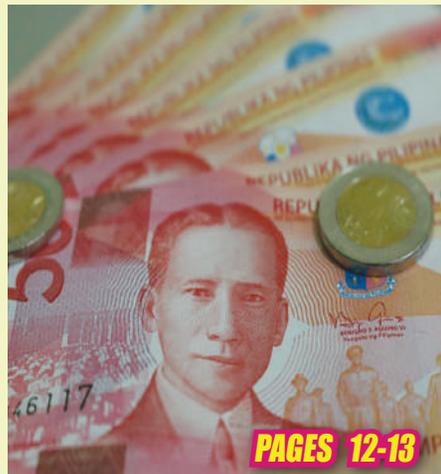




NEW YEAR'S MESSAGES FROM PM MARK CARNEY AND PREMIER DAVID EBY

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Amid economic woes and corruption, Filipinos welcome 2026 with less hope and more fear



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Original shows, films lead GMA's lineup



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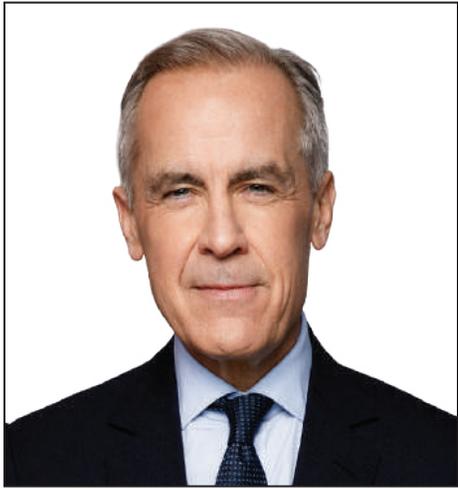
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NEW YEAR'S MESSAGES

Message from the Prime Minister Mark Carney to mark the New Year!



moments over the year that brought us joy, and the people in our lives who made them special.

Although this year has brought more than its share of challenges to our country, we have also been reminded that we are fortunate to be part of one extraordinary, generous, and caring nation.

We are strongest when we are united, when we look out for each other, and when we take care of each other. That is what makes Canada strong.

As this year comes to a close, we resolve to carry that same spirit and those same values into 2026. Happy New Year, Canada.” (Prime Minister’s website)

“Tonight, Canadians will gather with loved ones to celebrate the start of the New Year.

This is a time for families and friends across the country to come together and to welcome the year ahead. On New Year’s Eve, we pause to reflect on the

Premier’s statement on New Year’s Day



VICTORIA - Premier David Eby has issued the following statement marking New Year’s Day:

“Tonight, people across British Columbia will reflect on the year we’ve been through and look forward to the one ahead.

“This has been a year like none other in our history. It began with the president of our largest trading partner and a longstanding ally threatening our economy and our sovereignty. Those attacks have had real consequences for people and communities.

“But British Columbians responded the way we always do. We came together to defend the country we love, to stand up for one another and to support the workers and communities caught in the crossfire.

“Throughout the year, our government’s focus has been clear: building a stronger, more resilient economy that is less dependent on the United States and that works better for people here at home.

“We are seeing encouraging signs all around us. New job-creating projects are reaching final investment decisions and thousands of good jobs are being created across the province. British Columbia will be the economic engine that powers a stronger

and more independent Canadian economy - which is both a huge opportunity we must seize and a deep responsibility to the country to deliver on.

“We are also turning the corner on other big challenges. Rents are beginning to come down, thousands more people are now connected to a family doctor, and major infrastructure projects are coming online to support growing communities.

“Even as we make progress, we know many people are still struggling. Families are feeling stretched, especially at this time of year. That’s why the work ahead matters just as much as what we’ve accomplished so far.

“That work means training British Columbians for the skilled trades, so they are first in line for new jobs and higher paycheques. It means continuing to bring down the cost of daily essentials and creating the wealth necessary to improve the public services people depend on.

“There is nowhere else in the world I would rather be to face big challenges and a changing world than here in British Columbia. We have everything we need: skilled people, abundant resources and a shared commitment to look out for one another.

“As we say goodbye to the past year, let’s welcome the new one with confidence and with hope, knowing that together we can keep building a stronger, brighter future for British Columbia.” (news.gov.bc.ca)



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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S CORNER



Happy New Year 2026!

As we welcome 2026, Reyfort Media extends our heartfelt greetings to our loyal advertisers, Filipino community, our valued subscribers, loyal followers, ReyFort Media writers and columnist, and friends around the world.

Maraming salamat po for

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

Homeowner grant provides tax relief for British Columbians

The threshold for the provincial homeowner grant for residential properties in B.C. has been set at \$2.075 million for 2026, providing modest property tax relief to eligible homeowners.

Basic grant amounts remain unchanged:

- as much as \$570 for properties in the Capital Regional District, Fraser Valley Regional District and Metro Vancouver Regional District
- as much as \$770 for properties outside those areas

Seniors, veterans and people with disabilities, or those living with a relative who has a disability, may be eligible for additional grants for a total of:

- as much as \$845 in the Capital Regional District, Fraser Valley Regional District and Metro Vancouver Regional District

- as much as \$1,045 outside those areas

In 2025, nearly 500,000 seniors and more than 19,000 people with disabilities received this extra support.

To be eligible, the property must be the homeowners' principal residence.

Homeowners must apply to receive the grant. Homeowners can submit their grant application any time during the tax year.

The best time to apply is in May after property tax notices have been received and before the property-tax due date, typically in July.

Those who apply for the homeowner grant after their property-tax due date may face late-payment penalties to the unpaid portion of their property taxes normally covered by the grant.

The quickest and

easiest way to apply is online through the B.C. government website.

Applications are also accepted at ServiceBC centres or by phone at 1-888-355-2700.

Homeowners may also be eligible for B.C.'s Property

Tax Deferral Program if they:

- support a dependent child (Families with Children Program)
- are 55 or older during the current year
- are a surviving spouse
- are a person with disabilities

(news.gov.bc.ca)



'Echusera:' Vice Ganda calls out a netizen who took a video of him at the airport



Vice Ganda quickly responded to a circulating video showing a netizen chasing him at the airport, where the woman claimed she did not recognize him. In a viral video, Jessamine Tamaray Concepcion was seen chasing the actor-comedian at the airport. But Jessamine admitted she had forgotten the star's name.

"Si ano 'to, artista ito. Si ano 'to. Huy! Ito 'yung sikat na artista sa Pilipinas (I know him. He is a celebrity. Hey! This is a celebrity in the Philippines)."

Making his way through the boarding gate, Vice responded, "Happy New Year, po! Hindi niyo nga ako kilala, Ate, e. (Happy New Year! You don't even know me)."

"Nakalimutan ko name ni Vice Ganda pero namansin pa rin kahit parang Nag tampo o galit. Ewan ko bakit nakalimutan ko name niya. EAT Bulaga ksi ang Pinapanood ko (I forgot Vice Ganda's name, but he still noticed me even though he seemed upset or angry. I don't know why I forgot his name. I watch EAT Bulaga)," Jessamine wrote on her now deleted post.

Jessamine later changed her Facebook name, set her profile to private, and eventually removed the video, though other netizens had already saved and reposted it on social media.

After the video went viral, Vice took the time to address the situation during the "Laro-Laro Pick" segment on It's Showtime while coming across a contestant who looked like Jessamine on Jan. 5.

According to the "Call Me Mother" star, Jessamine couldn't say she didn't know him, since she recognized him right away.

"Echusera [siya], hindi raw niya alam pangalan ko. Kitang kita ko siya noong nakita niya ako. Sabi niya, 'Ay, si Vice Ganda.' Tapos vinideo ako. Ang layo ng nilakad niya ah, talagang binwisit niya ako (She's lying. She said she didn't know my name, but I clearly saw her recognize me. She even said, 'Oh, it's Vice Ganda,' before taking a video. She really chased after me, and it was irritating)," Vice said.

As much as Vice wanted to tell more about what happened, he chose to stop and get back to the show. "Ayoko na ikwento kasi mababash ka lalo, day. Malala. Nang-ano siya. Kinontent ako, girl. Nagmamadali na ako, malelate na ako (I don't want to share the whole story because she might get even more backlash. It was a crazy experience. She turned me into content, and I was in a hurry because I didn't want to be late.)" (

C. Alcantara/mb.com.ph)

Liza Soberano fulfills fan's request to post 'drafts' on TikTok

Actress Liza Soberano indulged a fan's request to post some "drafts" on TikTok following her birthday post.

The US-based actress on Monday, January 5, expressed gratitude to those who greeted and wished her well on her 28th birthday on January 4.

"Thank you for all the heartfelt birthday messages. I know I've been quiet for a while — I've been taking time to rebuild myself so I can come back stronger, wiser, and with even more love to give," she wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

"To those who've stood by me through every chapter, thank you. I love you all and can't wait to reconnect," Liza added with

a white heart emoji.

Liza's post has received 1,500 likes, 219 reposts, and over 100 replies, including one from a supporter who goaded her into posting something on TikTok. "Hopie, feel ko may TikTok drafts ka pa [diyan]. Hahaha post na 'yan," an online user wrote with emojis of a thinking face and face-with-hand-over-mouth.

"Sige nanga," Liza responded a few minutes later.

Her comment garnered 47 likes from X users, with some agreeing with the online user that the actress should "post" more "drafts."

Liza eventually posted outtakes from her sultry birthday photoshoot on TikTok, where

she has 7.2 million followers. "Outtake, outtake, outtake. Someone said to do a draft dump on Twitter," she captioned her post, sharing ten photos on the platform.

For her 28th birthday, the actress had a photoshoot with BJ Pascual, donning a black lace brassiere and a one-shoulder black dress.

She also hinted that she produced the shoot herself, saying it was "produced back home in the Philippines with the best team."

Liza is now based in the US, where she made her Hollywood debut in the horror rom-com "Lisa Frankenstein" in 2024. She is also part of the cast of

"Forgotten Island," alongside fellow Filipinas H.E.R. and Lea Salonga. (J. Malasig/Interaskyon)



Liza Soberano in this photo taken by BJ Pascual and posted on her Instagram on Jan. 5, 2026 (lizasoberano via Instagram)

MMFF 'lost its soul' due to rising cinema prices, says filmmaker

MANILA, Philippines — Filmmaker Jun Robles Lana lamented the rise of theater prices, claiming it has affected the movie-going experience of Filipino families especially during the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF).

Lana is no stranger to the MMFF having directed the likes of "Die Beautiful," "Big Night!," and "Kahapon, Ngayon, Bukas," as well as serving as a writer on the late National Artist Marilou Diaz-Abaya's entries "Jose Rizal," "Muro-Ami," and "Bagong Buwan."

This year Lana's entry "Call Me Mother" won Third Best Picture (shared with "Manila's Finest"), Best Actor for Vice Ganda, Best Child Performer for Lucas Andalio, and the Gender Sensitivity Award.

According to unofficial numbers, "Call Me Mother" leads the box office earnings for the 51st MMFF. This comes on the heels of Lana's entry last year "And The Breadwinner Is..." being one of the festival's top earners along with "Green Bones" and "The Kingdom." Despite the box office success of his movies, Lana still criticized high cinema prices on his social media accounts

which has led to the MMFF losing both customers and its "soul."

"For decades, the MMFF was the 'people's festival.' It was the one time of year when ordinary workers took their children to the mall to see their idols," Lana began, before pointing out a family of four would need at least P1,500 to watch a movie. That expense, Lana continued, does not include transportation to the theater or snacks to munch on during the film.

"By pricing the ordinary Filipino out of the theater, the industry hasn't just lost customers, it has lost its soul," Lana said. "Cinema has shifted from a shared national culture to a middle-class privilege."

The director said there's no reason to promote a "national" film festival while maintaining prices that exclude a majority of the population.

"Until we admit that cinema has become a luxury that the 'P500 Noche Buena' family cannot afford, we are simply watching the slow, expensive sunset of Philippine cinema," Lana ended.

The filmmaker was referencing



Filipinos enter a cinema in Iloilo's Festive Walk Mall to watch entries of the most recent Metro Manila Film Festival. Metro Manila Film Festival

the controversial comment of Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Cristina Roque claiming that P500 is enough for a traditional Christmas dinner in a Filipino household.

Filipinos expressed support Lana's statement across platforms, many agreeing that the movie-going experience

has been drastically affected by expensive theater prices.

Some criticized that a government-sponsored event like the MMFF should be more accessible to constituents while many pointed out Filipinos would opt to wait for MMFF entries to be available on streaming as it'd be a cheaper expense.

(K. Purnell/Philstar)

MMDA to discuss lowering movie ticket prices for MMFF 2026



Backed by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the Metro Manila Film Festival is the only time of year in the Philippines when theaters nationwide show local films exclusively. The 51st edition featuring eight official entries is now on its last stretch in theaters. Will the 2025 overall box-office results match or top the P800 million earnings of 2024?

MANILA — The high prices of movie tickets were seen as one of the factors behind the low turnout of movie patrons at this year's Metro Manila Film

Festival.

On average, regular cinema prices are at P400 now, while

premium cinemas go as high as P600 and up. The public and industry folks see this tag price as a reason for the decline of box office receipts this year. This was affirmed by MMFF Overall chairman Atty. Don Artes.

This year, the festival fell almost P100 million short compared to last year's gross receipts. The silver lining at this point is that ticket sales after the holiday break have picked up, and the majority of the eight entries have benefited from it.

"Kaya ko nasabi na successful, kasi 7 out of 8 movies lumampas sa 8 digits yung gross receipts nila which is first time din nangyari. Nung mga previous years, isa dalawa lang ang 8 digits and the rest pababa na nang pababa," Artes told ABS-CBN News.

To keep the momentum going, Artes spoke to producers and the Cinema Exhibitors Association of the Philippines (CEAP) to extend the festival run.

"We're going to extend it until January 14, ngayon compared to last year on a daily basis mas mataas yung gross. As in mataas, malaki pa. So we're extending it a week," he said.

When it comes to ticket prices, Artes said: "Ako personally, dapat hindi lalampas ng P300 ang presyo ng sine."

Some people are suggesting that cinemas should explore offering possible bundles and packages, especially for those

NEXT PAGE PLEASE...

'Call Me Mother' heads abroad after crossing P300M in local box office

MANILA, Philippines — “Call Me Mother” starring Vice Ganda and Nadine Lustre is gearing up for international releases later this week after making waves in the Philippines.

The Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2025 entry fared well at the Gabi ng Parangal as it shared the Third Best Picture Award with “Manila’s Finest.” It also won Best Actor for Vice on his fourth nomination, the Gender Sensitivity Award accepted by director Jun Robles Lana, and Best Child Performer for young star Lucas Andalio.

Following packed local cinemas, the co-production of Star Cinema, Viva Films, and IdeaFirst now heads overseas to reach Filipinos abroad.

Star Cinema announced that “Call Me Mother” would open in select theaters in the United States, Canada, Guam, and Cambodia on January 9.

It will be followed by screenings in Milan, Italy and Athens, Greece beginning January 11, Singapore starting January 15, and Australia and New Zealand the following week.

Screenings in Hong Kong and Macau were also confirmed, though specific dates would be given at a later date.

The international releases come

on the heels of “Call Me Mother” hitting P300 million at the local box office, as announced by Vice on X.

“300 Million THANK YOUs Madlang People!!!!” Vice wrote on his official X account.

The milestone makes “Call Me Mother” the highest-grossing Filipino film for 2025, surpassing the P260 million of “Meet, Greet & Bye” and the P173 million of “My Love Will Make You Disappear” — both also distributed by Star Cinema.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, which organizes the MMFF, have yet to disclose official box office numbers for this year’s festival entries but have allowed distributors to announce the success of their films at their own choosing. (K. Purnell/Philstar)



Vice (right) portrays Twinkle, a former queen maker turned adoptive, loving queer mother to Angelo, while Nadine plays Mara, Angelo’s biological mom and a former pageant prodigy-turned-high fashion model STAR / File

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who watch movies in groups. “Yan pa pwedeng i-consider yan, kunwari kung 400 (pesos) yung ticket, gawin nating 600 (pesos) for two. Para ma-encourage lalo na yung mga families,” Artes acknowledged. He also shared other factors that affected the numbers this year.

“Medyo mababa ang consumer spending natin ngayon. Ang pelikula naman among the priorities, hindi siya priority,” he noted.

He added, “Siguro, walang

pambatangayoneh,” referring to a movie that would cater to kids -- such as the kind that Vice Ganda would make in the past.

“Itong festival na ito mix siya ng commercial and artistic. Noong mga nakaraang panahon, more on the commercial side siya. This time, tumataas yung artistic value ng mga pelikula. Na tingin ko, nakakaapekto doon sa commercial value,” said Artes.

As early as now, a number of producers and A-list actors have expressed intent to participate in the annual MMFF this 2026. (MJ Felipe/abs-cbn)

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Leila de Lima praises 'I'mPerfect,' says film 'very personal' to her

Mamamayang Liberal Partylist Rep. Leila de Lima has given the thumbs up to the historic 2025 Metro Manila Film Festival entry "I'mPerfect" for its "remarkable" inclusivity and encouraged everyone to watch the film, produced by Sylvia Sanchez-Atayde of Nathan Studios, co-produced by CMB film services, and directed by Sigrid Andrea Bernardo.

Rep. de Lima said the movie is "very personal" to her because she has a child and grandchild with autism, noting that it was good to have a film that would enhance awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities, including those with Down syndrome.

"And the inclusivity of it all is very remarkable, and we need to really understand them. They can do it, you know, they can do it already. They have their own needs, they have their own feelings," said the lawmaker, who also attended the block screening for the film recently.

De Lima also said the movie tackles the difficulty of accepting that two people with Down syndrome can fall in love, strive for independence, and be left alone.

"And to show the world that they can do it. And they can, in fact, do it. And then, of course, it is all about inclusivity. Kasi siyempre, gone are the days na tinatago natin sila, gone are the days na kinakahiya natin sila, gone are the days that they are considered, you know, a liability. No, they are not at all a liability. And, in fact, they are supposed to be assets, they are blessings," Rep. de Lima said. She also said that the two leads, Krystel Go and Earl Amaba, can "stand on their own."

"They can stand on their own, as we can see in the movie. The plot, the storyline of the movie, is very good. It's about, of course, the love story between two people with Down syndrome," De Lima added. The lawmaker added that the movie is needed to increase awareness on PWDs, especially those with Down syndrome, even urging everyone to be seen by many people to address the challenges affecting the sector.



Mamamayang Liberal Partylist Rep. Leila de Lima (center) poses with the cast of 'I'mPerfect' during a recent block screening for the film.

She also said that she aims to create pieces of legislation that would help the PWD sector, including those with Down syndrome and autism.

De Lima urged everyone to continue watching 'ImPerfect,' as the movie will lecture everyone about inclusivity and changing the mindset of people towards PWDs, including persons with Down syndrome.

"Malaki pong leksyon ang makukuha natin dito, so, please, please. I am inviting you and encouraging you to watch this film, 'I'm Perfect,'" de Lima said.

Meanwhile, National Council for Disability Affairs Executive Director Glenda Relova said that the movie is a "perfect film" to showcase persons with PWD, especially those with Down syndrome.

"Pero dito ay pinakita po dito na kahit may kapansanan, na-over kami. Nagkakaroon ng resolution ang mga family for as long as nag-uusap sila at talagang naiintindihan nila kung ano yung pinagdadaanan ng kanilang kapamilyang may kapansanan. This is a mind-opener for every person and for every family na hindi natin dapat ikinakahon ng ating pananaw sa isang taong may kapansanan. (But here it is shown that even with disabilities, we are over it. Families can resolve issues as long as they talk and truly

understand what their family member with a disability is going through. This is a mind-opener for every person and for every family that we should not box our perspective around a person with a disability)," Relova said.

She also said that the movie deserved its plaudits in the MMFF, including winning Best Picture and Best Actress for Go.

"Kasi kita naman natin yung pagkakagawa ng pelikula, yung istorya maganda, yung sequencing maganda, yung emotion it's very raw, it's very real. Ramdam na ramdam mo.

(Because we can see how the film was made, the story is good, the sequencing is good, the emotion is very raw, it's very real. You can really feel it)," Relova said.

She also said that some places in the Philippines, such as Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, and Claveria, Misamis Oriental, were also allowed to be showcased in the Movie.

"I'm Perfect," the first Filipino movie featuring a cast of individuals with Down syndrome, won the Best Picture and Jury Prize for Best Ensemble at the 2025 MMFF. (R. Requintina/ mb.com.ph)

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Derek Ramsay joins Piolo Pascual, Cristine Reyes in 'The Kingdom' series

MANILA, Philippines — Derek Ramsay joins an already star-studded cast led by Piolo Pascual and Cristine Reyes in the continuation of the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2024 entry "The Kingdom" on the small screen.

"The Kingdom: Magkabilang Mundo" shows the aftermath of the succession issue explored in the 2024 movie where Vic Sotto's Lakan faced uncertainty on who among his three children, played by Cristine, Sid Lucero and Sue Ramirez, will inherit his throne.

In the movie, Vic sheds his regular comedian role to play the ruler of Kalayaan, the name of the Philippines in an alternate timeline where the country was never colonized by Western powers.

In the upcoming TV5 series, a wedding and new characters are introduced. Ryza Cenon and Derek Ramsay are teased, with each character uttering a line about their roles in the show.

Cristine's Matimyas narrates, "Sa bagong yugto, may bagong mukha ng pamumuno."

Right after her scene, Derek's



"The Kingdom: Magkabilang Mundo" is the continuation of "The Kingdom" movie. The TV5 series stars (from left) Derek Ramsay, Cristine Reyes and Piolo Pascual.. Screenshot from TV5's YouTube channel

character is flashed. He wears a red suit with floral design and sports an intimidating stance as he says, "Ako ang babasag sa bulok na sistemang niyayakap n'yo. Disiplina ang gamot sa kahariang ito." The MMFF 2024 movie was produced by APT Entertainment, MQuest Ventures and MZet Television Productions. It won Best Production Design and Best Visual Effects at the annual film festival. (K.A.Llemit/Philstar)

Filipino Canadian Lawyers Network (FCLN) is excited to host a Mentorship & NCA Networking Event on January 27, 2026, at Kulinarya Restaurant (details below).

FCLN is continuing to develop its mentorship program, and many of you have expressed interest in becoming a mentor or mentee. This gathering will bring together young lawyers and NCA candidates with experienced members of the Filipino bar in an intimate and informal setting. It's a great opportunity to connect with Filipino legal professionals from diverse backgrounds, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships. Our goal is to continue strengthening the Filipino legal community in British Columbia—over great company and delicious food.

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Attendance is limited, so if you are interested, please register at: <https://www.rfr.bz/l31fa63>.

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Jillian Ward, David Licauco to bring hard-hitting action in upcoming series 'Never Say Die'



Jillian Ward and David Licauco are set to deliver hard-hitting action in their upcoming Kapuso series "Never Say Die."

According to Nelson Canlas' report on "24 Oras," Wednesday, Jillian will play the role of a taekwondo artist in the series. For the role, she trained in martial arts for months and leaned on her experience with firing.

"Nung 2024, na-try ko na pong mag-firing. I'm happy na nagagamit ko rin po siya sa pagiging artista ko. Nakapag dalawang martial arts naman po ako tapos isa pong taekwondo class," she said.

"Natutunan ko po 'yung basics, paano 'yung form, paano talaga sumipa na may power, kung ano 'yung tamang tindig."

Jillian will be headlining "Never Say Die" alongside David Licauco. He will play the role of a news vlogger in the series and will also have his fair share of intense action scenes.

David had praised his co-stars, sharing that working with them on set has been a light and fun experience.

It takes a while for me to warm up around people di ba pero with si Jillian, Raheel, Ji Soo, Richard Yap, and everyone else, talagang I feel na it's very light lang. I don't have to think too much. Nag-enjoy lang kami."

Raheel Bhyria is also part of the series. Unlike Jillian and David's characters, however, his character is more "lampa" or clumsy.

"Ginawa na lang akong medyo lampa, so sa unang scene, spoiler, merong binalibag ako ni Jillian," he quipped.

Kim Ji Soo, Raymart Santiago, Richard Yap, Angelu De Leon, Anelyn Barro, Wendell Ramos, and more are also part of the series.

"Never Say Die" is set to premiere on GMA Prime soon. (GMA Integrated News)



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Original shows, films lead GMA's lineup

GMA Network, the country's leading media company, kicks off 2026 with a dynamic lineup of fresh programs and must-watch movies.

Leading the charge is "The Master Cutter," an action-packed series starring Dingdong Dantes as a humble tailor living a secret double life, alongside Paolo Contis, Max Collins, Jo Berry, Shuvee Etrata, Charlie Flemming and child star Sienna Stevens.

The adrenaline continues with "Never Say Die," the first on-screen pairing of Jillian Ward and David Licauco. "Truth is dangerous, justice comes at a price and there's only one vow worth keeping: Never. Say. Die," the series promises, also starring Jisoo, Raheel Bhyria, Angelu de Leon and Raymart Santiago.

Intrigue dominates in "The Secrets of Hotel 88," a gripping drama featuring Mika Salamanca, Brent Manalo, AZ Martinez, Ralph de Leon, Xyriel Manabat, Klarisse De Guzman and others. The series explores family ties tested by long-buried truths.

Rounding out GMA Prime are "Code Gray" with Alden Richards, "Hari ng Tondo" with Ruru Madrid, "Firewall," "Whispers from Heaven" and more adventures from "Encantadia Chronicles: Sang'gre."

Afternoons heat up with intense stories of love, rivalry and family. "House of Lies" reunites Beauty Gonzalez and Kris Bernal in a battle fueled by betrayal and family secrets. "Born to Shine" stars Zephanie, Olive May and Michael Sager chasing dreams in the world of music and P-Pop idol competition.

Psychological tension takes center stage

in "Apoy sa Dugo," starring Elle Villanueva, Derrick Monasterio and Ashley Ortega, while "A Mother's Tale" explores emotional conflicts between women with contrasting approaches to motherhood.

Laughter goes beyond the studio with "The Boobay and Tekla Show on the Go!" while "The People Have Spoken" combines quiz show and talk show elements with interactive audience fun. Returning favorites include "The Voice Kids 2026" and "Stars on the Floor." Collegiate sports fans can follow NCAA Season 101 volleyball and cheerleading competitions live.

Asian drama fans can look forward to titles such as "Innocent Lies" "Bitter Sweet Home" "DNA Lover" "You Touched My Heart" "Crazy x Rich" and more. GMA continues to elevate Filipino storytelling with original films in 2026. Leading the slate is "58th," an animated documentary by Carl Joseph Papa, honoring the victims of the Maguindanao massacre and telling the story of Reynaldo "Bebot" Momay, the 58th victim.

"Ella Arcangel," an animated adaptation of Julius Villanueva's 2017 comic series, follows a young girl battling men and mythical monsters in the city, directed by National Book Awardee Mervin Malonzo. Horror fans can anticipate "Huwag Kang Titingin" starring Sofia Pablo, Allen Ansay, Marco Masa, Michael Sager and more, directed by Frasco Mortiz.

GMA Pictures also brings acclaimed Filipino films such as "Balota" "Firefly" "Playtime" "Mananambal" "Shake, Rattle & Roll: Extreme" alongside

Hollywood blockbusters including "Shazam! Fury of the Gods" "Meg 2: The Trench" "Sonic the Hedgehog 2" and "Top Gun: Maverick."

As GMA Network closes its

milestone 75th anniversary year, it enters 2026 with an expansive slate of original programs, returning favorites and world-class content. (Malaya Entertainment)



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Amid economic woes and corruption, Filipinos welcome 2026 with less hope and more fear

By Carlito Pablo

Faced with economic hardships and corruption in government, Filipinos welcomed 2026 with the lowest level of optimism in nearly two decades.

Not surprisingly, they also ushered in the new year with the highest level of apprehension in about 20 years.

The Social Weather Stations (SWS) reported that its survey between November 24 to November 30, 2025 revealed that 89 percent of adult Filipinos were entering the New Year with hope rather than fear.

In a media release dated December 31, 2025, the social research group noted that this represents a one-point decline from 90 percent in 2024, following a seven-point decrease from 96 percent in 2023.

Moreover, this "marks the lowest level in sixteen years, since the 89% recorded in 2009".

SWS noted that on the other hand, 11 percent of adult Filipinos were entering the New Year with fear, up by one point from 10 percent in 2024, following a seven-point rise from three percent in 2023.

"This is the highest since 11% in 2009," the Metro Manila-based polling outfit stated.

Additionally, "Hope for the new Year was 87% when first surveyed by SWS at the end of 2000. It was in the 80s at the end of 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2009, and 2025. It was in the 90s at the end of 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, and from 2010 to 2024."

The survey respondents were asked: "Ang darating na taon ba ay inyong sasalubungin nang may pag-asa o may pangamba? [Is it with hopes

or with fears that you enter the coming year].

The results of another survey, which was done by Pulse Asia Research Inc., may provide some context about why hope is down and fear is up among Filipinos.

Pulse Asia conducted a nationwide poll between December 12 and December 15, and released its findings on December 30, 2025.

The survey showed that the need to control inflation is the leading urgent national concern of Filipino adults, with 59 percent identifying this as top priority.

Fighting graft and corruption comes second, 48 percent; increasing the pay of workers, 39 percent; reducing poverty, 22 percent; and creating more jobs and fighting criminality tied for fifth place at 19 percent.

With respect to other issues, fighting the widespread sale and use of illegal drugs got 18 percent; enforcing the rule of law, 13 percent; protecting the environment, 10 percent; promoting peace, nine per-

cent; helping farmers, nine percent; reducing taxes, eight percent; responding to the needs of calamity-hit areas, eight percent; and addressing the problem of involuntary hunger, eight percent.

Pulse Asia noted that Filipino adults are least concerned about aiding small entrepreneurs, six percent; protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers, three percent; defending territorial integrity, two percent; and dealing with terrorism, one percent.



Filipinos want the government to bring down prices and protect their purchasing power from inflation. Photo by Florante Valdez from Pixabay.

The government of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has said that its administration has shielded the country's poorest families from rising prices by keeping inflation low and sustaining economic growth in 2025.

A report by the state-run Philippine News Agency (PNA) on December 28, 2025 noted that inflation eased to 1.6 percent from January to November 2025, down from 3.4 percent in 2024.

The report stated that this marked a steady decline from 5.8 percent in 2022 and six percent in 2023.

"To put this in perspective, a 6% inflation rate means that your PHP100 can buy only about PHP94 worth of goods and services. But with inflation down to just 1.6% in 2025, that same PHP100 can now buy about PHP 98.4 worth of goods and services," Executive Secretary Ralph Recto explained in the PNA report.

"Kaya napakahalaga nito para sa bawat pamilyang Pilipino, lalo na ang mga mahihirap. Kapag mababa ang inflation, napapanatili natin na abot-kaya ang mga pangunahing bilihin, lalo na ang pagkain (That's why it's so important for every Filipino family, especially the poor. When inflation is low, we can

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keep basic necessities, especially food, affordable," Recto added.

In November last year, Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina Roque said that P500 is enough to cover a basic Noche Buena for a family of four. This remark generated a lot of backlash from members of the public who said that the amount is not enough for a Christmas feast.

Roque defended her estimate, saying that based on the government's price index, a simple spread for a family of four can include a Christmas ham (P170), spaghetti noodles and sauce (P78.50), macaroni salad (P152), fruit salad

(P98.25), and 10 pieces of pandesal bread (P27.75), totalling P526.95.

A December 3, 2025 editorial by the Philippine Daily Inquirer described Roque's Noche Buena as "fantastical" in the face of current prices and lack of jobs.

"Instead of using her time making P500 Christmas menus, Roque should get out of her office more and ramp up efforts to lower prices so that the wages and earnings will be enough for the majority of Filipinos to live in dignity and to spend more than P500 on a Christmas meal they deserve," the Inquirer's editorial suggested.

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Bam Aquino, Vico Sotto cited as Level Up People of the Year 2025

Talent manager and online show host Noel Ferrer has named Senator Bam Aquino and Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto as Level Up People of the Year 2025, citing their unwavering commitment to transparency, integrity and good governance.

“In a year where leadership is often defined by words, Mayor Vico Sotto and Senator Bam Aquino stand out for turning actions into tangible progress. These two leaders have shown Filipinos what it means to serve with integrity and courage, making them deserving of being the Level Up People of the Year 2025,” said Ferrer, host of the online show Level Up.

Aquino, who finished second in the 2025 senatorial race, was lauded for his strong connection with the youth and his focus on meaningful reforms through legislation such as the Blockchain the Budget Act.

“With a campaign fueled by

young voters, he translated that momentum into impactful legislation. From pushing for educational reforms to championing the Blockchain Act, Bam underscored transparency in government and paved the way for innovations that benefit everyday Filipinos,” Ferrer emphasized.

“His focus on empowering the youth and improving governance makes him a leader of his generation,” he added.

Sotto, meanwhile, was recognized for demonstrating how accountability can be a powerful tool for change after exposing alleged large scale corruption involving controversial contractors Sarah and Curlee Discaya, which sparked investigations into what has been described as one of the country’s biggest corruption scandals.

“His (Vico’s) bold move didn’t



Senator Bam Aquino and Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto

just highlight his commitment to clean governance, it showed citizens that transparency can lead to real justice. Through his actions, Vico has become a symbol of hope for those fighting against graft and corruption,” Ferrer said.

Ferrer stressed that the contributions of Aquino and Sotto go beyond politics,

saying their leadership inspires Filipinos to demand accountability, embrace transparency and believe in the power of progressive change.

“For their relentless efforts in shaping a better Philippines, they are truly the most inspiring leaders of 2025,” Ferrer ended. (Malaya News)

Actor Nico Antonio passes 2025 bar exams

MANILA, Philippines — Actor Nico Antonio has earned a new professional title after passing the 2025 Bar Examinations.

Antonio was among the 5,594 successful examinees out of 11,420 who took the bar this year as announced by the Supreme Court on Wednesday. The achievement comes shortly after Antonio portrayed a lawyer in the film “Unmarry,” turning his on-screen role into reality.

“From Atty. Willie on screen to Atty. Nico Antonio in real life. WOW, nakaka-proud naman talaga! Panoorin ang intense na court battle niya sa #UnMarry. Showing in cinemas nationwide!” Quantum Films wrote on social media.



Antonio is widely recognized for his range as an actor, earning praise for both comedic timing and dramatic depth. He won Best Supporting Actor at the CineFilipino Film Festival for “Delia & Sammy” and received the same award at the Metro Manila Film Festival

for “Big Night!” He later secured another MMFF Best Supporting Actor win for “Here Comes The Groom.”

His other notable projects include the satirical film “Ang

Babae sa Septic Tank 3” and the television series “Voltes V: Legacy.”

In recent years, Antonio has also taken on international work, appearing in South Korean productions such as “Big Bet” in 2022, where he played a CIDG officer alongside Son Suk Ku, and the 2025 K-drama “Confidence Queen.”

He is also associated with Quantum Films, the production company founded by his mother, producer and lawyer Joji Alonzo, known for films including “English Only, Please” and “Espantaho.” (I. Iglesias/Manila Times)

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Judy Ann Santos looks back on 2005 tax case

After 20 years, Judy Ann Santos revisited the infamous 2005 tax evasion case filed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), which the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) dismissed in 2013.

During an appearance on the "Moment To Moment" podcast, hosted by life coach and book author Pia Acevedo, Santos described it as exhausting — a moment when she had to fight for her name.

"Hindikonapansinnadalawang araw akong tulog tapos may isang mahabang pause ako na nagawa nung araw na nagising ako at na-realize ko na pagod na pala ako. Sa laban na ito, wala akong kasama. Ang daming nangyayari na hindi ko naiintindihan," Santos vulnerably shared with Acevedo.

"Unang kaso sa buong bahay ko — 'yung proseso, 'yung mugshots, lahat ng kamera, nakatutok sa 'yo,'" Santos added.

Going deeper, she stated that when people are not benefiting from a situation, they tend to distance themselves. "Pag

wala ka pa lang kikitain, ikaw lang mag-isa," she highlighted.

She further explained, "Pag may kinikita ka, biglang ang dami mong kasama. Pero 'pag may problema kang pagdaraan — na puwedeng sumabit ang mga pangalan nila — biglang wala silang kinalaman (pakialam) sa 'yo."

Reflecting on the BIR battle, the Kapamilya superstar pointed out that it helped her discover her own "worth" and "freedom."

"That was my moment of pause na 'It's time that I take control of my decisions, my life, my worth, what I want to do, what projects I want to take, how will I reinvent myself,'" she said.

"Pero hinayaan ko lang siya na parang I know na it needed to happen, na I had to know kung ano 'yung accounts ko, magkano ba talaga ang kinikita ko," she added.

Throughout her showbiz career at the time, she worked as an actor and endorser without knowing how much she was paid. "Wala akong alam kung magkano talaga 'yung binabayad sa akin."



Judy Ann Santos sits down with life coach Pia Acevedo. Screenshot on YouTube

Saying that it had taught her to have a voice, she went on, "If that didn't happen, I will never find my worth and I will never learn how to stand up for myself and have a voice. [Doon nagsimula na] tumatayang na ako at nasasabi ko 'yung gusto kong sabihin."

Claiming that voice, she said, ultimately led to her freedom.

"Nung nagsimula na akong bumali (to break free), nakararamdam na

ako ng freedom. 'Yung freedom na 'yun, ang tawag ko lang doon noon ay nagrebelde ako. But it was actually freedom. I was creating my own platform. Kailangang alam at gusto ko 'yung ginagawa ko. Then andoon na 'yung pag-sink in na hindi ako puwedeng basta sunod lang nang sunod," she ended. (J. Mercado/abs-cbn)

Rhian Ramos' 'first shower' of 2026 post gets Pinoys talking

Actress Rhian Ramos drew questions after posting about taking her "first shower" of the year five days into the new year.

The Kapuso actress wrote the following on her X (formerly Twitter) account on the afternoon of Monday, January 5:

"Okay, time to take my first shower of 2026"

Her post has earned 251,600 views, 840 likes, 117 reposts, and 30 replies, with Filipinos expressing surprise at the actress' post.

"Haha, happy new year, Rhian! Enjoy your first shower of the year," an online user wrote with an emoji.

"Dikapanaliligosimula January 1??? HAHAHAAAAHAHA," another commented.

"Baka nasa malamig na bansa [siya] ngayon. Understandable," another Pinoy wrote.

"Limang araw, bi?????" another asked with crying emojis.

Meanwhile, state weather bureau PAGASA said that Filipinos should expect a cold surge this January, with some mountainous areas experiencing single-digit temperatures.

The cold surge is an effect of the northeast monsoon (amihan) affecting the country, a weather phenomenon marked by cool and dry air.

Such weather has prompted some Filipinos to joke about skipping daily showers due to the cool atmosphere.

(J. Malasig/Interakyon)



Rhian Ramos in this photo posted on her Instagram on Nov. 20, 2025 (whianwamos via Instagram)

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Melanie Marquez recalls alleged abduction, confinement in mental hospital

Former beauty queen and actress Melanie Marquez said she was “abducted” on her birthday and confined in a mental hospital for 10 days.

On Monday, Jan. 5, speaking on “Fast Talk with Boy Abunda,”

Melanie recounted that she was invited to what she believed was a birthday celebration in July but was instead taken against her will and placed in a mental health facility. She did not specify the year of the incident.

“I was kidnapped against my will,” she said, adding that she was isolated, unable to communicate with anyone, and injected with medication that left her unable to move. She later learned she was being held at a mental hospital in Pasig.

She then linked the incident to a legal case she had filed against her estranged husband, whom she accused of physical abuse.

She said she was later transferred to a rehabilitation facility, where she stayed for eight months and suffered from depression. According to her, the staff at the facility eventually told her that medical tests showed no mental illness.

Melanie also denied claims that she intended to harm herself or her two sons, both of whom have special needs, saying her remarks were misunderstood.

She then expressed her hope for healing and peace as she welcomed the new year. (A.Villanueva, Manila Standard)



Adam Lawyer denies abuse allegations by Melanie Marquez and calls her claims ‘fabricated’ and ‘baseless’

Content Warning: This article contains discussions of abuse and harassment which may be distressing to some readers.

Adam “Randy” Lawyer has strongly denied the allegations of abuse raised against him by his wife, Miss International 1979 Melanie Marquez, following her emotional revelations on national television.

On an episode of Fast Talk with Boy Abunda on January 6, host Boy Abunda read a statement sent to the program via email from Randy’s legal counsel. The statement directly addressed Melanie’s accusations and emphasized Randy’s strong denial.

In the statement, Randy’s legal counsel asserted that the accusations were not only as untrue but also as damaging to his reputation.

“Our client, Mr. Adam Lawyer, categorically denies with strongest terms the allegations thrown against him. Ms. Melanie has always been engaged in ostentatiously accusing Mr. Lawyer of abuse, but all of which were found to be baseless or unfounded by the proper forum. This is nothing but an act of



harassment suffered by our client; an act of defamation on the part of Ms. Melanie,” wrote Atty. Jecko G. Bello.

The statement was released by Atty. Mitzell Arthur R. Magdaong, Atty. Isabel Perfetua P. Doctolero, and Atty. Jecko G. Bello, who further claimed that Melanie has a pattern of making accusations against her husband.

According to their statement, “Ms. Marquez has a notorious



history of hurling ostentatious, fabricated claims of abuse at Mr. Lawyer—every single one previously investigated and dismissed as baseless and unfounded by the appropriate authority/ies and forum/a.”

They also addressed a specific case that Melanie said during her interview, clarifying that the complaint was dismissed by the Office of the City Prosecutor of Makati and never reached the court of law.

Randy’s camp went on to describe the renewed allegations as a deliberate attempt to harm him, stating, “This latest stunt is nothing short of malicious harassment, designed to inflict severe reputational damage, emotional distress, and professional harm on our client. Mr. Lawyer will address the particularities of the Ms. Marquez’s accusations against him before the Bureau of Immigration, the proper forum.”

This follows Melanie’s recent interview with the King of Talk on January 5, where she publicly shared her side of the story.

During the interview, she spoke about alleged physical abuse and revealed that she is seeking the cancellation of Randy’s visa and his blacklisting.

She also disclosed that she is filing for divorce from her American husband of more than two decades.

Melanie and Randy were married in 2000 and have two children together. Melanie also has four children from previous relationships: Michelle Dee, Maxine, Mazen, and Manuelito. (A. De Guzman/Push team/abs-cbn/ photo from abs-cbn))

Anne Curtis mourns passing of father

MANILA, Philippines — Actress-TV host Anne Curtis announced Wednesday that her father, James Curtis-Smith, has passed away.

Curtis shared the news on social media, posting photos of her father along with a family statement.

“It is with profound sadness that we announce the unexpected yet peaceful passing of our father, James E. Curtis-Smith. A true patriarch in every sense, he shaped us with strength, resilience, and a wit that will forever echo in our family. He was deeply loved, endlessly admired, and will live on in our hearts always. We will miss him dearly. - The Curtis-Smith Family.”

Curtis-Smith was an Australian lawyer

with German, Italian, Irish and English roots. He was married to a Filipina, Carmencita Ojales. Together, they had three children, including Anne Curtis, actress Jasmine Curtis-Smith and Thomas James Curtis-Smith. He also had several children from previous relationships.

Following the announcement, celebrities and friends sent messages of condolence in the comments section.

“Hayden and I are so sorry to hear about your dad’s passing Anne. I know you’ve been dreading this day would happen. But, you can take solace in the fact that you super duper took care of him and that you did all you could for not only him but your whole family. That’s why I admire you so much,” Vicki

Belo wrote.

“Sorry to hear this Anne.. Sending all my love. Our prayers and deepest condolences,”

Karylle Tatlonghari-Yuzon commented.

“Condolences,” Benjamin Alves simply wrote. (I. Iglesias/Manila Times)



Anne Curtis with the late dad and mom

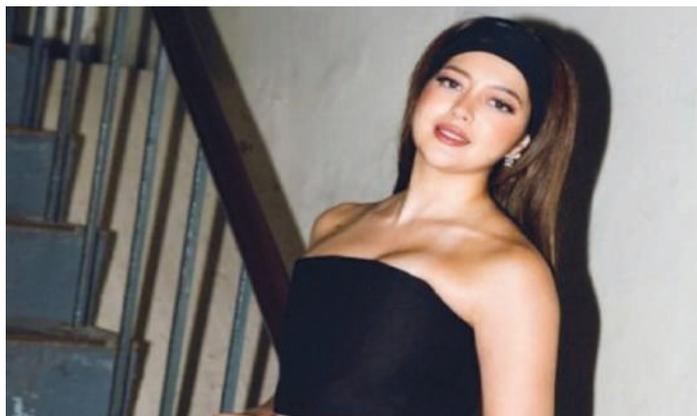
Sue Ramirez seeks blood donors for mother’s surgery

MANILA, Philippines — Kapamilya actress Sue Ramirez asked for blood donors for her mother’s open-heart surgery.

In her Instagram story, Sue posted a photo of her standing beside a hospital bed wherein her mom was lying.

“Kumakatok po ako sa inyong mga puso, it may be too much to ask, but if anyone here would be willing to donate blood for my mom, it would mean so much and could help save her life,” Sue wrote.

“Blood types B+, B-, O+, O- are eligible to donate with no alcohol intake for at least 48 hours,” she added.



Sue Ramirez in this photo taken by Aeron Almoneda and posted on JM Gumataay’s Instagram on June 3, 2025. (Instagram)

In another post, Sue said that those who cannot donate blood can pray for her mom instead. “If you can’t donate blood, prayers for her healing and strength would be deeply appreciated. Thank you so much,” she said.

In her past interview, Sue said that her mom is a strong female figure in her life.

“Our home growing up was always filled with love, sometimes tough love from

our mom, but you know, alam namin na pinalaki kami nang maganda. Outside of our home, if people criticized me... I didn’t really care that much because I went home to a loving home,” she shared in an interview with “Magandang Buhay” in 2016.

“All that I am is because of my mom. I would like to say that I was raised well and all thanks to her. All of the positive things people say about me, it’s because of her, of how she raised me. I am very grateful,” she said in another interview.

(J.M. Severo/Philstar)

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3 Filipino cardinals head to Rome for Pope Leo XIV's first consistory

Three Filipino cardinals left Manila on Monday for Rome to attend the first consistory convened by Pope Leo XIV, a key assembly of the Catholic Church's highest-ranking officials.

Cardinal Jose Advincula, archbishop of Manila; Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, bishop of Kalookan; and Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, archbishop emeritus of Cotabato, will join members of the College of Cardinals for the consistory scheduled for January 7 to 8.

"Please include us in your prayers," David said. The cardinals are also expected to take part in the closing Mass of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, which the pope will preside over at St. Peter's Basilica on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a Filipino prelate



Cardinals attend a consistory to create 21 new cardinals in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 7, 2024. (Vatican Media)

based in Rome who serves as pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, is also attending the consistory.

Because the consistory concludes on the eve of the Feast of Jesus Nazareno, Advincula will miss this year's celebrations in Manila, which are expected to draw millions of devotees.

Instead, the archbishop presided over the fifth novena Mass in honor of Jesus Nazareno on Sunday, January 4, at Quiapo Church.

"He will miss us on January 9 but he said he will be monitoring our celebration," said Quiapo Church rector Fr. Ramon Jade Licuanan.

Traditionally, the archbishop of Manila presides over the midnight Mass, or Misa Mayor, at the Quirino Grandstand during the annual feast.

This year, the Mass will be led by Balanga Bishop Rufino Sescon, a former Quiapo Church rector who was appointed to the episcopate in December 2024.

A consistory is a formal meeting of the College of Cardinals. Consistories may be ordinary, which are largely ceremonial and attended by cardinals residing in Rome, or extraordinary.

Extraordinary consistories, such as the one convened this week, gather cardinals from around the world who are able to travel and allow the pope to consult the entire College on issues affecting the life and governance of the Church. (CBCP News)

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Pope Leo XIV closes St. Peter's Holy Door, concluding Jubilee of Hope



Pope Leo XIV closes the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, concluding the Jubilee of Hope, on January 6, 2026. (Vatican Media via CBCP News)

VATICAN— Pope Leo XIV on Tuesday closed the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, bringing the ordinary Holy Year to an end — a time of grace that invited Catholics to conversion, reconciliation, and hope.

The pontiff processed toward the Holy Door as the antiphon *O clavis David* was sung. Reaching the threshold, he knelt before the door and remained for a few minutes in silent prayer. He then rose and, at 9:41 a.m., pushed shut the two large bronze doors — a gesture that visibly marked the end of the jubilee season.

"With thankful hearts we now prepare to close this Holy

Door, crossed by a multitude of faithful, certain that the Good Shepherd always keeps the door of his heart open to welcome us whenever we feel weary and oppressed," Leo XIV said in an address before the concluding gesture that ended the ecclesial event, ordinarily held every 25 years to offer the faithful the possibility of obtaining a plenary indulgence.

With these words, Leo XIV emphasized that even though the Jubilee has ended, God's mercy remains ever open to believers.

Before closing the doors, the Holy Father pronounced in Latin the formula prescribed by

the rite, following a practice established in 1975 and later simplified by St. John Paul II during the Jubilee of the Year 2000.

In keeping with the simplified celebration, the public rite did not include the portion involving the construction of a brick wall and was limited to the closing of the bronze doors. The masonry work itself will be carried out later, privately, about 10 days after this public rite.

The act will be overseen by the Office of Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff. The so-called *sampietrini* — personnel of the Fabric of St. Peter, including carpenters, cabinetmakers, and electricians who normally handle basilica maintenance — will build the brick wall inside the basilica to definitively seal the Holy Door.

During this private rite — without cameras or journalists — the traditional metal capsule (*capsis*) will be inserted into the wall. It will contain the official act of closure, coins minted during the jubilee year, and the keys of the Holy Door, as a material and symbolic testimony of the Holy Year

that, as the pope noted, has ended on the calendar but not in the spiritual life of the Church. Leo XIV then recited the prayer of thanksgiving for the ordinary Holy Year, proclaiming: "This Holy Door is closed, but the door of your mercy is not closed." The formula concluded with an invocation that the "treasures" of divine grace would remain open "so that, at the end of our earthly pilgrimage, we may confidently knock at the door of your house and enjoy the fruits of the tree of life."

The Jubilee of Hope was instituted on Dec. 24, 2024, by Pope Francis but, after his death in April, was concluded by his successor, Leo XIV — a situation not seen since the year 1700. The last ordinary Jubilee (celebrated every 25 years) took place in 2000.

Jubilees may also be celebrated at "extraordinary" moments, such as the Jubilee of Mercy celebrated by Francis in 2015, or the one to be convoked in 2033 to commemorate the two millennia of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

After closing the Holy Door, Leo XIV presided over Mass for the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord inside St. Peter's Basilica, bringing the day's liturgical celebration to its conclusion. (By Victoria Cardiel, Catholic News Agency via CBCP News)

SPORTS

Eala eyes sweep of Thursday twin duty

MANILA, Philippines — Alex Eala shoots for a quarterfinals spot in singles and a semis berth in doubles in twin assignment today in the 2026 ASB Classic at the ASB Tennis Center in Auckland, New Zealand.

The Filipina sensation starts her double duty in a team-up with American partner Iva Jovic against the seasoned duo of Czechia's Jesika Maleckova and Mexico's Renata Zarazua in doubles at 6:30 a.m. (Manila time).

Later in the day, Eala goes up against Croatian Petra Marcinko, WTA No. 82, in the Round of 16 duel in singles.

Eala returns to action in the

WTA 250-level NZ netfest this morning riding the momentum of victories in her opening matches both in singles and doubles.

Eala, 20, and Jovic, 18, scored a 7-6 (9-7), 6-1 rout of 31-year-old Elina Svitolina and 45-year-old Venus Williams in the doubles opener.

But the 53rd-ranked Eala and Jovic, No. 35, now face a more decorated tandem with a combined 47 doubles titles under their belt.

The 31-year-old Maleckova, ranked No. 72 in the WTA doubles, has won 29 titles in both the ITF and WTA circuits. (J.B. Ulanday/Philstar)



Alex Eala wins SEA Games tennis gold, ends long drought for PH (File Photo)

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SPORTS

International Longboard Qualifying event set in La Union

MOST of the world's top surfers are expected to compete in the La Union International Pro meet, a Longboard International Qualifying event that the Philippines is holding to welcome the new year from Jan. 20 to 24 off Urbiztondo Beach.

The meet is expected to attract one of the biggest international fields of any World Surf League (WSL) longboard event in history, with a direct path to the 2026 WSL Longboard Tour at stake.

"This new format is about creating more access and opportunities to longboarders from all WSL regions," said Will Hayden-Smith, WSL Longboard Tour Director. "We know there are incredible longboarders in every corner of the world who deserve the chance to compete on the biggest stage."

Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) chairman Patrick "Patò" Gregorio described the La Union International Pro as a "real thrill" and is excited to see the fruits of the country's sports tourism campaign, which he heads through the National Sports Tourism Inter-Agency Committee that President Marcos Jr. created.

"It will be a real thrill to host an exciting new event," Gregorio said. "The event will bring together the world's best longboarders, men and women alike, to compete on the flawless waves of Monalisa Point in San Juan."

Four direct tickets to the WSL Longboard World Tour are at stake in La Union, which boasts a rich surf culture and world-class waves for a perfect backdrop for the landmark competition.

"Our Filipino surfing athletes will surely be preparing to show off world-class skill and homegrown heart on home waters," Gregorio said. "We are excited to deepen our partnership with WSL as the Philippines continues to grow its presence on the global surfing map."

The field will be open to all WSL LQS surfers globally, with a seeding formula based on the Challenger Series.

"The event gives Filipino surfers that shot," Gregorio said. "La Union is a town with such a strong connection to longboarding and a perfect wave for competition, so we look forward to this event at this location." (Malaya Sports News)



EXCITED: Philippine Sports Commission chairman Patrick "Patò" Gregorio calls the event "the real thrill" as the world's best longboarders compete on the challenging waves of Monalisa Point in San Juan. (PSC)

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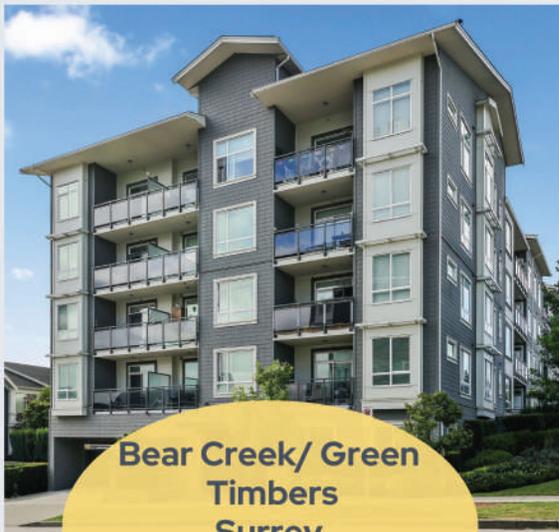
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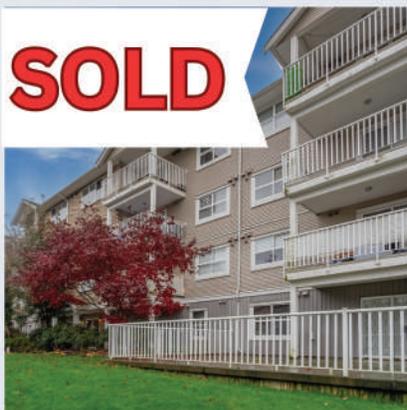
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