026-03-26 19:30)

MANILA, Philippines — The current administration' s several post-harvest facilities — including those inaugurated in Isabela province — will be a great help in pushing for food security, House of Representatives Speaker Faustino “Bojie” Dy III said on Thursday. Dy in a statement said that the government' s push for agricultural productivity is evident in the projects, as

- [Woman nabbed for selling 8-year-old boy' s explicit photos to foreigner](#) (2026-03-26 19:17)

MANILA, Philippines — A 31-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly selling explicit photos of her partner' s eight-year-old boy to an Australian man, the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Center (PNP WCPC) said on Thursday. Operatives had tracked her down through her conversations with the foreigner on the latter' s phone and she was entrapped

- [Gov' t urged to classify internet as '5th utility' as costs decline](#) (2026-03-26 19:16)

MANILA, Philippines — Advocacy group CitizenWatch Philippines has reiterated its call for the government to classify internet access as the country' s “fifth” utility, alongside electricity, water, gas, and transportation, as its costs continue to decline. The group' s co-convenor, Atty. Kit Belmonte noted that internet access should be included in the top list of essential utilities

- [Rising fuel costs hit infra, but rail projects on track — contractors](#) (2026-03-26 18:51)

MANILA, Philippines — Rising fuel prices driven by the conflict in the Middle East are affecting construction costs for Philippine infrastructure projects, but contractors say progress on major railway projects remains largely on schedule. Ricky Salenga, construction manager for tunneling works at Sumitomo Mitsui Construction, which handles Contract Package 103 covering the Anonas and Camp

- [TNVS drivers join transport strike, say income reduced by as high as 70%](#) (2026-03-26 18:46)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 150 transport network vehicle service (TNVS) drivers passed through Aurora boulevard on Thursday afternoon while sounding their horns and revving their engines in protest of the rising fuel prices, which have reduced their income by as much as 70 percent. The parade was part of a two-day nationwide transport strike organized

- [Gatchalian sees unscrupulous oil traders raking in windfall profits](#) (2026-03-26 18:17)

MANILA, Philippines – Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian sees unscrupulous traders reaping windfall profits from skyrocketing oil prices in the country driven by the crisis in the Middle East. READ:

PNP files profiteering, hoarding charges vs gas station, driver At Thursday' s hearing of theSenate Proactive Response and Oversight for Timely and Effective Crisis Strategy (Protect)committee,

- [Jeepney driver faints while lining up for cash aid; in stable condition](#) (2026-03-26 18:11)

MANILA, Philippines — A jeepney driver fainted during the rollout of the government' s cash financial assistance for public utility vehicle drivers but is now in stable condition, the Quezon City Government said on Thursday. The driver was taken by the city disaster risk reduction and management office to the Quezon City General Hospital for assessment

- [Marcos announces Camago-3 gas drilling, testing operations](#) (2026-03-26 18:04)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday announced the drilling and testing operations at Camago-3, capable of producing up to 60 million standard cubic feet of gas per day. In a video statement, Marcos said Camago-3 is the second major milestone under the USD893-million Malampaya Phase 4 campaign. READ: Marcos signs law granting him

- [Gatchalian tells DOE to power up, 'don' t sleep' as energy crisis looms](#) (2026-03-26 17:52)

MANILA, Philippines — Department of Energy (DOE) officials should take energy drinks and refrain from sleeping as they try to find alternative suppliers of oil and ultimately avoid an energy crisis for the country, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian said on Thursday. During the Senate' s ad hoc committee hearing on addressing the effects of the Middle East tensions,

- [Man nabbed for alleged illegal sale of fuel in Masbate](#) (2026-03-26 17:51)

MANILA, Philippines — A man was arrested for allegedly illegally selling fuel in Masbate, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Thursday. The suspect was entrapped in an operation in Barangay Tan-awan, Placer on Tuesday, according to the PNP in a statement. “Confiscated from the suspect were five liters of gasoline used in the buy-bust;

- [Sara Duterte, lawyers 'not consistent' with their positions – law expert](#) (2026-03-26 17:47)

MANILA, Philippines – Vice President Sara Duterte and her legal camp appeared to be “not consistent” with their positions on the House justice committee giving them the opportunity to be heard in the impeachment proceedings and refusing to attend for being a “mini trial,” a constitutional law expert said on Thursday. Paolo Tamase, associate dean

- [CDO transport workers stay on sidelines amid nationwide strike](#) (2026-03-26 17:39)

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY — Transport workers here chose not to participate in a nationwide strike demanding urgent actions on issues tied to the Middle East crisis that continue to squeeze them with reduced daily incomes. Officials said this could have been due to the paltry turnout during Monday' s citywide strike called by a federation

- [Marcos inspects Isabela palay warehouse, onion cold storage facility](#) (2026-03-26 17:14)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday inspected Ambatali Warehouse with multi-purpose drying pavement and the Ramon Onion Cold Storage Facility in the Municipality of Ramon, Isabela. The project was expected to strengthen the agricultural sector and provide a more efficient post-harvest system, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said in a press release.

- [Speaker Dy welcomes BARMM poll reset, backs stronger regional transition](#) (2026-03-26 17:13)

MANILA, Philippines – Speaker Faustino “Bojie” G. Dy III on Wednesday welcomed the signing into law by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. of the measure resetting the first regular elections in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), calling it a crucial step toward a more stable and credible democratic transition in the region.

- [SC upholds ex-Agusan del Norte mayor’ s malversation conviction](#) (2026-03-26 17:11)

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court has affirmed the malversation conviction of former mayor Teresita Soliva of the municipality of Remedios T. Romualdez, Agusan del Norte for failing to liquidate cash advances for confidential funds and other expenses amounting to more than half a million pesos. In a 26-page decision in August last year but

- [Calapan clergy renew vows after Vatican raises vicariate to diocese](#) (2026-03-26 17:10)
- [Ortega: House productive even with impeachment duty](#) (2026-03-26 17:02)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives is expected to top its performance in the 19th Congress regarding productivity even as it is duty-bound to tackle the impeachment complaints, Deputy Speaker Paolo Ortega V said on Thursday. Ortega, in a statement, said that having the House committee on justice tackle the impeachment complaints against Vice President Sara

- [PH always sincere in its dealings, Malacañang says](#) (2026-03-26 16:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has always been sincere in its dealings and negotiations with the international community, Palace press officer and Undersecretary Claire Castro said on Thursday. Castro said this in a press briefing, after being asked to react to the Chinese embassy’ s recent statements on the possible resumption of oil exploration talks between Manila

- [Transport strike in Bacolod lasts only a few hours](#) (2026-03-26 16:21)

BACOLOD CITY—A transportation strike that failed to cripple public transportation here ended before noon on Thursday. There were about 500 drivers and operators who gathered at five rally centers to demand government action against rising fuel prices brought on by unrest in the Middle East, said Eric Bendoy, secretary-general of the United Negros Drivers and

- [Transport strikes, protests to continue until demands met – Piston](#) (2026-03-26 16:18)

MANILA, Philippines — Drivers and operators of public utility vehicles will not stop holding transport strikes and protests until the government heeds their calls amid the rising cost of fuel products, transport group Piston president Mody Floranda said on Thursday. Floranda reiterated this statement as the No to Oil Price Hike Coalition, which comprises drivers

- [Marcos inspects agri, health projects in Isabela](#) (2026-03-26 16:01)

RAMON, Isabela—President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday pledged to put up more livelihood projects as he inspected various farm facilities and a new road in far-flung Ambatali village here and in Santiago City and Cabatuan town in Isabela province. Marcos said the projects would improve food supply and increase farmers’ earnings. Worth P168.3 million, the

- [Senators peel off the issue of conflicting data on onion production](#) (2026-03-26 15:26)

MANILA, Philippines — Senators during an agriculture panel hearing on Thursday questioned the government’ s conflicting data on national onion production. This comes as the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported a production surplus, while the Department of Agriculture (DA) reported a deficit. During the hearing, the PSA said the Philippines produced 308,661 metric tons (mt) in

- [Balisacan appears lukewarm over proposed tax on super rich](#) (2026-03-26 15:18)

MANILA, Philippines — Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan appears to be lukewarm over proposals to tax the rich, as a measure to curb the possible losses generated by the country due to the possible tax suspension, as it may create more harm than good. During a Malacañang press briefing on Thursday, Palace press officer and Undersecretary Claire

- [Transport group seeks P10,000 monthly aid for PUV drivers](#) (2026-03-26 15:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Transport group Manibela on Thursday called on the government to provide P10,000 in monthly cash assistance, instead of the one-time payout of P5,000, for public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers. According to Manibela chairperson Mar Valbuena, the P5,000 cash assistance is not enough for the drivers, noting the rising cost of fuel. “It’ s only

- [Marcos may order fuel excise tax cut, suspension by April 12 or 13](#) (2026-03-26 14:30)

MANILA, Philippines— President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. may order the suspension or reduction of excise taxes on petroleum products by April 12 or 13, an official of the Department of Finance (DOF) told senators on Thursday. DOF is part of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) tasked to make recommendations to the president to either suspend

- [Agencies should hasten response to oil crisis – Bam Aquino](#) (2026-03-26 14:21)

MANILA, Philippines — Cabinet members should respond to the ongoing oil crisis immediately with the national state of energy emergency declared, Sen. Bam Aquino said on Thursday.

“Please move as fast as the price of diesel and gasoline and gasoline is going up. Move as fastas that. If the price of diesel and gasoline

- [Marcos’ Partido Federal gains strength in House – South Cotabato gov](#) (2026-03-26 14:16)

KORONADAL CITY, South Cotabato – The Partido Federal ng Pilipinas (PFP) has been gaining strength in the House of Representatives, trailing behind the dominant Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD), its president, South Cotabato Gov. Reynaldo Tamayo Jr., said.

“Actually, the number is increasing regularly. We are the super majority in the local government, with the governors

- [PNP to bolster community ties to address rising cases of suicide](#) (2026-03-26 14:03)

[Warning: Mention of suicide] MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. on Thursday said the agency will be strengthening its relationships with communities in a bid to address the rising cases of suicide. “As law enforcers, the PNP also wants the public to feel that they can rely on

- [House gives free rides for those commuting from SJD, Welcome Rotonda](#) (2026-03-26 13:45)

MANILA, Philippines — Commuters moving from the City of San Jose del Monte in Bulacan to Welcome Rotonda in Quezon City can enjoy free rides after the House of Representatives launched trips as part of their transport relief initiative amid rising fuel costs. In a statement on Thursday, the House said that it launched a

- [Rice trader gives free gas to over 300 South Cotabato trike drivers](#) (2026-03-26 13:41)

KORONADAL CITY, South Cotabato – May you live long and your tribe increase. A young businesswoman received such wishes for her kindness after she gave out free gasoline for hundreds of tricycle and habal-habal drivers in the towns of Surallah and T’boli amid the skyrocketing fuel prices due to the Middle East war. READ: Marcos OKs

- [Calapan City heat index hits 41°C; ‘extreme caution’ advised](#) (2026-03-26 13:19)

CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro — Residents of this city are warned of mounting health risks as the heat index soared to a sweltering 41 degrees Celsius on Thursday morning, prompting local disaster officials to raise an “extreme caution” advisory. Data from the Calapan City Public Market monitoring station recorded the peak value at 11 a.m,

- [Coding without limits: IT grad thrives despite disability](#) (2026-03-26 13:17)

MANILA, Philippines — In the fast-paced world of front-end development, skill is often measured by how quickly one can type, fix errors, or run clean code. For Ayevin Hao, a 27-year-old BS Information Technology graduate of the University of the East (UE), that work happens differently. Every line of code, every command, is done with

- [55 green sea turtle hatchlings released in Catanduanes](#) (2026-03-26 13:07)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay— Fifty-five green sea turtle hatchlings were released into the sea on March 20 at Taelan Cove in Talisoy village, Virac town, in the island province of Catanduanes. The activity was led by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in Catanduanes, headed by officer-in-charge Lawyer Vivian D. Escoto, in coordination with

- [Police rule out foul play in death of missing Pasig teen](#) (2026-03-26 12:58)

MANILA, Philippines — Police have ruled out foul play in the death of 15-year-old Grade 9 student Isabelle Sophia Tablate, whose body was found in vacant a lot in Pasig City after she had been missing for five days. “There was no sign that she was killed or subjected to violence,” Capt. Rodolfo Rabago, team

- [Leviste to Marcos: Cut Asean budget, funnel savings to fuel price relief](#) (2026-03-26 12:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Batangas Rep. Leandro Legarda Leviste has urged the Office of the President (OP) to review and eventually trim its P22.9 billion budget for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit this year. Leviste is asking President Marcos to allocate the savings that will result in the budget decrease to measures that will

- [BARMM grants P7,500 fuel subsidy to transport sector](#) (2026-03-26 12:34)

COTABATO CITY — The Ministry of Transportation and Communication in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (MOTC-BARMM) has rolled out fuel subsidies for the transport sector as the petition for a provisional fare increase for public transport vehicles in the region remains up in the air. Through the MOTC-BARMM Pantawid Pasada Program (PPP), each franchise

- [When mangrove planting goes wrong](#) (2026-03-26 12:13)

MANILA, Philippines — Along a stretch of coastline, volunteers waded into shallow water, pressing mangrove seedlings into the mud — one by one, row after row. It is a familiar scene across the Philippines, often repeated after storms, during company-led drives, and in community activities promoted as climate action. The intention is clear: to protect

- [Oil traders quiet on May supply – local oil firms](#) (2026-03-26 11:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Fuel companies on Thursday admitted that no oil traders have committed to supplying stocks for May. The Philippine Institute of Petroleum (PIP) and the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA) made the revelation during the Senate Proactive Response and Oversight for Timely and Effective Crisis Strategy (Protect) committee hearing. “So many of

- [Lawyer of 18 ‘ex-Marines’ back at NBI over De Lima, Villanueva cases](#) (2026-03-26 11:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Atty. Levito Baligod, counsel for the 18 alleged former Marines, returned to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on Thursday to comply with the subpoena issued to him. This time, the subpoena was in connection with the cyber complaints recently filed by Mamamayang Liberal Rep. Leila de Lima and 2025 Ramon Magsaysay

- [Man arrested for siphoning diesel from truck in Tacloban](#) (2026-03-26 11:44)

TACLOBAN CITY — Police have arrested a man who allegedly siphoned diesel from the parked truck of a business establishment here. The theft was reported at a business along Rizal Avenue in Barangay 37, where around 70 liters of diesel fuel valued at P8,050 were siphoned from a company vehicle owned by Lucky Hardware and

- [Manibela leader seeks commuters' understanding over calls for fare hike](#) (2026-03-26 11:40)

MANILA, Philippines — Transport group Manibela chairperson Mar Valbuena on Thursday appealed for commuters' understanding and sympathy as they call for a fare increase in view of the rising cost of fuel due to the conflict in the Middle East. Valbuena criticized the suspension of the fare hike on several public utility vehicles, such as

- [Cebu prov' l govt cuts terminal fees for PUVs](#) (2026-03-26 11:13)

CEBU CITY — The Cebu provincial government has ordered a temporary reduction in terminal fees for public utility vehicles (PUVs) using Capitol-operated bus terminals, aiming to cushion the impact of rising fuel prices on transport operators and commuters. The three-month measure, which took effect on March 25 and will run until June 24 this year,

- [Residents brave long queue for cheap rice in Kidapawan City](#) (2026-03-26 11:02)

KIDAPAWAN CITY, Cotabato- Hundreds of residents here braved a long queue on Thursday to avail of the government's cheap rice. The people trooped to the National Food Authority (NFA) warehouse to get priority numbers starting at 4 a.m. But within an hour, the line of would-be beneficiaries had grown to about half a kilometer. Those

- [NCRPO deploys over 8,900 cops, 190 vehicles for transport strike](#) (2026-03-26 10:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Over 8,900 police officers and 190 police vehicles have been deployed in Metro Manila for security during the two-day transport strike launched on Thursday, March 26, according to the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO). A breakdown of the agency's deployment as of 10 a.m. showed they had sent out the following

- [Transport groups: Scrap, not just suspend, fuel taxes amid price hikes](#) (2026-03-26 10:54)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. should have abolished the excise tax and value added tax (VAT) on fuel products, instead of suspending or reducing their taxes, amid the rising cost of fuel caused by tension in the Middle East, transport group Piston said on Thursday. Piston president Mody Floranda said this as the

- [DA plans 5 mega hatcheries to boost aquaculture, ease pressure on seas](#) (2026-03-26 10:49)

GUINOBATAN, Albay — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said the government will strengthen aquaculture and build five mega hatcheries in the country to help achieve food security and allow overfished seas to recover. Laurel said the planned hatcheries will be established in the provinces of Camarines Sur, Sorsogon, Quezon, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Pangasinan. “The

- [Ombudsman to comply with House order for Sara Duterte SALN](#) (2026-03-26 10:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman on Thursday said they will comply with the order of a House panel to release the certified true copy of Vice President Sara Duterte’s Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN). Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano noted that SALNs of certain public officials are public documents that

- [Superkit series tees off May 16 in Clark](#) (2026-03-26 10:42)

MANILA, Philippines — The Superkit Series will tee off on May 16 to 17 at the Mimosa Golf and Country Club in Clark, Pampanga, marking a three-month nationwide tour organized by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines. The opening leg will be played across Mimosa’s Mountain and Acacia courses, setting the stage for a

- [Bacolod jeepney drivers, operators join nat’ l transport protest](#) (2026-03-26 10:36)

BACOLOD CITY- Drivers and operators of traditional jeepneys and other transport groups have stopped plying their routes here on Thursday as part of a nationwide protest to demand government action over rising fuel prices brought on by the Middle East unrest. Leading the strike in Bacolod are the United Negros Drivers and Operators Center-Pagkakaisa ng

- [Campaign launched for toxics-free, zero-waste hospitals](#) (2026-03-26 10:21)

TACLOBAN CITY — The Eastern Visayas Medical Center (EVMC), based here, launched on Wednesday a campaign for toxics-free and zero-waste hospitals aimed at reducing plastic use and improving healthcare waste management. The campaign was highlighted by the rollout of the “Nurse Susie” roadshow at the medical center’s Outpatient Department. The initiative forms part of the

- [Senate ad hoc panel holds consultation on impact of Middle East war](#) (2026-03-26 10:07)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate ad hoc committee resumed its hearing on Thursday to hear inputs on the socioeconomic effects of the Middle East war on Filipinos. The Proactive Response and Oversight for Timely and Effective Crisis Strategy (Protect) committee, created under Senate Resolution No. 45, aims to formulate a national comprehensive contingency framework. This

- [LOOK: Mall hours adjusted for Holy Week observance](#) (2026-03-26 09:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Major mall operators have announced adjusted operating schedules ahead of the observance of Holy Week, with closures set for Maundy Thursday on April 2 and Good Friday on April 3. Open on Maundy Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.: Open on Good Friday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.: Closed

- [Bicol's damaged Maharlika Highway section now open for Holy Week rush](#) (2026-03-26 09:54)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay — Motorists traveling from Metro Manila and bound for Bicol, Visayas, and Mindanao (and vice versa) for the Holy Week observance can now use previously damaged portions of the Maharlika Highway. This is after the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) completed emergency repairs ahead of the peak travel period. READ:

- [LIBRENG SAKAY rolled out in Metro Manila as transport strikes continue](#) (2026-03-26 09:45)

MANILA, Philippines – The government has rolled out “libreng sakay” (free rides) across key routes in Metro Manila as a nationwide transport strike disrupts public commuting on March 26 and 27. In an advisory, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) said the “libreng sakay” program will run from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday and

- [DepEd to Western Visayas schools: No fees for end-of-school-year rites](#) (2026-03-26 09:29)

ILOILO CITY — The Department of Education (DepEd) in Western Visayas has reiterated that no fees should be collected from students, parents, or teachers for end-of-school-year (EOSY) activities, including graduation and moving-up ceremonies. The directive was contained in Regional Memorandum No. 274, series of 2026, signed by Cristito A. Eco, regional director of the Department

- [Taal Volcano logs slight rise in sulfur emissions; seismic activity low](#) (2026-03-26 09:14)

LUCENA CITY, Quezon — Taal Volcano recorded a slight increase in sulfur dioxide emissions, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported on Thursday. In its morning bulletin, Phivolcs said the volcano emitted 1,625 metric tons of sulfur dioxide from its main crater over the past 24 hours, a level still classified as “weak.”

- [Nartatez vows crackdown on e-sabong after Manila coliseum bust](#) (2026-03-26 09:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. intends to crack down on online cockfighting after police shut down an alleged e-sabong operation at a coliseum in Manila yesterday. The raid in Vitas Coliseum in Tondo resulted in the arrest of 136 bettors and 28 operators. “Illegal e-sabong is a

- [On-site classes in Albay suspended due to transport strike](#) (2026-03-26 09:10)

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay—In-person classes in Albay province were suspended on Thursday and Friday in anticipation of the nationwide transport strike. In an advisory, Acting Governor Farida Co said the public and private schools will implement alternative learning modality at all levels.

She also advised the local government units to provide free rides for stranded commuters

- [Central Luzon deputy police chief named new head of Highway Patrol Group](#) (2026-03-26 09:07)

MANILA, Philippines — Police Regional Office Central Luzon (PRO 3) Deputy Director for Administration Brig. Gen. Rommel Batangan has been designated the new acting director of the Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group (PNP HPG). This came through the order of PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. dated March 25 and issued by the

- [CHR hails PH removal from UN list of grave rights violations](#) (2026-03-26 08:46)

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) welcomed the Philippines' removal from the United Nations (UN) list of grave child rights violations related to armed conflict, calling it a milestone in efforts to protect children in areas affected by fighting. The CHR said the delisting highlights “sustained national efforts to strengthen the implementation

- [Pagasa warns of soaring heat index across PH on March 26 \(Thursday\)](#) (2026-03-26 08:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Scorching heat is expected across the country, with the heat index reaching up to 41°C, while Metro Manila may experience 37°C to 38°C on Thursday, the state weather bureau warned. Heat index is how hot it actually feels to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature. Temperatures

- [OIL PRICE WATCH as of Thursday, March 26, 2026](#) (2026-03-26 08:10)

The Department of Energy describes the global oil market this week as “calm” compared to last week. Despite this pronouncement, local fuel prices are still going up, it's just that the numbers are about half of the increases experienced by motorists last week. Here are the prevailing oil prices in Metro Manila and other parts

- [Mt. Province cancels Lang-ay Festival due to nat'l energy emergency](#) (2026-03-26 07:27)

BAGUIO CITY — The provincial government of Mountain Province on Wednesday announced the cancellation of all activities for the annual Lang-ay Festival in support of the national energy emergency, officials said. In a social media post, the local government announced the cancellation “in compliance with Executive Order 17-2026,” adding that the move supports the National Energy

- [Corruption issues hound Marcos, Duterte in Pulse Asia poll](#) (2026-03-26 05:52)

Corruption remained the primary factor influencing the public's trust or distrust of President Marcos while Vice President Sara Duterte enjoyed the trust of most survey respondents because of her supposed ability to govern despite her alleged involvement in corrupt activities, according to the latest survey by Pulse Asia. The First Quarter 2026 Ulat ng Bayan

- [Police official accused of harassment quits post](#) (2026-03-26 05:50)

The acting Highway Patrol Group (HPG) chief of the Philippine National Police has voluntarily resigned from his post after a subordinate accused him of sexual harassment. Brig. Gen. Jessie Tamayao, however, denied the allegation in a statement on Wednesday, calling it part of a personal vendetta against him. “I have always conducted myself with the

- [SC: DSWD certificate needed in adoption of ‘surrendered’ kids](#) (2026-03-26 05:48)

Abandoned children who are surrendered to a person with whom they have no existing ties cannot be legally adopted without a certification from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). This was the recent ruling of the Supreme Court’s Third Division when it junked a petition for certiorari in connection with an adoption case

- [AMLC seeks forfeiture of assets tied to flood control scam](#) (2026-03-26 05:44)

The Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) has filed three petitions for civil forfeiture against assets allegedly linked to the flood control corruption scandal, following six months of investigations and freeze orders. In a statement, the council said the petitions cover assets of individuals and entities earlier placed under freeze orders issued by the Court of Appeals.

- [Cops bust ‘e-sabong’ in Manila; 174 arrested](#) (2026-03-26 05:42)

The police have busted a group behind an electronic cockfighting ( “e-sabong” ) operation conducting around 500 cockfights daily in a Manila coliseum, resulting in the arrest of 174 people, mostly bettors. Col. John Guiagui, the head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in the National Capital Region (CIDG – NCR), told reporters that they raided

- [Police note mounting suicides in PH capital](#) (2026-03-26 05:38)

Suicide cases in Metro Manila have more than tripled in the first quarter, a situation that should make families more aware of the factors that drive youths to self-harm, including the negative effects of online gaming, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said on Wednesday. The cases surged to 111 between January and March

- [House panel asks for Sara’ s SALNs, files on her threat to kill Marcos](#) (2026-03-26 05:36)

The House committee on justice opened a new stage on Wednesday in the impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte by asking two agencies—the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Bureau of Investigation—to produce documents pertaining to her declared wealth and the death threat she issued in 2024 against President Marcos, first lady Liza

- [P20 billion emergency fund set to secure fuel supply](#) (2026-03-26 05:32)

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has directed the release of billions in additional funds in response to the deepening global oil crisis caused by the Middle East conflict, a day after he signed an executive order declaring a national energy emergency. The P20-billion emergency fund, sourced from the Malampaya Gas Fund under the Special Account

- [Marcos gets special power to cut or suspend fuel tax](#) (2026-03-26 05:30)

President Marcos on Wednesday signed Republic Act No. 12316, a law authorizing him to suspend or reduce excise on petroleum products, as the country continued to reel from oil price spikes caused by the Middle East conflict. The measure was certified as urgent by the President on March 12, as an oil crisis loomed following

- [LGUs roll out fuel subsidy in provinces](#) (2026-03-26 05:06)

The streets of Kidapawan City in Cotabato province were almost emptied of passenger tricycles on Wednesday morning after their usual rounds of ferrying private and government workers to their respective offices. There was no transport strike. But many of them gathered at the city gymnasium and queued to beat the deadline to submit filled-out forms

- [Pangasinan, Ecija farmers face dearth of onion buyers](#) (2026-03-26 05:04)

CALASIAO, PANGASINAN—It is a bumper harvest season for onion farmers in Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija provinces. With the help of concerned agencies, growers were able to control armyworms, locally known as “harabas,” which are moth larvae that feed on onion leaves at night and cause severe production losses. As a result, this year’s harvest is

- [Mountain Province tourism bracing for impact of rising fuel prices](#) (2026-03-26 05:02)

BAGUIO CITY—Tourism in Mountain Province is taking a hit from the fuel shocks due to the conflict in the Middle East, which entered its 25th day on Wednesday. Gov. Bonifacio Lacwasan on Wednesday canceled the province’s annual Lang-ay Festival scheduled on April 6 to comply with President Marcos’ declaration of a state of national energy

- [LGUs, national government commit to diversity, inclusion](#) (2026-03-26 04:30)

As the global workforce continues to evolve, existing cultural factors and government policies demonstrate the growing role of businesses in fostering environments where employees feel seen, valued, and treated fairly. But beyond fairness, inclusive work environments empower individuals to fully realize and maximize their talents and capabilities. Companies that embed diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

- [Mangyans show promise of solar-powered future in Mindoro](#) (2026-03-26 04:25)

CITY OF CALAPAN—In remote communities across Mindoro, Indigenous Mangyan families are already experiencing what a renewable energy future could look like—powered by small, decentralized solar systems that bring light to homes and electricity to community facilities long beyond the reach of the grid. Their experience is now at the heart of a broader conversation, as

- [LIST: LGUs, schools shifting to online classes on March 26](#) (2026-03-26 00:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Several local government units (LGUs) and educational institutions have switched to online classes on Thursday, March 26 due to a nationwide transport strike. The

following LGUs have announced adopting the measure: Calabarzon Laguna – all levels, public and private; modular or online learning on March 26 Bicol Region Albay READ: Groups back2-day

- [PNP to public: Observe water activity safety guidelines](#) (2026-03-26 00:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday enjoined the public to take extra precautions when swimming or holding activities in pools and bodies of water.

“Swim only in designated areas, check for lifeguards, wear life vests when needed, and avoid risky behavior such as diving in shallow water or swimming alone,” PNP

## Source: The Manila Times

- [Shelter 'sets record straight' on girl's viral post to president](#) (2026-04-02 05:06)

MANILA, Philippines — A non-profit organization that has been sheltering an 11-year-old girl, whose appeal for help to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had gone viral, sought to clarify some "misinformation" surrounding some of the events that she pointed out in her story that was contained in a speech she delivered during her graduation recently..The Redeemer Homeless Mission, through lawyer Mary Joy Lumbria Acobera, said the girl, identified only as Maureen, and all children in the shelter area were safe and in good condition.The controversy stemmed from an open letter the girl read during her graduation ceremony recently where she sought protection and redress from sexual and other forms of abuse allegedly perpetrated by a barangay kagawad (village councilor) and his sons. She then walked out of her graduation ceremony to submit a petition to the vice mayor of Tinambac, calling for the removal of the local official.Acobera said that the administration and teachers of the Caloco Elementary School, where the girl was studying, “had no prior knowledge of Maureen’ s decision to walk out of her graduation ceremony.” “School Head Harrison Belleca and Ma’ am Michelle Daliva-Ocampo were likewise unaware of the portions of her speech where she intended to call out the injustices and where she sought permission to walk out,” Acobera said in a statement on Wednesday.Acobera also clarified that the girl did not walk home alone but was joined by her older sister who read the Bible in a prayer walk to the local government of Tinambac.Acobera also "set the record straight" after the girl recounted how her peer, reportedly a child with special needs, “got pregnant from the first rape” and how the village councilor “kidnapped” her and took her to Montalban for an abortion.” “The accused in the rape case has been in detention as the matter is pending before the court of law. Maureen’ s prayer walk was not solely for this specific incident; it was a stand against the impunity of a public official attempting to intimidate and silence the residents of Caloco,” Acobera said.Acobera extended the shelter's gratitude to the president for his swift response and action that was carried out by the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government and Tinambac Municipal Mayor Edward Albert “Bobit” P. Prades.

- [Bill of rights for air travelers pushed at House](#) (2026-04-02 03:36)

MANILA, Philippines — Bagong Henerasyon Partylist Rep. Robert Nazal is pushing for the institutionalization of the existing Air Passengers Bill of Rights that will guarantee clear, enforceable rights for Filipino air travelers amid the rapid growth of the aviation sector. House Bill 245 seeks to strengthen the existing Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) policies and strengthen its current protections. “This bill says a plane ticket is not just a receipt. It is a contract, and the Filipino passenger must receive the service, dignity, and remedies that the law guarantees,” Nazal said in a statement. He noted the sharp rebound in air travel following the Coronavirus pandemic, noting that passenger volume has reached 27.3 million in 2023, underscoring the urgency of ensuring that passenger protections keep pace with industry growth. “As air travel in the Philippines continues to recover and expand, passenger rights must keep pace with growth,” Nazal added. He said that while existing policies, as provided under the current Air Passenger Bill of Rights, outline passenger entitlements, these remain scattered unevenly enforced. The proposed measure, Nazal said, consolidated and strengthened these protections into a single statutory framework. Under the bill, passengers are guaranteed the right to full and transparent information on fares and conditions, the right to receive the full value of services paid for, and the right to timely assistance, compensation or rebooking in cases of delays, cancellations or denied boarding. It also mandates clear procedures for handling complaints and claims, imposes minimum service standards, and prescribes penalties for violations

- [Cardinal urges clergy to prioritize mental health amid rising distress cases](#) (2026-04-02 02:46)

MANILA, Philippines — A Cardinal urged Filipino priests to prioritize their mental health, citing a growing number of priests experiencing depression and anxiety and stressing the need for greater awareness and support within the Church. Speaking during the Chrism Mass at the Manila Cathedral on Maundy Thursday—where priests from across the archdiocese gather to renew their commitment to service and their promises—Advincula said 18 percent, or 1 in 5, priests are were experiencing psychological distress or emotional burden. “This is a concern we cannot ignore anymore,” Advincula said.

- [Prohibited items — from live ammunition to firearm magazines — seized in airports nationwide](#) (2026-04-02 02:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office for Transportation Security (OTS) has reported that several prohibited items were intercepted, including live ammunition and firearm magazines, in airports nationwide. At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3, screening officers held an American passenger bound for San Francisco after a live bullet was found in his carry-on bag. Other items seized at the same terminal were: - Two pieces of ammunition from a Tagbilaran-bound passenger. - A piece of ammunition from a traveler bound for Kalibo. - An empty shell from a passenger bound for Roxas City. - An amulet made from an ammunition shell from a Taipei-bound traveler. At NAIA Terminal 2, another empty shell was confiscated from a passenger on flight Z2-329 to Tacloban. The OTS also reported seizing prohibited items from

passengers at airports outside of NAIA. In Cotabato, a magazine loaded with four live bullets was seized, while an empty shell was discovered hidden in a carry-on bag in Dipolog. Additionally, a Manila-bound passenger from Roxas City was found with two firearm magazines. Although the items were confiscated, authorities allowed all involved passengers to board their flights for humanitarian reasons.

- [Pasig processes unserved PUJ drivers for cash assistance](#) (2026-04-02 02:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The Pasig City government has processed more than 1,000 traditional and modern public utility jeepney drivers who were left out of the initial distribution of the national government's cash relief assistance. The city government said the local registration and data validation were conducted to help unserved drivers qualify for a special payout under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The activity was held on Monday and Tuesday, March 30 and 31, through the City Transportation Development and Management Office. Pasig said the effort covered drivers who did not receive the P5,000 cash relief assistance distributed on March 25. A total of 1,024 individuals were processed and included in the initial list prepared by the local government. Of the total, 853 personally went to Maybunga Rainforest Park for registration and profiling. Another 171 members of transport cooperatives under the Pasig City Cooperative Development Office were included without having to undergo profiling. After the registration and profiling, the CTDMO, City Social Welfare and Development Office, and Cooperative Development Office carried out joint deduplication and data cleaning with the DSWD and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board. The city government said the process was meant to validate the information submitted and remove duplicate entries from both the Pasig masterlist and the national list. The initial list for Pasig has been submitted to the national government for the finalization of beneficiaries. Pasig said the schedule for the special payout for PUJ and MPUJ drivers in the city would be announced once the final list was completed.

- [De Lima pushes service contracting for PUVs](#) (2026-04-02 02:31)

MANILA, Philippines — Mamamayang Liberal Partylist Rep. Leila de Lima pushed to strengthen and expand the service contracting program for public transport to provide stable income for drivers while ensuring reliable and efficient service for commuters amid the continuing rise in fuel prices. In her House Resolution 913 filed on March 30, the senior deputy minority leader at the House of Representatives urged the Departments of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Transportation (DOTr) and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to study the public transport service contracting program and address any implementation gaps and operational challenges. She also sought to ensure inclusive participation in the program across transport sectors and recommend appropriate policy and legislative measures for its sustainable and efficient nationwide implementation. In a statement, de Lima said that many drivers have stopped their services due to the high costs of gasoline. "While some PUV (Public Utility Vehicle) drivers are still taking the risk, every trip comes with the heavy fear of either going into debt or earning next to nothing. This worsening oil price

crisis is truly a heavy cross to bear," de Lima said. She said that the current situation "necessitates proactive measures from the government to help our public transport sectors, and service contracting has already been identified as a sustainable subsidy mechanism that supports transport operators and commuters alike." Under the program, drivers received compensation based on actual kilometer run and performance incentives, in accordance with LTRFB guidelines.

- [PH condemns latest China aggression in West Philippine Sea](#) (2026-04-02 02:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine government on Thursday condemned the recent "aggressive and dangerous actions" by Chinese maritime forces against Philippine vessels, aircraft, and Filipino fisherfolk in the West Philippine Sea, saying these incidents "endanger lives, violate international law, and undermine regional peace and stability." In a statement, the National Maritime Council (NMC) said these "unlawful acts" by the China Coast Guard (CCG), the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the Chinese Maritime Militia, and other Chinese maritime forces occurred in areas where the Philippines has sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction. "Philippine operations in these areas are lawful and consistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2016 Arbitral Award," the NMC said. "On the other hand, the activities of China in these areas are inconsistent with international law and the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)," it added.

- [Phivolcs launches platform for 'preparedness, early warning and response'](#) (2026-04-02 02:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) launched a new platform designed to be a unified system for early warning, disaster preparedness and response, its chief, Teresito Bacolcol, said on Thursday. Called "Handa" (Ready), it was envisioned to be institutionalized as the country's Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA) platform for early warning data and analytics, enhancing public awareness, strengthening planning and coordination mechanisms, and building more resilient communities nationwide, Bacolcol said. Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. said the development of this platform was in response to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to establish a unified platform for early warning and disaster-related information. Developed under the Geospatial Analytics and Technology Solutions (GATES) Program - Project 3, Handa reflects sustained multi-agency collaboration and advances the integration of DRR-CCA into a unified geospatial and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled platform, said Solidum, Phivolcs' former director. Bacolcol said that Handa - powered by GeoRiskPH - integrates these capabilities into a unified system for preparedness, early warning, and response, ensuring informed decision-making across the phases of the disaster risk reduction management. Handa offers near real-time monitoring, location-based alerts, AI-assisted tools, and interactive dashboards, according to Phivolcs, DOST's attached agency. "It visualizes geologic and hydro-meteorological hazards, as well as critical facilities, and integrates advisories and warnings Phivolcs as well as from state weather bureau and

Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources,” Bacolcol said. The platform also enables incident reporting to support response coordination and emergency operations while users can report real-time incidents such as flooding, fires, road accidents, or other on-the-ground emergencies, helping authorities respond more effectively, Phivolcs said. “In urgent situations, users can activate the Emergency SOS alert to share their location with responders. An AI-powered assistant chatbot provides access to hazard, weather, and location-based safety information,” Bacolcol stressed. The new system is expected to encourage community participation by allowing citizens to report incidents, share on-the-ground observations, and actively contribute to situational awareness and response efforts, the top officials said.

- [Trust in govt drops as pessimism grows](#) (2026-04-01 16:18)

(UPDATE) PUBLIC trust and approval ratings for the country’s top leaders declined further in the first quarter of 2026, reflecting growing dissatisfaction and pessimism amid economic uncertainty and governance concerns, the latest Pahayag survey by PUBLiCUS Asia Inc. showed. The nationwide poll, conducted from March 21 to 24 among 1,509 registered voters, shows eroding confidence across key officials, even as broader public sentiment turns increasingly pessimistic. Marcos, Duterte ratings slide President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s approval rating dropped to 19 percent, down from 22 percent in the previous quarter, while his trust rating fell to 13 percent. Respondents cited three main issues behind the decline: perceived failure to ensure accountability in flood control controversies, backlash over developments involving former president Rodrigo Duterte and the International Criminal Court, and dissatisfaction with rising fuel prices Vice President Sara Duterte, while still the highest-rated among top officials, also posted significant declines. Her approval rating fell to 28 percent (from 34 percent), and trust dropped to 26 percent (from 31 percent). Her numbers were weighed down by impeachment complaints, political tensions and developments linked to the ICC case involving her father. Senate President Vicente Sotto III showed relative stability but recorded slight declines, with approval at 23 percent and trust at 14 percent. House Speaker Faustino Dy III continued to struggle with low public visibility, posting 11 percent approval and 6-percent trust ratings. Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo registered a mixed trend, with approval falling to 16 percent while trust remained relatively steady at 10 percent. Public pessimism surges The decline in leadership ratings comes alongside a sharp rise in public pessimism. Seventy-four percent of Filipinos now express a negative outlook for the coming quarter, up from 58 percent previously. Half of the respondents describe the country’s current condition as weak, while only 23 percent see it as strong. Nearly half (48 percent) believe the country is heading in the wrong direction. Economic anxiety intensifies Expectations for the national economy deteriorated markedly. A majority (56 percent) now anticipates further decline in the next quarter, a sharp increase from the previous survey period. At the household level, financial anxiety is deepening, with 36 percent respondents expecting their personal finances to worsen compared with last year. Overall optimism has dropped significantly, with only 23 percent expecting an improvement. At the household level, concern is rising, with 36 percent

anticipating worsening personal finances — more than double last year's figure. Corruption, cost of living Corruption remains the top concern, cited by 20 percent of respondents, alongside reported experiences of graft in public offices. Economic pressures are also widespread, including rising fuel prices, difficulty affording basic goods, and insufficient wages and unmet needs. These point to a crisis in governance and the economy shaping public sentiment. Service agencies Frontline government agencies continued to perform better in public perception. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority led in both approval (65 percent) and trust (45 percent), followed by the Department of Science and Technology, and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. In contrast, institutions associated with politics and infrastructure, such as the Department of Public Works and Highways and the House of Representatives of the Philippines, posted the lowest ratings. Half of the respondents disapproved of Cabinet members' overall performance, indicating continued dissatisfaction with the administration. Opposition figures in the Senate performed relatively well in public perception. Sen. Bam Aquino posted the highest net favorable rating, followed by Senators Francis Pangilinan and Risa Hontiveros. In contrast, strongly negative sentiment was recorded for Senators Jinggoy Estrada, Camille Villar, Ronald Dela Rosa and Mark Villar. Strong support for reform, transparency Across policy issues, Filipinos overwhelmingly support tax relief measures, greater transparency in infrastructure spending and political reforms, such as banning dynasties. Respondents were divided, however, on membership in the International Criminal Court, same-sex property rights and impeachment-related actions.

- [Palace says Ombudsman, DOJ swamped by flood control cases](#) (2026-04-01 16:16)

(UPDATE) THE Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman are overwhelmed by the volume of cases referred by the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI), Malacañang said Wednesday, a day after the panel ceased its operations. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro issued the statement after various groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact-finding body's probe, saying it failed to hold accountable the big fish behind the flood control scam. In a radio interview, Castro said the ICI, which concluded its operations on March 31, has already submitted its findings to the proper authorities, including referrals involving dozens of individuals linked to questionable infrastructure projects. "The ICI is just a fact-finding committee. They are not the ones who will hold the big fish accountable. They were tasked only to gather information, facts, testimonies that can be submitted directly to the investigating bodies, like the DOJ and also the Ombudsman," Castro said. "The filing of cases rests with the Ombudsman and DOJ," she added. Castro said the volume of referrals has placed pressure on investigating bodies, which were now conducting preliminary investigations. "Because of the sheer volume of the referrals, the Ombudsman and DOJ are seemingly overwhelmed," she said. Reiterating ICI chairman Andres Reyes Jr.'s remarks, the Palace official said the ICI has fulfilled its mandate and issuing an executive order to abolish the body was unnecessary. She reiterated that no one would be spared in the flood control probe. "Many are engaging in drama before the media. What we need is evidence that will serve as the basis for the prosecution of those involved," Castro said. "Stop the drama. We

have to start working.” “The ICI did not sleep, did not rest and did not relax. All of the recommendations, those who were charged and those for further investigation, are now in the hands of the DOJ and Ombudsman,” she added. During its six-month investigation, the ICI endorsed cases implicating at least 65 individuals, including lawmakers and contractors.

- [Philippines eyes ‘deepening cooperation’ with Iran on energy](#) (2026-04-01 16:15)

(UPDATE) THE Philippines is committed to “deepening cooperation” with Iran, particularly on energy, Manila’s foreign secretary said on Wednesday as the import-dependent archipelago jockeys with other regional countries for desperately needed oil. The price of fuel has hit historic highs in the Philippines since treaty ally the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, with the war forcing the partial closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz. President Ferdinand Marcos declared a state of national energy emergency last week, later saying that “nothing was off the table” as the country of 116 million tried to meet its need for fuel. Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro said in a post on social media platform X on Wednesday that she had explored “key avenues of operation” in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador Yousef Esmailzadeh that also included Energy Secretary Sharon Garin. “Building on the momentum of our Political Consultations last November 2025, we are committed to deepening our cooperation across all fronts, particularly energy cooperation,” she said of the meeting. The Foreign Affairs department offered no further details of the meeting, but it comes just days after Malaysia announced its tankers would be permitted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without paying any toll to Iran. The Iranian Embassy in Manila declined to comment on the meeting. A stock exchange filing on Monday revealed that the Philippines’ sole oil refinery had secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of “extreme necessity.” Agence France-Presse (AFP) had previously reported that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp., a purchase unthinkable before the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow’s war in Ukraine.

- [Maundy Thursday: A day of inclusivity, forgiveness](#) (2026-04-01 16:14)

MAUNDY Thursday marks one of the most important moments in Christianity, commemorating Jesus Christ’s Last Supper with His apostles. The day also marks the start of the Triduum — the three sacred days that commemorate Christ’s passion, death and resurrection through various traditions. One of those traditions is the Washing of the Feet, where priests imitate Jesus by washing the feet of their disciples. According to Luke 22:21, despite knowing Judas Iscariot’s betrayal of Jesus by selling Him for 30 pieces of silver, Jesus still welcomed him to His last supper, saying, “But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.” In his homily at the Manila Cathedral, Fr. Viel Bautista emphasized that, even in the face of betrayal, Jesus underscored the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. “For Jesus, even those plotting to kill Him, even those in a little while will be leaving Him off when He suffered, even those who would deny Him, He still offers a table to dine and to be reconciled,” he said. He added that Jesus’ actions reflect inclusivity, especially toward those who may feel distant from their faith. “In the many ways we turn away from the Lord, He will continue, and

He will endlessly offer a table for us,” Bautista said. Ironically, for many Filipinos, the day also marks a time for family reunions, as it is observed as a regular holiday. Bautista urged the faithful that as they see their families once again, they are reminded of the Last Supper and God’s unwavering love and desire to heal broken relationships. “For the many times we have also planned, prepared and executed our betrayals and of us turning away from Jesus, He offers a table... where He will be there and will be able to say to us, ‘I welcome you, I forgive you and I wish to strengthen you,’ ” Bautista concluded.

- [El Nido earns spot in BBC's top global beach destinations](#) (2026-04-01 16:13)

(UPDATE) EL Nido is among the BBC’s list of world’s eight best beach escapes, the Department of Tourism (DOT) said Wednesday. The recognition comes at a time when rising fuel prices and global economic challenges continue to shape travel patterns worldwide. The DOT said the citation underscores El Nido’s sustained reputation as a premier destination offering exceptional natural scenery and meaningful travel experiences. The destination continues to draw visitors with its pristine beaches, clear blue waters and dramatic limestone formations that cater to both leisure and adventure seekers. DOT officer in charge Secretary Verna Buensuceso said the recognition reflects the Philippines’ strong standing in the global tourism market. “Citations such as these affirm the beauty and prestige of the many treasures that we boast to the world,” Buensuceso said. “This recognition proves that El Nido, like our other coastal destinations, can offer the same level of quality vacations as our global counterparts,” she added. BBC journalist Francis Augustin highlighted El Nido’s wide range of marine activities, including visits to hidden beaches and lagoons across Bacuit Bay. The DOT added that efforts are under way to strengthen El Nido’s position as a cruise tourism destination following recent port calls by international vessels. El Nido now stands alongside beach destinations in New York, Italy, Puerto Rico, India, St. Maarten, Scotland and Tasmania in the BBC’s curated list.

- [Duterte: Pray for truth](#) (2026-04-01 16:12)

VICE President Sara Duterte called on Filipinos to pray for a society driven by truth, justice and sincere compassion as the country observes Holy Week. In a video message, Duterte stressed that Holy Week is a time to reflect on the “great sacrifice of the Lord — an offering of self that reminds us that the true meaning of life is found in serving others.” ” The silence of these days allows for a sincere examination of our aspirations — for ourselves, for our families and for our nation,” Duterte said. She also recognized the sacrifices of fellow citizens, especially overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East amid the ongoing war between Iran, Israel and the United States. ” Amid the conflict, we pray for their safety. They are living examples of sacrifice, and we ask for peace in the places where they are stationed,” Duterte said. She urged Filipinos to use the lessons of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice as an “inspiration for us to unite for a strong and prosperous Philippines.” Meanwhile, House Speaker Faustino Dy III called on the public to use Holy Week as a “time for reflection, renewal and recommitment to the values that strengthen families and the nation.” ” This Holy Week, I invite all Filipinos to pause and reflect on the

meaning of these days. Holy Week reminds us of sacrifice, forgiveness and hope — virtues that guide us as people and as a nation,” Dy said. He urged Filipinos to turn reflection into action by deepening their faith, strengthening family ties and cultivating a deeper and more genuine concern for others.

- [DOLE holds nationwide job fairs](#) (2026-04-01 16:11)

MORE than 1,800 jobseekers landed jobs on the spot through a series of sectoral job fairs led by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), underscoring the agency’s intensified efforts to expand access to jobs, particularly for vulnerable and priority groups. Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said the job fairs zeroed in on two priority sectors: displaced construction workers and graduating senior high school Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students, along with Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners.” This reflects a targeted, lifecycle-based approach to employment facilitation — addressing both workers reentering the labor force and first-time jobseekers transitioning from education to employment,” Laguesma said Wednesday. For displaced construction workers, he said, the DOLE mounted job fairs in 14 regions on March 25, 26 and 30, offering nearly 29,000 vacancies in construction and related industries. Laguesma added that out of 2,166 applicants, 395 were hired on the spot, delivering immediate income and stability. More construction-focused job fairs are lined up in May, including in the National Capital Region and Negros Island Region, to further expand opportunities in the sector. Laguesma said that by concentrating on construction and allied industries, DOLE improved placement efficiency and accelerated worker redeployment, ensuring that applicants’ skills and experience aligned closely with current industry demand. At the same time, DOLE partnered with the Department of Education to roll out job fairs for graduating TVL students and ALS learners nationwide. Designed to ease the school-to-work transition, the initiative reached over 7,300 students and resulted in more than 1,700 hired on the spot, including new beneficiaries of the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES). With over 43,000 vacancies offered, the fairs opened strong entry points for first-time jobseekers across multiple industries. He added that the effort is part of DOLE’s continuing, calendarized job fair program, ensuring steady, nationwide access to opportunities for both jobseekers and employers through DOLE and Bureau of Local Employment platforms. Laguesma said the Labor department continues to work closely with local government units, industry partners and relevant government agencies to expand employment opportunities, facilitate worker transitions and support recovery across affected sectors. Key initiatives include the enhancement of its labor market information system — particularly the PhilJobNet online portal — to provide real-time, verified job postings for youth and other jobseekers, as well as intensified partnerships with Public Employment Service Offices, national government agencies, local government units, the private sector and social partners to expand the reach of job fairs and employment services nationwide through the Trabaho sa Bagong Pilipinas. Laguesma said the DOLE is also actively implementing and scaling up preemployment and internship programs such as the SPES, Government Internship Program and JobStart Philippines, while supporting the career development needs of students and first-time

jobseekers. He added that the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), an attached agency of the DOLE, will likewise heighten and expand its scholarship programs as directed by the president to ensure that every Filipino family will have at least one child who completes a Tesda course to guarantee employability.

- [US seeks to expand access to PH market](#) (2026-04-01 16:10)

(UPDATE) THE United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will lead a trade mission to the Philippines in April to expand market access for at least 58 American farmers, ranchers and producers. The USDA noted that the Philippines is the tenth largest market for US agricultural and food products, averaging \$3.4 billion in annual exports over the past five years. The mission to be held from April 13 to 16 "follows a landmark trade agreement negotiated by President Donald Trump in July 2025, which opened new opportunities for US agricultural exports to the Philippines," the USDA said on Monday. The US Embassy in Manila shared the USDA's announcement on Wednesday. Deputy Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Michelle Bekkering will lead a delegation of 58 US agribusinesses, trade associations and representatives from four State departments of agriculture. "USDA is committed to getting American farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses better access to strong markets and fair opportunities abroad," said Bekkering in a statement. "Since the Philippines is one of the fastest-growing markets in Asia, this mission will connect US exporters directly with reliable buyers, strengthen our trade relationship, and help keep American agriculture globally competitive," she said. With a population of 118 million, a rapidly expanding middle class, and strong consumer preference for US products, the Philippines "offers enormous growth potential for American exporters," the USDA added. During the visit, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service staff and regional experts will host market briefings, site visits, and business-to-business meetings with buyers from the Philippines. State departments of agriculture from Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska and Wisconsin will join the mission alongside the 58 agribusinesses and trade associations.

- [Negotiations with Iran 'feasible' – analysts](#) (2026-04-01 16:09)

NEGOTIATIONS with Tehran to secure safe passage for Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz are "feasible," but the government should also push to keep any transit fees minimal to prevent spikes in domestic fuel prices, analysts said Tuesday. "Engaging Iran to secure safe passage for Philippine-bound oil tankers is a pragmatic step to manage near-term supply risks, given the country's heavy reliance on Middle East crude and the critical role of the Strait of Hormuz in global oil flows," Union Bank of the Philippines Chief Economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion told The Manila Times. "Any disruption, even temporary, can quickly feed into higher domestic fuel prices, with knock-on effects on inflation, transport costs, and household spending," he added. From a geopolitical perspective, Asuncion said this approach "reflects issue-specific diplomacy rather than a shift in strategic alignment." "While the Philippines is a US treaty ally, it is not a party to the conflict, and safeguarding civilian energy supplies is a legitimate national interest," the analyst said. "At the same time, the episode highlights the need

to reduce long term vulnerability through greater energy diversification, stronger buffer stocks, and accelerated investment in alternative energy sources," he added. Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael Ricafort told The Times that the Philippines should also seek to keep transit fees minimal to prevent spikes in domestic fuel prices. "This is a prudent and urgent measure amid the need to secure more petroleum supply, as part of state of energy emergency already done by other countries around the world such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Thailand," Ricafort said. "Though Iran signaled that there could be a toll fee that could increase shipping costs, better to negotiate minimal toll fee for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz," he added. Chester Cabalza, security analyst and president and founder of the Manila-based think tank International Development and Security Cooperation, agreed that the Philippines must reach out to Iran for the passage of Philippines-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, citing the two countries' "good relations." "The Philippines has robust bilateral relations with Iran, shown with the increasing number of medical and dentistry Iranian students in Philippine top universities," Cabalza told The Times. Political analyst Froilan Calilung, meanwhile, described the Philippines' engagement with Iran as "a de-risking strategy designed to decouple national energy security from regional military tensions." "By pursuing high-level diplomatic talks, the administration is attempting to leverage the country's non-belligerent status to secure 'non-hostile' classification for its vessels — thereby ensuring the survival of its economy without compromising its defense treaty with the United States," Calilung told The Times. With 98 percent of crude oil imports passing through the Middle East, Calilung said the Philippines was a "hostage to geography." "Securing the Strait of Hormuz is not a choice but a necessity to prevent a projected 50 percent price hike in essential commodities like rice, pork and chicken," he said. Calilung, who teaches political science at the University of Santo Tomas, said the Philippines was successfully differentiating between military alliance and economic participation. "While maintaining its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) with the US, the administration is making it clear that 'war was never in the Philippines' interest," the analyst said. "This 'middle-of-the-road' approach allows Manila to talk to Tehran for trade safety without violating its commitments to Washington," he added. The analyst also said the president's declaration of a state of national energy emergency served as the legal anchor for these talks. He said it shifted the narrative from "foreign intervention" to "emergency resource procurement," giving the government the mandate to bypass standard private-sector limitations and engage in government-to-government negotiations. "Analytically, the risk is not just oil; it is labor. As a major provider of global seafarers, the Philippines has a unique humanitarian leverage. Protecting Philippine-bound tankers inherently protects Filipino lives, providing a moral and political shield," Calilung said. He added that Marcos' order to Foreign Affairs Secretary Theresa Lazaro to negotiate with Iran marked a shift from a reactive foreign policy to a proactive "chief architect" role. "Success depends on whether Iran accepts the Philippines' neutrality as genuine and whether the US views these 'non-hostile' negotiations as a necessary exception for a regional ally's economic sanctioned state like Iran," he said.

- [Angara honors teachers as school year closes](#) (2026-04-01 16:08)

EDUCATION Secretary Sonny Angara honored teachers and reaffirmed the department's push to raise the quality of Philippine education as School Year 2025-2026 ended. In his message, Angara said that the dedication of teachers is crucial to the country's efforts to strengthen the education system. "To our beloved teachers across the country, I want to greet and thank you for your resilience, care, and silent heroism in our classrooms," Angara said. Over the past few months, the executive team of the Department of Education has visited hundreds of schools, meeting teachers and school heads to share their concerns and suggestions on improving the education system. The visits and consultations with teachers led to updates in policies on classroom observations, overtime and overload pay, and efforts to ease administrative workload, among others. "Under the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., it is clear in our promise to improve the lives of our teachers and increase our support to you," Angara noted. He said that the department has intensified support for educators, including the distribution of laptops and learning resources and the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression System, which aims to provide clearer promotion pathways for teachers and school heads. It also aims to promote up to 100,000 teachers and school heads by the end of School Year 2025-2026. Angara urged educators to take time to rest after months of academic work and end-of-school-year activities. "The future of Philippine education is being shaped every day in your classrooms. This administration will continue working so that every Filipino teacher can teach with dignity, support and hope. Together, we will move our schools — and our nation — forward," he said. Angara, meanwhile, challenged graduates to maintain their spirit of resilience as they transition out of the basic education system, reminding them that their ability to overcome setbacks will be their most critical asset in the face of future trials. "You stayed the course and learned to rise after setbacks. That resilience will matter far beyond the classroom," he said. He also thanked parents and teachers for helping students. "Behind every learner's success stands a community. To our teachers, thank you for teaching not only lessons but also courage. To our parents and families, your support made every achievement possible," Angara said. More than 1.9 million Grade 6 learners and 1.8 million Grade 12 learners are graduating this school year, both from public and private schools.

- [Aid, free rides inadequate amid oil crisis – coalition](#) (2026-04-01 16:07)

TEMPORARY interventions such as aid and free rides will not fix the country's worsening transport crisis amid rising oil prices, transport advocacy groups said Wednesday. In a solidarity statement released on April 1, the Move as One Coalition said the oil price spike has exposed deeper and long-standing failures in the public transportation system that continue to hurt drivers, commuters and ordinary workers. According to the group, the crisis goes beyond high fuel prices, with many drivers earning little income, commuters struggling to find rides, and workers forced to walk long distances to get home. Mobility, the group said, should be treated as a right and not a privilege for those who own private vehicles. It said stopgap measures such as financial aid and free rides do not address the root of the problem and merely cover up the collapse in the supply of sufficient and reliable public transportation. Moreover, it said the burden continues to fall on the 94 percent of Filipinos who do not own cars and rely on public

transportation for their daily trips. It suggested the government must shift to long-term, people-centered transport policies rather than short-term responses. The group pushed for reliable and sufficient public transportation through expanded net service contracting under what it called “Siguradong Sakay.” It stated this would allow continuous public transport operations while providing drivers with financial support based on their travel distance. “Libreng Sakay” (free ride) may even worsen losses for some drivers because passengers tend to choose free rides, leaving other operators with fewer riders, it warned. It called on the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to exempt local government units from the Certificate of Public Convenience requirement so they can provide transport services and respond faster to local demand. Furthermore, the group called for longer operation hours for LRT-1, LRT-2, MRT-3, and PNR, including limited train operations during Holy Week for people who still need to travel for work and livelihood. To protect drivers’ livelihoods, it urged the Department of Transportation to immediately release the equity subsidy for modern public utility vehicles and impose a moratorium on loan payments for modern units. It also called for lifting restrictions on light electric vehicles and e-trikes on national highways and creating more priority lanes for public utility vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

- [Flood control work continue during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 16:06)

CLEANUP, dredging and desilting of major waterways across the country will continue during Holy Week as part of the government's bid to move to prevent flooding, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said. DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon said on Wednesday that despite the holiday period, field teams remain deployed in key areas, carrying out around-the-clock clearing of waterways clogged by silt, debris and waste. He said these operations aim to restore water flow, increase the carrying capacity of waterways, and prevent overflow during heavy rains. “From Luzon to Mindanao, crews are clearing rivers, esteros, and drainage systems of silt, debris and waste, restoring water flow and boosting capacity to handle heavy rains,” Dizon added. The intensified efforts form part of the expanded Oplan Kontra Baha program, in line with the president’s directive to strengthen flood mitigation measures nationwide. He added that by sustaining operations even during Holy Week, authorities are working to stay ahead of the expected onset of the wet season and minimize disruptions to communities. Dredging and desilting activities are underway in high-risk and flood-prone areas, including Metro Manila, Ilocos, and Cagayan Valley; Naga, Cebu, and Bacolod; and Maguindanao. These locations were identified based on vulnerability to flooding, historical data, and sediment buildup that restricts water flow. In urban centers such as Metro Manila, clearing operations also target drainage systems often blocked by solid waste, contributing to flash floods during sudden downpours. Dizon said the simultaneous nationwide clearing of waterways reflects a more proactive, preventive approach to disaster risk reduction — focusing not just on response, but on preparedness and mitigation. The ongoing work, he said, also highlights the importance of interagency coordination and community participation. The DPWH chief urged residents to support the initiative by practicing proper waste disposal and helping keep

waterways clear, as even small blockages can significantly affect drainage efficiency."With the rainy season fast approaching, sustained, large-scale efforts like these are critical to protecting lives, safeguarding infrastructure, and reducing the economic impact of flooding across the country," Dizon stressed. Last Jan. 14, Dizon signed a special order creating a task force for Oplan Kontra Baha, headed by Undersecretary for Special Concerns Charles Calima Jr. The same task force was replicated in all 177 DPWH regional offices nationwide. The Task Force Kontra Baha will coordinate with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and private sector. Dizon gave the task force six months, or until July, to finish its mission and thereafter submit an accomplishment report detailing improvements, challenges, solutions, resources consumed, and targets achieved.

- [No real opposition, politics driven by personalities — analyst](#) (2026-04-01 16:05)

A political analyst has raised concerns over what he described as the absence of a genuine opposition in the Philippines, saying political dynamics are driven more by personalities than by policy alternatives. Carlos "Itos" Valdes, former president of the Katipunan ng Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP), said in an interview with The Manila Times that it is difficult to identify a coherent opposition bloc that clearly challenges government policies or offers a distinct national program. "Who are the opposition? There's none," Valdes said, stressing that the term has become vague in the current political landscape. He pointed out that figures often labeled as part of the opposition are not necessarily advancing positions that contradict the administration's policies. Instead, many are engaged in political disputes rooted in personal or situational interests rather than substantive policy differences. Valdes cited the lack of clear issue-based positions among national figures, noting that even high-profile personalities have yet to articulate concrete proposals on key concerns such as energy policy, economic management, or structural reforms. "What are they against? What policies are they opposing?" he asked, adding that criticism directed at the government often centers on personalities or immediate controversies rather than long-term governance issues. The analyst also questioned the readiness of potential contenders in the 2028 national elections, saying many have not presented comprehensive platforms that address the country's challenges. "They talk about running for higher office, but where is the policy? Where is the program?" he said. According to Valdes, the current political environment reflects a broader shift toward personality-driven politics, where public messaging is dominated by general statements and appeals rather than detailed policy frameworks. He said this trend weakens democratic discourse by limiting voters' ability to evaluate candidates based on concrete plans and measurable goals. Valdes emphasized that a functioning opposition should provide clear alternatives to government policy, offering solutions that respond to national issues and contribute to informed public debate. Without this, he warned, political competition risks being reduced to contests of popularity rather than a substantive exchange of ideas on governance and reform.

- [PNP receives over P500M new equipment](#) (2026-04-01 16:04)

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) on Wednesday blessed newly procured equipment under the Capability Enhancement Program (CEP) Fiscal Year 2025 and Congress-Introduced Changes and Adjustments (CICA) FY 2024 at Camp Crame in Quezon City. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. led the ceremony attended by PNP officials and members of the media. Under CEP FY 2025, the PNP received equipment valued at P244,710,956, including 800 sets of CDM Equipment, 3,711 units of All Purpose Waistcoat Vest, 600 sets of Non-Lethal Equipment, and 403 units of Autogated Night Vision Device (Monocular). CICA FY 2024 contributed additional assets worth P262,285,700, comprising 117 units of Personnel Carrier 4x4 and 71 units of Light Motorcycles. These acquisitions aim to enhance the mobility, protection and operational readiness of PNP personnel. Nartatez said these new assets will strengthen the operational capability of PNP units, particularly the Tourist Police Units, enhancing crime-prevention efforts and overall police visibility in key areas. “This will enhance the capability of our police units to prevent focus crimes in their respective areas,” he said. “We will immediately use the equipment this Holy Week and other activities to ensure public safety,” Nartatez said.

- [Public urged to get flu shots](#) (2026-04-01 16:03)

HEALTH experts on Wednesday advised the public to get flu vaccines as cases of “summer flu” are expected to rise during Holy Week. In a statement, the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) said influenza cases can spike outside of the rainy season. While less common, “summer flu” can still occur as travel, reunions and religious activities during Holy Week lead to closer contact and a higher risk of transmission. PHAP emphasized the importance of early vaccination, noting that it takes about two weeks for the body to develop protective antibodies after receiving the flu shot. “It takes about two weeks for the body to build protective antibodies after vaccination, so getting vaccinated early is critical, especially for high-risk groups such as seniors, pregnant women and individuals with chronic conditions,” said Dr. Melvin Sanicas, an expert in global health. Sanicas said that influenza can cause serious complications for people with underlying conditions. “Influenza can lead to complications such as pneumonia, and effects on the heart and brain, which may result in hospitalization or even death,” Sanicas said. To mitigate this, PHAP is advocating for collective action through its “IBA ang BAKUNADO” campaign. “Protecting communities from flu and other vaccine-preventable diseases requires a united effort from the government, health workers and private sector partners to ensure timely vaccine access and strong public awareness, especially ahead of the rainy season,” said Teodoro Padilla, executive director of PHAP. He advised the public to stay up to date with their vaccinations, adding that Filipinos can consult their health care providers or visit clinics, hospitals and pharmacies to get vaccinated. PHAP urged the public to take preventive measures while traveling, such as proper hand-washing, wearing masks in crowded settings and staying home when sick.

- [More Filipinos traveling during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 16:02)

THE number of Filipinos traveling abroad during Holy Week increased by 50 percent year on year, according to travel service provider Trip.com. The figure is higher than the same period in

2025, reflecting a “strong appetite” for international travel, especially to nearby countries in Southeast Asia. Filipino travelers prefer Asian destinations for Holy Week holidays, citing shorter travel time, diverse cultural attractions, and vibrant shopping and dining scenes. Hong Kong topped the list of destinations for Filipino travelers, followed by Tokyo and Singapore. Bangkok and Taipei rounded out the top five. Osaka, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; Macao; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Hanoi, Vietnam, completed the top 10.” This reflects Filipino travelers’ strong preference for nearby Asian cities, which offer convenient flight access, vibrant cultural experiences, and a variety of leisure and shopping experiences,” Trip.com said. Meanwhile, it said domestic travel remains popular, with Manila, Cebu and Palawan among the top three domestic destinations, followed by Boracay and Davao del Sur. The provinces of Bohol, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Leyte and Misamis Oriental rounded out the top 10. Trip.com attributed this to a combination of leisure trips and hometown visits. It noted that Filipino travelers are becoming “more deliberate” when planning their Holy Week trips.” On average, travelers are booking around 74 days before departure, indicating a preference for advanced trip planning as travelers look to secure flights, accommodations and activities well ahead of the peak holiday period,” Trip.com said in a statement. “The data also reveals that April 3 (Good Friday) is expected to be the busiest travel date, as many Filipinos begin their journeys at the start of the long holiday break.” For some, this means returning to home provinces for family gatherings and religious observances; for others, it marks the start of extended leisure trips. The data showed Filipinos are increasingly using the week for extended vacations. The average trip length this year is approximately 9.57 days, largely in line with last year’s 10.03 days. Trip.com highlighted evolving demographics. Women account for the majority of Holy Week travelers, making up 60 percent of bookings, compared to 40 percent for men. Travelers ages 35 to 49 represent the largest segment at 38 percent, followed by those ages 25 to 34 at 21 percent. Working professionals are the primary drivers of demand. A notable behavioral shift was the rise of independent travel; nearly 70 percent of bookings were made by solo travelers. Trip.com said this reflects “a growing preference for flexibility, personalized itineraries and self-directed experiences.” Trip.com’s data compared this year’s Holy Week figures (April 1–12, 2026) with last year’s (April 16–27, 2025).” Indeed, Holy Week is emerging as one of the Philippines’ most significant travel periods supported by strong demand across both domestic and international markets,” Trip.com said. “With outbound travel surging and local destinations remaining resilient, 2026 is shaping up to be one of the busiest Holy Week travel seasons yet.”

- [One person injured in crane basket fall](#) (2026-04-01 13:52)

MANILA, Philippines—The Manila City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (DRRM) on Wednesday reported that one person got injured after a crane basket carrying sand fell from a construction site in Manila. According to their initial report, the incident occurred at a building under construction along Florentino Torres Street at the corner of Gonzalo Puyat Street. The crane basket was reportedly lifting sand to an upper level of the structure when it fell. The injured individual was immediately sent to the nearest hospital. The Manila Police

District told the Manila Times that investigations are still ongoing to identify the cause of the incident.

- [OTS inspects NAIA to ensure safe Semana Santa travel](#) (2026-04-01 13:32)

MANILA, Philippines - The Office for Transportation Security (OTS) conducted a security inspection at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) on Wednesday to ensure safe, orderly, and efficient travel during Semana Santa (Holy Week). OTS Administrator Undersecretary Gilberto DC Cruz said the activity aimed to strictly enforce safety measures for passengers, personnel, and transport operators. During the visit to NAIA Terminal 3, the agency—joined by NAIA Special Assistant to the SMC President and CEO for Security-Related Matters Ramon A. Ragasa, along with other stakeholders—inspected the Overseas Filipino Workers’ lane and lounge to promote passenger welfare. The team also demonstrated two newly commissioned Explosive Detection Systems equipped with Computed Tomography technology, as well as an Automatic Tray Return system. This advanced equipment is designed to enhance the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of airport screening operations. “The safety and convenience of the traveling public remain our top priority, especially during peak travel periods such as Semana Santa. We will continue to intensify our monitoring and enforcement efforts to uphold the highest standards of security across all transport facilities,” Cruz said. After completing the NAIA assessment, the OTS team proceeded to other ports to continue inspections.

- [Palace to detractors, critics this Holy Week: Stop politicking](#) (2026-04-01 13:14)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang urged detractors of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and critics of his administration to reflect this Holy Week instead of politicking. Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro said fear mongering, spreading of misinformation and disinformation, and trolling the government will not do good for the country especially amid all the problems it is facing, particularly the effects of war in the Middle East. Marcos, she said, is focused on working for the Filipinos and finding ways to address the crisis. “For now, let's avoid politicking. If they have nothing good to say and just slander, they should stop for now or stop permanently and just cooperate with the administration for the upliftment of our country and the upliftment of every Filipino,” Castro said in Filipino in a radio interview. “The president is busy working,” she added. Among those very vocal in criticizing Marcos is Congressman Paolo Duterte who said the chief executive is more concerned about optics and building his legacy rather than tackling pressing issues such as rising prices of fuel and commodities. “We know what's happening now. The president doesn't like the conflict happening in the Middle East. So, what is he saying about focusing only on the legacy? The president is not just focusing on the legacy. The president is working,” Castro said. The official further stated that, unlike the past leadership, Marcos has led mitigating measures to cushion the impact of global oil price volatility triggered by hostilities in the Middle East. This includes looking for alternative sources of fuel supply, financial assistance and subsidies for various sectors, and involving all agencies for a whole-of-government approach to solve the problems.

- [PH committing 'suicide' if govt partners with China in WPS oil exploration — Carpio](#) (2026-04-01 09:48)

MANILA, Philippines — Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio on Wednesday said the Philippines would be “committing suicide” if the government entered into oil and gas explorations in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) with China, given its definition of joint development which completely goes against the Constitution. “For the Chinese, joint development means they own the oil and gas. But out of friendship, they allow other countries to participate in developing the gas or oil field,” Carpio said in a television interview on Wednesday. For Carpio, the Philippines cannot accept that because the Reed Bank, among the areas believed to be rich in natural gas, is within our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and that the Constitution reserves the use and enjoyment of the marine resources in the exclusive economic zone exclusively to Filipino citizens. “So, we cannot accept the condition of China that they own the oil and gas. That’s against our constitution. That’s against the [2016] arbitral award,” Carpio said. Carpio said that this was the very reason former president Rodrigo Duterte, through his former Foreign Affairs secretary Teddy Boy Locsin, completely terminated the talks on oil and gas explorations in 2022. China, at the last minute, demanded two service contract provisions — to remove the phrase saying oil and gas belonged to the Philippines and that the deal would be governed by Philippine law. “So, you do not see the Philippines benefiting from this possible joint exploration. That kind of joint development where we acknowledge that China owns the oil and (2:25) gas is against the Constitution. No government can enter into such an agreement,” Carpio said. Even the Armed Forces of the Philippines reiterated that China was “not a reliable partner” in negotiations given their historical coercion and aggression in Philippine waters.

- [PH eyes 'deepening cooperation' with Iran on energy](#) (2026-04-01 09:26)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is committed to "deepening cooperation" with Iran, particularly on energy, Foreign Affairs Secretary Theresa Lazaro said on Wednesday as the import-dependent archipelago jockeys with other regional countries for desperately needed oil. The price of fuel has hit historic highs in the Philippines since treaty ally the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, with the war forcing the partial closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz. President Ferdinand Marcos declared a state of national energy emergency last week, later saying that "nothing was off the table" as the country of 116 million tried to meet its need for fuel. Lazaro said in a post on social media platform X on Wednesday that she had explored "key avenues of operation" in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador Yousef Esmailzadeh that also included Philippine energy secretary Sharon Garin. "Building on the momentum of our Political Consultations last November 2025, we are committed to deepening our cooperation across all fronts, particularly energy cooperation," she said of the meeting. The Department of Foreign Affairs offered no further details of the meeting, but it comes just days after Malaysia announced its tankers would be permitted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without paying any toll to Iran. The Iranian embassy in Manila declined to comment on the meeting. A stock exchange filing on Monday revealed that the Philippines' sole oil refinery had

secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of "extreme necessity".AFP had previously reported that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp, a purchase unthinkable before the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine.

- [Marcos, Duterte ratings drop in Q1 of 2026](#) (2026-04-01 08:42)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte's approval and trust ratings dropped in the first quarter of 2026, according to a non-commissioned survey released on Wednesday. Marcos' approval and trust ratings fell from 22 percent to 19 percent and 15 percent to 13 percent respectively while Duterte's approval and trust ratings fell from 34 percent to 28 percent and 31 percent to 26 percent, based on Pahayag 2026, a non-commissioned survey, under PUBLiCus Asia. Dissatisfaction with flood control accountability, handling of his predecessor's International Criminal Court (ICC) case, and rising fuel prices were cited against Marcos while Duterte's marks were influenced by the impeachment complaints against her and ICC developments involving her father, former president Rodrigo Duterte who is detained at The Hague for crimes against humanity linked to his campaign against drugs. Senate President Tito Sotto with a 23 percent and 14 percent approval and trust ratings ranked second to Duterte who remained the government official with the highest ratings despite the drop. Next was Speaker Faustino "Bojie" Dy, with 11 percent approval, 6 percent trust ratings and Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo, with 16 percent approval and 10 percent trust ratings. Among the government agencies which rated high were Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), with 65 percent approval and 45 percent trust ratings, followed by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), 55 percent approval and 39 percent trust ratings and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), 53 percent approval and 37 percent trust ratings. Political and infrastructure institutions, such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the House of Representatives registered the lowest public ratings. The first quarter 2026 survey of Pahayag from March 21 to 24, 2026 sampled 1,509 registered Filipino voters through the Singapore office of PureSpectrum, a US-based panel marketplace. The survey tracks seven key modules: state of the country and economy, national issues, macro and micro concerns, approval and trust ratings of leaders and institutions, emotional perception of leaders, performance of elected officials, and media consumption habits.

- [Holy Week travelers urged to check vehicles, keep hotlines](#) (2026-04-01 07:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) reminded motorists traveling this Holy Week to inspect their vehicles before heading out and to keep emergency and roadside assistance hotlines ready, as authorities brace for heavier movement on major roads and expressways. In an advisory released Wednesday, the MMDA urged the public to do a "BLOWBAGETS" check before travel, covering battery, lights, oil, water, brakes, air, gas, engine, tires and self. The agency said motorists should make sure their vehicles were in good running condition and continue

following traffic rules to help keep trips safe during the Holy Week. MPTC said it had rolled out its “Biyaheng Arangkada” motorist assistance program from March 27 to April 6 across NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector, CAVITEX, CALAX and CCLEX in Cebu. It said personnel deployment had been increased across its network to improve traffic management, incident response and toll operations during the holiday rush. The tollway operator said roadside assistance stations had been strategically positioned, medical teams were on standby at select stops, and free 24/7 basic mechanical services were available at all NLEX and SCTEX Rest and Refuel stations. It added that free towing to the nearest exit for Class 1 vehicles would be available from 6 a.m. on March 27 until 6 a.m. on April 6. MPTC also said roadworks, lane closures and maintenance activities would be suspended during the period to help keep traffic moving, while teams were ready to activate counterflow schemes when conditions permit. It advised motorists to plan trips ahead of peak hours and said heavy northbound traffic was expected on NLEX from Wednesday afternoon to Thursday afternoon. Motorists needing traffic assistance in Metro Manila may call the MMDA hotline 136, which remains the agency’s main contact line for road and traffic concerns. For urgent emergencies such as crashes or incidents needing immediate response, travelers may call the national emergency hotline 911. Those needing to report road concerns to the Department of Public Works and Highways may contact 165-02 or 0961-684-7084, which are listed on the agency’s official contact page. Motorists traveling through NLEX, SCTEX, NLEX Connector, CAVITEX, CALAX and other MPTC-managed expressways may call 1-35000, which the company said was available 24/7 along with updates through the MPT DriveHub app. Users of SLEX, Skyway, STAR, NAIAX and TPLEX who have RFID or toll account concerns may also contact Autosweep customer care at (+632) 5318-TOLL (8655). For health-related emergencies, the public may also call the Philippine Red Cross hotline 143, which the organization lists as its emergency hotline on its official contact page.

- [US orders search for missing World War II American soldiers from ship wreckage off Subiic Bay](#) (2026-04-01 06:56)

MANILA, Philippines — The United States Department of Defense has started excavating a ship wreckage off Subic Bay to recover missing American servicemen believed to be on board the Oryoku Maru sank by the US Navy during World War II. Kelly McKeague, director of the Defense POW/MIA (prisoner or war/missing in action) Accounting Agency, said the Japanese transport ship was “mistakenly bombed by US Navy aircraft” in December 1944. “The ship was unmarked. But it held over 2,500 Allied prisoners of war as the ship was taking them from the Philippines back to Japan,” McKeague said in virtual press briefing on Wednesday. “We estimate there might be over 250 missing Americans in the hull of the ship. We think they might be limited to one or two hulls and that’s where the divers are currently operating on,” he said. McKeague said the DPAA began the mission the mission “three years ago to investigate the site and the wreckage from the standpoint of trying to understand what it was.” “What the ship looked like? So using this cutting edge underwater vehicles, we recreated a three-dimensional image of the ship and then allowed us to begin excavation which began in February of this past year,” he said. “And we have benefitted from the relationship with the Philippine Armed Forces in helping us excavate

this wreckage," McKeague added as he leads US efforts to repatriate missing American military personnel in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. He said the mission was "rooted in a sacred promise that the United States will search for, recover, and identify the remains of Americans missing from past wars." McKeague said the DPAA did not have any missions in either in the Visayas or Mindanao. "However, we do work often, in fact, year round in the Philippines," he said. "Currently we have teams in Leyte, Luzon, and Mindoro. And again this benefits greatly from the relationship that we established with the Philippine Armed Forces," he added. "Everyday DPAA teams operate across the globe in archives, remote jungles, mountainous terrains and underwater. Our professionals apply painstaking historical research, archaeological tenacity and cutting edge forensic science," he said. "We do this to provide answers to their families and the nation. This is more than a military mission. It is also a tool of diplomacy and a humanitarian one that binds allies, strengthens partners and reconciles with former enemies," he said. The DPAA said McKeague was responsible for policy, control, and oversight of all aspects of the department's program to account for missing American personnel from past conflicts.

- [PNP validates girl's claims in viral post to Marcos](#) (2026-04-01 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) is verifying the claims of a girl from Camarines Sur to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. about an abusive local village official. In a statement on Wednesday, the PNP said personnel from the Tinambac Municipal Police Station, together with investigators from the Provincial Investigation and Detective Management Unit (PIDMU), went to Barangay Caloco to validate allegations of "alleged harassment, community safety issues, and a previous rape case." "Police records show that the rape case was filed in 2023 and is currently under trial at the Regional Trial Court, with the accused already in detention at Tinangis Penal Farm," Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., PNP chief, said in a statement on Wednesday. Nartatez said interviews were conducted with the family of the student, barangay officials, and the alleged victim. The PNP also verified a separate complaint regarding missing electrical drop wires, which had been previously reported at the barangay level, although mediation efforts were not completed due to the non-appearance of involved parties. Follow-up operations were also conducted to assess the situation on the ground and ensure that all concerns, especially those involving minors, are properly addressed, Nartatez said.

- [Marcos orders adoption of local names for 131 Kalayaan Island features in Palawan, West PH Sea](#) (2026-04-01 04:13)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the adoption of local names for more than 100 features of the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in Kalayaan, Palawan, and the West Philippine Sea, Malacañang has said. Marcos issued Executive Order (EO) 111, which strengthens administration and governance, as well as sovereignty, in Palawan and the West Philippine Sea. Under EO 57, the National Maritime Council (NMC) recommended the adoption of the standard set of Philippine names for 131 features of the KIG located in Kalayaan,

Palawan, and the West Philippine Sea. NMC said that it was imperative to adopt a standard set of Philippine names for maritime features in the KIG to ensure efficient administration and governance of the area and to exercise the country's sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea.

- [Where's the big fish? Palace says DOJ, Ombudsman 'overwhelmed' with ICI cases](#) (2026-04-01 04:07)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Ombudsman are currently "overwhelmed" by the volume of cases referred by the Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI), Malacañang said Wednesday, a day after the panel ceased its operations. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro issued the statement after various groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact-finding body's probe as it failed to hold accountable the big fish behind the flood control scam. In a radio interview, Castro said the ICI, which concluded its operations on March 31, has submitted its findings to proper authorities, including referrals involving dozens of individuals linked to questionable infrastructure projects. "The ICI is just a fact-finding committee. They are not the ones who will hold the big fish accountable. They were tasked only to gather information, facts, testimonies that can be submitted directly to the investigating bodies, like the DOJ and also the Ombudsman," Castro said. "The filing of cases rests with the Ombudsman and DOJ," she added. "Because of the sheer volume of the referrals, the Ombudsman and DOJ are seemingly overwhelmed."

- [US Dept of Agriculture wants to expand access to PH market](#) (2026-04-01 03:55)

MANILA, Philippines — The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will lead a trade mission to the Philippines in April to expand market access for at least 58 American farmers, ranchers, and producers. The USDA noted that the Philippines was the 10th largest market for US agricultural and food products, averaging \$3.4 billion in annual exports over the past five years. The mission from Apr 13 to 16 "follows a landmark trade agreement negotiated by President Donald Trump in July 2025, which opened new opportunities for US agricultural exports to the Philippines," the USDA said on Monday. The US Embassy in Manila shared the USDA's announcement on Wednesday. Deputy Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Michelle Bekkering will lead a delegation of 58 agribusinesses, trade associations, and representatives from four State departments of agriculture. "USDA is committed to getting American farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses better access to strong markets and fair opportunities abroad," said Bekkering in a statement. "Since the Philippines is one of the fastest-growing markets in Asia, this mission will connect US exporters directly with reliable buyers, strengthen our trade relationship, and help keep American agriculture globally competitive," she said. With a population of 118 million, a rapidly expanding middle class, and strong consumer preference for US products, the Philippines "offers enormous growth potential for American exporters," the USDA added. During the visit, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service staff and regional experts will host market briefings, site visits, and business-to-business meetings with buyers from the Philippines. State departments of agriculture from Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska and Wisconsin will join the mission alongside the 58

agribusinesses and trade associations.

- [Palace: No holiday break for Marcos during Holy Week](#) (2026-04-01 03:40)

MANILA, Philippines — There will be no holiday break for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Holy Week, as he will continue overseeing government operations, Malacañang assured the public Wednesday. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Marco would remain on duty "24/7" during his stay in his home province of Ilocos Norte. "We know that wherever the President is, even in Ilocos Norte or elsewhere, once he gives an order, it must be followed, especially if it is for our countrymen," Castro said during a radio interview. "Amid the crisis in the Middle East, the President cannot stop working just because it is a holiday. It does not work that way. The President is on duty 24/7," she added.

- [Hotter Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday likely over PH](#) (2026-03-31 23:46)

MANILA, Philippines – The entire archipelago can expect hotter, more humid weather from Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday, the state weather agency said on Wednesday, advising the public to avoid outdoor activities, especially from late morning to mid-afternoon, to avoid fatigue, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion. Weather specialist Chenel Dominguez of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said in a 5 a.m. briefing that the weather systems expected to affect the country during Holy Week, or ‘Semana Santa’, would be the easterlies and the ridge of the High Pressure Area (HPA). At present, she said, the ridge of HPA, which is the opposite of the low-pressure area, has been extending over Northern Luzon. Meanwhile, Metro Manila and the rest of the country could experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms. “Generally, the country would likely have clear and sunny skies throughout the day with less chance of downpour, which may occur during late afternoon or at night,” according to the Pagasa forecaster. From Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday, light to moderate easterly to southeasterly winds will prevail over Northern and Central Luzon with slight to moderate seas, according to Pagasa. Elsewhere, winds will be light to moderate coming from the east to northeast with slight to moderate seas, it added. Pagasa also advised the public to drink water regularly, take breaks in shaded areas, and wear light-colored clothing. Also, use sun protection, such as a hat or umbrella, and avoid alcohol and caffeine as much as possible. For the heat index outlook, Pagasa said Metro Manila's temperature could hit 35 degrees Celsius, which falls under the extreme caution category. The day's highest temperature could be over Virac, Catanduanes, at 45 degrees Celsius, falling under the danger level.

- [SSS to employers: Register household helpers](#) (2026-03-31 16:41)

HOUSEHOLD employers can now register their domestic helpers with the Social Security System (SSS) to ensure they are covered by the country's social security protection program through its newly launched "Kasambahay Caravan." SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph de Claro said that at least 43 sites across Metro Manila and Rizal have already been made available after its launch last week. He emphasized that the caravan was a key SSS initiative to extend protection

to this overlooked group of workers. “Household helpers keep our homes running smoothly but often lack emergency protection,” de Claro said. “This initiative ensures every kasambahay can access SSS benefits such as sickness, maternity, disability, unemployment, retirement, funeral, and death,” he added in a statement. The SSS chief cited the need for house helpers to be enrolled with SSS, saying they would also benefit from several programs, including salary loans and calamity loans. “They will also get additional protection from the Employees’ Compensation (EC) Program for work-related sickness, disability, or death,” he said. During the kickoff event held at SM City Marikina last week, acting SSS-National Capital Region Operations Group Senior Vice President Benjamin Dolindo Jr. said the drive was aimed at strengthening social security coverage for a sector that plays a vital role in family life. “Social security coverage for the sector that is truly important in our homes is a shared responsibility. May we continue fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that every house helper is registered and protected,” Dolindo said. The top officials emphasized that Kasambahay Caravan is part of a broader campaign to bring SSS registration and membership services closer to household workers and their employers, many of whom are still not formally enrolled. Under Republic Act 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018, the SSS said employers are required to register their household helpers within 30 days of hiring and remit their contributions. For kasambahay earning P5,000 or more per month, household employers deduct the employee’s share from the salary, add their own contribution, and pay via accredited channels. For those earning P5,000 or less, employers fully cover the contributions. SM City Marikina Mall Manager Francis Brian Cruz welcomed the partnership, saying the mall is committed to supporting community-driven programs that promote social protection. De Claro said the SSS plans to expand the caravan in other areas to close coverage gaps among household workers and ensure they receive the same basic protections as other formal sector employees.

- [Asia: Adequate jet fuel supply secured](#) (2026-03-31 16:40)

AIRASIA Philippines said it has an adequate supply of jet fuel to maintain flight operations, addressing concerns over potential travel disruptions. The reassurance followed similar statements by other major local carriers, including Philippine Airlines (PAL) and Cebu Pacific (CEB), which recently secured fuel inventories to sustain scheduled flights. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. previously warned that jet fuel shortages linked to Middle East tensions could pose a risk to long-haul travel, calling the grounding of planes a “distinct possibility.” “AirAsia continues to work closely with fuel suppliers, industry partners and relevant government stakeholders to minimize disruptions and provide seamless travel for its guests,” the airline said in an advisory. CEB announced on March 29, 2026 that it has secured sufficient jet fuel to support all domestic and international flights until June 2026. Despite the fuel security, the budget carrier has implemented temporary flight cancellations and frequency reductions to manage surging global fuel prices, which have more than doubled since 2025. PAL also said it has secured enough fuel for its scheduled operations, including long-haul flights, for the foreseeable future. The flag carrier is collaborating with government regulators and fuel suppliers to ensure long-term operational stability.

- [New Nueva Ecija expressway cuts costs of transporting rice](#) (2026-03-31 16:17)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday led the opening of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) Contract Package 4 Aliaga–Cabanatuan Section, a four-lane segment expected to enhance connectivity across Central Luzon. Speaking to reporters, Marcos said the new CLLEX segment would not only cut travel time from Tarlac to Cabanatuan City but also help reduce transportation cost of commodities, particularly rice, as Nueva Ecija produces the highest volume of rice in the country. “You know that Nueva Ecija is the rice granary of the Philippines, and this will help reduce transport costs; by lowering transport costs, rice prices will remain stable,” Marcos said during a chance interview. The president also said the CLLEX expansion, which is expected to serve about 11,500 vehicles daily, would be toll-free until December 2026. He said that lower logistical expenses were critical in preventing price increases in essential goods, particularly food, which were often affected by rising fuel prices. “We are continuing to do this to make travel easier for people and to finally open it, because if you look at our highways, they mostly run north-south,” Marcos said. “Once this is completed — once we reach the east coast of Luzon — this will be the first major east–west highway to pass through,” he added. The newly opened segment extends CLLEX from the San Juan Interchange in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, to the Cabanatuan exit, completing Phase 1 of the 29.2-kilometer, four-lane expressway. The CLLEX Phase 1 is a P10-billion project funded through official development assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Once completed, CLLEX will improve access across Luzon, decongest major roads like the MacArthur Highway, and make it easier to move goods and people throughout the region. Marcos said the project formed part of broader efforts to enhance transportation networks, particularly by developing east-west corridors.

- [Iran's help eyed to safeguard tankers bound for Philippines](#) (2026-03-31 16:17)

MANILA will initiate diplomatic talks with Tehran to ensure the safe passage of fuel shipments bound for the Philippines passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit route that Iran has shut down as a result of the war in the Middle East. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has directed the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to take the lead on the matter as part of efforts to safeguard the country’s energy supply. “The president has already instructed Foreign Secretary Tess Lazaro... she will speak with the Iranian ambassador, most likely tomorrow. If not, by next week,” Castro said in Filipino at a Palace briefing. The planned engagement comes amid escalating hostilities following US and Israeli attacks on Iran that began Feb. 28, and Iranian retaliatory strikes on targets on the US and its allies in the Gulf region. In response to the US attacks, Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most critical choke points for the energy trade, with around one-fifth of global oil supply passing through it daily. Iranian attacks in the strait have effectively cut off access by tankers to and from oil-exporting Gulf states. The closure has already raised global oil prices dramatically and severely reduced its supply. Energy-importing countries like the Philippines are particularly vulnerable to such shocks, as the country relies heavily on imported petroleum products to meet domestic demand. Asia faces the gravest

fallout from the war on Iran and is confronting a major energy crisis, a global maritime analytics firm warned Tuesday. "We think Asia will, for now, be the ones suffering the most," Kpler president Jean Maynier said. He added that the continent did not have enough energy resources of its own to cover the gap, saying: "It will not be enough in China, it will not be enough to cover in big countries like the Philippines or Indonesia. So it's a real energy crisis." Castro said no specific Philippine-bound vessels have been identified as being at risk so far, and did not say if there were tankers on the way. "The secretary has not mentioned any specific vessels yet," she said. The administration has been implementing a series of interventions, including diversifying fuel sources, securing existing supply contracts, rolling out fuel subsidies for key sectors, and enforcing energy conservation measures across government offices. Meanwhile, Castro said the government is still consolidating the total cost of its response to the crisis. "We are currently gathering reports from all agencies. Most probably by next week we can provide the figures," she said. The Palace reiterated that maintaining unimpeded fuel flow remains a top priority as global uncertainties persist. Castro said Marcos' order to begin talks with Iran was made during a meeting with members of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (Uplift) Committee earlier this week, an inter-agency body created to address the national energy emergency earlier declared due to the war in the Middle East. Still, the government has high hopes of a positive outcome, given that "the Philippines has a good relationship with Iran." As part of efforts to diversify its sources of fuel, the country received its first delivery of more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil last week, procured by Petron Corp., the Philippines' only oil refiner, with additional 2.48 million barrels expected. Joint exploration a trap? Also on Tuesday, former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio warned that a joint Philippine-China joint oil and gas exploration could be a trap. "Joint development is a trap because joint development means, you go to the website of China, it says joint development means China owns the gas, the oil, all the natural resources," Carpio said in an interview during a visit to Pag-asa island. "China has [the] sovereign rights. That's from the point of view of China. So why will we accept that?" he added. Carpio visited Pag-asa Island to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of a Catholic church in the area. He first visited the disputed island 14 years ago when the Philippines was still preparing to contest China's nine-dash line. Even the Armed Forces of the Philippines reiterated that China is "not a reliable partner" in energy negotiations considering their coercive and aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) all recorded in video. In a recent interview with Bloomberg, President Marcos raised the possibility that the US and Israeli war against Iran could provide an "impetus" for the Philippines and China to strike a deal in jointly developing oil and gas resources in the contested WPS. The Chinese embassy in Manila earlier said China's "door to dialogue" on joint oil and gas development in the South China Sea remains open, but the Philippines must first "demonstrate sincerity" before negotiations can resume. Filipinos in Israel Meanwhile, the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv met with concerned Israeli agencies to safeguard the rights and welfare of Filipino workers and provide them the necessary aid amid the Middle East war. Philippine Ambassador to Tel Aviv Aileen Mendiola-Rau recently met with Eli Cohen, Israel Hotel Association president, to discuss the current situation of Filipino hotel workers. There are over 30,300 Filipinos in Israel, majority of whom work as caregivers. The rest

are workers in hotels, agricultural students, and missionaries. The embassy on Saturday said Mendiola-Rau also appealed to Cohen to ensure the Filipino workers' "safety and well-being amid the ongoing conflict in Israel." "The meeting follows recent consultations with hotel workers and discussions with Filipino community leaders across Israel," the embassy posted on Facebook. The meeting "reaffirmed both sides' commitment to maintaining open communication and support systems for Filipino workers, including assistance in employment continuity and access to essential services," it added. The embassy also held a separate meeting with officials from the Israeli Population and Immigration Authority to discuss broader concerns affecting Filipino workers in Israel. The embassy earlier urged Filipinos to immediately go inside the "mamad" or bomb shelter as soon as they receive an emergency alert. "No action is required, as the updated expiration date is reflected in the system. These workers may re-enter Israel up to and including Apr. 30," it added. WITH PNA, AFP

- [DTI chief: Price increase likely after April 16](#) (2026-03-31 16:16)

MANUFACTURERS will defer price hikes on goods until April 16, Trade Secretary Cristina Roque said Tuesday. "There is no price increase for basic necessities and prime commodities until April 16. Definitely, we can expect some price increase after that but not for all, because we talked to various manufacturers and for basic necessities and prime commodities, there will be no price increases up to the end of April," Roque said in English and Filipino. On March 28, the Trade chief announced that manufacturers and retailers have pledged not to increase the prices of goods until April 16. In her first meeting with them on March 16, 21 of them pledged to keep prices stable for 30 days, while others said they would go for 60 days. Roque said that she will be meeting with the manufacturers and retailers again after Holy Week. "The meetings will be weekly," she said. Roque urged the public not to engage in panic-buying or hoarding, as the supply of food is adequate, and prices for basic necessities and prime commodities are stable. The DTI said that there are more than 200 basic necessities and prime commodities, including sardines, canned meat, milk, coffee, dairy products, bottled waters, cup noodles, candles, and bath soap. Roque warned that hoarders and businesses violating the Price Act would be prosecuted. Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. dismissed concerns over a possible food price spike, saying extreme projections linked to rising oil prices are unlikely and do not reflect government interventions. The Agriculture chief said the scenarios presented to the Senate, which assumed that crude oil prices would average \$200 per barrel for six months, were based on "extreme assumptions" and did not include mitigating measures. "The prices presented assumed the full impact of soaring crude," he said. "They did not factor in government action, which we will undertake to protect Filipinos from an oil shock." The DA said the US-Iran war in the Middle East threatens the flow of supply along the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route in the international trade of fuel and fertilizer. It noted that about 30 percent of the global urea trade and 20 percent of ammonia and phosphate flows pass through this waterway. Despite the global uncertainty, the agency maintains that domestic food supply and prices remain stable. It noted that pork inventories remain sufficient, while poultry production exceeds demand, leading to lower farmgate prices. Tiu Laurel said that the

Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority has been authorized to make emergency fertilizer purchases. He added that state-owned firms like the Planters Products Inc. can help ramp up imports, noting that it imported a total of 120,000 bags of 14-14-14 complete fertilizer from Vietnam in October. The DA is also looking at alternatives, such as organic fertilizer, including chicken manure, to reduce the domestic agriculture sector's reliance on petroleum-based fertilizers. Tiu Laurel also warned against unfair trade practices, cautioning traders and suppliers against hoarding and profiteering amid the crisis. "We are ready to apply the full force of the law against anyone who seeks to exploit the situation," he said.

- [Holy Wednesday: a day of betrayal](#) (2026-03-31 16:15)

HOLY Wednesday, or "Miyerkules Santo" as it is locally called, marks the day Judas Iscariot conspired to betray Jesus Christ. In John 12:3, Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume while he was at the table with his disciples. Some of the disciples questioned why the perfume was not sold to help the poor, but Judas Iscariot objected because he wanted the money for himself. After this, Judas went to the Sanhedrin and offered to betray Jesus in exchange for money and began looking for the right time to do so. In Matthew 26:14-16, Judas agreed to hand Jesus over to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver. During the Passover preparations, Jesus told his disciples that one of them would betray him. When Judas asked if it was him, Jesus replied, "You have said so." In his homily at the Manila Cathedral, Fr. Rolly dela Cruz highlighted how Jesus, instead of expressing pain or anger, saw the goodness in Judas' betrayal. "Jesus is teaching us today to look at it from a positive viewpoint," dela Cruz said. Dela Cruz emphasized Jesus' surprising response. "When Judas left to go to the priests, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.'" As Filipino Catholics begin traveling home for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday — which are local holidays — Holy Wednesday reminds the faithful that, despite rising prices and conflict in the Middle East, Jesus' perspective teaches them to find something positive even in difficult times, dela Cruz said. "Many things, bad things, will happen — things that we do not want, things that we do not like. But Jesus is telling us today, look at the positive side," he said. He urged the faithful to adopt this mindset in their own lives, drawing inspiration from Jesus' ability to see glorification in the betrayal and denial by those closest to Him, dela Cruz said, encouraging Filipino Catholics to find hope and meaning in their own struggles.

- [Oil-thirsty Asian nations vying for Russian crude](#) (2026-03-31 16:14)

BANGKOK — Asian nations are increasingly competing for Russian crude oil as an energy crisis mounts amid the month-old war by the US and Israel against Iran, which has choked off roughly a fifth of the world's oil supply. Much of the oil from the mostly shut Strait of Hormuz was headed for Asia, hit hardest by recent energy shocks. Over the weekend, Iran-backed Houthi rebels entered the conflict, further threatening shipping. To shore up global crude oil supplies, the US has temporarily eased sanctions on Russian oil shipments already at sea — first for India, then for the rest of the world. Demand is rising in Asia while Russia is raking in billions of dollars. But experts say there is a limit to how much Moscow can boost its exports of crude oil,

which is unrefined petroleum needed to make fuels like gasoline and diesel, and it is already exporting at a level close to its previous peak. In addition, Russia's 4-year-old full-scale invasion of Ukraine and recent drone attacks on its energy facilities by Kyiv are hurting its export capabilities. For desperate countries in Asia the opportunity is short-lived and shrinking, said Muyu Xu, a senior crude oil analyst at the global trade data firm Kpler. "The real problem is how much cargo is still available in this market," she said. Before the Iran war, China, India and Turkey were the main importers of Russian oil, flouting Western sanctions for a healthy discount. US and European Union sanctions were meant to economically hinder Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. But the US sanction waiver sent energy-hungry Southeast Asia into a flurry. This month, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam signaled new interest in Russian oil. Manila, a long-time US ally, imported Russian crude for the first time in five years — days after it declared an energy emergency. Others may follow, but will compete with China and India for roughly 126 million barrels still at sea, according to Kpler. India alone typically needs 5.5 million to 6 million barrels of oil per day. Analysts say Russia is unlikely to boost exports sharply. In March, flows were about 3.8 million barrels a day, above February's 3.2 million but still below the mid-2023 peak of 3.9 million. Xu said the crisis was a reminder of how quickly geopolitics can shift — sometimes driven by just a few decision-makers — making it hard for countries to plan ahead. She said "right now, really the priority is to ensure your supply and all the other considerations are secondary." Southeast Asian countries competing for the dwindling amount of Russian crude oil at sea are likely hoping the US extends its sanction waiver beyond April, Xu added. The options are limited for these nations, and safer bets — like crude oil from the US, South America or West Africa — are too far for Asia, meaning shipments won't arrive for months. That leaves poorer nations scrambling. Airlines in the Philippines are weighing fuel rationing. Cash handouts are being rushed to those hit hardest, like transportation workers. On most days, lines at gas stations stretch for blocks. The nation of 117 million is an early warning for Southeast Asia. Before the war, the Philippines relied on the Middle East for nearly 97 percent of its total seaborne oil imports, according to Kpler data. The energy emergency declaration is a "new frontier" in its scale and magnitude, said Kairos Dela Cruz of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities. "It will definitely drive people down even further in the poverty line," he said. To ease energy shortfalls, the Philippines imported crude oil, a first since 2021. Other Southeast Asian nations are weighing similar options. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's March 23 visit to Russia included agreements on oil and gas cooperation, alongside nuclear energy, as rising diesel prices begin to squeeze Vietnam's manufacturing sector. In Indonesia, officials said "all countries are possible" partners as they shore up reserves. This includes Russia and the tiny oil and gas sultanate of Brunei, said Indonesian Energy Minister Bahlil Lahadalia. "When you don't have any other options, all options are on the table," said Putra Adhiguna of the Jakarta-based Energy Shift Institute. While weighing similar moves, Thailand is not as desperate as the Philippines, said Jitsai Santaputra of the energy consultancy The Lantau Group in Bangkok. She added that Thailand will likely wait and see so long as the impact is limited. But it's growing. Fuel prices in Thailand jumped on March 26 after caps and subsidies were lifted, with most fuels rising about 20 US cents per liter, with diesel up roughly 18 percent — a hit to

industry and transportation that risks pushing up the price of other goods. Defying Western sanctions, China and India were major Russian crude oil customers before the US and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28. An additional advantage for India was having US sanctions on Russian crude oil removed about a week before other countries. “They took that chance and snapped up quite many cargoes,” Xu said. By the time US President Donald Trump allowed everybody else to buy, she said it was “already a bit too late because most of the cargo had already been ordered” by China and India. Even with the headstart, Kpler data shows India’s crude oil imports from Russia probably aren’t enough to offset the lack of supplies from the Middle East. Its oil imports from Russia jumped to roughly 1.9 million barrels a day in March, from about 1 million barrels before the Iran war. Before that conflict, India imported around 2.6 million barrels per day of crude oil from the Middle East. That may not be enough, with the approach of peak summer energy demand — driven by travel, agriculture and freight needs — especially as emergency oil stockpiles run down, said Duttatreya Das of the think tank Ember. He added that short-term buys cover only a few days of supply, leaving any gap hard to fill without extra shipments from the US or Canada. “I don’t know how the shortfall will be met,” he said. Despite being the fifth-largest crude producer and pushing clean energy, China still has strong oil demand from its 1.4 billion people. But it also has built a vast oil stockpile. It has about 1.2 billion barrels of onshore crude inventories, Kpler estimates. That is nearly four months of its overall seaborne crude imports, which cushion short term impacts from the war. China sourced about 13 percent of its seaborne crude from Iran, according to Kpler, and roughly 20 percent from Russia, said financial data group LSEG. With ample reserves and deep pockets, analysts say some Russian shipments bound for China could be diverted to more desperate countries. “Russia emerges as a major winner from the entire conflict,” said Sam Reynolds of the US-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. Given the energy crisis, speed of delivery and temporarily lower prices, he said Asia has “a much larger incentive to import Russian oil.” “We can argue whether there’s a moral dilemma there, but I think it’s a reflection of the fact that countries are going to do whatever they need to to protect their energy security,” he said.

- [House to review oil deregulation law](#) (2026-03-31 16:13)

THE House of Representatives is set to review the Oil Deregulation Law. “Yes, definitely, that is included,” Marikina 2nd District Rep. Miro Quimbo, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, said in Filipino and English in a virtual media interview Tuesday. The upcoming joint House committee hearings are aimed at helping Filipinos amid the war in the Middle East. “I think it’s very clear to us that, you know, a totally unregulated [oil] industry like ours — I mean, it’s great for First World countries. It works there because, deregulated is really good because they are competing among themselves,” Quimbo said. “And in fact, you see it in some retail areas, they are really competing for lower prices. But the basic component that is missing is that you have a very strong law enforcement mechanism relative to making sure that competition actually takes place.” “In other countries, that is already very much alive; their antitrust, they really penalize, their ability to look into the bank accounts, into the records of

these companies for them to see whether there seems to be price fixing or price collusion," he said. Quimbo said the country's "anti-competition culture" was still "very immature," so "that is what we need to give a second look at." Speaker Faustino Dy III ordered joint House committee hearings to craft measures that would assist Filipinos amid the effects of the conflict in the Middle East. The hearings will be conducted after Holy Week even as the House is on a break. The chamber adjourned session March 28 and will resume May 4. During Cauayan's 25th cityhood anniversary Monday night, Dy, the congressional representative of Isabela's 6th District, said the country was "very dependent" on petroleum products and should have alternatives. In an interview Tuesday, Quimbo said there were "many renewable sources of energy in the Philippines." "I think what we need to do is how do we encourage the private sector... to invest more in renewables," he said. "We need to gather information so we can come up with the right recommendations." The hearings will be conducted by the House committees on energy; agriculture and food; aquaculture and fisheries; foreign affairs; ways and means; labor and employment; transportation; information and communications technology; economic affairs; social services; trade and industry; overseas workers affairs; and appropriations. "We are holding these joint hearings to make sure that the initiatives of the legislative branch are coordinated with the executive and are properly targeted and forward-looking," Dy said in a statement Monday.

- [Competency-based HR in govt backed](#) THE Civil Service Commission (CSC) has issued a resolution that aims to support government agencies in transitioning from traditional, process-driven personnel management to a modern, competency-based human resource system. "The reform ultimately aims to institutionalize competency-based HR systems across the bureaucracy," CSC Chairman Marilyn Barua-Yap said of Resolution 2600005, noting it would pave the way for the creation of comprehensive guidelines for implementing Competency-Based Human Resource Management Systems (CBHRMS). She said the new policy would help agencies "to move beyond paper-based, compliance-focused human resource practices and adopt an outcome-oriented framework anchored on clearly defined competencies for recruitment, performance management, rewards and recognition, and employee development." Government agencies are expected to identify core, leadership, and technical/functional competencies to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for government positions, Barua-Yap said. She added the new policy would be applied to constitutional offices, national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations with original charters, and state universities and colleges. Barua-Yap said the new guidelines were anchored on earlier CSC competency frameworks issued in 2012 and 2015 and support agencies' progression under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management. Establishing a CBHRMS is a core requirement for agencies seeking to attain Maturity Level 3 under Prime-HRM, where HR systems are expected to be fully integrated and strategically aligned with organizational goals, she said. ARLIE CALALO (2026-03-31 16:12)

THE Civil Service Commission (CSC) has issued a resolution that aims to support government agencies in transitioning from traditional, process-driven personnel management to a modern, competency-based human resource system. “The reform ultimately aims to institutionalize competency-based HR systems across the bureaucracy,” CSC Chairman Marilyn Barua-Yap said of Resolution 2600005, noting it would pave the way for the creation of comprehensive guidelines for implementing Competency-Based Human Resource Management Systems (CBHRMS). She said the new policy would help agencies “to move beyond paper-based, compliance-focused human resource practices and adopt an outcome-oriented framework anchored on clearly defined competencies for recruitment, performance management, rewards and recognition, and employee development.” Government agencies are expected to identify core, leadership, and technical/functional competencies to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for government positions, Barua-Yap said. She added the new policy would be applied to constitutional offices, national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations with original charters, and state universities and colleges. Barua-Yap said the new guidelines were anchored on earlier CSC competency frameworks issued in 2012 and 2015 and support agencies’ progression under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management. Establishing a CBHRMS is a core requirement for agencies seeking to attain Maturity Level 3 under Prime-HRM, where HR systems are expected to be fully integrated and strategically aligned with organizational goals, she said.

- [Garcia plays down impeach complaint](#) (2026-03-31 16:11)

COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia on Tuesday dismissed an impeachment complaint filed against him, saying the allegations had been previously addressed. Garcia was referring to the impeachment complaint filed before the House of Representatives by lawyers Aldrige Marvin Aceron and Sikini Labastilla. The complaint was based on Comelec's alleged use of a different source code in automated counting machines (ACMs), the presence of an unauthorized intermediary server, a single private IP address, and the systematic and selective implementation of campaign finance laws. “These issues or accusations are not new and have been clarified repeatedly by the Comelec in a manner understandable to the public,” he said, stressing that the commission would again respond for the benefit of the nation. In a statement, Comelec maintained that the software used in the May 12, 2025, national and local elections underwent proper review and certification. It said version 3.5.0 of the ACM source code was scrutinized during the local source code review and later certified by an independent international testing body. The poll body also rejected claims of an “intermediary server,” clarifying that the facility referred to as “Data Center 3” is not a server but a location housing five independent transparency servers operated by political parties, citizens’ arms and media organizations. These servers, Comelec said, receive election results directly from precinct-level machines. On the issue of modems sharing a single private IP address during the 2022 elections, Comelec said the configuration complied with technical standards and had no impact on the accuracy or integrity of transmitted results. “There is no legal requirement

mandating unique IP addresses for each device," it pointed out. The commission also denied allegations of bias in enforcing campaign finance laws, stressing that its decisions were grounded in existing laws and jurisprudence, as well as rulings of the Supreme Court. It explained that Comelec's decisions in the cases of Sens. Francis Escudero and Rodante Marcoleta, concerning campaign donations, are supported by law. It noted that the cases cited in the complaint remain under review and may still be elevated to the Supreme Court. "These cases involving Senators Escudero and Marcoleta underwent very thorough study and discussion by various Comelec departments and offices before a decision was made. The process on these case issues is not yet final and can still be elevated to the Supreme Court," it said. "There is no truth whatsoever to the allegation that the Comelec favors senators regarding the implementation of campaign finance laws. In fact, Comelec Chairman Garcia inhibited himself from two of these cases to avoid any conflict of interest and to ensure the investigation was unaffected until the results were released," it further said. Comelec said it is prepared to face the impeachment complaint and reaffirmed its commitment to uphold "free, fair, honest, orderly, credible, and transparent elections."

- [Go backs fuel excise tax suspension](#) (2026-03-31 16:10)

SEN. Bong Go expressed support for the government's move to allow the suspension of fuel excise taxes amid rising prices. The senator urged authorities to expand relief measures beyond public utility vehicle drivers to include other affected sectors. On March 25, the executive branch enacted Republic Act 12316, which authorizes the suspension or reduction of excise taxes on petroleum products when global oil prices breach certain thresholds. The law grants the president flexibility to respond more quickly to volatile oil markets upon recommendation of economic managers. An executive order declaring a state of national energy emergency has also been issued, enabling a whole-of-government approach to stabilize fuel supply and mitigate rising costs. Go welcomed the tax suspension measure, describing it as a necessary step to ease immediate pressure on consumers. However, he emphasized that government intervention must go further. "We support measures that can ease the costs of drivers, but they should not stop there. Many other sectors are affected and need help as well," he said. He warned that rising oil prices trigger a "domino effect" across the economy, driving up transportation fares, food prices, and other basic goods. "When oil prices rise, it affects fares, food, and daily needs. The scope of assistance should be broadened," he added. The senator's remarks came after a netizen posted on his official Facebook page, saying that while transport operators receive targeted assistance, other groups equally burdened by high fuel costs remain excluded. In another post, a balut (duck egg) vendor noted that higher fuel costs reduced their daily earnings. The senator said that overlooked sectors, such as street vendors and fisherfolk, should be included in relief efforts.

- [LTFRB summons 8 bus firms over alleged illegal fare hikes](#) (2026-03-31 16:09)

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has issued show cause orders against eight bus companies accused of implementing unauthorized fare increases,

warning of possible suspension or cancellation of their operating permits. LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the firms, some of which operate routes to the Bicol Region, were directed to explain why their Certificates of Public Convenience (CPCs) should not be revoked. “We understand the challenges that bus companies and other operators of public utility vehicles are facing now, but these challenges must never be used as a reason or as an excuse to violate existing regulations at the expense of commuters,” Mendoza said. The companies have 10 days from receipt to justify their actions after allegedly imposing additional charges due to rising fuel costs without LTFRB approval. They were also ordered to immediately stop collecting unauthorized fares. A hearing has been set on April 23. The LTFRB warned that failure to submit an explanation or attend the hearing would be treated as a waiver, which could lead to penalties, including a fine of P5,000. The regulator earlier approved a fare adjustment for public utility vehicles, including buses, but its implementation was suspended upon the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., citing the impact of rising oil prices on commuters. The LTFRB added it has deployed “mystery riders” to monitor compliance and detect overcharging. It also urged passengers to report incidents of illegal fare increases as part of its enforcement efforts.

- [Program to send US students to PH schools](#) (2026-03-31 16:08)

A CONSORTIUM has been launched to allow US universities to send students to the Philippines for short-term courses, semester exchanges, and faculty-led programs. The Consortium for Study Abroad in the Philippines (CSAP) was launched last March 24 in a ceremony led by the Philippine-American Educational Foundation (Fulbright Philippines), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Tourism, Department of Foreign Affairs, and US Embassy in the Philippines. The initiative will involve 15 of the Philippines’ top Higher Education Institutions. The founding members include the Ateneo de Davao University, the University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños, UP Visayas, and Silliman University. The US Embassy said CSAP aims to attract more American students by promoting Philippine universities as destinations for study and cultural immersion, positioning the country as a hub for international education. Fulbright Philippines Executive Director July Amador III said CSAP is a “unified national gateway built on four strategic pillars: Standardized Academic Rigor, Uniform Duty of Care, ‘Living Laboratories,’ and Streamlined Mobility.” “By providing this structured pathway, we ensure that students and scholars gain not only global-standard academic knowledge but also a deeper appreciation of the cultures and communities that shape our societies,” Amador added. US Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Jessica Simon said that educational exchanges are an important cornerstone of Philippine-US relations, especially with the two countries celebrating the 80th year of diplomatic relations in 2026. “Beyond academic growth, at its core, welcoming US students and faculty for cultural exchange and collaborations unite people and cultures. The United States remains committed to deepening our partnership with the Philippines through scholarships and exchanges to empower our people, develop our workforce, and prosper together,” Simon said. CHED Chairman Shirley Agrupis noted that global education now runs on reliability and that partner institutions “need to know that

programs are comparable, credits can be transferred, and students will be supported from admission to completion.”

- [Marcos to spend Holy Week in Ilocos](#) (2026-03-31 16:06)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he would spend Holy Week in his hometown, Ilocos Norte. "For the Holy Week, I will spend a few days in Ilocos Norte. And I will be back in Manila by the weekend," Marcos told reporters in Nueva Ecija. Marcos did not provide further details, but Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the president would continue to monitor developments in Ilocos Norte during the Holy Week. "He will spend his Holy Week in Ilocos Norte with his family. There will be no vacation because our president will continue to monitor and give orders on what our government agencies need to do," Castro said in a press conference. Last year, Marcos, first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and their sons, Joseph Simon and William Vincent, spent Maundy Thursday at Suba Beach in Ilocos Norte. In his Holy Week message, Marcos encouraged the public to renew their commitment to the faith, "inspired by selfless service" during the sacred season. "May this Holy Week strengthen our resolve to become a nation guided by faith, united in purpose, and inspired by selfless service," he said. Drawing from the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Marcos urged the Filipino faithful to renew their commitment to God to love and serve one another, and to remain faithful even in the face of trials. "The Passion of Christ reminds us that true greatness is not found in power, but in sacrifice; not in privilege, but in service; and not in comfort, but in the courage to carry the burdens of others," he said. The president called on Filipinos to continue working together for the welfare of their families and to build stronger communities anchored on faith and shared responsibility. He expressed hope that the Lenten season would inspire Filipinos to act with compassion and extend help to those in need. "For in every act of compassion, every hand extended to those in need, and every sacrifice made for the good of others, we keep alive the spirit of His message," he added. Marcos earlier declared April 2 and 3 as regular holidays in observance of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

- [CFO eyes specialized integration program](#) (2026-03-31 16:05)

THE Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) has sought to enhance the integration of Filipino migrants into their new home or host country as the Filipino diaspora in Germany continues to grow and diversify. The commission said that newly arrived Filipinos in Germany would soon have access to specialized post-arrival integration activities to ease their transition into German society. The CFO recently partnered with the Goethe-Institut, a nonprofit German cultural organization, to synchronize its pre-departure and post-arrival efforts for Filipinos migrating to Germany or for those who will live there to work or study. There are about 45,000 Filipinos living and working in Germany. "The demographics have shifted. Today, the population includes a robust number of information technology professionals, hospitality workers, students, and Filipinos married to German nationals," the CFO said on Tuesday. "Pre-departure and post-arrival mechanisms are considered vital for this demographic, which frequently grapples with language barriers and navigating complex social systems," the CFO said in a

statement. Under the proposed framework, CFO would tap Germany-based Filipino alumni of Goethe-Institut courses to conduct localized orientation and social integration activities for fresh arrivals. The agreement will soon be formalized through a memorandum of understanding, the CFO said. Under the proposed mechanism, the CFO would promote the Goethe-Institut's language and pre-integration courses during its mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars. The Goethe-Institut would provide training to CFO orientation officers and counselors, embedding German cultural insights directly into the Philippine-based briefing seminars. Bernadette Tamayo

- [Transport group questions delayed oil subsidy release](#) (2026-03-31 16:04)

TRANSPORT group Manibela on Tuesday questioned the slow rollout of the government's fuel subsidy program, saying only about P651 million of the P2.4 billion to P2.5 billion allocation has been distributed, as transport workers continue to bear the impact of rising fuel prices. In a statement, the group said more than 70 percent of the fund had yet to reach beneficiaries despite the urgent need for assistance among drivers and operators nationwide. Manibela said the subsidy had already been released to LandBank, but actual distribution remained slow in many areas. The group said assurances that the program was moving in the right direction were not enough if drivers and operators were still not feeling the assistance on the ground. It said the sector needs a clear timeline, a complete list of beneficiaries, and full transparency in the release and use of the fund. "The transportation sector is calling for immediate action, accountability, and a clear explanation," it said. The group said the fuel subsidy should reach legitimate beneficiaries in full and without delay, adding that the assistance should not be held back or stalled in the process. As of Monday, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board said P651.185 million has been distributed since March 17. Metro Manila received the biggest share at P181.278 million, followed by Calabarzon and Central Luzon, while LTRFB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said regional offices were continuing validation to speed up the payout.

- ['Gas-and-dash' suspect surrenders to authorities](#) (2026-03-31 16:03)

THE Quezon City Police District (QCPD) said on Tuesday that the driver involved in the viral "gas-and-run" incident over the weekend has turned himself over to the city police. Identified as "Jefferson," 27, of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, he showed up Monday night at the La Loma Police Station, accompanied by family members, QCPD director BGen. Randy Glenn Silvio said. The suspect's surrender came after efforts by QCPD's Special Investigation Team, which conducted a thorough probe including forward and backward CCTV (closed-circuit television) tracking and coordination with concerned agencies, Silvio said. These efforts led to the identification of the vehicle and the person involved in the incident, which happened a few days ago at a gas station in Balintawak, where Jefferson requested a full tank of diesel worth P5,196, the QCPD chief added. To the shock of the pump attendant, who tried to catch him up but in vain, the suspect suddenly sped off without settling the fuel bill. The QCPD said it would pursue the filing of an estafa complaint before the City Prosecutor's Office against the suspect, who

already apologized to the gas station management as he expressed remorse, citing high gasoline costs and low earnings.

- [Caloocan gives PUJ, tricycle drivers regular daily income](#) (2026-03-31 16:02)

CALOOCAN Mayor Dave Gonzalo Malapitan on Tuesday said that the local government has sealed a partnership with various tricycle and public utility jeepney (PUJ) transport groups based in the city to provide free rides for commuters. The collaboration with the local organizations of tricycle and jeepney drivers and operators would involve financial subsidies for them with the goal of sustaining their regular income and, at the same time, extending help to the affected commuters amid the unabated increase in fuel prices, Malapitan told The Manila Times. He said the city government forged a deal with several tricycle operators and drivers' associations (TODAs) to implement a "Libreng Sakay" program that would start on April 6 to provide free trips to local commuters. "We simply wanted to think of several measures, including this one, to alleviate the plight of the transportation sector due to the continuous fuel price hikes in local gas stations and, at the same time, help our affected commuters," the mayor said. According to the city's Public Information Office (PIO), the program would be available during traffic rush hours — 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., wherein participating TODA members would stand to receive P695 for four hours of service per day. Malapitan reiterated the local government's full support to provide assistance to city-based public transportation providers as he ensured that additional programs would be implemented in anticipation of further surges in fuel prices. The younger Malapitan said similar schemes would be carried out in the coming days involving jeepney organizations. The PIO said interested applicants may inquire with their respective transport groups' associations.

- [Manila provides P500 more aid to PUJ drivers](#) (2026-03-31 16:01)

PUBLIC utility jeepney (PUJ) drivers who joined the Manila government's free ride program will receive an additional P500 in daily cash assistance, on top of the P3,000 daily minimum subsidy given by the city government, Mayor Isko Moreno said Tuesday. Speaking at a Facebook live broadcast, Moreno said the increase was due to the P661,000 in savings generated from the program's first day of operations on Monday. He said that rather than the money being returned to the city, it will be redistributed directly to drivers. He added that this increase in assistance aims to help drivers cope with rising fuel costs, as diesel prices have gone up by P11 to P12 per liter. "Instead of putting that back in the government, we will give it to you instead, in response to the increase in crude oil prices yesterday and in the coming days," he said in Filipino. "To our drivers, I will increase your daily wage by P500 so that the P12 increase in the price of crude oil yesterday will be offset today and in the days to come," he added. The increased subsidy of P3,500 will apply for the remaining days of the program — Tuesday, March 31, and the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after Holy Week, which marks the end of the free ride program. Moreno further revealed that on the first day of the program, 129,665 passengers were served, with 1,038 jeepneys participating across the city's six districts.

- [Complaint filed vs. Herbosa, 16 others](#) (2026-03-31 14:13)

MANILA, Philippines - A graft complaint was filed on Tuesday at the Office of the Ombudsman against Department of Health (DoH) Secretary Teodoro Herbosa and 16 other people. The 16 were Health Undersecretary Randy Escolango, Health Undersecretary Gloria Balboa, David Masiado Jr., Anna Marie Celina Garfin, Adriano Suba-an, Cherylle Gavino, Maria Joyce Ducusin, Hardy Dumawing, Carmela Granada, Jan Derek Junio, Carmina Paz Vera, Jessa Joy Malipot, Mark Anthony Dizon, Liezl Fernandez, Mary Grace Bautista, and Jennifer Rabino. The complaint, anonymously filed, accused them of violation of Section 3(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act "by causing direct injury to the government through evident bad faith and gross negligence." As of early 2026, the complaint said, the DoH "incurred an actual, irreparable loss of" P68 million "due to commodities expiring while stagnant in the National Warehouse." According to the complaint, medications worth P68 million which were under family planning and mental health programs had expiration dates ranging from Dec. 2025 to Feb./Mar. 2026. "Moreover, the National Immunization Program reports an undelivered balance of Php 1,319,099,880.00, representing a staggering failure to utilize said life-saving vaccines", it read. The complaint said that on Jan. 22, 2026, the National Inventory Report "confirmed that" P1,319,099,880 "in vaccines remained undelivered".

- [ICRC urges parties in Middle East conflict to follow rules of war](#) (2026-03-31 13:54)

MANILA, Philippines—The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday called on parties involved in the Middle East conflict to “respect the rules of war,” stating they are “eroding the foundation of civilian life.” In a statement, the ICRC said if the parties of the conflict continue to disregard the rules of war, civilians will continue to suffer profound consequences that could “outlast the current conflict.” “Respect for the rules of war reduces the consequences for civilians, especially during military operations. All parties, regardless of the side they are on, are bound by international humanitarian law (IHL), and all states have an obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL, even if their adversary does not,” it said. The IHL mandates that civilians, medical personnel, aid workers, the wounded, and prisoners of war must be treated humanely. According to reports from HRANA, a US-based rights group, 3,461 people have been killed since the war erupted over a month ago. Of that number, 1,551 were civilians, and 236 were children. “At a time of escalating needs and tightening humanitarian budgets, the ICRC and other organizations are being forced to adapt to disrupted supply chains that are undermining their operations. Meanwhile, several countries already burdened by humanitarian crises must now also contend with rising fuel prices and increasing operational costs,” the ICRC said.

- [House review of oil deregulation law on the table](#) (2026-03-31 13:53)

MANILA, Philippines - Reviewing the Oil Deregulation Law is on the table at the House of Representatives. "Yes, definitely, that is included", Marikina 2nd District Rep. Miro Quimbo, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, said in Filipino and English in a virtual media interview on Tuesday on the coming joint House committee hearings aimed at helping Filipinos amid the conflict in the Middle East. "I think it's very clear to us that, you know, a totally

unregulated [oil] industry like ours--I mean, it's great for first world countries. It works there because, like I say, deregulated is really good because they are competing among themselves. And in fact, you see it in some retail areas, they are really competing for lower prices. But the basic component that is missing is that you have a very strong law enforcement mechanism relative to making sure that competition actually takes place", he said."In other countries, that is already very much alive, their antitrust, they really penalize, their ability to look into the bank accounts, into the records of these companies for them to see whether there seems to be price fixing or price collusion", he said.Quimbo said the country's "anti-competition culture" was still "very immature" so "that is what we need to give a second look at."

- [Minor seeks Marcos help vs abusive officials in social media post, gets response from president](#) (2026-03-31 13:31)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday took to social media to respond to the cry for help of a minor in Camarines Sur to end the supposed abuses of a village official. An 11-year-old girl last March 30 posted a letter addressed to Marcos on the Facebook page of Redeemer Homeless Mission and sought his help to hold accountable an abusive “kagawad” or councilor. She narrated how the son and aide of the village official allegedly raped and impregnated one of her friends in November 2022 and February 2023. “As a child, I have watched this Kagawad threaten us, cut and steal our electrical wires so we have no electricity, and cut and steal the wires to our balon (well) so we have no water,” she wrote. “Many of the families here stay in survival mode because government people make life very difficult,” she added. She also shared her fear of not having a bright future because of the impunity of the elected officials who were supposed to serve and protect them. “Question, Mr. President: How will we read if we are being raped? How will we read if our own government people cut our electrical wire so we have no lights?” she asked. “We are kids, we are not involved in your political parties. I just want to go to school without being raped. So, can you please help us?” she added. Marcos, who shared the letter that brought him close to tears and made him “very angry” in the comments, vowed to send help right away. “I am sending policemen to you and your sisters to protect you and to find anyone who has hurt any of you. I will make sure that you will be able to continue reading and studying as much as you want,” the chief executive said. “You are a very brave, intelligent and very kind girl and I will make sure to help you and your sisters in any way you need,” he added. The Palace has yet to confirm or release details if Marcos’ order had already been carried out.

- [Marcos approves P50/kilo price cap on imported rice](#) (2026-03-31 13:01)

MANILA, Philippines- President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he would issue an executive order to impose a P50 price cap on every kilo of imported well-milled rice. The move was based on the recommendation of the National Price Coordinating Council, a government body responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and stabilizing the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities. “When the price of oil goes up, food prices follow. That’s what we don’t want to happen. The National Price Coordinating Council recommended a price cap of

P50 per kilo for imported well-milled rice, and we will issue an executive order to implement this as soon as possible," Marcos said following a meeting of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport committee. The President said that currently, the price of basic necessities and prime commodities remained at the suggested retail price levels, including rice. He said the government was working to control the prices of 205 commodities in the midst of the current energy emergency. "We continue to engage manufacturers and retailers to hold off price increases until next month," he added.

- [Over 100K police deployed to secure Holy Week](#) (2026-03-31 12:47)

MANILA, Philippines — Over 100,000 police personnel will be deployed to secure peace and order, faster emergency response, and ensure public safety during the Holy Week, Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, said on Tuesday. Transportation Acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez said at least five million travelers were expected to flock to terminals, seaports and airports. At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, 150,000 passengers per day are expected, three million at the Paranaque Integrated Terminal Exchange and 2.6 million more in seaports nationwide. Local Government Secretary Jonvic Remulla said the joint forces of police, local government and transport sector would ensure that roads were obstruction-free. Nartatez said PNP personnel were set to provide assistance to relevant government agencies in clearing obstructions on the road including traffic flow, direction and control among others. Remulla encouraged everyone to call the PNP's Unified 911 hotline for any emergency on crime, health or fire situations as response is expected in five minutes or less. "We are eyeing zero focus crimes at least during Good Friday and zero deaths on road accidents," Nartatez said.

- ['Asia to suffer most from Iran war energy crisis'](#) (2026-03-31 11:57)

SINGAPORE — Asia faces the gravest fallout from the war on Iran and is confronting a major energy crisis, a global maritime analytics firm warned in an interview with Agence France-Presse on Tuesday. "We think Asia will, for now, be the ones suffering the most," Kpler president Jean Maynier told AFP at the company's offices in Singapore. He said the continent did not have enough energy resources of its own to cover the gap, adding: "It will not be enough in China, it will not be enough to cover in big countries like the Philippines or Indonesia. So it's a real energy crisis." Maynier said the impact of Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz was already visible in countries like the Philippines, where the government has declared a national energy emergency. "It's really bad for Asia and we are not optimistic if the event continues," said Maynier. "We hope at some point that politicians will find a solution." Brussels-based Kpler, which was founded in 2014 and owns the MarineTraffic website, is considered one of the foremost data analytics and ship-tracking agencies in the world. It has been keeping a close eye on the Strait of Hormuz since the United States and Israel's February 28 attack on Iran. Seventeen commodities vessels crossed the the strait over the weekend, 12 of them on Saturday, making it one of the busiest days for crossings since March 1, according to Kpler. As of 1700 GMT on Monday, commodities vessels had made just 196 crossings of the waterway this

month, a huge decrease from before the war. Of those, 120 were by oil tankers and gas carriers and most were travelling east out of the strait.

- [Marcos approves release of additional P1.28B support for transport workers](#) (2026-03-31 11:14)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday announced the release of an additional P1.38 billion to support transport workers impacted by skyrocketing fuel costs. In a video message, Marcos said distribution of the additional assistance would be rolled out starting next week. “More than 256,000 transport workers in Metro Manila have already received P5,000 in cash assistance. There is still P1.28 billion to be distributed. Nationwide distribution will begin on April 6,” he said in Filipino. The cash aid covers drivers and operators of modern and traditional jeepneys, UV Express, passenger and point-to-point buses, Transport Network Vehicle Service (TNVS) partners, taxis, tricycles, multicabs, and delivery services. The chief executive noted that P2.5 billion in fuel subsidies was initially allocated for the more than 1.4 million driver-beneficiaries and unit operators. The fuel subsidy distribution is only one of the government’s several initiatives to soften the blow of rising pump prices triggered by hostilities in the Middle East. Other mitigating measures the government has implemented include a 50-percent fare discount for LRT-2 and MRT-3; free rides in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, and Metro Davao; and toll discounts for jeepneys, buses, and freight food transport in the Northern Luzon Expressway (NLEX), Southern Luzon Expressway (SLEX), and STAR Tollway.

- [Manila grants additional P500 aid to jeepney drivers in free ride program](#) (2026-03-31 11:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Jeepney drivers who joined the Manila government’s free ride program will receive an additional P500 in daily cash assistance, on top of the P3,000 minimum subsidy given by the city government, Mayor Isko Moreno announced Tuesday. Speaking at a Facebook live broadcast, Moreno said the increase was due to the P661,000 in savings generated from the program’s first day of operations on Monday. He added that the increase in assistance aimed to help drivers cope with rising fuel costs, as diesel prices have gone up by P11 to P12 per liter.

- [Makati announces road closures, rerouting on Good Friday](#) (2026-03-31 07:36)

MANILA, Philippines — The Makati Public Safety Department will implement road closures and traffic rerouting on Good Friday. The city said traffic adjustments in the villages of Poblacion and Guadalupe Viejo for would be in effect from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. A portion of J.P. Rizal Avenue, from Pasong Tirad Street to Makati Avenue, will be temporarily converted into a two-way road from April 2 to April 5, covering Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Black Saturday and Easter Sunday. Normal traffic flow will resume at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, April 6, according to the city advisory. The city also said several streets in village Poblacion were closed last week due to the construction of kubols or kalbaryos by various groups recognized by St. Peter and Paul Parish Church. The roads listed for closure are: Gen. Luna Street — portion from P. Burgos Street to

Mercado Street Enriquez Street — from Don Pedro Street to Ferminia Street San Marcos Street — from Pagulayan Street to P. Burgos Street San Juan Street — from Pagulayan Street to P. Burgos Street Don Pedro Street — portion from Gabaldon Street to Mandalac Street Guanzon Street — from P. Burgos Street to Makati Avenue San Mateo Street — portion from D.M. Rivera Street to P. Gomez Street Agno Street — portion from D.M. Rivera Street to P. Gomez Street Doña Epifania Street — from A. Mabini Street to Agno Street Ilaya Street — portion from A. Mabini Street to J.P. Rizal Street Don Pedro Street — portion from A. Mabini Street to Villena Street Albert Street — portion from Villena Street to Palma Street P. Gomez Street — north side, from J.P. Rizal Street to Zamora Street P. Gomez Street — Hagdang Bato whole block San Agustin Street — from P. Burgos Street to P. Gomez Street Quintos Street — portion from Santiago Street to Singian Street Molina Street — from Quintos Street to Singian Street Zenaida Street — from E. Zobel Street to F. Zobel Street Bagong Diwa Street — from M.L. Quezon Street to Pertierra Street Ma. Aurora Extension Street — from Pertierra Street to Ma. Aurora Street Osmeña Street — from M.L. Quezon Street to Bridge Service Road or P. Burgos Street For light vehicles, cars and SUVs coming from the Guadalupe area or westbound and heading toward Makati City Hall, Circuit and Delpan Street in Manila, motorists will be rerouted through Estrella Street, Rockwell Drive, Kalayaan Avenue, Makati Avenue, Jupiter Street or Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, then N. Garcia Street before rejoining J.P. Rizal Avenue. Public utility jeepneys, public utility vehicles, and large or small trucks with six wheels and up coming from the same area will be redirected through the West Cloverleaf, EDSA southbound, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Paseo de Roxas Avenue, Makati Avenue and N. Garcia Street before returning to J.P. Rizal Avenue. Motorists coming from Delpan Street eastbound may either pass through the temporarily converted two-way section of J.P. Rizal Avenue toward the Makati City Hall area, then proceed to N. Garcia Street and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, or take Pasong Tirad Street, Kalayaan Avenue, N. Garcia Street and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue toward their destinations. The Makati Public Safety Department advised motorists to plan their trips ahead, expect delays in affected areas, and take alternate routes to avoid congestion.

- [Caloocan gives jeepney, tricycle drivers daily income to provide free ride to commuters](#) (2026-03-31 07:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Caloocan Mayor Dave Gonzalo Malapitan on Tuesday announced that the local government has sealed a partnership with tricycle and jeepney groups based in the city to provide free ride for the commuters in exchange for regular financial subsidy amid the unabated increase in fuel costs. Malapitan told The Manila Times that the city government initially forged a deal with several tricycle operators and drivers' associations (TODAs) to implement a 'Libreng Sakay' program that would start on April 6. "We simply wanted to think of several measures, including this one to alleviate the plight of the transportation sector due to the continuous fuel price hikes in local gas stations and at the same time, help our affected commuters," the city chief executive said. According to the city's Public Information Office (PIO), the program will be implemented during the rush hours – 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. — when participating drivers would receive P695 for four hours of service per

day. The son of former long-time Caloocan mayor and now District 1 Rep. Oscar Malapitan reiterated the local government's full support to provide assistance to city-based public transportation providers as he ensured that additional programs would be implemented in anticipation of further surges in fuel prices. The younger Malapitan said similar schemes would be carried out in the coming days involving jeepney organizations. The PIO said interested applicants may inquire with their respective transport groups' associations.

- [Palace declares half-day WFH for govt workers on Holy Wednesday](#) (2026-03-31 06:54)

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Tuesday announced a half-day work-from-home (WFH) setup for government employees on Wednesday in line with the country's observation of Holy Week. The Palace issued Memorandum Circular 116, "to allow them to travel to and from the different in the country" for the long break. Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro noted that remote work would be from 8 a.m. until noon. "However, agencies whose functions involve the delivery of basic and health services, preparedness/response to disasters and calamities, and/or the performance of other vital services shall continue with their operations under usual working arrangements and render the necessary services," part of the circular read. The adoption of WFH arrangements and suspension of work for private companies and offices, meanwhile, are left to the discretion of their respective employers, the circular further stated. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are regular holidays while Black Saturday is a special non-working day, the Palace said.

- [AFP: China 'not a reliable partner' in oil exploration talks with PH](#) (2026-03-31 06:23)

MANILA, Philippines — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Tuesday reiterated that China was "not a reliable partner" on the negotiating table despite ongoing talks on the possibility of joint oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, particularly in areas within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The Philippines and China have "initial talks" on potential oil and gas explorations at the Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on South China Sea meeting in Fujian, China, on March 28. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said both sides took note of the progress and made "frank and thorough exchange of views" on the real situation in the disputed waters where Manila raised concern over Beijing's "unlawful" actions. "We view diplomacy and defense as two sides of the same coin. We support the Department of Foreign Affairs as they conduct the consultations, while at the same time, we will keep performing our mandate of patrolling the seas, of securing what is legally and rightfully ours," Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad, AFP spokesman for the WPS, said in a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo. "The Philippine Navy, Air Force, the Philippine Army, the entire AFP, amid all the negotiations being conducted by DFA will continue performing its mandate of patrolling our seas and securing our sovereignty and sovereign rights, bearing in mind that the Chinese Communist Party is not a reliable partner on the negotiating table," Trinidad said. Trinidad said China's actions over the WPS throughout the years were a factual reference to not trust their pronouncements. "History will tell us that talk is different from action... Trust and confidence will always be based on transparency or truthfulness," Trinidad said.

- [Comelec chief refutes impeachment complaint, denies election irregularities](#) (2026-03-31 04:38)

MANILA, Philippines — Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia on Tuesday dismissed the impeachment complaint filed against him, saying the erroneous allegations had been previously addressed. The complaint before the House of Representatives by lawyers Adrige Marvin Aseron and Sikini Labastilla is based on the Comelec's alleged use of a different source code in the automated counting machines (ACM), the presence of an unauthorized intermediary server, a single private IP address, and the systematic and selective implementation of campaign finance laws. "These issues or accusations are not new and have been clarified repeatedly by the Comelec in a manner understandable to the public," Garcia said, stressing that the Commission would again respond for the benefit of the Filipino nation. In a statement, Comelec maintained that the software used in the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections (NLE) underwent proper review and certification. It said version 3.5.0 of the ACM source code was scrutinized during the Local Source Code Review and later certified by an independent international testing body. The poll body also rejected claims of an "intermediary server," clarifying that the facility referred to as "Data Center 3" is not a server but a location housing five independent transparency servers operated by political parties, citizens' arms, and media organizations. These servers, Comelec said, received election results directly from precinct-level machines. On the issue of modems sharing a single private IP address during the 2022 elections, Comelec said the configuration complied with technical standards and had no impact on the accuracy or integrity of transmitted results. "There is no legal requirement mandating unique IP addresses for each device," it pointed out. The Commission also denied allegations of bias in enforcing campaign finance laws, stressing that its decisions were grounded in existing laws and jurisprudence, as well as the ruling of the Supreme Court (SC).

- [Marcos orders talks with Iran on passage of PH-bound oil tankers through Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-31 04:14)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has directed the Department of Affairs (DFA) to start negotiations with Iran to allow the safe passage of Philippine-bound oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, Malacañang announced on Tuesday. This is to ensure the steady delivery of oil to the country amid the hostilities in the Middle East. "According to DFA Secretary Tess Lazaro, we have good relations with Iran," Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro said in Filipino in a Palace briefing. "That has already been ordered by the president. She will be meeting with the Ambassador of Iran, most probably by tomorrow or next week." Iran has closed down access to the Strait of Hormuz, where one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes, following attacks initiated by the United States and Iran ultimately shutting down access of tankers to and from oil-exporting Gulf states. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian urged Marcos to "open high-level talks" with the Iranian government and remove its blockade of tankers bound for the Philippines, predominantly reliant of oil importation. Such "strategic coordination," the lawmaker noted, would ensure that the rising costs of goods, especially petroleum products, would not further burden many Filipinos.

- [CSC releases new policy for competency-based recruitment in govt](#) (2026-03-31 03:57)

MANILA, Philippines — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) issued a resolution to support government agencies in transitioning from traditional, process-driven personnel management to a modern, competency-based human resource system aimed at improving public service delivery. CSC Chairman Marilyn Barua-Yap said Resolution 2600005 would pave the way for comprehensive guidelines for implementing Competency-Based Human Resource Management Systems (CBHRMS). She said the new policy would serve as a reference for agencies “to move beyond paper-based, compliance-focused human resource (HR) practices and adopt an outcome-oriented framework anchored on clearly defined competencies for recruitment, performance management, rewards and recognition, and employee development.” Government agencies are expected to identify core, leadership, and technical/functional competencies to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for government positions, Barua-Yap said. “The reform ultimately aims to institutionalize competency-based HR systems across the bureaucracy,” the top CSC official added. The CSC said the new policy would be applied to constitutional offices, national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations with original charters, and state universities and colleges. She said the new guidelines were anchored on CSC competency frameworks issued in 2012 and 2015 and support agencies’ progression under the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM). Establishing a CBHRMS is a core requirement for agencies seeking to attain Maturity Level 3 under PRIME-HRM, where HR systems are expected to be fully integrated and strategically aligned with organizational goals, the CSC chief stressed. The commission reiterated that institutionalizing competency-based HRM would enhance employee productivity, job satisfaction, service quality, and overall organizational performance.

- [Marcos to spend Holy Week in home province, urges renewal of commitment to faith](#) (2026-03-31 03:47)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday said he would spend Holy Week in his hometown, Ilocos Norte as he encouraged the public to renew their commitment to faith in his message. “For the Holy Week, I will spend a few days in Ilocos Norte. And I will be back in Manila by the weekend,” Marcos told reporters in Nueva Ecija. Last year, Marcos, First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and their sons, Joseph Simon and William Vincent spent Maundy Thursday at Suba Beach in Ilocos Norte. In his Holy Week message, Marcos encouraged the public to renew their commitment to the faith, “inspired by selfless service” during the sacred season. “May this Holy Week strengthen our resolve to become a nation guided by faith, united in purpose, and inspired by selfless service,” he said.

- [Marcos opens new expressway in Nueva Ecija, announces free toll until Dec](#) (2026-03-31 02:54)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday led the opening of the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) Contract Package 4 Aliaga-Cabanatuan Section, a

four-lane segment expected to enhance connectivity across Central Luzon. Speaking to reporters, Marcos said the new CLLEX segment would not only cut travel time from Tarlac to Cabanatuan City but also help reduce transportation cost of commodities, particularly rice as Nueva Ecija produces the highest volume of rice in the country. The President also announced that the new expressway segment would be toll-free until December 2026.

- [‘Gas-and-run’ suspect surrenders after viral incident](#) (2026-03-31 02:28)

MANILA, Philippines — The driver in the viral gas-and-run incident over the weekend has surrendered, police said Tuesday. Alias "Jefferson," 27, of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, appeared at the La Loma Police Station accompanied by family members, Quezon City Police Director Brig. Gen. Randy Glenn Silvio said. The surrender came after a thorough police investigation that included a review of CCTV (closed-circuit television) footage and coordination with concerned agencies that enabled the identification of the vehicle and the person involved in the incident which happened few days ago at a gas station along Balintawak, EDSA. Reports said that Jefferson bought a full tank worth of diesel at P5, 196 but sped off after. Investigation revealed that after learning that the incident had gone viral, the suspect stopped traveling and avoided social media, unaware that authorities were searching for him. He remained in his residence in Bulacan, where the vehicle involved was also kept. Police said it would pursue the filing of estafa before the City Prosecutor's Office against the suspect who apologized to the gas station management, expressing remorse but blaming high gasoline costs and low earnings for his offense.

- [Pagasa: Another sunny day for PH, heat index in Metro Manila may hit 37°C](#) (2026-03-30 23:41)

MANILA, Philippines — The entire archipelago would continue to experience generally fair weather, and Metro Manila's temperature would hit 37 degrees Celsius, falling under the extreme caution category, the state-run weather agency said on Tuesday. Weather specialist Veronica Torres of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said it has not monitored any low-pressure area (LPA) forming inside or outside the country's area of responsibility. Instead, Torres said the ridge or extension of the high-pressure area (HPA) has been stretching over northern Luzon. Meanwhile, the national weather bureau said Metro Manila and the rest of the country would also experience partly cloudy to overcast skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms due to the localized thunderstorms. The highest heat index of the day would be in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, at 41°C, falling under the extreme caution category. Heat cramps and heat exhaustion would be possible, and continued exposure to the sun could lead to heat stroke. Pagasa said HPA usually brings sunny, warm weather with minimal chances of rain. The heat index, or the 'feels like' temperature, measures "how hot it actually feels to the human body by combining air temperature and relative humidity."

- [Pag-IBIG to maintain 3% socialized housing rate](#) (2026-03-30 16:07)

IN a bid to keep homeownership affordable, the Pag-IBIG Fund announced on Monday that it would maintain its 3-percent annual interest rate for qualified socialized housing loans under the expanded Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino (4PH) program. Housing Secretary Jose Ramon Aliling, who chairs Pag-IBIG's board of trustees, said in a statement that the move was in support to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to keep decent and affordable housing within reach of Filipino workers, especially those from the low-and-moderate income sectors seeking to own their homes. "In keeping with the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Pag-IBIG Fund shall maintain the 3-percent interest rate for qualified socialized housing loans under the Expanded 4PH so that more Filipino workers can continue to pursue homeownership even during a time of global uncertainty," Aliling said. "By keeping monthly amortizations low, we are helping more working families secure a home of their own while supporting sustained housing production and the jobs it generates, in step with broader national efforts to keep the economy stable," he added. Pag-IBIG CEO Marilene Acosta, meanwhile, said the move also reflects the agency's strong fiscal standing and its continuing commitment to carry out the president's housing agenda in a way that keeps homeownership within reach of working Filipino families. "We continue to heed the direction of President Marcos in helping uplift the lives of Filipino workers by keeping homeownership affordable for those who need it most," Acosta said. She added: "Our strong fiscal standing allows Pag-IBIG Fund to keep the subsidized 3-percent rate in place so more working Filipinos can continue pursuing homeownership under the Expanded 4PH." Under the program, first-time homebuyers, particularly those earning less than P47,856 per month in the National Capital Region (NCR) and less than P34,686 outside NCR, may qualify for the subsidized 3-percent rate for the first five years of the loan term. Pag-IBIG said all overseas Filipino workers, regardless of income, may also qualify. Moreover, it said that under Pag-IBIG Fund's Early Bird Promo, the first 30,000 qualified borrowers may enjoy the same 3-percent rate for the first 10 years of their housing loan, allowing them to save more and benefit from affordable and predictable monthly amortizations for a longer period. Acosta said the loan may be used to purchase socialized house-and-lot and condominium units priced at up to P950,000 and P1.8 million, respectively. It also provides up to P100,000 in additional financing for home improvements, such as utility connections and home fixtures, and carries a 100-percent loan-to-value ratio, meaning no cash equity is required. At these terms, Acosta explained that monthly amortization is about P4,005 for a house-and-lot unit worth up to P950,000 and about P7,589 for a condominium unit worth up to P1.8 million, amounts that are lower than the cost of monthly rent. In addition, she said that eligible borrowers may further benefit from additional subsidy provided by the national government, which may bring down the annual interest rate to as low as 1 percent and make monthly payments even lower. The agency said that beyond keeping loan rates low, Pag-IBIG is also making it easier and less costly for members to look for a home through regional housing fairs that bring together quality housing units available for sale, partner developers, and Pag-IBIG Fund financing support in one venue. Pag-IBIG has launched its series of regional housing fairs through the Central Luzon Housing Fair earlier this year while similar fairs would take place in South Luzon, the Visayas, Mindanao, and Metro Manila in the coming weeks, Acosta said. The Central Luzon fair gathered over 40 developers, financing institutions, and

government agencies in one venue and provided on-site assistance for loan applications, she said. “Through these regional housing fairs, we are making it easier and less costly for members to find a home by bringing quality housing units available for sale, partner developers, and Pag-IBIG Fund financing together in one place,” Acosta said.

- [Cavitex-C5 segment to cut travel time](#) (2026-03-30 16:07)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday led the opening of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway-C5 Southlink Segment, a two-kilometer stretch connecting the cities of Parañaque and Taguig that will cut travel time between them from 1.5 hours to just 15 minutes. “And about 36,000 vehicles will pass through here, so, this is a big deal,” Marcos said in Filipino following the inspection. “It’s no small feat to reduce your commute from an hour and a half to 15 minutes. That’s a huge savings,” the president said, adding that the shorter drive would also enable motorists to save on gas. Marcos was accompanied by Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Vince Dizon and Department of Transportation (DOTr) Acting Secretary Giovanni Lopez, other government officials, and representatives of Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC). A P3.3-billion deal between Cavitex Infrastructure Corp. and DM Consunji Inc., the six-lane expressway is the last to be completed of the 7.7-kilometer infrastructure divided into four segments — Segments 3A-1 (C5 to Merville), 3A-2 (Merville to E. Rodriguez) and 2 (Cavitex to Sucat Interchange) opened in July 2019, August 2022 and June 2024, respectively. From March 30 to April 30, the toll for Segment 3B will be waived to accommodate those traveling for the Holy Week and to lower travelers’ expenses while on the road, the president said. Dizon said motorists and commuters can expect to save more on fuel, following the opening of the Cavitex-C5 Expressway Segment 3B. “What used to be a frustrating, stop-and-go journey from Taguig to Parañaque — often stretching up to two hours in heavy traffic — can now be done in just 15 minutes. That’s not just a small improvement — that’s a massive upgrade to everyday life for around 36,000 motorists and commuters who take this route daily,” added Dizon. The DPWH chief said the opening comes at a crucial time when fuel prices are in their all-time high, biting into people’s budgets. “The directive from the president — along with Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista — was clear: accelerate the opening of as many new roads as possible in the lead-up to Holy Week. With fuel prices remaining high, the government aims to ease the burden on everyday Filipinos by improving road infrastructure,” he said. Dizon said the impact of the new expressway segment goes beyond just shorter trips because it will help decongest major roads south of Metro Manila, cut fuel consumption significantly, reduce daily commuter stress and improve mobility for business and logistics. “For thousands of Filipinos, this isn’t just another road opening — it’s a real, everyday win. Fewer hours wasted. Less money spent. More time for what actually matters,” Dizon said. Apart from improving transportation efficiency and reducing costs, Segment 3B is also expected to enhance access for motorists from the South, such as Cavite, to metropolitan areas, thereby boosting economic development in Southern Metro Manila and Cavite by providing better access to industrial, commercial, and residential areas. More mobility efforts are set to be inaugurated, including the opening of the Central Luzon Link Expressway,

connecting Tarlac City to Cabanatuan City on Tuesday, March 31.

- [Holy Tuesday emphasizes Christ's call against hypocrisy](#) (2026-03-30 16:06)

HOLY Tuesday highlights the contrast between hypocritical leadership and genuine faith. According to Matthew 23:13-36, the day marks the moment Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees by delivering seven severe warnings against their corrupt leadership. This reminds believers of Jesus' unwavering commitment to His mission — even in the face of betrayal. In his homily, Fr. Rolly Dela Cruz of the Manila Cathedral echoed the Gospel, which says that hypocrisy persists even among members of the Church, challenging them to reflect on their spiritual lives, especially during Holy Week. “Let us not be comfortable with being physically inside, and yet we are distant from the Lord,” he said. Dela Cruz said this reality challenges believers to go beyond mere participation in religious activities and instead cultivate sincerity in their faith, especially as Christians commemorate the passion and death of Jesus Christ. “This holy week, most of us are engaging with spiritual exercises. Going to church, attending a procession, and the Stations of the Cross. But sometimes, we are criticized because of our actions, saying ‘we are churchgoers but have a bad attitude’ ; that is our challenge,” he told the faithful in Filipino. He said that as Filipinos commemorate the Holy Week, the observation serves as a crucial time for self-examination, calling on the faithful to confront inconsistencies between their actions and beliefs.

- [Graft complaint filed vs Bersamin, Olaivar](#) (2026-03-30 16:05)

CONCERNED citizens filed a graft complaint at the Office of the Ombudsman on Monday against former undersecretary Adrian Bersamin of the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office and former Education undersecretary Trygve Olaivar in connection with what the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said appeared to be a “commitment-insertion-kickback” scheme. The complainants — which included David San Juan, initiator of the Kilusang Bayan Kontra Kurakot, and Bayan Chairman Teodoro Casiño — cited, among others, budget deliberations of the Senate and affidavits of former Public Works undersecretary Roberto Bernardo. The complainants accused Bersamin and Olaivar of “corrupt practices” prohibited by the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service, and “violation of standards of personal conduct in the discharge and execution of official duties”. The complainants said they watched a video posted late last year by Zaldy Co, a former chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, who in November 2025 alleged that there had been an order from President Marcos to insert P100 billion in the 2025 General Appropriations Act. The Palace said Co's accusations were baseless. Bersamin resigned in the same month. Co resigned in September 2025 as a member of the House of Representatives after he was embroiled in a massive flood control bribery scandal. Co denied wrongdoing however, and said he was resigning because of “the real, direct, grave and imminent threat to the lives of my family members and me, and the evident denial of my right to due process of law.” Olaivar, who resigned in November 2025, also denied Bernardo's allegations. Based on the complaint, Bernardo had alleged in an affidavit that Olaivar in 2024

called him for a meeting to discuss unprogrammed appropriations. Bernardo said that in the meeting, Olaivar asked him to submit a list of projects. According to the affidavit, Bernardo later submitted a list to Olaivar. “Usec. Olaivar told me that the commitment is 15 percent” , he said.

- [PNP boosts police visibility in transport hubs](#) (2026-03-30 16:04)

POLICE presence in key transportation hubs in Metro Manila and tourism hotspots across the country has been intensified as more travelers trooped to bus terminals and sea ports for the Holy Week, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said on Monday. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said in a statement the increased police presence is part of the heightened alert status which took effect on March 29. Around 2.4 million travelers are expected at sea ports across the country, while airport authorities see around 1.3 million passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) for the entire Holy Week break. Nartatez said that while security is tight, the goal is to keep the flow of people moving. “Travelers can expect tight but efficient security screening. Our kababayan can also expect Police Assistance Desks (PADs) for quick and reliable response to all the requests for assistance of the travelers,” he said. The PNP is also bracing for the heavy volume of private vehicles on expressways and national highways. Nartatez reminded the public that safety starts with individual responsibility, and urged motorists to double-check their vehicles before heading out for a long drive. The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), meanwhile, expects a 7 to 10 percent increase in passenger traffic this Holy Week, projecting 550,000 travelers across its operated airports compared to 505,511 passengers during the same period in 2025. The agency has directed all area and airport managers to implement heightened operational readiness, including increased personnel deployment, stricter security protocols, and continuous passenger monitoring to ensure safe and efficient airport operations nationwide. Help desks will be set up at major airports to assist passengers to ensure a seamless travel experience. “We want to assure the public that all CAAP-operated airports are fully prepared to handle the surge in passenger volume, with measures in place to ensure safe, smooth, and convenient travel for all,” said CAAP Director General Raul del Rosario. He said airports will be on heightened alert from March 28 until April 5. It reminded the traveling public to arrive at the airport at least two to three hours before their scheduled departure, check real-time flight updates with airlines, and see to it that all travel documents are prepared in advance. The aviation regulator operates 42 airports. Four major gateways — NAIA, Mactan-Cebu, Clark, and Subic — are managed by separate authorities, though CAAP still maintains regulatory and air traffic oversight.

- [Over P651 million in fuel subsidy released – LTFRB](#) (2026-03-30 16:03)

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has released more than P651 million in fuel subsidies to public transport operators and drivers nationwide, saying the distribution is progressing as planned. In a statement on March 30, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the agency coordinated with regional offices and other government agencies to speed up the validation and payout process while ensuring a smooth rollout. Mendoza

acknowledged minor challenges encountered during the initial distribution in Metro Manila, but said these have since been addressed and used to improve subsequent payouts in the provinces. “We encountered several minor challenges, especially in Metro Manila, but these became lessons that helped improve the distribution in other areas,” he said. “The goal remains: a fast and efficient release of the fuel subsidy.” The subsidy program was implemented following the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to mitigate the impact of rising global oil prices amid tensions in the Middle East. The Department of Transportation earlier allocated P2.4 billion for the program, with the LTFRB tasked to facilitate its rollout even before fuel price pressures significantly affect the domestic market. Data from the LTFRB showed that as of March 17, P651,185,000 had been distributed. Metro Manila received the largest share at P181.278 million, followed by Calabarzon with P98.215 million and Central Luzon with P73.416 million. The fuel subsidy covers drivers and operators of traditional and modern jeepneys; UV Express units; buses, including point-to-point services; transport network vehicle service (TNVS) partners; taxis; tricycles; and delivery services. Mendoza said the agency would continue to fast-track the remaining distribution while exploring additional forms of assistance for the transport sector. “The task is not yet done. There is still much to be done, but we assure the public that the government is working together to deliver this assistance as quickly as possible,” he said. The LTFRB earlier also urged the operators of public utility vehicle terminals to reduce rental fees by at least 50 percent, while toll discounts for public transport units have likewise been implemented.

- [PAL returns to Saipan after nine years](#) (2026-03-30 16:02)

FLAG carrier Philippine Airlines has returned to Saipan after nearly nine years, restoring a direct air link between Manila and the CNMI and signaling renewed confidence in the market. The relaunch comes as the airline pushes ahead despite the declaration of an energy emergency in the Philippines and the recent suspension of its Cebu-Guam route, with officials stressing that the Manila-Saipan service remains a priority. At a ribbon-cutting ceremony held Monday, March 30, at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport, PAL executives and CNMI leaders underscored both the symbolic and economic importance of the route’s return. PAL Express Vice President for Ground Operations Matthew Tamaray said the airline is banking on the expansion of the CNMI’s Economic Vitality and Security Travel Authorization Program (EVS-TAP) to drive growth, particularly among Filipino travelers. “We had an engaging discussion with our partners here on Saipan about extending CNMI Economic Vitality and Security Travel Authorization Program for Filipinos,” Tamaray said, noting that travelers from the Philippines are increasingly opting for destinations with visa-free or streamlined entry. “Filipino travelers are expanding their reach... to Asean, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, where visa processing is streamlined.” He described the restored service as more than a commercial move. “This isn’t just a new entry in our flight schedule; it is a restoration of a vital lifeline between our two nations,” Tamaray said, adding that PAL aims to “make the wide Pacific feel a little smaller and our nations a little closer” while supporting tourism, cargo movement, and access to health care in Manila. CNMI Gov. David Apatang welcomed the airline’s return,

calling it crucial to the CNMI's economic recovery. "Philippine Airlines has been here before, and we want to welcome Philippine Airlines back to the Commonwealth," Apatang said. "We need your help... to help with our economy here also in the Commonwealth." CNMI delegate Kimberlyn King-Hinds linked the route to broader efforts to ease federal constraints on air service. "In a nutshell, more planes landing means more customers," she said. "That is the work that we're doing in Washington, D.C., to be able to remove some of these structural barriers... that is limiting our ability to expand markets." She added that the connection goes beyond tourism. "The Philippines is not just customers. It represents connecting families, people who call the CNMI home, who also call the Philippines home." Commonwealth Ports Authority Executive Director Esther Ada said the restored flights open new opportunities for the islands. "Today marks more than the return of an airline. It represents new opportunities for the CNMI," Ada said. "The restored service brings greater access to the Philippines and stronger connections to the world, making it easier for families to reunite, cultures to stay connected, and communities to grow stronger." Philippine Consulate General in Agana consul Joaquin Ricardo Aragon placed the development in a broader diplomatic context. "Philippine Airlines had been here before... but now, it's back," Aragon said, noting that 2026 marks the airline's 85th anniversary and the 80th anniversary of Philippines-US diplomatic relations. "We are living in somewhat challenging times now... and this is something to look forward to. It's not all doom and gloom." He said the direct service would especially benefit the Filipino community in the CNMI. "They now have a direct flight to get back home — and to come back also." Passengers on the inaugural flight cited convenience as a key advantage. Raniel Santos, a teacher, said the route eliminates stopovers. "No need to stop over at Guam anymore... it's a lot faster, a lot more convenient... it's a big blessing." Norlyn Cabrera said the direct connection makes travel "easier, and the flight is shorter," while Sildrey Veloria noted he can now visit family "more quickly than stop over to Korea or Guam." For Jershwin Angeles of the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, the timing allowed his team to train in the Philippines. "We took this opportunity... to travel to the Philippines," he said, adding that about 40 players will spend 10 days in training camp. PAL's inaugural PR2571 flight from Manila was greeted with a traditional water cannon salute, marking the airline's official return to Saipan after years of absence. Despite external pressures, PAL Regional Head for Japan, Korea and Oceania Bryan Sansolis said the airline is proceeding with the route launch, even as energy constraints in the Philippines have forced adjustments elsewhere in its network. "We're really keen on supporting the Saipan route... it will not affect the new routes," Sansolis said during a Zoom call with media members prior to Monday's flight. The airline will operate twice weekly — Monday and Thursday — using an Airbus A321-CEO configured with 12 business class and 187 economy seats.

- [National security expert urges fact-based discourse amid economic pressures](#) (2026-03-30 16:01)

AMID rising prices and public frustration, a national security expert and civic leader urged a measured, fact-based discourse, cautioning against sweeping claims that could mislead the

public. In an interview with The Manila Times, Jose Antonio Goitia acknowledged that Filipinos are feeling the strain of higher fuel costs and inflation but stressed that complex problems require nuanced understanding. “People are under pressure, and it becomes easier to accept extreme conclusions. But governance must still be judged on facts, not feelings,” he said. Goitia noted that rising fuel prices follow a global trend driven by supply disruptions and geopolitical tensions beyond any single country’s control. “We cannot control global prices. What we can control is how we respond,” he said, citing mitigation measures such as fuel subsidies and targeted assistance for transport workers, farmers and fisherfolk. While acknowledging concerns about the adequacy of these measures, Goitia cautioned against claims that no action has been taken. He also stressed that corruption, though critical, should not be used to explain all economic challenges. “Inflation is driven by multiple factors; reducing every issue to one cause stops us from understanding the real problem,” he said. Goitia emphasized the need for constructive criticism focused on solutions rather than blame. “It is easy to say everything is wrong. It is harder to say what should be done next,” he said. Under the administration of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., he said the government has taken a “measured” approach, balancing targeted support with fiscal discipline amid global challenges. “A country moves forward not when it shouts the loudest, but when it understands the clearest,” Goitia said.

- [Graft complaint filed vs Bersamin, Olaivar](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

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Bernardo later submitted a list to Olaivar. "Usec. Olaivar told me that the commitment is 15 percent," he said.

- [Petron secures 2.5M barrels of Russian crude oil](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Philippines' sole oil refinery has secured nearly 2.5 million barrels of Russian crude out of "extreme necessity," a stock exchange filing revealed Monday, as the country seeks to replenish fast-dwindling fuel reserves. The Philippines has seen the price of fuel hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. most recently saying stocks could last until June 30. Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported last week that a tanker filled with Russian crude oil had arrived at the harbor servicing refinery operator Petron Corp., a purchase unthinkable before longtime treaty ally the United States eased sanctions tied to Moscow's war in Ukraine. In a report to the Philippine stock exchange released Monday, Petron said it had agreed to purchase Russian crude after seeing at least 4 million barrels in shipments canceled since the start of the Middle East war. "The purchases were undertaken strictly out of extreme necessity as an extraordinary emergency measure in response to unprecedented geopolitical and supply-chain disruptions and only after exhausting all commercially and operationally viable alternatives," the report reads. "A refinery shutdown for failure to secure crude would lead to serious nationwide fuel shortages and sharp price spikes," said the company, whose refinery accounts for about 30 percent of the country's fuel needs. Since the war began, the cost of diesel and gasoline has skyrocketed, driving protests by groups representing the country's jeepney drivers and others. Prices were set to tick up again on Tuesday. The United States earlier this month eased some restrictions on sales of Russian crude, allowing countries to purchase oil that was already at sea until April 11. The Philippines' Department of Energy last week announced the arrival of 142,000 barrels of government-procured diesel, part of its target of "up to 2 million barrels of additional supply for the country." Energy Secretary Sharon Garin said that shipment had come from Japan. Petron on Monday said that it may continue to purchase Russian oil to augment the national fuel supply if the war in the Middle East persists. "We would like to disclose that if the current crisis persists and alternative crude sources remain unavailable or insufficient, we may again be compelled to consider purchases of Russian crude oil to augment the national fuel and directly mitigate the inimical consequences resulting from the absence of a stable and reliable source of crude," Petron said. "Any initiative taken by the corporation shall be made in close coordination with the Philippine government and would be guided by the overriding objective of ensuring energy security for the country," it added. Petron emphasized, however, that the procurement of Russian crude oil is not part of its business-as-usual strategy, and that the purchase was made strictly as an extreme necessity due to the war in the Middle East.

- [CFO eyes training course on marriage migrants](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) has proposed the integration of marriage migrants and cross-border families in an academic training course that deals with the impacts of

international migration. The CFO said it made the recommendation to highlight the government's push for a deeper understanding of global migration. The proposal was made on Wednesday during the curriculum review for the 2026 Professional Course on Global Migration (PCGM), organized by the University of the Philippines-Cifal. The commission said that to craft effective diaspora programs, the CFO requires its key personnel to have a mastery of modern migration governance, which is why its participation in the PCGM "is vital." The CFO said that its push to include marriage migrants in the curriculum is aligned with its "frontline role in the Philippine government's campaign against human trafficking." It noted that under Secretary Dante Ang II, the CFO "is undergoing a strategic pivot toward active diaspora engagement for national development." The commission "is shifting from viewing migration merely through the lens of labor to viewing overseas Filipinos as vital partners in nation-building, philanthropy, and economic investment," it added. "Cross-border marriages and mail-order spouse schemes have historically been exploited by traffickers to bypass traditional labor regulations," the CFO said in a statement on Monday. "Because marriage migrants fall under the CFO's direct jurisdiction, the commission acts as a critical safety net," it added. Through mandatory guidance and counseling services, the CFO screens and prepares spouses of foreign nationals, equipping them with legal knowledge to prevent domestic violence, exploitation and modern-day slavery. Now on its eighth run, the PCGM will take place from August to November 2026 for mid- to senior-level migration practitioners. The course links migration governance to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

- [SC drops Harry Roque's petition against House panel](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Supreme Court has dismissed the petition of former presidential spokesman Harry Roque seeking to prevent the House of Representatives' quad committee (quadcomm) from arresting him or compelling him to attend hearings and submit documents in connection with its investigation into Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGOs). In a decision penned by Associate Justice Samuel Gaerlan, the court en banc ruled that Roque's petition for certiorari and prohibition had become moot after the quadcomm lifted the contempt order against him and the 19th Congress adjourned on June 11, 2025. The quadcomm, convened in 2024, is a composite panel made up of the Committees on Dangerous Drugs; Public Order and Safety; Human Rights; and Public Accounts that investigated alleged illegal activities linked to POGOs. Roque was invited to appear as a resource person at the committee's first hearing. He did not attend, citing a scheduling mix-up. He appeared at the second hearing, where he was questioned about his alleged ties to POGOs and was directed to bring specific documents to the next session. Roque defied the order, and filed instead a motion to quash the quadcomm subpoena. He argued that producing the documents would violate his rights to privacy and protection against self-incrimination. The quadcomm denied his motion and issued an order requiring him to explain why he should not be held in contempt. Roque cited medical reasons for failing to attend subsequent hearings. The committee issued a subpoena compelling his appearance and a detention order, instructing the House sergeant-at-arms to arrest him if

necessary. Roque raised the matter to the Supreme Court, and also sought the writ of amparo, claiming that the committee's orders threatened his rights to life, liberty, and security. On Oct. 1, 2024, the court denied his request for amparo, ruling that the remedy is reserved for cases involving extralegal killings, enforced disappearances, or similar threats — none of which applied to a congressional contempt case. The panel lifted the contempt order on June 9, 2025, and submitted its final committee report, which included a proposed bill banning POGOs, the following day. The 19th Congress adjourned on June 11, 2025. In dismissing Roque's petition, the high court emphasized that a case becomes moot when a ruling can no longer provide practical relief. A legislative inquiry ends either upon submission of the committee's final report or adjournment of Congress, at which point any existing contempt order becomes ineffective. With the contempt order lifted, the final report submitted, and Congress adjourned, the Court ruled it could no longer grant Roque any effective relief.

- [Provincial buses allowed on EDSA during Holy Week](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will temporarily allow provincial buses to use EDSA during Holy Week as part of traffic measures for the expected surge of passengers leaving Metro Manila. The agency said the arrangement will run from 9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, until 6 a.m. on Monday, April 6. Buses coming from North Luzon may pass through EDSA up to their terminals in Cubao, Quezon City. Buses from South Luzon will only be allowed up to the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITx) and Pasay City. The MMDA said the temporary setup was intended to help buses complete trips more efficiently during the Holy Week exodus. The agency has already suspended the number coding scheme and assigned personnel in key roads and transport hubs in the metropolis to manage the higher traffic volume.

- [Carpooling rules tweaked to avoid competing with PUVs](#) (2026-03-30 16:00)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said on Monday the proposed carpooling program will be restricted so it will not take passengers away from franchised public utility vehicles. Speaking at a press briefing at MMDA's head office in Pasig City, MMDA Chairman Don Artes said the government was shaping the rules to ensure carpooling remains a limited, point-to-point arrangement and does not operate like regular public transport. Artes said the proposed setup would ban roadside pickup and drop-off, and only allow fixed pickup and drop-off points. He said the government also wants to limit carpooling vehicles to two trips a day — one in the morning and one in the afternoon or evening — so they would not function like jeepneys, buses or UV Express units. "Again, it should not function like our regular transport services because we also do not want it to take passengers away from the legitimate operators with franchises that are operating, such as jeepneys, buses, and our UV Express," Artes said. The program would be open to the public, including individual car owners, as well as companies that want to set up shuttle services for their workers. He said even nearby offices in the same building or area may later be allowed to share shuttle arrangements. He said the fare structure would also be regulated so participants would not overcharge commuters. Transport

authorities can set parameters to keep contributions close to regular transport costs while still allowing drivers to recover fuel, maintenance and possible parking expenses. Artes urged participants not to abuse the system by treating it as a profit-driven business. He said routes would have to be declared in the application and reflected in the special permit to be issued by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). Artes said the government was considering issuing QR codes that would indicate the restrictions attached to each approved carpool unit. Artes said the LTFRB was expected to issue the guidelines after Holy Week, with the government aiming to launch the program as early as the following week.

- [Bam Aquino wants petroleum products under government price control](#) (2026-03-30 15:19)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Bam Aquino filed Senate Bill (SB) 2011 to classify gasoline, diesel, and other petroleum products as basic necessities, placing them under the government's price control function. In a statement on Monday, the senator said the measure aims to address the "worsening oil crisis burdening many Filipino families." "Across the country, workers, small business owners, farmers, and ordinary households are struggling to make ends meet," Aquino said. The bill seeks to "address a gap" in Republic Act 7581 or the Price Act by including petroleum products among the basic necessities that may be subjected to a price ceiling during periods of national emergency. "Currently, only liquefied petroleum gas and kerosene are considered basic necessities, while gasoline, diesel, and other petroleum products are not covered by price control mechanisms," Aquino said. "The Philippines is in the midst of a fuel price crisis, and Filipino families are feeling the strain. Rising diesel and gasoline prices have pushed up transportation costs, food prices, and the cost of basic goods," he said. The bill also extends the allowable period for price control on these products from 15 days to thirty 30 days, ensuring that government interventions remain effective amid sustained price increases. "This proposal complements broader efforts to deliver targeted assistance, support workers and small businesses, and ensure the continuity of essential services during this period of uncertainty," Aquino added.

- [Win Gatchalian wants to limit Filipino youth's social media use](#) (2026-03-30 13:58)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Win Gatchalian sought to limit Filipino youth's access to digital platforms, for their protection, following Indonesia's enforcement of a social media ban for minors under 16. "Let us not wait for the problem to worsen before we act," Gatchalian said in a statement in Filipino. He cited the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment which found that every one-hour increase in 15-year old Filipino learners' use of digital devices for leisure resulted in a four-point decrease in math scores. In 2024, Australia became the first country in the world to ban minors under 16 on social media. The ban took full effect in December 2025. The senator on Monday said that Indonesia is the first country in Southeast Asia to enforce a social media ban for minors. Under its regulation, minors below 16 will be prohibited from creating accounts on platforms deemed 'high-risk', including Instagram, Tiktok, Facebook, YouTube, X, and Roblox, among others. The Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center earlier urged telecommunication firms to prepare for a

possible nationwide Roblox block to protect children from online exploitation and harmful content. Gatchalian also cited a Los Angeles jury finding YouTube and Meta liable for childhood social media addiction. Sen. Risa Hontiveros earlier filed Reso 357 directing the Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality to conduct an investigation on Roblox and other online gaming platforms. Hontiveros wants to establish a mandatory age verification protocols and child safety standards to prevent online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, grooming, violent radicalization and other emerging digital threats consistent with international best practices and child safety laws.

- [PCUP, PhilFIDA partner to engage Metro Manila urban poor in ‘abaca’ production](#) (2026-03-30 13:45)

MANILA, Philippines – The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) has partnered with the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) to expand livelihood opportunities for urban poor communities. PCUP Commissioner Reynaldo Galupo described his recent meeting with PhilFIDA Executive Director Arnold Atienza at the agency’s central office in Quezon City as productive, noting that both sides explored joint programs aimed at benefiting urban poor groups, particularly those in remote areas of Metro Manila. In a message to The Manila Times on Monday via Viber, Galupo said discussions focused on how the two agencies could collaborate on livelihood initiatives linked to fiber production. The PCUP official emphasized the importance of creating more income opportunities for the urban poor, especially through inter-agency partnerships. “Partnerships like this with PhilFIDA can help reach more families and equip them with practical, hands-on skills,” he said. Atienza welcomed the proposal and highlighted several of PhilFIDA’s ongoing programs, including training on fibers such as abaca, cotton, silk, pineapple, and coconut. He also cited current initiatives such as abaca discussions (talakayan) and bag-making projects being conducted in provinces like Catanduanes. PhilFIDA likewise expressed openness to involving PCUP in its training programs, which could allow selected beneficiaries from urban poor communities to participate. Both agencies agreed to move forward with drafting and signing a memorandum of agreement to formalize the partnership. According to Galupo, the collaboration is also expected to involve coordination with local government units to support the program’s rollout on the ground.

- [83,000 passengers avail of Manila’s free jeepney rides on first day](#) (2026-03-30 13:06)

MANILA, Philippines — Around 83,000 passengers benefited from the free jeepney rides launched by the Manila City government on its first day of operations. In a statement released Monday, the city government reported that a total of 82,958 passengers were served by 1,027 participating jeepneys under the initiative. Manila Mayor Isko Moreno earlier said the program aims to ease the impact of rising fuel costs on commuters. Under the scheme, the city government will rent more than 1,000 active jeepneys, with drivers earning about P3,000 per day. The initiative will run for five days, starting Monday, March 30 and 31, before pausing for Holy Week. It will resume from Monday to Wednesday the following week, with a possible extension depending on available funds. Holy Week. It will then resume on Monday to

Wednesday of the following week, with a possible extension depending on available funds.

- [Roads in Manila to be closed for Good Friday procession](#) (2026-03-30 12:35)

MANILA, Philippines—The Manila Police District (MPD) on Monday said roads will be closed on Good Friday for the procession of the Nazarene. In a Facebook post, the MPD said a rerouting scheme will be implemented as roads will be closed starting at 7 p.m. on April 2. The 3.8-kilometer route of the procession will begin and end at Plaza Miranda and will pass through several key streets, including Villalobos, Carlos Palanca, Quezon Boulevard, Arlegui, Legarda, Hidalgo, and Bilibid Viejo, before returning to Quiapo Church. Among the major roads affected are northbound and southbound lanes of Quezon Boulevard from A. Mendoza/Fugoso to Quezon Bridge, parts of España Boulevard, C.M. Recto Avenue service roads, Legarda Street, and several streets in Quiapo and San Miguel districts. Other roads to be closed include Arlegui, San Rafael, Gonzalo Puyat, Paterno, Evangelista, and Carriedo. The MPD urged motorists to take alternate routes during the procession. Vehicles from A. Mendoza heading to Quezon Boulevard should turn right to Fugoso Street and then left to Tomas Mapua Street. Those coming from Quezon City using España Boulevard may turn right to P. Campa or use Nicanor Reyes (Morayta) to access C.M. Recto Avenue. Meanwhile, vehicles from P. Burgos Avenue heading to Quezon Bridge should take Jones or McArthur bridges. Those from Ayala Bridge bound for Carlos Palanca Street may proceed to P. Casal or take San Marcelino Street to UN Avenue. Motorists from Sta. Mesa heading to Legarda should divert to C.M. Recto Avenue.

- [Lawyers to file impeachment complaint vs Comelec chief, 6 commissioners](#) (2026-03-30 10:27)

MANILA, Philippines — A group of lawyers on Monday said they will file an impeachment complaint before the House of Representatives against Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman George Erwin Garcia and six commissioners, citing alleged violations of election laws and betrayal of public trust. Eldrige Marvin Aceron, founding partner of Aceron & Attorneys and head of the Aceron Public Interest and Legal Association, and Sikini Labastilla of Project Damaskus Lawyers said the complaint accused Comelec officials of culpable violation of Republic Act 8436 or the Automated Election System Law, as well as other high crimes. The complaint stemmed from what the lawyers described as a “pattern of institutional misconduct” during the 2022 and 2025 elections. Aceron said one of the key allegations involved the Comelec’s use of software version 3.5.0 in around 110,000 automated counting machines during the May 12, 2025 elections, which he claimed was not the same version subjected to the legally required source code review. Garcia had earlier acknowledged the use of the software version. The complaint also questioned the alleged use of an “unauthorized intermediary server,” referred to as “Data Center 3,” through which election results were reportedly transmitted before reaching accredited transparency servers. The complainants said this setup led to delays in the release of results to watchdog groups, including the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting and the National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections. Garcia was also accused of concealing the use of a single private IP address for

thousands of vote-counting machine modems. The complainants said transmission logs that could have verified early vote data were no longer available after they were not preserved. They also pointed to a Supreme Court ruling in August 2024 that found the Comelec en banc liable for “official inaction” in relation to its own procedures. The fourth charge accused the poll body of selectively enforcing campaign finance laws, allegedly favoring candidates allied with the administration despite findings of non-compliance by its own Political Finance and Affairs Department. Aseron said the timing of the filing was influenced by the approaching end of the terms of two commissioners in 2027 and the need to establish accountability ahead of the 2028 national elections. “Garcia will supervise the 2028 elections with the same undisclosed transmission architecture, the same pattern of evidence concealment, and the same selective enforcement record that are the subject of this complaint. That cannot happen without a formal legal record demanding accountability,” he said. Garcia however dismissed the complaint, saying it is about old issues that the poll body had repeatedly answered. “The credibility of the 2022 and 2025 elections was confirmed by random manual audit, revision of ballots, by citizens’ arms and international observers,” Garcia said. The complainants said the case would be transmitted to members of the House of Representatives and made available to the public and media. They added that they are seeking endorsement from at least one lawmaker, as required under the Constitution for impeachment complaints to proceed.

- [DOTr warns bus firms: Unauthorized fare hikes could lead to franchise suspension](#) (2026-03-30 05:52)

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Transportation on Monday warned bus companies that raised fares that they could face show cause orders and possible license suspension. Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez said authorities were verifying reports that some operators at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) implemented fare increases without government approval. “We will be able to take action by issuing citations to bus operators and public transport vehicles that have increased fares without authorization,” Lopez said in an interview. He stressed that any fare adjustment without clearance from the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board could lead to the revocation or suspension of a company’s franchise. The warning followed an earlier directive by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. suspending a planned fare hike for public utility vehicles that was supposed to take effect on March 19.

- [P651M in fuel aid released to transport sector — LTFRB](#) (2026-03-30 05:16)

MANILA, Philippines—The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said that it has released more than P651 million in fuel subsidies to public transport operators and drivers nationwide. In a statement issued Monday, March 30, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the agency coordinated with regional offices and other government agencies to speed up the validation and payout process. Mendoza said minor problems were encountered during the initial distribution in Metro Manila, but these have since been addressed to improve subsequent payouts in the provinces. “We encountered several minor challenges, especially in Metro

Manila, but these became lessons that helped improve the distribution in other areas,” he said. “The goal remains: a fast and efficient release of the fuel subsidy.” The subsidy program was implemented following the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to mitigate the impact of rising global oil prices amid tensions in the Middle East. The Department of Transportation allocated P2.4 billion for the program, with the LTFRB tasked to facilitate its rollout. Data from the LTFRB showed that as of March 17, P651,185,000 had been distributed. Metro Manila received the largest share at P181.278 million, followed by Calabarzon with P98.215 million and Central Luzon, P73.416 million. The fuel subsidy covers drivers and operators of traditional and modern jeepneys, UV Express units, buses including point-to-point services, transport network vehicle service (TNVS) partners, taxis, tricycles, and delivery services. Mendoza said the agency would continue to fast-track the remaining distribution while exploring additional forms of assistance for the transport sector. “The task is not yet done. There is still much to be done, but we assure the public that the government is working together to deliver this assistance as quickly as possible,” he said.

- [Trump says Russia can deliver oil to Cuba](#) (2026-03-30 04:06)

HAVANA, Cuba — US President Donald Trump said Sunday that Moscow could send oil to Cuba despite Washington's de facto fuel blockade, as a Russian tanker was expected to deliver some much-needed crude to the crisis-hit island. While the shipment would give the country some relief, Trump renewed his threats against the communist government, predicting that it would fail "within a short period of time." The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is carrying 730,000 barrels of crude, was off northeast Cuba on Sunday evening and is expected to dock in the western port of Matanzas by Tuesday, according to shipping tracker MarineTraffic. It would be the first shipment of oil to the island since January, bringing some temporary relief to the country of 9.6 million people that has endured a deepening energy and economic crisis. "If a country wants to send some oil into Cuba right now, I have no problem with that, whether it's Russia or not," Trump told reporters as he flew back to Washington from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. "Cuba's finished, they have a bad regime, they have very bad and corrupt leadership, and whether or not they get a boat of oil it's not going to matter," Trump said. "I'd prefer letting it in, whether it's Russia or anybody else, because the people need heat and cooling and all of the other things that you need," he added. Cuba lost its main regional ally and oil supplier in January when US forces captured Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro. Trump subsequently threatened to impose tariffs on any country sending oil to Cuba and has mused about "taking" the island. "Within a short period of time, it's going to fail, and we will be there to help it out," he said Sunday. "We'll be there to help our great Cuban Americans out who were thrown out of Cuba, in many cases, their family members were mutilated and killed by (Fidel) Castro...Cuba's going to be next." Daily outages After Washington launched the oil blockade, President Miguel Diaz-Canel imposed emergency measures to conserve fuel, including strict rationing of gasoline. He warned this month that "any external aggressor will encounter an unbreakable resistance." Fuel prices have soared, public transport has dwindled and some airlines have suspended flights to Cuba, hitting the country's fragile economy. Cubans have endured regular

outages as its aging power plants struggle to meet demand, with seven nationwide blackouts since 2024, including two this month, sparking rare protests. A humanitarian aid convoy brought more than 50 tonnes of medicine, food, solar panels and other goods to Cuba by air and sea in recent days. The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is under US sanctions, left the Russian port of Primorsk on March 8. It was escorted by a Russian navy ship across the English Channel, but the two vessels parted ways when the tanker entered the Atlantic Ocean, according to the British Royal Navy. The New York Times, citing an unnamed US official briefed on the matter, said the US Coast Guard was allowing the tanker to reach Cuba. The US Coast Guard did not reply to an AFP request for comment. Another ship that was reportedly carrying Russian diesel to Cuba, the Hong Kong-flagged Sea Horse, rerouted to Venezuela this week. Diesel an 'urgent need' Once the Anatoly Kolodkin's crude arrives in Cuba, it would take about 15-20 days to process the oil and another 5-10 days to deliver its refined products, according to Jorge Pinon, an expert on Cuba's energy sector at the University of Texas at Austin. "The urgent need today in Cuba is diesel," the former oil executive said. The Russian shipment could be converted into 250,000 barrels of diesel, enough to cover the country's demand for around 12.5 days, Pinon said. Pinon said the government would have to decide whether to use the fuel for backup power generators or for buses, tractors and trains needed to keep the economy going for two weeks. "If you are Diaz-Canel or somebody making the decision, you go, 'OK, where where do I go with that diesel?'" he said. "Do I want to generate more electricity so there are less apagones (blackouts)? Or do I want to put it in the transportation sector?"

- [Marcos leads opening of Cavite-C5 segment](#) (2026-03-30 02:19)

MANILA, Philippines—President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday led the opening of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway-C5 Southlink Segment, a two-kilometer stretch connecting the cities of Parañaque and Taguig. The President said the thoroughfare is expected to cut travel time from one and a half hours to just 15 minutes. "About 36,000 vehicles will pass through here. So, this is a big deal because it will decongest, reduce traffic on small roads," Marcos said in Filipino following the inspection. "And that's a huge thing because of the big savings in commuter time. Second, because of the turmoil in the Middle East, it's a huge savings in gasoline, in crude oil, in fuel," he added. Marcos announced that this segment of the expressway would be toll-free for the whole month of April.

- [City govt does not prepare fuel aid list, Sotto clarifies](#) (2026-03-30 02:11)

MANILA, Philippines — Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto said Monday the city government only assists national agencies in the distribution of fuel-related aid and does not decide who gets included in the list of beneficiaries. During the city's flag-raising ceremony, Sotto thanked members of the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association and other riders for their cooperation and patience as the city works with agencies handling the aid process. He said the list for tricycle groups was being prepared with the help of the Tricycle Operation and Regulatory Office, adding that the order of submission and processing would also affect who gets accommodated first. For other subsectors such as delivery riders, TNVS drivers and jeepney

operators and drivers associations, Sotto said the city government does not maintain a working list, making the process more difficult. He said the local government has been trying to coordinate with the proper agencies, including the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Sotto added that aid under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations was being extended to people affected by rising oil prices, noting that riders and drivers were among the first sectors hit and were therefore first to receive subsidy from the national government.

- [Midnight train from Georgia: A view of America from the tracks as airports struggle in the shutdown](#) (2026-03-30 00:51)

ABOARD THE CRESCENT — There's something melodic about watching the sun rise over a rural stillness broken only by the rhythms of steel wheels on tracks. Or so we tell ourselves. In this case, being aboard a train at all owed more to politics than poetry. Congress and Donald Trump were mired in their latest budget stalemate, one rooted in the Republican president's immigration crackdown and the tactics of federal forces he has sent to U.S. cities. But this impasse has upended a foundational constant of American life today: easy air travel. In Atlanta, my hometown airport, cheerfully marketed as the world's busiest, had descended into organized chaos. Unpaid federal employees called out from work, leaving a diminished security staff to screen travelers frustrated by hours-long waits in line. I wanted to get to Washington for the NCAA basketball tournament. So I eliminated the risk of a missed flight and booked the train overnight and into game day across a 650-mile route. In this fraught moment in U.S. politics, I slowed down and thought about things we take for granted. Who ever ponders the conveniences of that 20th-century innovation, the airplane, that makes 21st-century hustle possible? We book and board. An unconscious, first-world flex of modernity. It's even rarer to grapple with the inconvenience. My decision had taken me further back, to the 19th century and another defining innovation: the long-distance train. A 14½-hour weekend train ride is time aplenty to appreciate how completely politics, economics, social strife and fights over identity and belonging have always affected the order of our lives, including how, when and where we move around in these United States. But Amtrak's Crescent also allowed me to see the expanse of our collective experience. I traversed the urban, suburban and rural breadth of East Coast America. I learned how other travelers came aboard. And in that, I found the portrait of people, past and present, who refuse to be as paralyzed as some of their elected leaders. Convenience on the railways There is little glamour late night in a crowded Amtrak station. Children are up past bedtime and tended by frazzled parents. Older adults struggle with luggage and stairs. Airports are not red-carpet affairs either, of course. But there is a certain cache to Delta's Atlanta-Washington flights. They typically take about two hours gate to gate. They often are slotted at a midpoint gate of the concourse nearest the main terminal. That is almost certainly a nod to members of Congress who use it — but who have lost some airline perks during this extended partial shutdown. In normal circumstances I can get from my front porch to Capitol Hill or downtown in as little as 4½ hours. Security lines these days could at least double my

overall air travel time. The train is still longer, and time is money, we are taught. But certainty has value, too, even if it means at 11:29 p.m. departure. And at the Amtrak station, there were no standstill lines, no Transportation Security Administration agents, no ICE agents as stand-ins. Passengers who arrived mere minutes before departure made it on board and found seats quickly — assigned in boarding order, not predetermined zones that yield jammed aisles. There's no in-seat service or satellite TV. But even coach seats, the lowest Amtrak tier, are as spacious as airline first-class — and there is Wi-Fi, so it's not the 19th century or even 20th century after all. On board, I heard one crew member joke, "I'm no TSA agent." The pathways of history. As a boy in rural Alabama, I counted train cars and wondered where they were headed. I've since read diary entries and letters from my grandmother and her sisters recounting World War II-era weekend trips to Atlanta. The South's largest city has a historical hook, too. Originally named "Terminus," Atlanta developed in the antebellum era as a critical intersection of north-south and east-west rail routes. That is what drew Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman for one of the Civil War's seminal campaigns that helped defeat the Confederacy. A century after the Civil War, Delta chose Atlanta for its headquarters rather than Birmingham, Alabama, which was the larger city as of the 1960 census. The company's decision was tied up in tax breaks for the airline, named for its crop duster origins in the Mississippi Delta region. According to some interpretations, Delta's decision was made easier because of the more overt racism of Alabama's and Birmingham's leaders as they defended Jim Crow — a code that, among other acts, allowed states to segregate the passenger trains that predated Amtrak. On this night, I heard many languages and accents, notable given the role that immigrant labor played in building the U.S. rail system and especially striking now with immigration — legal and illegal — at the forefront in Washington, my destination. I saw faces that reflected U.S. pluralism, a different mix from what my grandmother and aunts would have seen a lifetime ago. The array of voices celebrated the freedom and ease of rail travel. So did Agatha Grimes and her friends after they boarded in Greensboro, North Carolina, as part of a long weekend trip to celebrate her 62nd birthday. "I got stuck in the Atlanta airport last week," Grimes said, as her group laughed together in the dining car. "It's just nuts." Beretta Nunnally, a self-described "train veteran" who organized their trip, said, "There's no worry about parking. No checking bags. You come to the station, you get where you going, and you come home." An era for planes, trains and automobiles. Still, that is not as easy in the United States as it once was. Just as politics, economics and subsidies helped grow U.S. railroads, those factors diminished the network as auto manufacturers, oil companies, roadbuilders and, finally, airline manufacturers and airlines commanded favor from politicians and attention from consumers. Riding hours across rural areas, I noticed the junkyards where kudzu and chain-link fencing framed rows of rusted automobiles. I saw the farmland and equipment that helps feed cities and the rest of the nation. I awoke to see the night lights of office towers in Charlotte, North Carolina, and its NFL stadium. I saw vibrant county seats — and I thought of countless other towns like them that are not thriving as they sit disconnected from passenger rail and far from the Eisenhower-era interstate system that we crossed multiple times on our way. In each setting, voters — conservatives, liberals, the extremes and between — have chosen their representatives, senators and a president who now set the nation's course. When I arrived in Washington, I

paused to enjoy Union Station's grand hall and its Beaux Arts appeal, and I lamented how much splendor has been lost because so many striking U.S. terminals have been razed. I stepped outside and looked up at the Capitol dome. While I had slept, the Senate managed a bipartisan deal to fund all of the Department of Homeland Security except immigration enforcement. As I continued northward, House Republican leaders rejected it. The stalemate continued. I was a weary traveler but renewed citizen. I had a game to get to. And the train rolled on.

- [Egypt's early closing order jolts Cairo's night life as war-driven oil costs soar](#)  
(2026-03-30 00:48)

CAIRO — The Egyptian government is seeking ways to conserve oil-powered electricity during the U.S.-Israel war with Iran, enacting at least one policy that threatens Cairo's identity as a city that never sleeps. The government imposed new nationwide closing times Saturday for stores, restaurants and cafes, ordering them to shut early and interfering with their ability to operate during critical hours. "It's ruinous," said Youssef Salah, a cafe owner in Cairo. "It deprives us from our peak time." The decision is one of a series of measures the government has taken in recent weeks to mitigate the fallout of the U.S. and Israeli war against Iran, which has shaken the Middle East and the global economy. Though Egypt is not a party to the widening conflict, the most populous Arab country is one of the most impacted by the war's far-reaching repercussions, including higher oil prices and disrupted shipping routes. "We must protect people's livelihoods" The early closures will have dire repercussions on hundreds of thousands of small businesses found on almost every street, alley and lane across the country. Some of them — including many eateries, juice shops and cafés — usually operate nonstop. Salah, the café owner in Cairo's middle-class neighborhood of Sayeda Zeinab, said he was forced to cut his 35-member workforce by 40%. The 46-year-old father of three used to keep his venue open 24 hours a day, with peak hours starting in the evening till the first hours of the new day. The late-night shifts are now abolished, he said. "It's painful," Salah said as he closed his shop doors at 9 p.m. (19:00 GMT) on Saturday. Yet two days into the decision, some Egyptians danced around the government order. Some cafes closed their front doors as patrons inside went about smoking shisha or playing chess, dominos or cards. Others took to social media to criticize the early closures. "The Butterfly effect," Mahmoud Elmamlouk, editor of Cairo24, one of the biggest news outlets in Egypt, wrote on social media after cafe shops shuttered their doors Saturday evening. "The closure of Strait of Hormuz has deprived us from smoking shisha in Talbia," he wrote, referencing a working-class neighborhood in greater Cairo. Ayman Harbi, who works at a store in Downtown Cairo, called on the government to extend the opening hours at least till midnight, saying that closing at 9 p.m. is "extremely difficult" for business like his. "Our work in the summer usually starts after 8 p.m. (18:00 GMT)," he said. "Forcing me to close at 9 p.m. (19:00 GMT) makes the workday pointless." Magdy al-Deeb, a business owner, urged the government to reverse the decision to preserve jobs, especially for cafes and small businesses. "Where will all those people (workers) go," he asked of those who could lose their jobs. Smoking a shisha — the tobacco burning water pipe — in a Cairo café, he said society " must protect people's livelihoods." The decision to close businesses early has also changed to

the lifestyle for Egyptians accustomed to being able to buy virtually anything at any time, especially in big cities like Cairo and Alexandria. A nighttime tour across Cairo Saturday and Sunday revealed the city's usually vibrant streets turned eerily quiet. 'Exceptional' measures' Shops, restaurants, malls and cafes across the country have been ordered to close at 9 p.m. (19:00 GMT) for a month. The measures -- described by the government as "exceptional" — include dimming streetlights and roadside advertising. The government's district offices in the New Administrative Capital, east of Cairo, were also ordered to close by 6 p.m. (16:00 GMT). Civil servants were also asked to return working from home for one day a week in April. The government exempted tourist-attraction areas from its energy-saving measures, given that tourism is a major source of foreign currency for the cash-strapped country. The exempt areas include the Red Sea tourist resorts of Hurghada, Sharm el-Sheikh, Marsa Alam, as well as the antiquities-rich southern cities of Aswan and Luxor. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly said the measures aim to curtail oil consumption. "The alternative would be to resort again to further price increases," he warned. The government already hiked prices for fuel and cooking gas earlier this month as global energy prices soared with the virtual closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial chokepoint for about a fifth of global oil supply. Repercussions are particularly painful for Egypt. Global energy prices have skyrocketed since the start of the war on Feb. 28, when the U.S. and Israel launched massive airstrikes on Iran, which retaliated with attacks on oil and gas infrastructure across the Persian Gulf and by squeezing traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. The increases hit Egypt hard given that its population of over 108 million people consumes \$20 billion of oil products annually, including fuel used to operate power plants. The country imports 28% of its gasoline and 45% of its diesel and Madbouly said the nation's oil bill had more than doubled from January to \$2.5 billion.

- [Israeli police prevent Catholic leaders from celebrating Palm Sunday Mass at Jerusalem church \(2026-03-30 00:44\)](#)

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli police prevented Catholic leaders from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate a private Mass on the Christian holiday of Palm Sunday for the first time in centuries, setting off a wave of criticism from the United States and others. Jerusalem's major holy sites, including the church, are closed because of the ongoing Iran war, as the city has come under frequent fire from Iranian missiles. Early Monday morning, Israel's police said it had approved a "limited prayer framework" for the church, in consultation with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. On Sunday, the Patriarchate had called the police decision to bar entry "a manifestly unreasonable and grossly disproportionate measure." It prevented two of the church's top religious leaders, including the Latin Patriarch, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and the Custos of the Holy Land, from celebrating Palm Sunday at the place where Christians believe Jesus was crucified. Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and launches the Holy Week commemorations for Christians which culminates in Easter. Israeli police said they had notified church authorities on Saturday that no Mass could take place on Palm Sunday because of safety considerations, the lack of access for emergency vehicles in narrow alleys of the Old City and lack of adequate shelter. In the Monday statement, police said

the new framework would aim to "enable freedom of worship." It highlighted that restrictions at holy sites without standard protected spaces — like the cavernous church deep in a maze of tiny alleyways — are meant to "safeguard worshippers" from Iranian attacks. Earlier this month, shrapnel from the interception of an Iranian missile fell on a rooftop just steps from the church. However, the Latin Patriarchate said the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been hosting Masses that aren't open to the public since the Iran war began on Feb. 28, and it was unclear why Sunday's Mass and access by the two priests was any different. "It's a very, very sacred day for Christians and in our opinion there was no justification for such a decision or such an action," said Farid Jubran, the spokesperson for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Jubran said that the church had requested permission from police for a few religious leaders to enter the church for a private celebration on Sunday — not one that was open to the public. The Patriarchate said that the decision impeded freedom of worship and the status quo in Jerusalem. The traditional Palm Sunday procession normally sees tens of thousands of Christians from around the world walk from the Mount of Olives down the narrow, hilly streets toward the Old City, waving palm fronds and singing. The Patriarchate canceled the traditional procession last week because of safety concerns, and has held Masses limited to fewer than 50 worshippers in compliance with the Israeli military's guidelines for civilians. Pizzaballa instead celebrated Mass in the nearby St. Savior's Monastery, a soaring marble church which is located next to an underground music school that the Israeli military has deemed a safe shelter space. Later on Sunday, Pizzaballa held a prayer for peace at the Dominus Flevit Shrine on the Mount of Olives, but kept his homily concentrated on Jesus and didn't mention the morning's incident. Pope Leo XIV, at the end of Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square, prayed for all Christians in the Middle East who he said were living through an "atrocious" conflict. He said that "in many cases, they cannot live fully the rites of these holy days," though he didn't elaborate. The Vatican spokesman didn't immediately respond when asked to comment on the Jerusalem incident. US, France and Italy criticize decision The closure sparked a wave of criticism that Israeli authorities had gone too far in restricting worship, including from Israel's top ally, the United States. U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee, a devout evangelical Christian, said that the incident was "an unfortunate overreach." He said in a statement that the proposed prayer with Pizzaballa and the others was well below the 50-person limit for gatherings. "For the Patriarch to be barred from entry to the Church on Palm Sunday for a private ceremony is difficult to understand or justify," he wrote. French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the incident, which he said had added to the "concerning increase in violations of the status of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem." In a post on X, Macron wrote: "The free exercise of worship in Jerusalem must be guaranteed for all religions." Italian authorities across the political spectrum condemned the move to restrict Pizzaballa, an Italian cardinal considered a leading papal contender in the 2025 conclave, to access the church. The Italian government formally protested the incident to Israeli authorities and summoned Israel's ambassador to Rome for clarification. Premier Giorgia Meloni said that the police action "constitutes an offense not only against believers but against every community that recognizes religious freedom." Meloni's conservative government tried to keep a balanced position with Israel during the war in Gaza, supporting Israel's right to defense but condemning the toll on Palestinians. The Italian leader has also said that Italy won't

participate in the Iran war, while affirming that the Islamic Republic can't be allowed to possess nuclear weapons. Israel working to allow partial access Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there was no "malicious intent" and that the cardinal was prevented from accessing the church because of safety concerns, but that Israel would try to partially open the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the coming days."Given the holiness of the week leading up to Easter for the world's Christians, Israel's security arms are putting together a plan to enable church leaders to worship at the holy site in the coming days," Netanyahu wrote on X. In an interview with Italian Catholic broadcaster TG2000, Pizzaballa said there was difference of opinions with Israeli authorities over accessing the church, but that the dispute remained polite."We want to use this situation to try to clarify better what will be done in the coming days, respecting the security of all naturally but also in respect of the right to prayer," he said. The Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, is also mostly closed because of safety issues, but authorities are letting up to 50 people at a time pray in an enclosed area adjacent to the plaza. Smaller churches, synagogues, and mosques are open in Jerusalem's Old City if they are located within a certain distance of a bomb shelter deemed acceptable by Israel's military and, if gatherings are kept under 50 people. The same limitations apply to most of Israel, where schools have also been closed since the beginning of the Iran war and workplaces can function only where a shelter can be reached in the short time available after an alert.

- [Strikes knock out power in Tehran, Iran says US plotting ground invasion](#) (2026-03-30 00:40)

TEHRAN, Iran — Airstrikes knocked out electricity to parts of Tehran and its surroundings on Sunday as a top Iranian official accused the United States of plotting a ground invasion despite publicly pushing for a negotiated deal. Pakistan said meanwhile that it was ready to broker and host "meaningful talks" between Washington and Tehran to bring an end to the month-old US-Israeli war against Iran. The Israeli parliament was set to vote overnight on a 2026 budget that provides for a massive rise in military spending, increasing the defense budget by more than \$10 billion to over \$45 billion. In addition to fighting the war against Iran with its US ally since February 28, Israel is also battling in southern Lebanon against Iran-backed Hezbollah. Iran's energy ministry reported power outages in the capital, its surrounding region and Alborz province "following attacks on electricity industry facilities" and said the authorities were working to "resolve the problem." US President Donald Trump has previously threatened to strike Iranian power stations if Tehran does not negotiate a peace deal, before repeatedly extending a deadline to do so. Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warned on Sunday after a US warship with another 3,500 military personnel arrived in the Middle East that any US ground invasion of the country would be repelled. "The enemy publicly sends messages of negotiation and dialogue while secretly planning a ground attack," Ghalibaf said in a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency. "Our men are waiting for the arrival of the American soldiers on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional allies once and for all," he added. The war has escalated into a regional conflagration as Iran has retaliated with attacks on Gulf states and shut down the critical Strait of Hormuz oil shipping lane, sending

energy markets into a tailspin and threatening the world economy. Ghalibaf called for unity among Iranians, saying the war was "at its most critical stage." 'Uncertain future' Weeks of unrelenting strikes have taken a heavy toll on ordinary people in the country. "I miss a peaceful night's sleep," an artist in Tehran told AFP, saying night-time strikes were "so intense it felt like all of Tehran was shaking." Farzaneh, a 62-year-old woman in Iran's western city of Ahvaz contacted by AFP from Paris, said: "People wake up each day worried about an uncertain future." A university in Iran's central city of Isfahan said it was hit by airstrikes on Sunday for the second time since the war erupted. In Tehran, the Qatari news channel Al Arabiya said an Israeli missile hit the building housing its office. On the diplomatic front, Pakistan, acting as a go-between for Washington and Tehran, hosted foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt in Islamabad for talks on the crisis. Trump has repeatedly spoken of diplomatic contacts with Iran, although these claims have been denied by Tehran. Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the visiting diplomats had discussed how to "bring an early and permanent end to the war" and there was a growing consensus behind Islamabad hosting peace talks. He said Iran and the United States had expressed "confidence in Pakistan to facilitate the talks" and that he had spoken to his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi as well as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and other foreign ministers who also backed the idea. Despite making diplomatic overtures including proposing a 15-point plan to end the war, the United States has also been sending more military assets into the region. The USS Tripoli, an amphibious assault ship carrying around 3,500 Marines and sailors, arrived in the Middle East on Friday. According to The Washington Post, the Pentagon was preparing plans for weeks of ground operations -- potentially including raids on sites near the Strait of Hormuz -- though Trump has yet to approve any deployment. Iran says it has closed the Strait of Hormuz, which previously accounted for a quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade and a fifth of liquefied natural gas shipments, to vessels from hostile nations. Aluminium plants targeted On another front, Israeli attacks have continued in Lebanon, which was drawn into the war when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2. The Lebanese health ministry said on Sunday that the death toll from Israeli strikes had surpassed 1,200. Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral near Beirut on Sunday of three journalists killed by the Israeli military in southern Lebanon on Saturday. In the Gulf, Iranian forces said they had fired a volley of missiles and drones at plants belonging to two of the world's largest aluminium producers in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, targeting what they described as industries linked to the US military. Emirates Global Aluminium said an Iranian attack wounded six and caused significant damage to its plant, while Bahraini state media said two Aluminium Bahrain employees were injured. In Kuwait, the defence ministry said 10 service members were injured in an attack on a military camp and 14 ballistic missiles and 12 hostile drones were detected in Kuwaiti airspace in the past 24 hours. In Israel, thick black smoke could be seen rising from an industrial complex in the Negev desert in images released by the Israel Fire and Rescue Authority. The military said the impact may have been caused by missile shrapnel.

- [Russian tanker heads to Cuba despite US oil blockade](#) (2026-03-30 00:37)

HAVANA, Cuba — A Russian oil tanker under US sanctions is due to arrive in Cuba by Tuesday despite a de facto American fuel blockade of the energy-starved island, according to shipping data. The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is carrying 730,000 barrels of crude, was off the eastern tip of Cuba on Sunday, according to shipping tracker MarineTraffic. The tanker, traveling at 12 knots, is now scheduled to arrive at the western port of Matanzas on Tuesday. It was previously forecast to arrive Monday. It would be the first shipment of oil to the island since January, bringing some temporary relief to a country of 9.6 million people that has endured a deepening energy and economic crisis. Communist-ruled Cuba lost its main regional ally and oil supplier in January when US forces captured Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro. US President Donald Trump subsequently threatened to impose tariffs on any country sending oil to Cuba and has mused about "taking" the island. He renewed his threats on Friday, saying "Cuba is next" at an investment forum in Miami. Jorge Pinon, an expert on Cuba's energy sector at the University of Texas at Austin, said he was surprised the United States did not try to intercept the Russian tanker before it approached Cuba. "I think now the chances that the United States will try to stop her have basically disappeared," Pinon told AFP. Once the boat enters Cuban waters, he said, it "is almost impossible for the US government to stop it." The New York Times, citing an unnamed US official briefed on the matter, said the US Coast Guard was allowing the tanker to reach Cuba. The US Coast Guard did not reply to an AFP request for comment.

Daily outages After Washington launched the oil blockade, President Miguel Diaz-Canel imposed emergency measures to conserve fuel, including strict rationing of gasoline. He warned this month that "any external aggressor will encounter an unbreakable resistance." Fuel prices have soared, public transport has dwindled and some airlines have suspended flights to Cuba, hitting the country's fragile economy. Cubans have endured regular outages as its aging power plants struggle to meet demand, with seven nationwide blackouts since 2024, including two this month and sparking rare protests. A humanitarian aid convoy brought more than 50 tonnes of medicine, food, solar panels and other goods to Cuba by air and sea in the past week, with two sailboats bringing the last shipments from Mexico on Saturday. The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is under US sanctions, left the Russian port of Primorsk on March 8. It was escorted by a Russian navy ship across the English Channel, but the two vessels parted ways when the tanker entered the Atlantic, according to the British Royal Navy. Another ship that was reportedly carrying Russian diesel to Cuba, the Hong Kong-flagged Sea Horse, arrived in Venezuela instead earlier this week.

Diesel an 'urgent need' Once the Anatoly Kolodkin's crude arrives in Cuba, it would take about 15-20 days to process the oil and another 5-10 days to deliver its refined products, Pinon said. "The urgent need today in Cuba is diesel," the former oil executive said. The Russian shipment could be converted into 250,000 barrels of diesel, enough to cover the country's demand for around 12.5 days, according to Pinon. Pinon said the government would have to decide whether to use the fuel for backup power generators or for the buses, tractors and trains needed to keep the economy going for two weeks. "If you are Diaz-Canel or somebody making the decision, you go, 'OK, where where do I go with that diesel?'" he said. "Do I want to generate more electricity so there are less apagones (blackouts)? Or do I want to put it in the transportation sector?"

- [UN force in southern Lebanon says peacekeeper killed](#) (2026-03-30 00:34)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The UN force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) said one of their peacekeepers was killed after a projectile hit one of their positions late Sunday. "A peacekeeper was tragically killed last night when a projectile exploded in a UNIFIL position near Adchit Al Qusayr," said Monday's statement. "Another was critically injured." The UNIFIL statement said they did not know the origin of the projectile but had launched an investigation to find out. "No one should ever lose their life serving the cause of peace," it added. State media NNA reported earlier that the position hit belonged to the Indonesian battalion serving with UNIFIL. The town of Adchit al Qusayr lies near Lebanon's southern border with Israel, where Israeli forces have been battling Hezbollah fighters for nearly a month. The war in the Middle East spread to Lebanon in early March after Iran-backed Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel. Their attack came after the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on the first day of the US-Israeli offensive. Israel has retaliated with wide-ranging airstrikes on Lebanon and Israeli forces are now advancing into numerous towns in southern Lebanon. Israeli officials say they intend to set up a security zone extending 30 kilometers from the Israeli border to protect those living in northern Israel. UNIFIL has reported that its positions have been hit more than once since the start of the latest fighting. On March 7, three Ghanaian soldiers were wounded by gunfire in a border town in southern Lebanon.

- [Israel approves 2026 budget with increased defence spending](#) (2026-03-30 00:30)

Jerusalem — Israel's parliament approved the 2026 budget early Monday, providing for a significant increase in military spending as the country remains engaged in wars on multiple fronts. Lawmakers passed the budget with 62 votes in favour and 55 against. The vote averted an automatic government collapse and snap election that would have followed failure to pass the budget by March's end, under Israeli law. The proposed total expenditure budget for 2026 amounts to approximately 850 billion Israeli shekels (NIS) or \$270 billion. "As part of the updated budget, and in light of Operation 'Roaring Lion', more than NIS 30 billion (about \$10 billion) has been added to the ministry of defence budget, bringing it to over NIS 142 billion," the parliament said in a statement, using the name Israel has given to the war with Iran. Israel's defence spending has steadily increased since the war in Gaza broke out following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. In addition to fighting the new war against Iran with its ally the United States since February 28, Israel is also battling Iran-backed Islamist movement Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Ahead of the vote, lawmakers debated the budget proposals late on Sunday. Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called it a "historic turning point" for Israel. "We have the capacity to reshape the Middle East. This budget positions the nation to win," Smotrich said. "We are passing this budget under a right-wing government committed to fulfilling its term and achieving its missions in security, the economy and judicial reform." "This term will be remembered as a historic turning point for the State of Israel, redefining both our security approach and our economy," Smotrich added. He also praised Israel's macroeconomic performance as "astonishing" despite the war. 'Greatest theft' Main opposition leader Yair Lapid described it as "the greatest theft in the state's history". "Six billion shekels are coalition

funds that this government is allocating to itself -- to corruption and draft evasion," Lapid said. "The Israeli public is not foolish. It understands that this budget is a windfall for the corrupt and for those who evade responsibility -- celebrating at our expense," he added. Earlier this week, Lapid had lashed out at the government over its handling of the war in Iran, specifically criticising delays in legislation that would allow ultra-Orthodox Jews, who are largely exempt from military service, to be conscripted. The law aligns with the demands of a broad majority of Israelis, who are increasingly opposed to the ultra-Orthodox exemptions. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who relies on his ultra-Orthodox party allies to maintain power, has delayed the legislation's adoption. The surge in defence spending in the budget will lead to a three-percent cut across all other ministries, which was also strongly criticised by Lapid. But Netanyahu's government, dependent on the support of its ultra-Orthodox and settler allies for its survival, has approved a significant increase in funds earmarked exclusively for them. Ultra-Orthodox parties will receive more than \$750 million in additional funds for private schools they control. Despite the sweeping cuts imposed on all civilian budgets, funding for settlements has remained unchanged, according to a report by the anti-settlement group Peace Now. The Peace Now report denounced the measure as "daylight robbery of public funds" for the benefit of a small group within the government's base. On December 4, the government approved spending more than \$875 million over five years to develop settlements in the occupied West Bank, which are illegal under international law.

- [PH, China reopen oil exploration talks](#) (2026-03-29 16:10)

(UPDATE) THE Philippines and China have made "initial exchanges" on potential oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, nearly four years since previous talks were terminated in 2022. The subject was raised at the just-concluded Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on South China Sea meeting in Fujian, China, on March 28. In a statement late Saturday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said both sides took note of the progress made in other possible areas of cooperation to "increase confidence in the maritime domain," including communication between their coast guards and ocean meteorology. The two sides had "frank and thorough exchange of views" on the situation in the South China Sea, where Manila "firmly reiterated" its position and raised concerns over China's actions that have "disrupted lawful activities and posed risks at sea," the DFA said. "The Philippines emphasized the need for diplomacy and communication for managing differences at sea, and upholding international law, particularly the 1982 Unclos (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award," it said. The BCM was held back-to-back with the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC), and both were led by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Leo Herrera-Lim and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. At the FMC, Manila said it would handle all bilateral issues in line with the Philippine national interest, "while advancing mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in the economic and people-to-people areas." The two sides brought up the need to stabilize access to energy and fertilizers, as well as potential cooperation in green and renewable energy, trade and agriculture, against the backdrop of current global developments, including the Middle East

crisis. The DFA said it was agreed that the reconvening of appropriate bilateral mechanisms was a necessary step in reopening negotiations. The DFA said it would play a “responsible and professional role” as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) this year, especially on managing regional talks, upholding Asean centrality, and reinforcing a rules-based order. The DFA said the Philippines and China would convene a bilateral foreign ministers’ meeting “within the year” following these latest talks. A geopolitical analyst on Sunday said renewed discussions between the Philippines and China on possible joint oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea come at a critical time, as global supply uncertainties mount due to tensions in the Middle East. In an interview with The Manila Times, Herman Tiu Laurel, president of the Manila-based think tank Asian Century Philippines Strategic Studies Institute (ACPSSI), said the reopening of talks was “very late in the day,” driven by what he described as a potentially severe oil and gas supply crisis linked to the conflict pitting the United States and Israel against Iran. Tiu Laurel said China was concerned about the Philippines’ consistency in previous agreements, citing what he described as policy reversals and “flip-flopping” since initial engagements in 2013. He also pointed to the Philippines’ termination in 2022 of a joint exploration agreement reached in 2018 between Xi Jinping and Rodrigo Duterte. According to Tiu Laurel, former Foreign Affairs secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. announced the unilateral termination of the agreement during the transition from the Duterte administration to that of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Tiu Laurel said Duterte had opposed the move and warned that abandoning the agreement could lead to tensions. He added that the current administration should provide assurances of “sincerity” if it intends to pursue joint development with China. He also questioned whether Manila’s renewed engagement would be sustained, noting uncertainties over how external geopolitical pressures, particularly from the US, might influence policy direction.

- [Worries about global economic pain deepen](#) (2026-03-29 16:09)

US and Israeli attacks on Iran have driven up prices, darkened the outlook for the world economy, sent global stock markets reeling, and forced developing countries to ration fuel and subsidize energy costs to protect their poorest. Ongoing strikes and counterstrikes on Persian Gulf refineries, pipelines, gas fields and tanker terminals threaten to prolong the global economic pain for months, even years. “A week ago or certainly two weeks ago, I would have said: If the war stopped that day, the long-term implications would be pretty small,” said Christopher Knittel, an energy economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “But what we’re seeing is infrastructure actually being destroyed, which means the ramifications of this war are going to be long-lived.” Iran has hit Qatar’s Ras Laffan natural gas terminal, which produces 20 percent of the world’s liquefied natural gas. The March 18 strike wiped out 17 percent of Qatar’s LNG export capacity and repairs will take up to five years, state-owned QatarEnergy said. The war caused an oil shock from the get-go. Iran responded to US and Israeli attacks on Feb. 28 by effectively closing off the Strait of Hormuz, a transit point for a fifth of the

world's oil, by threatening tankers trying to pass through. Gulf oil exporters like Kuwait and Iraq cut production because there was nowhere for their oil to go without access to the strait. The loss of 20 million barrels of oil a day delivered what the International Energy Agency calls the "largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market." The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil climbed 3.4 percent on Friday to settle at \$105.32. That was up from roughly \$70 just before the war began. Benchmark US crude rose 5.5 percent to settle at \$99.64 per barrel. "Historically, oil price shocks like this have led to global recessions," Knittel said. The war also has dredged up a bad economic memory from the oil shocks of the 1970s: stagflation. "You're raising the risk of higher inflation and lower growth," said the Harvard Kennedy School's Carmen Reinhart, a former World Bank chief economist. Gita Gopinath, former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, recently wrote that global economic growth, expected before the war to register 3.3 percent this year, would be 0.3 to 0.4 percentage points lower if oil prices averaged \$85 a barrel in 2026. Fertilizer shortages and price hikes hurt farmers. The Persian Gulf accounts for a big share of exports of two key fertilizers, a third of urea and a quarter of ammonia. Producers in the region enjoy an advantage: easy access to low-cost natural gas, the primary feedstock for nitrogen fertilizers. Up to 40 percent of world exports of nitrogen fertilizer pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Now that the passage is blocked, urea prices are up 50 percent since the war and ammonia 20 percent. Big agricultural producer Brazil is especially vulnerable because it gets 85 percent of its fertilizer from imports, Alpine Macro commodity strategist Kelly Xu wrote in a commentary. Egypt, a big fertilizer producer itself, needs natural gas to make the stuff and production falters when it can't get enough. Eventually, higher fertilizer prices are likely to make food more expensive and less abundant as farmers skimp on it and get lower yields. The squeeze on food supplies will land hardest on families in poorer countries. The war also has disrupted world supplies of helium, a byproduct of natural gas and a key input in chipmaking, rockets and medical imaging. Qatar makes helium at the Ros Laffan facility and supplies a third of the world's helium. Rationing gas and limiting the air conditioning "No country will be immune to the effects of this crisis if it continues to go in this direction," International Energy Agency head Fatih Birol said on March 23. Poorer countries will be hit hardest and face the biggest energy shortages "because they will be outbid when competing for the remaining oil and natural gas," said Lutz Kilian, director of the Center for Energy and the Economy at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Asia is especially exposed: More than 80 percent of the oil and LNG that passes through the Strait of Hormuz is headed there. In the Philippines, government offices are now open just four days a week and bureaucrats must limit the use of air conditioning to nothing cooler than 75 F (24 C). In Thailand, public workers have been told to take the stairs instead of elevators. India is the world's second-biggest importer of liquefied petroleum gas, which is used in cooking. The Indian government is giving households priority over businesses as it allocates its limited supply and absorbing most of the price increases to keep costs low for poor families. But LPG shortages have forced some eateries to shorten hours, close temporarily or drop dishes like curries and deep-fried snacks requiring a lot of energy. South Korea, dependent on energy imports, is restricting the use of cars by public employees and has reinstated fuel price caps that had been dropped in the 1990s.

- [DOLE releases P1.2B standby fund for vulnerable workers](#) (2026-03-29 16:08)

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is ramping up its response to the national energy emergency, setting aside P1.2 billion in standby funds to protect the country's most vulnerable workers from the effects of the Middle East crisis. Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said over the weekend that the move aligns with the government's rollout of the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (Uplift) under Executive Order 110, designed to cushion the economic shocks of global energy disruptions on the domestic economy. At the core of the DOLE's push were the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers (Tupad) emergency employment program and the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP). Tupad offers emergency employment, giving affected workers community jobs for 10 to 30 days. Beneficiaries would receive the daily minimum wage prevailing in their region. The DILP is the department's flagship program that provides vulnerable and marginalized workers access to resources, such as working capital in the form of raw materials, equipment, tools and jigs. Laguesma said Tupad and DILP "are being mobilized to support workers at risk of displacement as the energy crisis ripples across industries." In the first quarter of 2026, emergency employment through Tupad and livelihood assistance through DILP benefited 110,106 workers, with total disbursements reaching P753.69 million. To support Uplift, the department is working closely with agencies such as the Department of Transportation, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and local government units. Initial efforts will focus on transport workers to help maintain mobility and economic activity, with plans to extend assistance to sectors like agriculture and fisheries, Laguesma said. Repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were also being attended to. In coordination with the Department of Migrant Workers and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the labor department is lining up job matching, skills training through Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and livelihood assistance for displaced OFWs. A major highlight is the upcoming "Bayanihan para sa Balikbayang Manggagawa," a one-stop reintegration platform for returning workers and their families. On the jobs front, DOLE has staged 144 job fairs nationwide since January, Laguesma said. Meanwhile, Sen. Francis Pangilinan over the weekend said the proposed P10-billion financial package for affected agricultural sectors would only benefit four million farmers and 400,000 fishermen. Pangilinan said there are over 10 million farmers and 2.5 million fishermen affected by the mounting economic pressures from the Middle East war. He said the one-time P2,325 cash aid to concerned farmworkers and fisherfolk would come from the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk under the 2026 budget. About 15,000 fishermen would receive fuel assistance from the P150-million 2025 continuing appropriation, with P75 million each allotted to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Agriculture (DA). Pangilinan called for more government support for the agriculture and fishery sectors reeling from surging oil prices, which drive up the cost of fuel, transportation, and fertilizer costs. Pangilinan said other sources could be tapped, such as the DA's P1 billion Quick Response Fund (QRF). Other concerned agencies can tap certain items under their 2026 allocations to support local food producers, he said. These include the P3.11-billion budget of

the Agricultural Credit Policy Council, the P2.4-billion budget for high-value crops under the DA, the P6.5-billion budget of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp., and the DA's QRF.

- [Manufacturers to defer price hikes until April 16](#) (2026-03-29 16:07)

MANUFACTURERS have pledged not to raise the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities until April 16, the DTI said in a statement on Saturday. “This assurance follows the DTI’s meeting with major manufacturers and retailers to hold off on price increases until April 16, 2026, ensuring stability for Filipino consumers amid the ongoing Middle East tensions,” the DTI said. Trade Secretary Cristina Roque had a virtual meeting with the manufacturers on March 28. Among them were Milk Corporation, Chattrade Enterprises, Commonwealth Foods Inc., Century Pacific Food Inc. (CPFI), Ecosential Foods Corp., Sevilla Candle Factory Inc., Lorenzana Food Corp., Monde Nissin, Nestle Philippines, Procter & Gamble Philippines Inc., San Miguel Foods, Slord Development Corp., Unilever Philippines Inc., Universal Canning Inc., Universal Robina Corp., Virginia Food Inc., Wellmade Manufacturing Corp., and a representative from the Canned Sardines Association of the Philippines (CSAP). Retailers who agreed not to raise prices include Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc., SM Markets (SM Supermarket, SM Hypermarket, Savemore), Metro Retail Stores Group Inc., and the Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Association. Complying with Executive Order 110, the DTI will intensify its nationwide monitoring to ensure the commitments are reflected at the retail level. It said it maintains jurisdiction over “726 variants of essential products in which 196 stock keeping units include a suggested retail price (SRP), including canned sardines, canned meat, coffee, processed milk, instant noodles, condiments, laundry soap, toilet soap, candles, salt, battery, bottled water, and bread.” On Friday, the department announced that the supply and prices of basic necessities and prime commodities remained stable. The DTI also clarified that the automatic nationwide price freeze is not in effect, despite President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s declaration of a state of national energy emergency. Under the Price Act (Republic Act 7581), prices are automatically frozen only under specific conditions, such as a state of calamity or similar emergency declarations. Enacted into law in 1992, the Price Act ensures fair pricing and availability of basic necessities and prime commodities, especially during times of calamities and emergencies. Violators face a fine of from P5,000 to P2 million. Last week, the trade chief met with 21 manufacturers of canned sardines, bread, bottled water, instant noodles, coffee, canned meat, toilet soap and candles, and agreed not to increase the prices for 30 days. Chynna Grace Ong and the Philippine News Agency Among them were Mega, Ligo, Unipak, Lucky 7, Fresca, Golden Town, Morjon, Wilkins, Nature’s Spring, Pinoy Tasty and Pandesal, Safeguard, Tide, Green Cross, Datu Puti, Lorins, and others. On Sunday, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto commended businesses that deferred price increases for their show of solidarity with consumers. “We commend businesses that have deferred price increases as an act of solidarity with the public, commendably placing patriotism before profits,” Recto said. He said the move aligns with government interventions to stabilize the country’s fuel supply and cushion the public from price shocks. The government has secured oil from both traditional and alternative sources, and received commitments from industry players like Petron and Seaoil to stabilize supply lines. The

Department of Energy has also facilitated the procurement of 1.04 million barrels of diesel, with initial shipments expected this week. Fuel subsidies have also been distributed to transport operators, farmers and fisherfolk. Energy conservation measures are being enforced in government offices, including reduced fuel use for non-essential vehicles and monitoring of electricity consumption, Recto said.

- [Holy Monday: Time to reflect on faith](#) (2026-03-29 16:06)

HOLY Monday is a day often overlooked during Holy Week. It comes right after Palm Sunday, when Jesus Christ was welcomed in Jerusalem, but what does it signify? The Gospel of Mark 11:11–12 revealed that after spending the evening in Bethany, Jesus and his disciples set out for Jerusalem early Monday. Jesus then encountered a fig tree and cursed it for its fruitlessness. Some interpreted the act as God's judgment on the lack of genuine faith by believers. After arriving in Jerusalem, he found commerce and corruption in the temple, where there should have been worship and reverence. In a fit of rage, he overturned the tables, condemning the practice. "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers," he said. For Filipino Catholics, Holy Monday serves as a reminder to examine one's faith and actions. Fr. Cyrain Cabuenas of Borongan, Eastern Samar, said in his homily that the day calls on the faithful to reflect on how people respond to truth, particularly in the face of adversity. "The Passion of Christ is not only about His suffering; it is also about how people respond to truth. Jesus stood for what was right, yet He was rejected. Those in authority chose to protect themselves instead of doing what was just, and the crowd allowed itself to be influenced, choosing noise over truth. This is what makes Holy Week uncomfortable, because it asks a question we cannot avoid: where do we stand when truth is at risk?" Cabuenas said. He said the message of Holy Week remains relevant in the Philippine context, where issues such as corruption, political conflict, and rising living costs continue to burden many Filipinos. "We see it when power is used for personal gain, when truth is ignored, and when the innocent suffer while justice seems slow or absent," he said. Cabuenas cautioned the faithful against reducing Holy Week to rituals, such as attending Mass or joining processions, without allowing it to inspire real change. "If nothing changes — if corruption continues, injustice remains, and the poor are still forgotten — then something essential is missing. Holy Week is not meant to be just an annual routine; it is meant to change us," he said. He asked Filipinos to live out their faith in honesty, integrity and compassion, even in small, everyday choices, stressing that meaningful change begins within individuals. In his Holy Week message to the nation, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called on Filipinos to unite for the shared goal of building a country grounded in faith and selfless service to others. The president urged every citizen to "take a moment for a brief pause, rest, and reflection." "From His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, to the suffering of the Cross at Calvary, and finally to the glory of His Resurrection, we witness a love so powerful that it embraces human suffering and conquers even death," he said. The immeasurable love of Jesus Christ, he said, reflects a love that embraces human suffering and triumphs over death. "The Passion of Christ reminds us that true greatness is not found in power, but in sacrifice; not in privilege, but in service; and not in comfort, but in the courage to

carry the burdens of others,” he said. He called on the faithful to renew their commitment to loving and serving one another, especially in times of hardship, and to remain steadfast in faith despite life’s trials. “For in every act of compassion, every hand extended to those in need, and every sacrifice made for the good of others, we keep alive the spirit of His message,” the president said. Malacañang has declared April 2, Maundy Thursday, and April 3, Good Friday, as regular holidays. Black Saturday, April 4, was declared a special non-working holiday. Leyte 1st District Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez on Sunday said Holy Week “is a time for prayer and reflection. This is a time for remembering the great love of God — a love that saved us, gave hope, and continues to guide us back to Him.” “Amid the conflicts and problems we face, may this day serve as an invitation for us to pause, reflect, and repent,” he said. “This is a time to examine our hearts, our shortcomings, and the times when we fell short in loving. In the quiet of prayer, may we find the strength to carry on, the courage to forgive, and the heart ready to love again — especially in times when this is most difficult to do.”

- [Customs fast-tracks fuel shipments](#) (2026-03-29 16:05)

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) is stepping on the gas to keep the country’s fuel lifeline flowing, rolling out aggressive measures to fast-track petroleum imports while maintaining round-the-clock monitoring across all ports. Customs Commissioner Ariel Nepomuceno issued Office of the Commissioner Memorandum 36-2006 over the weekend, directing all ports to give fuel shipments top priority. The order mandates faster unloading, streamlined customs clearance, zero tolerance for delays, tighter interagency coordination, and continuous oversight — ensuring critical fuel cargo moves from ship to shore without a hitch. “Ensuring the timely release of petroleum products is critical to keep the country moving. That is why we are making sure petroleum shipments are processed without delay and closely monitored at all times. Our goal is simple — to keep supply steady and ensure that no disruption reaches our industries or our communities,” Nepomuceno said. Nepomuceno gave assurances that safeguards are in place to ensure that every drop of fuel entering the country is properly taxed. He said the Fuel Marking Program ensures petroleum products are authenticated at the depot level, quality and tax compliance are verified, and any irregular shipment is immediately flagged. At sea, the bureau’s vessel tracking system keeps tankers under constant watch even before they reach Philippine waters. This allows authorities to monitor routes, anticipate arrivals, and conduct immediate inspections — closing gaps from offshore transit to final discharge. According to Nepomuceno, the bureau is also working with the Department of Energy (DOE) for real-time monitoring of fuel shipments and depot inventories across the country. Nepomuceno pointed out that petroleum imports generate roughly P200 billion annually in revenues, making them a critical pillar of government collections. Efficient processing and tight regulation are not just operational priorities but also economic imperatives. In San Fernando, La Union, the BOC cleared the arrival of 9.4 million liters of diesel for PNOC at Seoail Bangar Terminal, the largest oil import hub in Region I. The shipment, part of the Department of Energy’s Strategic Fuel Reserve program, was processed and discharged at speed following tight coordination and pre-clearance checks, reinforcing fuel stability across Luzon. Meanwhile, in Limay, Bataan,

customs teams prioritized the handling of major crude oil delivered by the Sara Sky. The vessel, loaded with over 100,000 barrels of ESPO Blend crude from Russia, was swiftly cleared and unloaded at the Petron Bataan Refinery, ensuring immediate integration into the country's fuel supply chain. Nepomuceno commended the two ports for their timely action. "I commend the Port of San Fernando, La Union, and the Port of Limay for their quick and efficient handling of these priority fuel shipments from Russia and Japan. Their swift action and coordination ensured that essential petroleum products were released without delay."

- [SSS eyes loan payment moratorium, penalty condonation](#) (2026-03-29 16:04)

THE Social Security System (SSS) is studying loan payment moratorium for its members and condonation program for employers to ease the burden of surging fuel prices. SSS President and CEO Robert Joseph de Claro said the measures aim to provide immediate relief to SSS members and employers struggling with financial difficulties in the wake of the unabated increase in fuel costs due to the war in the Middle East. "This would ensure they can continue to access vital benefits without an added burden," de Claro said in a statement. He said the agency is also assessing options for extending contribution payment deadlines for employers and individual paying members, providing greater flexibility amid the current situation. "We recognize the hardships many Filipinos are enduring as we remain committed to protecting the welfare of our over 40 million members," de Claro said. "We are expediting internal reviews and consultations with stakeholders to roll out these support initiatives as swiftly as possible, while safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the SSS fund," he added. Mandated to provide social protection to private sector workers, self-employed individuals and overseas Filipino workers, the SSS said it is also actively pursuing digital initiatives to simplify administrative and implementation processes to reduce compliance burden and ensure the timely delivery of relief measures and services. The SSS assured the public that updates on these programs will be announced through official channels once finalized. Members and employers were encouraged to visit [www.sss.gov.ph](http://www.sss.gov.ph) or its official social media channels for the latest information on its programs.

- [Medialdea stable after fainting at Duterte birthday solidarity walk](#) (2026-03-29 16:03)

FORMER executive secretary Salvador Medialdea was reported to be in stable condition after he fainted during a solidarity walk held for former president Rodrigo Duterte's 81st birthday on Saturday, March 28. Medialdea, 74, was delivering a speech at Rizal Park along San Pedro Street in Davao City when he suddenly stopped, appeared to lose his balance, and struggled to continue, prompting concern from the crowd. Emergency responders from Davao City Central 911 immediately assisted him. He was taken off the stage in a wheelchair and transported by ambulance to Davao Doctors Hospital. Organizers said Medialdea, who has a heart ailment, became emotional during his remarks. He was initially brought to the hospital for a routine checkup. A medical procedure for Medialdea was scheduled for Sunday, March 29, with attending physicians reporting that he remained in stable condition. Medialdea, a close ally of Duterte, served as executive secretary during the former president's administration and had

accompanied him during his arrest and initial appearance before the International Criminal Court in March 2025. The solidarity walk drew several supporters and followed a route from Roxas Avenue through C.M. Recto Street to San Pedro Street in Davao.

- [Tulfo pushes work from home, ride-sharing](#) (2026-03-29 16:02)

SEN. Erwin Tulfo raised the need to bring back the work-from-home (WFH) setup for the private and government sectors amid the continuous rise in fuel prices triggered by the Middle East war. He said that his proposal was implemented during the pandemic and was proven effective. “If a worker’s physical presence or activity is not required at the workplace, why not just have them report online?” Tulfo asked. “For instance, those in office roles like planning, research, admin, customer service, and other similar jobs can work from home,” he said on Sunday. Even medical consultations and checkups were done online by doctors during the pandemic, he added. “Why not do it again now?” “And if physical presence is required, such as in manufacturing, hotels, restaurants, or hospitals, colleagues can carpool in one vehicle and split the gas costs,” Tulfo said in a statement. The senator also suggested that officemates could book through ride-hailing apps and share the fare. “I’ve noticed that the number of stranded passengers on the streets seems to be increasing these days because fewer PUVs (public utility vehicles) are operating due to the high cost of fuel,” he said. “With these steps that we have tried before, workers will be able to save,” Tulfo said. Sen. Joel Villanueva earlier sought the expansion of WFH arrangements to reduce fuel consumption and shield Filipinos from the effects of rising oil prices. He urged the government and the private sector to adopt other flexible work schemes to address possible fare hike. Villanueva, author of Republic Act 11165 or the Work-From-Home law, said the measure provides a ready policy framework that can be maximized to lessen commuting at a time when global oil prices are climbing due to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Signed into law in 2018, the law institutionalized work-from-home arrangements in the private sector, allowing employees to perform their duties from alternative workplaces using telecommunications and digital technology. He said that aside from work from home schemes, both the government and the private sector could also adopt other alternative work arrangements that reduce commuting demand, such as hybrid work setups, compressed workweeks, staggered working hours, and flexible schedules. “These alternative work arrangements can help decongest our roads, lower fuel consumption, and allow workers to save on transportation costs,” Villanueva said in a statement.

- ['Unbundling hospital charges a step backward'](#) (2026-03-29 16:01)

A health reform advocate criticized the proposal of the Department of Health (DoH) to unbundle hospital charges, calling it “a step backward.” The proposal comes after the DOH reacted to the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines Inc. (PHAPI) floating the idea of implementing a five percent increase in hospital fees as costs of fuel and basic commodities increase. DoH Spokesman Albert Domingo called for a breakdown of hospital charges to provide greater transparency. He said unbundling costs like room rates, electricity, fuel, and staff

salaries would allow the public to understand how healthcare prices are affected by the rising oil prices. “It’s time to ‘unbundle’ or ‘break down’ the charges of hospitals and health facilities. Don’t just say ‘room rate’ —how much is charged for electricity? For gasoline/diesel? For nurses’ salaries?” Domingo said. Dr. Tony Leachon told The Manila Times on Sunday the DoH’s proposal would erode the integration, equity, and universality that the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law and the Sin Tax Law were meant to achieve. “The Sin Tax Law and the Universal Health Care Law were never meant to stand alone. They were conceived as twin pillars of reform—one raising resources from harmful consumption, the other ensuring those resources translate into accessible, equitable health services. To unbundle them is not innovation; it is a betrayal of their essence,” he said. Aside from the fragmentation, Leachon argued that bundling hospital charges ensures solidarity, where wealthier individuals contribute more while the poorer population benefits. He said unbundling risks creating inequality by removing this balance. Healthcare should not be treated as a commodity to be broken into pieces, but as a fundamental right that must be guaranteed for all Filipinos, he said. “Unbundling is not progress—it is a step backward,” Leachon said. He called on policymakers to resist the proposal and instead focus on strengthening the integration of the Sin Tax and UHC laws.

- [Palace touts public-private ‘synergy’ in boosting energy security](#) (2026-03-29 16:01)

MALACAÑANG on Sunday gave assurances the country’s energy security is steadily stabilizing despite the global oil crisis triggered by the war in the Middle East. In a statement, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said the “synergy of public-private efforts,” spearheaded by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., is now “bearing fruits that guarantee energy security” as the government addresses the effects “of a crisis not of its own making.” Recto cited, among others, the commitment of oil firms to provide a steady supply of oil and petroleum products despite the volatility in the international market. One such company is Petron Corp., which sourced its supply from both traditional and alternative sources. Last week, its procurement of more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil was delivered. “Meanwhile, the oil diplomacy ably conducted by energy officials led by (Department of Energy) Secretary Sharon Garin has resulted in the firm order of 1.04 million barrels of diesel, with the first batch arriving this week. From Indonesia also comes the ironclad guarantee of a steady supply of coal. The news that new wells of Malampaya will go on stream by the last quarter of this year further boosts our energy security,” he said. “Believing that these gains will be sustained, we fully back the efforts of Petron, Seaoil, other oil companies, the DOE (Department of Energy), and PNOC (Philippine National Oil Company) to keep the supply lines flowing so the economy is powered up, the country running, and our lives minimally disrupted,” Recto said. He pointed to the recently signed Republic Act 12316 which grants the president the authority to suspend or reduce excise taxes on fuel as another mitigating measure to cushion the impact of skyrocketing pump prices. These initiatives, however, “will all be for naught” if not felt by the people, Recto said. Government assistance, such as fuel subsidies and discounted rides and toll fees, has been rolled out to ease the burden of vulnerable sectors. Around 250,000 public

transport drivers — bus, jeepney, tricycle, and transport network vehicle service (TNVS) — have benefited from the financial aid. Farmers and fisherfolk will also receive assistance to prevent fuel costs from driving up food prices. The government's vehicle fleet, except those used for public safety and health services, "has been put on a strict gas diet," Recto said.

- [Caloocan extends free legal aid to 29 women PDLs](#) (2026-03-29 16:01)

TWENTY-NINE women who are currently detained at the custodial facility of the Caloocan Police became the beneficiaries of the free legal services from the city's legal department, Mayor Dave Gonzalo Malapitan said on Sunday. Malapitan told The Manila Times via Viber that the initiative was part of the local government's activities to mark International Women's Month. He said the city government provided legal advice and assistance to the women PDLs in connection with the criminal cases filed against them in various trial courts in the city. The city chief executive said the project, led by the city's Legal Department and Social Welfare and Development Office, is a regular undertaking to make services more accessible even to the most vulnerable sectors of the community. Also, the mayor said that his administration remains committed to upholding justice and the rule of law, adding that, "the rights of people, especially those under preventive custody, must be given the highest level of respect." He further said the local government is maximizing its resources to address crime incidents, which have been declining since early last year due to enhanced police visibility and law enforcers' prompt response to emergencies.

- [LTFRB steps up safety checks ahead of Holy Week exodus](#) (2026-03-29 10:40)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has begun intensified inspections of buses and public utility vehicles (PUVs) nationwide in preparation for the Holy Week travel surge. On Sunday, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II ordered all regional directors to implement a nationwide roadworthiness inspection protocol. According to Mendoza, coordination with local government units (LGUs) and law enforcement agencies is critical to maximize road safety enforcement. "This is a yearly exodus, and we expect more people and vehicles on the road traveling to the provinces for religious activities, vacations, and other purposes," Mendoza said. "Our goal is to ensure the safety of commuters and other road users by verifying the roadworthiness of buses and PUVs, as well as the physical and mental readiness of drivers." He also emphasized the need for terminal operators to comply with regulations that safeguard passenger safety and comfort. The LTFRB has already intensified inspections of PUV terminals following complaints about dilapidated facilities. Hundreds of terminal owners and operators have been issued show-cause orders or notices of violation, and some facilities have been temporarily closed for serious safety breaches. "Aside from the safety of PUVs on the road, we also have to make sure passengers are comfortable and treated well inside the terminals," Mendoza said. "There must be no excuses—violators should be called out and required to explain why they should not be penalized." Millions of Filipinos are expected to travel to the provinces during the Holy Week break. Police forces have begun mobilization, and the LTFRB is coordinating closely to ensure

the safety and comfort of all passengers.

- [NTC activates communications support program for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-29 08:54)

MANILA, Philippines — A nationwide public assistance operation program has been launched to ensure reliable and uninterrupted communications during the observance of Holy Week, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) said on Sunday. The NTC said all its regional offices (ROs) were instructed to collaborate with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Civic Action Groups as well as Amateur Radio Groups. The ROs must also closely coordinate with local government units through their Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices to strengthen on-the-ground communication support and emergency response, according to the commission, a regulatory agency attached to the Department of Information and Communications Technology. To ensure the seamless operation of the communication support teams and further enhance readiness, the NTC said it would facilitate the swift issuance of temporary permits and licenses. It cited its importance especially as millions of Filipinos are expected to travel nationwide. “Telecommunications and broadcast entities are likewise enjoined to actively assist in the timely and accurate dissemination of public advisories,” the agency said. The NTC, which has the mandate to supervise, control and adjudicate all telecommunications services, among others, throughout the country, reaffirmed its commitment to public safety, consumer welfare, and dependable communications services throughout Holy Week.

- [P10B aid not enough — Pangilinan](#) (2026-03-29 06:27)

Erratum: When this story was first published it said that the aid was for 400 fishermen, it should be 400,000 fishermen. We apologize for this mistake. MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Francis Pangilinan over the weekend said the proposed P10 billion financial aid is not enough since it would only benefit four million farmers and 400,000 fishermen. The senator said over 10 million farmers and 2.5 million fishermen were affected by the mounting economic pressures caused by the Middle East war. He said the one-time ₱2,325 cash aid to concerned farm workers and fisherfolks would come from the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk under the 2026 budget. About 15,000 fishermen would receive fuel assistance from the ₱150 million 2025 continuing appropriation, with ₱75 million each allotted to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Agriculture (DA). He sought additional government support for the agriculture and fishery sectors reeling from the global oil price surge, which drive up the cost of transportation and fertilizers. The senator said the situation affects small-scale farmers and fishermen who are among the most vulnerable sectors in the country. Pangilinan raised the possibility of tapping other sources of funds, such as the DA’s quick response fund. He expressed willingness to pass measures to make these funds readily available.

- [Philippines, China start oil exploration talks](#) (2026-03-29 03:14)

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippines and China have made “initial exchanges” on a potential oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, nearly four years since previous talks were

terminated in 2022. The subject was raised at the just concluded Bilateral Consultative Mechanism (BCM) on South China Sea meeting in Fujian, China, on March 28. In a statement late Saturday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said both sides took note of the progress made in other possible areas of cooperation to “increase confidence in the maritime domain,” including coast guard-to-coast guard communication and ocean meteorology. The two sides had “frank and thorough exchange of views” on the situation in the South China Sea, where Manila “firmly reiterated” its position and raised concerns over China’s actions that have “disrupted lawful activities and posed risks at sea.” “The Philippines emphasized the need for diplomacy and communication for managing differences at sea, and upholding international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award,” the DFA said. The BCM was held back-to-back with the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC), both led by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Leo Herrera-Lim and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. At the FMC, Manila said it would handle all bilateral issues in line with the Philippine national interest, “while advancing mutually beneficial cooperation especially in the economic and people-to-people areas.” Both sides discussed the need to stabilize access to energy and fertilizers, as well as potential cooperation in green and renewable energy, trade, and agriculture, against the backdrop of current global developments, including the Middle East crisis. The DFA said both states identified reconvening of appropriate bilateral mechanisms as a necessary step. Also highlighted was improving two-way tourism, through visa-free arrangements, enhanced connectivity, and prospective new direct air routes. Meanwhile, Manila emphasized that it would play a “responsible and professional role” as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year, especially on managing regional talks, upholding Asean centrality, and reinforcing a rules-based order. The DFA said the Philippines and China would convene a bilateral foreign ministers’ meeting “within the year,” following these latest talks.

- [Manhunt on for killers of five policemen](#) (2026-03-29 02:55)

COTABATO CITY – Police and military forces are tracking down gunmen who ambushed and killed five police officers and injured three others, including a police captain, on Saturday night in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur. Police also condemned the attack against police officers who were returning to their barracks after peacekeeping operations in Shariff Aguak town. The victims were members of the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company of Maguindanao del Sur Police Provincial Office. “This deliberate and cowardly act against law enforcement officers will not be tolerated,” Brig. Gen. Jaysen de Guzman, BARMM police regional director, said in a statement Sunday. De Guzman said the Maguindanao del Sur police have launched intensified manhunt operations and are pursuing all leads to identify and arrest the perpetrators. “We assure the public that all necessary measures are being undertaken to bring those responsible to justice and hold them fully accountable,” he said. Capt. Guiseppe Tamayo, Maguindanao del Sur police provincial spokesman, said the police officers were en route to Camp Akilan, the provincial police headquarters, when they were ambushed by a group of gunmen in Barangay

Poblacion Mother, Shariff Aguak, around 9:10 p.m. The five police officers were pronounced dead on arrival at the Bangsamoro Regional Medical Center in Datu Hoffer, Maguindanao del Sur. Three others remain in critical condition. Tamayo withheld their identities pending official information to their respective families. The Army's 601st Infantry Battalion is joining the police manhunt in Shariff Aguak and nearby towns

- [Manila Water announces service disruption in parts of Metro Manila, Rizal](#) (2026-03-29 02:21)

MANILA, Philippines—The Manila Water Company (Manila Water) said some areas in Metro Manila and Rizal will have service interruptions due to maintenance and service improvement activities. From 9 p.m. on March 30 to 4 a.m. on March 31, portions of Barangay Mauway, Addition Hills, and Plainview in Mandaluyong City will experience service interruption due to the installation of a PVC valve along NCMH corner Road 10. On March 31, from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. on April 1, residents in Barangay Santolan, Pasig City will be affected by a temporary water interruption due to a zero pressure test along Evangelista Avenue up to the corner of Gabriel Street. During the same period, portions of Barangay Calzada in Taguig City, particularly along Lontoc and Virata streets, will experience service disruption due to step testing activities. Meanwhile, in Rizal province, parts of Barangay Manggahan in Rodriguez will have water interruption from 10 p.m. on April 6 to 4 a.m. on April 7 due to leak repair works along Millex Road. Also in Rizal, portions of Barangay San Roque in Antipolo City will be affected during the same period due to line meter replacement along Marigman Road. Manila Water advised affected residents to store enough water ahead of the scheduled activities and to flush their taps for a few minutes once water service resumes until it runs clear. The company added that customers may contact its hotline 1627 or its official social media pages for updates and concerns.

- [Some areas in Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan to have power interruptions due to maintenance works](#) (2026-03-29 01:52)

MANILA, Philippines—Several areas in Metro Manila, Cavite and Bulacan provinces will have power interruptions from March 30 to April 1 due to maintenance and upgrading works, Meralco said Sunday. On March 30, portions of Alapan–Bucandala Road and Alapan II-B Road in Barangay Alapan II-B, Imus City, Cavite will have no electricity from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. because of the relocation of facilities for a government road project. Also on March 30, parts of Fidela Soriano Street and areas in Barangay Hulong Duhat, Malabon City will experience power interruption from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. due to replacement of facilities. In Bulacan, portions of several barangay in Paombong and Hagonoy, including Binakod, Masukol, San Jose, San Roque, Sta. Cruz, Pugad, and Tibaguin, will be without power from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. because of pole replacement works. In Makati City, parts of San Miguel Village in Barangay Poblacion, particularly along F. Zobel and nearby streets, will have no power from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. due to the installation of facilities. On March 31, portions of Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Avenue and nearby streets in Barangay Manggahan, Santolan, and Dela Paz in Pasig City will have outages

between 12:01 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. and again from 4:30 a.m. to 5 a.m. due to line reconductoring and facility replacement. Also in Pasig, parts of Ortigas Avenue and nearby areas in Barangay Ugong will be without power from 11 p.m. on March 31 to 12 a.m. on April 1 due to line reconstruction works. In Muntinlupa City, portions of Montillano Street, M. L. Quezon Avenue, and surrounding residential areas in Barangay Alabang and Cupang will have power interruption from 11 p.m. on March 31 to 4 a.m. on April 1 due to line reconductoring and relocation of facilities along the Philippine National Railways (PNR) tracks. In Manila, particularly in Tondo, parts of Tuazon and Morga streets and nearby areas will be without electricity from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on March 31 due to line reconstruction works. Also on March 31, portions of Upli-Palulum Road and nearby areas in Alfonso, Cavite will have power interruption from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the installation of primary line facilities.

- [Iran-backed Houthis enter the month-old war and could further threaten global shipping](#) (2026-03-29 00:48)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iranian-backed Houthi rebels entered the month-old war in the Middle East on Saturday, claiming two missile launches at Israel. About 2,500 U.S. Marines arrived in the region. And Pakistan's government said that regional powers plan to meet Sunday to discuss how to end the fighting. The war has threatened global supplies of oil and natural gas, sparked fertilizer shortages and disrupted air travel. Iran's grip on the strategic Strait of Hormuz has shaken markets and prices. The United States and Israel continue to strike Iran, whose retaliatory attacks have targeted Israel and neighboring Gulf Arab states. More than 3,000 people have been killed. The Houthis' entry could further hurt global shipping if they again target vessels in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off the Red Sea, through which about 12% of the world's trade typically passes. There could be limited relief after Iran on Friday agreed to allow humanitarian aid and agricultural shipments through the Strait of Hormuz following a United Nations request. U.S. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has given Iran until April 6 to reopen the strait. Witnesses in Tehran reported heavy strikes late Saturday. Israel's military earlier said that it targeted Iran's naval weapons production facilities, and said that it would finish attacking essential weapons production sites within "a few days." Iran fired missiles toward Israel, while air defenses early Sunday intercepted missiles and drones across Gulf countries. The U.S. said that it has struck more than 11,000 Iranian targets in the war. And Ukraine's president visited Gulf nations as his country offers defense help with drones. Houthi involvement sparks concerns. Houthi Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said on the rebels' Al-Masirah satellite television station that they launched missiles toward "sensitive Israeli military sites" in the south. If the Houthis increase attacks on commercial shipping, as they have in the past, it would further push up oil prices and destabilize "all of maritime security," said Ahmed Nagi, a senior Yemen analyst at the International Crisis Group. "The impact would not be limited to the energy market." The Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is crucial for vessels heading to the Suez Canal through the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia has been sending millions of barrels of crude oil a day through it because the Strait of Hormuz is effectively closed. Houthi rebels attacked more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two vessels, between November

2023 and January 2025, saying that it was acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza during the Israel-Hamas war. The Houthis' latest involvement would complicate the deployment of the USS Gerald R. Ford, the aircraft carrier that arrived in Croatia on Saturday for maintenance. Sending it to the Red Sea could draw attacks similar to those on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in 2024 and the USS Harry S. Truman in 2025. The Houthis have held Yemen's capital, Sanaa, since 2014. Saudi Arabia launched a war against the Houthis on behalf of Yemen's exiled government in 2015, and they now have an uneasy ceasefire. Diplomacy attempts as U.S. beefs up troop numbers

Pakistan said that Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt will send top diplomats to Islamabad for talks aimed at ending the war, arriving Sunday for a two-day visit. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that he and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held "extensive discussions" on regional hostilities. But Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told his Turkish counterpart by phone that Tehran was skeptical about recent diplomatic efforts. Iranian state-run media said that Araghchi accused the United States of making "unreasonable demands" and exhibiting "contradictory actions."

Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar later spoke with Araghchi and urged "an end to all attacks and hostilities." Trump envoy Steve Witkoff has said that Washington delivered a 15-point "action list" to Iran for a possible ceasefire, with a proposal to restrict Iran's nuclear program — the issue at the heart of tensions with the U.S. and Israel — and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran rejected it and presented a five-point proposal that included reparations and recognition of its sovereignty over the waterway.

Meanwhile, U.S. ships with around 2,500 Marines trained in amphibious landings have arrived, adding to the largest American force in the region in more than two decades. And at least 1,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division, trained to land in hostile territory to secure key positions and airfields, have been ordered to the Middle East.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that Washington "can achieve all of our objectives without ground troops." U.S. troops wounded at Saudi base

More than two dozen U.S. troops have been wounded in Iranian attacks on Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan Air Base in the past week, according to two people briefed on the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to comment publicly. Iran fired six ballistic missiles and 29 drones at the base Friday, injuring at least 15 troops, five of them seriously, they said. The base, about 96 kilometers (60 miles) from the Saudi capital Riyadh, was attacked twice earlier in the week, including a strike that wounded 14 U.S. troops, according to the people briefed on the matter. More than 300 U.S. service members have been wounded in the war. At least 13 have been reported killed.

Death toll climbs

Iranian authorities say more than 1,900 people have been killed in the Islamic Republic, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel. In Lebanon, where Israel has started an invasion in the south while targeting the Hezbollah militant group, officials said that more than 1,100 people in the country have been killed since the start of the war. In Iraq, where Iranian-supported militia groups have entered the conflict, 80 members of the security forces have died. In Gulf states, 20 people have been killed. Four have been killed in the occupied West Bank.

- [Oil spill deals economic blow to fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico](#) (2026-03-29 00:40)

VERACRUZ, Mexico — Every year, fish markets in the seaside Mexican city of Veracruz flood with a crush of customers in the lead up to Holy Week. This year, they were virtually empty. That's because a huge oil spill off the Gulf of Mexico has spread more than 373 miles (600 kilometers) across the ocean and seeped into seven nature reserves. Mexicans who have worked in Veracruz's booming fishing industry for years say they've been dealt a blow at one of the busiest times of the year. Markets usually jammed with customers were desolate on Friday, with some vendors loudly promoting their products in a desperate attempt to attract customers. Fishing has declined off the coasts of the seaside states of Veracruz, Tabasco and Tamaulipas since the spill. "This is our livelihood," said a worried Miguel López Rojas, owner of one of the fish stalls in the popular market. Authorities in the country said that the spill originated from a vessel anchored off the coast of the port city of Coatzacoalcos in Veracruz state and two "natural seepages." The government estimates that about 430 tons of hydrocarbons have been collected along the coasts of the three Mexican states, but have ruled out severe environmental damage from the spill. Despite that, reports and images have been circulated by local media of dead turtles, eels and fish washing up on Mexican beaches and floating near shorelines. López Rojas said that the oil spill hasn't only caused a dramatic drop in fish supplies, but also a decline in purchases, as consumers are avoiding the product. Amid public concern, federal health authorities have denied any reports of illnesses linked to consuming fish or seafood because of possible contamination. But concern nonetheless has circulated across the country. Susana Gutiérrez, a 67-year-old seamstress, said from a market in Mexico City that "you have to be careful with the pollution because we still don't know what this spill could lead to." As federal and state authorities intensify efforts to contain the spill and clean up beaches, fishermen have also struggled to make ends meet as they have been forced to almost completely halt fishing to prevent boat engines and nets from being contaminated with oil, effectively losing their main source of income. "This year has been very disastrous for us, because in all my years of life we had never experienced something of this magnitude," said Norma González Pérez, a fisherwoman from the town of Salinas in southwestern Veracruz. Veracruz is one of Mexico's main fish producers. In 2024, the eastern state generated about 2.76% of the country's fish, oyster and seafood production, according to official figures. Fish are an essential component to many of the state's traditional plates. Authorities haven't yet provided an estimate of how many fishermen have been affected by the spill, but activists say it could be several hundred. González Pérez said things have become so bad for some fishermen that they have had to resort to bank loans. Holy Week, once a festive season for them marked by an abundance because of an annual fish migration in the Gulf of Mexico, now feels a lot more grim, she said. "This year there will be no celebration or anything," González Pérez said. "This year we will basically have nothing."

- [Sailboats carrying aid reach Cuba after going missing](#) (2026-03-29 00:34)

HAVANA, Cuba — Two sailboats carrying humanitarian aid to crisis-hit Cuba reached Havana on Saturday after disappearing during a longer-than-expected journey from Mexico that triggered a search-and-rescue operation. The crew of nine -- who included American, French and German

citizens and a four-year-old boy -- appeared in good health and spirits, smiling and giving thumbs-up as they moored in the capital under clear skies. The vessels delivered the final shipments of Our America Convoy, an international humanitarian effort that has brought aid to support Cuba as a US oil blockade deepens the island's energy and economic crisis. "We are very sorry to make people worried about us. We were never in any real danger," Adnaan Stumo, a 33-year-old American and coordinator of the sailing convoy, told reporters. "It was not a very difficult journey. It's just a circuitous journey," Stumo said. The boy, he said, "is a strong, young sailor." "We're so happy to bring a crew from so many different countries that are demonstrating solidarity and support for the Cuban people in the face of this criminal blockade," Stumo said. The ships were greeted by scores of Cubans, including government officials, chanting "long live the revolution!" and "down with imperialism!" "They scared us a little because we kept wondering, 'when will they get here?'" Gerardo Hernandez, a former Cuban spy who served time in US prison, told the crowd. 'Not worried at all' The Friend Ship and Tiger Moth, which set sail from southeast Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on March 20, had been expected to arrive in Cuba on Tuesday or Wednesday. But the Mexican Navy announced a search-and-rescue mission Thursday after losing communication with them, raising concerns about their fate. After a tense wait, organizers of the convoy reported early Saturday that the Mexican Navy had finally located the boats and that the crews were safe. The Navy said one of its aircraft had spotted the sailboats 80 nautical miles northwest of Havana. It then deployed a ship to support them. Stumo said the crews agreed to take a longer route north after facing strong winds from the east. Contact was lost with the Mexican Navy because the boat's small satellite link "was on the fritz." They reestablished contact with the Mexican Navy plane. "We were not worried at all," Stumo said, noting that arriving on schedule is never a sure thing on sailboats. "We are very thankful that the Mexican Navy came out and looked for us last night." The sailboats brought medicine, food, hygiene products and other supplies. 'Cuba is next' The first shipments from the convoy arrived by plane from Europe and the United States last week. A fishing boat that was converted into an aid vessel, which had also left Mexico last week, arrived in Cuba on Tuesday. It had been escorted by a Mexican Navy ship part of the way. In total, the convoy brought more than 50 tonnes of medical supplies, food, water and solar panels to Cuba, with hospitals among the recipients. Cuban exiles in Miami and other critics have slammed the convoy as benefiting the communist government more than ordinary people. US President Donald Trump imposed a de facto oil blockade on Cuba in January after US forces seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, whose government had been Cuba's principal source of fuel. Trump has also threatened tariffs on countries that ship oil to Cuba, whose aging electricity system has been hit by regular blackouts, including two nationwide outages last week. He renewed his threats on Havana on Friday, even as the US-Israeli war against Iran entered its second month, saying "Cuba is next."

- [Iran Guards threaten to hit US universities in Mideast](#) (2026-03-29 00:30)

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's Revolutionary Guard on Sunday threatened to target US universities in the Middle East after saying US-Israeli strikes had destroyed two Iranian universities. "If the US

government wants its universities in the region to be free from retaliation... it must condemn the bombing of the universities in an official statement by 12 noon on Monday, March 30, Tehran time," said the statement published by Iranian media. The statement added: "We advise all employees, professors, and students of American universities in the region and residents of their surrounding areas" stay a kilometre away from campuses. Several US universities have campuses scattered throughout the Gulf region, such as Texas A&M University in Qatar and New York University in the United Arab Emirates. Strikes overnight Friday to Saturday hit Tehran, including the university of science and technology in the northeast of the capital, damag

- [Lebanon kids struggle to keep up studies as war slams school doors shut](#) (2026-03-29 00:26)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — In a classroom turned shelter for displaced families, teenager Ahmad Melhem follows a recorded lesson on a tablet as the war between Hezbollah and Israel interrupts education for hundreds of thousands of students in Lebanon. "I don't want to regret not finishing my studies despite the difficult circumstances," said Melhem, whose family was displaced from Beirut's southern suburbs, the site of repeated Israeli bombardment. "We took a risk and went back to get schoolbooks," he told AFP. "We're trying with everything we have to continue our education so we can achieve our goals," said the 17-year-old, who hopes to study engineering after finishing high school. Crisis-hit Lebanon was pulled into the Middle East war on March 2 when militant group Hezbollah fired rockets towards Israel to avenge the US-Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Israel has responded with large-scale strikes on Lebanon and a ground offensive in the country's south, killing more than 1,100 people -- including 122 children -- and displacing more than one million people, according to authorities. The United Nations children's agency UNICEF says the war has left almost half a million students out of school in Lebanon, after more than 350 public schools were turned into shelters and many in areas under Israeli bombardment were closed. Melhem's family and others are sharing a classroom divided up by plastic curtains at a school in a central Beirut district, the room scattered with thin mattresses and blankets, a table and small stove serving as a shared kitchen. 'Digital divide' In the corner, Melhem has set up his books and a computer screen, but there is no internet in the room. An NGO has provided internet access in the schoolyard, crowded with children playing and families socialising, but Melhem says he cannot concentrate because of the noise, so he watches the recorded classes later. His private school resumed distance learning two weeks after the war began, after cancelling subjects and shortening lessons. "In-person (class) is better and more engaging," he said. "I miss group work and the science projects we used to do." According to a 2023 World Bank report, each day of public school closures costs the Lebanese economy three million dollars. In the courtyard, Melhem's mother helps her other son, aged eight, to follow his online classes. "If I leave him alone, his mind wanders and he can't keep up with the lesson," says Salameh, 41. "The war has destroyed everything," she added. "Education is the only thing left for my children." UNICEF's head of education in Lebanon, Atif Rafique, expressed particular concern about the future of students who are preparing to enter university while the war continues. He warned of the

dangers of children dropping out of school, especially "girls and adolescent young women" who face additional risks, including early marriage. 'Not even pens' In Dekwaneh, north of Beirut, at a vocational institute that is now a shelter, Aya Zahran said she spends her day "preparing food and working to make the place livable". "We have only one phone that my siblings and I share," said Zahran, 17, who is also displaced from Beirut's southern suburbs. But "the link the school sent us (for online classes) doesn't work", she said. Rafique said hundreds of public schools lack the resources for distance learning, and noted a "big digital divide" when it comes to internet access, with teachers also affected. UNICEF has helped launch an online platform with recorded lessons, and a hotline allowing students to access materials through a phone call, without needing internet access. He said children in south Lebanon have been disproportionately affected by education interruptions since the last round of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah broke out in October 2023. Just a week before the latest war began, UNICEF reopened 30 schools in the south that had been damaged in the previous conflict, he said. At the vocational institute's entrance, an education ministry employee was registering children to assess what educational services they need. "The situation here is very difficult... there's no internet here, and not even pens," said Nasima Ismail, who has been displaced from the northeast Bekaa region, as she signed up her children. "My children are top students. I don't want them to miss out on their education, as happened to us when we were kids," said Ismail, recalling Lebanon's devastating 1975-1990 civil war. "I want them to complete their education, even if we are left with nothing," she said. "I wish them days better than ours."

- [Clear, sunny skies expected over next 5 days in PH \(2026-03-28 23:43\)](#)

MANILA, Philippines – The entire archipelago could expect clear and sunny skies at least over the next five days due to the easterlies – warm, humid winds that pass through the Pacific Ocean – the state-run weather bureau said on Sunday. Weather specialist Veronica Torres of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said, however, that localized thunderstorms would be experienced especially from late afternoon or at night. She said that Pagasa has not monitored any weather disturbance forming in or outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility in the coming days. Still, the national weather agency has said that zero to one tropical cyclone could occur this month. In particular, the easterlies would bring partly cloudy to overcast skies, isolated rain showers or thunderstorms over Metro Manila and the rest of the country within the next 24 hours, she added. As temperatures rise, particularly from late morning until mid-afternoon, Pagasa advised the public to limit outdoor activity, especially when the sun's heat is at its peak, wear light-colored clothing, use sun protection like umbrellas and hats, and stay hydrated.

- [Gatchalian Highlights Camago-3 Development Amid Malampaya Decline \(2026-03-28 16:48\)](#)

SEN. Sherwin Gatchalian said on Saturday that ongoing drilling activities at the Camago-3 gas well are a potential boost to the country's energy security amid rising global fuel prices. "While it may take time before this translates into actual supply and lower prices, it

represents a much-needed light at the end of the tunnel,” Gatchalian said. The Camago-3 well is part of the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project, a critical energy asset that supplies a significant portion of Luzon’s electricity requirements. The project has long been central to the Philippines’ efforts to reduce dependence on imported fuel and stabilize power generation costs. Energy analysts say new drilling activities are crucial as existing reserves in the Malampaya field continue to decline, raising concerns over future supply shortages and potential spikes in electricity prices. Gatchalian emphasized that the Camago-3 development highlights the urgent need for sustained exploration and increased investment in the country’s energy sector.” This underscores the importance of ensuring sufficient supply and improving affordability through continued investment in our energy sector,” the senator said. The Philippines is heavily reliant on imported oil and coal, making it vulnerable to global price fluctuations and external shocks. Recent increases in fuel costs have contributed to inflationary pressures, affecting transportation fares, food prices and electricity rates nationwide. Gatchalian has been among lawmakers pushing for a diversified energy mix that includes natural gas, renewable energy and other indigenous sources to enhance long-term energy resilience. The Department of Energy has yet to release a definitive timeline on when output from Camago-3 could begin contributing to the national grid, as testing and validation activities remain ongoing.

- [Missiles, drones rain on Gulf states, Israel](#) (2026-03-28 16:15)

TEHRAN — Gulf countries and Israel came under missile fire and Israeli forces struck Iran on Saturday, as the war raged into its second month. In a sign that the conflict may be expanding further, Israel's military said air defenses responded to a missile launched from Yemen — the first since the start of the war on Feb. 28, and after threats from Iran's Houthi allies to launch attacks. The war began when the United States and Israel launched airstrikes across Iran, killing supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and more than a thousand civilians, sending shockwaves across the globe. A month later, the conflict showed no sign of ending, with Israel announcing fresh strikes on Tehran, where an AFP journalist saw 10 intense blasts and a plume of black smoke. Emirati authorities said debris from a successful missile interception started fires at an Abu Dhabi industrial zone, injuring five Indian nationals. Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted a missile and several drones, and Bahrain said a blaze caused by the "Iranian aggression" had been brought under control. In Israel, repeated air raid sirens sent people to shelters, including in Tel Aviv, where one man was killed, and two others were wounded, and in the country's north, where media reported a simultaneous attack from Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah. An Iranian missile and drone attack on the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia wounded at least 12 American soldiers, two of them seriously, according to The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, citing unidentified officials. US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said Friday he believes Iran would hold talks with Washington "this week, we're certainly hopeful for it." Hormuz Strait closed to ‘enemies’ One major issue has been the near-closure of the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, which has sent markets into turmoil and pushed oil prices to levels not seen since the start of the war in Ukraine. Iran's

Revolutionary Guards said Friday they had turned back three ships trying to transit the Strait of Hormuz, adding the route was closed to vessels traveling to and from ports linked to its "enemies." "This morning, following the lies of the corrupt US president claiming that the Strait of Hormuz was open, three container ships of different nationalities... were turned back after a warning from the IRGC Navy," the Guards said on their Sepah News website. "The movement of any vessel 'to and from' ports of origin belonging to allies and supporters of the Zionist-American enemies, to any destination and through any corridor, is prohibited," it added. The move raises fresh doubt about which vessels are able to transit the strategic waterway, which is a conduit for a fifth of world oil and gas supplies in normal times, as well as other vital products. A total of 34 ships have been approved by Iran to transit the strait recently, using a route around Larak Island just off the country's coast, according to analysts at leading shipping journal Lloyd's List — which dubs the system the "Tehran toll booth." Most were Greek- and Chinese-owned, as well as other Indian-, Pakistani- and Syrian-owned vessels, the journal said. Energy market intelligence firm Kpler said it identified two container ships belonging to Chinese firm Cosco that had attempted to cross the strait on Friday but had turned around. The developments "suggest the situation remains highly unstable," Kpler data analyst Rebecca Gerdes said in a statement. Thailand, meanwhile, said it has reached an agreement with Iran. "An agreement has been reached to allow Thai oil tankers to transit safely through the Strait of Hormuz," Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said at a press conference, adding the development would alleviate concerns over fuel imports. "With this agreement in place, there is greater confidence that disruptions like those seen in early March will not recur," he added. More than 80 percent of the crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) that passes through the Strait of Hormuz heads to Asia, according to the US Energy Information Administration. Much of Southeast Asia is bearing the brunt of fuel supply difficulties, and long lines at gasoline stations in Thailand have become increasingly frequent. "In Manila, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian called on the government to initiate negotiations with Tehran. "In light of the ongoing surge in the price of petroleum products, which has already caused significant disruptions on the domestic front, I strongly urge the executive department to engage in high-level discussions with Iran to secure safe passage of Philippine-bound oil vessels through the Strait of Hormuz and ensure they are recognized as neutral entities," Gatchalian said. "Dangerous to the world" Trump reiterated his disappointment with NATO allies over their refusal to help secure the Strait of Hormuz, after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he had won G7 support to oppose Iran's attempts to impose a toll on the key sea lane for Gulf oil and gas exports. "It's unacceptable, it's dangerous to the world, and it's important that the world have a plan to confront it," said Rubio, who joined a meeting of G7 foreign ministers in France. The G7 ministers expressed the "absolute necessity to permanently restore safe and toll-free freedom of navigation" in the waterway and called for "an immediate cessation of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure." Rubio declared that Washington expects its military campaign to prove victorious within weeks. "When we are done with them here in the next couple of weeks, they will be weaker than they've been in recent history," he told reporters. Iran had sent "messages" to the American side but had not formally responded to the 15-point plan, Rubio said. While Trump has extended his deadline for Tehran to reopen the

Strait of Hormuz or face attacks on energy assets to April 6, Iranian media reported strikes on Friday on three Iranian nuclear facilities and two steel plants, with officials saying there was no radioactive release. Israel confirmed it had struck the Khondab heavy water complex and a uranium processing plant in Ardakan, while the UN nuclear watchdog said Iran had informed it of another strike on the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi threatened retaliation "for Israeli crimes" in a post on X, saying the attacks contradicted Trump's "extended deadline for diplomacy." Israel's military reported at least five rounds of Iranian missile fire within just over five hours, and a statement early Saturday said Israeli forces were "striking Iranian terror regime targets across Tehran." "Fingers on the trigger" Trump, swinging between threats of obliteration and optimistic talk of dealmaking, has insisted the Islamic Republic wants to "make a deal." Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned they would strike industrial sites across the region, having earlier issued similar warnings for US military bases and hotels hosting American troops. Iranian strikes have shattered the Gulf's reputation for stability, hitting Dubai's airport, Bahrain's capital, and energy facilities across the region during the course of the war. Yemen's Houthi rebels, which did not immediately comment on the missile fire reported by Israel, had warned on Friday they would join the war if US-Israeli attacks on ally Iran continued or if more countries joined the conflict. The Houthis have in the past attacked shipping in the Red Sea in response to regional conflicts, but had so far not intervened in the latest war. "We affirm that our fingers are on the trigger for direct military intervention," the group said in a statement. Tehran also called for an end to US and Israeli attacks on aligned regional groups — a reference to Hezbollah, among others, Tasnim reported. Lebanon was drawn into the war after Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2. Israel renewed strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs Friday, saying it was targeting Hezbollah infrastructure. The UN refugee agency warned Lebanon faced a deepening humanitarian crisis, risking catastrophe, with over a million people displaced. AFPTV footage showed smoke rising from the Beirut suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold largely emptied after previous Israeli evacuation warnings and heavy strikes. Red Sea threat Trump said Thursday that Iran had allowed 10 oil tankers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz as a "present" to show it was serious about negotiations to end the war. But a senior analyst at Lloyd's List, Bridget Diakun, said, "We don't see that. Unless he's talking about the ships that are in the shadow fleet... I have no idea what he's talking about." The US and Iran have been exchanging proposals this week to end the conflict via intermediary Pakistan, but no direct talks have been confirmed. Some analysts believe the discussions are doomed to fail, or could be a smokescreen for Trump as he prepares a ground offensive to reopen the strait by force or seize Iranian oil assets. Thousands of US paratroopers and extra Marines are heading to the region.

- [Japan approves subway, Mindanao highway loans](#) (2026-03-28 16:14)

JAPAN and the Philippines signed on Friday fresh loans for the Metro Manila Subway and Cagayan de Oro-Malaybalay Highway projects. In a ceremony in Pasay City, Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro and Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Endo Kazuya exchanged notes on the release of P85.45 billion for the two infrastructure projects. The fourth

tranche loan for Phase 1 of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP 1) amounts to 220 billion Japanese yen or about P84.81 billion, while the Central Mindanao Highway program amounts to 1.672 billion Japanese yen or about P644 million. The MMSP 1 covers the construction of a 27.5 km subway line from Valenzuela to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, traversing Bicutan. The phase involves the installation of a 33.1-km electromechanical system; physical integration with the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) System, particularly the Food Terminal Inc. (FTI) to Bicutan segment; construction of a depot and 17 stations; and the procurement of 30 train sets. Once completed, the subway is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion in Metro Manila and cut travel times across the capital region. “Supporting the Philippines’ development is not only vital for the country itself but also for the stability and prosperity of the wider region,” Endo said. “Japan remains firmly committed to continuing its cooperation. While our security cooperation is growing rapidly, development cooperation remains the cornerstone of Japan-Philippines relationship.” Lazaro thanked Japan for its continued support for infrastructure development in the country, saying the two projects — both key programs under the Build Better More of the Marcos administration — signal the government’s push to “make progress felt by our people.” “Growth must be both efficient and inclusive. We must ease congestion and improve integration where economic activity is concentrated and strengthen connectivity in areas where potential is still being unlocked,” she said. The second loan, meanwhile, covers the financing of engineering services for the highway section connecting Cagayan de Oro and Malaybalay to reduce travel time from 6.5 hours to 3.5 hours. The Central Mindanao High Standard Highway project, to be implemented from 2026 to 2034, will construct about 64.7 km of road with four lanes, traversing Tagoloan and Cagayan de Oro in Misamis Oriental, as well as Manolo Fortich, Sumilao, Impasugong, and Malaybalay in Bukidnon. Strengthening relations It will also cover the construction of 47 bridges, including nine special long-span bridges, each with main spans exceeding 100 meters. Lazaro emphasized that the agreements reflect the enduring partnership between Manila and Tokyo. “These projects build on the strong foundation of our existing cooperation with Japan and reflect our shared commitment to ensuring that progress in connectivity is both efficient and inclusive,” she said. Japan remains one of the Philippines’ top development partners, particularly in infrastructure financing through JICA, with ongoing support for railways, roads and disaster resilience projects across the country.

- [Carpio returns to Pag-asa Island after 14 years](#) (2026-03-28 16:13)

RETIRED Associate Justice Antonio Carpio returned to Pag-asa Island on Saturday for the first time since 2012, when the Philippines was preparing its arbitration case against China over competing claims in the West Philippine Sea. Carpio traveled to Pag-asa Island to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for what will be the first Roman Catholic Church on the island, a project aimed at supporting both civilian residents and government personnel stationed in the area. “Many things have changed here. It looks better now,” said Carpio, who is widely regarded as one of the “key architects” of the Philippines’ legal strategy against China’s claims in the South China Sea. He was instrumental in advising the government to bring the

dispute to an Unclos (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) arbitral tribunal, and was part of the official Philippine delegation to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. Also present at the ceremony were Philippine Coast Guard spokesman for the West Philippine Sea Rear Admiral Jay Tarriela, Bishop Socrates Mesiona and Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff Executive Director Teodoro Matta. Mesiona presided over a Mass attended by residents of the island and led the groundbreaking rites for the church. The project carries significance beyond its religious function, Tarriela said, describing it as a symbol of the community's enduring presence in the West Philippine Sea. "The primary objective of constructing this Roman Catholic Church on Pagasa Island is to fulfill and nurture the spiritual needs of our local residents, providing a sacred space where faith can flourish amid the threatening Chinese presence in the West Philippine Sea," Tarriela said. "Far more than a mere physical structure or architectural edifice, this church stands as a powerful symbol of hope, resilience and unity," he added. Tarriela said the initiative sends a clear message about the importance of the island to the country. "This endeavor underscores a profound truth: that Pagasa Island is unequivocally worth fighting for and defending. It sends a clear and enduring message that this island is not just a strategic outpost, but a living, breathing community deserving the protection from our government," he said.

- [Economists urge long-term solutions as peso weakens](#) (2026-03-28 16:12)

THE government should focus on long-term solutions such as diversifying energy sources and attracting more money from abroad, as the peso's recent slide drives up fuel and food costs for consumers, an economist said Saturday. Union Bank of the Philippines Chief Economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion told The Manila Times that the peso's recent depreciation was largely driven by "external shocks," particularly higher oil prices and a stronger US dollar amid the war in the Middle East, rather than domestic weakness. The economist said that a weaker peso "makes it more costly for the government to cushion fuel and food prices, as it amplifies imported inflation, even as remittances and exports provide some offset." "Policy should remain calibrated — allowing the exchange rate to act as a shock absorber while the BSP (Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas) smooths excessive volatility and fiscal support is kept targeted and temporary," Asuncion told The Times. "Over the medium term, energy diversification and stronger external inflows matter more than defending any specific peso level," he added. Robert Dan Roces, chief economist at Security Bank Corp., agreed that the peso was weakening mainly on global forces — strong dollar, higher oil, and risk aversion — "not a breakdown in local fundamentals." But he said that "it does make cushioning more costly: fuel imports, subsidies, and debt servicing all rise in peso terms." "The goal now is to smooth volatility, not defend a level — measured FX intervention, clear signaling, and tight policy coordination," Roces told The Times. "Ultimately, stability comes from fundamentals: keeping inflation anchored, fiscal discipline intact, and investor confidence steady," he added. Meanwhile, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael Ricafort told The Times that the central bank's main focus remained on price stability, saying that smoothening exchange rate volatility was key to maintaining stable inflation. Since the Philippines is a net

importer, he said, the government has also relied on non-monetary measures to cushion the impact of higher prices. Ricafort said that previous administrations used targeted subsidies as a way to reduce pass-through of higher prices and mitigate the inflationary effects while managing limited financial resources to prevent wider budget deficits and prevent incurring additional debt. “Consistency on stance on fuel taxes across different administrations and economic teams reflects fiscal discipline and prudence, based on calculated cost-benefit analysis. Larger foregone government revenues amid limited financial resources and budget deficit would also benefit more the higher income brackets than the poor,” Ricafort said. “That is why targeted subsidies have been given to the hard-hit and most vulnerable sectors, such as the poorest of the poor, such as for the transport sector/PUV drivers, fisherfolk, and agricultural sectors, to also reduce or temper the need to pass higher prices of fuel to the general public,” he added. Economist Victor Andres Manhit, founder and chief executive officer of Stratbase, said consumers should take priority over farmers as the government responds to inflation worsened by global conflict, rising fuel costs, and higher food prices. “Are we here to protect the farmers? (Or) Are we here to protect the Filipino consumers?” Manhit said. He argued that farmers would still have buyers for their produce, while the more immediate problem facing the broader public is the high cost of living. Manhit said the inflation outlook for the rest of the year remains uncertain, with global tensions continuing to strain economies and drive up the cost of fuel, power and basic goods. He said the Philippines, unlike some countries, does not subsidize power or gasoline, leaving consumers more exposed to price shocks during crises. Manhit said inflation for Filipinos is largely driven by food, particularly rice and chicken, and argued that the government should revisit the value-added tax (VAT) and review tariffs on imported rice and corn to help ease the cost of living. He said lower tariffs on rice and corn could also help bring down the prices of poultry and meat, as corn is a key input in food production. Fuel prices in the country have surged past P100 per liter as the Philippines scrambles to look for alternative sources of oil and gas. Despite the spike in fuel costs, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. maintained that the overall situation remained under control and urged the public to refrain from panic buying or hoarding. On Friday, the president said the country has enough crude oil to last until June 30. This came after Malacañang confirmed that a shipment of more than 700,000 barrels of crude oil from Russia arrived recently. The shipment was reportedly bound for the refinery of Petron Corp. in Bataan, where it will be processed into petroleum products such as diesel and gasoline. The latest delivery signals renewed efforts by the government to import oil from Russia after a pause that began in 2022, following global market disruptions due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Speaking at the sidelines of the opening of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway Phase II, Marcos said the Philippines has secured sufficient crude oil imports for the coming months to support domestic supply. “Because of that, we now have a supply of crude oil that is sufficient until June 30,” the president said. Marcos said the government would continue to look for additional suppliers to ensure long-term energy security. The president earlier said the country was looking to countries like Russia, Japan, China and South Korea. Marcos also recently issued Executive Order 110, declaring a state of national emergency, which will be in effect for one year unless sooner lifted or extended, the president said. He also signed a measure allowing the suspension of

excise taxes on fuel, although its implementation will depend on global oil price trends and recommendations from the economic cluster. Excise taxes may be suspended if global crude oil prices exceed \$80 per barrel for at least one month. CATHERINE VALENTE, JAMES DANIEL DANIO

- [Catholics mark Palm Sunday, begin Holy Week observance](#) (2026-03-28 16:11)

FILIPINO Catholics will once again flock to the churches nationwide, waving their palm leaves to commemorate Palm Sunday on March 29, marking the beginning of Holy Week. Palm Sunday honors Jesus Christ's entrance into Jerusalem before his crucifixion and resurrection. As Jesus entered the city on a donkey, people gathered and laid palm branches and their cloaks across His path. The observation dates back to the late 4th century in Jerusalem, where early devotees reenacted Jesus' entry into the city. The palm leaves symbolized victory in the ancient world. The day also marks the beginning of Holy Week and the last week of the Lenten season, one of the most significant events for Filipino Catholics. In his homily on Saturday, Fr. Jade Licuanan of Quiapo Church said this time is an opportunity to pause, reflect and prioritize spiritual activities during this sacred time. Licuanan emphasized the significance of Holy Week as a period for silence and prayer, encouraging individuals to shift their focus from leisure plans to meaningful faith-based practices. "Now, it's Holy Week. What are you talking about with your friends? Neighbors? Or cousins? Relatives? What are you planning to do during Holy Week? Huh? Where are you going to the beach?" Licuanan said in Filipino, highlighting the tendency of some to prioritize outings and vacations over spiritual observance. Licuanan reminded churchgoers that Holy Week is a time to commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He encouraged families and friends to engage in activities such as "visita iglesia" or visiting multiple churches, attending Good Friday services, participating in the Stations of the Cross, and celebrating the Easter Vigil Mass. "If that is the topic of your conversation among your peers, congratulations. You have chosen a good friend group," he said. Licuanan implored those who have already planned their vacations to "think again," urging them to schedule such activities after the Holy Week observances. He urged the faithful to plan for personal growth and a deeper faith during Holy Week, rather than treating it as a holiday. Licuanan highlighted the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model and guide during Holy Week and beyond. Drawing from the Gospel of John 11:45-56, he noted that those who came to Mary ultimately came to believe in Jesus. He encouraged the faithful to make Mary a part of their lives, families, and even their plans. "Make the Blessed Mother a part of your barkada. Make the Blessed Mother a part of your family. Make the Blessed Mother a part of your planning," he urged.

- [House Justice panel to study SC petition vs impeachment hearings](#) (2026-03-28 16:10)

The House Justice Committee said that it has taken note of the petition filed before the Supreme Court by the lawyers allied with Vice President Sara Duterte seeking to stop the ongoing impeachment hearings. The group, led by lawyer Israelito Torreon, filed a petition for certiorari and prohibition at the Supreme Court on Friday, saying that the panel "overstepped its constitutional gatekeeping role by allowing defective complaints against Duterte to proceed and conducting subpoena-driven evidentiary proceedings that resemble a trial." In a statement on

Saturday, panel chairman and Batangas City Rep. Gerville Luistro said they have not yet received or reviewed the actual petition filed by the camp of Torreon. “As with any legal pleading involving the institution, we will study it carefully once it is formally served, and we will respond through the proper legal processes,” Luistro said. She emphasized, however, that the Constitution is “equally clear in vesting upon the House of Representatives the sole power to initiate impeachment cases,” a responsibility she said that they do not take lightly and are “duty bound to carry out faithfully.” “The ongoing proceedings in the House Committee on Justice are part of this constitutional process. They are designed to determine whether probable cause exists — not to determine guilt, and not to conduct a trial. That function belongs to the Senate,” Luistro said. She further reiterated that the hearings that are being undertaken are “anchored on due process, consistent with the Constitution, the Rules on Impeachment, and relevant jurisprudence.” “The proceedings are open, orderly, and provide all parties the opportunity to be heard,” Luistro said. Some members, meanwhile, described the move as a “diversionary tactic” designed to deflect from the proceedings. Committee Vice Chairman and Manila Rep. Joel Chua said that the issues raised by Torreon’s camp are “mere hallucinations.” “We followed the due process guidelines the Supreme Court meticulously laid out in its two decisions on the previous articles,” Chua said. Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Terry Ridon, meanwhile, said that the petition “will not stop the resolve of the House Committee on Justice to exact accountability for the serious allegations against [Vice President Duterte].” “The subpoena of documents relevant to the grounds for impeachment is well within the authority of the House Committee on Justice under the 1987 Constitution and the House Rules on Impeachment, both of which expressly allow the conduct of hearings in aid of impeachment proceedings,” Ridon said. Ridon added that neither the Constitution nor the Rules of Impeachment require that all evidence be attached to the complaint at the time of the filing. “This includes the issuance of subpoenas covering the Vice President’s statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALNs), as well as tax, corporate, and banking records relating to the Duterte-Carpio couple and their business interests,” Ridon said. He reiterated that their hearing is not a fishing expedition, stressing that the subpoenas will be complied with and that Duterte will be made accountable. Meanwhile, Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Rep. Leila de Lima said that Duterte is “showing signs of desperation” in trying to evade accountability. “May pa-’ bloodbath, bloodbath’ pang sinasabi noon. Sa simpleng committee hearing nga ay takot na takot ngayon (She was warning of a bloodbath in the past, but she is scared of attending a simple committee hearing),” de Lima said.

- [Filipinas urged to take leadership positions](#) (2026-03-28 16:09)

WOMEN entrepreneurs were urged to take up space and venture into leadership positions during the Go Negosyo Women’s Summit held in Parañaque City on Saturday. The summit highlighted the increasing number of women-owned businesses, particularly in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector, and underscored the need to empower more women to lead. As the Philippines chairs this year’s Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Nora Terrado, senior adviser for Women, Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Business

Advisory Council, encouraged women to take more leadership positions that are crucial in nation-building. “We need to prove to the world that we are women leaders. The role of the Philippines during this chairship, especially for women, is to lead in Asean,” she said during the panel discussion. Trade and Industry Secretary Cristina Roque said women are not just participants in the economy but key drivers of it. “Let’s not discount what a woman can do. Because for a woman, once you push them to the wall, or once you get into a crisis, all of a sudden, all these miracles happen. A lot of big businesses have been built from small businesses, and a lot of communities have been helped because of women-led businesses. And because it’s true, women are strong, smart and resourceful. We’re not just a part of the economy. We are the ones in charge of it,” said Roque. In 2025, Roque said women own about 66 percent of MSMEs in the country and account for 62 percent of new business registrations. She said these numbers show the courage, resilience and determination of women to uplift their communities. Roque urged women entrepreneurs that, amid the crisis where prices of goods are increasing, there are opportunities they can take advantage of to grow. “In every crisis, not everyone loses; a lot of people also win in crisis, so let’s look for those opportunities,” she said. Meanwhile, broadcast journalist and United Nations Women’s National Goodwill Ambassador Karen Davila explained why women make effective leaders, noting their responsiveness in crises. She stressed the importance of empowering women at the grassroots level, pointing out that they are often the most affected by poverty. “Many women who are at the grassroots level get left behind. As we say in UN Women, ‘poverty is the face of the she.’ So we have to pay attention to the women in the grassroots level,” she explained. To address this, she encouraged women to support and uplift each other. “In times of crisis like this. What can we do? I always give this challenge to women: Are you mentoring other women? Are you helping another woman?” she said. During the event, Go Negosyo also awarded the 2026 Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneurs Awards to Filipina entrepreneurs for their contributions to economic development and job creation in their own communities.

- [DOH raises Code White Alert during Holy Week](#) (2026-03-28 16:08)

THE Department of Health (DOH) announced Friday it will raise a Code White Alert for Holy Week. Under the Code White Alert, effective March 30 to April 6, health emergency teams, medical supplies and emergency rooms in DOH hospitals will be on standby 24/7 to respond to health-related emergencies. The alert covers the DOH Central Office, regional Centers for Health Development and hospitals to ensure readiness to respond to medical needs during the Holy Week period. DOH spokesman Albert Domingo urged the public to take precautionary measures as they travel to provinces to observe Holy Week traditions. “Even as DOH is ready to rescue this Holy Week, health and safety begins with you,” Domingo told The Manila Times. He advised the public to stay hydrated and avoid direct sunlight as the summer heat intensifies. “Stay hydrated as the heat is on: Drink seven to eight glasses of clean and plain water a day [except for patients under medical supervision]. Wear loose and light-colored clothing following the norms required by the places to visit. Avoid direct sunlight from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Keep vehicles well maintained; rest well, and do not drink and drive. Choose dry and sour food for packed

lunches, avoiding those that spoil easily,” he added. He reminded the public to call the nationwide emergency hotline, 911, in the event of medical emergencies.

- [New Bill Seeks 40-Year Sentence and Stricter Penalties for Sexual Violence](#) (2026-03-28 16:07)

HOUSE of Representatives Senior Deputy Minority Leader and Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Rep. Leila de Lima has filed a measure to strengthen the protection of women and children against rape and sexual violence. De Lima filed House Bill 8716 on March 23 to expand the definition of rape by emphasizing the absence of consent, recognizing grooming as a form of predatory conduct that may lead to sexual abuse and imposing harsher penalties when the crime is committed by persons in positions of authority or trust. Under the measure, violators will be penalized with 40 years of imprisonment without parole. By strengthening definitions, penalties and accountability mechanisms, she said, the proposed measure seeks to reinforce the State’s commitment to protecting individuals from sexual violence and exploitation, and to upholding their fundamental rights to dignity, safety and justice. De Lima, in a news release on Saturday, noted that incidents of violence and abuse across genders and sexual orientations remain significantly underreported due to fear, stigma and barriers to accessing justice. This highlights the need to strengthen legal safeguards and enforcement mechanisms against these human rights violations. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority recorded 11,479 cases of rape involving girls below 16 years old in 2023, yet no cases were filed under Republic Act 11648 during the same period. Meanwhile, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund, 2 million children in the Philippines were subjected to online sexual abuse and exploitation in 2021 alone.” With these alarming figures, we aim to implement stronger procedural safeguards against sexual exploitation, including mandatory reporting obligations, the prohibition of amicable settlements and affidavits of desistance in rape cases, and better protections for the privacy and identity of victims,” the former chairman of the Commission on Human Rights said.” At a time when cases of rape and sexual abuse on digital platforms remain rampant, and when some government officials and persons in positions of authority or trust tolerate vulgarity and harassment, we urgently need a stronger law to ensure greater accountability.”

- [Benitez Files P50-Billion RESCUE Act for Economic Crisis Response](#) (2026-03-28 16:06)

BACOLOD CITY — Negros Occidental 3rd District Rep. Javier Miguel Benitez filed a bill electronically on Friday that aims to create a system for a faster, more proactive economic crisis response. Under his proposed Resilient Economy and Stabilization for Crisis and Urgent Emergencies (Rescue) Act, the government would release at least P50 billion once a state of emergency is declared. Benitez said the bill would push for a broader and more institutionalized economic response system that builds on the framework of the Bayanihan Economic Resilience Bill, which would provide the government with the tools to address large-scale economic disruptions. In a statement released on Saturday, Benitez said transport workers, fishermen, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in conflict-prone areas, and micro, small and medium enterprises are among those most at risk from the ongoing crisis. He noted that effects are

expected to ripple across sectors in a systemic way, affecting communities and the broader economy. “We are not buying a fire truck if the house is currently burning, but that is what we are doing,” Benitez said. “During Covid[-19], we wrote two emergency laws and spent P646 billion while the crisis was already on top of us. Now, with diesel costing P130 per liter, fishermen cannot go out in the sea and 2 million OFWs are in the conflict zone.” His bill was filed amid the war in the Middle East that is affecting the Strait of Hormuz, with oil prices nearing \$115 a barrel and local diesel prices expected to reach around P140 to P150 per liter by next week. Under the bill, a Bayanihan Economic Stabilization Fund with a target of P50 billion will be created. It would be mobilized once a state of national emergency is declared, with assistance deployed within 72 hours. Besides the fund, a standing council called the National Economic Resilience Council would be created to coordinate response efforts, while an Economic Early Warning System would be set up to monitor risks and enable timely intervention. “We should create the Rescue Act before the next crisis,” Benitez said. “A permanent fund of P50 billion, a standing council, early warning system, and once an emergency is declared, the help should be received within 72 hours.” The proposed measure also strengthens emergency protections, including direct cash transfers, fuel and wage subsidies and mandatory grace periods on loans, rent, utilities and insurance during declared national emergencies. It also includes provisions to boost supply chain resilience, energy security and strategic reserves. Benitez said his bill aims to ensure stronger preparedness and faster response mechanisms, addressing gaps in current emergency frameworks and strengthening the country’s overall economic resilience. At the Senate, Sen. Loren Legarda pushed for the Bayanihan Power to the People Act, or Bayanihan 3 Law, which seeks to establish a comprehensive and coordinated government response to the ongoing global oil crisis. The senator warned against overreliance on price controls, describing them as temporary solutions that fail to address structural issues. “The nation risks repeatedly choosing between high prices or high subsidies — both of which are unsustainable,” she said. The proposed Bayanihan 3 Law seeks to grant the executive branch expanded but time-bound powers to respond decisively to the crisis. Its key features include the possible temporary exemption of value-added tax on basic goods and essential services to ease inflationary pressure; acceleration of renewable energy development, alternative transport systems and energy efficiency programs; emergency measures such as increased taxes on luxury and sin goods, and the proposed imposition of a wealth tax; and economic stabilization mechanisms to cushion the inflationary effects of rising fuel costs. The bill also aims to reduce the country’s vulnerability to global oil price volatility by promoting domestically sourced and sustainable energy systems.

- [1,297 special bus permits OKd for Holy Week rush](#) (2026-03-28 16:04)

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has granted special permits to 1,297 passenger buses nationwide to accommodate the expected surge of travelers during the upcoming Holy Week break. In a statement issued on Saturday, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the additional buses are meant to address the anticipated influx of commuters heading to the provinces, noting that Holy Week travel remains a significant annual movement

for Filipino families. “The increase in the number of passengers at this time of the year is normal because this is an annual religious activity that is really important for the Filipino people,” Mendoza said. He added that higher fuel prices may further encourage more people to use public transportation instead of private vehicles. The LTFRB said it would closely monitor passenger volume in terminals and deploy additional units if necessary to respond to real-time demand. Mendoza also directed bus operators to ensure the roadworthiness of their units before deployment. Regional directors have been ordered to conduct inspections in terminals covering buses and other public utility vehicles (PUVs) as part of broader safety preparations. Likewise, the agency is coordinating with local government units and law enforcement agencies to strengthen road safety enforcement and provide travel assistance. “Our goal is to ensure the safety of commuters and other road users by ensuring the roadworthiness of buses and other PUVs, as well as the physical and mental readiness of drivers,” Mendoza said. Apart from road safety, the LTFRB reiterated the need for terminal operators to comply with regulations on passenger safety and comfort. The agency noted that it had intensified inspections in recent weeks following complaints about poor terminal conditions. Several terminal operators have already been issued show-cause orders and notices of violation, and some facilities were shut down for serious breaches of safety standards. “Aside from the safety of PUVs on the road, we also have to make sure that all passengers are comfortable and treated well inside the terminals,” Mendoza said, warning that violators would be held accountable. Millions of Filipinos are expected to travel to the provinces for the Holy Week, prompting heightened preparations by transport and security agencies.

- [Several Pasay roads closed for running event](#) (2026-03-28 16:02)

SEVERAL roads in Pasay City will be closed early Sunday for the Rexona 10 Miler Run 2026, according to the Pasay Traffic and Parking Management Office. The traffic office said the closures will take effect from 1:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. today, March 29, to ensure the safety of participants and the smooth conduct of the event. Affected roads include SM Mall of Asia Block 16, Seaside Avenue, Diokno Avenue with a zipper lane at the impounding area, Buendia Extension, Macapagal Avenue up to the PNB U-turn with a zipper lane, Jalandoni Street northbound and Sotto Street with a zipper lane at the PICC side. Also covered by the road closure are Roxas Boulevard southbound from Quirino Avenue up to the boundary of Parañaque City, Bukanig Street with a zipper lane and Atang dela Rama with a zipper lane at the PICC side. Motorists were advised to plan their trips and take alternate routes to avoid inconvenience, the traffic office said.

- [Sara, Kitty Duterte Send Emotional 81st Birthday Messages to Father in The Hague](#) (2026-03-28 16:01)

THE daughters of former president Rodrigo Duterte released greetings to their father as he celebrates his 81st birthday on March 28 in incarceration. For a year now, Duterte has been in the custody of the International Criminal Court at Scheveningen Prison in The Hague for alleged

crimes against humanity in relation to his war on drugs. In a video message on Saturday, Vice President Sara Duterte thanked the parallel support groups, volunteers and the “millions of Filipinos” in the Philippines and abroad who organized celebrations to honor him. “Your loyalty to him is a testament to a leadership that truly prioritized the safety and dignity of every Filipino family,” Sara said. She said the defense of his rights as a Filipino is a defense of national sovereignty, urging everyone to be vigilant against the weaponization of the law and the unconstitutional intrusion of foreign bodies that seek to bypass Filipino courts. “Our justice system must remain independent, serving only the mandate of the Filipino people and never the interests of foreign powers,” Sara said. Meanwhile, in a post on her official Instagram account, Veronica Duterte said she will be “forever 12” years old whenever she is with her father, whom she described as her “mirror.” “I am right in front of you, like a mirror resembling in your character, bravery, grit, volition — but not even half your heart. I am just fine being in your shadow because I know no one can replace your heart,” Veronica, also known as Kitty, said. Kitty said she now understands that loving him to the point of truly knowing him revealed that he is a “difficult person, but it’s either I love you or I don’t. I sacrifice for you or I don’t. I choose you or I don’t. I fight with you or I don’t. It’s always all or nothing.” “Only now have I understood, now that I’m turning 22 and have put you first, through it all and above all,” Kitty said. She said the greatest gift she could give to her father is to be “strong like you and strong for you.” The former president’s party, Partido Demokratiko Pilipino, also greeted its chairman, saying members are “deeply grateful” for his visionary leadership and the unwavering courage he showed in serving the Filipino people. “Your legacy of ‘Tapang at Malasakit’ (Strength and Compassion) continues to inspire us as we work together toward a better future for the nation,” the party said. Lawyer Paolo Panelo said fighting before the Supreme Court for his writ of habeas corpus case is “one of the greatest honors” of his life. “Not only because it is a landmark case that only a few lawyers will ever experience in their lifetimes, but more so because I am fighting for what is right for someone I care about and admire,” said Panelo, son of Duterte’s former presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo.

- [Filipino Catholics mark Palm Sunday, opening Holy Week observance](#) (2026-03-28 15:15)

MANILA, Philippines—Filipino Catholics will once again flock to the churches nationwide, waving their palm leaves to commemorate Palm Sunday on March 29, marking the beginning of Holy Week. Palm Sunday honors Jesus Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem prior to his resurrection. As Jesus entered the city on a donkey, people gathered and laid palm branches and their cloaks across Jesus’ path. The observation dates back to the late 4th century in Jerusalem, where early devotees reenacted Jesus’s entry into the city, said Britannica. In earlier times, the palm leaves symbolized victory in the ancient world. The day also marks the beginning of the Holy Week and the last week of the Lenten season, one of the most significant events for Filipino Catholics. Fr. Jade Licunan of Quiapo Church said this time of the Holy Week is an opportunity to pause, reflect, and prioritize spiritual activities during this sacred time. In his homily on Saturday, Licunan emphasized the significance of Holy Week as a period for silence and prayer,

encouraging individuals to shift their focus from leisure plans to meaningful faith-based practices.

- ['Policy should remain calibrated,' says economist amid weak peso](#) (2026-03-28 14:59)

MANILA, Philippines- The government should focus on long-term solutions, such as diversifying energy sources and attracting more foreign investment, as the Philippine peso's recent slide drives up fuel and food costs for consumers, an economist said on Saturday. Union Bank of the Philippines chief economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion told The Manila Times that the peso's recent depreciation has been largely driven by "external shocks," particularly higher oil prices and a stronger US dollar amid the war in the Middle East, rather than by domestic weakness. He noted that a weaker peso "makes it more costly for the government to cushion fuel and food prices, as it amplifies imported inflation, even as remittances and exports provide some offset." "Policy should remain calibrated—allowing the exchange rate to act as a shock absorber while the BSP smooths excessive volatility and fiscal support is kept targeted and temporary," Asuncion said. "Over the medium term, energy diversification and stronger external inflows matter more than defending any specific peso level," he added.

- [ABS-CBN not party to Lopez family dispute](#) (2026-03-28 14:37)

Amid recent news reports of an internal dispute involving the Lopez family, multimedia giant ABS-CBN said it is not a party to the issue. The statement from the network's board of directors came after reports surfaced that Federico "Piki" Lopez had sued his cousins, led by ABS-CBN chairman emeritus Eugenio Lopez III, over his removal from Lopez Inc., the group's private holding firm. The board said claims of "unresolved audit findings" are unfounded, stressing that no such audit findings exist. Directors also dismissed allegations that the proposed capital infusion could be used for "payouts for certain executives," calling the claim "equally baseless" and emphasizing that no payouts have been made or planned. "Since losing its franchise in 2020, the company has faced challenges unlike any in its history. ABS-CBN has not stopped fighting to ensure its continued existence. It has not stopped serving," the board said. "The last thing it needs is for its people to be misrepresented in a dispute it is not involved in," it added.

- [Former budget secretary named as Asian liberals head](#) (2026-03-28 14:11)

Former budget secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad has been elected as the new chairman of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), the Liberal Party of the Philippines (LP) announced on Saturday. Abad previously served as CALD chairman from 1999 to 2000. "The question is no longer whether democracy will expand. The question is whether democracy will survive," Abad said in his acceptance speech. He cited growing threats to democracy worldwide, including the rise of elected authoritarianism, the erosion of institutions, the spread of disinformation, deepening inequality, and the weakening of democratic norms. Despite these challenges, Abad expressed optimism about the "rise of a new generation of citizens," noting their active role in demanding accountability, challenging corruption, and reshaping political

landscapes. “They are not passive citizens—they are agents of democratic disruption and renewal,” he said of young people. “In 2000, we believed democracy was the future. In 2026, we must fight to ensure it still is,” Abad added. He also outlined six priorities for Asian liberal democrats: restoring integrity in public finance and governance; rebuilding and protecting democratic institutions; defending truth in the age of artificial intelligence; preventing the abuse of technology; making democracy deliver tangible results for people; and investing in the next generation of democratic leaders. Abad previously served as LP president from 1999 to 2004. He also served as Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management under then president Benigno Aquino III.

- [Marcos urges Filipinos to join Earth Hour, conserve energy](#) (2026-03-28 13:55)

MANILA, Philippines- President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Saturday called on Filipinos to take part in Earth Hour this year, stressing the need for energy preservation and limiting fuel consumption amid the ongoing global energy crisis. This year’s World Wide Fund for Nature’s Earth Hour is scheduled from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. local time. In a video message, the President said this year’s observance, themed “Switch on Habits for Earth,” is especially relevant as the country faces rising fuel costs and global uncertainties. “This year’s event provides a timely and relevant opportunity for us to reflect, not only on the issue of climate change and environmental preservation, but also on the need to conserve energy and to limit fuel consumption amid the current global crisis,” Marcos said. “The simple act of turning off our lights for one hour goes a long way. So, I invite every Filipino to participate in this cause and be inspired by the theme, Switch on Habits for Earth. May the true meaning of Earth Hour be part of our lives starting tonight,” he added.

- [More bypass roads to be opened to help ease oil price hike effects](#) (2026-03-28 11:00)

MANILA, Philippines – President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to open more bypass roads in the country to help reduce gasoline consumption amid the oil price hikes. In a statement on Friday, DPWH Secretary Vince Dizon said aside from saving on gasoline, opening bypass roads would also speed up the delivery of services. He added that the newly opened Lipa-Padre Garcia Bypass Road will serve as an alternative route to the Manila-Batangas Road and Lipa-Rosario Road to ease the traffic flow in Lipa City. “The President has repeatedly told us: speed up the delivery of services to our countrymen. Let’s speed up all construction, because we need to open new roads to avoid traffic,” Dizon said during the opening of the bypass road in Batangas. “The bypass roads we opened – they are a huge relief, a huge reduction in traffic, a huge reduction in fuel consumption.” Meanwhile, the President has also ordered to expedite the construction of farm-to-market roads (FMR) in the country, Dizon said during the inspection of the FMR project in Barangay New Casay, Braulio E. Dujali, Davao del Norte on Friday with Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. He said once the remaining 1.9 km. section of the FMR is completed, the journey of transporting their produce from New Casay to Dujali is expected to be shortened by 15 minutes from 30 minutes. “With only 800 meters (of the farm-to-market road), the cost of

crude oil will be reduced by half. When we finish this, our farmers, all the way to Tagum, will benefit,” he said. “The President said that all the missing (parts) must be passed on because the assistance is really big.” Dizon also noted that they would address the lack of riprap and drainage systems in the area to prevent flooding and protect the farms and livelihoods of residents.

- [Marcos orders removal of cash aid tarpaulin with his photo](#) (2026-03-28 07:42)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the removal of a tarpaulin bearing his photo at a cash aid distribution site, Malacañang said. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the directive was in line with Marcos’ commitment to the “anti-epal” provision of the 2026 General Appropriations Act (GAA). Castro said the president himself called out the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) over the issue. “When President Marcos Jr. saw a tarpaulin that had his picture on it, he ordered that his image be removed. So now it’s no longer there—he addressed it, he called out the DSWD,” Castro said during a press briefing on Friday. Castro issued the statement after Bayan president Renato Reyes questioned whether Marcos was exempt from the “anti-epal” provision, citing a tarpaulin that read: “Serbisyo at Tulong mula kay Pangulong Bongbong Marcos (Service and assistance from President Bongbong Marcos).” The 2026 GAA specifically prohibits public officials, candidates, politicians, political parties or their representatives from taking part in or influencing the distribution of cash assistance for political mileage or to further their own interests. Castro said while the president was not exempted from this provision, the public should also know his projects for their welfare.

- [House justice panel 'to study' SC petition filed by Duterte allies to stop impeachment hearings](#) (2026-03-28 07:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives' Committee on Justice said that it has “taken note” of the petition filed before the Supreme Court to stop its impeachment proceedings against Vice President Sara Duterte. The group, led by Israelito Torreon, filed a petition for certiorari and prohibition at the Supreme Court on Friday, saying that the panel “overstepped its constitutional gatekeeping role by allowing defective complaints against Duterte to proceed and conducting subpoena-driven evidentiary proceedings that resemble a trial.” In a statement on Saturday, Panel chairman and Batangas City Rep. Gerville Luistro said that they have not yet received or reviewed the actual petition filed by the camp of Torreon. “As with any legal pleading involving the institution, we will study it carefully once it is formally served, and we will respond through the proper legal processes,” Luistro said. She, however stressed that the Constitution was “equally clear in vesting upon the House of Representatives the sole power to initiate impeachment cases,” a responsibility that they do not take lightly and is “duty bound to carry out faithfully.” “The ongoing proceedings in the House Committee on Justice are part of this constitutional process. They are designed to determine whether probable cause exists—not to determine guilt, and not to conduct a trial. That function belongs to the Senate,” Luistro said. She further reiterated that the hearings that were being undertaken was “anchored on due

process, consistent with the Constitution, the Rules on Impeachment, and relevant jurisprudence." "The proceedings are open, orderly, and provide all parties the opportunity to be heard," Luistro said. Some members, meanwhile, described the move as a "diversionary tactic" designed to deflect from the proceedings. In a statement, Committee vice chairman and Manila Rep. Joel Chua said that the issues raised by Torreon's camp were "mere hallucinations". "We followed the due process guidelines the Supreme Court meticulously laid out in its two decisions on the previous Articles," Chua said. Bicol Saro Partylist Rep. Terry Ridon, meanwhile said that the petition "will not stop the resolve of the House Committee on Justice to exact accountability for the serious allegations against [Vice President Duterte],"

- [Metro LGUs to join Earth Hour observance, call on residents to switch off non-essential lights](#) (2026-03-28 07:27)

MANILA, Philippines — Several Metro Manila local government units will join the observance of Earth Hour on Saturday, calling on residents to switch off non-essential lights and take part in the global campaign for environmental protection. The main Earth Hour Philippines event, organized with WWF-Philippines, will be held at Arcovia City in Pasig, with doors opening at 4:30 p.m., while the symbolic switch-off of non-essential lights is set at exactly 8:30 p.m. Pasig City called on residents to take part in the observance either by joining the ceremonial switch-off at Arcovia City or by turning off non-essential lights from their homes, offices or public spaces. The WWF-Philippines said the Arcovia City event would also feature performances from local music artists like Lola Amour, Clara Benin and The Riddleys ahead of the symbolic lights-off. In its advisory, the Pasig city government said even small actions could create a wider impact when done collectively, as it encouraged residents to spread the campaign among their families, friends and neighbors. Pasay City will also take part in the annual lights-off movement, with Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano urging the public to become more conscious of their role in protecting the environment. "Today, we join the rest of the world in honoring and caring for our ultimate provider of what we have today, Mother Earth," Calixto-Rubiano said. She said Pasay was moving toward its goal of becoming a smart and sustainable eco-city, adding that the city wanted to be at the forefront of efforts to protect the planet. "Together, let us be eco-conscious advocates and take part in this year's Earth Hour," she said. WWF-Philippines said Earth Hour began in Sydney in 2007, when people switched off their lights for one hour to show support for the planet, and has since grown into a global movement joined by millions each year. The group said the annual observance may not solve the climate crisis on its own, but it serves as a reminder that many people around the world still care and are willing to take part in collective action for the environment. Other Metro Manila city governments also issued similar calls for participation as local officials encouraged communities across the capital region to observe the one-hour switch-off.

- [De Lima wants tougher protection for women, children vs. rape, abuse](#) (2026-03-28 06:33)

MANILA, Philippines – House of Representatives Senior Deputy Minority Leader, Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Rep. Leila De Lima, has filed a measure to strengthen the protection of women

and children against rape and sexual violence. De Lima filed House Bill 8716 on March 23 to expand the definition of rape to emphasize the absence of consent; recognize grooming as a form of predatory conduct that may lead to sexual abuse; and impose harsher penalties when the crime is committed by persons in positions of authority or trust. Under the measure, violators will be penalized with 40 years of imprisonment without parole. By strengthening definitions, penalties, and accountability mechanisms, she said, the proposed measure seeks to reinforce the State's commitment to protect individuals from sexual violence and exploitation and to uphold their fundamental rights to dignity, safety, and justice. De Lima, in a news release on Saturday, noted that incidents of violence and abuse across genders and sexual orientations remain significantly underreported due to fear, stigma, and barriers to accessing justice, highlighting the need to strengthen legal safeguards and enforcement mechanisms against these human rights violations. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority recorded 11,479 cases of rape involving girls below 16 years old in 2023, yet no case was filed under RA 11648 during the same period. Meanwhile, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), two million children in the Philippines were subjected to online sexual abuse and exploitation in 2021 alone. "With these alarming figures, we aim to implement stronger procedural safeguards against sexual exploitation, including mandatory reporting obligations, the prohibition of amicable settlements and affidavits of desistance in rape cases, and better protections for the privacy and identity of victims," the former chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights said. "At a time when cases of rape and sexual abuse on digital platforms remain rampant, and when some government officials and persons in positions of authority or trust tolerate vulgarity and harassment, we urgently need a stronger law to ensure greater accountability."

- [LTFRB approves 1,297 special bus permits ahead of Holy Week travel surge](#) (2026-03-28 05:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has granted special permits to 1,297 passenger buses nationwide to accommodate the expected surge of travelers during the upcoming Holy Week break. In a statement issued Saturday, LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the additional buses were meant to address the anticipated influx of commuters heading to the provinces, noting that Holy Week travel remains a significant annual movement for Filipino families. "The increase in the number of passengers at this time of the year is normal because this is an annual religious activity that is really important for the Filipino people," Mendoza said. He added that higher fuel prices may further drive more people to opt for public transportation instead of using private vehicles. The LTFRB said it would closely monitor passenger volume in bus terminals and deploy additional units if necessary to respond to real-time demand. Mendoza also directed bus operators to ensure the roadworthiness of their units before deployment. Regional directors have been ordered to carry out inspections in terminals covering buses and other public utility vehicles (PUVs), as part of broader safety preparations. The agency is likewise coordinating with local government units and law enforcement agencies to strengthen road safety enforcement and provide assistance to travelers. "Our goal is to ensure the safety of commuters and other road users by ensuring the

roadworthiness of buses and other PUVs, as well as the physical and mental readiness of drivers,” Mendoza said. Apart from road safety, the LTRFB reiterated the need for terminal operators to comply with regulations on passenger safety and comfort. The agency noted that it had intensified inspections in recent weeks following complaints about poor terminal conditions. Several terminal operators have been issued show cause orders and notices of violation, while some facilities were shut down for serious breaches of safety standards. “Aside from the safety of PUVs on the road, we also have to make sure that all passengers are comfortable and treated well inside the terminals,” Mendoza said, warning that violators would be held accountable. Millions of Filipinos are expected to travel to the provinces during the Holy Week period, prompting heightened preparations across transport and security agencies.

- [Emergency crisis response system bill filed at House](#) (2026-03-28 04:56)

MANILA, Philippines — Negros Occidental 3rd District Rep. Javier Miguel Benitez will file a bill that will create a system for a faster, more proactive economic crisis response, including a fund worth at least P50 billion to be released once a state of emergency is declared. The "Resilient Economy and Stabilization for Crisis and Urgent Emergencies (RESCUE) Act" seeks for a broader and more institutionalized economic response system that builds on the framework of the Bayanihan Economic Resilience Bill, which will provide government with the tools to address large-scale economic disruptions. In a statement on Saturday, Benitez said that transport workers, fisherfolk, overseas Filipino workers in conflict-prone areas, and micro, small, and medium enterprises were among those most at risk from the ongoing crisis, with its effects expected to ripple across sectors in a systemic way, affecting communities and the broader economy. “We are not buying a fire truck if the house is currently burning, but that is what we are doing. During Covid, we wrote two emergency laws and spent P646 billion while the crisis was already on top of us. Now, with diesel costing P130 per liter, fishermen cannot go out in the sea and two million OFWs are in the conflict zone,” Benitez said. The bill was filed as the war in the Middle East has affected operations along the Strait of Hormuz, with Iran blocking the passage of vessels allied with US and Israel, causing oil prices to jack up close to \$115 a barrel. Under the bill, a "Bayanihan Economic Stabilization Fund" with a target of P50 billion will be created, which would be mobilized once a state of national emergency is declared, with assistance deployed within 72 hours. Aside from the fund, a National Economic Resilience Council will also be created to coordinate response efforts, while an Economic Early Warning System will be set up to monitor risks and enable timely intervention.

- [Pasay roads closed for running event](#) (2026-03-28 04:43)

MANILA, Philippines — Several roads in Pasay City will be closed early Sunday for a running event, according to the Pasay Traffic and Parking Management Office. The traffic office said the closures would be enforced from 1:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. to ensure the safety of participants and the smooth conduct of the Rexona 10 Miler Run 2026. Affected roads include SM MOA Block 16, Seaside Avenue, Diokno Avenue with zipper lane at the impounding area, Buendia Extension,

Macapagal Avenue up to the PNB U-turn with zipper lane, Jalandoni Street northbound, and Sotto Street with zipper lane at the PICC side. Also covered by the road closure are Roxas Boulevard southbound from Quirino Avenue up to the boundary of Parañaque City, Bukanig Street with zipper lane, and Atang dela Rama with zipper lane at the PICC side. Motorists were advised to plan their trips ahead and take alternate routes to avoid inconvenience, the traffic office said.

- [Sara, Kitty greet dad on 81st birthday](#) (2026-03-28 02:39)

MANILA, Philippines -- The daughters of former president Rodrigo Duterte greeted him as he celebrated his 81st birthday today, March 28. Duterte has been detained for a year at the International Criminal Court's Scheveningen Prison at The Hague for crimes against humanity in relation to his war on drugs. In a video message on Saturday, Vice President Sara Duterte thanked the parallel support groups, volunteers and the "millions of Filipinos" in the Philippines and abroad who have organized celebrations to honor him. "Your loyalty to him is a testament to a leadership that truly prioritized the safety and dignity of every Filipino family," Sara said. She also said that the defense of his rights as a Filipino was also a defense of the national sovereignty, urging everyone to be vigilant against the weaponization of the law and the unconstitutional intrusion of foreign bodies that sought to bypass Filipino courts. "Our justice system must remain independent, serving only the mandate of the Filipino people and never the interests of foreign powers," Sara said. Meanwhile, in a post on her official Instagram account, Veronica Duterte said that she would be "forever 12" years old whenever she would be with her father, whom she described as her "mirror." "I am right in front of you, like a mirror resembling in your character, bravery, grit, volition—but not even half your heart. I am just fine being in your shadow because I know no one can replace your heart," Veronica, also known as Kitty, said. Kitty also said that she now understood that loving him to the point of truly knowing him revealed that he is a "difficult person, but it's either I love you or I don't. I sacrifice for you or I don't. I choose you or I don't. I fight with you or I don't. It's always all or nothing." "Only now have I understood, now that I'm turning 22 and have put you first, through it all and above all," Kitty said. She said that her greatest gift that she could give to her father was to be "strong like you and strong for you." VIDEO FROM OVP COMMUNICATIONS

- [PH, Japan seal new loan agreements for subway, Mindanao highway projects](#) (2026-03-28 02:16)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines and Japan formalized fresh financing agreements for two major infrastructure projects aimed at improving urban mobility in Metro Manila and regional connectivity in Mindanao, reinforcing bilateral cooperation under the government's infrastructure drive. Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro and Japanese Ambassador Endo Kazuya signed and exchanged diplomatic notes at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) covering the fourth tranche loan for the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) Phase 1 and the engineering services loan for the Central Mindanao High Standard Highway Project. Officials from the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Public Works and Highways

(DPWH), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) attended the ceremony on Friday. Major subway funding secured The largest component of the agreements is a ¥220 billion (approximately ₱84.81 billion or \$1.48 billion) loan for the fourth tranche of the Metro Manila Subway Project Phase 1, one of the flagship infrastructure programs of the Marcos administration. The MMSP involves the construction of a 27.5-kilometer underground railway system connecting Valenzuela City to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in Bicutan.

- [DOH to raise Code White Alert for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-28 02:13)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) is set to raise a Code White Alert for Holy Week. In a statement late Friday, the agency said the alert would be in effect from March 30 to April 6, 2026, as part of the agency's preparedness and response measures. Under the Code White Alert, health emergency teams, medical supplies, and emergency rooms in DOH hospitals are on standby 24/7 to respond to road crash incidents, injuries, and other health-related emergencies in the coming week.

- [NCCA, PhilPost launches new stamps for Holy Week](#) (2026-03-27 19:36)

MANILA, Philippines—The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Philippine Postal Corporation (PhilPost) on Friday launched a new set of commemorative stamps for Holy Week. The stamps feature the Stations of the Cross, with a total of 14 stamps—each representing one station. Speaking at the NCCA's inaugural lenten cultural recollection, NCCA Chairman and Executive Director Eric Zerrudo said the stamps serve as a visual reminder of how faith has long been embedded in Filipino culture. “These stamps will serve as proof and as a visual reminder of our faith and culture,” he said. The stamps will be made available to the public next week, in time for the Holy Week observation.

- [Women are excellent peacemakers'](#) (2026-03-27 19:15)

MANILA, Philippines- The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (Opapru) concluded its Gender and Development (GAD) lecture and forum series, highlighting the significant contributions of women in the Philippine peace process. The fourth series, which is among the major activities of this year's National Women's Month celebrations, featured a diverse panel of women peacebuilders, which included Iona Jalijali, Country Representative of Center for Humanitarian Dialogue; Nur-Ainee Tan Lim, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Social Services and Development; Elisa Lapiña, Opapru Director for Local Conflict Transformation-Field Implementation Support Unit Mindanao; and Veronica “Ka Inca” Tabara, GPH-Kapatiran Joint Enforcement and Monitoring Committee. In her opening remarks, Opapru Executive Director for Peace Sustainability Susana Guadalupe Marcaida lauded the panelists for being some of the best and most inspiring examples of how Filipino Women are playing key peacebuilding leadership roles across all sectors of society. “Together, these four women represent a single story of what meaningful participation actually looks like, diverse in context, grounded in experience, and

unified in purpose,” she said. Marcaida said that these women are not just colleagues, but fellow advocates she had worked alongside over the years, especially during the peace process's most challenging and uncertain moments. “This forum is part of our 2026 National Women's Month celebration. But more than a celebration, it is a commitment to carry forward the lessons of our peace journey,” Marcaida said. “To move from recognition to action, from policy to practice, and from participation to genuine leadership,” she added.

- [DSWD eyes second round of cash aid to drivers](#) (2026-03-27 16:17)

THE Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Friday said it is considering another round of financial aid to transport workers if fuel prices continue to surge. In a press conference in Manila, DSWD Secretary Rexlon Gatchalian said the P5,000 being distributed to transport groups under its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations program is only the first phase of the government's program to ease the burden of rising fuel costs on drivers. “This is not going to be limited to one round, it's going to be multiple rounds. In fact, that's why I'm circling around to see the issues on the ground,” he said. After Holy Week, there will be a special payout schedule for transport workers who were not included in the first round, “and then we'll immediately move on to the second round,” Gatchalian said. Transport groups went on a two-day nationwide strike to drive home the point that the cash subsidy from the government is not enough to cover their needs. One organization, Manibela, prodded the government to provide P10,000 in monthly cash assistance, instead of the one-time payout of P5,000. Gatchalian said the agency will continue to assist vulnerable sectors for as long as the crisis continues. Gatchalian also announced that on April 8, the agency will begin distributing financial aid outside Metro Manila. He said high-density areas, such as Regions 3 (Central Luzon) and 4A (Calabarzon), would be prioritized. Gatchalian stressed that physical appearance is a requirement in claiming financial assistance. Digitalizing the distribution of the financial assistance is also being considered, he said. Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso, meanwhile, announced Friday that the city government will compensate public utility jeepney drivers to ease the effects of the rising fuel costs. During a Facebook Live broadcast, Moreno said the city government would rent 1,442 jeepneys and pay their drivers. “For drivers, there is a stable income; there is a fuel allowance, guaranteed by the city. At the end of the day, the driver is paid,” he said in Filipino. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) reported no violent incidents during the transport strike. MMDA General Manager Nicholas Torre III said the grievances of the protesters were valid and were being relayed to concerned government agencies through the MMDA's Emergency Operations Center. He said the MMDA deliberately avoided deploying free rides for commuters during the strike “because we do not want to take away the very small earnings of those who did not join those movements.” Instead, the agency adjusted its deployments depending on where there were passenger build-ups, particularly in areas where commuters waiting by the roadside could be exposed to danger. The No to Oil Price Hike Coalition, which led the broader protest, demanded the nationalization of the oil industry and the removal of taxes on fuel products. The group accused the government of making the public bear the burden of higher oil costs instead

of addressing the profits of large oil companies. The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Friday said the strike was “generally peaceful,” despite reports of stranded commuters and scattered disruptions in Metro Manila. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said the situation on the ground remained manageable on the first day of the protest action. “I commend our commanders and personnel for properly responding to the situation on the ground by ensuring that the right of the people to air their grievances is respected and making sure that those affected are properly assisted. This is a good job that must be sustained,” said Nartatez in a statement. Police presence was sustained in hot spots as commuters adjusted to limited transport options. “Police visibility helps deter incidents. When the police are present, everyone becomes more disciplined,” Nartatez said.

- [Marcos: Asean leaders summit pushing through](#) (2026-03-27 16:16)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday said the Philippines’ hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Leaders’ Summit in May would push through despite the war in the Middle East. In a media interview following the graduation rites of the Philippine National Police Academy in Silang, Cavite, Marcos said the region’s leaders would focus discussions on oil supply, food security and the welfare of migrant workers. “We have consulted with our counterparts in the 10 other member states. And the question that I asked them is very simple: Would you prefer — because everybody is busy with the oil crisis going on, because of the war in the Middle East — would you like to postpone the Asean Summit? The consensus that we came to is that it is precisely now that we must coordinate our efforts,” he said. “So, that is what we are going to do. We will continue [the] Asean Summit,” he said. The president said the 48th Asean Leaders’ Summit and Related Summits will be “very bare bones,” focusing only on urgent and essential issues. “What we really need at this time is for us leaders to talk to know what do we do in the future, what do we do for the rest of the year, what do we do, how can we help each other, and what is the Asean position regarding all of these shocks that are coming our way,” he said. Marcos said the 49th Asean Summit and Related Summits in November would “tentatively” proceed as scheduled. “Tentatively, the Leaders’ Summit in November will push through since it’s also important because other world leaders will be coming here from Europe, China, Korea and Japan. All of these matters need to be discussed,” he said. Marcos said that by September or October, he would again ask other world leaders if the Leaders’ meeting would proceed. As part of its chairmanship of Asean in 2026, the Philippines is hosting 650 ministerial and senior official meetings. On Tuesday, Batangas Rep. Leandro Leviste urged the Office of the President to reduce its P22.9-billion budget for this year’s Asean summit. Leviste filed House Bill 911, which seeks to cut the projected expenses and reallocate the funds to measures aimed at easing the impact of fuel price hikes. In 2017, when the Philippines last hosted the Asean Summits and related meetings, it allocated P16.747 billion, of which only 51 percent or P8.572 billion was disbursed. Marcos declared on Tuesday a state of national energy emergency, citing risks to the country’s domestic fuel supply created by the war. The import-dependent country has seen the price of fuel hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The war has also

affected millions of guest workers from Asean states who are living in countries caught in the crossfire. It was not immediately clear if other pressing priorities, including the civil war raging in Myanmar or a long-gestating code of conduct between the bloc and China over the South China Sea, would be completely off the table for discussion.

- [Smaller fuel prices increases seen](#) (2026-03-27 16:15)

DIESEL and gasoline prices will continue to increase next week, but the spike won't be a sharp as in previous weeks, a source in the local oil industry source said on Friday. The per-liter price of diesel is expected to go up by P11 to P12, the source said. The price of gasoline could either stay steady, or increase by around P3. The estimates are based on the four-day trading of Mean of Platts, Singapore, the pricing index for refined goods in Southeast Asia. It will be the 11th straight week that diesel and gasoline prices will increase. The source attributed the relatively smaller increase in fuel prices to signs that the conflict may be de-escalating, resulting in a drop in crude oil price benchmarks, the source said. On Friday, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said is open to proposals to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law and remove the value-added tax (VAT) on fuel, as part of the government's efforts to cushion the impact of the war in the Middle East on the people. But right now, the government is focused on delivering "immediate" solutions to the energy problems, Marcos said. "As I said before, nothing is being discounted, meaning we are discussing everything that can be done so that we can do something to help alleviate the impact of the war in the Middle East," Marcos said during a media interview in Silang, Cavite. The Oil Deregulation Law liberalized the downstream oil industry in 1998, allowing oil companies to set pump prices based on global market conditions rather than government control. Fuel products are subject to a 12-percent VAT, on top of excise taxes, which adds to their overall retail price. The president said making amendments to the law would require extensive discussion and could not be implemented immediately. On Tuesday, Senate President Vicente Sotto III filed Senate Bill 1984 that seeks to repeal the 28-year-old Republic Act (RA) 8479, or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act. Sotto said now is the perfect time to give back to the state the authority to manage fuel prices. "Now that our petroleum prices are directly impacted by the geopolitical tension in the Middle East, transparency, scrutiny and uniformity in pricing are needed more than ever," Sotto said. Earlier, House lawmakers from the Makabayan bloc pointed out that RA 8479 was flawed because it did not promote competitiveness but instead "consolidated corporate power, enabled coordinated price increases and left the public defenseless." Sen. Bam Aquino, meanwhile, wants the VAT on fuel products suspended or reduced to provide relief to Filipinos grappling with soaring pump prices. Aquino said on Friday lawmakers are now considering a follow-up measure that would grant the president authority to adjust VAT rates on oil products. "We are studying a measure that goes beyond the excise tax, giving the President powers to suspend or lower VAT on fuel. This could have a bigger impact on prices," Aquino said. During a hearing of the Senate's Proactive Response and Oversight for Timely and Effective Crisis Strategy Committee on Thursday, representatives from oil companies expressed support for the proposal, noting that removing the 12-percent VAT would translate more directly into lower pump prices. Tanya

Samillano, representing small oil players, said eliminating VAT simplifies price adjustments. “If VAT is removed, it’s no longer part of the cost. That makes it easier for us to immediately implement reduced prices,” Samillano said. Aquino urged the Department of Finance to help quantify the potential savings for consumers, emphasizing the need for data-driven policy decisions. He said the Senate is prepared to act swiftly on the proposal if endorsed by economic managers. Aquino also highlighted his role as co-author and co-sponsor of Republic Act 12316, which grants the president emergency powers to suspend or reduce excise taxes on petroleum products. If fully implemented, the law is expected to:– Reduce gasoline prices by up to P10 per liter.– Lower diesel prices by around P6 per liter.– Cut liquefied petroleum gas prices by P3 per kilogram.– Slash kerosene prices by about P5 per liter. Another senator, Sherwin Gatchalian, raised concerns over potentially excessive profits of oil companies as global fuel prices surge. In a chance interview, Gatchalian criticized the pricing mechanism used by oil firms, particularly the “replacement cost” method, which bases pump prices on current market rates rather than the actual, often lower, cost at which existing inventory was purchased. “These are old inventories. They should be priced using a first-in, first-out basis,” he said. “But because the industry is deregulated, the Department of Energy cannot see how much these companies actually paid for their supply.” Gatchalian said the absence of transparency in procurement costs makes it difficult for regulators to determine whether oil firms are guilty of profiteering. “If we knew how much they bought it for and how much they sold it for, we could easily determine their margins,” he said. This opacity has fueled speculation, including claims raised by Sen. Rodante Marcoleta, that oil companies could be earning as much as P3 billion daily. Gatchalian acknowledged that the estimate was plausible, though unverified. “I haven’t computed it myself, but it’s not far-fetched to say profits are already very large,” he said. He said the Philippine Competition Commission has been directed to monitor the industry for signs of anticompetitive behavior and profiteering. “There are multiple mechanisms. We can check for anticompetitive conduct or intentional profiteering. Monitoring is critical because it’s hard to believe there are no excess profits in this situation,” he said. On the possibility of joint oil and gas exploration with China in the West Philippine Sea, Gatchalian said both sides must demonstrate sincerity while respecting Philippine sovereignty. With fuel prices still climbing, he underscored the need for decisive government action — both in regulating industry practices and securing a stable supply.

- [Philippines, France sign visiting forces agreement](#) (2026-03-27 16:13)

(UPDATE) THE Philippines and France signed a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (Sovfa) on Friday, expanding defense ties and allowing easier deployment of troops between the two countries. Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and French Minister for the Armed Forces Catherine Vautrin formalized the pact following a bilateral meeting in Paris, where Teodoro is attending a series of engagements, including the Paris Defense and Strategy Forum. The Sovfa sets the legal guidelines for visiting forces, facilitating joint exercises, training and other military cooperation activities. “We were able to reach this stage in record time because of the fact that our two countries have had years of trust and confidence in working and dealing with one

another,” Teodoro said in a speech during the signing, a recording of which was provided to the media in Manila by the Department of National Defense. France becomes the latest country to have a visiting forces arrangement with the Philippines, which is expanding its network of defense partnerships under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The Philippines has a long-standing Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States, and signed a similar pact with Australia in 2012. More recently, Manila concluded a Reciprocal Access Agreement with Japan, allowing its troops to participate in the upcoming Balikatan exercises alongside Filipino and American forces. It will be the first time Japanese combat personnel will be deployed to the Philippines since World War II. Teodoro has also overseen visiting forces agreements with Canada and New Zealand, while negotiations for a similar pact with the United Kingdom are expected to begin soon. In his remarks, Teodoro said the agreement with France reflects a shared commitment to strengthening defense capabilities and upholding international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Even before the deal was finalized, France had joined the Philippine Navy in joint drills in the West Philippine Sea. French naval vessels are also expected to participate in this year’s Balikatan, which began as the Philippines’ largest joint annual military exercise with the US. France has been among the countries supporting the Philippines amid tensions with China in the South China Sea. In a keynote speech in Paris, Teodoro emphasized the need for deeper cross-regional cooperation in security and defense, citing growing challenges that require coordinated responses among like-minded nations.

- [Lawyers petition SC to halt Duterte impeachment](#) (2026-03-27 16:12)

A GROUP of lawyers allied with Vice President Sara Duterte on Friday petitioned the Supreme Court to stop ongoing impeachment proceedings against her in the House of Representatives. The group argued that the process undertaken by the House Committee on Justice violates constitutional limits. In a 186-page petition for certiorari and prohibition, which includes a prayer for a temporary restraining order and a writ of preliminary injunction, the petitioners sought to stop the House from proceeding with the third and fourth impeachment complaints. They argued the complaints should have been dismissed outright for insufficiency in form and substance. The petition was filed by lawyers Israelito Torreon, Vic Rodriguez, Resci Angelli Rizada-Nolasco, Martin Delgra III, Wendel Avisado, James Patrick Bondoc, Raul Lambino, Luna Maria Acosta-Manlitoc, Jesus Hinlo Jr. and Richard Mata. Named as respondents were the House Committee on Justice, chaired by Rep. Gerville Luistro, and the House of Representatives, represented by Speaker Martin Romualdez. During a press briefing, Torreon said the legal challenge was not meant to shield the vice president from accountability but to ensure the impeachment process remains within constitutional bounds. “Impeachment is a grave constitutional process. It is not a political free-for-all,” he said. He added that the case raises fundamental questions about whether the House justice panel may allow preliminary complaints to proceed by relaxing rules and relying on subpoenas to substantiate allegations. The petitioners argued that the committee gravely abused its discretion when it allowed the third and fourth complaints to move forward despite what they described as clear defects. They said the complaints were “repackaged” and duplicative of earlier filings, noting

that one had been publicly described as an “improved version” of a previous complaint. According to Torreon, the same lawmaker who endorsed an earlier complaint also endorsed a subsequent one, suggesting what he called a “rolling and tactical filing process” that undermines the constitutional threshold required for impeachment. The lawyers further accused the committee of applying a double standard, pointing out that earlier impeachment complaints against President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had been dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence, while those against Duterte were allowed to proceed despite similar deficiencies. Central to the petition is the claim that the House justice panel overstepped its “gatekeeping” role by conducting subpoena-driven proceedings before determining whether the complaints were sufficient in form and substance. The petitioners said this effectively transformed a preliminary review into a full-blown evidentiary inquiry. THEY QUESTIONED THE ISSUANCE OF SUBPOENAS COVERING DUTERTE’ S STATEMENTS OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH DATING BACK TO 2007, AS WELL AS DOCUMENTS FROM THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND RECORDS INVOLVING CORPORATIONS NOT MENTIONED IN THE COMPLAINTS.” This shows that the committee is not proving a specific discrepancy; it was broadly searching for one,” Torreon said, describing the proceedings as a “fishing expedition” not sanctioned by the Constitution or House rules. The petition also argued that due process is compromised when complaints are allowed to survive initial scrutiny and are later bolstered by externally gathered evidence, instead of requiring complainants to establish a clear and direct link between alleged offenses and the respondent at the outset. The legal move comes as the House Committee on Justice continues to seek financial records and summon witnesses regarding allegations that Duterte misused confidential and intelligence funds, amassed wealth disproportionate to her income and engaged in actions against senior government officials. She has repeatedly denied the accusations. Earlier, the committee set aside the first impeachment complaint for violating the one-year ban rule, while the second complaint was withdrawn by its complainant. The filing of the petition adds a new layer of uncertainty to the impeachment process as the House moves closer to deciding whether to elevate the complaints to the plenary. A vote of at least one-third of all House members, or 106 lawmakers, is required to transmit articles of impeachment to the Senate for trial.

- [PH, Chinese ships avoid collision in WPS](#) (2026-03-27 16:12)

A PHILIPPINE Navy ship on patrol near Pag-asa Island in the West Philippine Sea narrowly avoided a collision with a Chinese missile frigate on March 25. In a statement on Thursday night, the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ (AFP) Western Command said the BRP Benguet encountered the People’ s Liberation Army Navy missile frigate, with bow/pennant number 532 while on routine patrol. The frigate “executed an unsafe and unprofessional maneuver by closing in and passing at a dangerously close distance,” the AFP said. It said such maneuvers are provocative and constitute a clear violation of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. “Despite this, the measured and decisive actions of the Benguet effectively prevented escalation while ensuring the safety of all personnel on board,” it added. Speaking at the just-concluded forum organized by the Stratbase Institute

and the Japanese Embassy in Manila marking 70 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, AFP chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. said the Philippines would remain anchored in international law despite China's growing assertiveness in the disputed waters. "In the face of the People's Republic of China's increasing assertiveness in the West Philippine Sea and the broader South China Sea, the Philippines remains firmly anchored in international law, diplomacy and transparency," Brawner said, describing Manila's approach as "principled restraint, coupled with resolve." He stressed that the country would continue to assert its maritime rights through peaceful and lawful means, citing the 2016 ruling under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which invalidated Beijing's sweeping claims in the South China Sea. Brawner also pointed to expanding defense cooperation with allies, including the "SQUAD" grouping and the upcoming Balikatan Exercises, which are set to include Japanese participation for the first time, as a sign of Manila's firm resolve. For his part, Stratbase president Victor Andres Manhit said defending Philippine sovereignty requires a broader, multi-sectoral approach beyond government, calling for "strategic clarity" and deeper coordination with democratic partners. "Because the next seventy years will not be defined by history — but by how we act today," Manhit said. "In a region where the stakes continue to rise, the Philippines and Japan have both the opportunity and the responsibility to work together to strengthen economic resilience, enhance security cooperation and uphold the principles that keep our region stable and open." Meanwhile, Philippine Coast Guard commandant Adm. Ronnie Gil Gavan described tensions in the West Philippine Sea as a "daily reality" for frontline personnel, framing maritime security as a fundamental right. "Security at sea is a human right," Gavan said, noting that coast guard personnel routinely protect Filipino fishers and respond to vessels in distress. He added that Philippine authorities have repeatedly documented incidents of Chinese vessels attempting to block or harass Filipino personnel, calling the West Philippine Sea the "most immediate test" of Manila's partnerships with like-minded countries. Gavan emphasized the importance of cooperation with allies such as Japan in maintaining a sustained presence at sea and ensuring that Philippine forces remain "professional, yet unyielding." Former Supreme Court justice Antonio Carpio said enforcement of the 2016 arbitral award does not depend on a single global authority but on the continued presence of allied navies in contested waters. "Every time the US and its allies sail in the West Philippine Sea... that is enforcement," Carpio said, adding that such operations reinforce the area as part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone under the ruling. He also urged the government to pursue additional legal remedies, including new arbitral cases over overlapping extended continental shelf claims, to further strengthen the landmark decision and build broader international support.

- [Marcos Urges New PNPA Graduates to Shun Corruption, Protect Human Rights](#)  
(2026-03-27 16:11)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday urged the new graduates of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) to have zero tolerance for corruption and human rights abuses. "While the nation's trust in the police force has climbed in these last years, there is still room for

improvement,” Marcos said in his speech during the 47th Commencement Exercises for the “Silang Paglaom” Class of 2026 in Silang, Cavite, noting lingering public doubts toward the police. He added that corruption and human rights violations have no place in the police service, warning that misconduct erodes the very foundation of public safety. “Our security is weakened when the hands sworn to protect are tainted. So we must change this,” he added. The president said he has ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) to ensure a visible and disciplined presence in communities, alongside efforts to strengthen internal accountability. He reiterated that the PNP, together with the National Police Commission, must enforce a strict zero-tolerance policy against corruption and human rights abuses. Marcos directed the PNP and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to conduct prompt and objective investigations into erring officers. “Throughout the PNP ranks, we have conducted thousands of investigations on erring personnel, resulting in disciplinary actions,” Marcos said. “We can improve public trust through enhanced police visibility and transparency in these investigations,” he added. The president highlighted the government’s push for moral and spiritual formation within the police force, citing nationwide moral recovery sessions to reinforce ethical standards among officers. Marcos urged the graduates to transform the police force into “one that is deeply trusted by our citizens.” “Help to cleanse your ranks so that wrongdoings of a few will not destroy the reputation that you have worked so hard to achieve. Become problem solvers by fairly enforcing the law,” Marcos said. “Be law enforcers who will bring closure and justice to our people, especially those who have been oppressed,” he added. The president urged the graduates to never forget their duty to the republic. “Always keep in mind that your oath is tied to the republic and the Filipino people alone. Leave all other interests at the door,” he said. This year’s top police cadet among 326 graduates is Van Marie Editha Gundaya Cagasan, 24, a native of Baybay City, Leyte. The PNPA Class of 2026, whose name “Sinanay Na Alagad Ng Kapayapaan Na Maglilingkod Sa Pilipinong Mamamayan” (Trained Servant of Peace Who Will Serve the Filipino People) marks a new batch of officers expected to uphold law, order, and public service under the administration’s vision of a “Bagong Pilipinas” (New Philippines).

- [Groups bemoan unsolved labor killings](#) (2026-03-27 16:10)

A TOTAL of 105 cases of trade union killings in the country since 2016 remain unsolved, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) said Thursday. The statement, made in partnership with the Danish Trade Union Development Agency, was published in the 2025 State of Freedom of Association in the Philippines Report. “Documented violations continue at an alarming rate, averaging at least one case per week in 2025. These include killings, harassment, illegal arrests, and intimidation — often linked to state security frameworks and, increasingly, to private sector actors,” it read. The 2025 report said the Inter-Agency Committee on Freedom of Association under Executive Order 23 “failed to deliver concrete results, including the prosecution of perpetrators in high-profile cases.” It also cited the “continued funding of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict.” “Trade union density (4 percent) and collective bargaining coverage remain critically low. Despite a large labor force (60 percent),

only a small proportion of workers are unionized or covered by collective agreements (1 percent),” the report stated. It noted that “protection for labor rights defenders remains inconsistent as institutional responses remain inadequate.” The previous 2024 report cited a “culture of impunity” regarding red-tagging, abduction, and enforced disappearances. “We lauded President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. when he signed Executive Order No. 97 last year. It was a welcome signal that the government recognized freedom of association, not as a gift from the state but as an inherent right of every worker that must be protected, not feared. But an executive order cannot do the walking if the government will not move its feet,” said FFW National President Sonny Matula. “The sad truth is this: there is still no visible progress in the 105 documented cases of killing of workers. Rights on paper are good. Justice in practice is better. Workers need both,” he added. National Federation of Sugar Workers spokesman Mario Tapi-on lamented that the government continues red-tagging when workers only want a living wage. “Our movement was born out of the need to defend the right of our sugar workers to just compensation because they are now receiving lower than what is right according to the law,” Tapi-on said. “We are calling for a living wage but the government’s response is red-tagging and linking our efforts to terrorism. We only want respect for our rights and protection as we fight for justice.” Lucy Francisco of the Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan said women workers’ rights deserve more attention. “It is unfortunate that the rights of women workers, such as reproductive and care rights, remain overlooked by employers and policymakers. Sometimes it is even used to discriminate against women,” Francisco added. “As part of the workforce who contribute to the development of our economy, these needs should be acknowledged and supported. Women’s rights are workers’ rights and human rights that we need to defend as well.”

- [Proactive governance sought amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-27 16:09)

DAVAO CITY — Sen. Bong Go called on government officials to be proactive and responsive as the nation grapples with the effects of the oil crisis. “What is happening to us today is difficult. We are affected — everything has a domino effect,” Go said before officers and members of the Vice Mayors League of the Philippines (VMLP) Caraga Region chapter at the Apo View Hotel as part of the activities for Araw ng Dabaw, the city’s annual founding celebration. He emphasized the need for constant readiness among public officials, urging them to act swiftly when needed. “If a special session needs to be called, I am ready to work. For me, we should be ready to be called 24/7 because we are affected by the oil crisis,” he added. Go expressed gratitude to constituents in the Caraga region, acknowledging their role in his political success.

“I would not be the No. 1 senator in the 2025 election if it weren’t for you. I am grateful with all my heart,” he said. Reaffirming his commitment to public service, the senator described himself as a “neighbor” willing to help at any time. “I’m just here, your neighbor who will continue to serve as much as I can,” he added. During the gathering, Go recognized key regional officials of the VMLP Caraga chapter, including Chairman Allan Bernal, Vice Chairman Jesusimo Ronquillo, Secretary-General Jovitte Calo, Treasurer Melchie Tuscano, Auditor Ryan Fel Napuli and Public Relations Officer Jonathan Edillor. Also present was VMLP National President

and Quezon Vice Mayor Maynard Bumanglag. Go introduced his son, Davao Oriental Vice Mayor Christian Lawrence Go, to attendees. As chair of the Senate committees on sports and youth, Go highlighted the importance of investing in young Filipinos, stressing that leadership should extend beyond legislative duties and focus on compassion and grassroots service. “Let us not limit ourselves as legislators. Our job is constituency, legislation and representation,” he said.

- [Madriaga claims seen as ‘comical’](#) (2026-03-27 16:08)

THE legal counsels for Vice President Sara Duterte and former representative Arnolfo Teves Jr. dismissed claims by alleged bagman Ramil Madriaga that Teves wanted him dead inside prison, calling the allegations “comical” and “poppycock.” During House impeachment hearings Wednesday, Akbayan Party-list Rep. Jose Manuel Diokno raised a motion to place Madriaga under the House’s protective custody, claiming he was “being dragged to a cell that was built by Teves.” In a statement, Salvador Paolo Panelo Jr., Duterte’s counsel for the perjury case she filed against Madriaga, said Madriaga’s counsel, Raymund Palad, previously claimed the vice president visited Madriaga to persuade him not to testify. “That story was quickly debunked by (Interior) Secretary Jonvic Remulla, who confirmed that VP Sara visited Teves, not Madriaga. Since his lie was exposed, Madriaga has conveniently shifted his narrative to insinuate that VP Sara, through Teves, is behind the alleged threat to his life,” Panelo said. Panelo stressed that the falsehood is “on brand” for someone who has lied about his association with the vice president and his own background. “The House Justice Committee’s blind acceptance of this ridiculous and unsubstantiated narrative from a ‘polluted source’ only confirms the committee’s willingness to entertain fabrications in pursuit of a politically motivated agenda,” Panelo added. In a separate statement, Teves’ counsel, Ferdinand Topacio, said the move was expected from Diokno. “I suggest he stick to what he does best: represent non-clients in non-cases using non sequitur. Because all he spews out is nonsense,” Topacio added. Duterte has denied knowing Madriaga, which led to the filing of perjury charges against him earlier this month. In an earlier interview with The Manila Times, Panelo said they want Madriaga to remain alive, as he is the only one who can admit that the allegations against Duterte are false. “He is the only one who can tell who his handlers are, and if he will stand by his testimony, he can add further to his allegations against VP Sara,” Panelo said. He further stated that if Madriaga’s testimony had not been used in the impeachment trial, Duterte would not have filed perjury charges against the self-confessed security consultant. “But because this is used to deceive the public and subvert the will of the people, then he should be made liable,” Panelo said.

- [Ujano's acquittal lauded](#) (2026-03-27 16:07)

THE Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Pahra) on Friday welcomed the release of women’s and children’s rights advocate Sally Ujano after the Court of Appeals (CA) acquitted her of rebellion charges. “This is a victory for every advocate who refused to stay silent. It proves that while the wheels of justice may grind slowly, they can still crush the walls of impunity when we stand together. Nanay Sally’s freedom is a win for the movement, but it is

also a reminder that many others remain behind bars due to trumped-up charges,” Pahra Secretary-General Edgar Cabalitan said in a statement. Pahra said it has been at the forefront of the campaign for her release, even elevating her case to international platforms and the United Nations. “We welcomed Nanay Sally home not just as a survivor, but as a symbol of hope.... Her vindication fuels our resolve to continue the fight for all political prisoners who are still waiting for their day of justice,” Cabalitan said. The human rights group said the victory should serve as a precedent for the dismissal of other cases against activists and community leaders. “The alliance maintains that the ‘weaponization of the law’ must end to truly protect the democratic space in the country,” Pahra said. Earlier Friday, a Facebook page calling for Ujano’s release first confirmed the news through a family statement. “Today, goodness and love have triumphed because we can once again be with Mama, also known as Nanay Sally Ujano. The Court of Appeals has ruled in our favor in the resolution they issued, acquitting Nanay Sally of the accusations against her. This is wonderful news and a great victory for all of us — especially for the youth and women’s sector, particularly as we conclude Women’s Month,” Ujano’s children said in Filipino on Friday. “We, as siblings along with our entire family, are grateful to everyone who stood with us so that we could overcome this struggle for the truth,” they added. Ujano was detained at the Correctional Institute for Women in Mandaluyong City after she was originally convicted of rebellion by the Taguig Regional Trial Court Branch 266. The conviction was linked to an alleged ambush of two military personnel in Quezon province in 2005. She was arrested Nov. 14, 2021, and was released Thursday.

- [Marcos opens new NAIA expressway](#) (2026-03-27 16:05)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday inaugurated the new NAIA Expressway (NAIAX) westbound off-ramp, a 320-meter road designed to improve access to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 and ease congestion along Andrews Avenue in Pasay City. Speaking to reporters, the president said the new exit was expected to reduce travel time for motorists by at most 30 minutes. “It is short but will have a big impact because this is where traffic builds up. This will help avoid traffic,” Marcos said after the opening of the new NAIAX exit ramp. Marcos said the project was part of the government’s broader efforts to improve mobility, especially in preparation for the upcoming Holy Week. He cited several initiatives, including the opening of additional connector roads linking Cavitex to C-5 and routes leading to Cabanatuan, aimed at providing further relief to travelers. “This is just one part of what we are doing, especially in preparation for Holy Week,” the president said. “We continue to open and improve our roads to make travel easier across the country,” he added. Marcos was joined during the inspection by Acting Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon, San Miguel Corp. (SMC) Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ramon Ang, Acting Transportation Secretary Giovanni Lopez, Toll Regulatory Board Executive Director Jose Arturo Tugade, and Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano. In a chance interview after the president’s visit, Ang said the project costs about P1 billion. SMC is the Concessionaire and Operator of the project, which was completed in December 2025 and opened to the public on March 27, 2026. According to government data, the project is expected to reduce travel time by 15 to 25 minutes for

motorists coming from the South Luzon Expressway, Skyway Stage 3, and Lawton Avenue, particularly during peak hours. Marcos previously ordered concerned government agencies to develop infrastructure that improves connectivity and decongests traffic in Metro Manila. Upon the president's orders, the NAIAX Westbound Off-Ramp to NAIA Terminal 3 Project was constructed to complement NAIA's modernization under the Public-Private Partnership program, providing new airport access for smooth, predictable travel. In addition, road widening was carried out along Circulo del Mundo Rotonda, leading to NAIA Terminal 3. Traffic congestion and inefficient inter-terminal transfers at the NAIA cause subpar arrival and departure experiences from Manila, aggravated by unpredictable travel time for travelers transferring between NAIA terminals. As part of efforts to further enhance NAIAX, the project aims to improve connectivity among NAIA's three terminals, with a projected 30 to 40-percent reduction in vehicle volume at the Andrews Avenue-Newport intersection by separating airport-bound traffic from local roads, providing immediate relief to commuters and residents of Newport City and Villamor.

- [Duterte defense rebuffs prosecution request](#) (2026-03-27 16:04)

THE legal counsel for former president Rodrigo Duterte has rejected a confidential request by the prosecution before the International Criminal Court (ICC), calling it an insinuation of professional misconduct. In a public filing dated March 26, 2026, defense counsel Nicholas Kaufman responded to a confidential prosecution request submitted March 5, disputing suggestions that the defense may have violated Article 8 of the Code of Professional Conduct. "Since spring is in the air and Counsel is feeling remarkably benevolent, he will not take offence at the unnecessary nature of the Request and its implied suggestion ... that he might be violating Article 8," Kaufman wrote, dismissing the prosecution's concerns. The filing, submitted to Pre-Trial Chamber I presided over by Judge Iulia Antoanella Motoc, addressed several redacted issues, including conditions and restrictions involving the defense team and Duterte. Kaufman also took aim at what he described as the prosecution's "unabated passion for scrutinizing the media coverage" of the case, advising its senior trial lawyer to "not believe everything he reads in the papers" — unless it concerns Duterte's innocence. Central to the prosecution's request was what the defense described as a "peculiar" inquiry into the roles of certain individuals whose identities remain redacted and their possible access to confidential information. In response, Kaufman issued formal assurances to the chamber, stating these individuals have neither received nor will receive official disclosures related to the case, have no access to nonpublic filings, and are not permitted to participate in privileged communications or meetings with Duterte at the ICC detention facility. He maintained that the prosecution's request carried an "implied suggestion" of misconduct, which the defense firmly rejected. Duterte faces charges before the ICC over alleged crimes linked to his administration's anti-drug campaign. He is currently in custody at the court's detention center in The Hague pending further proceedings.

- [MMDA seeks temporary private shuttle scheme](#) (2026-03-27 16:04)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is seeking a temporary scheme that would allow privately owned vehicles without franchises to operate as company shuttle services under special permits, as rising fuel prices continue to strain commuters and employers in Metro Manila. In a publicly shared letter on Friday, MMDA Chairman Don Artes proposed carpooling or a company-based shuttle service scheme as an immediate intervention to ease commuters' burden, cut fuel consumption, and maximize existing transport resources. The proposal came amid continuing global developments that have affected energy supply, raised petroleum prices, increased transportation costs, and reduced mobility options for workers in Metro Manila. Artes asked the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to allow the temporary use of privately owned vehicles, even without existing franchises, to operate as shuttle services through the issuance of special permits. He also proposed a faster, simpler process for securing permits through streamlined measures and minimal requirements to expedite the deployment of shuttle services. Under the proposal, operations would be limited to employee transport, nonprofit in nature, and fully compliant with LTFRB rules and regulations. The MMDA said the initiative aims to provide an immediate and practical option for commuters affected by higher fuel prices, encourage ride-sharing, reduce the number of private vehicles on the road, support companies in maintaining workforce mobility, and help ease traffic congestion while improving fuel efficiency in Metro Manila. On March 30, the MMDA and LTFRB will meet with the Department of Transportation, Land Transportation Office, and Highway Patrol Group to discuss the proposed carpooling guidelines.

- [Court resets hearing vs vlogger, starlet](#) (2026-03-27 16:03)

THE battle over explicit online content that could reach children continued Friday as sexy star Salome Salvi appeared at the Makati City Prosecutor's Office, while vlogger Brian Babilonia skipped his second consecutive hearing, prompting the preliminary investigation to be reset for April 16. Salvi attended the second preliminary investigation hearing over alleged violations of Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code, in relation to the Anti-Cybercrime Act. Babilonia, who also goes by the name Tio Bri, was absent for the second consecutive hearing, according to the Kapisanan ng Social Media Broadcasters ng Pilipinas Inc. (KSMBPI). The complaints stemmed from content posted on public social media platforms that the group said were "easily accessible to children." KSMBPI said it had issued a cease-and-desist notice through its legal counsel, Mark Tolentino, in November 2025, but was allegedly ignored, prompting the filing of cases earlier this month. KSMBPI chairman Michael Raymond Aragon said the camp of Salvi had sought dialogue before the formal complaints were filed. However, both sides ultimately agreed to let the legal process proceed. He added that the organization is preparing to file additional complaints against other entities it accused of posting similar adult content online. "We are set to file similar cases against Cinepop and T-Bone corporations once our evidence and witnesses are complete," Aragon said, reiterating the group's call for stricter compliance to prevent minors from accessing explicit materials online.

- [MMDA turns over PH's first electric ferry vessel](#) (2026-03-27 16:02)

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on Thursday formally marked the turnover of M/B Dalaray, billed as the country's first electric ferry, several months after it was launched in November 2025. During the ceremonial closing of the Development, Prototyping, and Pilot Deployment of the Electric Passenger Ferry Project on Thursday, officials presented the pilot run results of the vessel, which served 3,258 passengers through February. The project also helped avoid about 16,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions and saved about 6,237 liters of fuel, with officials presenting the figures as part of the ferry's operational gains. Passenger surveys also highlighted the boat's safety, sustainability as an electric ferry, cleanliness, and quiet operation as among its notable features. MMDA Chairman Don Artes said the electric ferry marked an important step toward sustainable and innovative transport solutions for the country's waterways. Artes said M/B Dalaray demonstrates that technology can be used to create a cleaner, more efficient, and environmentally responsible public transportation system. He also announced plans to build two more electric boats and to seek technical assistance from agencies involved in the project, including the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Energy, and Maritime Industry Authority. Artes said the plan would complement the upcoming fully electric Love Bus, which will offer free rides in selected areas in Pasig. MMDA Deputy Chairman Frisco San Juan Jr. also shared his experience riding the ferry, saying it was enjoyable because "it is very quiet and it is easy to hear the guides whenever there are tour groups." San Juan said the push for electric ferry boats is timely given the ongoing tensions in the oil-rich Middle East. He said this proved that the transition to electrification and cleaner transport options was a "pressing and immediate priority" for the future of urban mobility. MMDA General Manager Nicolas Torre III, meanwhile, shared observations from his inspection ride on board Dalaray on Wednesday, including the need to improve the communications system at stations of the MMDA Pasig River Ferry Service.

- [DMW closes recruiter, visa firms in Manila](#) (2026-03-27 16:01)

THE Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) on Friday said it shuttered a recruitment agency and a visa consultancy firm in Ermita, Manila. In a statement posted on its Facebook page, the DMW closed Creative Artist Placement Service Inc., along with its tie-up, Schengen Visa Caps, for allegedly recruiting Filipino workers illegally to central European countries, particularly Poland, Hungary, and Czechia. Undersecretary Bernard Olalia, who led the operation, said the firms offered various jobs in Europe, such as factory workers, farmers, housekeepers, cleaners, and drivers, with a monthly salary of P80,000. However, the DMW said, applicants were asked to pay an overcharged placement fee of between P120,000 and P150,000. "Despite such payments, they were not deployed even after waiting for more than one year," the DMW said. As a result, the closure of the recruitment agency and its visa firm affiliate will include their staff members in the "List of Persons with Derogatory Record," and bar them from participating in the government's overseas recruitment program. They will also be charged with illegal recruitment. Creative Artist Placement Service Inc.'s license will be cancelled for recruitment violations. The firms' closures raised the total number of establishments the DMW closed to seven, and more are being targeted this year to protect overseas Filipino workers from illegal

recruiters.

- [PH has enough crude to last until June 30](#) (2026-03-27 16:00)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday said the country has enough crude oil to last until June 30. The president's assurance came after Malacañang confirmed that a shipment of more than 700,000 barrels of crude oil from Russia arrived recently. The shipment was reportedly bound for the refinery of Petron Corp. in Bataan, where it will be processed into petroleum products such as diesel and gasoline. The latest delivery signals renewed efforts by the government to import oil from Russia after a pause that began in 2022, following global market disruptions due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The global price of oil has spiked after the United States and Israel launched air attacks against Iran at the close of February. Tehran has retaliated with air assaults that targeted Israel and other Gulf countries considered as US allies. Iran also closed the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway through which a fifth of the world's oil shipment passes. Speaking at the sidelines of the opening of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway Phase II, Marcos said the Philippines has secured sufficient crude oil imports for the coming months to support domestic supply. "Because of that, we now have a supply of crude oil that is sufficient until June 30," he said. The president said that importing crude for local refining was more cost-efficient than bringing in already refined petroleum products. "There is a difference in pricing when we import crude oil compared to importing already refined fuel like diesel. Importing refined fuel is more expensive," he said. Despite the arrival of oil from Russia, Marcos said the government will continue to look for additional suppliers to ensure long-term energy security. On Wednesday, he said he has ordered the Department of Energy to search for more fuel sources, even though the country has stockpiled up to 45 days' worth of crude. "And my instruction to them is: do not stop. Continue looking for additional supply because we do not know how long this situation will last," Marcos said. "And when we say we have — now we are talking about around 45 days on average, more or less. But we do not know how long this will last, or how long the supply is going to be diminished from the Middle East through the Strait of Hormuz," he said. Marcos said the country was searching out to countries like Russia, Japan, China and South Korea. The president also recently issued Executive Order 110, declaring a state of national emergency, which will be in effect for one year unless sooner lifted or extended, the president said. He also signed a measure allowing the suspension of excise taxes on fuel, although its implementation will depend on global oil price trends and recommendations from the economic cluster. Excise taxes may be suspended if global crude oil prices exceed \$80 per barrel for at least one month.

- [Duterte urges Filipinos to "be prepared" for "difficult" food situation](#) (2026-03-27 15:48)

MANILA, Philippines - Vice President Sara Duterte has urged Filipinos to be prepared until the end of 2026 as the food situation in the country to become "more difficult" due to the threat of El Nino and rains until the end of the year as well as the ongoing price increases due to the War in the Middle East. She also said that the Office of the Vice President will practice "cost cutting measures" and cancelling their events to ensure that funds will be directed towards their public

assistance programs. In a video statement on Friday, Duterte said that the "continuous rise in the prices of goods is a heavy blow to our aspiration of having a peaceful and prosperous life for every Filipino family," "What we are going through is not normal; it is the result of crises outside our country, including the war in the Middle East, which directly affects the price of food, oil, and other basic necessities," Duterte said. She said that the OVP will continue to implement programs that are focused on helping people to save money, such as the PagbaBAGo Campaign, the OVP Free Bus Ride program, Mag Negosyo ta 'Day livelihood program, and the RIICE or the Relief for Indigents and Individuals in Crises and Emergencies program. Duterte also revealed that two events of the OVP to be held in June - the Pasidungog and the Kasarilayaan - will be cancelled for this year. "These are two large gatherings—one for the LGBTQ community and the other for the year-four accomplishment report of my term. Instead, the funds originally intended for these activities will be added to the budget of the RIICE project," Duterte said. She called on Filipinos to "prioritize sufficient food for our families, medical treatment for the sick, and the education of our children," "The most effective defense against crisis is preparedness. Let us begin planning our steps through the end of 2026, including preparing for possible job losses, the continued rise in food prices, and risk reduction measures against the effects of extreme heat and flooding on our livelihoods," Duterte said.

- [No winner in Ultra lotto 6/58, Mega lotto 6/45 draws for March 27](#) (2026-03-27 15:36)

MANILA, Philippines — 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 Ultra lotto 6/58 was 12-57-16-01-42-51 which had a jackpot prize of P75,000,000.00. There was also no winner for the Mega lotto 6/45 draw, which drew a winning combination of 19-38-36-31-27-02 for a jackpot prize of P15,000,000.00.

- [349 Pinoys return home from Middle East](#) (2026-03-27 14:59)

The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) late on Friday said that 349 Filipinos from the United Arab Emirates returned to the country. Both agencies said that the Filipinos were returned through a government-chartered flight TVR7737. According to OWWA, 222 were overseas Filipino workers, 78 were dependents (along with 11 infants), and the other 49 were stranded Filipinos that were "rescued by the government". In total, 2,910 OFWs from the Middle East returned to the country, with 2,120 of them coming through the five government-chartered flights.

- [Palace: No 'energy lockdown' seen for now](#) (2026-03-27 14:31)

MANILA, Philippines- The government does not see the need to implement an "energy lockdown" for now, Malacañang said Friday. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the government was looking for sources to ensure a continuous supply of oil for the country. "Right now, the President is really preparing for this, the administration is preparing for this, so we don't want to end up in the worst-case scenario," Castro said during a press conference. "So, that's why now, with the cooperation of all government agencies, especially DOE (Department of

Energy) and DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs), we are really looking for sources so that the supply of petroleum will not stop and will continue for our countrymen," she added.

- [Palace welcomes WFH plan of private firms to save energy](#) (2026-03-27 14:10)

MANILA, Philippines- Malacañang on Friday welcomed suggestions from business groups to adopt a work-from-home (WFH) setup to reduce fuel consumption and ease the impact of rising oil prices. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said Malacañang viewed the proposal as “helpful” but would leave the decision to private companies. “If that will be the proposal of private business companies, that will be a big help,” Castro said during a press conference. “Of course, the President will not dictate on private companies,” she added.

- [House Justice Panel describe petition by Duterte allies as "diversionary tactic"](#) (2026-03-27 13:31)

MANILA, Philippines - Some members of the House Justice Committee said that the petition filed by the lawyers allied with Vice President Sara Duterte that stops the ongoing impeachment hearings described the move as a "diversionary tactic" designed to deflect from the proceedings. The group, led by Israelito Torreon, filed a petition for certiorari and prohibition at the Supreme Court, saying that the panel "overstepped its constitutional gatekeeping role by allowing defective complaints against Duterte to proceed and conducting subpoena-driven evidentiary proceedings that resemble a trial." In a statement, Bico Saro Partylist Rep. Terry Ridon said that the petition "will not stop the resolve of the House Committee on Justice to exact accountability for the serious allegations against her, including the misuse of confidential funds, the issuance of death threats against the President and other public officials, and unexplained wealth and related violations." "The subpoena of documents relevant to the grounds for impeachment is well within the authority of the House Committee on Justice under the 1987 Constitution and the House Rules on Impeachment, both of which expressly allow the conduct of hearings in aid of impeachment proceedings," Ridon said. Meanwhile, Mamamayang Liberal Partylist Rep. Leila de Lima said that Duterte is "showing signs of desperation" in trying to evade accountability. "May pa-"bloodbath, bloodbath" pang sinasabi noon. Sa simpleng committee hearing nga ay takot na takot ngayon (She is saying a bloodbath, but she is scared of attending a simple committee hearing)," de Lima said.

- [Palace: Govt studying proposed fuel price freeze](#) (2026-03-27 13:17)

MANILA, Philippines- The government is studying a proposed price freeze on petroleum products, Malacañang said Friday, as the Philippines faces four consecutive weeks of steep increases in pump prices. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said authorities are weighing both consumer welfare and the viability of the oil industry. “This will be balanced based on what is appropriate so that not only one sector is affected,” Castro said during a press briefing. “There should be balance for the oil industry and for the public. We are not saying that a price freeze will not be implemented, but it is currently under study,” she added. Castro said declaring an energy emergency is crucial to addressing disruptions in global oil supply,

which affect both the availability and pricing of fuel products in the country. She emphasized that the government remains proactive while ensuring all interventions comply with existing laws. “The government can perform its duties without violating the law. We can unlock the funds we need to use in accordance with the law,” she said. Castro added that the government, through the Department of Energy (DOE), has lined up measures to ensure a stable electricity supply. “We have issued department guidelines to allow the use of cheaper fuel and to generate more power from sources such as coal and renewable energy. The Energy Regulatory Commission has also suspended the electricity market to enable increased use of coal, renewable energy, and even power generated from Malampaya gas field,” Castro said, quoting the DOE. “We are also assisting renewable energy developers in completing their projects ahead of schedule,” she added. For island communities, Castro said the government is planning to secure cheaper, lower-grade diesel for the National Power Corporation to help prevent blackouts. She also urged solar energy firms to fulfill their commitments to help stabilize the country’s power supply. In a related development, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. announced on Thursday the successful drilling and testing of the Camago-3 well, which is producing up to 60 million standard cubic feet of gas per day. This development is expected to extend the lifespan of the Malampaya gas field, providing additional, more stable, and potentially cheaper power for Filipino consumers.

- [Defense rejects prosecution request in Duterte ICC Case](#) (2026-03-27 09:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The legal team for former president Rodrigo Duterte has dismissed a prosecution request as 'unnecessary,' pushing back against what it described as implied insinuations of professional misconduct. In a public filing dated March 26, 2026, the defense responded to a confidential prosecution request submitted on March 5, rejecting suggestions that counsel might be violating Article 8 of the Code of Professional Conduct. “Since spring is in the air and Counsel is feeling remarkably benevolent, he will not take offence at the unnecessary nature of the Request and its implied suggestion (or rather insinuation) that he might be violating Article 8 of the Professional Conduct,” lead defense counsel Nicholas Kaufman said in the filing. The response addressed five specific points that remain redacted in the public version, relating to restrictions or conditions imposed on the defense team and Duterte himself. Kaufman also criticized the prosecution for what he called an “unabated passion for scrutinizing the media coverage of this case,” advising the Senior Trial Lawyer to “abide by the adage ‘not to believe everything he reads in the papers’ – unless, of course, it relates to Mr Duterte’s innocence.” The filing was submitted to Pre-Trial Chamber I, presided over by Judge Iulia Antoanella Motoc. Duterte faces charges at the International Criminal Court over alleged crimes committed during his presidency’s anti-drug campaign. He was taken into ICC custody and is currently held at the court’s detention center in The Hague.

- [PNP Chief orders crackdown on LPG hoarders, profiteers](#) (2026-03-27 09:06)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) on Friday vowed to crack down on liquefied petroleum gas retailers who were hoarding and manipulating prices during the oil

price crisis. Gen. Jose Melencio C. Nartatez, Jr., PNP chief, said the move aimed to protect the public from artificial price increases during a period of tight supply. “I have directed our local police to heighten monitoring of retailers to prevent hoarding and price manipulation of LPG amid the present energy challenges that we are facing,” he said in a statement. The move is in line with the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla to ensure an adequate supply of petroleum products amid energy challenges caused by conflict in the Middle East. He said proper coordination was now being done with the local government units and other agencies concerned to come up with measures against hoarding and profiteering. The Department of Energy (DOE) said it was closely monitoring the supply of LPG, which may only last up to 24 days, including incoming deliveries. Based on the DOE’s March 20 inventory and daily average utilization, the Philippines still has a sufficient petroleum products supply such as gasoline and diesel. However, LPG has the lowest supply. For March, LPG prices in Metro Manila have now spiked from P825 to over P1,000 per regular tank, according to the DOE. Nartatez assured the public that the police would not hesitate to go after retailers who would take advantage of the situation. “This is not the time to panic and this should never be the time to take advantage of any of our kababayan. While the national government is exhausting all measures to help, we in the PNP will also make sure that consumers are always protected,” said Nartatez.

- [DSWD eyes second round of financial aid for drivers](#) (2026-03-27 08:16)

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on March 27, 2026 says it is considering another round of financial assistance if fuel price hikes continue. Video By Allen Limos

- [SC petitioned to halt Duterte impeachment proceedings](#) (2026-03-27 07:25)

MANILA, Philippines — Lawyers allied with Vice President Sara Duterte have filed a petition for certiorari and prohibition with a prayer for a writ of preliminary injunction before the Supreme Court on Friday, seeking to stop the ongoing impeachment proceedings against her at the House of Representatives. The petition challenges the actions of the House Committee on Justice. During a press briefing, lawyer Israelito Torreon said the petition did not seek to shield the Vice President from accountability but aimed to ensure the impeachment process remained constitutional. “Impeachment is a grave constitutional process. It is not a political free-for-all,” he said. The petitioners argued that the House committee overstepped its constitutional gatekeeping role by allowing defective complaints against Duterte to proceed and conducting subpoena-driven evidentiary proceedings that resemble a trial. The petition highlights six main points of concern: - The committee allegedly applied a double standard, dismissing earlier impeachment complaints for insufficient evidence while allowing similar deficiencies in the Duterte-Carpio complaints. - The third and fourth complaints were characterized as repackaged, conclusory, and duplicative, undermining the intended threshold review. - Subpoenas for documents, affidavits, and other evidence were issued before establishing the sufficiency of the complaints, effectively turning preliminary review into a

“fishing expedition.” - The petition contends that due process is compromised when complaints are allowed to survive first and then expanded through external evidence.- Threshold review, the lawyers argued, could not be bypassed or converted into a full evidentiary process.- The complaint process, they said, should require clear linking of alleged offenses to the respondent, rather than relying on hearsay, vague allegations, or institutional controversies.Torreon stressed that the petition was a constitutional limits case, not a question of guilt or innocence. “We are asking the court to decide whether the House Committee on Justice may keep preliminary complaints alive by relaxing rules and using subpoenas to substantiate claims,” he said.The filing comes as the committee continues to request financial records, statements of assets, and other documents tied to Duterte, while summoning witnesses related to alleged misuse of confidential and intelligence funds.The impeachment complaints accuse Duterte of misusing government funds, accumulating wealth beyond her income, and plotting against senior officials—allegations she has repeatedly denied.The legal challenge raises fresh questions over procedural boundaries as the House moves closer to potentially endorsing the complaints to the full chamber, where at least 106 lawmakers must vote in favor for the case to proceed to the Senate.

- [Court resets hearing vs starlet, vlogger to April over 'adult' content access to children](#) (2026-03-27 04:51)

MANILA, Philippines — The battle over explicit online content that could reach children continued Friday as sexy star Salome Salvi appeared at the Makati City Prosecutor’s Office while vlogger Brian Babilonia skipped his second consecutive hearing, prompting the preliminary investigation to be reset to April 16.Salvi personally attended the second preliminary investigation hearing for alleged violations of Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code in relation to the Anti-Cybercrime Act. Babilonia, who also goes by the name Tio Bri, was absent for the second consecutive hearing, according to the Kapisanan ng Social Media Broadcasters ng Pilipinas Inc. (KSMBPI).The complaints stemmed from content posted on public social media platforms that the group said were “easily accessible to children.” KSMBPI said it had issued cease-and-desist notices through its legal counsel, Mark Tolentino, in November 2025, but these were allegedly ignored, prompting the filing of cases earlier this month.KSMBPI Chairman Michael Raymond Aragon said the camp of Salvi had sought a dialogue prior to the filing of charges. However, both sides ultimately agreed to let the legal process proceed.He added that the organization was preparing to file additional complaints against other entities it accused of posting similar adult content online. “We are set to file similar cases against Cinepop and T-Bone corporations once our evidence and witnesses are complete,” Aragon said, reiterating the group’s call for stricter compliance to prevent minors from accessing explicit materials online.

- [Marcos open to repealing oil deregulation law](#) (2026-03-27 04:28)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is not discounting the proposal to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law to allow the government to regulate oil prices and intervene in

securing oil supply. However, Marcos said the government was focused on delivering "immediate" solutions to the energy problems at the moment. "Nothing is being discounted, meaning everything that can be done so that we can do something to help mitigate the impact of the war in the Middle East is being discussed," Marcos said during a media interview in Silang, Cavite. "But what we are focus now is immediate, you know we will have to ammend the oil deregulation, that's a long discussion. I don' t know when will it come out," he added.

- [Villar Group malls adjust operating hours starting March 30](#) (2026-03-27 04:25)

MANILA, Philippines — Shopping malls under the Villar Group will adjust its operating hours starting March 30, 2026, following the government' s declaration of a national energy emergency. In separate advisories, Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc. said that operating hours for its Vista Malls would be modified, with all branches set to operate from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The same adjusted schedule will likewise be implemented across its Starmalls network. Both operators advised mallgoers to check the official social media pages of their preferred branches for any branch-specific updates or changes. The adjustment comes as businesses respond to measures aimed at managing electricity consumption amid tightening power supply conditions. Mall operators, among the country' s largest energy users, are expected to recalibrate operating hours to help ease demand on the grid. Further details on how long the adjusted schedules will remain in place have yet to be disclosed.

- [Marcos: Asean meet to push through in May](#) (2026-03-27 04:09)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday said the Philippines' hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Leaders' Summit in May would push through despite the ongoing war in the Middle East. In a media interview in Silang, Cavite, Marcos said that Southeast Asian leaders would focus discussions on oil supply, food security, and the welfare of migrants workers. "We have consulted with our counterparts in the 10 other member states. The question that I asked them is very simple, because of the war in the Middle East, would you like to postpone the Asean Summit? The consensus that we came to is that it is precisely now that we must coordinate our efforts," Marcos said. The President described the summit as "bare-bones," focusing only on urgent and essential issues. "What we really need at this time is for us, leaders to talk to know what do we do in the future, what do we do for the rest of the year, what do we do, how can we help each other, and what is the Asean position regarding all of these shocks that are coming our way," he added.

- [DSWD eyes second round of financial aid for public transport drivers](#) (2026-03-27 03:57)

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on Friday said it was considering another round of financial aid if fuel price increases continue. In a press conference in Manila, DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian said the P5,000 in cash assistance currently being distributed to different transport groups under its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) program was only the first phase of the government' s initiative to ease

the burden of rising fuel costs on Filipino drivers. “This is not going to be limited to one round, it's going to be multiple rounds. In fact, that's why I'm circling around to see the issues on the ground, because right after Holy Week, there will be a special payout schedule for those who were not included in the first round, so that they can also be given, and then we'll immediately move on to the second round already,” he said.

- [Fuel price increase eases further next week amid US-Iran talks on de-escalating war in Middle East](#) (2026-03-27 03:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Diesel and gasoline prices will increase again next week although at a slower pace as discussions between the US and Iran are ongoing to de-escalate the war in the Middle East, a local industry source said on Friday. The source said that diesel prices were expected to go up by around P11.00 to P12.00 per liter while gasoline will either have no adjustments or increase by around P3 per liter. These estimates are based on the 4-day trading of Mean of Platts, Singapore, the pricing basis of refined goods in Southeast Asia. This will also be the 11th straight week that diesel and gasoline prices have increased. “For this week, the relatively lower increase on diesel and slight easing of the increase of gasoline prices, are driven by de-escalation signals in the Middle East conflict, resulting to a drop in crude oil price benchmarks,” the source said. “Gasoline prices, which closely track crude and regional supply risks, softened as fears of prolonged supply outages are somewhat reduced. Diesel however, often moves differently and more sharply due to distillate supply tightness,” the source added. Local oil companies raised gasoline and diesel prices last week by around P8-P12 per liter and around P15-18 per liter respectively.

- [Duterte, Teves counsels dismiss alleged threat of bagman](#) (2026-03-27 03:35)

MANILA, Philippines — The counsels for both Vice President Sara Duterte and former representative Arnolfo Teves dismissed the claim of alleged bagman Ramil Madriaga that Teves wanted him dead inside prison, calling it “comical” and a “poppycock.” During the impeachment hearing at the House of Representatives on Wednesday, Akbayan Partylist Rep. Jose Manuel Diokno raised a motion to put Madriaga under protective custody of the House as he was “being dragged to a cell that was built by Teves.” In a statement, Salvador Paolo Panelo Jr., the counsel of Duterte to the perjury case she filed against Madriaga, said that his counsel, Raymund Palad, previously claimed that Madriaga was visited by the Vice President to persuade him not to testify. “That story was quickly debunked by [Interior] Secretary Jonvic Remulla, who confirmed that VP Sara visited Teves, not Madriaga. Since his lie was exposed, Madriaga has conveniently shifted his narrative to insinuate that VP Sara, through Teves, is behind the alleged threat to his life,” Panelo said. He stressed that this falsehood was entirely “on brand” for someone who has lied through his teeth about his supposed association with the vice president and his own background. “The House Justice Committee’s blind acceptance of this ridiculous and unsubstantiated narrative from a “polluted source” only confirms the Committee’s willingness to entertain fabrications in pursuit of a politically motivated agenda,” Panelo added. In a separate statement, Teves's counsel, Ferdinand Topacio, said that it was already expected

coming from Diokno."I suggest he stick to what he does best: represent non-clients in non-cases using non sequitur. Because all he spews out is nonsense," Topacio added.

- [Marcos opens new NAIAX expressway to ease traffic](#) (2026-03-27 03:27)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday opened the new NAIA Expressway (NAIAX) westbound off-ramp, a 320-meter road designed to improve access to Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 and ease congestion along Andrews Avenue in Pasay City. The President said the new exit was expected to reduce travel time for motorists by as much as 30 minutes. "It is short but will have a big impact because this is where traffic builds up. This will help avoid traffic," Marcos said after the opening of the new NAIAX exit ramp. Marcos was joined during the inspection by San Miguel Corp. President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon Ang and Public Works Secretary Vince Dizon. NAIAX is operated and maintained by Skyway Operations and Maintenance Corp. under SMC Infrastructure, a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp., which holds the 25-year concession to operate the expressway.

- [Philippines, France sign visiting forces agreement to boost military cooperation](#) (2026-03-27 03:17)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines and France signed a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA) on Friday, expanding defense ties and allowing easier deployment of troops between the two countries. Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and French Minister for the Armed Forces Catherine Vautrin formalized the agreement following a bilateral meeting in Paris, where Teodoro is attending a series of engagements, including the Paris Defense and Strategy Forum. The SOVFA sets the legal framework for the presence of visiting forces, facilitating joint exercises, training, and other military cooperation activities. "We were able to reach this stage in record time because of the fact that our two countries have had years of trust and confidence in working and dealing with one another," Teodoro said in a speech during the signing, a recording of which was provided to media in Manila by the Department of National Defense. France becomes the latest country to enter into a visiting forces arrangement with the Philippines, as Manila expands its network of defense partnerships under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.. The Philippines maintains a long-standing Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States and signed a similar pact with Australia in 2012. More recently, Manila concluded a Reciprocal Access Agreement with Japan, whose troops are set to participate in the upcoming Balikatan exercises alongside Filipino and American forces—marking the first deployment of Japanese combat personnel to the Philippines since World War II. Teodoro has also overseen visiting forces agreements with Canada and New Zealand, while negotiations for a similar pact with the United Kingdom are expected to begin soon. In his remarks, Teodoro said the agreement with France reflected a shared commitment to strengthening defense capabilities and upholding international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Even before the deal was finalized, France had joined the Philippine Navy in joint drills in the West Philippine Sea. French naval vessels are also expected to participate in Balikatan 2026, the Philippines' largest annual military exercise with the United States. France has been

among the countries supporting the Philippines amid tensions with China in the South China Sea, where Manila asserts its maritime entitlements. In a keynote speech in Paris, Teodoro emphasized the need for deeper cross-regional cooperation in security and defense, citing growing challenges that require coordinated responses among like-minded nations.

- [Marcos: PH has enough crude oil until June 2026](#) (2026-03-27 02:58)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Friday announced that the country has sufficient crude oil supply to last until June 30, 2026. At the sidelines of the opening of the NAIA Expressway Phase II, Marcos said he and San Miguel Corp. Chairman Ramon Ang have discussed the importation of fuel to support domestic supply. "In terms of crude oil supply, because they are importing crude oil to be refined here in the Philippines, the price is different... It is more expensive when you import refined oil, which is diesel. And he (Ang) said, we already have a supply of crude oil, sufficient supply to last until June 30," he said.

- [PH Navy vessel avoids collision with Chinese warship in WPS](#) (2026-03-27 02:50)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Navy ship BRP Benguet (LS-507) avoided a potential collision after a dangerous maneuver by a Chinese missile frigate while it was conducting a routine operation near Pag-asa Island in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) on March 25, according to the Armed Forces of the Philippines in a statement late Thursday. The AFP Western Command (Wescom) said the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) missile frigate has the bow/pennant number 532. "While conducting lawful operations, BRP Benguet encountered the PLAN vessel, which executed an unsafe and unprofessional maneuver by closing in and passing at a dangerously close distance," it said. Wescom said such dangerous maneuvers are provocative and constitute a clear violation of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. "Despite this, the measured and decisive actions of LS-507 effectively prevented escalation while ensuring the safety of all personnel on board," it added. Likewise, Wescom called on the PLAN to adhere to established international rules and norms to prevent incidents at sea. It also added that it will continue to perform its lawful maritime operations with professionalism and resolve in exercising the country's sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction in the WPS.

- [SSS assures OFWs in Middle East of uninterrupted digital access](#) (2026-03-27 00:53)

MANILA, Philippines — The Social Security System (SSS) has assured its members in the Middle East that they can continue to access benefits and services through its digital platforms despite the escalating regional conflicts. In a statement on Thursday, SSS President Robert Joseph de Claro highlighted the reliability of the My.SSS Portal, which allows overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to file benefit claims and loan applications without interruption, provided they meet qualifying conditions. Among the available services is the unemployment benefit for OFWs who have been involuntarily separated from their jobs, subject to certification by the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW). "Even in these challenging times, our digital infrastructure ensures seamless service delivery," De Claro said. "Members in the Middle East need not worry; they can

manage their accounts safely from anywhere with internet access."The state pension fund chief also noted that pensioners residing in the region can now comply with the Annual Confirmation of Pensioners (ACOP) using the recently launched facial authentication feature on the SSS website ([www.sss.gov.ph](http://www.sss.gov.ph)). "A standout innovation is the ACOP Facial Authentication with Liveness Check, enabling secure identity verification from smartphones anywhere," De Claro explained. He added that the tool was designed to reduce fraud risks and eliminate the need for travel amid the current security situation in the Middle East. "These tools were purpose-built to empower OFWs, allowing transactions 'whenever, wherever' even in crisis zones," he said. Data from the SSS showed that as of December 2025, there are 1,476,645 covered OFWs, with 540,018 listed as active paying members. "We remain committed to supporting our OFWs through innovation and resilience, no matter the circumstances," De Claro added.

- [Trump says Iran allowed passage of 10 oil tankers as a 'present'](#) (2026-03-26 19:48)

WASHINGTON — Iran allowed 10 oil tankers to pass through the strategic Strait of Hormuz as a "present" to show it was serious about negotiations to end the war, US President Donald Trump said Thursday. Trump was referring to cryptic comments he made two days earlier about a "gift" from Tehran that involved the flow of oil and gas through the waterway, a key chokepoint for the global energy trade. Iranian forces have effectively slowed shipping through the strait to a trickle during the Middle East war, which began nearly four weeks ago. "They said 'to show you the fact that we're real and solid and we're there, we're going to let you have eight boats of oil,'" Trump told reporters in his first cabinet meeting since the conflict started. The tankers were believed to be Pakistani-flagged, Trump said, adding that he had seen news reports that they had passed the strait. "And, I said, 'well, I guess we're dealing with the right people'. And actually, they then apologized for something they said, and they said, 'We're going to send two more boats.'" Before giving his account to reporters, Trump first checked with his Middle East negotiator Steve Witkoff at the cabinet table, saying: "Steve, can I reveal the present?" The US president did not provide any further details. Data from marine intelligence firm Kpler shows that six laden oil tankers and five loaded gas carriers have transited the Gulf since Monday, but there was no independent confirmation these were the ones cited by Trump. Of these vessels, three oil tankers and two gas carriers are currently subject to US sanctions related to Iran. Based on tracking signals, two of the six oil tankers appear to be heading toward China, while one is bound for Thailand. Among the gas carriers, one is en route to Singapore, and another has already arrived in India. For the remaining six vessels, their destinations cannot be determined from the available data.

- [No winner in Super lotto 6/49, Lotto 6/42 draws for March 26](#) (2026-03-26 16:26)

MANILA, Philippines — 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 Super lotto 6/49 was 46-04-19-25-33-02 which had a jackpot prize of P144,085,930.99. There was also no winner for the Lotto 6/42 draw, which drew a winning combination of 29-15-03-18-23-30 for a jackpot prize of P10,000,000.00.

- [Diversification, grid upgrade key to solving energy crisis](#) (2026-03-26 16:17)

AGAINST the backdrop of a newly declared national energy emergency, The Manila Times Energy Forum 2026 convened on Thursday, bringing together representatives from the Department of Energy (DOE), the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) and Meralco PowerGen Corp. (MGen) for the morning session. Representatives from the National Power Corp. (Napocor), National Transmission Corp. and Aboitiz Power joined the afternoon session. With the theme “Addressing current energy challenges, building a secure and sustainable energy future,” the forum evolved into a “war room” of ideas as the country grappled with the escalating fallout from the Middle East conflict. Moderated by TMT columnist Ben Kritz, the panel reached a sobering consensus: the Philippines’ “umbilical cord” to Middle East energy supplies is no longer a manageable risk but a national security vulnerability. Participants emphasized that long-term resilience lies in developing indigenous energy sources and strengthening the grid infrastructure. They also underscored the need to move beyond temporary fuel subsidies toward localized energy solutions as well as environmental protection protocols. Napocor Chief Executive Officer Jericho Jonas Nograles warned local government units that he has the cooperation of the military to protect critical watersheds and that one of Napocor’s goals it for barangay to be able to “sustain themselves via solar and wind,” effectively insulating them from tremors in the global market. With diesel prices breaching the P100-per-liter mark and the peso weakening past 60 against the United States dollar, discussions shifted from long-term planning to immediate resilience. The focus expanded from fossil fuels to renewable energy and low-emission alternatives such as liquefied natural gas (LNG). The timing of the forum was critical. Just 48 hours earlier, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed Executive Order (EO) 110, placing the country under a state of national energy emergency for one year. MGen President and Chief Executive Officer Emmanuel Rubio, and Aboitiz Renewables President and Chief Executive Officer David Mikel Aboitiz outlined how the private sector is accelerating off-grid power solutions, including large-scale solar farms. The original roster of speakers, which included DOE Undersecretary Felix William Fuentesbella and ERC Chairman Francis Saturnino Juan, was changed at the last minute after they were called to attend a Senate hearing on EO 110. They were replaced by DOE Director Michael Sinocruz and ERC Executive Director Nancy Aurora Fajardo. Sinocruz discussed the administration’s push toward renewable energy while maintaining output from diesel and coal-fired power plants to stabilize prices, as global LNG and oil shipments face disruptions at the Strait of Hormuz. He also spoke of a diversified sourcing of energy which includes the potential adoption of small modular reactors. During the morning fireside chat, Kritz raised the issue of balancing solar energy generation and distribution. Rubio said MGen’s Battery Energy Storage Systems help address the “duck curve” by storing excess solar power and releasing it when demand rises. Meanwhile, National Transmission Corp. President Fortunato Leynes emphasized that “there is no transition without transmission,” stressing the need to accelerate grid expansion and improve infrastructure to support renewable energy integration. Aboitiz also pointed out that grid constraints, permitting delays and land acquisition issues rather than design, funding or construction, remain the primary bottlenecks in scaling up renewable energy

projects. Transforming challenges In her opening remarks, The Manila Times CEO Anna Marie Ang-Thompson said that the news organization documents developments in the energy sector in real time. “We see the volatility of power costs, the strain on our aging grids and the rising public demand for sustainability. We are here today to do more than just report on these realities. We are here because we recognize that, as leaders, we hold the collective power to transform these challenges into a definitive turning point for our country,” she said. Times President and COO Blanca Mercado cited EO 110, signed on Tuesday, that authorizes the unified package for livelihoods, industries, food and transportation — with Malacañang declaring that energy security is a national priority.

- [Ombudsman to turn over VP Sara's SALN](#) (2026-03-26 16:16)

THE Office of the Ombudsman on Thursday said it will comply with the subpoena issued by the House Committee on Justice for statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALNs) of Vice President Sara Duterte. The committee is conducting hearings to determine whether there is probable cause to impeach her, after it found two impeachment complaints sufficient in form and substance. “Here in the Office of the Ombudsman, any person can request, the public, the general public can request for a copy of SALNs that are with the Ombudsman: the president’s, the vice president’s, those of the heads constitutional commissions and local government unit officials,” Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said. “So, even a simple request would do... And so much more if it is a subpoena. We will comply,” Clavano said. The committee voted on Wednesday to issue a subpoena to the Office of the Ombudsman for Duterte’s SALNs from 2022 to 2025, 2007 to 2013 and 2016 to 2022. The Ombudsman, which is the repository for the SALNs of certain officials including the vice president’s, could provide the SALNs from when she was Davao City mayor and vice mayor. Clavano said they would endorse the subpoena to the Ombudsman’s Mindanao office. 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 requires 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. Meanwhile, the political party of the vice president’s father, former president Rodrigo Duterte, said they are “alarmed and bothered” by what they described as the “weaponization” of the impeachment process by the House panel. The statement from the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino comes after the defense team of the vice president said on Wednesday that they are questioning the proceedings of the committee, saying that only the Senate has the “sole power” to try impeachment cases.

- [Beijing says it's open to oil exploration talks](#) (2026-03-26 16:15)

THE Chinese Embassy in Manila said Beijing remains open for oil and gas exploration talks with Manila as long as the Philippines shows its sincerity for such discussions. The embassy was asked to comment on the remarks of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., in a Bloomberg interview,

that he is open to resuming discussions with China on a joint oil and gas project in a disputed area of the South China Sea. It noted that China and the Philippines in the past “have conducted in-depth discussions on joint oil and gas development in disputed waters in the South China Sea and have made positive progress.” Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the latter’s state visit to Beijing on Jan. 5, 2023, issued a joint statement on the agreement “to resume discussions on oil and gas development at an early date.” “As long as the Philippine side demonstrates sincerity, China’s door to dialogue and cooperation will remain open,” the embassy said in a statement on Thursday. “Setting aside differences and pursuing joint development is the right path to uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea and deliver benefits to countries in the region and their peoples,” it added. The Palace on Thursday said the Philippines is not ruling out the possibility of engaging in a joint exploration with China to develop oil and gas resources in the West Philippine Sea (WPS). Presidential Communications Office Undersecretary Claire Castro issued the statement in reaction to Beijing’s pronouncement that it is willing to strike a deal with Manila if it would show “sincerity.” The Philippines and China have been long embroiled in a territorial dispute over the WPS. “The Philippines has never been insincere. In all occasions, the Philippines has always been sincere in talking, in negotiating, especially under the leadership of President Marcos. He doesn’t have a secret deal. If the negotiation can lead to anything that will be good for the Philippines, the president will not object to that,” Castro said in Filipino. “Right now, there is no joint exploration with China, but that doesn’t mean there won’t be [any in the future]. So, the Philippines is also open to that,” she added. The United States and Israeli war against Iran, which triggered oil prices to skyrocket in the international market, could provide an impetus for the Philippines and China to finally reach a deal. “That’s something we are exploring. Everything that might be of help we are certainly pursuing,” Marcos said. But the Philippines claims exclusive rights over the natural maritime resources in the contested waterway which China refuses to recognize. Given the current geopolitical situation, Marcos raised the possibility of a “reset” in the two countries’ strained relations. “There’s going to be a very, very serious restructuring,” he said. Constitutional challenge Joint exploration faces constitutional challenges, however. In 2023, then-senator Francis Tolentino urged the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to carefully study the government’s plan to have another round of gas exploration talks with China. Tolentino said the DFA should take into consideration what the Constitution provides when it comes to the Philippines’ rights in its exclusive economic zone. He said the DFA should consider the 2016 Hague arbitral ruling and the recent Supreme Court decision which invalidated the 2005 Tripartite Agreement for Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) before entering into another partnership with China. Voting 12-2-1, the Supreme Court on Jan. 10, 2023, invalidated the tripartite agreement between China National Offshore Oil Corp., Vietnam Oil and Gas Corp., and Philippine National Oil Co. involving an area in the South China Sea covering 142,886 square kilometers. The court ruled that the JMSU is unconstitutional for allowing wholly owned foreign corporations to participate in the exploration of the country’s natural resources without observing the safeguards provided in Section 2, Article 12 of the 1987 Constitution. In 2023, then-Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel III also raised the need for transparency from both Philippine and Chinese

governments if the proposed negotiations for joint oil and gas explorations in WPS pushed through. Pimentel, in a statement, said the purpose of transparency “is for us to know if the agreement is compliant with our Constitution.” Transparency “is crucial for these talks to prosper, most especially when it involves our rights over some parts” of WPS, he added. Tolentino also said that since the matter involves foreign policy and national security, it is only proper that the Senate must be involved in any future exploratory talks with China. He noted that the 2016 Arbitral Ruling invalidated China’s “nine-dash line” claim, the basis of Beijing’s expansion in the South China Sea and the WPS.

- [Camago-3 well successfully drilled, tested – Marcos](#) (2026-03-26 16:14)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday announced that the Camago-3 well has been successfully drilled and tested, producing up to 60 million standard cubic feet of gas per day. “Today, I am proud to announce another step forward in our mission to secure affordable, reliable energy for every Filipino,” Marcos said in a video message. “It is the second major milestone under our \$893-million Malampaya Phase 4 campaign, and it is significantly larger than our first,” he added. The president said Camago-3 holds an estimated 2.5 times more recoverable gas than the Malampaya East-1 discovery. “Together, these two wells are projected to extend the life of the Malampaya gas field by an estimated six years,” Marcos said. “We are targeting first gas delivery by the fourth quarter of 2026,” he added. “This is energy we control. Energy that shields the Filipino people from rising fuel costs beyond our shores,” the president said. Prime Energy, operator of Service Contract 38 (SC 38), on Thursday said that it is on track to deliver first gas from the Malampaya Phase 4 (MP4) development by the fourth quarter of 2026. The Camago-3 well flowed at rates of up to 60 million standard cubic feet of gas per day, confirming a substantial addition to Malampaya’s remaining gas resources and reinforcing the role of indigenous natural gas in supporting the Philippines’ long-term energy security. “The successful completion of Camago-3 demonstrates the strength of the Filipino workforce and the close collaboration between government and industry,” Prime Energy said. The Malampaya consortium, led by Prime Energy in collaboration with joint venture partners UC38 LLC, Prime Oil & Gas Inc. and PNOG Exploration Corp., continues to advance activities under MP4 on schedule. For the first time since 2000, new subsea pipelines are being installed to tie additional resources into the Malampaya platform, restoring large-scale offshore construction capability and reinforcing the Philippines’ long-term energy resilience. “Delivering results of this scale in less than three years since the renewal of SC 38 is an amazing achievement and reflects what ‘Top Quartile’ performance looks like in the international Oil and Gas industry. This progress keeps us firmly on track to deliver first MP4 gas in the fourth quarter of 2026 and opens new opportunities to expand the country’s domestic gas resources,” the company said. Prime Energy, a wholly owned subsidiary of Prime Infra, thanked the president and the Department of Energy for supporting new investments to sustain the country’s indigenous natural gas supply. Utilizing indigenous gas provides a vital shield against price volatility driven by global events. Malampaya’s fuel cost equivalent is approximately P4.80 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), compared with roughly P10.30/kWh for imported

liquefied natural gas. “The results at Camago-3 further strengthen our confidence in Malampaya’ s remaining resource potential,” Prime Energy said. “Together with the Malampaya East-1 gas discovery, this will deliver continued value of indigenous natural gas in ensuring a stable and reliable power supply for Filipino consumers.”

- [Labor group seeks P5,000 wage subsidy](#) (2026-03-26 16:13)

ORGANIZED labor called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to include the over 5 million minimum wage earners in the government’ s cash-support program to ease the impact of the rising costs fueled by the Middle East conflict. The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) on Thursday pressed the government to roll out a P5,000 subsidy for private sector employees, who it said are also suffering from rising fuel costs. It said that with Congress still failing to pass the long-delayed P200 legislated wage hike, urgent relief should be provided to minimum wage earners, similar to what the government is providing to the transportation sector. “It cannot be that everything is increasing — except for wages. If there’ s a fuel subsidy, there should be a wage subsidy. We cannot abandon five million workers,” TUCP said. It said that for more than three decades, minimum wage earners have been left behind by the regional wage-setting system established in 1989. It criticized the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for failing to hold consultations with labor groups and raised concern over the formation of the Palace’ s Uplift (Urban Program for Livelihood Finance and Training) Committee without adequate worker representation. “For over thirty years, fair wages have not been given to the workers. Now, in the midst of a crisis, they are being neglected again. Not once were we consulted by DOLE, and the Uplift Committee was formed without a genuine voice from the ranks of the workers,” TUCP said. It made the call during the Senate Protect (Proactive Response and Oversight for Timely and Effective Crisis Strategy) Committee hearing, as the Department of Budget and Management confirmed P230 billion in available crisis funds. “The P5,000 subsidy costs just P25 billion — loose change compared to the P230 billion [for other sectors]. It can be done if there’ s a political will,” TUCP said. It called on Malacañang to certify the P200 legislated wage hike as urgent to fast-track its passage. TUCP also called on the government to remove the excise taxes on petroleum products, implement price control on basis commodities, including diesel and gasoline, impose a moratorium on loan payments and lower interest from SSS, GSIS and Pag-IBIG.

- [Manibela urges govt to scrap fuel taxes](#) (2026-03-26 16:12)

TRANSPORT group Manibela on Thursday called on the government to remove the excise tax and value-added tax on fuel, a day after a driver died during a payout in Quezon City. Manibela Chairman Mar Valbuena said drivers were being squeezed by rising oil prices and delayed relief, prompting the group to press for the immediate removal of fuel taxes on the first day of the nationwide transport strike. Valbuena said the government should not wait any longer to lift the excise tax on fuel and the VAT, which further increased the burden on drivers. He said President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. should prioritize the suspension of the excise tax, the removal of VAT on fuel and oversight of oil prices so oil companies would not take advantage of the increase in

petroleum prices. He said drivers were left with grievances over the fuel aid distribution and the suspension of the fare increase. Valbuena said drivers were asked to submit multiple documents before the payout, including copies of their OR/CR (Official Receipt and Certificate of Registration), franchise papers and other requirements, but many still did not receive assistance. He said some lists were also misplaced, claiming that names submitted in Pasig City ended up in Caloocan City, while drivers along their Nagtahan route did not receive any fuel subsidy. Valbuena said transport groups submitted lists four times, but none of their members on that route received aid. “The giving of aid should be orderly, now that someone has died. Some felt dizzy, some were not given anything. What we received was not aid, but only inconvenience — we lined up the whole day, did not drive, and in the end there was nothing to receive,” he said. A Manibela member also appealed to the government to act on the drivers’ concerns after the driver died during Wednesday’s payout in Quezon City. “Please think carefully about how you will solve our situation, because every member of Manibela is already suffering. We do not want what happened yesterday to happen again. Someone already died, but still got nothing,” the member said. Valbuena said the group’s protest was also driven by the continued increase in fuel prices, which he said had entered its fourth week. He said the transport sector was being affected by the continued rise in diesel prices and by what he described as the government’s lack of control over pump prices. Valbuena also said the problem was not the war in the Middle East itself, but businessmen who, he claimed, were taking advantage of the situation by raising petroleum prices. He said removing fuel taxes would help drivers and other sectors directly affected by rising oil prices, including farmers, fishers and workers. Valbuena questioned the allocation of government funds, saying only P2.5 billion of the P21-billion subsidy package would go to drivers and others directly hit by the oil price increase. He said some groups of 60 to 100 drivers had only four, five or eight members who were able to receive aid. Valbuena said around 80 percent joined the strike, particularly in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. He said at least 30,000 jeepneys in Metro Manila joined the strike and that the figure in the National Capital Region could reach at least 100,000 if transportation network vehicle services, motorcycle taxis and UV Express units were included. Valbuena said the government was not prepared for the strike despite earlier statements from the group that the protest would begin on Wednesday and last for three days.

- [NPCC backs P50/kg price cap for imported rice](#) (2026-03-26 16:11)

THE National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) has endorsed to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. the proposal of the Department of Agriculture (DA) for a P50-per-kilogram (kg) price ceiling on imported rice for 30 days. In a statement on Thursday, the NPCC said it has adopted the DA’s proposal for the imposition of a price cap on 5 percent broken rice. The council said the measure seeks to curb unreasonable price increases and prevent market abuse. The price cap is anchored on Republic Act 7581, or the Price Act, which protects consumers by stabilizing the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities. It said the proposal is consistent with efforts in response to the president’s declaration of a State of National Energy Emergency. Earlier this month, there were reports of imported rice being sold for as high as P60/kg in some parts in the

country. Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has said the increase was partly due to the war in the Middle East, which has pushed up fuel prices and freight charges. Tiu Laurel said a P60/kg price on imported rice was not reasonable, noting that 5 percent broken imported rice should only retail within a P48 to P50/kg range. The DA continues to expand its P20/kg rice program. It is also selling rice at P45/kg and P48/kg through Food Terminal Inc. and Planters Products Inc. This initiative has started in Metro Manila and will soon be implemented in major cities nationwide.

- [Go to DBM: Use idle funds for key youth programs](#) (2026-03-26 16:10)

SEN. Bong Go urged the National Youth Commission (NYC), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to utilize funds already allocated by Congress, warning against leaving budgets idle while critical youth programs remain unimplemented. Go, who chairs the Senate Committee on Youth, raised the issue during the Senate hearing on March 17, citing delays in the rollout of initiatives, particularly those addressing mental health and bullying among the youth. He noted that some programs have been pending for years despite the availability of funding. In response, NYC Chairman Jeff Ortega said limitations during budget deliberations affected the use of additional allocations. Ortega explained that guidance from their agency head restricted spending beyond the commission's regular budget. He said certain requested funds were earmarked for specific purposes that have yet to be implemented. "We only asked for the budget that was given to us for the NYC Extension Office that we are still not using," he said. Ortega said he was open to redirecting funds toward more urgent programs, subject to coordination with the Senate and DBM. Go said funds approved by Congress must be put to use, especially when intended for youth development programs. He raised concerns that unutilized funds could be diverted elsewhere without clear public benefit. The DBM acknowledged the concern and said upcoming budget preparations could help support such initiatives.

- [Southeast Asia revisits nuclear power plans for AI data centers](#) (2026-03-26 16:09)

BANGKOK, Thailand — Nuclear power is getting a second look in Southeast Asia as countries prepare to meet surging energy demand as they vie for artificial intelligence-focused data centers. Several Southeast Asian nations are reviving mothballed nuclear plans and setting ambitious targets and nearly half of the region could, if they pursue those goals, have nuclear energy in the 2030s. Even countries without current plans have signaled their interest. Southeast Asia has never produced a single watt of nuclear energy, despite long-held atomic ambitions. But that may soon change as pressure mounts to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change, while meeting growing power needs. The Iran war is underscoring the vulnerability of Asia's energy supplies, raising the sense of urgency about finding alternatives to oil and gas in Southeast Asia, analysts say. The surge in crude oil prices caused by the escalating conflict has raised the motivation for countries to speed up their nuclear efforts, said Alvie Asuncion-Astronomo of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute. Vietnam and Russia advanced a nuclear power deal this week as the region's energy security concerns worsened. In South Asia, Bangladesh is racing to power up its new nuclear power plant, also backed by Russia, to

address the country's energy shortfalls. Southeast Asia will account for a quarter of growth in global energy demand by 2035, according to the International Energy Agency, or IEA. That partly is because of the more than 2,000 data centers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines, according to the think tank Ember. Many more data centers are in the pipeline. That's most obvious in Malaysia, which aspires to be Southeast Asia's AI computing hub and has drawn investments and interest from tech giants like Microsoft, Google and Nvidia. The revival of Southeast Asia's nuclear interest mirrors a global trend. Nearly 40 nations — including the United States, Japan, South Korea and China — have joined a global push to triple installed nuclear energy capacity by 2050. Southeast Asia will account for nearly a fourth of the 157 gigawatts expected from “newcomer nuclear nations” by mid-century, according to the industry-backed World Nuclear Association. “There is a more serious, new and growing momentum for the development of nuclear energy in Southeast Asia,” said King Lee, with the association. Southeast Asia revisits nuclear power. Five of the 11 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines — are chasing nuclear. Vietnam is building two nuclear plants, backed by the Russian state corporation Rosatom. These are “nationally significant, strategic projects,” according to Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh. Vietnam's revised atomic energy law took effect in January. Indonesia added nuclear to its new energy plan last year, aiming to build two small modular reactors by 2034. Officials there say Canada and Russia have issued formal cooperation proposals and others will soon follow. Thailand set a target last year of adding 600 megawatts of nuclear generating capacity by 2037. Nuclear is a “promising solution” to supplying enough affordable, clean electricity to meet rising demand, officials with Thailand's Electricity Generating Authority told a conference in Bangkok. No Southeast Asian nation has engaged with atomic energy more than the Philippines, which built a nuclear power plant in the 1970s that it never turned on. A new atomic energy regulatory authority launched last year will “usher in the integration of nuclear power,” according to Philippine officials. The country set a 2032 target and approved a roadmap for potential investors in February. “We are not anticipating that nuclear electricity will be cheap at the onset,” said Asuncion-Astronomo. But in the long term, she said it will improve the Philippines' energy reliability, security, independence and eventually costs. “The ongoing conflict in the Middle East definitely demonstrates how volatile fossil fuel costs are and the instability of the supply,” she said. “Nuclear is an alternative solution that can give us more self-reliance in terms of energy.” Southeast Asian nations without firm plans are also showing interest. Cambodia's latest national strategy signaled an openness to nuclear and Singapore outlined plans last year to study its own atomic potential. Even the tiny oil and gas sultanate of Brunei told the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, that it is “carefully exploring nuclear energy.” Data centers revive Malaysia's nuclear plans The AI-focused data centers contributing to Southeast Asia's growing energy demand are large windowless buildings filled with rows of computers. A standard AI data center consumes as much electricity as 100,000 households, the IEA says. Malaysia has more than 500 operational data centers. Another 300 or so are under construction and around 1,140 are planned, according to Ember. Malaysia revived its nuclear program last year and set a 2031 target for bringing atomic energy online. Nuclear power risks

remain Global nuclear capacity will more than triple — to about 1,446 gigawatts — by 2050 if existing reactors continue operations and governments meet their stated targets, according to the World Nuclear Association. More than 400 nuclear reactors, in about 30 countries, generate around 380 gigawatts of energy, according to the IAEA's Power Reactor Information System. This makes up between 4.5 to 10 percent of the world's energy, the IEA and nuclear association estimate. Concerns over nuclear safety, waste and supply remain. Public resistance flared after the cataclysmic 1986 Chernobyl and 2011 Fukushima nuclear meltdowns. But even Japan, which idled all its plants after that disaster, is restarting its nuclear plants. Bridget Woodman, with the research group Zero Carbon Analytics, said that as the world strays farther off track from its climate goals, nuclear can look deceptively more enticing than other less risky alternatives, like renewable energy. Southeast Asian countries “considering starting a nuclear industry from scratch” need to consider “the possibility of accidents,” she said.

- [Comelec adopts austerity measures amid national energy emergency](#) (2026-03-26 16:07)

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) has implemented austerity measures relative to the president's declaration of a state of national energy emergency to ease the impact of the war in the Middle East. The Commission en banc on Thursday adopted the recommendation of Chairman George Erwin Garcia to postpone or cancel non-essential travel and activities that entail significant budgetary expenditures. “This measure demonstrates sensitivity to the economic hardship and fuel price volatility currently affecting the Filipino people,” Garcia said in a memorandum. However, the en banc exempted from its directive activities related to the preparations for the Bangsamoro parliamentary election, the 2026 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections, and the 2028 national and local elections, the resolution of electoral controversies and other core functions and activities in compliance with rules and regulations. The recommendations adopted by the Commission en banc include, among others, the postponement of the Election Expo Convention and Conference, including the Asian Electoral Stakeholders Forum VII and the Philippine Election Expo scheduled on April 21-23, 2026. The commission postponed the National Goodwill Games scheduled for May 8-10, 2026 and the team building activities of all departments and offices. The Comelec will also adopt a work-from-home arrangement for main and field offices every Monday beginning April 6, 2026. Meanwhile, Malacañang on Thursday assured the public that essential government services would not be affected by the government's energy conservation measures. Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said agencies delivering frontline services were not covered by the four-day onsite work being implemented to conserve energy. “The language of the president's order is clear: Agencies that provide frontline services shall keep their services running at all times,” Recto said in a statement. He said that the “overriding rule” was that “essential, basic and vital services” must not be disrupted. These include agencies involved in the “direct delivery of health, public safety, and emergency response services.” “We do not cut ambulance service in the name of fuel economy. We do not restrict police response to crime in order to save on gas. Services like these are not subject to cost-cutting,” he added. “If fuel prices rise, we will put government vehicles on a gas diet so ambulances, fire trucks, and police

patrol cars can continue operating,” he said. Under Memorandum Circular 114 issued by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on March 6, support and auxiliary offices, even in frontline agencies, are required to reduce their energy consumption by at least 20 percent. Recto said the conservation measures covered regional and administrative offices. “If you are a regional office of the Bureau of Fire Protection, you are covered by energy conservation protocols, but the fuel supply of fire trucks is exempt,” he said.

- [Senators sound alarm on possible onion price collapse](#) (2026-03-26 16:05)

SEN. Joseph Victor Ejercito on Thursday warned that rising production costs and declining farm-gate prices may push farmers into losses and put the country’s food security at serious risk. “We cannot neglect our farmers,” Ejercito said. 989789,989793,989791,989782,989784,989779,989792,989785,989772,989775,989776,989783,989781,989777,989778,989794,989796,989773,989780,989786,989774,989787,989790,989771,989795 He cited the sharp drop in farm-gate prices of onions in Nueva Ecija and other producing provinces, even as production costs continue to rise. The Senate deputy majority leader raised this matter during a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform held in Nueva Ecija. Sen. Francis Pangilinan, the panel chairman, said the inquiry looked into the “systemic collapse” of onion farmgate prices in Occidental Mindoro and Nueva Ecija. Ejercito said that the situation is no longer a simple issue of supply and demand. “This is no longer just a matter of price fluctuations. This is a failure of the system. This is [government] negligence.” Sen. Panfilo Lacson also questioned the country’s onion importation policy, saying that continued importation during local harvest could harm farmers. The Senate president pro tempore cited data suggesting that the Philippines may already be beyond onion self-sufficiency. He presented the Philippine Onion Industry Road Map 2021-2025. “The Philippines reportedly needs to increase onion production from 229,539 metric tons to 279,270 metric tons in order to achieve self-sufficiency by 2025,” said Lacson in Filipino. He said data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that the national onion harvest in 2024 had reached 264,000. “So, the question is, how much was harvested in 2025?” he asked. Lacson learned a harvest of 279,000 metric tons of onion is self-sufficient. “And we’ve even exceeded that. So why did we import so much — 94,000 metric tons in total in 2025? Our shortfall wasn’t even close to 94,000 metric tons,” he said. “Why are we importing? It’s to kill our farmers, there’s no other reason,” Lacson said. Ejercito also raised concern over the continued influx of imported onions, even during peak harvest season, which he said undermines local producers. He questioned the government’s importation strategy, warning that poorly timed imports worsen the situation. Ejercito said the issue “goes beyond market fluctuations and points to structural problems that must be immediately addressed.” Lacson said that local farmers are being harmed by importers who deliberately time shipments to coincide with the local harvest, undercutting the prices of homegrown onions. Pangilinan, panel chairman, raised concerns over the continued importation of onion during the local harvest season. He noted that farmers are already struggling with rising fuel and logistics costs resulting from the Middle East war. He said onion import clearances remained

valid during the local harvest period despite policies intended to prevent overlap with domestic production. “It is questionable, especially since the policy is very clear that imports should not overlap with the harvest season of our local farmers,” Pangilinan said in Filipino. He noted that imported onions occupying cold storage facilities leave little room for local harvests, forcing farmers to sell their products at a lower cost. “When this happens, you cannot help but wonder whether our farmers are being deliberately denied access to cold storage while imported onions continue to enter the market and farmgate prices keep falling,” Pangilinan said.

- [Tulfo welcomes dismissal of eligibility case](#) (2026-03-26 16:05)

THE Senate Electoral Tribunal has dismissed a quo warranto petition seeking the ouster of Sen. Erwin Tulfo, who called the dismissal a reaffirmation of earlier decisions clearing his eligibility. In a statement issued on Thursday, Tulfo expressed relief over the tribunal’s March 25 decision. “I thank God that this case that was repeatedly thrown at me has been dismissed,” he said. The tribunal, chaired by Justice Marvic Leonen, junked the petition on the grounds of “insufficiency in form” and failure to meet basic procedural requirements. Tulfo thanked the tribunal members for “for carefully reviewing and finally dismissing this case based on the pieces of evidence my lawyer submitted.” The petition, filed by Berteni Cataluña Causing, questioned Tulfo’s eligibility to hold public office, citing allegations that held United States citizenship and served in the US Army, a prior libel conviction allegedly involving moral turpitude, and purported violations related to political dynasties and academic qualifications. The ruling effectively ends the latest legal challenge against Tulfo, following earlier dismissals of similar cases by the Commission on Elections. He described the decision as a “direct and clear affirmation” of the previous rulings. The tribunal, which serves as the sole judge of electoral contests involving members of the Senate, has yet to release a full copy of its decision.

- [Kids, elderly more susceptible to heat stroke – DOH](#) (2026-03-26 16:04)

THE Department of Health (DOH) urged the public to take precautions against heat-related illnesses, particularly heat stroke, which poses a significant threat to children and the elderly. In a television interview on Thursday, Health Secretary Ted Herbosa said it is important to stay hydrated and avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, as the heat intensifies. Herbosa said the bodies of children and the elderly are less efficient at regulating temperature, making them more susceptible to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. While most heat-related illnesses, such as heat fatigue, can be managed with rest, hydration, and cooling techniques, severe cases of heat stroke require immediate medical attention. “The treatment of most heat-related illnesses does not require hospitalization. However, heat stroke, which can be fatal, needs to be treated urgently in hospitals,” he said. Herbosa assured the public that public hospitals and emergency departments are equipped and ready to manage an increase in heat-related illnesses.

- [PNP aims to close more e-sabong hubs](#) (2026-03-26 16:04)

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) said Thursday that it intends to close more “e-sabong” hubs across the country following a major operation against illegal cockfighting in Tondo, Manila. PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. called for an intensified crackdown against illegal online cockfighting, noting the operation in a coliseum in Tondo was part of a sustained nationwide campaign targeting organized illegal gambling networks. “We are intensifying intelligence-driven operations nationwide. This crackdown will continue until these illegal gambling hubs are completely dismantled,” Nartatez said in a statement. Authorities on Tuesday night raided an alleged 24-hour e-sabong operation at Vista Coliseum in Tondo, resulting in the arrest of more than 170 individuals. Nartatez said the operation exposed how illegal betting activities continue to operate behind closed doors despite a nationwide ban. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order 9 in December 2022, reaffirming the nationwide suspension of e-sabong operations and ordering stricter enforcement against illegal activities. “Illegal e-sabong is a breeding ground for crime. It leads to financial ruin for families and fuels petty crimes. This destroys the moral fiber of our community,” Nartatez said. “Apart from gambling, these hubs often involve unregulated crowds and tax evasion. It creates an environment where lawlessness thrives, affecting even those who are not playing,” he added. The PNP is currently conducting nationwide intelligence mapping to locate e-sabong networks attempting to hide behind physical coliseums or digital screens. Nartatez lauded the CIDG-National Capital Region and the Manila Police District for the successful operation and warned operators of illegal e-sabong operations to stop their activities.

- [CAAP unveils eco-friendly facility](#) (2026-03-26 16:04)

THE Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) broke ground on a P382.96 million, six-story executive building on Monday. Located within the CAAP Central Office complex on Old MIA Road in Pasay City, the modern facility was designed to serve as the agency’s executive hub and meet the rising demands of the aviation sector. The building will expand office capacity and improve inter-office coordination, fostering a more efficient and productive working environment for employees. “These initiatives reflect one clear direction: a CAAP that is safer, greener, and truly future-ready,” said CAAP Director General Raul del Rosario. The regulator also inaugurated a sewage treatment plant (STP) within the same compound. The facility utilizes integrated fixed-film activated sludge (IFAS) technology — the first of its kind in a Philippine government aviation facility — and is capable of treating up to 260 cubic meters of wastewater daily. The CAAP added that eight newly acquired Oshkosh aircraft rescue and firefighting units have been deployed to domestic airports under its jurisdiction. The units were distributed to airports in Laoag, Puerto Princesa, Butuan, Siargao, Busuanga, Bicol, General Santos and Tacloban.

- [Marcos urged to call special session after Holy Week](#) (2026-03-26 16:03)

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. must call a special session of Congress after Holy Week to address the worsening impact of the Middle East war on Filipinos, two lawmakers from northern Metro Manila said on Thursday. Interviewed separately via Viber, Caloocan City 2nd

District Rep. Edgar Erice and Navotas City Rep. Toby Tiangco highlighted the need for Congress to remain in session and “act decisively given the current situation.” “Especially now that the chief executive has declared a state of energy emergency,” they pointed out. Erice and Tiangco said they already filed measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis, including fuel subsidies for affected sectors, government austerity measures and suspension of the value-added tax (VAT) on petroleum products to ease the burden on consumers. “It would be unfair that Congress is on break while the Filipino people are suffering. This is not the time for recess — this is the time for action,” said Erice, a member of the House opposition. They noted that the crisis has gone beyond energy concerns and now affects inflation, transportation costs, food security, government revenues, and the safety of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). “In the long run, the families of OFWs in the country would be directly affected and that would be alarming,” Tiangco said. They called on the House to exercise its oversight powers over rising oil prices, citing alarming data. “It was indeed infuriating to find out that at the height of the crisis, there are opportunists and greedy people who take advantage for their own interests,” Erice said. He noted that based on the Asian diesel price tracker, the Philippines has already recorded a 97-percent surge in the prices of diesel, compared with other neighboring countries which only had a 30 percent to 40 percent rise. To ensure continuity of legislative work while conserving resources, Erice proposed a modified schedule like holding only two sessions weekly from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in order to save on electricity. Tiangco suggested austerity measures like doing away with food catering, especially during committee hearings. “Let’s try bringing our own food — coffee and bread is good enough. What’s important, our work must continue amid this crisis. Let us show good example to our fellowmen,” the former long-time Navotas mayor said.

- [‘DBP willing to waive penalties on loans’](#) (2026-03-26 16:02)

THE Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) announced Thursday that the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) is willing to temporarily waive or suspend penalties on overdue loans of transport service entities that acquired modern jeepneys under the government’s modernization program. LTFRB Chairman Vigor Mendoza II said the loans were obtained by transport cooperatives and small companies to finance the purchase of modern jeepneys under the Public Transport Modernization Program. Mendoza said many of these units are financed through DBP’s Program Assistance to Support Alternative Driving Approaches. He said the LTFRB wrote to DBP President and CEO Michael de Jesus requesting a temporary waiver or suspension of penalties on delayed payments, citing the financial strain caused by surging fuel prices. “The significant increase in petroleum costs has placed additional pressure on transport operators, affecting their ability to meet loan obligations,” Mendoza said. In its reply, DBP acknowledged that the Middle East situation has driven up global oil prices and weakened the peso, resulting in higher operating expenses for the transport sector. “DBP may consider granting a temporary suspension or waiver of penalties on a case-to-case basis, subject to approval of the appropriate authorities,” the bank said in its response. Mendoza welcomed the bank’s response, saying the measure would help operators

stabilize their finances and sustain public transport services. “This will be a big help to operators struggling with rising operational costs,” he said, adding that the move reflects coordination among government agencies to support the transport sector.

- [PNP HPG names acting director](#) (2026-03-26 16:01)

POLICE Regional Office Central Luzon Deputy Director for Administration BGen. Rommel Batangan has been designated acting director of the Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG). On Wednesday, PNP chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. released the order issued by the PNP Directorate for Personnel and Records Management. The appointment follows the resignation of BGen. Jessie Tamayao, who stepped down Wednesday amid a subordinate's sexual harassment accusation. The victim filed an administrative complaint against Tamayao before the National Police Commission on Tuesday. Tamayao denied the accusations in a statement and clarified that his resignation was not an admission of guilt but a gesture of respect for due process.

- [Russian oil arrives, boosts buffer stock](#) (2026-03-26 16:00)

A SHIP carrying more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil has arrived in the Philippines, a source with knowledge of the matter told Agence France-Presse (AFP) on Thursday, days after the country declared a national energy emergency over the Middle East war. The Sierra Leone-flagged Sara Sky, bearing high-quality crude from Russia's ESPO pipeline arrived on Monday, with documents showing the consignee as Petron Corp., operator of the Philippines' sole oil refinery, said the source, who asked to remain anonymous as they were not authorized to speak to press. Based on recent data from the Department of Energy and international energy monitoring agencies, the Philippines consumes about 450,000 to 487,000 barrels of oil per day. At this rate, the Russian delivery this week would add less than two days to the country's fuel inventory. The Philippines is heavily dependent on imported fuel, the cost of which has hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. An AFP journalist on Thursday saw the Sara Sky at anchor in Limay port just outside Manila, where the Petron refinery is located. It is believed to be the first shipment of Russian oil to the Philippines in five years. Last week, Ramon Ang, CEO of Petron, told AFP the company was “in talks” to potentially purchase Russian oil. On Thursday, he declined to confirm the arrival of the shipment. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Wednesday that the Philippines was casting a wide net in its search for fuel, with the country's dwindling stocks expected to last only another 45 days. “We have not only gone to our... traditional oil suppliers, we have tried to explore other sources that are not affected by the war that is ongoing in the Middle East,” he said in a press briefing addressing the state of emergency. “Nothing is off the table. We are looking at everything, everything that we can do.” The United States this month eased some restrictions on sales of Russian crude, allowing countries to purchase oil that was already at sea until April 11. Kpler analyst Muyu Xu told AFP around 120 million barrels of Russian oil may have been at sea at the time, adding much of it may have already been preordered by Chinese or Indian clients. On Thursday, the Philippines' Department of Energy activated a P20-billion

emergency fund that Energy Secretary Sharon Garin called a “proactive step” to securing fuel supplies. Garin said earlier this week that the Philippines also planned to boost the output of its coal-fired power plants to keep electricity costs down as the war wreaks havoc with gas shipments. With the cost of LNG (liquefied natural gas) soaring, Garin said the country would “temporarily” be forced to lean even more heavily on the fossil fuel, the main contributor of climate-warming carbon dioxide emissions from human sources. She added that top coal supplier Indonesia had placed no restriction on the amount the Philippines could buy if it needs to increase imports.

- [JV Ejercito: Onion price collapse threatens farmers, food security](#) (2026-03-26 13:46)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito on Thursday warned that rising production costs and declining farm-gate prices may push farmers into losses and put the country's food security at serious risk. The senator said that while the country is in the midst of state of national energy emergency, the problems hounding the agricultural sector remain. Ejercito reiterated that farmers remain the backbone of the nation and must not be neglected. "We cannot neglect our farmers." He cited the sharp drop in farm-gate prices of onions in Nueva Ecija and other producing provinces, even as production costs continue to rise. The Senate deputy majority leader raised this matter during a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform held in Nueva Ecija. He said that the situation is no longer a simple issue of supply and demand. "This is no longer just a matter of price fluctuations. This is a failure of the system. This is [government] negligence." Ejercito also raised concern over the continued influx of imported onions, even during peak harvest season, which he said undermines local producers. He questioned the government's importation strategy, warning that poorly timed imports worsen the situation. Ejercito said the issue "goes beyond market fluctuations and points to structural problems that must be immediately addressed."

- [DSWD, DOTR to have special payout of fuel subsidies for PUV drivers not on master list](#) (2026-03-26 13:31)

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Transportation (DOTr) would set a day for the special payout of fuel subsidies for transport workers who were excluded from the master list of beneficiaries, Malacañang announced on Thursday. Presidential Communications Office (PCO) Undersecretary Claire Castro said this is to ensure compliance with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to not leave anyone behind in the government's efforts to cushion the impact of the high prices of petroleum products particularly those from the transport sector. Castro noted that DOTr Secretary Giovanni Lopez and DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian have agreed to have a special payout for the P5,000 financial assistance which will come from the Cash Relief Assistance Program under the DSWD's Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS). "There may have been a double entry or lack of details in their names or they may not have been registered with the LTRFB (Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board). But by the order of the president, no one will be left behind," the official said in Filipino in a Palace briefing. Reports

earlier surfaced that there were jeepney drivers in some areas around the country whose names were not on the list slated to receive the cash aid. Castro gave reassurance that this is now being remedied. "It's likely that there was a double listing. Let's say they were listed as a tricycle driver but they are also driving a motor taxi. So, all we really need is review the list of valid beneficiaries," she said. Overall, the government's cash aid targets 245,066 driver-beneficiaries and operators of 1,180,783 PUV units nationwide.

- [Lazaro urges countries to uphold international law](#) (2026-03-26 13:10)

MANILA, Philippines -- Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro called on all countries to uphold international law, particularly the respect for sovereignty amid the war in the Middle East. Lazaro underscored the need for the "peaceful resolution of disputes, refraining from the threat or use of force, and cooperation within an established and robust multilateral system." The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said she renewed the Philippines' call for all parties to the ongoing conflict to "de-escalate and resolve their differences through diplomacy and dialogue." Lazaro said the Philippines is committed to enhancing its relations with Muslim partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. She made the assurance on Thursday when she hosted a lunch reception for Muslim heads of diplomatic missions in the Philippines to celebrate Eid' l Fitr, which marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan. The DFA said Lazaro emphasized the "universal values of compassion, empathy, and unity that are shared by other faiths and cultures in the world." She said that Eid' l Fitr is a national holiday in the Philippines to give importance to the Muslim population, mostly in Mindanao and in the Bangsamoro region. "The DFA said it "traditionally hosts the Eid' l Fitr reception to keep with its tradition of expressing solidarity and brotherhood with the Muslim members of the diplomatic corps and the larger Muslim community."

- [Lacson: Smuggling, unchecked importation, sloppy govt response 'killing' onion farmers](#) (2026-03-26 13:04)

MANILA, Philippines -- Sen. Panfilo Lacson said aside smuggling and unchecked onion imports, disjointed government data and sloppy government response further push farmers to the brink. The senator called out the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) for the apparent discrepancies in their data on onion production and consumption. This issue hinders the government from making the needed decisions to help onion farmers, said Lacson during a public hearing of the Senate committees on agriculture and local government on the systemic collapse of onion farm-gate prices. "How can we arrive at effective decisions if your data is disjointed?" Lacson asked the representatives of the DA and PSA. The PSA said the Philippines produced 308,660 metric tons (MTs) in 2025. Lacson said this could mean a "surplus" of about 13,000 MTs of onion. Lacson noted that the Philippines imported 94,000 MTs in 2025. He said that the volume of onion imports that year could even be bigger -- potentially up to 150,000 MTs if smuggling and leakage are factored in. On the other hand, Lacson said DA's figures showed that onion production in 2025 amounted to 245,988 MTs

from Regions 1 (Ilocos Region), 2 (Cagayan Valley), 3 (Central Luzon). Onion production in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan) in 2025 showed a deficit of 22,035MTs. "It seems the communication gap between the DA and stakeholders is very wide. Are stakeholders being consulted by the DA? How often? Or if they are consulted, are the stakeholders being heard?" Lacson asked.

- [President announces successful drill, test of second Malampaya well](#) (2026-03-26 11:21)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday announced that the Camago-3 well has been successfully drilled and tested, producing up to 60 million standard cubic feet of gas per day. "Today, I am proud to announce another step forward in our mission to secure affordable, reliable energy for every Filipino," Marcos said in a video message. "It is the second major milestone under our \$893-million Malampaya Phase 4 campaign and it is significantly larger than our first," he added. The President said Camago-3 holds an estimated 2.5 times more recoverable gas than the Malampaya East-1 discovery. "Together, these two wells are projected to extend the life of the Malampaya gas field by an estimated six years," Marcos said. "We are targeting first gas delivery by the fourth quarter of 2026," he added.

- [Marcos mulls wealth tax as revenue measure for govt](#) (2026-03-26 10:19)

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. would study the possibility of implementing a wealth tax as part of possible revenue measures of the government, Malacañang said Thursday. Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the president was considering various policy options after economist Winnie Monsod criticized the administration's suspension of excise taxes on fuel, saying it benefits wealthier Filipinos more than the poor. "Just like what the President said, nothing is off the table so all suggestions are being considered," Castro said during a press conference. However, Castro cited the statement of Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DepDev) Secretary Arsenio Balisacan on the matter, saying that "imposing a wealth tax on the super wealthy is an economist's dream because wealth tends to compound." "A wealth tax slows wealth concentration over generations. Such concentration translates into political and economic power leading to market failures, slowing economic growth and further weakening inclusivity. Implementing or administering a wealth tax is never easy," Balisacan said, as relayed by Castro. "Most countries that have tried it such as Germany, France, and Sweden abandoned it because of its administrative complexity and the low revenue it generated. Moreover, a wealth tax may encourage capital flight especially when imposed during an economic crisis," he added.

- [Police Highway Patrol Group names Central Luzon deputy chief acting director](#) (2026-03-26 09:37)

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine National Police (PNP) named an acting director for its Highway Patrol Group to replace his predecessor who resigned over allegations of sexual harassment. Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr., PNP chief, released the order issued by the PNP's Directorate for Personnel and Records Management on Wednesday for Brig. Gen. Rommel

Batangas, Police Regional Office Central Luzon (PRO 3) deputy director for Administration, to succeed Brig. Gen. Jessie Tamayao who stepped down after a subordinate filed an administrative complaint before the National Police Commission (Napolcom) against him. Tamayao denied the accusations in a statement and clarified that his resignation was not an admission of guilt but a respect for due process.

- [Labor demands ₱5,000 monthly wage subsidy for 5M workers as prices soar](#) (2026-03-26 08:18)

MANILA, Philippines — Organized labor called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to include the over five million minimum wage earners in the government's cash-support program to ease the impact of the rising costs fueled by the ongoing Middle East conflict. The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) on Thursday pressed the government to immediately roll out a P5,000 subsidy for private sector employees, saying that they are also suffering from the effects of rising fuel costs. It pointed out that with Congress still failing to act on the long-delayed ₱200 legislated wage hike, urgent relief should also be provided to minimum wage earners, similar to what the government is providing to the transportation sector. "Hindi puwedeng lahat tumataas—maliban sa sahod. Kung may fuel subsidy, dapat may wage subsidy. Hindi puwedeng pabayaang ang limang milyong manggagawa" (It cannot be that everything is increasing—except for wages. If there's a fuel subsidy, there should be a wage subsidy. We cannot abandon five million workers)," TUCP stressed. The labor group lamented that for more than three decades, minimum wage earners have been left behind by the regional wage-setting system established in 1989. It also criticized the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for failing to convene meaningful consultations with labor groups, and raised concern over the formation of the Palace's UPLIFT Committee without adequate worker representation.

- [PDP slams House "weaponization" of Impeach Probe](#) (2026-03-26 08:05)

MANILA, Philippines — The Partido Demokratiko Pilipino (PDP) said it was "alarmed" over the "weaponization" of the impeachment process by the House of Representatives Justice Committee against Vice President Sara Duterte. Duterte is the daughter of PDP's chairman-emeritus, former president Rodrigo Duterte, who is currently jailed at International Criminal Court at The Hague where he may stand trial for alleged crimes against humanity for his war against illegal drugs. In a press briefing in Quezon City on Thursday, PDP Deputy Spokesman Ferdinand Topacio said that the committee, led by Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro, was converting the summary proceedings into a "trial" for the Vice President. "Both Houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives, cannot formulate its rules that violate the constitution, particularly the due process clause, the right against self incrimination, and the right to remain silent," Topacio, a lawyer, said. Topacio even described the proceedings as a 'kangaroo court' and a "star chamber", meaning a court with no due process. Former PDP senatorial candidate Jimmy Bondoc agreed with Topacio, saying that the jurisdiction of the House committee to conduct a mini trial is "fatally flawed" and "defective," citing the concept of "in dubio pro reo" or "always rule for the accused" "Because it's in favor of the accused, always in

favor of Sara who is now an accused, who is in jeopardy and we know they will file cases," Bondoc, a lawyer, said. On Wednesday, the defense team of Duterte said that it was questioning the proceedings of the committee, saying that the Senate has the "sole power" to try impeachment cases.

- [China seeks sincerity from PH in resuming oil exploration talks](#) (2026-03-26 07:24)

MANILA, Philippines — The Chinese Embassy in Manila said Beijing remained open for oil and gas exploration talks with Manila as long as the Philippines showed its sincerity for such discussion. The embassy was asked to comment on the remarks of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., in a Bloomberg interview, that he was open to resuming discussions with China on a joint oil and gas project in a disputed area of the South China Sea. It noted that China and the Philippines in the past "have conducted in-depth discussions on joint oil and gas development in disputed waters in the South China Sea and have made positive progress." Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Philippine leader's state visit to Beijing on Jan. 5, 2023, issued a joint statement on the agreement "to resume discussions on oil and gas development at an early date." "As long as the Philippine side demonstrates sincerity, China's door to dialogue and cooperation will remain open," the embassy said in a statement on Thursday. "Setting aside differences and pursuing joint development is the right path to uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea and deliver benefits to countries in the region and their peoples," it added. In 2023, then senator Francis Tolentino urged the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to carefully study the government's plan to have another round of gas exploration talks with China. Tolentino said the DFA should take into consideration what the Constitution provides when it comes to the Philippines' rights in its exclusive economic zone. He said the DFA should consider the 2016 Hague Arbitral ruling and the recent Supreme Court decision which invalidated the 2005 Tripartite Agreement for Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) before entering into another partnership with China. But voting 12-2-1, the Supreme Court on Jan. 10, 2023 invalidated the tripartite agreement between China National Offshore Oil Corp., Vietnam Oil and Gas Corp., and Philippine National Oil Co. involving an area in the South China Sea covering 142,886 square kilometers. The court ruled that the JSMU was unconstitutional for allowing wholly-owned foreign corporations to participate in the exploration of the country's natural resources without observing the safeguards provided in Section 2, Article 12 of the 1987 Constitution.

- [DOH warns heat stroke more prevalent in kids and elderly](#) (2026-03-26 07:12)

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Health (DOH) urged the public to take precautions against heat-related illnesses, particularly heat stroke, which poses a significant threat to vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. In an interview with state-run media PTV on Thursday, Health Secretary Ted Herbosa said it was important to stay hydrated and avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, as the summer heat intensifies. "To our countrymen, especially the elders and children, they are the most at risk for heat-related illnesses. Drink plenty of water, avoid staying in hot places for too long, and if you feel unwell, seek medical attention

immediately," he said in Filipino.

- [Ombudsman to comply with House panel subpoena order for Sara SALNs](#) (2026-03-26 06:20)

MANILA, Philippines — The Office of the Ombudsman will comply with a subpoena order issued by the House of Representatives on the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) of Vice President Sara Duterte. In a press conference on Thursday, Assistant Ombudsman Mico Clavano said that "even a simple request would do [...]. So much more if it is a subpoena. We will comply." The House justice committee, which is hearing Duterte's impeachment case to determine whether there is probable cause, decided on Wednesday to issue a subpoena to the Ombudsman for the vice president's SALNs from 2022 to 2025, 2007 to 2013, 2016 to 2022. The office, which is the repository for the SALNs of some officials, including the vice president's, could provide the documents from when she was Davao City mayor and vice mayor. Clavano said that "we would have to direct or endorse the request or subpoena to the proper office that was the repository of those SALNs which is 'yung sa Mindanao office ho natin (our Mindanao office)."

- [Russian oil arrives as PH battles 'energy emergency'](#) (2026-03-26 05:09)

MANILA, Philippines — A ship carrying more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil has arrived in the Philippines, a source with knowledge of the matter told AFP Thursday, days after the country declared a national energy emergency over the Middle East war. The Sierra Leone-flagged Sara Sky, bearing high-quality crude from Russia's ESPO pipeline arrived on Monday, with documents showing the consignee as Petron Corp, operator of the Philippines' sole oil refinery, said the source, who asked to remain anonymous as they were not authorized to speak to press. The Philippines is heavily dependent on imported fuel, the cost of which has hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. An AFP journalist on Thursday saw the Sara Sky at anchor in Limay port just outside Manila, where the Petron refinery is located. It is believed to be the first shipment of Russian oil to the Philippines in five years. Last week, Ramon Ang, CEO of Petron, told AFP the company was "in talks" to potentially purchase Russian oil. On Thursday, he declined to confirm the arrival of the shipment. President Ferdinand Marcos said Wednesday that the Philippines was casting a wide net in its search for fuel, with the country's dwindling stocks expected to last only another 45 days. "We have not only gone to our...traditional oil suppliers, we have tried to explore other sources that are not affected by the war that is ongoing in the Middle East," he said in a press briefing addressing the state of emergency. "Nothing is off the table. We are looking at everything, everything that we can do." The United States this month eased some restrictions on sales of Russian crude, allowing countries to purchase oil that was already at sea until April 11. Kpler analyst Muyu Xu told AFP around 120 million barrels of Russian oil may have been at sea at the time, adding much of it may have already been pre-ordered by Chinese or Indian clients. On Thursday, the Philippines' Department of Energy activated a 20 billion-peso (\$332 million) emergency fund that energy secretary Sharon Garin called a "proactive step" to

securing fuel supplies. Garin said earlier this week that the archipelago nation also planned to boost the output of its coal-fired power plants to keep electricity costs down as the war wreaks havoc with gas shipments. With the cost of LNG (liquefied natural gas) soaring, Garin said the country would "temporarily" be forced to lean even more heavily on the fossil fuel, the main contributor of climate-warming carbon dioxide emissions from human sources. She added that top coal supplier Indonesia had placed "no restriction" on the amount the Philippines could buy if it needs to increase imports.

- [Comelec adopts austerity measures; cancels non-essential travel](#) (2026-03-26 03:54)

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has implemented austerity measures in connection with the President's declaration of a state of national energy emergency to ease the impact of the war in the Middle East. The Commission en banc on Thursday adopted the recommendation of Chairman George Erwin Garcia to postpone or cancel non-essential travel and activities that entail significant budgetary expenditures. "This measure demonstrates sensitivity to the economic hardship and fuel price volatility currently affecting the Filipino people," Garcia said in a memorandum. However, the En Banc exempted from its directive activities related to the preparations for the Bangsamoro parliamentary election, the 2026 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections, and the 2028 national and local elections, the resolution of electoral controversies and other core functions and activities in compliance with rules and regulations. The recommendations adopted by the Commission en banc include, among others, the postponement of the Election Expo Convention and Conference, including the Asian Electoral Stakeholders Forum VII and the Philippine Election Expo scheduled on April 21-23, 2026. The commission postponed the National Goodwill Games scheduled for May 8-10, 2026 and the teambuilding activities of all departments and offices. The Comelec will also adopt a work-from-home arrangement for main and field offices every Monday beginning April 6, 2026.

- [30K delivery, motorcycle taxi riders queue for P5K fuel subsidy](#) (2026-03-26 03:47)

MANILA, Philippines—Thousands of motorcycle taxi and delivery riders on Thursday packed the Quezon Memorial Circle (QMC) in Quezon City where the city is handing out P5,000 in relief assistance amid rising fuel costs. Mayor Joy Belmonte told The Manila Times that she directed Elmo San Diego, the city's Department of Public Order and Safety chief; and QMC management to ensure the safety of the riders and orderliness during the event. The local government said the distribution will be made in alphabetical order. The riders should bring the original and a photocopy of their professional driver's license with three signatures. "On behalf of the city government, I am gratified by the quick response of the national government led by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board for extending the much-needed assistance to these essential sectors," Belmonte said. The city government has also set up similar payouts for TNVS (transport network vehicle service) riders as well as jeepney and tricycle drivers.

- [Drivers are losing P1,500 a day, group says as transport strike starts](#) (2026-03-26 03:09)

MANILA, Philippines — Transport group Manibela on Thursday pushed back against complaints over its proposed fare increase, saying drivers are losing big because of soaring fuel prices. On the first day of the nationwide transport strike on Thursday, March 26, Manibela Chairman Mar Valbuena said each driver is losing about P1,500 in daily income. “You are affected only once or twice, but for us, each driver loses P1,500 in income every day,” Valbuena said. He said that even if commuters take four rides a day, the added cost from the proposed increase would amount to about P10 to P12. “If you compare that with the P1, P2, or P3 fare increase that we are asking for, and let us say you ride four times a day, that is only P12, only P10, while for us we lose thousands,” he said. Valbuena said commuters should also share the burden being carried by drivers as fuel prices continue to eat into their earnings. “I hope we share the responsibility. If you are saying this reduces your income, it affects us even more,” he said. He also took a swipe at the government’s free ride trucks, saying some passengers were no longer able to get to work. “There are no more passengers, they were no longer able to get to work. Will that (truck) fight a war? What do you think of the people? Trash?” he said in Filipino.

- [Barmm officials welcome Marcos' signing of law resetting election](#) (2026-03-26 03:02)

MANILA, Philippines—Key officials in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Barmm) on Thursday expressed optimism following President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s signing of a law rescheduling the region’s first parliamentary elections to September 2026. Republic Act (RA) 12317, signed by the President on Wednesday, amends the Bangsamoro Organic Law, moving the historic vote from its original 2025 schedule to the second Monday of September this year. Maguindanao Rep. Esmael “Toto” Mangudadatu called the postponement a “blessing” that provides essential breathing room for the democratic process. “There is still time for candidates to prepare and for people, especially the youth who have just become eligible, to register before the September deadline,” Mangudadatu said. “We hope the elections will be peaceful and that all elected officials will remain committed to serving the people,” he added. Acting Senior Minister Abdullah Cusain assured the public that preparations were underway to ensure credible and orderly election. “The Office of the Chief Minister will ensure that the process will be credible, peaceful, transparent, and with integrity,” Cusain said. “Our preparations have been continuous. Even when the election was rescheduled, we maintained coordination with the Commission on Elections, especially at the regional level,” he added. The move also drew support from the United Bangsamoro Justice Party (UBJP), the political arm of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. UBJP spokesman Mohajirin Ali said the new date provided “renewed momentum” for a transition they have advocated for since last year. “This is something we have been pushing for since last year. We were ready when elections were initially set, even when they were moved to October,” Ali said. Barmm officials are hopeful that the rescheduled election will pave the way for stronger governance, inclusive leadership and lasting peace.

- [Govt urged to scrap fuel taxes as transport strike gets underway](#) (2026-03-26 02:55)

MANILA, Philippines — Transport group Manibela on Thursday called on the government to remove the excise tax and value-added tax on fuel, a day after a driver died during a payout in Quezon City. Manibela Chairman Mar Valbuena said drivers were being squeezed by rising oil prices and delayed relief, prompting the group to press for the immediate removal of fuel taxes on the first day of the nationwide transport strike. During the protest, Valbuena said the government should not wait any longer to lift the excise tax on fuel and should also remove the VAT, which further increased the burden on drivers. “We are appealing to the government to remove the excise taxes, although it has already been signed, but when will that become effective? Because what we know is that it will still take several weeks before it is removed, and the Value Added Tax, where the base is even bigger, should also be removed,” Valbuena said in Filipino. He said the problem was aggravated by what he described as a disorderly aid distribution process, after a driver died during Wednesday’s payout in Quezon City. “The giving of aid should be orderly, not that someone has died. Some felt dizzy, some were not given anything. What we received was not aid, but only inconvenience — we lined up the whole day, did not drive, and in the end there was nothing to receive,” he said. A Manibela member also urged the government to find a solution quickly. “Please think carefully about how you will solve our situation, because every member of Manibela is already suffering. We do not want what happened yesterday to happen again. Someone already died, but still got nothing,” the member said. Valbuena said the transport strike has gone beyond the issue of unpaid aid and reflected wider frustration over the continued rise in fuel prices and the losses drivers absorb each day.