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# Training people in B.C. for in-demand skilled trades jobs

## *New investment supports economic growth, training capacity, good-paying jobs*

**Delta** - Thousands of people will benefit from B.C.'s \$241-million investment in skilled trades training, expanding access to good-paying jobs for people in British Columbia, while ensuring employers have workers to deliver major projects.

"Growing B.C.'s economy means making sure British Columbians are first in line for the opportunities created by the billions in investment arriving in our province," said Premier David Eby. "We are expanding training capacity where it's needed most and helping people get into rewarding trades careers faster, while also building up B.C.'s economy."

Expanding skilled trades training capacity and reducing waitlists

Through Look West, the Province is strengthening B.C.'s trades-training system to respond to growing labour demand and global economic uncertainty. The \$241-million investment will immediately expand training where capacity exists and modernize programs to keep pace with industry needs. As the funding rolls over the next three years, there will be tens of thousands more trades seats across B.C.'s training institutions. The investment will:

- \* double annual funding to SkilledTradesBC from \$107 million to \$214 million by 2028-29
- \* create as many as 5,000 new trades training seats in 2026 at public post-secondary institutions and non-profit union trainers, helping



- more people enter training and move onto job sites sooner
- \* reduce wait lists for high-demand trades by expanding program capacity
- \* increase per-seat funding across apprenticeship programs that lead to SkilledTradesBC credentials, helping trainers manage rising costs for equipment, curriculum and instruction
- \* establish the Look

West: Workforce Readiness Initiative, a strategy designed to improve access to training in rural and remote communities, which responds directly to employer needs

- \* expand skilled trades certification, starting with tower and mobile crane operators

**MORE ON PAGE 5**



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## New SkyTrain stations taking shape for transit riders south of Fraser River Canada, B.C. highlight major progress on Surrey Langley SkyTrain extension

LANGLEY -Station construction is underway at all eight stations along the Surrey Langley SkyTrain extension, marking a major project milestone and moving the region closer to better, more connected transit for communities south of the Fraser River.

The project is being delivered by the Province with funding from the federal and provincial governments.

"Everyone needs to get to school, work or appointments, and all the better if commutes go quickly with a minimum of stress," said Premier David Eby. "This new extension links the growing region south of the Fraser with the rest of Metro Vancouver, making commuting faster and easier, while relieving traffic congestion. With all eight new SkyTrain stations now under construction, we are closer to riders moving from Langley City Centre to downtown Vancouver in a little over an hour."

Once complete, this project will extend the Expo Line from King George Station in Surrey to Langley City Centre, transforming the way people travel in communities south of the Fraser River and connecting them to destinations

in Metro Vancouver.

"The Surrey Langley SkyTrain will transform the way people move around Metro Vancouver," said Gregor Robertson, federal Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister Responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada. "Breaking ground on the last of eight stations is a huge step toward building vital and reliable public transit connections.

Through collaboration, we are building the first rapid transit project south of the Fraser in 30 years."

The Surrey Langley SkyTrain will unlock opportunities to build transit-oriented communities, especially around the eight stations, with more options for housing, employment and services such as health care and child care. The project also includes 14 kilometres of new, fully separated multi-use pathways, connecting to regional active transportation networks and the new SkyTrain stations.

"The Surrey-Langley SkyTrain extension is about more than just moving people - it's about building stronger, more-

connected communities," said Mike Farnworth, B.C.'s Minister of Transportation and Transit. "This project will reduce congestion, cut commute times and provide a reliable transportation for the region's growing population."

Station foundation work is already complete at six stations, with work continuing at 152 Street Station and beginning at Willowbrook Station. Above-ground progress of station construction is visible at the Fleetwood and Green Timbers stations, where station structures are taking shape. With all eight stations under construction, the focus will shift from foundation work to vertical construction, building the stations that will soon serve future riders.

### Progress across the project

In addition to station construction, contractors are making significant progress on all aspects of the project.

\* Guideway foundation construction is almost 90% complete, and 75% of guideway columns are built.

\* All four launching gantries are in operation constructing the elevated guideway, with more

than 30% of guideway segments installed (five kilometres).

\* The Precast Concrete Facility in South Surrey is producing segments for the elevated guideway, with half of all segments now cast.

\* The 16-kilometre underground duct bank, which will house the electrical lines needed to power the SkyTrain, is more than 75% complete (approximately 12 kilometres).

\* Trackwork began in the last week of April 2026, with rail installation starting 18 months after the start of major construction.

"As construction begins on Willowbrook Station, we're moving closer to a transit system that better connects people, communities, and opportunities across the region," said Randeep Sarai, federal Secretary of State (International Development) and MP for Surrey Centre. "The Surrey-Langley SkyTrain extension will make it easier for residents to get where they need to go by reducing service gaps, shortening commute times and expanding public transportation across Metro Vancouver for years to come." (news.gov.bc.ca)

## Survivors and families of Lapu-Lapu victims request meeting with United Way BC regarding \$2 million Kapwa Strong Fund donations



The April 26, 2025 Lapu-Lapu festival tragedy claimed 11 lives. Photo by Carlito Pablo.

Survivors and families of victims of the 2025 festival tragedy in Vancouver are asking to meet with United Way BC, the charity that administered the special fund raised from donations following the traumatic incident.

In a letter to United Way BC, Vanessa Hill spoke on behalf the people impacted by the attack and stated that that Kapwa Strong Fund was "presented as a coordinated community response intended to support survivors and families of victims".

"We note that public charitable funds carry a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that donor intent, transparency, and equitable

distribution are upheld," Hill said.

However, "To date, many victims report receiving little to no direct financial assistance through the Kapwa Strong Fund."

More than \$2 million in donations were raised through the Kapwa Strong Fund, and around \$500,000 were allocated to Filipino BC, organizer of the April 26, 2025 Lapu-Lapu festival.

United Way BC launched the Kapwa Strong Fund on May, 2025 and stated in a media release that the special fund will "support those touched by the traumatic events".

"One hundred percent of donations to United Way BC's Kapwa Strong Fund will directly support Vancouver's Filipino community and those impacted by this tragedy. Proceeds will go towards mental health supports and trauma counselling, access to essential needs including meal and gas vouchers, events and spaces for community to connect and share resources, and more," the charity said in its media release.

However, Hill noted in the letter

a "misalignment between donor Intent and fund distribution".

"It is our understanding that donations were made by the public in good faith, with the clear expectation that financial support would directly benefit victims and families affected by the tragedy.

"Instead, a substantial portion of funds appear to have been allocated to intermediary organizations and program-based initiatives rather than direct financial assistance to victims," Hill said.

The letter also requests:

\* A full and detailed financial breakdown of all funds received and disbursed under the Kapwa Strong Fund

\* Identification of all recipient organizations and amounts allocated to each

\* A clear explanation of the decision-making and governance process

\* Documentation of how victims' needs were assessed and incorporated into funding decisions

\* A written account of what proportion of funds has directly reached victims and families

\* A clear plan for any remaining funds, including timelines and distribution methodology

With respect to remaining funds, it may be recalled that on April 21, 2026, Vancouver-Kensington MLA Mable Elmore wrote United Way BC and suggested to the charity to ask organizations that received allocations from the Kapwa Strong Fund to returned unused or remaining funds in their possession.

Elmore recommended that United Way BC can give the unutilized donations to directly benefit survivors and families of victims.

Hill's boyfriend Adrian Jonez (AJ) Sico suffered severe injuries from the 2025 attack. Sico needs continuing treatment and therapy, including medical intervention outside Canada.

Sico's cousin Jendhel May Sico was one of 11 people who died in the festival tragedy last year.



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**TRAINING...FROM PAGE 2**

**Building a stronger economy**

Demand for skilled trades workers is increasing as major projects are underway throughout British Columbia. An estimated \$88 billion in major projects is proposed over the next three years, including 17 projects added to the Province's priority major projects list. The projects are expected to create tens of thousands of jobs in construction, clean energy, critical minerals, marine and transportation sectors.

By doubling annual funding to SkilledTradesBC and increasing training delivery, the investment lays the foundation for sustained growth in trades training, with the first 5,000 new seats in 2026-27 being the beginning of continued expansion over the next three years. The investment is focused on ensuring people in British Columbia are ready to fill the jobs, while supporting

a stronger and more resilient economy and positioning B.C. as Canada's leading economic engine.

"British Columbians are ready to build the homes, hospitals, clean energy and major projects that will strengthen the economy," said Jessie Sunner, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. "The jobs are here and the talent is here, and we're making sure with 5,000 new training seats in the first year alone, that people in B.C. are first in line to secure these good-paying, family supporting jobs."

To ensure B.C.'s trades-training system responds to the needs of people, businesses and communities, the strategy was developed in collaboration with post-secondary institutions, industry associations and the BC Building Trades. The partnerships support a more flexible and responsive training system aligned with Look West priorities and help connect people to good-paying, in-demand trades jobs needed to



deliver major projects.

"This is a transformational investment in trades training in British Columbia," said Brynn Bourke, executive director, BC Building Trades. "As the largest sponsor of apprentices in British Columbia and representing over a dozen different union training schools, the BC Building Trades knows firsthand how important this money is for the system. These investments will help expand

opportunities for apprentices, strengthen training capacity and ensure the next generation of skilled tradespeople can meet the growing demands of our province's economy and infrastructure projects."

Aligned with the Look West economic strategy, the investment supports major project delivery, strengthens B.C.'s economic resilience and helps keep good-paying jobs. (news.gov.bc.ca)



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## Snippet of Stories

Joe Larano Jr.

# Leaving, Arriving and Everything In Between

There is a certain feeling when one boards a plane bound for home. It is not only about distance. It is about returning to something familiar yet unknown, something that has quietly changed while you were away. As I settled into my seat, I could not help but think of that old song, Leaving on a Jet Plane. The melody speaks of departure, of longing, of uncertainty. Yet this time, I was not simply leaving. I was arriving

The Philippines welcomed me not with silence, but with life in full volume. The moment I stepped out of the airport, I was greeted by warm air, thick and embracing, as if reminding me that I belong. The streets were alive. Jeepneys passed with their familiar colors and character. Tricycles moved through narrow roads with ease. People walked with purpose, yet with a certain lightness that is uniquely Filipino.

I traveled across cities that each told their own story. There were places loud with movement, where traffic seemed endless and the sound of horns became a rhythm of daily life. Yet within that noise, there was resilience. There was a quiet understanding among people who shared the same space.

Then there were moments of stillness. Early mornings where the sun slowly revealed the outlines of mountains and trees. Afternoons by the sea where the horizon stretched endlessly, inviting reflection. Evenings where conversations flowed as naturally as the breeze. These were the quiet spaces that balanced the noise, reminding me that beauty is not always found in what is seen, but in what is felt.

What made this journey truly meaningful was not only the places, but the people.

I reconnected with old classmates whose laughter felt unchanged despite the years. Friends who have taken different paths yet remained familiar in heart. Relatives whose presence carried both memory and belonging. Along the way, I met new friends in the professional circle who added depth to my understanding of community.

It became clear to me that connection is not merely about knowing someone. It is about recognizing a part of yourself in them. Each conversation, each shared meal, each simple moment carried a sense of grounding. It reminded me that who we are is shaped not only by our own journey, but by the people we encounter along the way.

I attended gatherings and events that reflected the richness of Filipino culture. There was celebration in everything. Food prepared with care and pride. Music that carried both nostalgia and joy. Stories shared openly, sometimes with humor, sometimes with sincerity. There is an imperfection in how things unfold. Schedules change. Plans shift. Yet within that imperfection lies authenticity. It is real. It is human. And it is beautiful.

The Philippines is not a place that hides its flaws. Its streets can be chaotic. Its systems can be imperfect. But perhaps that is where its true charm lies. Beauty here is not curated. It is lived. It is found in the contrast between the vibrant and the calm, the organized and the spontaneous, the old and the new.

As my journey came to an end, I found myself once again at the airport. The same place where it all began, yet I was no longer the same person who arrived. The song Leaving on a Jet



Plane echoed once more in my thoughts, but this time it carried a different meaning. Leaving is not always about goodbye. Sometimes, it is about carrying with you the places, the people, and the moments that have quietly changed you.

I realized that travel is not only about discovering new destinations. It is about rediscovering oneself through others. It is about understanding that connection gives depth to our experiences. Without it, places are just locations. With it, they become stories.

And so, as I prepared for departure, I carried more than memories. I carried a renewed sense of identity. A reminder that no matter where we go, it is the connections we build that define us.

To those who journey, whether near or far, may you find more than sights to see. May you find people to connect with, moments to hold on to, and stories to tell. Because in the end, it is not the leaving or the arriving that matters most. It is everything in between. (Contact: [jbblarano@gmail.com](mailto:jbblarano@gmail.com))



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# Philippine Ambassador Strengthens Ties with Filipino Community During Vancouver Town Hall and Inauguration of Newly-Renovated Consular Hall

By Janice Lozano

VANCOUVER, BC — May 7, 2026 — A strong spirit of unity, diplomacy, and community engagement filled the Philippine Consulate General in Vancouver as Filipino community leaders, ASEAN representatives, and distinguished guests gathered for the official inauguration of the newly-renovated Consular Hall and Town Hall Meeting with the Filipino Community in British Columbia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

The landmark event was led by H.E. Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Canada, during his official visit to British Columbia from May 4–8, 2026.

The evening opened with welcome remarks from Hon. Gina A. Jamoralin, Consul General of the Philippine Consulate General in Vancouver, followed by the arrival of Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga and representatives from ASEAN member states, including the Consuls General of Thailand and Malaysia.

In a keynote address that was both deeply personal and historically significant, Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga reflected on the longstanding relationship between the Philippines and Canada, while emphasizing the vital role Filipinos continue to play in shaping communities across the country.

“Today, there are more than one million Filipinos in Canada, making this the second-largest Filipino community overseas,” the Ambassador stated. “But even more significant is this: I believe the story of the Filipino diaspora in Canada began right here in British Columbia.”

He acknowledged the historic contributions of early Filipino pioneers, including Benson Flores, whose legacy continues to inspire generations of Filipino Canadians.

The Ambassador described



H.E. Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Canada

the newly-renovated Consular Hall as more than simply an administrative facility, calling it “a tangible home for Filipinos abroad” and “a physical manifestation of the Philippine government’s commitment to serve as an enabling partner in your success.”

The inauguration and ribbon-cutting ceremony symbolized the Philippine government’s continued investment in improving services, accessibility, and support for Filipinos living throughout Western and Northern Canada.

Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga also highlighted the growing strength of Philippine diplomacy and Canada-Philippines relations, noting that the Philippine Consulate General in Vancouver was the very first Philippine diplomatic post established in Canada in 1956 — only seven years after diplomatic ties between the two countries formally began.

“This renovation reflects our government’s commitment to delivering a gold standard of public service here in British Columbia and throughout Canada,” he said.

The Ambassador commended the Vancouver Consulate for delivering over 17,000 consular services and conducting



Hon. Gina A. Jamoralin, Consul General

successful outreach missions throughout its jurisdiction in 2025, reinforcing the Philippine government’s commitment to inclusive diplomacy and

responsive public service.

With nearly 200,000 Filipinos residing in British Columbia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, the Consulate continues working to make passports, visas, dual citizenship, and other essential services more accessible and efficient for the Filipino community.

During the town hall and open forum, community leaders and attendees engaged directly with the Ambassador and Consular officials on important issues affecting Filipinos in Canada, including immigration pathways, professional credential recognition, youth opportunities, dual citizenship, emergency preparedness,

**MORE ON PAGE 11**





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Exclusive Column for Philippine Asian News Today  
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## “Digital Clutter Is Real — And It’s Stressing People Out”

Why our phones, computers, and online lives are becoming mentally exhausting.

Request to our readers: Be sure to connect with us on **Facebook** and **Instagram** and **Like** and/or **Follow** our pages so you won't miss our **Tip of the Day**.

Send us your questions, we might just make it the main topic of our next issue but if the matter is urgent, text us at (236) 700-6388 starting with the word HELP.

Let me ask you something honestly...

*How many unread emails do you currently have?*

*How many photos are sitting on your phone right now?*

*How many browser tabs are open on your computer?*

If your answer made you slightly uncomfortable — you're definitely not alone.

Over the last few years, I've noticed a growing problem affecting people of all ages: digital clutter. Our devices are slowly becoming overloaded with apps, notifications, duplicate photos, forgotten accounts, endless subscriptions, and thousands of files we no longer even remember saving.

And surprisingly, it's not just annoying — it can actually become mentally exhausting.

Many people tell me they feel overwhelmed every time they look at their phones. Constant notifications, storage warnings, unread messages, software updates, password reminders... it never seems to end.



Our digital lives are beginning to resemble an overstuffed closet: eventually, the clutter starts creating stress.

One of the biggest culprits today is the smartphone. Phones are now cameras, calendars, filing cabinets, entertainment systems, and communication hubs all rolled into one small device. The result? Thousands of photos, dozens of apps, and notifications competing for our attention every few minutes.

The good news is that a little “digital cleanup” can make a huge difference.

### Start small:

- Delete apps you no longer use
- Unsubscribe from junk emails
- Organize important photos into albums
- Back up old files
- Clear unnecessary notifications
- Close unused browser tabs
- Restart your devices regularly

Even spending just 15–20 minutes a week can noticeably reduce digital stress.

Another important tip: not every notification deserves your attention. Turning off non-essential alerts can instantly make your phone feel calmer and less demanding.

And remember — technology is supposed to help us, not overwhelm us.

**My Simple Advice:** Treat your digital life the same way you treat your home ... a little regular cleaning prevents major chaos later.

You don't need to organize everything in one day. Just start somewhere.

**Closing Thought:** “Sometimes the best tech upgrade isn't a new device — it's less digital clutter.”

And here comes my shameless plug...

If your digital life feels overwhelming, confusing, or out of control, I'd be happy to help simplify it.



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**REUNITED AFTER DECADES:  
 Rey Fort and Jerry Valiente  
 FROM SCHOOL DAYS TO CANADA**

Life is truly full of unforgettable surprises. Our friendship journey began many years ago as elementary classmates at Aurora A. Quezon Elementary School. As young students, we shared simple childhood memories, classroom laughter, and dreams for the future without knowing that our

paths would continue crossing through the years. Fate reunited us once again at FEU Boys' High School, where our friendship continued to grow during our teenage years. From school activities to everyday student life, we remained connected as classmates and friends.



From left are Cyril, Ceriz, Edward, Lily, Jerry and Cecile with Rey and Cely

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*The Tall Order*  
*By Mon Datol*

## Sa 257 'Yes' votes, VP Sara inimpeach ng Kamara; Allan Cayetano na-coup Tito Sen; 'Bato' atapang atao, tinakbuhan NBI na may ICC warrant; humihingi TRO SC, 'di huhulihin ng NBI

Sa botong 257 pabor, 25 tutol at 9 abstain ay tuluyan nang na-impeached ng Kamara si Vice President Sara Duterte, kahapon, Mayo 11, sa makasaysayang yugto ng Philippine political history na kung saan...

**Tinatanggal sa pwesto Pangalawang Pangulo ng Pilipinas.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Sa plenary session, iprinisinta ni Committee on Justice Chairperson Gerville Luistro ng Batangas ang mga artikulo ng impeachment laban kay VP Sara at sinabi pang hindi lamang ito usapin ng bilang ng boto kundi kung naitaguyod ba ang Konstitusyon, nasunod ang wastong proseso, may sapat na ebidensya, at nanaig ang buong katotohanan, kaya't...

**Kailangang dinggin ng Senado kaso ni VP Sara Duterte. Pronto.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Nabahiran ng sari-saring emosyon ang nangyaring pagpapalit ng liderato sa Senado nuong Lunes matapos patalsikin sapuwesto ng 13 Senador bilang Senate President si Tito Sotto III at ipinalit si Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano.

**Nakngdragon, Tol Reyfort, 2 pala Hudus sa Senado ng Pinas?!?**

\*\*\*\*\*

Sa pagsisimula ng sesyon, nagmosyon agad-agad si Sen. Imee Marcos, ang 'Hudas#1,' (Hudas sa Kapatid at Pamilya Marcos) na ideklarang bakante ang lahat ng posisyon sa kapulungan at ng matapos ang botohan, 13 senador nga ang bumoto pabor sa mosyon kabilang na 'Hudas#2' Loren Legarda, at 10 ang tumutol. At opkors, pang 13 bumoto ke Cayetano ang parang palitaw na si...

**Sen. Bato na biglang lumitaw, humahangos, habol ng NBI.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Pinasumpa agad-agad ni SP Alan Cayetano si Loren Legarda, ang 'Hudas#2' bilang Senate President Pro Tempore (kanang kamay ng SP) dahil sa pag-hudas kina Tito Sen at Sen Ping' at hayagang...

**Pagbira ng Leviste clan kina PBBM at Gov Vi at ES Recto.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Walang 'delay' na mangyayari sa 'impeachment trial' ke VP Sara Duterte at susundin DAW nila ang 'atas' ng SC sa 'fortwith' o agarang pagdinig sa kaso ng Bise na naaayon sa Konstitusyon kapag natanggap na raw ng Senado ang transmittal ng impeachment endorsement mula sa Kamara. Yan ang...

**Pangako ni 10K SP Alan P. Cayetano sa impeachment ng VP.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Ini-lockdown ang Senado nuong Lunes ng gabi sa harap ng planong arestuhin si Sen. Bato dela Rosa dahil lumabas na, finally, ang 'warrant of arrest' mula sa ICC na dinala ang kopya ni dating Senador Antonio Trillanes IV, AT ipinakita ng Senado KUNG paano magbigay ng 'entitlement' sa mga me kasong Honorable Senators...

**Tulad ni Bato na inilagay agad sa 'Custody' para di maaresto.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Pwede umanong hulihin si Sen. Bato kahit na nasa loob ito ng Senado at merong sesyon dahil lampas 6 na taon ang parusa sa 'crimes against humanity' na siyang ikinaso ng ICC kay Bato dela Rosa, at hindi batas ang 'Senate Resolution 44' na nagbibigay ng Senate Protective Custody ke DL Rosa kaya't...

**Hindi pwedeng kanlungin ng Senado si Bato.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Kaya't agaran daw humingi sa Supreme Court ng TRO mga abogado ni Bato nuong

Lunes din dahil alam ng mga ito na 'temporary' lang ang pagka-tigil sa pag-aresto ng NBI sa Senador ng Mindanao at 'eventually' ay...

**Mapoposasan si Bato dahil legal at lehitimo warrant nito.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Si Sen. Bong Go umano ang susunod ke Bato na 'huhulihin' ng ICC dahil sa pagiging 'moneymen' na taga-bigay ng money rewards sa mga 'nakakapatay' umano ng 'drug pushers at users' sa 'operation Tokhang' ni DCU30, ayon kay SenTri IV sa isang TV interview kahapon. Kaya nga kitang-kita sa TV sa loob ng Senado...

**Ang lungkot at takot sa mukha ni Bong Go katabi ni Bato.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Galit-na-galit si Bato ng makapasok na sya sa Senado at sigaw ng sigaw at nakipag-wrestling DAW siya sa NBI Agents para makawala at maka-takbo paakyat sa itaas. Natawa ako sa 'pagsusumbong' na ginawa ni Bato sa TV camera ng Senado, eh, nasa likuran lang niya RTIA host kaya't...

**Dapat ke Lodi Raffy Tulfo sya nagsumbong! hehehe...**

\*\*\*\*\*

Naghain ng Senate Resolution No. 395 sina Sen. Tito Sotto III, Sen. Ping Lacson, Sens. Risa Hontiveros, Bam Aquino IV, at Kiko Pangilinan na humihiling kay Sen. Bato dela Rosa na boluntaryong sumuko sa mga awtoridad matapos itong isyuhang ng warrant of arrest ng ICC, dahil iginagalang ng Senado ang "judicial and prosecutorial processes" na kinasasangkutan ng kanilang mga miyembro at dating opisyal, tulad nina dating Senador...

**Juan Ponce Enrile, Leila De Lima at Antonio Trillanes IV.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Isang mangiyak-ngiyak na Sen. Bato dela Rosa umapela

ke PBBM Martes na huwag siyang ipadala sa ICC sa The Hague hindi lang para sa kaniya kung 'di para na rin sa lahat ng mga Pilipino na malagay sa ganitong sitwasyon. Ok na sana apela, nakaka-antig ng damdamin ang mga salita ni Bato, na Bayani ang tingin ni Binoe sa kapwa niya DDS, pero...

**Nanakot pa na haharap din sa ganuonng situasyon si PBBM???**

\*\*\*\*\*

Isang komentong nabasa ko ang nagpatawa sakin ng marami-rami, heto yon: "6 na taong di pumasok sa trabaho, ngayon, ayaw namang umalis ni Bato sa Senado." Actually, mga bro, kung susuriing mabuti ang senariong ginawa ng magkapatid na Cayetano, Imee, Jinggoy, Joel, at Legarda, tulad ng iniisip ko, ay...

**Na-budol nila si Bato para lumitaw at iboto si Cayetano.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**SHORT ORDER:** Happy Birthday, Dr. Christina Gamo of Mississauga, ON (May 10)... Happy birthday today, May 12, Pareng Boy Guevarra of Brgy. Sapang, Jaen, NE. MBtC brad Yob Pogi... Happy Birthday today May 12, Tukayong Yorme Mon Ilagan!... Happy birthday (May 12) Ateng Virginia 'Virgie' Datol of Nueva Ecija, from the whole Family... Happiest birthday greetings to Pakner Ron delos Reyes (May 14) of Moting Today Channel TV4, from ur wonderful wifey Webb delos Reyes & children of QC, friends & colleagues from print and broadcast media-RP. God Bless.

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**PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR FROM PAGE 9**

and stronger cultural and economic partnerships between Canada and the Philippines.

Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga also addressed Canada's upcoming 2026 Express Entry reforms, noting that Canada's growing emphasis on healthcare professionals, skilled workers, tradespeople, and researchers presents major opportunities for talented Filipinos seeking permanent residency and long-term career growth.

At the same time, he acknowledged ongoing challenges involving

credential recognition and reaffirmed the Philippine government's continued engagement with provincial and federal leaders to ensure Filipino professionals can fully utilize their expertise and contribute meaningfully to Canadian society.

The Ambassador further underscored ASEAN solidarity during a time of global uncertainty, recognizing the presence of ASEAN representatives and reaffirming the Philippines' commitment as ASEAN Chair for 2026 under the theme:

"Navigating Our Future Together." He emphasized that regional cooperation, resilience, and

shared prosperity remain central priorities for the Philippines and its ASEAN partners.

The event also highlighted the Philippine Consulate General's Emergency Response Mapping Registry (VERMAP) initiative, aimed at strengthening emergency outreach and communication with Filipinos across British Columbia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories during natural disasters and crises.

The evening concluded with group photos, networking, and fellowship among community leaders, Consular officials, and attendees — reflecting the enduring spirit of bayanihan

and the growing strength of the Filipino Canadian community.

As the Filipino presence in Canada continues to grow and thrive, the evening served as a powerful reminder that the relationship between the Philippines and its overseas communities remains rooted in service, unity, heritage, and shared success.

"Our consulates are more than administrative offices — they are front lines of our nationhood and tangible homes for Filipinos abroad," Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga stated.

Mabuhay ang Filipino community sa Canada.



**Liwanag: The Lost Poem That Found Its Way Home**

This Mother's Day, our family remembers a poem that was once lost for decades—and the mother whose life gave meaning to every word written in it.

In the early 1960s, in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Flaviano Fos wrote a handwritten poem for his young granddaughter named Liwanag, who was then living in General Santos City. He simply called it "Liwanag."

Written carefully on lined paper in beautiful penmanship, the poem spoke about light—how it guides, comforts, and keeps a family together during difficult times. Flaviano, a professor at Central Luzon State University, may not have realized it then, but the poem would one day become one of the family's most treasured memories.

But somewhere through the passing years, the original poem disappeared.

Like many Filipino families, life moved quickly. Children grew up, homes changed, and families migrated overseas. The handwritten copy of "Liwanag" was eventually lost and quietly became one of those things the family thought they would never see again. Yet Liwanag herself never forgot it.

Even without the paper, she memorized the poem by heart. She carried every verse with her through childhood, motherhood, and later, life in Canada. Sometimes she would speak about the missing poem and wonder aloud where it could have gone. She hoped it might still exist

somewhere among old belongings or forgotten keepsakes back home in the Philippines.

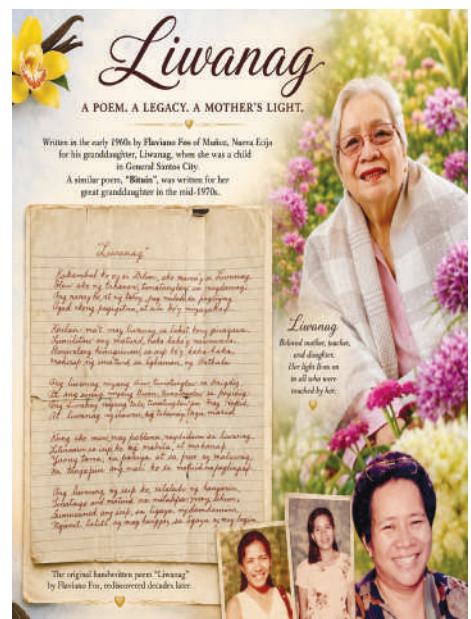
In 2001, her son started a family in Vancouver. Years later, in 2013, Liwanag joined them and continued dedicating her life to teaching and caring for family. Known affectionately as "Nanay Ling," she spent more than 25 years as a Filipino language teacher, helping preserve Filipino culture for younger generations.

To her family, however, she was more than a teacher. She was warmth, guidance, patience, and sacrifice. She became exactly what the poem described decades earlier—a light inside the home.

Then came a discovery that felt almost impossible. During a visit back to the family's hometown, her son Ryan came across an old handwritten paper tucked away among belongings that had survived generations. It was the original poem "Liwanag"—the same fragile paper written by Lolo Flaviano more than 60 years earlier.

The family could hardly believe it. After decades of being lost, the poem had somehow found its way home. Its paper had aged. The ink had faded. But the emotion inside the words remained untouched by time.

For the family, rediscovering the poem became more than simply finding an old document. It felt like reconnecting with a piece of their mother's soul and hearing the voice of a grandfather reaching across generations. Sadly, Liwanag passed away in



Vancouver in March 2024.

But before and after her passing, the rediscovery of the poem brought comfort to the family—a reminder that love can survive distance, migration, time, and even loss itself.

Years after writing "Liwanag," Lolo Flaviano would write another poem titled "Bituin" ("Star") in the mid-1970s for one of his great granddaughters, continuing a family tradition of expressing love through poetry.

This Mother's Day, the family remembers Nanay Ling through the poem she cherished her entire life—a poem once lost, but never forgotten. Because sometimes, the things we lose eventually find their way back to us when we need them most.

**"Liwanag"**

*Kakambal ko ay si Dilim; ako  
nama'y si Liwanag,  
Ilaw ako ng tahanan,  
tumatanglaw sa magdamag;  
Ang nanay ko, at ng tatay, pag-  
malabo sa pagliyag  
Agad akong pagigitna, at sila  
ko'y niyayakap...*

*Kailan ma't may liwanag, sa  
lahat kong ginagawa,  
Lumilitaw ang matuwid, haka-  
haka'y nawawala;  
Paniwalang kinagisnan, sa isip  
ko'y haka-haka,  
Mahirap ng imatuwid, sa  
aghaman ng Bathala...*

*Ang liwanag niyang araw  
tumatanglaw sa daigdig,  
At ang sinag niyang buan,  
tumatanglaw sa pag-ibig;  
Ang liwanag niyang tala,  
tumatanglaw sa may hapid,  
At liwanag ng ilawan sa  
tahana'y, taga-masid*

*Kung ako man may problema,  
nagdadaan sa liwanag,  
Lilinawin sa isip ko, ng makita  
at mahanap  
Yaong tama, na pasiya at sa  
puso ay maluwag,  
Na tanggapin ang mali ko sa  
matuwid na paglingap.*

*Ang liwanag ng isip ko,  
nilalabo ng hangarin,  
Tinatago ang matuwid na  
natatakpanng yaong lihim;  
Sumusunod ang isip sa ligaya  
ng damdamin,  
Ngunit lahat ay may hanggan,  
sa ligaya ay may lagim.*

(Submitted by Ryan Ferrer)

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### NEWS

## Paper warns Canada of "reputational harm" from deepening ties with the Philippines

By Carlito Pablo

Canada is risking its global reputation as a human rights defender because of its growing military and economic involvement with the Philippines.

This message is conveyed in a briefing paper prepared by the Canada chapter of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP).

"Canada is deepening its military and economic relationships with the Philippines against a backdrop of corruption scandals that have plagued the Philippine government in the last year," the document stated.

The paper was presented in Ottawa to a Canadian MP and a ranking official of Global Affairs Canada by a delegation that included Danilo Ramos, who was visiting the country in his capacity as chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines).

The group in late April 2026 met Alexis Brunelle-Ducepte, a Bloc Québécois MP and vice chairperson of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Ramos and party also met Alan Bowman, director general for Southeast Asia and Oceania with Global Affairs Canada.

The meetings with Canadian representatives happened in the midst of Canada's first active participation in the Balikatan wargames in the Philippines from April 20 to May 8.



Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines David Hartman posed this photo on social media of himself with Canadian soldiers participating in the 2026 Balikatan military exercise.

From an observer nation, Canada sent a broad range of military units to the 2026 iteration of Balikatan, an annual military drill by the Philippines and the U.S.

On November 2, 2025, Canada and the Philippines inked a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA), a pact that builds on the Canada-Philippines Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2024.

"It will allow the Canadian 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," stated a media release by Canadian Department of National Defence on the same day about the SOVFA.

The ICHR-Canada paper noted that amid expanding military and economic relations, "questions arise regarding the broader political, security, and human rights implications of this deepening Partnership".

Canada's Ambassador to the Philippines, welcomed members of the Canadian Forces who were taking part in the 2026 Balikatan.

On social media, Hartman described Canada's participation in the wargames as a "tangible demonstration of Canada's commitment to our allies and our #IndoPacific strategy".

In a media release, ICHR-Canada related that KMP chair Ramos and delegation held high-level meetings with government figures in the Canadian capital of Ottawa on April 29 and 30.

"While framed as part of Canada's Indo-Pacific engagement, these developments occur in the context of persistent and well-documented corruption scandals, systemic human rights violations, and ongoing counterinsurgency operations in the Philippines that have raised serious concerns under international humanitarian law."

"At a time when rural militarization, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, red tagging, and political imprisonment continue, deeper military cooperation risks implicating Canada in policies and practices that contradict its stated commitments to human rights, democratic governance, and accountability," the paper stated.

"Simultaneously, large-scale corruption within key Philippine institutions raises serious reputational, legal, and moral risks for Canada as it expands both defence and development engagement."

David Hartman, who is

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systemic repression, and are exacerbated by foreign military support," stated the media release dated May 1, 2026.

Kelti Cameron, an international solidarity officer with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), was part of Ramos' delegation.

"Ramos detailed the intensifying militarization of rural communities, where counterinsurgency operations have resulted in widespread displacement, harassment, and violence. He emphasized that these conditions are rooted in longstanding issues of landlessness, poverty, and

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and meaningful action."

In its briefing paper, ICHR-Canada warned that Canada "risks direct complicity in corruption and in violations of international human rights and humanitarian law as it deepens military and economic relations with the Philippine government". "Widespread corruption increases governance and rights-related risk in any deepening bilateral engagement. It elevates the likelihood of complicity, reputational harm, and legal/policy incoherence with Canada's own human rights defender guidelines," the paper stated.

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## Tinig Migrante

By E. Maestro

# They could have been my children

I heard the news of the deaths of 19 individuals, now collectively known as the Negros 19 or the Toboso 19, when it first came out in military press releases. The people killed were initially nameless and faceless until reports came in from other sources different from the military's narratives. Recent data, especially from the initial autopsy reports of Dr. Fortun, the forensic pathologist who examined several of the bodies, plus more reports and statements strongly indicate the killings constitute a massacre and a gross violation of international humanitarian laws.

And I saw their faces. Read their names. Their ages. Their academic backgrounds. Their commitment to helping others. And that is when it hit me. As a mother, they could have been my children – they could easily have been mine.

Young, bright, passionate, thoughtful of others especially the poor and the oppressed, and I would add, selfless and kind. As a mother who taught my own children to be kind and serve the people, these young people (who could easily have been my own) had in their short lives acted on one of the world's great commandments – “love your neighbour as yourself.”

R.J. Nichole Ledesma, 30, community journalist; Alyssa Alano, UP Diliman Student Councilor; Maureen Keil Santuyo, 24, UP student, member, National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates; Errol Wendel, 24, member, Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura; Lyle Prijoles, 40, International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, from San Francisco, USA; Kai Sorem, 26, from Seattle, USA. Pati sila, na taga-roon, the young people killed from Toboso: a young farmer Roel Sabillo, 19, Jemina Gumadlas, 15; and Dexter Patajo, 17.

The military claimed the 19 dead were all “rebels”. The New People's Army disputed this with its statement and listed the names of the slain 10 Red fighters, their names and ages. The rest were civilians. The news of the deaths has

gone viral. Tributes were held in and out of the Philippines. They also demanded answers from the military and the state, they demanded justice and accountability, and in the case of Errol's family, the immediate return of Errol's body (because the military sent them the wrong one!) There is a strong and loud call for an urgent, independent and impartial investigation into what happened in Toboso, Negros, including the reported killings and the forced displacement of the communities. The military's narrative is unraveling.

The military and the state forget that their track record under this regime (and all regimes starting from the dictator Marcos Senior) is a track record dripping with blood.

What happened is not an isolated incident. There have been other killings and massacres of peasants, workers and human rights defenders in Negros, an island plagued for decades with poverty, hunger, landlessness and militarization, counter-insurgency operations against the people and human rights violations while big and rich landlord families and all the apparatus needed by them to protect their interests hold sway all over the island.

To ask why the young people were in Negros is to ask back, Why not? Ano ba ang nangyayari sa Negros, sa mga mamamayan na nasa Negros? There is a civil war raging inside the country. For decades. All governments and its military, from Marcos, Sr. to the present one under Marcos, Jr. have publicly boasted that they would eliminate the armed rebellion during their terms. These remain empty boasts. The New People's Army just marked its 57th anniversary, perhaps a testament to its struggle for freedom and democracy for the country's poor and oppressed.

But the Philippine Secretary of Defense says there is already peace in the country! Coming at the heels of the case of the Negros



19, I felt the statement was made to gloss over what the military has done in Negros. Tell that to the mothers who have to bury their children!

There are malicious, cruel, and vilest online comments from many Filipinos, from paid trolls, cowards who hide behind fake names, perhaps from the NTF-ELCAC. The goal is clear – even in death, strip them of their humanity and dignity

- dehumanize them to render them by some malicious logic that they do not deserve basic human rights and due process. To ridicule the dead, blame the dead and their families, mock them with words like “Corned beef”, is to expose the loss of

basic human empathy and humanity.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the war that is happening back home. As a mother, I have taught my children that we, Filipinos, belong to a proud and courageous lineage of Filipino men and women who have resisted, fought back, who have served and loved our country and the people, throughout our history – that is in our DNA as Filipinos.

To the mothers of the young people who were killed, niyayakap ko po kayo, bilang ina. Ang inyo pong mga anak ay mabubuting anak ng bayan.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Migrante Mass Sunday

May 17 is Migrante Sunday at St. Mary the Virgin South Hill Church.

Migrante/Migrants Mess is a joint service of St. Mary the Virgin with Migrante BC, grassroots organization working to promote and protect the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants, immigrants and refugees.

Migrants Sunday is held every third Sunday of the month.

Sunday Service starts at 10:30 am  
After the service, join us for fellowship with coffee and refreshments in the hall  
Bring a dish if you can (and a friend)  
All are welcome!  
Let us build solidarity together!

**Ka Daning, Filipino peasant activist and poet, is also the chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), the largest farmers association in the Philippines**

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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

*Strictly taken from Canada.ca*

A Canadian Certified Immigration Consultant, Certified Senior Advisor and a Notary Public in the City of Burnaby, Editha Corrales Nelson's preferred areas of practice are Powers of Attorney, Wills Preparation, International Legal Documents, Name Changes, Affidavits, Letters of Invitation, Statutory Declarations, Drafting of Business Contracts and other notarial services. For an appointment, please call: 604-777-2757.

*The following should not be construed as providing legal advice and information in this column is intended only as a general guide and should not be applied to specific circumstances without further consultation. For more information on the subject, contact Editha Corrales Nelson at 604-777-2757.*



# COMMUNITY CORNER

BY CHRISTIAN CUNANAN AND APPLE PLATA

## Circulo Pampangueno Spring Fundraising 2026 – JUKEBOX HITS PARTY

On May 9, 2026, the Circulo Pampangueno Association of British Columbia held its Spring Fundraising Program, "Jukebox Hits Party," in Vancouver, BC. The event brought together Kabalens, friends, supporters and different Filipino community organizations in celebration of unity, culture, and community service.

Led by CP President Edith Montemayor and the current officers, proudly shared its continuing mission and legacy of helping communities in need both in Canada and the Philippines. Guest of honour Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin joined the event and showed support for the association's programs and projects.

For more than 40 years, Circu-

lo Pampangueno has extended help to disaster victims, supported medical missions, feeding programs, church projects, and scholarships for underprivileged students.

This year, the association celebrated the success of its scholars. Marco Armas graduated as a Dean's Lister with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from Holy Angel University. Jesiah Merriel Delgado completed a Diploma in Midwifery at UP Manila School of Health Sciences.

Other scholars recognized were Renzo Becilla, James Pantig, Rika B. De Jesus, and John Paul P. Salunga for their dedication to education and community pride.



Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin



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# UFCABC holds 2026 annual meeting, elects new officers

By Janice Lozano

The United Filipino Canadian Associations in British Columbia successfully held its 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on a beautiful sunny day at SELC College, bringing together officers, member organizations, community leaders, volunteers, and supporters for an afternoon filled with reflection, accountability, gratitude, and renewed commitment to serving the Filipino Canadian community across British Columbia.



The atmosphere throughout the AGM was one of unity, sincerity, and deep appreciation as members gathered to look back on one of the most emotionally challenging yet impactful years in UFCABC history.

One of the most moving moments of the afternoon came during the President's Report delivered by outgoing UFCABC President Arcie Lim. His heartfelt and deeply reflective speech resonated strongly throughout the room, leaving many attendees emotional and visibly moved.

Speaking with humility, honesty, and compassion, Lim thanked the officers, volunteers, partners, and member organizations who stood beside UFCABC "through thick and thin" during a year marked by both triumph and tragedy.

He acknowledged the immense challenges faced by the organization over the past year, particularly following the devastating Lapu-Lapu tragedy that deeply impacted the Filipino community. Despite those hardships, Lim emphasized how UFCABC remained steadfast in its mission to serve with integrity, compassion, and genuine concern for the people.

"There was not a dry eye in the room," one attendee shared following the speech. "President Arcie Lim spoke from the heart. You could truly feel his love for the organization and for the community."

Among the major highlights of his report was UFCABC's direct involvement in supporting victims and families affected by the Lapu-Lapu tragedy through financial assistance initiatives in partnership with the United Way Kapwa Strong Fund and community-led efforts including Pinoy Vancouver Strong and

Sagip Kababayan initiatives.

Lim emphasized that helping victims directly was one of the most meaningful decisions the Board had ever made — a decision he said the organization could proudly look back on knowing they made a real difference in people's lives during their darkest moments.

He also reflected on the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the organization's Pista ng Bayan celebrations in the aftermath of the tragedy, noting that the decision came only after multiple meetings and careful consideration out of respect for grieving families and the broader community.

The President also touched on several key areas including:

- \* Financial stability and organizational growth
- \* Increased collaborations with community partners
- \* Membership retention and expansion
- \* The importance of transparency and relevance
- \* Strengthening communication systems
- \* Preventing volunteer burnout through shared leadership
- \* Reviewing and modernizing UFCABC's Constitution and By-Laws
- \* Continuing servant leadership rooted in faith, unity, and integrity

Throughout his address, Lim repeatedly emphasized the importance of remaining united as one community and continuing to move forward with purpose, humility, and compassion.

Many members expressed sadness upon learning that Arcie Lim would not be seeking an-

other leadership position in this year's elections due to important family matters in the Philippines that will require him to spend significant time abroad.

Community members and fellow officers described him as a deeply respected, calm, and selfless leader whose dedication, wisdom, and steady guidance helped UFCABC navigate some of its most difficult moments.

A very special and heartfelt thank you was also extended during the AGM to all outgoing officers and board members for their countless hours of volunteer service, sacrifices, dedication, and unwavering commitment to helping guide and navigate UFCABC through one of the most difficult and emotionally trying periods in the organization's history.

Members acknowledged that the challenges faced over the past year were unlike anything the organization had previously experienced. From responding to the devastating aftermath of the Lapu-Lapu tragedy, assisting grieving families and victims, making difficult organizational decisions, managing community expectations, coordinating relief initiatives, and ensuring the organization continued operating effectively during uncertain times — the responsibilities carried by the outgoing officers were immense.

Despite the emotional toll, long hours, pressures behind the scenes, and personal sacrifices made along the way, the outgoing leadership remained committed to serving with compassion, professionalism, integrity, and genuine care for the community.

Many officers worked tirelessly behind the scenes with little recognition — attending meetings

late into the evening, organizing initiatives, responding to urgent community needs, building partnerships, supporting victims and families, and ensuring UFCABC continued moving forward during one of the most challenging chapters in its history.

Attendees recognized that UFCABC's accomplishments, resilience, and continued strength today were made possible because of the collective efforts, teamwork, and servant leadership demonstrated by the outgoing officers and volunteers who continuously stepped up whenever the community needed them most.

Following the President's Report, Treasurer Bert Parungao presented the organization's Financial Report alongside fellow Treasurer Merlina Fayusal.

Members commended both Parungao and Fayusal for their outstanding financial stewardship, professionalism, and meticulous bookkeeping practices. Attendees praised the organization's financial records as highly detailed, transparent, organized, and exemplary — setting a strong standard for nonprofit and community organization financial reporting.

Special recognition was given to the finance team for ensuring UFCABC maintained healthy financial standing despite the many challenges faced throughout the year.

The AGM also highlighted the many accomplishments achieved collectively by the organization over the past year, including:

- \* Lapu-Lapu community relief

**GO TO PAGE 18 FOR CONTINUATION**



## UFCABC ...FROM PAGE 17

and victim support initiatives

- \* Pinoy Vancouver Strong efforts
- \* Sagip Kababayan initiatives
- \* Community collaborations and outreach programs
- \* Cultural and heritage events
- \* Fundraising and victim assistance distributions
- \* Volunteer mobilization and humanitarian support efforts
- \* UFCABC's successful 10th Anniversary milestone celebrations

Members reflected proudly on how the organization stepped up during one of the Filipino community's darkest moments, proving once again the power of unity, compassion, volunteerism, and collective action.

Throughout the afternoon, speakers repeatedly echoed the sentiment that "Teamwork makes the dream work," recognizing the countless volunteers, officers, member organizations, and community partners whose sacrifices and tireless efforts continue to strengthen UFCABC's impact throughout British Columbia.

*The AGM also officially announced the newly elected 2026 UFCABC Board of Directors:*

### 2026 NEWLY ELECTED UFCABC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President  
Joel Castillo

Vice Presidents  
Rene Alcantara  
Rey Fortaleza

Secretaries  
Janice Lozano  
Kamila Del Rosario

Treasurers  
Merlina Fayusal  
Bert Parungao

Auditors  
Shailene Caparas  
Ernesto Ong

Public Relations Officer  
Allan Fernandez

Business Managers  
Esther Cheer  
Rosette Correa  
Virgil Hilario  
Edith Montemayor  
Rudy Tuliao  
Agnes Uguil

Sergeant-at-Arms

Congratulations were extended to everyone elected to serve the Filipino community through UFCABC. Members expressed optimism and excitement for the incoming Board, wishing them a successful term filled with unity, integrity, collaboration, compassion, and meaningful service to the community.

Special recognition and heartfelt appreciation were also given to the COMELEC Committee led by Mary Anne Velayo and Via Fernly for their hard work, fairness, professionalism, and dedication in helping ensure a smooth, organized, and successful election process.

Newly elected incoming President Joel Castillo also delivered brief but heartfelt remarks following the election results, reflecting on the organization's growth, resilience, and the importance of unity moving forward.

Castillo acknowledged longtime members and supporters who remained loyal to the organization through difficult years and praised UFCABC's evolution into one of the leading umbrella Filipino organizations in the province.

"We should not be in competition with other organizations," Castillo shared. "We should continue working steadily the way we should be working because we always believe that we should do the right thing because it is the right thing to do."

He also emphasized the growing trust and confidence being

placed in UFCABC by organizations such as United Way, the City, and various levels of government, noting that the way UFCABC conducts itself continues to shape how the broader community views Filipino leadership and community collaboration in British Columbia.

Castillo concluded his remarks by thanking members for their continued support and encouraging everyone to continue the journey together as one united organization.

The gathering concluded with optimism, gratitude, and renewed inspiration as members prepared to move forward into another year of service, leadership, and community-building.

As President Arcie Lim stated during his closing remarks:

"The moment we lose relevance is the moment we lose the trust of the community we serve. The moment we lose relevance is the moment we stop making a difference."

The 2026 UFCABC AGM served not only as a formal organizational meeting, but as a powerful reminder of resilience, servant leadership, unity, accountability, and the enduring strength of the Filipino Canadian community.

*\*Thank you Patrick Dang Ai Takahashi and SELC College for hosting us*

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**SPOTLIGHT**  
stories that inspire... by Pam Gervacio

**A Home Run for Hope: Empowering Youth Through Sports and Service... By Pam Gervacio**

Patricia Strowbridge

In alignment with Rotary's theme for the month — celebrating, empowering, and supporting young people — the Rotaract Club of HOPE 604, together with the (RCVM) Rotary Club of Vancouver Mountainview, UMAC Vancouver, Patty Mortgage, Sintang Lahi: Filipino Women's Group of BC and the Whalley Little Baseball League, proudly launched a meaningful initiative to support children and aspiring young athletes in the Philippines.

Through this collaborative humanitarian project, baseball gear and sports equipment are being donated to students and youth communities in the provinces of Lipa, Batangas and Malaybalay Bukidnon. The initiative aims to inspire young people by providing opportunities for recreation, teamwork, leadership, and personal growth through sports.

For many children, sports are more than just games — they are a pathway to confidence, discipline, friendship, and hope for a brighter future. By equipping young players with baseball gear, the organizations involved hope to encourage youth participation, healthy lifestyles, and community engagement while helping children pursue their dreams both on and off the field.

**Our Deepest Gratitude**

This impactful project was initiated and led by Patricia "Patty" Strowbridge, Vice President and President Nominee of the Rotaract Club of HOPE 604 and VP of Whalley Little League. Her vision and dedication inspired volunteers, donors, and community partners to unite in service for the youth of the Philippines.

On behalf of the Rotaract Club of HOPE 604, sincere appreciation goes to everyone who contributed their



**Rotaract Club HOPE 604**



time, generosity, and support to make this mission possible.

**Our Dedicated Volunteers**

Patricia Strowbridge, Myla Pakingan, Pam Gervacio, Perry Strowbridge, Isaiah Guevara, Jinkee Celestino, Manish Karki, Ate Susan Ramos, Ate Zeny, and Kuya Victor Villamera.

**Financial Support (\$90 Donors)**

Special thanks to the members of the (RCVM)Rotary Club of Vancouver Mountainview for their generous financial support: Matt Caparas, Chona Caparas, Bert Parungao, Ernie Ong, Edith Malang, KJB, Henry Chan, Dr. Gloria & Spike.

**Logistics and financial Support:**

- Ate Zeny and Kuya Victor with Sintang Lahi BC — for donating four boxes courier fees,
- Patty Mortgage — for donating two boxes of courier fees.
- Theresa Baguisa of UMAC Vancouver — for providing discounted shipping boxes that helped make this project possible.
- Pam Media Productions and Patty Mortgage for volunteers' food.
- Whalley Little Baseball League — for generously donating baseball supplies and equipment for the children.**

This project reflects the true spirit of Rotary and Rotaract: people of action coming together to uplift communities and invest in the next generation. Together, we are honoured to support young baseball players in the Philippines and create opportunities that inspire hope, unity, and empowerment for youth.

<https://rotaracthope604.org>



**Rotaract Club of HOPE 604**



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**PAMPANGA'S CUISINE**





SunStar

All Write

By Al S. Mendoza

## Eala's decent fight against Rybakina



NOTHING to be ashamed of. In fact, Alex Eala can walk on any mall with her chin up anytime at all. Proud as a peacock.

Yes, while it's true that Eala lost to Elena Rybakina, that didn't diminish the luster of her brilliant performance before going down in, um, defeat.

That was last Sunday night, May 10, 2026, PH time.

After putting up a courageous

stance, Eala yielded a 6-4, 6-3 loss to Rybakina.

But that looked more of a win to me than a debacle for Eala, who, at 20, kept her composure and had, on several thunderous occasions, Rybakina on the ropes.

It was the Round of 32 in the Italian Open, the match held before a sizable crowd in ancient Rome where a spectator—obviously a Filipino—kept hollering, “Laban Eala Laban (Fight Eala Fight!)” during

changeovers.

As usual, the 5-foot-9 Eala did fight with her heart and mind, engaging the 6-foot-0, Russian-born Rybakina from Kazakhstan in a ferocious skirmish during almost the entirety of the one-and-a-half hour match.

But the weight of Rybakina's world No. 2 ranking was obviously too heavy to carry for the 44th-ranked Eala that in the end, the feisty Filipino tennis sensation had to let go.

Still, while Eala was stopped on her tracks, not her demeanor, though, as a determined warrior out to prove to the world that she's got what it takes to be a champ someday.

She showed it in the first set, when she refused to totally give up the ghost by rallying from a 1-3 deficit to stay close—bucking a match point to make it to within 4-5 holding serve.

But just as Eala was cooking up a rally, Rybakina's sheer power and experience (she turned pro in 2014) would butt in, even

sealing the 6-4 win in the first set with a smashing ace.

Eala didn't fold up that easily, though, taking a 2-1 lead in the second set through a break-back in the set's second game.

Stung, Rybakina unleashed her full might to string up three straight games for a 4-2 bubble en route to a 6-3 second set win to wrap up the match for her fourth advance to the Round of 16 in five attempts.

But as I said, Eala has her head held up high, losing to Rybakina, yes, but not after putting up a “more than decent” fight according to movie idol Johnny Revilla.

And didn't Eala excellently defeat Poland's Magdalena Frech and China's Xinyu Wang to arrange her meeting with Rybakina?

I tell you, Eala is a project in progress. No rush.

*Reprinted from SUNSTAR CHAIN; authorized by the writer.; Photo credit theglobal filipinomagazine.com)*

### OTHER NEWS

## CBCP urges Senate to promptly convene impeachment court for VP Sara Duterte

*The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) on Tuesday pressed the Senate to promptly convene as an impeachment court for Vice President Sara Duterte, cautioning that delays could erode public confidence in constitutional institutions.*

In a pastoral statement, the CBCP said the House of Representatives had already acted on the impeachment complaint, voting by more than the required one-third of its members after finding probable cause, and was set to transmit the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate.

The statement, titled “Serve the Common Good in the Pursuit of Justice and Truth,” was dated May 12, 2026 and signed by CBCP president Archbishop Gilbert A. Garcera of Lipa.

The bishops appealed to senators to fulfill their constitutional duty, urging them to “abide by what the Constitution directs” once the impeachment articles are received for trial.

They also reminded lawmakers to avoid any action that could be interpreted as evading or delaying their responsibility, saying this could weaken trust in democratic processes.

The CBCP made its appeal amid political tension following changes in Senate leadership, with concerns raised by various sectors over possible delays or procedural moves affecting the impeachment proceedings.

It stressed that the Senate should convene the impeachment court “at the soonest possible time,” noting that postponement would also delay the resolution of the case and ac-



*Archbishop Gilbert Garcera of Lipa, CBCP president, presides over a Mass during the Couples for Christ International Leaders Conference at the Jose Rizal Coliseum in Calamba City Jan. 10, 2026. (CFC Media via CBCP News)*

countability mechanisms under the Constitution.

The bishops ended their statement by calling on the public to remain vigilant and prayer-

ful, asking Filipinos to stay engaged in the proceedings and invoking the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima for guidance over the country's leaders and institutions. (CBCP news)



### Wisdom from the Word

Ben Berto



## ENDOR REVISITED

19 When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. 21 Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. 22 Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Isaiah 8: 19-22, NIV

In the 28th Chapter of 1 Samuel, we find the story of King Saul visiting a witch hiding at Endor, a tiny village in Mt. Tabor. Witches and wizards are directly involved in communication with the dead, aided by

evil spirits, the angels that fell from heaven with Satan. God told the Israelites to have no dealings with them, in fact, to "terminate them with extreme prejudice," a CIA term, or kill them.

The Bible states that communication with the dead is sin. King Saul, when he was in good terms with God, zealously exterminated them. When King Saul began to disobey God, God would no longer listen to him.

When the Philistines declared war against him and he saw their large army, he began to shake with fear. Read the chapter for the whole story. The Seventh-day Adventists believe that the dead are unconscious, thus cannot communicate or can't even hear, even if you fire the biggest cannon near their ears.

The Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief, #25

states thus. *The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day, death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous ( 1 Cor. 15: 51-55, 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18) will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later.*

In His midnight interview with Nicodemus, Jesus told the Pharisee these reassuring

words, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16. This promise is precious because it promises life eternal, even if we die a natural death someday.*

*To contact us: Our website is [www.abundantlifeadventist.ca](http://www.abundantlifeadventist.ca). Worship with us every Saturday Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Genesis 2: 2, 3, Exodus 20: 8-10, Isaiah 58: 13, 14; Isaiah 66: 22, 23; Matthew 5: 17-19; Revelation 22: 14 John 14: 1-3*

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### Moments

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD



## The comforter

The story is told about a worried wife who called her friend, saying she suspected her husband was with some other woman because it was already late, and he wasn't home yet. Her friend's reply was: "Will you please stop thinking negative! Maybe he just met an accident or, maybe, he had a heart attack, okay?"

In today's Gospel (John 14:15-21), Jesus promised that He will give us an Advocate helper, who will be with us always and who will comfort us. The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete or the Comforter is the one who guides and enlightens us. May we, too, become helpers and comforters to one another. Are you a source of comfort and strength to others, or are you a source of discomfort and hurts?

It is so consoling and comforting to know that the Lord is with us always. "In a little while you will see me, but you still see me, because I

live, and you will live in me." (John 14:19) In His farewell discourse, Jesus took the trouble of repeating over and over His promise that He would not abandon us or leave us as orphans. Yes, we have the blessed assurance that He will be with us always. That's clear. But the question is: are we with Him, always?

"In a little while" is a beautiful phrase that is loaded with hope. Suffering is not forever. Bad people are not forever. Suckers and milkers are not forever. In a little while our country will move on toward greater heights. In a little while it will be proven again that it pays to be good, and that crime does not pay. Keep believing. Keep hoping. Keep praying. Keep working on love.

It's May once again, the beautiful month of May, dedicated to Mama Mary. I remember how, as kids, we would spend our summer days in Bani, Pangasinan, climbing trees, swimming in

the river, going to the barrios looking for spiders, or just frolicking in the summer sun. But the afternoons also found us gathering flowers and going to the church to offer our love and gratitude to the Blessed Mother. It was a beautiful practice, the memory of which to this day I keep in my mind and in my heart. May we not forget Mama Mary, our Mother.

Today is Mother's Day. How many mothers are forgotten or are taken for granted by their children? Worse, how many mothers are hurt by their children? One time an elderly woman came to me, crying and telling me that, perhaps, it was better for her to die already so that she would not be a burden to her children anymore. She went on to say that her children hardly called or visited her, and if ever they did, all she heard were their complains, their miseries, and their never-ending squabbles and quarrels among themselves. The greatest pain for any mother is to know that her

children will not be all right and will not have peace with each other after she is gone. A mother does not need much to be happy. All she needs is love and assurance from her children, her "little ones." Have you called, have you visited, have you hugged your mother lately? Better do it now, before it's too late.

I hold in my heart many lessons I learned from my Mama. But what I remember most as a child was her constant admonition to endure and be patient because everything is passing, and that things will become better—in a little while. I still could hear her words: "Itepel yo labat (just endure)"; "mandasal kayo labat (just pray)"; "mankalakal kayo (be good)."

Some years ago, I learned a song titled "Walk in the World for Me" (A Healing Affair of the Heart by Deanna

MOMENTS TO PAGE 22 ...



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FR ORBOS from PAGE 21....

Edwards): "Walk in the world for me, sing a happy melody, and keep my memory, not far away; may you find that life will bring all the best of everything; take special care of you, for me today." Words of Jesus, words of Mama Mary, and works of Mama that I hold dear in my heart to this very day.

The month of May is the month of Mama Mary, a woman who from the very start was covered and guided by the Holy Spirit, a woman of faith who believed that God's promises to her will come to pass. May we, too, become more docile, more submissive, and more obedient to the Divine Will. Fiat voluntas tua! Thy will be done Lord!

Allow me to share this text message I received recently: "We heal our souls whenever we confess; we heal our spirit whenever we pray; we heal our body whenever we fast and abstain; and we heal our heart whenever we forgive." May the Holy Spirit heal us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. May He heal us of our bad habits, and our bro-

ken relationships, and may the Holy Spirit heal our homes, our country, our world, our earth.

Let me end with the words of a physician who said that in his 30 years of medical practice, he has prescribed many things, but he has come to realize that the best medicine is love. When asked, what if it doesn't work, his reply was: "Double the dose." May we who are in the business of loving continue to love, and keep on loving and doubling the dose, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Happy Mother's Day! As we pray for our mothers and for all mothers, we also pray for our motherland, our mother earth, and our mother nature.

A moment with the Lord: Lord, may we become comforters to each other. Amen.

*momentswithfrjerry@gmail.com*  
(Reprinted from inquirer.net)

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CELEBRATING 27 YEARS



# Philippine Bayanihan Community Centre Celebrates 25 Years of Unity and Service in Victoria, BC

*The Filipino community in Victoria, British Columbia is set to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Philippine Bayanihan Community Centre on Friday, May 15, 2026 a historic milestone recognizing one of the first Filipino community centres in British Columbia.*

The celebration carries the inspiring theme: "From Shared Hands to Shared Home 25 Years of Bayanihan Spirit."

The special event will bring together community leaders, dignitaries, performers, supporters, and residents from different cultural communities, while especially encouraging the Filipino community to unite in solidarity and inspire Filipino associations and organizations across British Columbia.

Organizers emphasized that the anniversary celebration is not only for the Filipino community in Victoria, but for everyone who believes in multiculturalism, volunteerism, friendship, and community cooperation. The event aims to strengthen unity among Filipino organizations and inspire future generations to continue preserving Filipino heritage, culture, and the true spirit of Bayanihan.

The program will begin at 11:00 AM with guest arrival and registration, followed by the Canadian and Philippine national anthems. Mike Caparas will deliver the Land Acknowledgement, recognizing the traditional territories where

the gathering will take place. Cultural pride will be showcased through performances by the Sampaguita Dancers presented by Tita Quigley, highlighting the beauty and richness of Filipino traditions and arts. Welcome remarks will be delivered by Melissa Badua, while Laila Pires will present the history of Bayanihan and its remarkable journey over the past 25 years.

The celebration will also feature messages from distinguished guests including Philippine Consul General Dra. Gina Jamoralin, Member of Parliament Will Greaves, former Victoria Police Chief Del Manak, Mayor Dean Murdoch, and Mayor Marianne Alto, who are all expected to recognize the contributions of the Filipino community to the cultural and social fabric of British Columbia.

Following lunch, the audience will enjoy musical performances by classical singers before participating in an open discussion and community-building session designed to encourage stronger cooperation among Filipino associations and the broader multicultural community.

For many attendees, the anniversary represents more than just a celebration it is a tribute to the sacrifices, volunteerism, dedication, and unity of the Filipino pioneers who helped establish a permanent home for the Filipino community in Victoria.

The Philippine Bayanihan Community Centre continues to



serve as a cultural and social hub where community gatherings, educational activities, outreach programs, and cultural celebrations are held, helping preserve Filipino identity while promoting inclusiveness and friendship among all communities.

Community Centre celebrates 25 years of service, the event stands as a powerful reminder that through unity, cooperation, and the Bayanihan spirit, the Filipino community in British Columbia continues to grow stronger and inspire generations to come. (By Reyfort Media/ Photos Credit: Ben Pires)

As the Philippine Bayanihan





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8 Bi-weekly Draws\*

\*\$88 Gift Card will be drawn at each location on March 12, April 12, April 27, May 17, May 22, June 8, and June 22

**WHOLE WEEK DEALS: MAY 14 TO MAY 20** OFFER VALID WHILE STOCKS LASTS, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES, REFER TO DISPLAYTAGS IN STORE IN CASE OF DISCREPANCY OF PRINTING ERROR IN THIS AD

**PRODUCE**

**MEAT**

**RED MARADOL PAPAYA**



**1<sup>88</sup> LB**

**GREEN SEEDLESS GRAPES**



**4<sup>98</sup> LB**

**FRESH REGULAR GROUND PORK**



**3<sup>48</sup> LB**

**FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS IN BAG**



**1<sup>98</sup> LB**

**SIU CHOY (NAPA) CABBAGE**



**78¢ LB**

**YELLOW YUKON GOLD POTATO B.C.**



**88¢ LB**

**FRESH BEEF BACK RIBS UNGRADED**



**6<sup>18</sup> LB**

**SCAN FOR MORE WEEKLY DEALS!**



f FACEBOOK | Instagram | WEBSITE

**FROZEN FOOD & COOLER**

**ASIAN BOY BOILED CORN NO HUSK 3PCS**



**2<sup>68</sup> EA**

**GOLDEN SABA SLICED STEAMED BANANA 454G**



**3/5<sup>00</sup>**

**BINGGRAE MELONA BAR ASSORTED 8X70MELONA**



**4<sup>98</sup> EA**

**BARRIO FIESTA SLICED MILKFISH 400G**



**5<sup>98</sup> EA**

**BAMBOO DELIGHT SHRIMP & CRAB RICE NET SPRING ROLL 500G**



**5<sup>98</sup> EA**

**AA1 GALUNGGONG/SCAD 450G**



**3/8<sup>00</sup>**

**LAS ISLAS BABY MILKFISH MARINATED 350G**



**4<sup>48</sup> EA**

**VIVA JUICY HOTDOGS ASSORTED 600G**



**12<sup>98</sup> EA**

**GROCERY**

**UFC BANANA SAUCE REGULAR/SPICY 550G**



**2<sup>38</sup> EA**

**MAGGI MAGIC SARAP SEASONING MIX 12X8G**



**2<sup>38</sup> EA**

**AROY-D BAMBOO SHOOTS STRIPS/SLICES 540G**



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

**IF COCONUT WATER 1L**



**2<sup>68</sup> EA**

**GOLDEN MOUNTAIN SEASONING SAUCE 600ML**



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

**MANG TOMAS ALL-PURPOSE SAUCE 550G**



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

**SIMPLY FRESH RICE VERMICELLI 908G BUN TUOI**



**3<sup>98</sup> EA**

**FLOATING SWAN SRIRACHA SAUCE 740ML**



**4<sup>48</sup> EA**

**SUPER Q SPECIAL PALABOK/GOLDEN BIHON NOODLES 454-500G**



**2/3<sup>00</sup>**

**S&W PREMIUM PINEAPPLE JUICE 1.36L**



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

**LEE KUM KEE OYSTER SAUCE PREMIUM 510G**



**5<sup>88</sup> EA**

**MEGACHEF FISH SAUCE BLUE 700ML**



**7<sup>28</sup> EA**

**MAYNILA'S CHOICE PANCIIT CANTON 454G**



**3<sup>98</sup> EA**

**JHC CORN ROLL SNACK 114G**



**2/4<sup>00</sup>**

**L.A. LUCKY POLOKU MUSHROOM SEASONING 500G**



**7<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