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## FROM THE PUBLISHER'S CORNER



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your continued trust and support. Because of you, we remain committed to delivering honest journalism, meaningful stories, and community-driven news that uplift, inform, and unite Filipinos wherever we may be.

May this New Year bring good health, peace, hope, and prosperity to you and your families. Sama-sama nating harapin ang 2026 with renewed faith, stronger community spirit, and a shared commitment to truth and service.

*From all of us at Reyfort Media,*

*Happy New Year!  
Mabuhay ang Pilipino!*

*Rey Fortaleza OLY*



## Minister's statement on status of the decriminalization pilot program

**VICTORIA** - *Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, has released the following statement on the status of the decriminalization pilot program:*

“The toxic-drug crisis continues to take lives and cause tremendous pain across British Columbia.

Families, communities, first responders and service providers are all feeling the impact.

This is a deeply complex public-health emergency, and there is no single solution that can fix it. From the beginning, we have been determined to explore every option and use every tool available to save lives and support people who are struggling.

“In 2023, we launched a pilot program to decriminalize people who use drugs. We did this with the support of advocates, service providers, police and members of the legislative assembly. The intention was clear: to make it easier for people struggling with addiction to reach out for

help without fear of being criminalized.

Despite the hard work and good intentions behind the pilot, it has not delivered the results we hoped for. For that reason, we will not be asking the federal government to renew the exemption.

“This does not mean the work ends here. We remain focused on strengthening the approaches that are helping people get timely, appropriate care.

Our priority is, and always has been, to make sure people can get help when and where they need it. We continue to believe that addiction is a health issue, not a criminal justice issue.

“We are building a more complete and comprehensive system of mental-health and addictions care in B.C., including prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction and after-care. We have opened hundreds of new treatment and recovery beds, significantly



reduced wait times for withdrawal management and prevented tens of thousands of overdose deaths through services such as Take Home Naloxone and overdose-prevention sites.

“At the same time, we are supporting police in focusing their efforts on the people who make and traffic toxic drugs and who bring violence, crime and suffering to our communities.

“People struggling with addiction are our friends, our family members and our neighbours. As the toxic-drug crisis continues to evolve, our response must evolve with it.

We will continue learning, adapting and trying new approaches to turn the tide on this crisis and ensure people can get the care they need without fear, stigma or judgment.” (news.gov.bc.ca)



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## COMMENTARY

# Celebration Amid Suffering? Filipino Community Demands Accountability of Lapu-Lapu Funds

By Janice Lozano

Filipino BC has announced that it will once again host this year's Lapu-Lapu Day celebration, in partnership with Latincover. While the announcement is wrapped in the language of cultural pride and festivity, it has instead exposed a painful and unresolved reality: many victims connected to the recent tragedy are still suffering, still waiting, and still without clear answers.

For a significant portion of the Filipino community, this announcement does not inspire pride. It sparks anger, disappointment, and disbelief.

How can there be celebration when wounds remain open?

How can there be music and dancing when victims continue to struggle financially and emotionally?

How can unity be preached when accountability has yet to be demonstrated?

These are not rhetorical questions. They are urgent moral challenges.

## *Celebration Without Accountability Is Reckless*

When a tragedy of this scale occurs, communities respond instinctively, with generosity, compassion, and trust. Donations are given in good faith, with the clear expectation that the funds will go directly toward helping victims who were profoundly and personally affected.

Once those funds are collected, the responsibility becomes absolute.

Transparency is not a



*Filipino BC is facing questions about how Lapu-Lapu funds were spent.*

courtesy. It is a duty.

When hundreds of thousands of dollars are raised, the public has every right to know how that money was used. If victims reportedly received only a few hundred dollars for basic necessities while the total amount raised remains unclear, questions are inevitable and justified. That is not negativity. That is accountability.

Attempting to frame these concerns as "attacks" or "disrespect" misses the point entirely. This is about stewardship of community trust.

"Sana bago mag-celebrate ulit, ayusin muna yung mga gusot at mga tanong tungkol sa mga donasyon para sa mga biktima."

Before another celebration is planned, unresolved issues must be addressed. Before stages are built and performances scheduled, transparency must come first.

## *Silence Fuels Mistrust*

The most responsible,

and necessary, response to growing concern is a clear, detailed, and public accounting of the funds. This should include:

- The total amount of money raised
- The exact amount distributed
- How assistance was provided, while respecting privacy
- Any administrative or operational expenses
- A clear plan and timeline for remaining funds

Anything less invites speculation. Silence does not protect organizations, it undermines them. Even if no wrongdoing occurred, the absence of transparency erodes confidence and deepens division.

## *Why This Moment Matters*

This issue is especially critical now, as Filipino BC moves forward with Lapu-Lapu Day and likely future fundraising efforts, including initiatives tied to a Filipino Cultural Centre.

If the community will be

asked to donate in the future, whether for celebrations, infrastructure, or future emergencies, then trust must be firmly established. Trust is not automatic. It is earned. And once shaken, it cannot be restored through celebration alone.

## *Culture Without Conscience Is Hollow*

Lapu-Lapu is not just a symbol of culture. He represents resistance, courage, and justice. Honoring his legacy requires more than pageantry, it requires moral integrity.

There is a growing and painful perception that instead of prioritizing victims, actions taken so far have left them feeling ignored and further burdened.

"Bakit walang malinaw na aksyon ang Filipino BC at bakit tila mas pinahihirapan pa ang mga biktima?"

If decision makers truly witnessed the victims' realities, the financial hardship, the emotional trauma, the uncertainty, would celebration still be the priority?

This is not about opposing culture.

This is not about tearing organizations down.

This is about justice, accountability, and human dignity.

Until clear answers are provided and victims are meaningfully supported, the community will continue to ask, loudly and unapologetically.

Who is this celebration really for?

**#JusticeForTheVictims  
#lapulapuvictims**



# Helping people, communities affected by flooding

## Disaster Financial Assistance helps cover uninsurable losses from disasters

**Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) is now available for eligible people, businesses and communities in the southwestern British Columbia affected by flooding from the heavy rainfall Dec. 10-19, 2025.**

### Eligible communities

This assistance applies to flood-affected people, businesses and communities within the geographic boundaries of the following areas:

- City of Abbotsford
- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Electoral Areas
- Capital Regional District Electoral Areas
- City of Chilliwack
- Fraser Valley Regional District

- District of Hope
- Village of Pemberton
- City of Port Coquitlam
- Town of Port McNeill
- Chawathil First Nation
- Leq'á:mel First Nation
- Matsqui First Nation
- Semá:th First Nation
- Stsailles First Nation
- Tsartlip First Nation

### What Disaster Financial Assistance can cover

For renters and owners, insurance is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family in the event of a disaster. In situations where insurance was not available,

DFA may compensate for sudden, unexpected and uninsurable essential losses. This may include building repairs to a damaged principal residence, clean up and

debris removal, and replacement of essential personal effects. DFA is unable to compensate for losses for which insurance was reasonably and readily available.

### Applying for DFA

DFA is available to homeowners, renters, business owners, farmers, corporation-owned properties, charitable organizations and communities to cover uninsurable disaster-related losses.

Applications for this DFA event must be submitted to the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness within 90 calendar days of the event authorization.

### The deadline to submit

applications is April 13, 2026.

An online DFA application portal for private-sector applicants was launched in 2024.

The portal is now available to public-sector applicants, making it quicker and easier for individuals, organizations, local governments and First Nations to apply for support for eligible, uninsurable disaster-related losses.

### Local governments and First Nations

Local governments and First Nations that have infrastructure damage resulting from the December flooding should submit a local government DFA application as soon as possible. (news.gov.bc.ca)



Financial assistance available for flood-affected people and communities

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## Snippet of Stories

Joe Larano Jr.

# Every new year starts a new beginning

Every January, when the holiday lights are gone and the last echoes of Happy New Year fade into the cold Vancouver air, many Filipino immigrants sit quietly by a window with a cup of coffee, thinking about the road they have walked. It is never an easy path.

It is filled with long nights, survival jobs, homesickness, and the steady hope that tomorrow can still be better.

This is the season when simple resolutions are born. Not the dramatic kind, but the honest promises we make to ourselves. To learn a new skill. To work harder. To believe that we deserve more than just getting by. For many overseas Filipino workers and immigrants in Canada, the new year is not about grand celebrations. It is about resetting the heart and mind so we can continue the journey with courage.

For Mark Chua, a thirty-five year old architect from Surigao del Sur, the journey began with a difficult family decision. Mark was already a registered architect with a small practice in his hometown.

He designed homes and small commercial and retail spaces. Life was simple but meaningful. Yet as his children grew, the cost of education and the dream of a more secure future weighed heavily on his mind.

After many nights of discussion, the family decided that Mark would go to Canada on a student visa. They spent their savings on school applications, processing fees, travel costs, and living expenses.

A part of their residential lot, which was meant to be a future investment, was sold to complete the needed funds. There were no guarantees. Only faith.



Mark landed in Vancouver alone, leaving his wife and children behind in the Philippines. He hoped that when he finally received Permanent Resident status, they would be reunited.

The winter was colder than he expected. The city felt distant. But each morning he reminded himself why he was there.

He enrolled in a course related to architecture and construction. Even with his years of experience, he had to adjust to a new system, new standards, and new teaching methods.

English was used every day, and the pressure to perform was real. On top of that, immigration rules for international students often changed. Work hours were limited. Sometimes he was allowed only twenty hours a week.

Still, Mark did not stop. He studied during the day and worked part time whenever he could. He joined Filipino

architects groups in British Columbia, where he met professionals who understood both his skills and his struggles.

These connections became very important. They gave job referrals, wrote testimonials for him, and helped him understand how the local industry worked.

Slowly, doors opened. A small architectural office took interest in him. They saw not just a student, but an architectural designer who had real experience and strong work values. What started as

a short contract turned into a regular position. For the first time in years, Mark felt that his long sacrifices were beginning to make sense.

Every January, he wrote simple goals in his notebook. Improve his skills. Save more money. Prepare documents for Permanent Resident application. These goals were his reminder that his story was not finished yet.

Last year, Mark finally began his application for Permanent Resident status. It was not the end of the journey, but it was a sign that he was moving forward. He called his family in Surigao del Sur and shared the news. For the first time in a long while, their conversations were filled with clear plans, not just hopes.

When asked what the new year means to him now, Mark simply says it is about holding on. Holding on to faith, to patience, and to the belief that every sacrifice has a purpose.

To every kababayan in British Columbia and elsewhere, whether you are in healthcare, construction, hospitality, or still dreaming of returning to your profession, let this new year be your quiet turning point. Sit down with your coffee.

Write your goals. Believe in your journey.  
(contact: [jbларано@gmail.com](mailto:jbларано@gmail.com))

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# OPEN WORK PERMITS EXTENDED

**Open work permits for applicants under the temporary resident to permanent resident pathway**

**You can apply for an open work permit until December 31, 2026**

The deadline to apply for an open work permit has been extended until **December 31, 2026**.

If you're still waiting for a decision on your permanent residence application submitted in 2021 under the temporary resident to permanent resident pathway, this extension allows you

- to keep your temporary resident status in Canada
- continue working in any occupation and for any employer while your application is being processed

This extension only applies to eligible applicants and their family members.

**Who can apply**

**Principal applicants in Canada**  
To be eligible for an open work permit, you must meet 5 requirements:

- 1. Residency**  
You must live in Canada.
- 2. Application for a temporary resident to permanent resident pathway**  
You must have applied under one of the temporary resident to permanent resident pathways.

You must have received one of the following:

- an email from IRCC confirming that you've successfully submitted your permanent residence (PR) application for 1 of the following:

Workers with recent Canadian work experience in essential occupations (health and non-health)

French-speaking workers with recent Canadian work experience in essential occupations (health and non-health)

Recent international graduates from a Canadian post-secondary institution

French speaking international graduates from a Canadian institution

Recent international graduates from a Canadian post-secondary institution (applications above the cap)

Temporary resident to permanent resident pathway applicants who used an alternative format (applications above the cap)

- the letter the Client Support Centre gave you when you requested an alternative format application (such as a paper copy, Braille or large print)

**3. Authorized to work**

When you applied for the PR pathway, you were legally authorized to work with 1 of the following:

- a valid work permit

- an authorization to work without work permit
- an authorization to work under any public policy

**4. Language requirements**

When you applied for the PR pathway, you met the language requirements for the pathway you're applying for.

You must have had valid results from an approved language test when you applied.

If you applied for one of the French-speaking streams, your test results must be from an approved French language test.

**5. Immigration status**

When you apply for your work permit, you must either:

- have valid temporary resident status

you're not a temporary resident if you hold an open work permit and you're a refugee claimant who's

waiting for a decision from the Immigration Refugee Board appealing the Immigration Refugee Board's decision on your claim

- have applied to extend your status before it expired ("maintained status")
- be eligible to restore your status

**Family members**

You're eligible for an open work permit if you meet all of the following conditions:

- you're a spouse, common-law partner or dependent child of a principal applicant for the

- permanent resident pathway
- you're 18 years of age or older
- you're within or outside Canada
- you apply online
- the principal applicant applied and is eligible for an open work permit under this public policy

Your application will be refused if the principal applicant has not applied for an open work permit under this public policy.

- the principal applicant included you as an accompanying family member in their permanent residence application

If you're a family member in Canada, you must also

- have valid temporary resident status or
- have applied to extend your status before it expired (maintained status) or
- be eligible to restore your status

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## Bargaining reaches an impasse without meaningful funding for classroom conditions

**VANCOUVER, BC**—Collective bargaining between BC's 52,000 teachers and the BC Public School Employers' Association reached an impasse yesterday due to government's unwillingness to recognize the support needed to improve classroom conditions in schools.

While the employer has offered general wage increases in line with other public sector unions, it has refused to provide additional funding to address priorities like working conditions that other public sector workers have received.

The BC Teachers' Federation says this decision directly affects students' learning environments and access to the attention and support they need.

"Teachers are being asked to accept less support for students than other public sectors have received for their work. That means fewer resources to address student mental health, overcrowded classrooms, and growing workload pressures in schools," BCTF President Carole Gordon said.

"Other public sector unions secured funding to manage issues like workload because it affects the quality of services they provide. Students deserve the same consideration."

Teachers report increasing class complexity and violence due to unmet needs, as well as reduced time for lesson preparation, assessment, and individualized student support.

In a recent survey of teachers, half reported a higher workload over the previous year, and 14% said it was unlikely they would still be teaching in two years' time. Fewer than one-quarter of teachers felt that students' academic, social, and emotional needs were being met.

"Teachers love their students and their communities. Every day, they step in to fill gaps in the system so kids can learn, feel safe, and thrive. But those gaps are growing," said Gordon.

Teachers have come to the bargaining table in good faith 35 times since contract negotiations began in March.

They have consistently raised concerns about classroom conditions and proposed solutions; however, the employer has rejected those proposals and has not put forward meaningful alternatives. Without targeted investment to address these pressures, students will continue to feel the impact.

If teachers received the same funding as other public sector unions, the Federation believes progress could be made in the following areas:

- more counsellors so every student has access to mental health and emotional support

The NDP has yet to deliver on its campaign promise of one counsellor for every school.

In North America, the average ratio is one school counsellor per 250 kids. In BC, the average is one counsellor per 693 kids.

- class size limits for Grades 4 to 12 for all districts within the collective agreement—specifically those without existing language on the topic in their local collective agreements

- more preparation time for teachers to make lesson plans, connect with parents, and give individualized support and attention to every student
- salary improvements at the low end of the pay grid to attract more new teachers to the profession.

"Teachers want what parents want: a positive learning environment where every child feels supported," Gordon said. "We're disappointed that government is asking kids to wait another four years for classroom improvements."

The union will be consulting with members on next steps in the days ahead.

Updates to the public will be provided early and often.

### **About the BC Teachers' Federation**

The BC Teachers' Federation represents more than 52,000 teachers and advocates for a free, inclusive, and quality public education system where the learning needs of all students can be met.

## B.C.'s Forestry Decline Is a Policy Failure, Not a Market Reality

### *As Truck Loggers Association Convention Begins, Forestry Critic Calls for Accountability and Urgent Policy Reset*

Vancouver, BC: As the Truck Loggers Association convention begins today, BC Conservative Forestry Critic Ward Stamer says British Columbia's forestry crisis is the result of government mismanagement, not market forces, and that an urgent policy reset is needed to restore certainty, sustainability, and accountability.

"For generations, forestry supported families and communities across B.C.," said Stamer. "Today, mills are closing, contractors are parking equipment, and families are being forced to leave home, not because the resource is gone, but because policy has failed."

Government data shows timber shipment values dropped by more than half a billion dollars in the past year, with harvest levels falling by roughly 50 per cent in just four years.

At the same time, prolonged permitting timelines, unreliable fibre access, outdated forest inventories, and rising costs have made long-term planning impossible for mills and contractors.

Stamer said the NDP's approach to forest governance, including its implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), has added uncertainty by offloading government

responsibility onto licensees while the province steps back from active decision-making.

Recent court rulings have reinforced concerns about government abdication and poor oversight.

"A policy reset means government taking responsibility again by working collectively with industry partners and First Nations, setting clear permitting timelines, using current data, and actively managing forests so they remain healthy, sustainable, and economically viable," said Stamer.

"Forestry is a renewable

economic asset. B.C. doesn't have a resource problem, it has a policy problem."

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*The Tall Order  
By Mon Datol*

## **Nasaan si Bato?; Impeachment vs Sara2 ikakasa na; PBBM 'impeachment' walang basehan; 5.5M dumagsa sa Traslacion 2026 ng Poong Nazareno; Alex Eala bigo sa ASB Classic semis; Imee Marcos ang 'Meow-meow' ng Senado; Cong Leviste sasabit sa 'solar power' sale**

Itinuturing ng Quiapo Church na pinakamataas sa kasaysayan ang mahigit 5.5 milyong debotong dumagsa sa Pista ng Poong Hesus Nazareno o' Traslacion 2026 ngayong taon na umabot sa 30 oras at 50 minuto, mula alas-4 ng madaling araw noong Biyernes, Enero 9, hanggang 10:50 ng umaga nitong Sabado, na kung saan ....

**4 nasawi at 1,057 ang nasugatan sa prusisyon.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Nabigo si Alex Eala na umabante sa finals ng ASB Classic sa Auckland, New Zealand matapos matalo sa semifinals laban kay Wang Xinyu ng China, 7-5, 5-7, 4-6 sa isang napaka-exciting na laban, na kung saan...

**Posibleng nanalo si Alex kung di na injure balakang.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Ito ang unang torneo ni Eala ngayong 2026 kasunod ng makasaysayang 2025 season kung saan pumasok siya sa WTA Top 100 at umabot pa sa Top 50. Sana maka-recover agad-agad si Alex sa minor injury ng kanyang balakang na nakuha niya sa semis duel niya kay kay Wang Xinyu ng China sa ASB netfest sa Auckland NZ dahil kasunod na next week ang matinding pinaghahandaan niyang...

**Australian Open na isang WTA Grand Slam tourney.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Hindi pa nagpapakita sa Senado si Sen. Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa habang tinitipa ko itong aking artikulo at huli siyang nakita sa kaniyang opisina nuong November 11, 2025 kayat di siya nakalahok sa bicameral committee kung saan isa siya sa miyembro na tatalakay sa 2026 budget. Tanong nga ng milyong Pinoy ngayon...

**Asan na si Bato? Ilabas mo na, Darna!!!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Walang makapagsabi kung nasaan si Senator Bato maski na ang chief of staff niya ay wala raw alam kung nasaan Boss nila at malaki nga raw palaisipan kung nasaan ang 'matapang

na senador' na una ng sinabi ni DILG Secretary Jonvic Remulla na naispatan daw sa Pampanga ang nawawalang mababatas. Akala ko ba matapang, tsismis lang at wala namang ICC warrant eh...

**Nakngdragon! Tinakot lang ni Omb Boying nagtago na!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Wala, talo ang milyong Pinoy, kasama na mga bumotong DDS ke Bato dahil kahit nagtatago ito ay kumukuha ng sweldo sa Senado, at alam nyo ba kinikita ng mga Senador? Ayon sa DBM, ang isang senador ay sumasahod ng mula P294,000 hanggang P380,000 kada buwan at ang mga staff ng senador, ay sumasahod ng humigit kumulang P12,000 to P54,000 bawat buwan bukod pa ang mga bonuses.

**Huwag kang sumweldo kung nagtatago. Mahiya ka naman Bato!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Kung ordinaryong manggagawa ang gumawa nang mahabang absent gaya ng kay Bato, siguradong tsugi na sa trabaho. Wala ng ha o' ho, alaws ka ng trabaho Dong. Magbubukas na ulit ang regular session ng Senado sa Enero 26 kaya...

**Kung may delikadesa si Bato, matrabaho ka na sa Senado.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Hindi na nag-iisa si Cavite Rep. "Kiko" Barzaga bilang mambabatas na 'meow-meow' dahil may counterpart na siya sa Senado, si Sen. Imee Marcos dahil kung ano-ano ang sinasabi niya at sa mga paltos na banat sa mga kasama at trabaho sa Senado, ani ito kay...

**Sen. Ping Lacson na hinamon ng 'sabunutan' ni Manang Biday.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Sinabipani Senate President Pro Tempore Ping Lacson na wala umanong moral ascendancy si Imee na kuwestiyunin ang pork barrel fund sa 2026 budget dahil mayroon din itong P3.5 bilyong allocables noong 2025

at ito'y nasa files ni yumaong dating DPWH Usec Cathy Cabral. Tanga-tangahan lang peg ni Manang Biday sa pork Barrel?

**Nakngdragon Tol Reyfort! Patay-malisya? Mahiya ka naman Imee!!!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Ani pa Sen. Ping ay 'kini-criticize umano ni Sen. Imee 'yung budget ng 2026, 'yung napirmahan, sabi niya tadtad ng 'pork', may giniling, may tinadtad pero 'pork' pa rin, eh kung ganu'n definition niya ng 'pork', eh siya 'yung merong 'pork' eh, at...

**Ph3.5Bilyon 'pork' ni Manang 'Meow' ng Senado. Awww!!!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Inimbistigahan na raw ng DOJ ang solar energy firm na itinayo ni Batangas 1st District Rep. Leandro Leviste dahil sa balitang paglilipat umano ng prangkisa sa Meralco nang walang approval ng Kongreso, dahil bawal sa batas yon at...

'Violation of franchise' at hindi ninenegosyo ang prangkisa.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Wala ka bang kahihiyan? Anong klaseng tao iyan? Anong klaseng Pilipino 'yan? National franchise. Renewable energy critical to the national life. Tapos ganu'n lang. Nabenta mo? ipi-flip mo lang? Nanay mo pa senador," sabon ni Remulla ke Cong 'Ngaw-ngaw' sa kanyang "Executive Session" program sa DZRH noong Sabado.

**Lagot anak ni Loren, pulos kasi ngaw-ngaw sa Cabral files, eh.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Nag-divest umano si Leviste ng kanyang shares sa SP New Energy Corp. (SPNEC) mula 2023 hanggang 2025 bago naupong miyembro ng Kamara noong Hulyo 2025. Ibinenta niya ito sa MGen Renewable Energy Inc. (MGreen), isang subsidiary ng Manila Electric Co. Base sa disclosure ng transaksyon, naibenta niya ito ng P34 bilyon.

**Kaya pala naging bilyonario si Cong Lendro. Pero legal ba transaksyon? Abangan.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Sinabi ng Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) na maghahain sila ng panibagong impeachment complaint laban kay VP Sara Duterte sa Pebrero 6 na hustong isang taon matapos ang isang taon na ban.

**Wala ng magagawa SC sa bagong impeachment case ni Bise P.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Kabilang sa reklamo laban kay Sara ay ang tangka umanong assassination laban kay PBBM, FL Liza Marcos at Speaker Martin Romualdez; hindi wastong paggasta ng P612.5 milyong halaga ng confidential funds; bribery at corruption sa DepEd noong ito pa ang secretary; unexplained wealth na nakasaad sa SALN niya; at pagkakasangkot sa extrajudicial killings sa Davao City noong siya pa ang mayor.

**Aabangan natin ito, Bayan.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Minaliit lamang ng Malacañang ang pahayag ni Caloocan City Rep. Edgar Erice na maaaring maharap sa impeachment complaint si PBBM dahil pinabayaan umano nitong masalaula ang badyet ng gobyerno at ninakaw lang ng mga tiwali.

**Alaws yan, di lulusot sa Kongreso tsismis ni Erice.**

\* \* \* \* \*

KUNG, sakaling maisampa ang impeachment complaint laban kay PBBM, ito ay rerepasuhin ng House committee on justice na kasalukuyang pinamumunuan ni Batangas Rep. Gerville Luistro upang tiyakin kung sapat ito sa porma at nilalaman at KUNG nakalusot sa antas ng komite, kakailanganin ang

**SEE NEXT PAGE ...**



# Filipinos and allies meet with Deputy Consul General in Vancouver to formally submit a petition for immediate release of Chantal Anicoche

VANCOUVER, BC - January 12, 2026

Representatives from BAYAN BC, Anakbayan BC, and Anakbayan Surrey met with Deputy Consul General Paul Vincent Uy at the Philippine Consulate General-Vancouver to formally submit a petition calling for the immediate release of Chantal Anicoche from the custody of the AFP.

On behalf of PCG-Vancouver, Deputy Consul General Paul Vincent Uy agreed to send the petition and signatures to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Office of the President by Tuesday, January 13th.

In conjunction, Filipino youth, migrants, women and allies held a protest, yesterday, January 11, at Joyce Skytrain Station, gathering signatures and demanding the release of Chantal Anicoche as part of a Global Day of Action.

This Global Day of Action comes on the heels of the Armed Forces of the Philippines indiscriminate bombing of the peasant and indigenous communities in Mindoro.

On January 1st, the Armed Forces of the Philippines violated international humanitarian law by conducting a bombing and aerial strafing campaign against

the communities in Mindoro in an effort to protect resource extraction projects.

While volunteering and getting to know the peasant and indigenous communities in Mindoro, youth leader Chantal Anicoche was caught in between the attack and is currently in custody of the Armed Forces.

Chantal Anicoche's advocacy and continued concern for human rights and rights of indigenous peoples and farmers in the Philippines serves as an inspiration for many youth across the diaspora in supporting fellow Filipinos from abroad.

Her relief work in the rural communities of Mindoro also serves as a reminder of how the US-Marcos Regime continues to turn their backs on the Filipino people.

This recent bombing of Mindoro serves as yet another reminder.

Filipinos across BC and their allies call on all to remain steadfast to demand justice for those impacted by the Mindoro bombings and Bayan BC calls on all Filipinos and allies to continue the fight to safely and immediately release Chantal Anicoche.



Deputy Consul General Paul Vincent Uy (centre) with representatives from Anakbayan and Bayan. Jan 12, 2026 (Photo credit: Bayan BC)



Group photo of the delegation outside of the Phil Consulate General - Vancouver. Jan 12 2026 (Photo credit: Bayan BC)



Jan 11 2026 rally at Joyce Skytrain Station to demand the release of Chantal Anicoche. (Photo credit: Migrante BC)

## TALL ORDER FROM LAST PAGE ...

boto ng hindi bababa sa one-third ng mga miyembro ng Kamara bago ito maipadala sa Senado, na magsasagawa naman ng impeachment trial. Malabnaw pa sa sabaw ng ginisang pusit makakuha ito ng 1/3 boto sa Lower House dahil...

**Mahigit 95% ng 319 Kongresista suportado si PBBM. Pramis.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**SHORT ORDER:** Happy birthday (January 12) to Noraline Domingo Polendey from her loved ones.... Happiest 71st bday greetings to Taciana Yambot (Jan.

12) from the whole Yabot Family of Jaen, NE...It's your birthday today (January 12) & make a wish Bem Dela Cruz of Manila, greetings from your Fam & friends...Happy birthday in Paradise Yangku Venci Gamboa Datol (Jan. 13) from the whole Fam, colleagues, friends... Happy birthday (Jan 14) to Engracio Revillame Cruda of Jaen, NE from the Cruda Fam... Happy birthday to Miss Aila Agustin (Jan 15) of Toronto from Agustin Fam... Happiest birthday (Jan. 15) to UMAC Pres. Larry D. Baguisa, also Super Capt., Santo Tomas Norte of Jaen, NE from Dayno & Baguisa Family of Scarborough, Toronto & Vancouver, Canada. MBtC Abay!...**God Bless.**

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# NEWS Former diplomat examines geopolitical risks of closer Canada-Philippines military ties

By Carlito Pablo

Is Canada prepared for a military confrontation with China in defence of the Philippines and Taiwan?

This question was posed by a former diplomat in an article on Open Canada, the online magazine by the Canadian International Council, a foreign-affairs think-tank.

Jan Top Christensen, a retired ambassador of Denmark and whose postings include the Philippines, authored the piece examining the risks of closer military ties between Canada and the Philippines.

In his article titled "China and the Philippines: Strained Neighbourly Relations and the Canadian Connection", the former envoy cited in particular the visiting forces agreement in Manila last year.

"When Canadian Defence Minister David McGuinty signed a status of visiting forces agreement (SOVFA), with the Philippines in November 2025, he may have inadvertently moved Canada closer to military involvement in the South China Sea (SCS)," Christensen wrote.

"Is Canada ready for this?" the former diplomat asked in his piece published on January 5, 2026.

A media release by Canada on the day of the SOVFA signing noted that the agreement "marks a new chapter in Canada-Philippines defence cooperation, enabling greater engagement, cooperation, and collaboration between both nations".

"It will allow the Canadian



Canada's HMCS Ville de Quebec participated in joint naval drills with the Philippines and Australia in August 2025. Photo from HMCS Ville de Quebec's social media.

Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to work more closely together through participation in joint and multinational operations and exercises in each other's territories," explained the release dated November 2, 2025.

Now based in Canada, Christensen noted, "agreement itself innocently makes it easier for Canada to participate in bilateral and multilateral military drills in the Philippines".

"But what could be the risks of closer cooperation further down the road?" the former diplomat asked.

The Philippines and China have competing claims over areas in the South China Sea (SCS).

"Would it be in Canada's national interests to help defend Philippine claims to fishing grounds in the SCS? It may seem farfetched but in October 2022, naval ships belonging to Canada, the US, Japan, and Australia were already conducting exercises in the SCS for the first time

together," Christensen wrote.

Christensen noted that Canada's 2024 defence policy states that, "as a Pacific nation, the security and stability of the broader Indo-Pacific region is vital to Canada's future. It is the world's fastest growing region and home to six of Canada's top 13 trading partners".

He also noted that some observers predict that China may try to invade Taiwan in 2027.

"In a meeting in Ottawa in November, [former Canadian diplomat] Michael Kovrig's assessment was that a direct military confrontation between China and the US over flashpoints such as Taiwan and the SCS is not impossible within five years," Christensen related.

Considered by China as a breakaway province, Taiwan also claims certain parts of the South China Sea.

Meanwhile, Washington

has repeatedly said that it is obligated to defend the Philippines under the two countries' 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

Christensen recalled that U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has said "without mentioning China by name, that the defence agreement between the two countries covers third-party attacks

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on military and civilian ships in the Pacific and the SCS".

As well, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman criticized the U.S. and the Philippines, saying Washington is using Manila as a "proxy to provoke confrontation and escalate tensions in the region".

"In such sharpened scenarios, the danger may be that Canada could become collateral damage if tensions increase in the SCS," Christensen wrote.

"That said," he continued, "we should not be that surprised if this was to happen as the 2024 defence policy also noted that Canada would continue to promote stability in the Indo-Pacific region "by maintaining a more persistent presence and helping support regional defence."

"If an open military confrontation erupts with China, what could be Canada's involvement? Using navy ships and other military forces visiting the Philippines or the region? We are not at this serious stage, yet. But what if...?"

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## Tinig Migrante

By E. Maestro

Mary Jane Veloso turned 41 last January 10, 2026. She has spent 15 birthdays behind bars, in prisons in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Migrante International posted that “the Philippines government has kept Mary Jane behind bars for over a year now [in the Philippines]. There is nothing stopping her from realizing freedom but the whim of Bongbong Marcos. She has no crime under our legal system. Indonesia has long said they would respect any measure of clemency for Mary Jane. Most of all, she is not a criminal but a victim of human trafficking. Rather than grant Mary Jane clemency or push through with her case against her traffickers, Marcos Jr. continues to prolong her suffering in prison with no justice in sight.”

Malaya Canada and the Global Pinoy Diaspora in Canada had hoped that Mary Jane would be released during the holiday season in 2025. They sent a letter/ petition to President Marcos, Jr, to the Secretary of Justice, the Director General of the Bureau of Corrections, and the Philippine Ambassador to Canada.

The response from the Bureau of Corrections was that the Board of Pardons and Parole has assessed on September 11, 2025 that “in assessing the qualifications of Ms. Veloso on whether or not she is eligible for executive clemency review, which, as of that date, remains in the NEGATIVE.”

It continues: “As a result, PL Veloso, whose original sentence was commuted to reclusion perpetua (life imprisonment), will only be eligible for commutation of sentence after serving 25 years. Furthermore, she will be eligible for conditional pardon upon serving ½ of the maximum term of her original indeterminate and/or definite prison sentence. As of this date (Dec 27, 2025), PL Veloso has served a total of fifteen (15) years, eleven (11) months. And twenty-nine (29) days, including earned Good Conduct Time Allowance.”

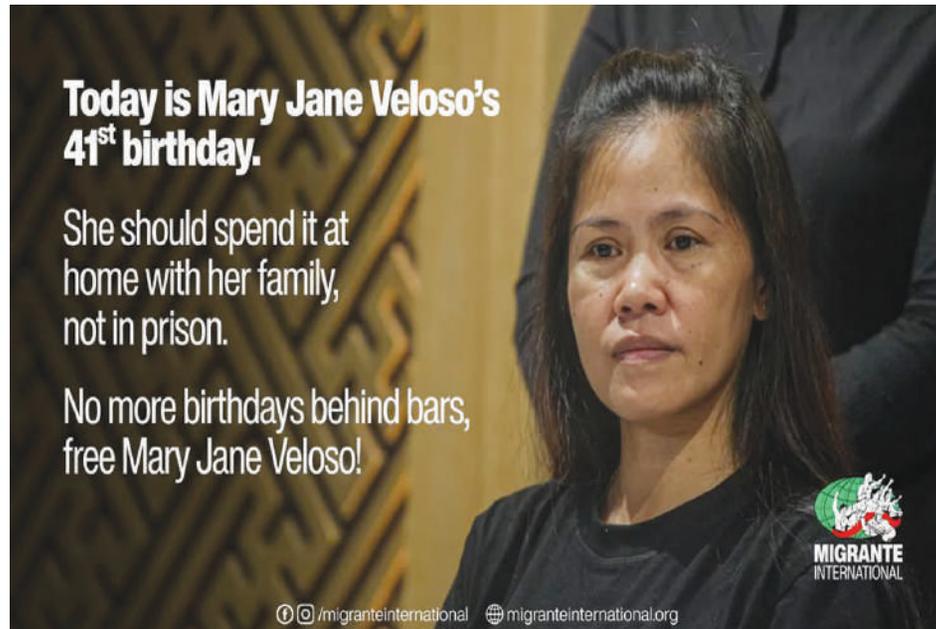
Nagtatanong lang. Which Philippine court commuted her death sentence imposed

# It was not a happy birthday

Today is Mary Jane Veloso's 41<sup>st</sup> birthday.

She should spend it at home with her family, not in prison.

No more birthdays behind bars, free Mary Jane Veloso!



by the Indonesian court to life imprisonment? When did this happen?

The National Union of Lawyers, on behalf of Mary Jane, submitted a petition for the writ of habeas corpus before the Supreme Court despite last November 14, 2025. “Despite surviving a near-execution and enduring nearly fifteen years of incarceration in Indonesia, Mary Jane remains behind bars—this time on Philippine soil, under the custody of our own government, without a single criminal charge, conviction, or commitment order from any Philippine court. Her continued detention is based solely on a “practical arrangement” between two States, forged entirely out of executive discretion and without apparent basis in any international or domestic law.”

The Supreme Court still has to respond to the petition and in the meantime, the days go by, the clock keeps on ticking. Malinaw ang basehan ng mga abogado ni Mary Jane, kung pakikilingan lang sana.

Firstly, “The Philippine government has no legal authority to enforce a foreign criminal judgment in the absence of a treaty on the transfer of sentenced prisoners or enabling law.” Mary Jane Veloso’s confinement in prison is unconstitutional. She is detained in the Philippines without a charge, conviction, or commitment order from any Philippine court.

Heto pa. “Under the principle of territoriality, the Philippines has no jurisdiction to enforce

arrest and conviction abroad were the direct result of the deception and exploitation she suffered at their hands. To continue enforcing that foreign sentence now, on Philippine soil, is a direct breach of both international and domestic law.”

Ang presidente ang may kapangyarihan na gamitin ang executive clemency on humanitarian grounds, siya lang ang may mabigat na kapangyarihan tulad nito.

Alam ko, patuloy na magtitiis si Mary Jane sa bilangguan. Patuloy na maghihinagpis ang kaniyang magulang at mga anak. Hindi sila naghihintay ng himala. (Kasi wala nga daw himala.)

Ang pinanghahawakan ay ang paniniwala na mananaig ang hustisya, ang compassion, ang karapatang pantao para kay Mary Jane.

Iyon din ang pinanghahawakan namin, kami na sumusuporta sa kampanya na palayain si Mary Jane Veloso.

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## Filipino community, Canadian solidarity groups deliver petition to Philippine Consulate in Toronto calling for release of Filipino-American community organizer

**TORONTO** – Representatives of Filipino diaspora organizations and Canadian solidarity groups delivered a petition to the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto on Monday, January 12, calling for the immediate release of Filipino-American community organizer Chantal Anicoche from the custody of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Representatives from BAYAN Toronto, Migrante Ontario, the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) Toronto, and Malaya Movement Canada met with Consul Rodney Jonas Sumague to formally submit the petition and accompanying statements. The groups expressed grave concern for Anicoche's safety and well-being and demanded her immediate release.

"To assume that the AFP can be trusted with Chantal's safety is a clear contradiction," said Lui Queano from Malaya Movement Canada. "Such a move legitimizes the very institution responsible for systematic human rights violations and the normalization of repression under de facto martial law in Mindoro."

The petition delivery is part of a three-day action in Toronto organized by the Filipino diaspora and allies to demand accountability for military violence in Mindoro and the release of Anicoche.

On Sunday, January 11, more than 60 Filipino community members in Toronto, together with solidarity allies, braved

freezing temperatures and strong winds to hold a vigil outside the Philippine Consulate. The vigil honoured the lives lost during the January 1 aerial bombing and strafing operations carried out by the Philippine government in Cabacao, Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro, which displaced nearly 200 families and killed 5 civilians including children.

During the vigil, community members condemned the Philippine government's terror-tagging and black propaganda targeting human rights defenders and community organizers, including Anicoche. Speakers at the vigil underscored that such attacks endanger activists and are used to justify military violence against civilians.

Solidarity groups further linked the bombings in Mindoro to broader patterns of militarization, stating that U.S. imperialism fuels the same bombs and bullets used against Palestinians, Venezuelans, and Indigenous Mangyan-Iraya communities in the Philippines. These areas become targets because of their rich natural resources, preyed upon by foreign companies and military. From Palestine to Venezuela to the Philippines, groups raised a unified call to stop the bombings and end the U.S. war machine.

"These horrific acts of violence within the first week of 2026 have exposed the United States' desperate attempts to cling to power while anti-imperialist and national liberation movements are strengthening their resistance

around the world," said Kim Garcia, BAYAN Toronto coordinator. "Despite the increasing fascism, we know that there is no level of repression that can stop the people from justly rising up in resistance."

The petition to release Anicoche gathered a total of 702 signatures across Canada, with 500 collected online and 202 gathered in person. (Kim Garcia BAYAN Toronto Coordinator bayan.toronto1@gmail.com)



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# Despedida Farewell Dinner Honoring Consul Analyn Ratonel

By Janice Lozano

Vancouver, BC — The United Filipino Canadian Association in BC (UFCABC) hosted a heartfelt Despedida Farewell Dinner in honor of Consul Analyn Ratonel as she concluded her six-year diplomatic posting at the Philippine Consulate General in Vancouver.

Held at Stefano's Restaurant, the evening brought together leaders and representatives from numerous Filipino-Canadian organizations to celebrate the life, service, and legacy of a truly remarkable public servant.

In attendance were representatives from the Rotary Club Mountain View (RCMV), Philippine Institute of Certified Accountants (PICPA), University of the Philippines Alumni Association in BC (UPAABC), Circulo Pampangueno Association in BC (CPABC), New Westminster Philippine Festival Society (NWPFS), Miss Filipinas Worldwide, Pinoy Buzz, Philippine Nurses Association (PNA)/Tribu Productions, Forever Young Seniors Society, RF Media Group, Philippine Bicol Association of BC (PBABC), along with community supporters Marlon and Maylani Parel, all united by one purpose, to honor Consul Ratonel's extraordinary service and unwavering commitment to the Filipino community in British Columbia.

The evening was filled with warmth, gratitude, and emotion as guests bid farewell to one of the most beloved members of the Philippine Consulate. Consul Analyn Ratonel is widely known as a true people person—charming, humble, approachable, and always ready to help.

Her genuine compassion, tireless dedication, and hands-on service left an indelible mark on countless individuals, families, and organizations across the province.

As community leaders took turns sharing personal stories and messages of appreciation, the depth of Consul Ratonel's impact became profoundly clear. Each speaker reflected

on her kindness, professionalism, and steadfast support for community initiatives.

The tributes were deeply moving, and as heartfelt words filled the room, Consul Analyn was visibly touched—overcome with emotion and brought to tears by the outpouring of love, respect, and gratitude. It was a powerful moment that spoke volumes about the meaningful relationships she built and the lives she touched through years of dedicated service.

The despedida was bittersweet—a celebration of accomplishments and a moment of farewell. While the night marked the end of her official post in Vancouver, it was evident that her legacy will live on in the hearts of the Filipino-Canadian community.

Her guidance, kindness, and unwavering commitment have helped strengthen unity, foster collaboration, and uplift countless kababayans.

Though this chapter comes to a close, the evening made one thing clear: this is not goodbye. It is a heartfelt see you again. With deep gratitude, attendees celebrated her invaluable contributions and sent her off with warm wishes for continued success, happiness, and fulfillment in her future endeavors.

From all of us in British Columbia, thank you, Consul Analyn, for everything you have done. Your service, compassion, and leadership will never be forgotten.

A special prayer was offered for Consul Ratonel as she embarks on her next journey, asking for God's guidance, wisdom, peace, good health, and continued blessings.

May her kindness and dedication continue to inspire others to serve with the same faithfulness and heart she has shown our community.

**Mabuhay ka, Consul Analyn!**  
**You will always be part of our BC Filipino family.**

(Photos from Janice Lozano)



UFCABC President Arcie Lim presents a plaque to Consul Analyn Ratonel





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## United Filipino Canadian Association in BC Leads Powerful Sagip Kababayan Calamity Relief Benefit Show



through initiatives such as Alkansya ng Bayan, with donation boxes placed in local businesses, and the E-Alkansya Program for organizations and individuals wishing to contribute digitally. Every contribution, no matter the size, continues to make a difference.

Even in the darkest moments, the spirit of bayanihan lives on.

*To our kababayans back home: Hindi namin kayo nakakalimutan.*

*We stand with you. We pray for you. And we will continue to help you rise again. (Photos from Janice Lozano)*

### By Reyfort Media

Vancouver, BC — The Sagip Kababayan Calamity Relief Benefit Show, organized and hosted by the United Filipino Canadian Association in BC (UFCABC), concluded with hearts full of gratitude, humility, and renewed purpose. What unfolded was far more than a fundraising concert; it was a powerful expression of unity, compassion, and the enduring Filipino spirit of bayanihan.

The unforgettable evening brought together artists, community leaders, families, and supporters in a shared mission: to stand in solidarity with kababayans in the Philippines affected by devastating calamities that have destroyed homes, livelihoods, and a sense of safety. Though separated by distance, the Filipino community in Canada came together as one, transforming music, generosity, and collective action into real and meaningful hope.

From the moment the event began, the venue was filled with warmth and belonging. Every performance, introduction, and cheer echoed a deep sense of shared responsibility and love for one another. Music once again proved its power, not only as entertainment, but as a bridge that connects hearts and mobilizes communities toward action.

Sagip Kababayan Chair Ms. Janice Lozano reflected on how the event

came together with gratitude and awe:

“We were incredibly grateful that everything aligned so beautifully—the venue, the band, and some of the best voices and singers here in Vancouver. With everyone’s schedules coming together at the right time, it truly felt meant to be. We couldn’t have asked for a better group of people to unite for this cause, and we are more than thankful for each and every one who made this night possible.”

While the benefit show celebrated togetherness, it also honored the painful reality faced by many Filipinos back home. Being thousands of miles away does not lessen the grief felt for those affected by natural disasters; rather, it strengthens the resolve to help. Through this initiative, UFCABC reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that no kababayan feels forgotten.

The success of the Sagip Kababayan Benefit Show was made possible through the dedication of performers, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and attendees whose generosity and presence transformed compassion into impact. The talent, passion, and energy on stage reflected the very best of the Filipino community and embodied the true spirit of bayanihan.

A special highlight of the evening was the Rossinite Band, whose generosity and infectious enthusiasm elevated the event by staying beyond their scheduled time and

turning the crowd’s excitement into a spontaneous karaoke moment, capturing the joy, warmth, and unity that defined the night.

UFCABC extends heartfelt gratitude to the artists who lent their voices and talents to the cause: Arielle Josephine Tuliao, Edz Dulatre, John Valle, Charlo Sia Cedro, Mikaelah Unso, Raven Karl, Marianne Ross Vinculado, and Janice Lozano. Their dedication and belief in the mission were instrumental in making the event a success.

Deep appreciation is also extended to the UFCABC Organization, whose unwavering support and leadership continue to guide the organization’s community-driven initiatives. As Lozano shared, “Their collaboration was a true example of teamwork in action. Team work makes the dream work.”

UFCABC also extends sincere gratitude to its generous donors and sponsors, whose support made a tangible and lasting impact. Their commitment to helping those in need reinforces the strength and compassion of the Filipino-Canadian community.

All proceeds from the event will be coursed through the Rotary Club Mountain View, ensuring transparent and direct support for calamity relief efforts in the Philippines.

Beyond this benefit show, the United Filipino Canadian Association in BC remains committed to continuing its humanitarian mission





# COMMUNITY CORNER

BY CHRISTIAN CUNANAN AND APPLE PLATA



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## Happiest Birthday Lynne Vic!

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## RP NEWS ...AND MORE.....

# Quiapo Church to evaluate 'Traslacion' after record breaking procession

Quiapo Church officials will conduct an immediate evaluation of the annual procession of the image of Jesus Nazareno, with possible changes eyed to improve safety and crowd control.

Fr. Robert Arellano, spokesman for Traslacion 2026, said organizers are recording lessons from this year's longest and biggest procession in the feast's history to help plan future events.

"We will conduct an immediate evaluation. Each year is a new experience, and what we learn now will guide future Traslacion celebrations," Arellano said.

He said any changes would follow careful study, not quick decisions, because of the size and complexity of the religious event.

Arellano said it is too early to name specific changes, but organizers may review the design and handling of the andas or carriage of the revered icon of

cross-bearing Jesus Christ,

"Personally, there may be changes to the andas, but we really need to have a deep study regarding this," he said, citing its impact on crowd movement.

He said changes to the andas could help crowd movement, a long-standing concern during the massive procession through Manila streets.

Organizers are considering whether to shorten the Traslacion route, though Arellano said this would require strong data.

"Any major change like the route must be supported by relevant data and information," he said, calling it a serious decision.

He said the Quiapo Church works with local government, police and other agencies to decide changes and protect public safety.



Devotees try to get close to the glass-encased image of Jesus Nazareno during the annual Traslacion in Manila Jan. 9, 2026. (CBCP News/Earl Jerald Alpay)

The andas arrived at Quiapo Church at 10:50 a.m. Saturday, nearly 31 hours after it left Quirino Grandstand at 4 a.m. Friday.

The 2026 Feast of Jesus Nazareno was historic for both the

longest Traslacion and the largest crowd, drawing more than nine million devotees.

Authorities said the procession also left four people dead, with about 1,700 others needing medical care for injuries and exhaustion. (CBCP)

## MARCOS WANTS ZALDY CO RETURNED TO PH

**Orders review of all options, including extradition**

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered relevant agencies to review all available options that would expedite the return to the country of former Ako Bicol party-list congressman Zaldy Co, including the possible forging of an extradition deal with Portugal where the fugitive solon was last reported seen, according to Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla.

Co is facing graft and malversation of funds charges in relation to an alleged massive corruption scheme involving flood control and other infrastructure projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

The Sandiganbayan has issued an arrest warrant against Co and has tagged him as a "fugitive from justice" amid reports that he had fled the country to escape prosecution.

Remulla disclosed the President's directive during a briefing in

Malacañang on Tuesday, where he reiterated that authorities have reliable information that Co is hiding in Portugal and is using a Portuguese passport.

"We are still studying the possibility of applying for the extradition of Zaldy Co from Portugal. The problem here, though, is that we do not have an extradition treaty with Portugal," he said in mixed English and Filipino.

An extradition treaty is a formal agreement between two countries that they will return fugitives facing charges in their home country to face trial.

Remulla said that while there is no existing extradition deal between the Philippines and Portugal, Manila can seek the assistance of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), and the United Nations, among others, to bring back Co.

RP NEWS to PAGE 22....

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**Wisdom from the Word**

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# CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR

Dear friends, God is good. So, I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. 2 Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him.

**ROMANS 12: 1, 2 CEV**

What behaviour is expected of Christians today? What is their lifestyle to be? Some people think that if they are Christians, they can do anything they wish. Saint Paul said in his letter to the Romans that we as Christians should live a lifestyle that is acceptable to God which is our reasonable service.

The 21st Fundamental Belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church states, "We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven."

*For the Holy Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord, we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health and joy in our lives.*

*This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of human taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit.*

*It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified*

*in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness."*

Furthermore, "Christians should adopt a different lifestyle, not for the sake of being different but because God has called them to live by principle.

The lifestyle to which He has called them enables them to reach their full potential as His creation, making them efficient in His service. Being different also advances their mission: to serve the world---to be salt in it, light to it.

Of what value would salt be without taste, or light that didn't

differ from darkness? Christ is our example. He lived so thoroughly in the world in the world that people accused Him of being a "glutton and a drunkard" {Matthew 11:19, NIV} though He was not. He so consistently lived out God's principle that no one could prove Him guilty of sin." (John 8:46 NIV)

Science has proven that being a vegetarian is a healthy lifestyle. Many books have been written about it, and space would not permit listing all of them. Suffice it to say that research has proven that vegetarianism is a healthy lifestyle.

Henry Salt's plea for vegetarianism, articulated in his influential 1886 book *A Plea for Vegetarianism*, argued that a plant-based diet is morally superior, economically beneficial, and healthier, challenging traditions and promoting a more humane, civil society by

WISDOM TO PAGE 22 ...

**Moments**

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD



# Mission in tandem

The story is told about two men riding tandem on a bicycle made for two, who were panting and perspiring when they finally reached the top of the hill. "That was a stiff climb," said the first man. "It certainly was," replied the second man. "And if I hadn't kept the brake on, we would have slid backward."

Today is the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord. In today's Gospel (Matthew 3:13-17), we hear of the inspiring tandem of Jesus and His cousin, John, who baptized Him in the Jordan River. Nobody applied the brakes on anyone. Theirs was teamwork and partnership all the way, and in all ways, for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

It is the Kingdom of God that suffers if we do not set aside our division and rivalries. We are a team. There are no greater gods or superstars among us. We all are equally called to work

humbly in the vineyard of the Lord.

Humility is the key to harmony and unity. Jesus humbled Himself to be baptized by John, who, in turn, humbly prevented Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and yet You are coming to me?" In the end, both of them humbly obeyed God's will.

What is, who is pleasing to God? More than our talents, achievements, and efforts, it is our humble obedience that pleases Him. Great works are great, but if done without humble obedience, they are empty, vain, and self-serving.

Take note that our baptism is about membership and mission. By virtue of our baptism, we become children of God and members of the Church. But along with this privilege is a mission. We who have been anointed

with the oil of gladness are sent to bring the good news to the poor. Gladness and good news are a part of our identity, and must be the trademark of whatever ministry or mission we are called to do. Be joyful and be good news!

Just precisely what or who is a Christian? His Eminence, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, in his homily at the Quirino Grandstand last Jan. 9, 2014, mentioned prayer, obedience, and witnessing as the three marks of the true devotee of the Black Nazarene, or a true Christian for that matter. Let us check if we have these marks, and if we are concretely living them out.

Prayer is remembering God, and coming into His presence anytime, anywhere. How many times do you remember God in your ordinary day? How often do you stop awhile to be aware of His presence, thank Him, or

ask for His help and mercy? When prayer has ceased to be just an obligation or duty, and when prayer is not just asking but also giving Him praise and glory, then prayer has become a joy and a reality.

Obedience. "He must increase; I must decrease." (John 3:30). A true Christian is one who obeys God's plans and commands. His vision is our vision; His mission is our mission. In other words, our personal and worldly agenda must be integrated into His agenda. When we look at our country today, do we see people who are busy with God's agenda?

Witnessing. As Christians, we are supposed to become witnesses not in the sense of being spectators or observers but in the sense of being persons who attest to and vouch for the reality of

MOMENTS TO PAGE 22 ...



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### WISDOM from PAGE 21....

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### FR ORBOS from PAGE 21....

God's love in their lives. Yes, a Christian is a certified true copy of Christ. The truth of the matter is that many of us are "nothing but second-rate, trying-hard copycats" when it comes to our faith.

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less." A lot of our problems can be solved or avoided if we take the road of humility. But it is a road less traveled precisely because we regard it as the road for losers. It is not. With humility, one cannot lose, or be lost. And please remember, even the Lord came to John in humility to be baptized by him.

Today, let us ask ourselves: Am I living a life that is pleas-

ing to God? We spend a lot of time thinking of what people say about us. The bottom line is that we should just do and give our very best, and leave to God the rest. We cannot, we should not, be too concerned about pleasing everyone. Try visiting a grave or a cemetery. There, a lot of our concerns in life just fall into place. Indeed, what will really matter when we ourselves will be there then?

A moment with the Lord: Lord, remind us that our mission is always done in tandem with You, and with one another. Amen.

[momentswithfrjerry@gmail.com](mailto:momentswithfrjerry@gmail.com)

(Reprinted from [inquirer.net](http://inquirer.net))

### MARCOS from PAGE 20....

"Extradition is almost impossible because we do not have a treaty. But there are other avenues we are studying to get him," he said.

He added that extradition would be the last resort since the process of forging an extradition agreement between the Philippines and Portugal would take years to finish and set up.

### DENIED

Co's lawyers have failed to convince the Sandiganbayan to recall its December 10, 2025 directive for the cancellation of his passport by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and declaring him a fugitive from justice.

The anti-graft court's Fifth Division, in a nine-page resolution, denied on Tuesday the Urgent Motion for Reconsideration filed by the law office of Rondain and Mendiola on behalf of the former lawmaker wherein the defense

invoked the defendant's right to due process.

"It is undisputed that accused Co remains beyond the reach of the court.

He has not voluntarily surrendered or submitted to arrest.

In view of his status as a fugitive from justice... the court was unable to entertain accused Co's pleadings and defenses and applied the 'fugitive disentitlement doctrine,'" the Sandiganbayan said.

As long as Co remains at large, the court stressed that he is not entitled to seek affirmative relief, including his Urgent Motion for Reconsideration.

Associate Justice Zaldy Trespeses penned the resolution with Associate Justices Gener Gito and Kevin Narce Vivero concurring.

(J. Reyes with P. Tabingo/ Malaya)

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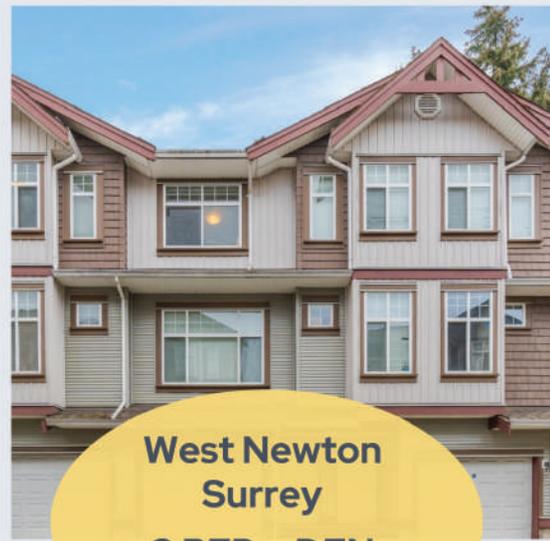
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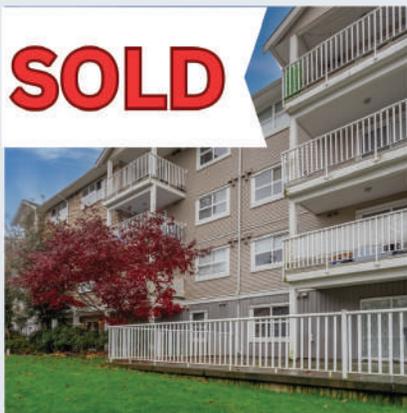
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TALLEY'S GREENSHELL MUSSELS HALF SHELL 454G



**6<sup>98</sup> EA**

ANT FARM R16 DURIAN W/ SEED 400G



**9<sup>88</sup> EA**

**GROCERY**

GOLDEN PANDA GREEN MUNG BEANS 300G



**98¢ EA**

AROY-D YOUNG GREEN JACKFRUIT 565G



**1<sup>98</sup> EA**

MIKKO FLOUR FOR RICE PANCAKE 500G



**2<sup>48</sup> EA**

FOOD EMPIRE CAFE PHO 9X24



**2<sup>98</sup> EA**

KNORR LIQUID SEASONING 250ML



**1<sup>98</sup> EA**

ANGEL CONDENSADA CREAMER 380G



**2<sup>18</sup> EA**

CA GRAIN RED PEANUT KERNEL 2LB



**3<sup>48</sup> EA**

FOCO COCONUT WATER 1L



**2/5<sup>00</sup>**

UFC BANANA SAUCE REGULAR/SPICY 550G



**2<sup>18</sup> EA**

AROY-D COCONUT MILK 400ML



**2/3<sup>88</sup>**

VIFON NGON NGON RICE NOODLES 500G



**2/7<sup>00</sup>**

BAMBOO TREE RICE VERMICELLI 908G



**2/8<sup>00</sup>**

INDOMIE MI GORENG FRIED NOODLES 5X85G



**2/6<sup>00</sup>**

ARGENTINA CORNED BEEF 340G



**6<sup>98</sup> EA**

RED BOAT FISH SAUCE 40N° 500ML



**12<sup>48</sup> EA**

MEKONG STAR JASMINE RICE ST25 5KG



**17<sup>98</sup> EA**

**HAPPY TUESDAY**

Every Tuesday, all year round, shop and you'll be rewarded, instantly!



**HAPPY TUESDAY**  
3X Reward Points

**\$1 = 3 POINTS**  
SPENT REWARDED