



# The TITANS

The Official Student Publication of **Liceo de Cagayan University Senior High School**  
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### CDO is second richest city outside Metro Manila

by RHIANNE CORDOVA

With P343,936 per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022, Cagayan de Oro City is declared the second richest city outside Metro Manila, according to the data on the Provincial Product Accounts (PPA) of the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA) released on March 18, 2024.

Listed as the top richest city is Baguio City with P420,016 per capita GDP.

Lapu-Lapu City ranked third at P313,039 per capita GDP, followed by Iloilo City at P306,444 and P297,930 per capita GDP, respectively.

Per capita GDP measures the economic growth of an area per person, further estimating the area's average living standards.

Meanwhile, Netizens expressed mixed reactions to Cagayan de Oro's ranking as the state of the city's current water issue prevails, and some expressed their congratulations.

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## OREO WATER WOE

### CDO water crisis heightens

by DOROTHY ANGELICA EBARAT  
art by D'ANA GRACE AMOR

#### IN FIGURES

**₱430M**  
Bill dating back  
to 2021

**₱16.60**  
per cubic meter  
before 2021

**₱20.57**  
per cubic meter  
in 2023



With Cagayan de Oro being one of the most progressive cities in the country, one would not believe that it has been facing water supply issues since 2021.

The water supply disruption in Cagayan de Oro is rooted in a dispute over a proposed rate increase between the Cagayan de Oro Water District (COWD) and its bulk water supplier, Cagayan de Oro Bulk Water Incorporated (COBI).

In December 2023, COBI issued a billing notice to COWD, claiming that it owed P430 million dating back to 2021.

COBI had demanded higher payments for the water it supplies, increasing the rate from P16.60 per cubic meter before 2021 to P20.57 per cubic meter in 2023.

COWD refused to acknowledge the debt claimed by COBI, arguing that the rate increase took place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the water utility asserted that it had consistently paid at the original rate and invoked a force majeure provision in its 2017 contract to prevent COBI from enforcing the higher rate.

COWD General Manager, Engineer Antonio Young, explained that the price difference—from P16.60 per cubic meter before 2021 to P20.57 in 2023—was the primary factor in the disputed P430-million debt.

COBI, however, maintained that COWD had not provided a satisfactory reason for invoking the force majeure clause.

Despite COWD's stance, COBI threatened to cut off the city's water supply unless the debt was paid, prompting COWD to seek assistance from the city government to appeal to COBI to reconsider its decision to enforce the disconnection notice.

#### ONGOING INVESTIGATION

Cagayan de Oro Mayor Rolando Uy formed a task force, led by Councilor Edgar Cabanlas, to investigate the conflict between COWD and COBI.

In his investigation, Cabanlas uncovered that the public had been misled by

both corporations, which initially claimed that the water supply issue was due to pipe repairs when in reality, the problem stemmed from COWD's non-payment.

COBI's lawyer, Roberto Rodrigo, sent a letter to COWD requesting a meeting to negotiate a resolution between the two companies and apologized for causing alarm in the city due to the notices sent to COWD.

#### NO-SHOW

COBI had reached out to COWD multiple times in an attempt to resolve the disputed debt, but water district executives reportedly failed to attend the meetings, including one scheduled in Cagayan de Oro and another in Davao, which COWD allegedly canceled at the last minute.

However, Young contended that COWD had also made efforts to contact COBI to address the issue.

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## Liceo U inks 3-Year MOA with Malaysia's SMS Phoenix Global

by SHALAIN MEYKATRIZ BERLUDO

To foster global collaboration and enhance academic and professional opportunities for both institutions, Liceo de Cagayan University strengthened its commitment to internationalization by signing a 3-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Malaysia's SMS Phoenix Global and NSS Consultancy on September 30, 2024, at the New Boardroom, Rodelsa Hall.

Representing SMS Phoenix Global and NSS Consultancy was Dr. Nila Noya Garcia, who joined the university President, Dr. Alain Marc P. Golez, Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Denise O. Orong, VP for Academic Affairs, Dr. Zenaida G. Gersana, and Asst. VP for Academic Affairs, Dr. Rosella Ortiz, Dean of School of Teacher Education, Dr. Ma. Fe D. Opina, and Director of Internationalization, Mr. Henry Abellano to formalize the partnership.

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Story from page 1

# ORO WATER WOE

## CDO water crisis heightens

by DOROTHY ANGELICA EBARAT

### STATE OF EMERGENCY

The ongoing conflict prompted the local government of Cagayan de Oro to declare a state of emergency and implement measures to mitigate the effects of the bulk water supply cut-off.

Mayor Uy issued an executive order declaring the city in a state of emergency following the disconnection of the bulk water supply from COBI to COWD.

According to the order, the Incident Management Team is tasked with conducting a Rapid Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (RDANA) to evaluate the impact of the water supply disruption.

Moreover, Young noted that measures are already in place to ensure continued access to water, including an emergency purchase of bulk water from alternative suppliers and the implementation of water rationing.

### SUPPLY DISRUPTION

COWD issued a public advisory urging residents to store water in preparation for the possibility that its supplier may cease providing treated water due to the ongoing disputed debt claim.

This advisory drew significant public criticism aimed at both COWD and COBI for their inability to reach a settlement, which has caused distress among consumers.

### FULL TAKEOVER

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. visited Cagayan de Oro on May 16, 2024, where he reported having spoken with businessman Manny Pangilinan to encourage a resolution to the ongoing water supply dispute, which Pangilinan agreed to restore service to the residents in the city.

The President also tasked the Local Water Utilities Administration

(LWUA) with studying the potential management of the Cagayan de Oro Water District to address the water supply crisis.

Following this directive, the interim board members and general manager appointed by the LWUA administrator replaced COWD's general manager and board of directors.

Among the measures LWUA will undertake during the full takeover include determining short-term and long-term solutions in the water supply situation, including the implementation of a viable non-revenue water (NRW) program.

During the full takeover, LWUA will implement measures to identify both short-term and long-term solutions to the water supply issues, including a viable non-revenue water (NRW) program.

The administration

will operate COWD's facilities, systems, and properties efficiently, adhering to sound legal, administrative, and financial practices.

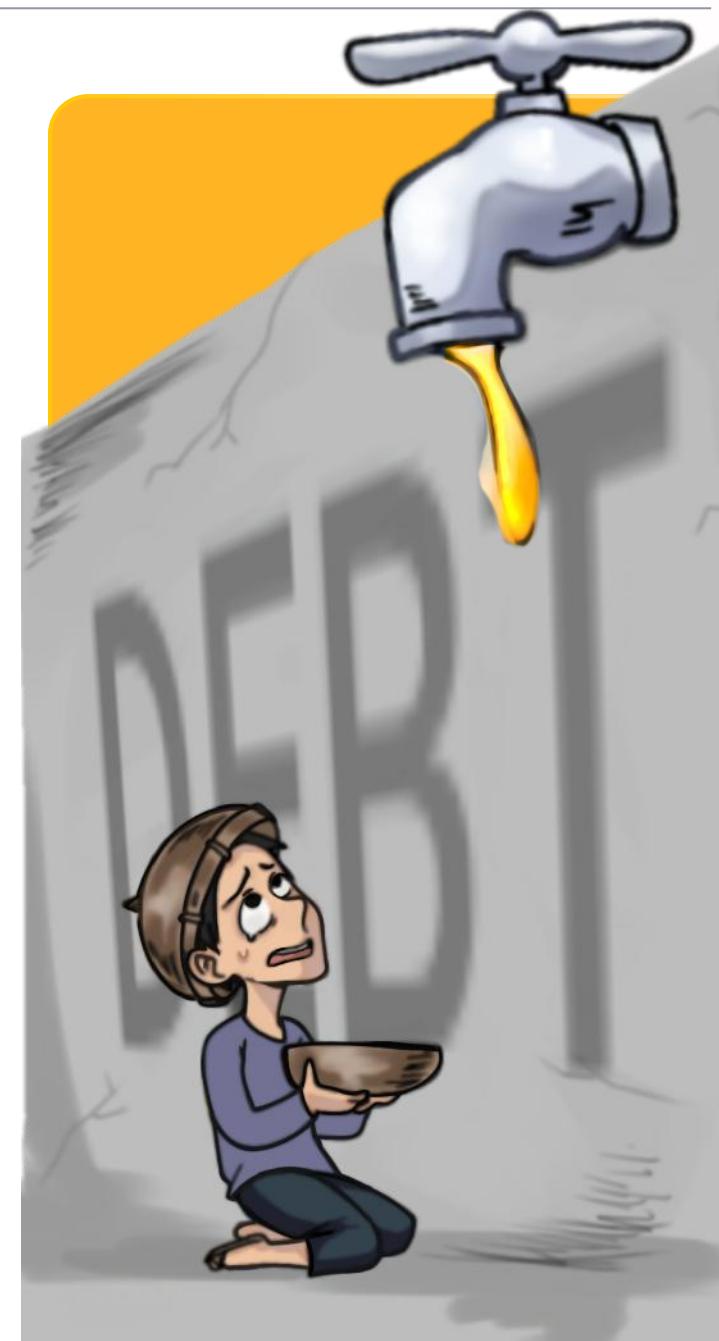
Additionally, LWUA will address any irregularities and issues in COWD's accounts, ensuring compliance with its obligations to the LWUA, suppliers, and consumers, while implementing necessary measures to rectify violations and address the root causes of default.

### IN FIGURES

### ₱430M

**Amount of debt dating back to 2021**

Source: Cagayan de Oro Bulk Water Incorporated (COBI)



Story from page 1



**INKED FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION.** University officials meet with representatives from Malaysia's SMS Phoenix Global. photo by KATRICE ISABEL CARANATAN

## Liceo U inks 3-Year MOA with Malaysia's SMS Phoenix Global

by SHALAIN LLEANSY MEYKATRIZ BERLUDO

The signing marked a significant step towards fulfilling both institutions' shared goals of advancing teaching, learning, and internationalization through strategic programs.

Key among the initiatives outlined in the

MOA is the Internship Program for the School of Teacher Education, which will provide Liceo students with international exposure and hands-on experience in global teaching environments.

Additionally, the partnership included a

Dual Diploma Program, allowing students to pursue academic qualifications recognized both locally and internationally, broadening their career prospect.

The agreement highlighted both

institutions' commitment to enhancing global learning experiences and supporting professional development in an increasingly globalized workforce. This collaboration will contribute to Liceo de Cagayan University's long-term objective of becoming a key player in the international education landscape, while also providing Malaysia's institutions access to Filipino talent and expertise.

With this partnership in place, both Liceo de Cagayan University and SMS Phoenix Global, alongside NSS Consultancy, look forward to nurturing educational innovation, creating opportunities for students and educators, and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

## PH, Germany strengthen ties on Friendship Day celebration

by JUST REL BINOBO

Liceo de Cagayan University, through its Internationalization Office (LIO), continues to enhance its global partnerships by collaborating with the Goethe-Institut Philippinen, Germany. This collaboration was highlighted during the celebration of Philippine-German Friendship Day, held from September 30 to October 2, 2024.

The celebration featured a showcase of talents by Grades 9 and 10 students enrolled in German language classes at the university's Basic Education Department AVR. These performances, which ranged from German songs to cultural presentations, underscored the growing influence of the German language and culture in the students' educational experience.

Special guests from Goethe-Institut Philippinen—Ms. Barbara Pauli, Manager of Educational Cooperation, and Mr. Jens Hericks, Head of Language Courses—attended the event, delivering inspiring messages.

Ms. Pauli commended Liceo de Cagayan University for its dedication to fostering international cooperation through language education, noting that

language is a powerful tool in bridging cultures. Mr. Hericks echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the role of language in global communication and collaboration. He also highlighted the Goethe-Institut's commitment to supporting educational initiatives in the Philippines, particularly in promoting German language proficiency.

The ongoing collaboration between Liceo de Cagayan University and Goethe-Institut Philippinen reflects both institutions' shared commitment to expanding the international horizons of students. Through initiatives like the German language program, Liceo aims to equip its students with skills that will not only enhance their academic experience but also prepare them for global opportunities.

## The Repertory debuts Kunig Awards, highlights artistic merit of theater arts

by GHIA BELLA JOICE ARANAS

In recognition of the art of theatrical productions, the English and German Languages Department in collaboration with The Repertory, the official theater company of the Senior High School Rodolfo Neri Pelaez campus staged the 1st Kunig Awards for One-Act Plays on April 12 and its daytime awarding ceremony on April 20 at the AVR 1, Main Campus.

The show, which brought together an eclectic group of theater enthusiasts, students, and curious onlookers, acted as a reminder of the performing arts' unique ability to capture audiences and deliver compelling themes in a condensed time frame.

The grand production featured three original plays and one adaptation, directed and performed by students from the four

participating camps, namely, Bakit Babae Ang Naghuhugas ng mga Pinggan? by Camp Lualhati, Peksman, Mamatay Man by Camp Bernal, Kalye Mirasol by Camp Ibsen, and A Dinner for Two by Camp Vinnette.

Through the event, aspiring playwrights and performers were given a platform to display their talents and explore new concepts. It likewise created a nurturing

atmosphere for emerging artists to refine their craft and get criticism from seasoned pros, establishing a feeling of community and cooperation in the theatrical scene.

Furthermore, the performances were evaluated by award-winning theater acts, Kenneth Sabijon, Noli Paglinawan, and John Andrew Begafria.



**FRIENDSHIP DAY.** Administrators from the Basic Education Department meet with visitors from Germany on PH-German Friendship Day. photo by REBECCA JANE PACAS

**SURVEY NEWS**

**65% of Senior High students show awareness of Safe Spaces Act**

by ODEZA LAGUS

Sixty-five percent of Grade 11 students at Liceo de Cagayan University reveal a generally high awareness of the Safe Spaces Act, or R.A. 11313 in a survey conducted on August 2024.

In detail, 182 out of 281 students indicated "Agree" showing a high level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act, which seeks to protect individuals from harassment in both public and private spaces.

The results highlight that the majority of Grade 11 students are adequately informed about the Safe Spaces Act, while a small portion remains less aware, underscoring an opportunity for increased education and awareness efforts on this important legislation.

When correlated to students' social well-being, these findings imply that students with higher awareness of the Safe Spaces Act tend to experience better social well-being. This suggests that awareness of protective laws like the Safe Spaces Act may positively influence students' social interactions and mental health.

This insight could guide future initiatives to bolster students' knowledge of anti-harassment laws, promoting security within the school.

**UNIVERSITY NEWS**

**DXLU Radio Broadcasting Team wins 2nd Overall in 2024 RSPC**

by SOPHIA SKAI SINGAYAN



**MAJOR COMEBACK.** Sentinel News Radio team's victory photo after nabbing 2nd best production at the 2024 RSPC. photo by EMMANUEL AYA-AY

After a two-year hiatus, DXLU 88.8 Radio News Sentinel, the official radio broadcasting team of the Liceo U Senior High School won 2nd Best Production at the 2024 Regional Schools Press Conference (RSPC).

After achieving first place in the Division Schools Press Conference (DSPC), the student journalists competed in the three-day regional tilt in Xavier Ateneo Sports Center and Cagayan de Oro National High School—Junior High Campus from May 2-4.

The team composed of James Matthew V. Sunogan, Julia Franchiska B. Nuestro, Joseph Charles M. Sososo, Erich Benedict B. Clerigo, Airon M. Chiu, Diane A. Caharian, and Arman Zeus D. Tadena, also bagged multiple awards.

Meanwhile, Jessica Gabrelle C. Quiblat, a Grade 12-STEM 5 student, won fifth place in Copyreading and

Headline Writing, coached by Nap S. Caruz.

The broadcasters were coached by Caruz as well.

Moreover, Christian Dave J. Lucaban represented the university and the division in Paggutin Kartung Editorial, coached by Rezza Fe P. Navasa, a faculty member.

**SIDE BAR**

- 2nd Best Overall Production**
- 2nd Best Script**
- 2nd Best Anchor**
- 2nd Best News Presenter**
- 3rd Best Technical Application**
- 4th Best Infomercial**

Source: DepEd Region X

**Liceo U opens new academic building, dialysis center**

by NAYSA JOELLE FABE



**RIBBON CUTTING.** Dr. Pelaez, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Dr. Golez, University President, led the ribbon-cutting ceremony. photo by TRISHA WHYNCH OMBAY

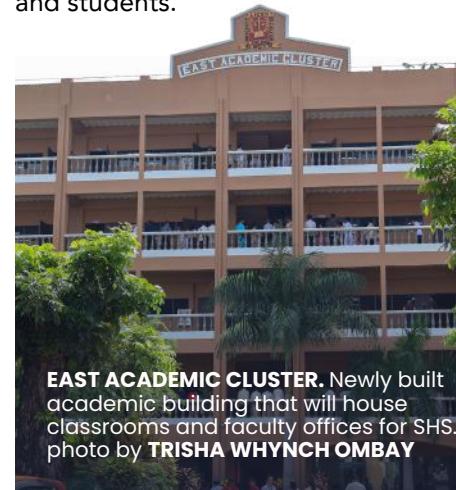
On September 18, 2024, Liceo de Cagayan University's newly built East Academic Cluster (EAC) and the Lifeline Dialysis Center were officially inaugurated with the ribbon-cutting and blessing ceremonies.

The East Academic Cluster, formerly the Heritage Building, has been renovated to accommodate classrooms, offices, and other educational facilities.

On the other hand, the Lifeline Dialysis Center was established to offer comprehensive care for individuals with kidney ailments, operating with the motto "Strive for Kidneys, Stride for a Cure."

Before the blessing ceremony, a Holy Eucharistic Celebration was held at the University Chapel presided over by Rev. Fr. Bobit Laroga, SSS.

Present during the event were the esteemed leaders of the university, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr. Rafaelita P. Pelaez, the University President, Dr. Alain Marc P. Golez, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Dr. Denise O. Orong, upper-level administrators, faculty members, and students.



**EAST ACADEMIC CLUSTER.** Newly built academic building that will house classrooms and faculty offices for SHS. photo by TRISHA WHYNCH OMBAY

**University-wide earthquake, fire drills intensified**

by HERBERT HANS EBARAT

Aiming to enhance campus safety and emergency preparedness, the Liceo de Cagayan University Office of Security and Safety, Office of the Vice President for Administration and Legal Affairs, and Office of Student Affairs conducted a large-scale earthquake and fire drill on the campus grounds on Friday, September 27, 2024.

Participants responded to a two-phase alarm system, wherein the first alarm prompted them to 'duck, cover, and hold' during a simulated earthquake. In contrast, the second alarm signaled an organized evacuation to designated open areas.

The safety officers demonstrated fire extinguishing techniques, reinforcing hands-on emergency preparedness training for all involved.

This exercise is part of the university's efforts to ensure students and staff are well-prepared for emergencies.



**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS.** Students and employees participate in the university-wide earthquake and fire drills. photo by PRINCESS KATE GIGANTO

**SIDE BAR**

**TOP 60**

Out of 229 (HEIs) in the Philippines

**TOP 3**

Out of 5 (HEIs) in Cagayan de Oro

**EduRank** is an independent organization that evaluates HEIs worldwide based on salient factors like research outputs, non-academic prominence, and alumni influence.

Source: Edurank 2024

**'TRUTH NEEDS A VOICE'**

**Pursuit of truth up in 2nd Journalism Cup**

by SHALAIN LLEANSY MEYKATRIZ BERLUDO

The Titans Student Media and Publication emboldened the essence of seeking the truth in the recently held 2nd Journalism Cup, highlighting the prevalence of its pursuit despite not having a platform.

"Even if there is no competition you can still convey and tell the truth. The truth doesn't only need a platform like this; it needs a voice. And we all have voices; we just need to use them," The Titans School Paper Adviser, Nap S. Caruz said in his closing remarks at the Awarding Ceremony on March 2 at the Rodolfo Neri Pelaez Campus—Audio Visual Room (AVR).

With several events in both individual and group categories, the contestants were divided into four publications: the Woodward Post for Grade 12 HUMSS, the Cerulean Scribe for STEM, The Forefront for ABM, and The Sanguine Nexus for Grade 11 HUMSS, respectively.

The competition is annually held to uphold the essence of campus journalism, encouraging a world where truth is safeguarded for God, country, and humanity.

**SIDE BAR**



**4 journalists have been killed so far under President Marcos' administration.**

Source: Human Rights Watch Philippines 2024



**TRUTH UP.** Mr. Nap S. Caruz, The Titans School Paper Adviser remarked on the importance of upholding the truth as journalists. photo by LANCE LAWRENCE PERGES

## Annexus hosts 'HEARTFUL Conversations' Seminar on HIV, STIs

by ODEZA LAGUS

In an effort to empower students with knowledge and awareness about Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), a seminar entitled "HEARTFUL Conversations: Health, Empathy, Awareness, Responsibility, and Trust- Addressing HIV and STI Challenges with Awareness and Intimacy Learning" was held at Room 210, RNP Hall on February 24.

### IN FIGURES

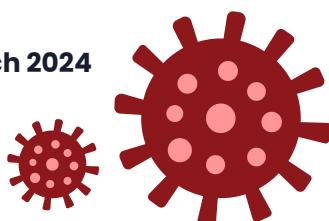
#### 143 HIV CASES

Misamis Oriental & CDO  
January - June 2024

#### 3,410 NEW CASES

Nationwide  
January - March 2024

Source: DOH X



In partnership with the Rotaract Club of Carmen Valley and the Annexus Club, the symposium, aimed to open conversations and address sensitive topics that are often taboo, especially among students.

Mrs. Jasmine A. Abing, a registered nurse and one of the speakers, shed light on the misconceptions surrounding love and its responsibilities, urging individuals to prioritize self-love and dispelling notions of passive or emotional dependency.

Furthermore, Mr. Ricamel Abing, one of the speakers, discussed the risks and social implications of teenage pregnancy, underlining the importance of family planning and understanding one's fertility cycle to prevent unintended pregnancies and associated health risks.

With the presented statistical data on the impacts of HIV and STIs, Mr. Raffy Ardemil, Region X Case Manager, also provided insights into common signs and symptoms of STIs and the importance of early

detection, remarking that the City Health Office (CHO) has been providing free confidential HIV testing and counseling.

The discussion also covered the alarming rates of early sexual initiation among young people, with statistics revealing significant numbers engaging in sexual risk behaviors without adequate protection, consequently increasing vulnerability to HIV and early pregnancy.



photo by GRACIELLA AMILAO

## SHS highlights media literacy in AI era with 'DILAAB' confab

by SAMANTHA VILELA

To shed light on the complexities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its implications on media and information literacy, the English and German Languages department of the Senior High School RNP Campus held a talk dubbed "DILAAB: Igniting Literacy in Media and Information in the Age of AI" at the AVR 3 on February 16.

Nap S. Caruz, Chairperson of the English and German Languages department, delivered his opening message emphasizing how AI can be a friend and a foe.

Additionally, Caruz cautioned against solely relying on AI, especially for academic success, urging the students to not compromise integrity by using shortcuts

through technology. "Don't use AI as if your academic achievement solely depends on it, do not allow AI to take over and diminish your natural intelligence," Caruz

Furthermore, the event's resource speaker, John Steward D. Carcosia, delivered a comprehensive discussion on his topic "Navigating the Digital Age: Media Information and Literacy in the Era of AI."

"AI has a limited capacity to understand, while humans have an unlimited capacity to understand complex ideas and information", Carcosia said.

Carcosia's statement highlighted the cognitive abilities of humans emphasizing the capacity for creativity, empathy, and abstract thinking in processing and comprehending intricate concepts, a distinction that separates humans from AI technology.

Moreover, Carcosia stressed the importance of discerning between the advantages and drawbacks of using AI, underscoring the over-reliance on AI without critical evaluation.

Additionally, Carcosia tackled the relevance of media information literacy by stating that the need for individuals to critically evaluate information with media literacy skills in an age where misinformation, fake news, and AI-generated content are prevalent, is essential in navigating through the internet.

Overall, DILAAB 2024 served as an essential platform for promoting discourse, critical thinking, and informed decision-making in the face of technological advancements.



IGNITING WISDOM. Resource speaker, John Steward Carcosia tackles the pros and cons of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in DILAAB 2024.

photo by RYAN CHRIS MONTERO

### UNIVERSITY NEWS

## PWDs to receive scholarship discounts – OSA

by PAUL SAYSON

In a new initiative to enhance educational support, Liceo de Cagayan University's Office of Student Affairs (OSA) announced a scholarship grant discount for students with disabilities.

This initiative aligns with Republic Act No. 10754, which mandates educational assistance for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at all academic levels.

The Office of Student Affairs memorandum, dated October 31, 2024, called on all deans and principals to inform students with disabilities in their departments about this scholarship opportunity. Eligible students are encouraged to visit the Office of Student Affairs to register and begin the application process.

This discount is expected to significantly benefit PWD students, easing the financial burden and helping them focus on their academic pursuits. The university hopes that through this initiative, students with disabilities will have greater access to the resources and support they need.

To apply, students will need to present the following:

- ➡ PWD ID
- ➡ School ID
- ➡ Clinical History or Medical Abstract
- ➡ Endorsement letter from their dean or principal

## Educators advocate role of informed literature in tackling societal woes

by PRECIOUS REI LUMBA

In celebration of the English Fest 2024, the English and German Language Department of the Senior High School Rodolfo Neri Pelaez (RNP) Campus organized a series of workshops on Flash Fiction and Poetry Writing dubbed "Moving Letters: Workshop on Informed Fiction" on February 2-3, held at the University Audio Visual Rooms.

Chairperson of the English and German Language Department, Nap S. Caruz, emphasized that the workshop aimed to inspire and equip aspiring writers with the essential skills to make impactful stories.

"It is our job as young writers to use literature as the vessel, the voice, that amplifies conversations, and addresses the world on its pressing societal issues", he stressed.

Creative Writing teachers, Aimee Ann Sanglitan,

Dwen Ziel Devibar, Nap S. Caruz, and Rosa Joy G. Estrada were the resource speakers of the said workshop which explored the nuances of creating flash fiction and poetry, equipping the students with the speakers' vast expertise and exploration of poignant themes.

Moreover, the workshop not only provided students with the skills necessary for flash fiction and poetry but also ignited a passion for storytelling, leaving participants inspired and well-prepared for their future endeavors in the world of literature.



INFORMED LITERATURE. Aimee Ann Sanglitan, Creative Writing teacher engages with students who participated in the two-day informed fiction workshop.

photo by CRISSA RICKER

**SURVEY NEWS**

## Students find both satisfaction, challenges in 4-day blended schedule – survey

by ARIES LABRADOR

A recent qualitative study published in May 2024 has explored how academic achievers in the Liceo de Cagayan University Senior High School perceive a unique four-day blended learning schedule, revealing a mix of satisfaction, flexibility, and challenges among students.



A recent qualitative study published in May 2024 has explored how academic achievers in the Liceo de Cagayan University Senior High School perceive a unique four-day blended learning schedule, revealing a mix of satisfaction, flexibility, and challenges among students.

With the schedule combining two days of face-to-face classes with two days of online sessions, the study found that students experienced both advantages in managing their time and notable challenges in adjusting to the demands of hybrid learning.

A significant number of participants found the four-day week to be a convenient setup.

"I don't have to go to school and commute every day, which is less hassle and very convenient on my part," shared one participant, highlighting the advantage of fewer days spent commuting.

Others noted the schedule allowed them to work from home, saving money and enabling them to dedicate more time to personal and academic tasks. The four-day structure also provided students with greater flexibility, as it allowed them to structure their time to complete assignments and allocate time for group projects.

"It's both online and face-to-face, and I am able to manage my time more," as described by another student participant.

Participants reported that the schedule fosters self-discipline and responsibility, essential skills for their academic success.

"It helps students to become more responsible in managing their time through the four-day week blended class," one student noted.

The flexibility of Fridays without scheduled classes also provided students with the chance to complete both school and household tasks, aiding in their overall productivity. Additionally, some students observed that the schedule encouraged them to improve their digital skills and maintain an organized, planned approach to tasks.

"I jot down my schedule each day. It helps me stay aware of my pending tasks and track my progress," another participant explained.

Despite the benefits, the four-day schedule also presented difficulties. Some participants found the blended approach exhausting, particularly when faced with the physical demands of commuting for face-to-face classes alongside online sessions.

"We have tasks that need practice face-to-face or must be done physically, so it's tiring," commented one student, underscoring the physical and mental toll of the hybrid format.

The switch between online

and in-person learning proved challenging for some, especially when adjustments to class schedules and activities disrupted their focus and workflow.

Further, the condensed school hours sometimes left students feeling that instructional time was inadequate.

"We need more time for learning," one participant explained, noting that compressed class hours required teachers to rush through lessons.

Despite the challenges, participants shared that the blended schedule facilitated interaction among peers. Having both online and in-person interactions created a more dynamic learning environment, allowing them to engage and have fun with friends while learning.

"In face-to-face class, we can interact with friends, classmates, and teachers in a more engaging way," one student stated.

While students reported positive aspects of managing time effectively, they also stressed the need for improved scheduling to better support their academic and personal development.

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

## University OESL launches Mini Library Project at Consolacion ES

by DIANE CAHARIAN

By extending the transformative power of education to underserved communities through the university's enduring commitment to community service learning, Liceo de Cagayan University successfully held its Mini-Library Campaign Project at Consolacion Elementary School on July 25, 2024.

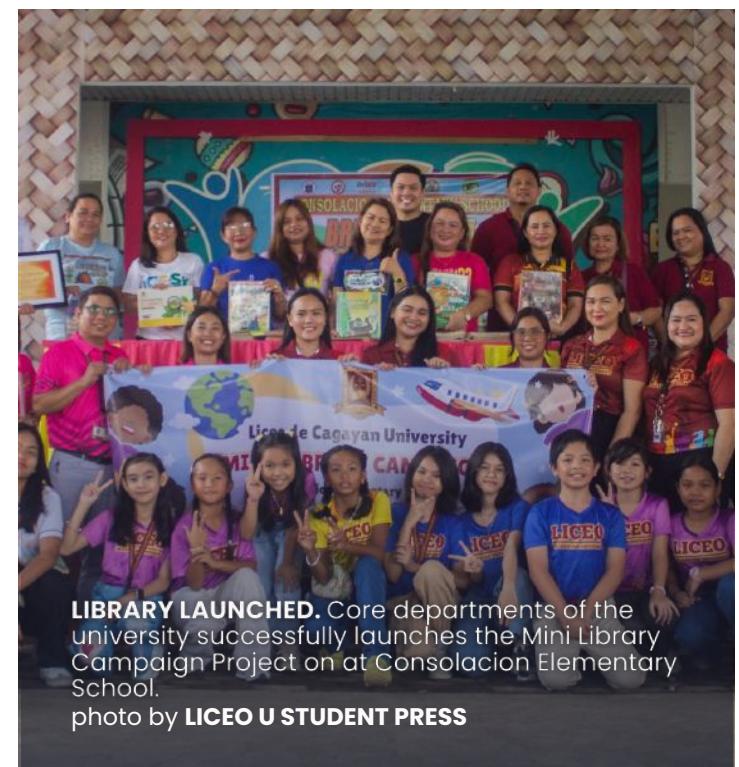
Spearheaded by the university's Office of the Vice President for Research, Extension, Planning, and Innovation, along with the Office of Extension and Service Learning, the Basic Education Department, the College of Information and Technology (CIT), and the Elsa P. Pelaez Memorial Library, the initiative reflects Liceo's mission to make learning accessible to all.

The campaign aims to foster community engagement by providing free access to books, encouraging literacy, and cultivating a culture of academic excellence.

Director of the Office of Extension and Service Learning, Salm Kairo S. Dumanlag, expressed that this project is a milestone in Liceo's longstanding tradition of service.

"The Licean community has pursued excellence through community service in rural areas for many years. This partnership with Consolacion Elementary School marks the first step in bringing that mission to urban communities, reaching more students and fostering greater educational impact," he remarked.

Liceo's Mini-Library Campaign goes beyond simply providing books; it creates an interactive platform where children and community members can connect over a shared love of reading and learning. Through these mini-libraries, Liceo U is building spaces that encourage dialogue, enrich local knowledge, and strengthen community bonds.



In an evolving world where multilingualism is increasingly valuable, a study at Liceo de Cagayan University Senior High School published in May 2024 underscored the importance of effective teaching methods in boosting students' self-confidence in language acquisition.

Conducted among Grade 11 students from the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strands, highlighted a significant relationship between German Language Teaching Effectiveness and students' German Language Learning Self-Efficacy.

The findings reveal that students largely perceive German language teaching strategies as "very effective."

Additionally, most

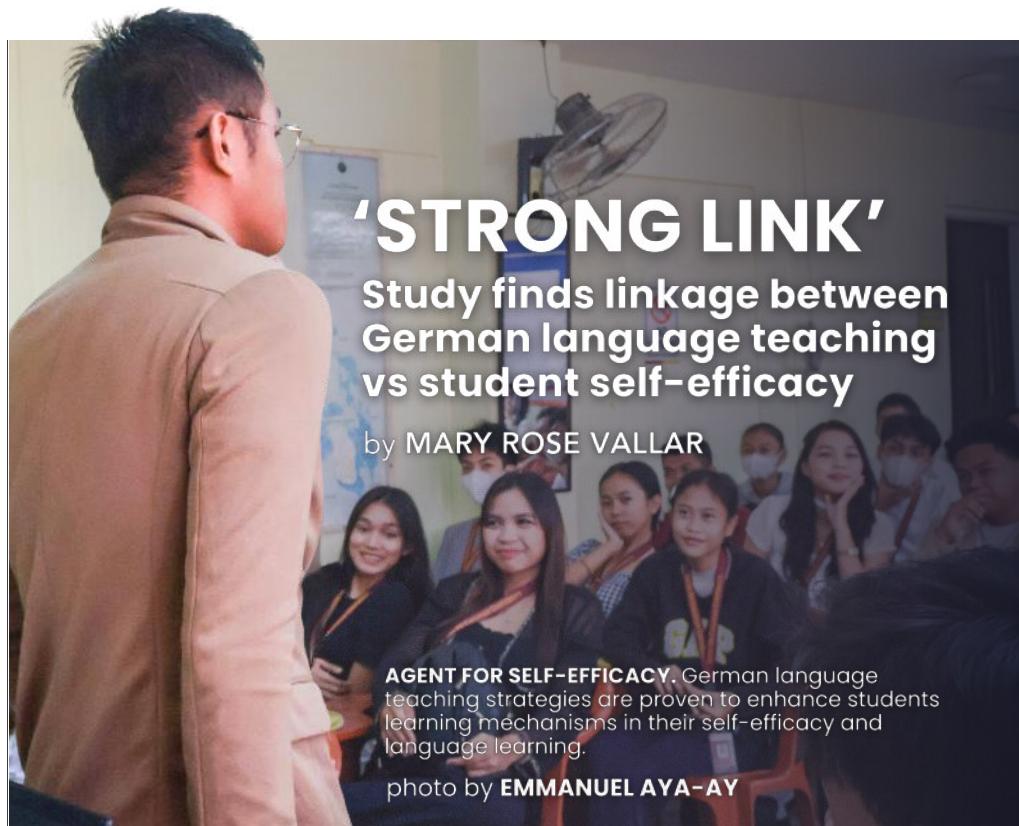
students reported a high level of self-efficacy, meaning they feel confident in their ability to successfully learn German.

Notably, the data showed a strong, positive correlation between teaching effectiveness and self-efficacy levels, indicating that better teaching practices contribute significantly to students' confidence in their language-learning capabilities.

Further analysis revealed that teaching effectiveness varied slightly, with ratings between 3.37 and 3.75 while

self-efficacy scores ranged from 2.36 to 3.23. The findings suggest that students with high self-efficacy are not only aware of their linguistic challenges but also employ strategies to overcome them, leading to an enhanced learning experience.

This correlation underlines that students who feel supported by effective teaching methods are better equipped to tackle obstacles, refine their skills, and improve their academic performance in language studies.





**Safeguarding  
the truth,  
for God, country,  
and humanity**

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cartoon by JEDY ALTA

Vice President Sara Duterte's recent behavior during the 2025 budget hearings has raised serious concerns about her commitment to transparency and accountability as a public official. Rather than providing clear and direct answers to legitimate questions from senators and members of Congress about her office's budget, VP Duterte resorted to deflection tactics that obstructed the democratic process.

For insight, the OVP is seeking a budget of P2.037 billion for 2025, an increase from the P1.885 billion for the current year. These billions of pesos in the budget include a P10 million allocation for the vice president's self-authored children's book.

When Senator Risa Hontiveros inquired about the P10 million allocation for distributing VP Duterte's book, the VP accused the senator of politicizing the budget hearing. Instead of addressing the substance of the question, VP Duterte brought up unrelated matters, including Hontiveros' past comments about the Duterte administration. This is a classic example of deflection, where the focus is shifted away from the issue at hand to avoid accountability.

As a sworn public official, VP Duterte must uphold fairness and respect the budget hearing process. Deflection tactics like whataboutism and non sequiturs undermine the Legislature's constitutional role in

scrutinizing government expenditures. By framing legitimate questions as politically motivated, VP Duterte may have inadvertently undermined the credibility of the proceedings among her supporters.

The P10 million allocation for VP Duterte's book has also drawn criticism from

When Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raoul Manuel asked for the name of Isang Kaibigan's editor due to the glaring errors in grammar, logic, and overall not being at par in terms of quality and purpose, VP Duterte jokingly quipped that the editor was Manuel himself, which seemed to show her frivolous

from inquiries made by ACT Teachers party-list Rep. France Castro regarding expenditures on items such as tables, chairs, and desktop computers, which amounted to P30.5 million. Instead of confronting these issues directly, VP Duterte chose to veer away from the question, which

she perpetuated doesn't do good to the interest of the taxpayers. She should stop making everything about herself and respect the procedure of the hearing. By deflecting and refusing to answer legitimate questions, VP Duterte is failing to uphold her duty to the Filipino people.

## From BUDGET HEARINGS to BUDGET ERRING

**“** As a leader, VP Sara should set an example of openness and accountability. Budget hearings are an essential part of the system of checks and balances that ensures Filipino taxpayer's money is used responsibly.

children's book publishers, who argue that the funds could have been better used to support struggling local authors. They point out that the estimated cost of P50 per book seems inflated, given the economies of scale of a 200,000 print run. The lack of transparency around the approval process for this expenditure is particularly concerning.

conduct and lack of concern to the seriousness of having to put out a well-thought out children's book. This isn't the first time that the VP has been scrutinized over her office's budget. Recently, her P125 million budget from 2022 came under fire after the Commission on Audit (COA) flagged P73.287 million of it as disallowed.

This scrutiny arose

further eroded public trust in the budgetary process. As a leader, VP Duterte should set an example of openness and accountability. Budget hearings are an essential part of the system of checks and balances that ensures government funds are used responsibly.

More than anyone, she should understand that the 'budget-erring'

### IN FIGURES



**₱2.037B**  
OVP Proposed  
Budget for 2025



**₱1.87B**  
OVP Budget for  
Fiscal Year 2024



**₱2.3B**  
OVP Budget for  
Fiscal Year 2023



**₱733M**  
Reduced OVP  
Budget for 2025

art retrieved from Vector

Source: Department of Budget and Management, Senate Committee on Finance



Ink Link

## Culturally Inappropriate

by MARCU BENEDICT EDUBAS

As the delicacy 'Pastil' substantially emerged in the food industry, an obstructive alteration to the recipe has been made to create variations on the menu. The swapping of pork as an alternative main ingredient for chicken and beef has caused distress and disbelief.

Pastil, or known as patis, is a popular rice dish originating from the Maguindanao people. As part of their religious belief, they particularly are using chicken, beef, and fish as their main ingredients and pork has purposefully never been part of it. To create a version of pastil with pork has tinted and defied its cultural essence, knowing that consumption of pork is strictly prohibited among Muslim people.

Have people been that desperate to consider food value propositions to the point of disobeying the delicacy's cultural representation?

There is nothing wrong with imitating food products or altering them to expand for more variations, but disregarding the culture and adding something that is restrained to its cradle is just blatant

disrespect.

To keep out of the culinary faux pas, Pork Pastil should've been renamed into a different label that doesn't relate to Pastil itself. To reinvent a different name would keep the delicacy's authenticity and originality. Until then, it should be banned to maintain respect and admiration for the Islamic culture.

This isn't just revolving around the components and name of the delicacy, but the culture that has been disregarded. If unity in diversity is what we want to prevail, then we should start by learning about other cultures and adapt to them with respect.

cartoon by JEDY ALTA

**“**  
There is nothing wrong with imitating food products or altering them to expand for more variations, but disregarding the culture and adding something that is restrained to its cradle is just blatant disrespect.



First Takes

## Fool's Circle

by MIGUEL BENEDICT ESCUDERO

The Rodrigo Duterte-led Drug War remains a campaign of much controversy til the present day—remembered by some as a tragic era of bloodshed. Now, the perpetrators face the cry of justice, but how will the Drug War probe for justice ensure transparency if the one accused leads it?

Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, who was the chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP) at the time of active anti-drug campaigning, is now ironically the one proposing he leads the probe of the War on Drugs despite being an alleged leader of the campaign who denies the injustices of that era.

The issue highlights the pressing problem of conflict of interest and personal agenda in the guise of justice in Philippine politics.

Appointing someone who is closely related to the campaign to steer its own probe is a plain disregard for the principle

of an honest investigation.

Supporters may argue that Dela Rosa's initiative shows his commitment to unveiling the truth of the campaign, but it doesn't consider the possibility of it doing the opposite.

Ultimately, a probe for an issue this large must be executed with utmost integrity and transparency, which are both at risk if the proposal is continued. The government must act to warrant this issue in the right hands, free of bias. Only then we can be assured that the probe is handled fairly.



cartoon by JEDY ALTA



Fierce Take

## Leaders or Clout Chasers?

by TWINKLE MAE MARTINEZ

Being a student leader is no easy task as many responsibilities are in the palm of our hands. Leaders are entrusted to be the captain of the ship to give directions and a beacon of transformation. Yet, what happens when leaders fail, or worse, when they become mere clout chasers?

We can all agree that leadership entails more than just the position, but we cannot deny that some belong to the spectrum of "leaders" who only do it because they love to be in the spotlight, or because they enjoy the privileges, like gaining an excessive amount of extra-curricular scores at the end of the quarter, and mind you, more often than not, they are the ones who will not listen, will choose to gatekeep brilliant ideas, and when the situation becomes worse, they are nowhere to be found.

But what should we do when we encounter one? Just be passive-aggressive? No, we need to speak up. Some might say that silence is one of the best forms of prayer, but it can also be one of the easiest ways to commit injustice and enable mediocrity.

Moreover, we can break the pattern and seek the leadership we are due. Expressing individual opinions matters and is encouraged. Our voice holds significant influence, and vocalizing our thoughts could ignite real transformation.

We should demand transparency and accountability and push for leaders who stand up for what's right and act in humility rather than seeking personal glory. I hope that we will stop being complacent about things that affect us. Let us amplify our voices for good causes and redefine our role as followers because will you be at ease staying silent amidst a broken system of leadership?

## SIDE BAR

**The range of alleged prize money to reward police officers during the drug war under the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte.**

**₱20,000 to ₱1 million**

Source: House Quad Committee/House of Congress

The Wordsmith

## Wood You Consider the Cost of Progress?

by JIHAN JOAHARA PAJO

Every time a tree is cut in Cagayan de Oro, it's not just wood that falls — it's our city's future. There is a clear line between development and destruction; you can have one without the other. However, it seems like this is an undiscovered concept to Cagayan de Oro's urban planners.

As a proudly raised young Kagay-anon, I have witnessed my fair share of development in this city. I wore the badge of honor on my sleeve as a citizen of "The City of Golden Friendship," but the hustle and bustle have now clouded the perception of what it means to progress. Demolishing the environment, particularly its trees, appears to be non-negotiable when it comes to the city's innovation now.

Uptown CDO has become the center of attention for its rapid growth in terms of infrastructure, housing,

and commercial establishments.

With its expanding local population and visitors, traffic has risen to the top of the city's concerns, and authorities have executed a road-widening project in response. They have resorted to cutting down mature, full-grown trees to proceed with this project, which is supposedly going to fix the traffic on the roads.

Their methods are far from ideal and are harming the area's natural environment, leaving us more vulnerable to nature's retaliation. The removal of trees isn't just an environmental concern — it has real

consequences for the people living here.

Like most Kagay-anons, my residential area lacks a proper drainage system and has been experiencing floods due to frequent, excessive rainfall, causing casualties and inconvenience for us common folks.

We now rely on the already limited plants and trees around us to help with mitigation. How much worse could this situation become if more trees are unnecessarily cut, as in this road-widening project?

Why are the products of past tree-planting efforts being cut down instead of uprooted and

moved?

Moreover, the traffic issues that this project aims to solve could perhaps be addressed through smarter management—rerouting, better enforcement, and improved public transportation—rather than defaulting to expansion.

Additionally, why does this expansion have to come with environmental repercussions when they could have been avoided? The issue lies deeper in how necessary this approach really is and how thoroughly planned it was.



**“**  
We should not confuse silence with contentment or lack of objection with approval. Just because there is no disagreement doesn't mean there is agreement, and not protesting doesn't imply support. We must insist on the leadership we deserve, assert our voices, and break free from inertia.

cartoon by JEDY ALTA

**“**

I am not opposed to change, especially if it concerns the functionality and welfare of our city. Nonetheless, change doesn't need to be destructive.



**Night Owl**

## It's About Time

by DIANE CAHARIAN

The motive for legalizing the divorce bill in the Philippines remains motionless, which uproots toxicity in several households. Denouncing a bill that contradicts the religious commandments yet validates the couples and families it concerns is antiquated. I dare say, it is time for our nation to reconsider its stance on marriage dissolution and legalize divorce.

Living in a country deeply rooted in family values, we see family as the basic foundation of society, and divorce has long been demonized. While the entirety of the nation remains equally divided and firmly holding their respective judgments, the unethical and detrimental motivation to legalize divorce outweighs the motion not to.

As a young individual, who witnessed violence and abuse in a place where you call 'home' is merely pushing the idea of a toxic household.

Acting as a major obstacle to the bill's passage, the Catholic Church, a dominant force in the country, remains staunchly opposed to divorce. While it's true that the sanctity of marriage should be

protected and preserved, the cries of battered wives, suffering husbands, and traumatized children should also be seen as an equally compelling truth that one, like the church should not turn a blind eye to.

Divorce is not a tool to encourage separation but rather a necessary option for those who have exhausted all efforts to save their marriage. Denying this choice condemns individuals to a lifetime of emotional and psychological imprisonment.

It's time that the government listens to Filipinos who an outdated system has silenced. Divorce should not be demonized—it should be a path to freedom, offering individuals the right to choose peace and dignity.

**“**  
Divorce is not a tool to encourage separation but rather a necessary option for those who have exhausted all efforts to save their marriage.



**Aries-tocracy**

## Actors? Not Again

by ARIES LABRADOR

As advocacies surge from different running candidates in the upcoming 2025 Elections, the Philippines continues to lose its credibility in politics by allowing social media personalities and actors to run for government positions. It's true that with fame or without, one has the freedom to vie for a political position, but at what cost?

Many of these candidates lack formal political experience and a deep understanding of the complexities of governance.

Running with just mere empathy and willingness to help the Filipino people without prior knowledge makes these advocacies too idealistic and far from reach.

Has politics become the new medium for entertainment and clout chasing?

To become a viable candidate in the elections, one must obtain expertise in policy making and using it to further advocacies.

With this, politicians who are well-

qualified for government positions are overshadowed by these individuals due to their fame. The rising trend of prioritizing popularity over qualification can hinder effective governance.

Acting as the mediator, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) must establish clear standards for candidates, emphasizing the importance of credentials, integrity, and leadership experience.

As political ignorance prevails in the elections, it's part of our duty to educate society. We should always consider the qualities of a candidate rather than looking at their popularity.

**“**  
To become a viable candidate in the elections, one must obtain expertise in policy making and using it to further advocacies.



**“**

To become a viable candidate in the elections, one must obtain expertise in policy making and using it to further advocacies.



**First Person**

## When Policy and Reality Don't Add Up

by ODEZA LAGUS

As a student who comes from a lower-class family, I only depend on an ambulant vendor parent and an academic scholarship. It is typical to have a limited allowance, I sometimes need to compromise on my food to still have a budget for other matters. The moment I heard the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) chief Arsenio Balisacan claim that a Filipino who spends an average of 64 pesos a day for three meals is not considered food poor, I immediately wondered, how do they conclude someone is out of poverty base on a budget they could also never settle on themselves?

The food threshold stirred a lot of arguments among Filipinos of various socioeconomic classes. Some say it is unrealistic amidst the country's current inflation rate and poverty rate. While others would say that it is just enough for foods such as eggs and instant noodles, do these foods ensure enough nutrients for us? Especially in children and people in physically demanding jobs, since nutrients we get from food are key to productivity. I once went to a local carinderia for my lunch after class. While I wanted

a beef stew with a price of 70 pesos, I couldn't risk spending that much on only one dish, so, I resorted to the cheapest dish—a bland omelet egg—for 15 pesos and a small cup of rice for 10 pesos. It cost me 25 pesos, which if we put it into the 21 pesos per meal estimation, I become far from having another meal and achieving a balanced diet meal. This primary experience made me realize the thick borderline between social classes; the upper class can dictate how poverty should be addressed despite not experiencing it firsthand.

Government agencies are allocated millions of budget for their annual research, so why do they skimp on producing timely and accurate data? Rather

than gathering data from remote areas with the cheapest goods, instead, they should base it on the average prices of basic goods nationwide and further adjust the food threshold to the current inflation rate and poverty rate in the country. In the sense that it is the government's responsibility to guarantee easy access to affordable and healthy food options for all social classes, especially those in the lower class.

The government became way too out of touch with reality when they should be the ones to speak for the masses. The food threshold should

habitat speak for the Filipinos in absolute poverty and relative poverty. No one is supposed to feel uplifted by the lowering of poverty standards while still experiencing poverty.

**“**

The government became way too out of touch with reality when they should be the ones to speak for the masses.

**The View**

## 'Cyberbullicide', what about it?

by SOPHIA SKAI SINGAYAN

With digitization and social media evolving like a progressive city in the age of the new millennia, its negative counterparts, like Cyberbullying have emerged as a significant public health concern, particularly among adolescents, with profound implications for mental health and well-being.



**“**  
solace, only to become further victimized.

The link between cyberbullying and suicide is particularly alarming. Cyberbullying has been identified as a contributing factor to suicidal ideation among adolescents. This phenomenon has been termed "Cyberbullicide," reflecting the serious consequences that online harassment can have on mental health.

As society continues to navigate the complexities of digital communication, it is imperative to raise awareness about the dangers of cyberbullying and to implement effective prevention and intervention strategies.

### SIDE BAR

#### Forms of Online Harassment

**35%**

People in a group chat mocking someone's status or photo

**25%**

Trolling somebody in an online game

**17%**

Liking or sharing content to mock someone openly

**16%**

Annoy somebody they dislike online

**12%**

Sending nasty messages to somebody they know offline

**5%**

Using fake identity on a profile to annoy or upset someone

**“**  
It is imperative to raise awareness about the dangers of cyberbullying and to implement effective prevention and intervention strategies

Source: Djuraskovic, O. (2024)



**Bulls Eye**

**The Troubling Optics of Guo's Arrest**

by DOROTHY ANGELICA EBARAT

While the successful apprehension of Alice Guo in Indonesia, who is charged with serious crimes including human trafficking and money laundering, is commendable, the celebratory selfies and casual interactions with the officials tasked with escorting her back to the Philippines left a bad taste in the mouth.

The optics of the situation are deeply troubling. Guo, who had evaded law enforcement for months, was treated more like a celebrity than a wanted criminal, posing for photos. The agents involved, including those from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and Bureau of Immigration (BI), appeared to be more interested in capturing a memento than maintaining professionalism.

Guo is not a star, but a fugitive facing grave charges. She should have been treated with the gravity her crimes deserve, not like a VIP. The agents' conduct made a "mockery of the Filipino people".

Law enforcement must maintain the highest standards of professionalism, even in the face of a successful operation. Treating fugitives like celebrities erodes public faith and makes a farce of the justice system. The government must take steps to prevent similar incidents in the future.



cartoon by JEDY ALTA

*Guo is not a star, but a fugitive facing grave charges. She should have been treated with the gravity her crimes deserve, not like a VIP.*

“

**Proactively Yours**

**Call for Reforms**

by ANGEL LUVE AMBEN

While a typical student council election allows students to participate and realize their rights in voting and doing all due diligence on the leaders they choose, such is not the case that happened in the 2024 Senior High School Student Council Elections.

In the current voting system, only the elected classroom presidents are the ones given the chance to run for student council positions and consequently, the ones allowed to vote in the elections.

Unfortunately, the structure restricts both the size of the candidates and that of the electorate to a very small number of people which in essence marginalizes the rest of the student population from any activity that is meant to shape their representation.

This practice does not appear to be in line with the main intent of having a student council which is to represent all students. The ongoing system is far from

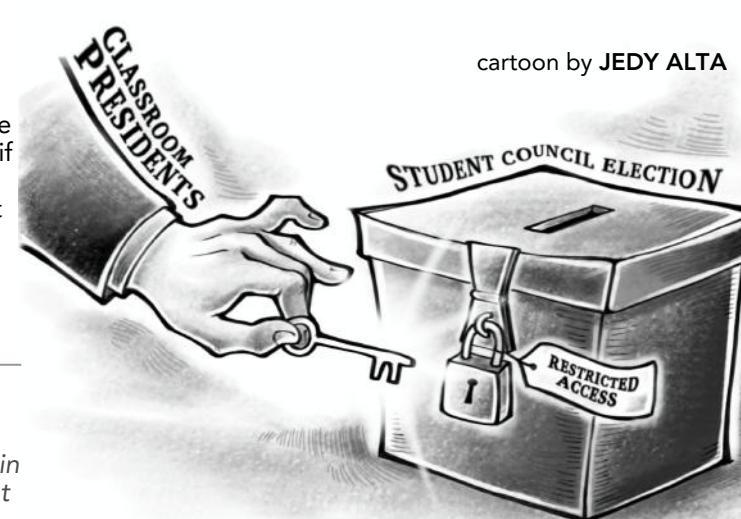
being democratic and logical.

Rather than allowing every student to file for candidacy or vote for worthy student candidates in the student council, this practice has been suppressive of the majority.

An election is a platform where students come to appreciate democracy within any space, schools included. With the current population of the Senior High School, it is safe to say that we can have more options for good leaders if we open the gate for everyone and do not limit it to our classroom presidents.

Student council elections should mirror

what is framed in the country's constitutional electoral system. In that way, students will understand and be educated on how actual elections in this country work. Thus, it is time that the current council by-laws be amended to make it consistent with the principles of representative democracy.



cartoon by JEDY ALTA

*This practice does not appear to be in line with the main intent of having a student council which is to represent all students. The ongoing system is far from being democratic and logical.*

“



**Goddess' Notes**

**I Need a Scholarship Too**

by JOSALISEL LUTAO

As tuition fees rise and the cost of living continues to soar, the burden on students and their families becomes almost unbearable. In these times of financial hardship, scholarships have become a lifeline, offering the chance to pursue dreams without sinking into debt. But, are scholarships truly fulfilling their purpose if they're leaving some students behind?

The overwhelming bias in scholarship distribution toward STEM students is an issue we can't ignore. Does this mean only those who study science and technology deserve the opportunity to pursue higher education without financial barriers?

As a student, I've seen my fellow learners from not just the HUMSS but also ABM, TVL, and Arts and Design pathways abandon their true passions—not because they lack talent or dedication, but because scholarship opportunities for these strands are limited.

Yes, the world is evolving. We need scientists and engineers to move us forward. But what about the future leaders, teachers, and

writers? Don't they deserve the same support? Who will guide society through the complexities of politics and culture if we continue to ignore the students studying these fields? Innovation is essential, but so is leadership, creativity, and empathy.

Every career path plays a critical role in shaping our world, and it's important to acknowledge that not every student has the same talents or interests. Some excel in problem-solving and technology, while others shine in communication, creativity, or leadership. Shouldn't scholarships celebrate all these talents equally?

For a fair and inclusive education system, schools and

scholarship programs must expand their support to include all academic strands. Scholarships should be accessible to everyone, no matter what strand they belong to.

“

*The overwhelming bias in scholarship distribution toward STEM students is an issue we can't ignore. Does this mean only those who study science and technology deserve the opportunity to pursue higher education without financial barriers?*



**Trisha Speaks**

**A Long and Lusting Love**

by TRISHA WHYNCH OMBAY

Marital rape is a disturbing issue that highlights significant flaws in how we see marriage and consent. As a Christian, I believe that the foundation of marriage is love, a love that is deeply rooted in respect, not lust.

But can there be real love without respect? If respect is missing, is it possible to say that love exists within that relationship? And if love is absent, what then becomes of the marriage?

The idea that marriage automatically grants unconditional consent to sex is not just outdated, it's terrifying. It perpetuates a belief that reduces individuals, particularly women, to mere objects instead of recognizing them as equal partners with their own rights and autonomy.

This outdated notion suggests that once you say "I do," you no longer have the right to say "no."

Consent is crucial in any relationship. It should be explicit, enthusiastic, and most importantly, revocable. The notion that marriage removes the need for ongoing consent is not just wrong, it's a violation of personal autonomy.

Addressing the issue of marital rape is about more than just protecting women's rights; it's about affirming a universal commitment to human dignity.

Isn't it time our legal systems and societal attitudes evolved to recognize that rape within marriage is still rape? The fight for justice in these cases is a fight for the basic human right to say "no" and have that decision respected.

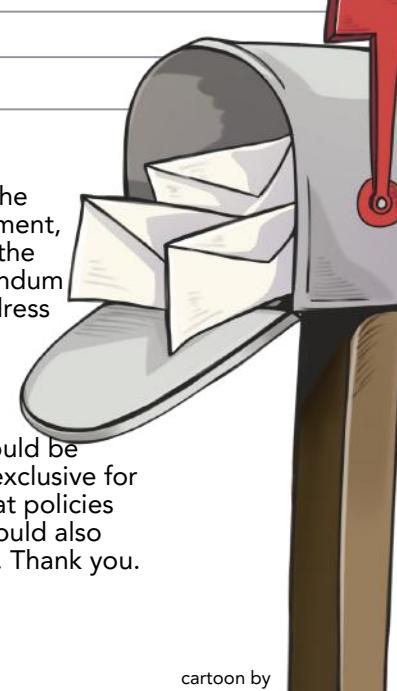
“

*Consent is crucial in any relationship. It should be explicit, enthusiastic, and most importantly, revocable.*

**EDITOR'S MAIL**

**Dear Editor,**

I am a student from the Senior High School Department, and I want to comment on the university's recent memorandum on the updates regarding dress codes within the campus. Although I understand that we are still under the Basic Education Department, I believe that the policy should be for everyone and not only exclusive for college students. I hope that policies that mention inclusivity should also extend to the SHS scholars. Thank you.



Yours truly,  
**JEAN MARGARET**

cartoon by  
DIANA MAE GRACE AMOR

**Dear Jean Margaret,**

We appreciate your concern about the updated dress code policy. Your concern is valid and we understand the frustration. However, the exclusion of the SHS in the adherence to the updated dress code is due to the existing dress code policy tailored to the Basic Education Department as stated in the SHS Student Handbook 2021 Edition.

Updates on these provisions can only be carried out for amendments/revisions upon the recommendation of the BED Principals and approved by the University President.

Let's hope that the updated dress code policy will extend to the Senior High School real soon. Thank you.

Hoping for your consideration,  
**THE TITANS EDITORS**

“

The lines between justice and violence begin to blur as they bear the form of guns pointed at the vulnerable, unable to raise their hands as a defense against the onslaught of bullets that pierce the skin with ease.

# DUTERT

## HOLDING THE LINE AGAINST A LINE

by PAULA NIÑA MAGADAN

W

ithin the shadows of flashing blue and red lights, the clear crack of a gunshot has been heard countless times; lives taken under false allegations of skewed judgment. In the line of fire, citizens begin to fear for their families and friends—becoming victims of a system that promises safety yet delivers violent fear. The voices of the people have begun to protest, the streets searching for justice for the unjust endings of innocent people. *How long will this brutality persist before change begins to set its pace?*

Police brutality has been a chronic problem, especially in the Philippines where the influential take hold of the administration and use their power to bend the law enforcement to their will.

Its existence has been a persistent echo of the failure to address the abuse and corruption that has been undertaken by the nation.

It has been a quiet thrum that has slowly grown into a buzz in recent years after the inauguration of former president Rodrigo Duterte with his anti-drug campaign, the War on Drugs, which led to a concerning amount of widespread reports of police violence, subjugating people to begin fearing for the worse.

Human Rights Groups have followed the tracks, estimating the amount to be higher than what reports have said.

Leading to believe that victims have had their lives taken without due process under the belief of resolving crime through brute force.

Many officers have been accused of getting rid of suspects while planting evidence to falsify reports, beginning to foster an environment that normalizes brutality as a form of justice, giving less regard to human rights.

The lines between justice and violence begin to blur as they bear the form of guns pointed at the vulnerable, unable to raise their hands as a defense to the onslaught of bullets that pierce the skin with ease.

The usage of excessive force against the inferior draws a question of how far should the government fall to rise to the perceived justice it serves?

In the midst of the haunting cases that begin to pile up as they're pushed further into the backdrop of other pressing issues, citizens have had their lives taken brutally to a cause that has strayed far from its purpose of correcting a system that has disrupted the people's nation.

Among one of the most high-profile cases was of a 17-year-old boy named **Kian Delos Santos**, cornered and shot during a raid in Caloocan City on August 16, 2017.

The police stated that it was out of self-defense until it was later discovered in the CCTV footage that he was unarmed and fearful, his body dragged into an alley after being fatally shot, the pleading whispers echoing before his final hour, "Please stop."

Little **Myca Ulpina**, merely three-years-old, still being cradled in the arms of her father—was killed before she could ever fully understand what fear was.

In the quiet month of June 2019 at Rodriguez, Rizal, Myca had become another victim to the ever growing list of names of innocent lives lost.

While the police claimed her death was due to her father using her as a shield, her family disagreed with their words.

An echo to the disregard of the lives of those who are too young to understand the brutality subjected.

photo retrieved from PHILIPPINE STAR



KIAN DELOS SANTOS, 17

photo retrieved from SOUTH CHINA POST



MYCA ULPINA, 3



# EMPIRE

## LEGACY OF ABUSE AND INJUSTICE



DANICA MAY GARCIA, 5

photo retrieved from CNN

At only five—**Danica May Garcia** would have her life cut short, at the height of childhood dreams overrun by the violence that burst into her home on a late evening of August 2016.

Instead of merely targeting her grandfather, who recently turned himself over, Danica fell through the gunfire.

A life stolen by indifference that knew no mercy, sparing neither the old or young through the storm of smoke and gunpowder.

Vanishing into the shadows, 14-year-old, **Reynaldo de Guzman** was swept away—a disappearance that led to him to be discovered dead days later.

His body held 30 stab wounds, the decay tossed aside like a mere afterthought in Nueva Ecija.

Their words said he was silenced as a result of his friend's alleged crime, yet the twisted narrative could not erase the innocence of the victim.

A boy betrayed by the system that craved justice through any means necessary.

The final nail to the coffin, at 19, **Carlo Angelo Arnaiz** would meet his fate at the end of a pointed weapon—his unrealized dreams remaining a figment of yesterday, meeting his end on August 2017.

His crime allegedly being robbery, saying he fired first at the law enforcement, and yet his bruised and broken body told a different story—one of tortured pains merely hidden by forced silence.

These innocent lives stolen under the false words twisted into cases of alleged crimes, children's lives at stake, all in the name of serving the people—is sacrificing the lives of the guiltless the price of justice?

This cycle of violence and power, masked as "justice", haunts the streets of the Philippines, a nation grappling with a system that has lost its way.

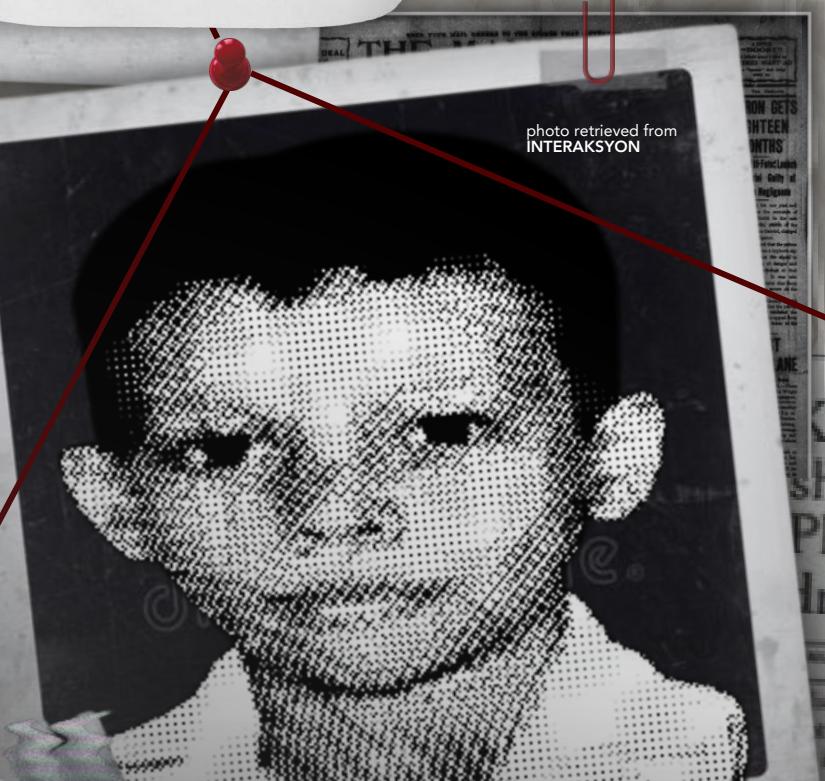
A continuous grim undertone of its landscape, for every family left without answers, invisible wounds deepen.

True justice requires more than calling out the brutality of its people's actions, but in reshaping the system that blurs the lines of justice and violence.

The government stands at the crossroad of either continuing this path that has caused fear, or embrace has failed its citizens—allowing the chance to restore lost trust and to find the value of the human life that has been victims of pointed guns.

While the path to the intended goal seems to hold challenges that intimidate, as more voices continue to advocate and demand change for the system that has continuously allowed this violence to fester, the possibility of a safer nation begins to light its path.

Real justice will come when the promise of safety becomes more than a mere illusion, a vision of law that truly serves its people, rekindling the faith of a future without gunshots aimed at fire.



REYNALDO DE GUZMAN, 14

photo retrieved from INTERAKSYON

CARLO ANGELO ARNAIZ, 19

photo retrieved from GMA NETWORK

# DRAG IS NOT A CRIME

## Intrpecting Drag Culture in Modern Day Philippines

by PAULA NIÑA MAGADAN

Pop off, ate!

In recent years, the art form of drag has faced growing scrutiny and legal challenges, sparking debates across the globe about freedom of expression, identity, and acceptance. However, advocates argue passionately that drag is not a crime, but a vibrant expression of creativity and self-discovery.

Rooted in a history of resilience and transformation, drag challenges societal norms, encourages inclusivity and celebrates diversity. Despite ongoing legal restrictions and misunderstandings, supporters emphasize that drag is an artistic medium, one that reflects individuality, provides community, and fuels social progress.

In the Philippines, drag has blossomed into a celebrated and dynamic form of expression that reflects the country's deep-seated love for performance, storytelling, and creativity.

Embedded in Filipino culture's acceptance of diverse identities, drag has become more visible and embraced in recent years, particularly with the influence of local talent and international media.

Shows like Drag Race Philippines and personalities like Precious Paula Nicole, who won the show's first season, have brought drag culture into the mainstream, showcasing the creativity, wit, and resilience of Filipino drag queens.

On the other hand, Marina Summers, a drag queen from the

Philippines, made waves on the international stage with her stellar performance on Drag Race UK vs. The World. Known for her polished looks, fierce runway presence, and powerful storytelling, Marina quickly became a fan favorite, representing Filipino drag with pride and elegance.

### DRAG AS A SAFE SPACES

Drag in the Philippines goes beyond entertainment; it serves as a powerful platform for advocacy, celebrating LGBTQ+ identities, and addressing issues related to gender equality, inclusivity, and social justice.

In a country that still grapples with conservatism and discrimination, drag offers a safe space for self-expression and community solidarity. Filipino drag queens blend traditional and contemporary elements in their performances, often incorporating humor, Filipino pop culture, and political commentary. The result is a unique art form that reflects both Filipino pride and the ongoing fight for acceptance and rights within the broader LGBTQ+ community.

### DRAG IS POLITICAL

More than just a form of entertainment, Drag is a bold political statement that uses art and performance to challenge norms, critique societal issues, and advocate for change, and this has always been the case.

As an art form, drag confronts traditional views on gender and identity, subverting expectations through exaggerated costumes, makeup, and personas. This defiance of rigid gender roles makes drag inherently political, especially in societies where LGBTQ+ rights are restricted or stigmatized.

By embracing fluidity and defying conventions, drag artists celebrate freedom of expression, showcasing that identity is personal and self-defined.

Throughout history, drag performers have been at the forefront of movements for LGBTQ+ rights, standing in solidarity during key moments like the Stonewall riots and other significant protests for equality.

Even today, drag continues to push boundaries, often addressing themes like gender, sexuality, discrimination, and human rights within performances. In countries where drag is restricted or misinterpreted as dangerous, drag artists use humor, satire, and spectacle to critique authority, address social injustices, and encourage viewers to question the status quo.

In this way, drag acts as a powerful form of activism, with each performance affirming that identity and self-expression are essential to personal freedom and cultural diversity.

### CDO DRAG CULTURE: A THRIVING FORCE

In Cagayan de Oro City, the drag scene has steadily grown, becoming a colorful and dynamic part of the local culture. While drag may not be as mainstream in CDO as it is in larger cities, local performers and LGBTQ+ advocates have worked tirelessly to create safe spaces and vibrant shows that celebrate diversity and individuality.

The Superstar KTV Lounge and Club is just one of the best places for Drag performances in the city. Drag houses, like the pioneering House of Drag Lords take center stage on Saturdays performing for the drag patronizers.

CDO's drag scene combines Filipino humor, heartfelt storytelling, and a unique blend of traditional and modern elements, reflecting the city's evolving culture. Performers often draw from local influences, incorporating

Bisaya language, humor, and references to regional customs in their acts, making their performances relatable to local audiences while celebrating regional pride.

Khianna with a K and Hannah Beskie are the Kagay-anon drag queens who wowed national television during their drag race seasons, showing immense talent and sophistication and waving the CDO drag to the world.

Despite challenges, including lingering social stigma and limited platforms, the drag community in Cagayan de Oro continues to flourish, with more inclusive spaces and events emerging.

### A GOLDEN ART FORM

Intrpecting drag culture reveals a deeply transformative and multifaceted art form that goes beyond performance, serving as a mirror to society's evolving views on identity, gender, and self-expression.

With the global

expansion of Drag Culture, influences from various cultures add richness and diversity to the art. Each region's unique interpretation, such as the Bisaya-influenced performances in Cagayan de Oro, showcases how drag can honor local traditions while challenging conventional views.

Ultimately, drag culture continues to thrive and evolve, inspiring introspection on what it means to be truly authentic and fearless in self-expression.

As drag gains recognition as a legitimate art form and tool for advocacy, it remains a symbol of liberation, reminding society of the importance of embracing differences and celebrating individuality.

Tip your queens!

photo by KEONAHSS

The Chop!

photo by SEVEN BARRETO

photo by THEMISUA

# BEYOND ICONS

Striving For A Society Where Leaders Like Leni Robredo Are The Norm

by YSABELLE ROSE ENCALLADO

In recent years, the name Leni Robredo has become synonymous with integrity, empathy, and effective public service in the Philippines.

Her leadership as the former Vice President resonated with millions, not only for her programs aimed at marginalized sectors but also for her quiet, determined resistance against disinformation and divisive politics. Yet, the statement "We shouldn't need any more Leni Robredos" has surfaced as a deeper reflection on the state of governance in the country. But what does this sentiment truly mean?

At its core, the idea is not a rejection of the exemplary qualities Robredo embodies, but a call for systemic change. It suggests that society should not have to rely on the rarity of exceptional leaders to inspire hope or protect democracy. Instead, these qualities should be the standard, embedded in all levels of public service and governance.

Robredo's tenure was marked by policies and initiatives that directly addressed the needs of underserved communities.

From disaster response initiatives to livelihood projects and public health

programs, she showcased what leadership with empathy looks like. Her approach was grassroots-oriented, participatory, and transparent—qualities that resonated deeply, especially against the backdrop of an often populist politics.

Truth be told, the statement is not about diminishing Robredo's contributions or suggesting that her example isn't needed. The goal, integrity, empathy, and competence should be the norm—where the phrase "We need another Leni Robredo" is no longer a plea but a given.

As the Philippines navigates its path forward, this aspiration should guide not just its leaders but its citizens. Building a system where quality leadership is the standard requires a collective effort, education, and an unwavering commitment to the values that leaders like Robredo represent. Only then can the nation move toward a future where "needing more Leni Robredos" becomes an unnecessary, if poignant, wish.



Photos retrieved from [INQUIRER.NET](#)

# Deja vu

THE UNSUSPECTED RETURN OF TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY

by PAULA NIÑA MAGADAN



As the world held its breath for America through the glaring lenses of their television screen, an election ends with a stunned silence—the re-emerging figure of a victorious Donald Trump, as he returns to the seat he was once impeached from, defeating Vice President Kamala Harris against all odds.

Photo retrieved from [THE GUARDIAN](#)

The 2024 US elections have rewritten the narrative of its nation, history forever etched in the American books—America has chosen a convicted felon as its 47th president, showcasing the questionable appeal of Trump's administration to the country and its impact on the entire world.

With a felony conviction that would normally become a career-ending in the world of politics, Trump's campaign has been steadfast in its support for the man who has caught the eye of national and international news outlets, managing to sway the opinions of the political landscape to his favor.

For his loyal supporters who have been consistent since 2016, his conviction is merely another chapter of a long-running challenge they believe is a product of a system created to vilify him.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, stands a woman that challenges the status quo. Kamala Harris, the Vice President, a seasoned prosecutor and an advocate for criminal justice reform, Harris, offered a vision that centered on pushing the narrative of the current political turmoil shadowing America.

For many Americans who have shown their passionate support, she was the clear choice—

driving with solutions to issues plaguing its country.

With Trump's reelection, he has defied the notion of what it means to be a "qualified" presidential candidate.

As the ballots roll in, the country remains intensely divided, a population that eyes the opposite party with derision as the implication of his win questions the integrity of the democratic system of America.

Now, as the nation tries to weigh in with the reality of its situation, the challenge of what it means to serve the country begins to take hold.

Whether this means that elections begin to shift to being personality-driven campaigns, the uncertainty is clear when it comes to what it means to be "presidential."

## Cumpio's Truth

Filipino Journalists' Lives at Gunpoint

by RYMAE SHANE CATAYONG

Frenchie Mae Cumpio is more than just a name; she represents the beating heart of fearless journalism in the Philippines. A dedicated journalist and human rights defender, Cumpio had long been a voice for the marginalized and oppressed in Eastern Visayas, exposing stories often hidden in the shadow of mainstream narratives.

However, on February 7, 2020, her voice, along with four other activists, was abruptly silenced when they were arrested in a predawn raid. The arrest was marred by accusations that many argue were baseless and politically motivated—echoing a familiar strategy that has threatened press freedom in the country.

Before her arrest, Cumpio led Eastern Vista, an independent news outlet committed to truth-telling and amplifying community voices. Her work embodied the core mission of journalism: to inform, question, and hold power to account. But under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte, a climate of fear began to envelop the media landscape. This period saw an alarming rise in extrajudicial killings and an increasingly hostile environment for

journalists, with accusations, red-tagging, and harassment becoming common tactics used to suppress dissent and reporting that questioned state-sanctioned actions.

Cumpio's ordeal exemplifies the courage and resilience demanded of journalists who dare to defy suppression. Despite her imprisonment, her spirit remained unbroken. Through the seeds of her unyielding commitment, hope continues to grow among journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens. It symbolizes a broader resistance against the erosion of press freedom, inspiring a movement that demands

not just justice for Cumpio and the Tacloban 5, but for all journalists whose work has been stifled under threat.

As she steps up to the stand to confront these charges, Cumpio's case brings the collective struggle of Filipino journalists to the forefront. It serves as a stark reminder that journalism is not just a profession—it is an act of resistance. Each story that shines a light on injustice, each report that breaks silence, is an act of defiance in a world that would rather conceal the truth.

In a country where being a journalist can mean standing on a razor's edge between truth and persecution,

Frenchie Mae Cumpio's story is a vivid portrait of struggle, resilience, and the enduring pursuit of justice. The seeds she planted—embodying hope, courage, and an unwavering commitment to truth—are taking root, sprouting a collective movement that holds the line in the face of repression.



Photo retrieved from [PHILIPPINE STAR](#)

#FreeFrenchie  
#DefendPressFreedom

by SHALAIN LLEANSY MEYKATRIZ BERLUDO

# BREAKING-FREE

## -An ode to my old self-

It all began when my mother figured out I was smart at the age of one. Instead of the usual mamas and dadas, I was starting to sing the lyrics of Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On." The spark began early, growing stronger with every passing year that soon enough became a raging flame inside of me, an insidious force urging me to work harder and better than the rest.

With every passing time, I became accustomed to being called the gifted child. Heads turned as the littlest contender walked her worn-out shoes up on the stage, a smile beaming, knowing she had what she and her parents had wanted.

Though I may have seemed like an outcast, it had never paid the pride of having been known as the prodigy who stood out from the rest.

It was late when I realized that the steadfast burn had started swallowing me whole down into the depths to where I shouldn't have belonged. I could still vividly remember the sting of an unsatisfactory grade when I didn't meet their expectations. It was in these moments that I realized that my self-worth was tied to numerical figures on paper, accolades, and trophies in gold.

Then it all stopped. Or did it? So suddenly, it felt like time stopped ticking for me. Every step forward, I go back two. A potential buried deep inside my bones, deprived of the sparks that had once burned me alive. When did I stop being remarkable? I could only look back on who I was. I didn't feel like the old me anymore.

Having relied on what I have accomplished, its absence had left a huge void in my existence.

I was stuck in a void trying to relive who I was before. Indeed, the cost of being the girl that I was had left turmoil inside of me. A cost so high, mainly paid by my peace and happiness. Was it all worth all the sleepless nights, the countless tears, and the endless fight against my voices and thoughts of failing?

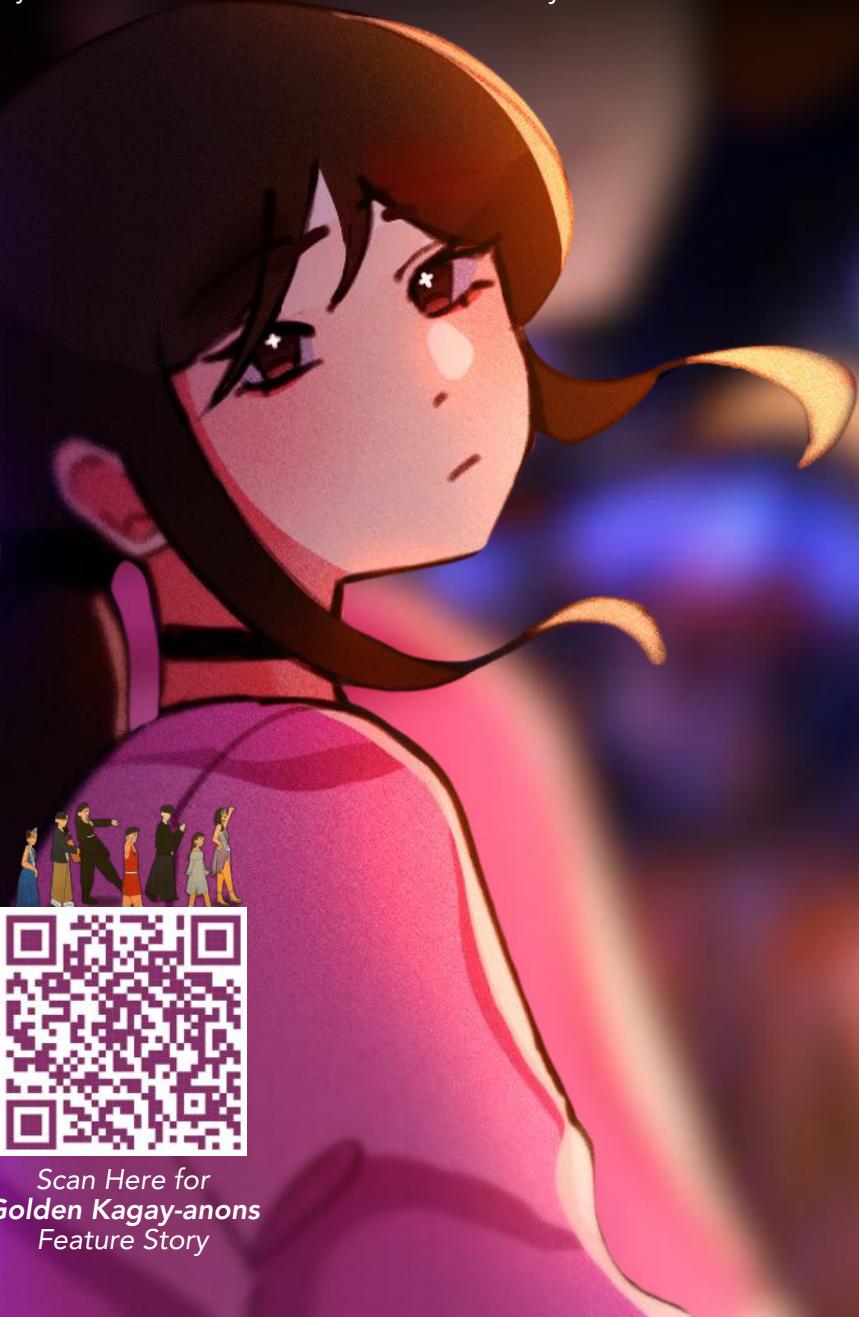
Then I decided to breathe, just enough to recall what mattered. It was not an overnight thing, but it did happen on a random Wednesday morning.

I suddenly felt like I did not have to be so hard on myself anymore. Indeed, other things mattered more than the accolades that I received. I started to accept that I was not falling behind but that I only had new priorities instead. I may not be shining like I was before; but I was gaining more friends and being my most confident self because after all, I was not me mainly because of my achievements. I am a complex human being with a broken smile, an erupting laugh, and a boiling temper.

These vital moments are to internalize that we are people because of our feelings, mistakes, and individuality.

While it is alright to strive for something, we should not put ourselves on a pedestal and make it seem like the world would stop spinning if we failed to do so. Just take one step at a time, forward, and never back.

cartoon by MICHAELA ACEDO



Scan Here for  
Golden Kagay-anons  
Feature Story

## ONE

# MOONUIT Night

by RYMAE SHANE CATAYONG

The buzzing sounds of jeepneys echoed frantically all over Divisoria. Cars maneuvered through one-way streets, with drivers honking due to traffic delays. People rushed past each other as music from ukay-ukay shops reverberated through the air, their sounds mingling over dense chatter.

At the periphery, some people lay on the pavement, others as vendors urging you to try out their latest food project. A group of teenagers yells excitedly as they wonder where their next cafe stop will be.

A thousand lives connect here, to each a story still unseen and silent, every story as a complement to the busy heart of Cagayan de Oro.

### THE MASSEUSE

On the second floor of a rented pad, a mother scurries through her fridge as she prepares breakfast.

She spends her day with the duties that come with motherhood.

When the night shifts, however, her time is spent at the Plaza, working as a masseuse to

help keep their family's finances afloat.

"Mas bibo sauna compared karon", she expressed her struggle, her mind wandering on the 'shortcomings' she's had as a mother.

### THE CHILDREN

Just across the street where the mother masseuses, are three kids playing with bald mops. They race around the monument of Ramon Magsaysay, their tiny hands gripped on their mops, mimicking the sounds of toy cars.

The moon's light cast on their bright faces, their smiles gleaming their own world wonder. The oldest of the three brought out a 4-piece Siomai. Sharing it with the other two, he thanked the world before eating, his words grateful to the vendor that offered it to him -- it was the only stock left before they closed.

### THE FRUIT VENDOR

The night grew darker, and the once-crowded plaza felt a little

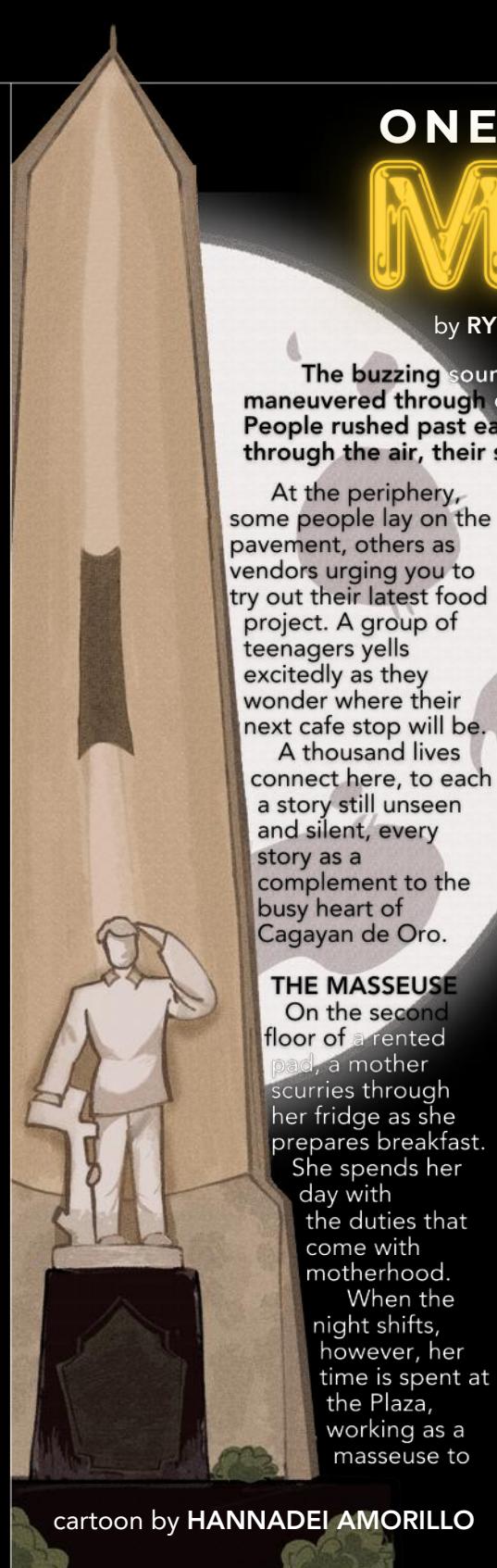
lonelier. The cardboard boxes crumbled under the heavy load of fresh lanzones fruits. Its weight was too much for Manong to carry, muttering how he could've closed the stall much easier if they hadn't fallen.

He mentioned how his life took a crazy turn back in his province. He heaved a sigh and proceeded to pack his things, his hands were wrinkled because of time, but his movements were soft and patient.

"Nahitabo naman, padayon ra jud ta ani, ga." While picking up his fruits,

People weave in and out of the city, their lives intersecting with their fills of stories to tell. It's a bizarre sentiment—the idea that everything and everyone is experiencing life at the very same time, and in very different ways.

Life is not linear, we may never know the stories of everyone we've met, but they're present nevertheless. If we take a moment to keep our hearts open, each tale is just as remarkable as everyone else's.



cartoon by HANNADEI AMORILLO

# Love Grows Wherever She Goes

by YSABELLE ROSE E. ENCALLADO

photo by BING GONZALES

There is nothing in this world that is more peculiar than life. At one point you have something and then the next, you lose it. In the hush of melancholic darkness, Ms. Cathlyn Floremae Raluto's life was tragically ended by a reckless driver, scurrying off without a trace. Even amidst this devastation, the sunshine she brought and left in this world will forever walk this lifetime.

In the words of her students, she wasn't just a teacher, she was a friend and a mother. As they fondly recalled their cherished memories, they highlighted one particularly from the team building program she planned for them.

It was the end of their First Session and before they entered a new one, she orchestrated a program with the goal of bringing the class together and to encourage her students to interact with one another.

According to them, she brought people together by simply being the person that she is.

Ms. Cath was a representation of love that is kind and gentle, one that doesn't scare you but instead it embraces you.

As I watched how their eyes glistened as they spoke about Ma'am Cath,

I didn't just see what their words meant, I felt it. She brought the best out of people and that was her biggest strength. She was so full of love herself that just the sheer thought of her being gone could leave you empty, yearning for how good it all felt when the world still had her.

They continuously linger on the parts where her advice had touched each layer of their being, how her words spoke volumes, and how they still take them by heart.

Losing her was more than painful, it was terrifying. It left the feeling of emptiness with the simple thought that she was no longer around.

With that reality, all they could do is be grateful that they got to have her in their lives, kept in their hearts forever.

"Laban lang sa life." One of her students said, a huge smile plastered on her face. She remembered how Ma'am Cath that used to say that to them as a reminder for them to keep going in spite of every curveball thrown their way. Until now they still live by her wise words, the warmth she casted upon them, and the positive impact she made in the lives of many.



# Down by the Golden River

## A Rich Exploration of CDO River's Flora, Fauna, and Fungi Kingdoms

by ARIA GOLDIEMERE DELIGERO

With 421 primary rivers, the Philippines is endowed with an abundance of water bodies. Slicing through the terrains of Northern Mindanao, the Cagayan River stands as one of Cagayan de Oro's golden treasures. The Cagayan de Oro River, one of the 18 main river basins in the nation, rises in the Kalatungan Mountain Range and flows north through the towns of Bukidnon and the golden city of Cagayan de Oro before emptying into Macajalar Bay. The river serves as the natural dividing line between Bukidnon and Cagayan de Oro City.

During precolonial times, the river was referred to as the Kalambaguasahan River because of the presence of lambago trees or sea hibiscus that mostly grows in moist tropical areas such as riverbanks. When the Spaniards reached the city, it was renamed as "Cagayan River," matching the city's name, Cagayan de Oro, derived from the indigenous term "Cagayan," which means river, and the Spanish word "de Oro," which means "of gold." Together, these two words make the "River of Gold."

Throughout the years, the river has sustained the lives of many Kagay-anons, whether it be as a source of food and water, as a recreational activity like whitewater rafting due to its wild watercourse, or as a source of employment and tourism opportunities. It performs exceptionally well both economically and ecologically.

Beyond that, the Cagayan River is more than just a body of water. Its waters have sustained

generations upon generations. It has long been a part of Cagayan de Oro's cultural legacy. On top of that, the river is certainly rich in biodiversity, supporting a diverse range of fauna, flora, and fungi biodiversity.

### Fauna-menial Kingdom

Various types of fauna can be found in the riverbanks and within the waters of the river, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, mollusks, and bats.

Inhabiting the river's waters are tilapia, snapper (aha-an), Indo-Pacific tarpon (Buwan-buwan), crab (Alimango), silver perch (Bugaong), mudfish (Halu-an), catfish (Pantat), mangrove red snapper (Tadlungan), squaretail mullet (Balanak), and freshwater snails.

Above its waters and along the riverbanks, bats, various frog species, snakes, and other reptiles are hosted in the area. There are eight bat species, five belonging to the Pteropodidae family, two Vespertilionidae, and one Emballonuridae, which can be found along

the hollow trees. Two indigenous species of conservation significance are included in this variety, which makes up around 15% of Mindanao's bat biodiversity.

These species help to conserve the river and sustain not only its environment but also the economy of Cagayan de Oro.

### Flora-shing Colors

The river is home to fruit-bearing trees like banana, guava, mango, and coconut as well as ficus spp., which act as food for bats, and also trees such as gmelina arborea, and molave.

The area along its banks is also home to a remarkable variety of 97 species, spanning 81 taxa and 52 families. These plants, which fall under the categories of angiosperms, gymnosperms, pteridophytes, and bryophytes, comprise the fundamental strata of the river's ecology and are used for a variety of economic purposes, such as food, medicine,

building, and ornamentation.

Additionally, carabao grasses predominate in the ground cover along the riverbanks, providing habitat for small animals.

### Funga-mental Species

The microorganisms of the river are important for maintaining the fundamental wellness of the ecosystem.

Organic matter from fallen leaves and dead plants is broken down by fungal decomposers and mycorrhizals, which are fungus that form symbiotic with plants and provide them with minerals like potassium (K), nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and other micronutrients.

### Liceo U's Safer River, Life Saver Foundation

Through its university initiative, The Safer River Life Saver Projects, the Liceo de Cagayan University, which is situated next to the river, has contributed to the conservation and preservation of the Cagayan de Oro river. By planning activities like tree

planting campaigns, waterway clean-ups, and a recent Cagayan River tour with Licean students to raise awareness of environmental issues, the institution has helped to solve environmental problems since its foundation in 2009.

Each component is essential to the river's overall health. The fauna, flora, and fungus, are all interdependent. Protecting the environment as a whole, not just one aspect, is crucial. Thus, keeping it healthy is crucial to preserving both the ecological balance and the means of subsistence for those who rely on it.

Since the first drop of water touched the soil, nature and humans have shared a lasting relationship. The connection that exists between this river and humanity serves as a reminder of our shared obligation to safeguard our natural resources for the benefit of both the current and future generations.



Two indigenous species of bats that have conservation significance are included in this variety, which makes up around 15% of Mindanao's bat biodiversity.

# Nature's Nemesis

Think before you drink

by ARIA GOLDIEMERE DELIGERO

Plastic bottles are made of PET and HDPE. Because of this, they are not biodegradable and can take up to 450 years to break down, which can cause long-term environmental harm.

Behind the Golden River's biodiversity lies innumerable piles of throwaway bottles. With so many plastic bottles floating around its waters, its biodiversity is endangered.

Plastic bottles are the major source of plastic pollution; the Philippines is responsible for 80% of ocean plastic pollution, with 19 Philippine rivers—including the Cagayan de Oro River—ranking among the top 50 polluting rivers worldwide

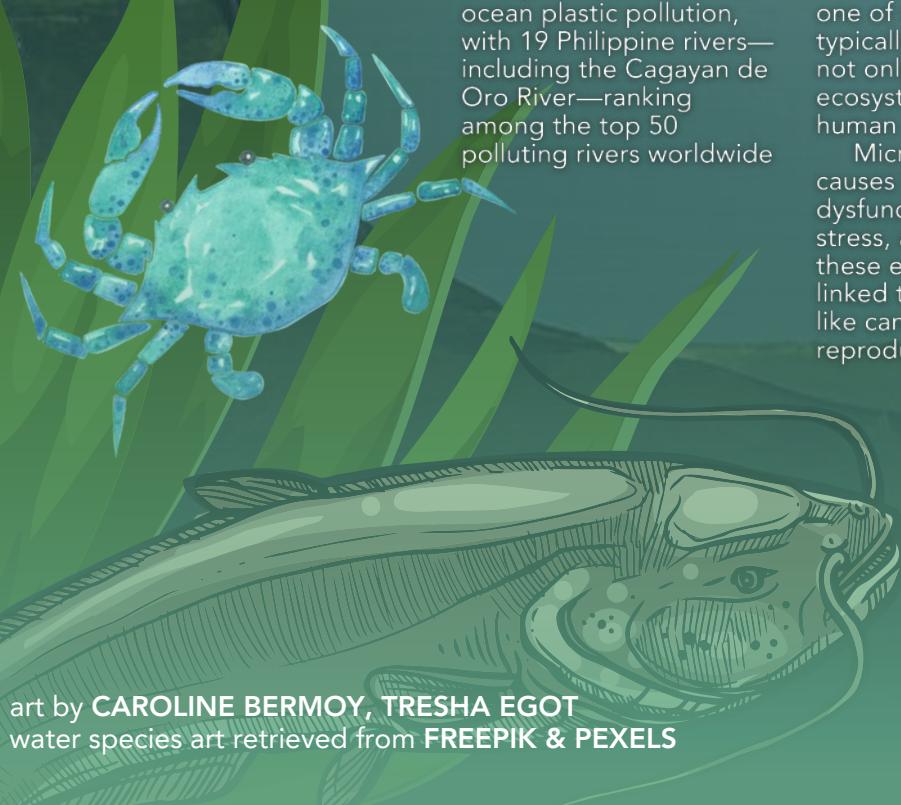
It's easy to throw when we're unaware of the consequences it brings. These plastic bottles we've thoughtlessly thrown will be directly reflected on us. 150 fish species worldwide have consumed microplastics, making plastic bottles a major threat to biodiversity. As fishes are one of the foods we typically intake, this does not only impact aquatic ecosystems but also human health.

Microplastic exposure causes immunological dysfunction, oxidative stress, and DNA damage; these effects may be linked to chronic diseases like cancer and reproductive issues.

Plastic bottles, though they can be reusable, are not ideal for daily use. Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE) are the main materials used to make plastic bottles. Because of this, they are not biodegradable and can take up to 450 years to break down, which can cause long-term environmental harm.

With the availability of trendy and convenient non-plastic tumblers like aquaflasks, Stanley, and even cheaper ones found in our nearby markets, what's preventing us from adapting to these trends and disregarding the daily use of plastic bottles?

As the Earth continues to deteriorate, let the process of change begin in ourselves. From minimal and personal efforts such as switching from plastic bottles to tumblers to participating in major ones like helping in coastal clean-ups, these measures are already making a significant contribution to protecting not just our waterways but the planet as a whole.





Cyber-Thread

### Depths of Deepfake

by ARIA GOLDIEMERE DELIGERO

At a time when people's perceptions and beliefs are influenced by the content generated through artificial intelligence flaunted on social media, the invasion of deepfake technology has become a high-energy threat to one's identity and integrity.

These hyper-realistic synthetic media that are made through artificial intelligence are capable of mimicking anyone, weirdly, and their mere presence has comfortably distorted the line between what's real and what isn't.

Deepfakes don't only mislead people, they erode people's trust in media, institutions, and even friendships. Given the potential impact of deepfakes, it is essential to pay more attention to this problem and make serious efforts to slow down its spread.

People used to think deepfake was more of a stupid novelty item, but now it's rapidly becoming a common problem, statistically with a spike of 3000% in deepfake-based fraud attempts in the past year.

This is a colossal concern as this goes to show how vulnerable this technology is and any other bad actor who wants to develop believable impersonations for several malignant ends, such as identity theft, financial fraud, and campaigns to spread fake information can be successful overnight.

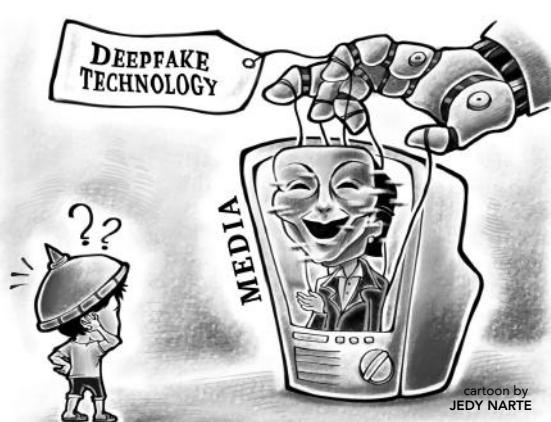
Recently, there have been fake videos and pictures on social media platforms that portray some of the members of BINI, a P-pop girl group managed by Star Magic, they have already become one of the many chosen subjects of deepfake content in the country.

Furthermore, the potential consequences of the deepfake technology raise significant worries. The consequences are dire: when trust in information sources diminishes, so too does the foundation of informed decision-making in democratic societies.

To address the deepfake crisis, a multifaceted approach is essential. It can start by encouraging a culture of skepticism—where users verify information through trusted sources before sharing—which can help mitigate the spread of deepfakes.

The rise of deepfake technology presents a formidable challenge to individual identity and societal integrity. As this technology continues to evolve, so too must our responses.

By fostering public awareness, investing in technological solutions, and implementing regulatory measures, we can begin to alleviate the threat posed by deepfakes. It is time to confront this digital menace head-on and protect the authenticity of our identities and the integrity of our information landscape. The stakes are too high to ignore; the future of trust in our digital world depends on it.



## SIDEBAR

## 3 in 5

Educators uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) for research and writing purposes.

Source: Research Conducted by US-based Hanover Research in 2023.

## INSIDE THE WRAPPERS: Uncovering the Health Implications of Pancit Canton

by PSALM ISAIAH M. CASINO

Nationally relished, an addicting flavor and a partner to your heavy papers. The go-to snack and meal of the Filipino people, popularized by companies like Lucky Me, XTRA BIG, and Quickchow, has long been a favorite among our younger population. It is cheap and easy to prepare; you can't get enough of it. But what lies beyond its intoxicating taste?

In every tasty dish, the question that always follows is, "What's in it?" Be it the contents or how it's made, every dish invokes curiosity. The answers aren't as nice as they might seem in the case of the highly acclaimed Pancit Canton.

Despite its flavor and popularity, the prominent noodle dish contains negative health effects that you may associate with its consumption. For average individuals, consuming pancit canton regularly would pose significant health risks and might result in complications.

Pancit Canton, in contrast to other noodle dishes, makes extensive use of soy sauce, which is well-known for having a high salt content. Some people could be misled into believing that the issue is not as bad as it seems when, in reality, consuming excessive amounts of sodium has been connected to health risks, including high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease.

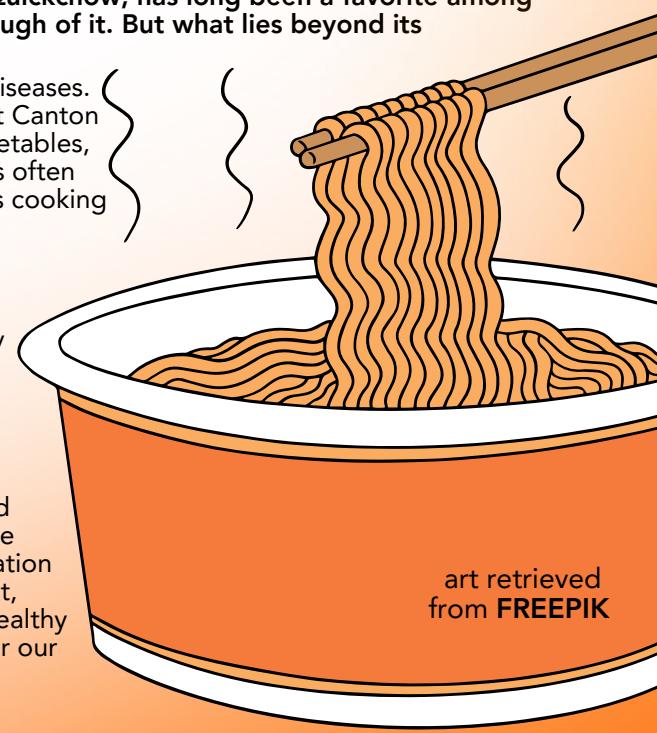
According to the USDA, the dish has also been associated with its high calorie (518 kcal per serving) and fat content (28 g per serving).

Frequent consumption of high-calorie products can lead to weight gain and put you at risk from obesity-related conditions such as diabetes

and cardiovascular diseases.

Although Pancit Canton contains various vegetables, its nutritional value is often diminished due to its cooking process and mixture with other noodles and fats.

While Pancit Canton is undeniably tasty, its negative health effects would make it ideally not worth consuming daily; instead, it is better recommended that Pancit Canton be consumed in moderation as an occasional treat, while prioritizing a healthy and balanced diet for our overall well-being.



art retrieved from FREEPIK

## Understanding MPOX: Not the New COVID

by JOHN ERICK M. EDURIA JR.

Following the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, the introduction of any new infectious diseases might spread ripples of panic around the world. MPOX, a viral disease formerly known as monkeypox, has recently piqued the interest of global health experts while also raising public concerns. However, it is critical to note that MPOX is not the next COVID-19. Although both diseases are caused by viruses, their means of transmission, symptoms, and public health implications are very different.



art retrieved from MULTIVASTUDIO

MPOX, a viral disease known as monkeypox, has recently piqued the interest of global health experts while also raising public concerns. However, it is critical to note that MPOX is not the next COVID-19. Although both diseases are caused by viruses, their means of transmission, symptoms, and public health implications are different.

MPOX primarily spreads through close contact with bodily fluids or contaminated materials as well as prolonged face-to-face respiratory droplet exchange, in other words, sneezing or coughing.

MPOX typically presents with a rash or pustular lesions, along with a fever, swollen lymph nodes, and muscle aches. These symptoms can last anywhere from two to four weeks, and while they are uncomfortable, MPOX is generally self-limiting in healthy individuals.

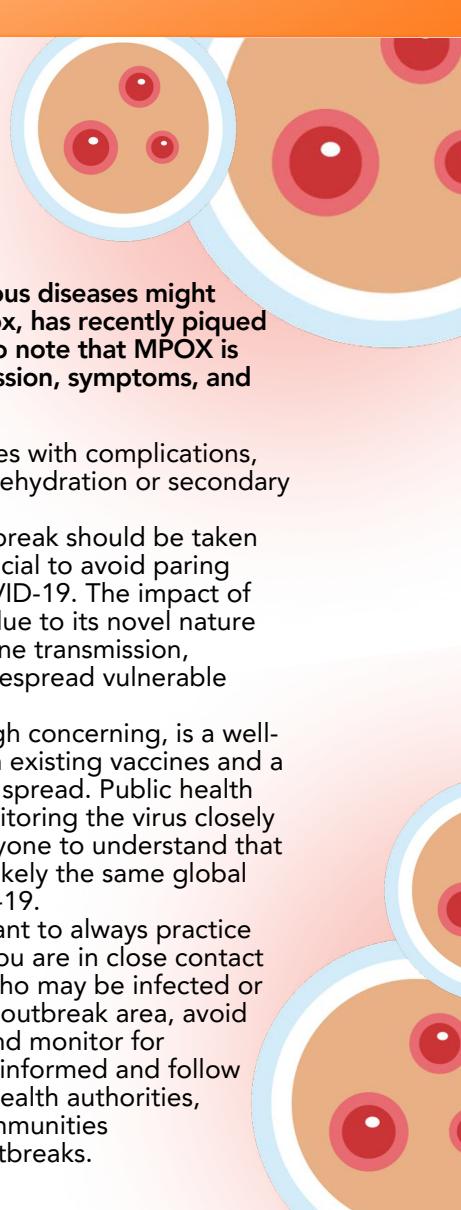
Hospitalization is rare and primarily

reserved for cases with complications, such as severe dehydration or secondary infections.

Any viral outbreak should be taken seriously; it's crucial to avoid paring MPOX with COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 was due to its novel nature and rapid airborne transmission, especially in widespread vulnerable populations.

MPOX, though concerning, is a well-known virus with existing vaccines and a limited mode of spread. Public health officials are monitoring the virus closely and urging everyone to understand that this virus is not likely the same global event as COVID-19.

It is important to always practice caution, and if you are in close contact with someone who may be infected or have been in an outbreak area, avoid direct contact and monitor for symptoms. Stay informed and follow guidance from health authorities, especially in communities experiencing outbreaks.



## Reality Behind the Huff, Puff, and Blow

by RYAN MAGANOD

With society ever-evolving, societal concerns encompass not only traditional concerns like racism, poverty, and inequality but also more recent and contemporary ones. What has been a recent concern in the Philippines is vaping.

Vaping is becoming increasingly common among Filipinos, with a disturbing percentage of adults and young people picking up the habit. According to a recent Global Youth Tobacco's Survey, almost one in seven Filipino youths between the ages of 13 and 15 are reported to use vapes.

Vapes are seen as a trend, frequently worn by users like

it's a fashion accessory. As we roam through the cities, there is always a teenager wearing vapes like pieces of jewelry, as it fulfills them for both accessibility and decoration.

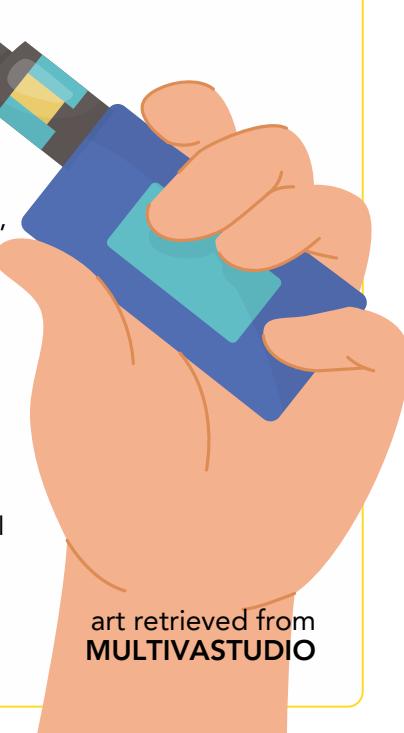
However, beneath the fashion lies a dangerous masquerade. People often have the misconception that vaping is relatively safer than smoking classic cigarettes. But in actuality, it can be just as dangerous.

Manufacturers of vape devices added a revolutionary upgrade to smoking. They added flavors that usually come from fruits, menthol, sweet, and others that entice the consumers. The amount of toxic substances present in vapes could be much higher

than in regular cigarettes.

The amount of toxic substances present in vapes could be much higher than in regular cigarettes. E-cigarettes have an oily liquid base that dissolves and heats up nicotine, a highly addictive substance. In addition, common compounds found include formaldehyde, which causes lung cancer; acrolein, a weed killer; and diacetyl, which is known to promote lung irritation when inhaled.

Vaping may be trendy, but prioritizing health should never go out of style. If the public will not bring a stop to vaping, it would be a starting point of a major dissonance between perceived safety and actual health risks.



art retrieved from MULTIVASTUDIO

# Mangosteen: The Future of Eco-Friendly Dye?

by JOHN ERICK M. EDURIA JR.

Imagine a future where the vivid colors of your clothes come not from chemicals but from fruits. This vision might be closer than you think, thanks to the students of G12-STEM 2, who, with their research product titled "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Mangosteen (*Garcinia Mangostana*) as a Natural Dye for Silk Products," used the humble mangosteen fruit better known for its health benefits rather than its hidden potential to revolutionize fabric dyeing. Could this natural, eco-friendly dye be the key to a more sustainable textile industry?

The researchers were inspired to create this product in light of significant environmental challenges plaguing the country due to the extensive use of synthetic dyes, which caused serious ecological and water pollution. These artificial products pose health risks such as skin irritation and allergies, this approach promotes the creation of natural fibers, reduced water usage, eco-friendly chemical processes, and energy-efficient care method.

## THE HOW'S OF IT ALL

The process began with the sample preparation, which consisted of one and a half kilos of fresh, ripe mangosteen collected from the local market and was then emptied by removing the edible parts. The white layers of the skin were scraped, and the pericarps were washed under running water. The mangosteens were then left to stand for 2 hours to allow any remaining water to evaporate, and the pericarps were then chopped and air-dried for 3 hours.

As they finished the sample preparation, the dye extraction procedure began, using the solvent

extraction method with ethanol as the chosen solvent. The mangosteen peels were then immersed in a container filled with ethanol, and the peels were left to soak for 24 hours in the dark place at room temperature.

After the extraction of the mangosteen pigments, the solution containing the extracts was separated from the solid residue left by the peel through a filtration process in which they strained the extracted product onto a filter paper to isolate the peel debris from the filtrate. Upon completing the extraction, the researchers proceeded to the second part of the pigment separation process by sending the filtrate to the laboratory where a rotary evaporator, a device utilized for efficiently and gently removing solvents from the sample through evaporation, was readily available in one of their laboratories and was then handed over to them for the extraction process.

Subsequently, the researchers moved on to the morphanting process, which can increase the fabric's color strength. They utilized a mordant, specifically aluminum potassium sulfate, commonly known as "Tawas" in the Philippines.

It followed a stage of soaking the fabrics with aluminum solvent for a night and rinsing the fabric with clean water, then soaking it in the aluminum solvent again and boiling it at 100°C for an hour; it will then be left to cool at room temperature. The fabrics will then be removed and rinsed thoroughly, and lastly, they will leave the fabrics to air-dry for 24 hours.

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND

The science behind the mangosteen's dyeing potential: it is rich in anthocyanin, and natural pigments can be extracted and applied to fabrics, achieving hues that are not only beautiful but also sustainable. Unlike synthetic dyes, which often rely on petroleum-based chemicals, mangosteen dye offers a renewable alternative.

## ON ITS SUSTAINABILITY

Can mangosteen-based dye withstand washing, sunlight, and everyday wear? According to the research that was presented, it showed promising results but still needs modifications that are needed to make it as durable as synthetic dyes.

As the textile industry moves toward sustainability, natural dyes like mangosteen could redefine what's possible.

Beyond just adding color, mangosteen represents a shift toward holistic, environmentally responsible industries. If in the future such projects are successful, this tropical fruit could soon bring its vibrant hues to the clothes we wear, proving that sometimes the best innovations are those rooted in nature.



art retrieved from  
FREEPIK

# Accuracy at Your Fingerprints: Revolutionizing Attendance Monitoring

by ARIA GOLDIEMERE DELIGERO

As technology continues to progress for convenience, many conventional approaches must also adapt. Traditional manual attendance systems, such as roll calls and registers, have been in use in schools for decades. Nevertheless, these approaches are frequently ineffective due to their labor-intensive nature, time consuming nature, error-proneness, and potential for problems such as proxy attendance.

By implementing fingerprint biometrics, the Grade 12 STEM 5 students have developed an automated attendance management system that addresses this issue.

With this, students only need to touch the sensor with their fingers when they enter the classroom, and the system will confirm their attendance within a few seconds. After verification, the system logs the student's precise arrival time, marked as time-in, and the time-out when classes are over. The database contains all of the attendance statistics.

Attendance records can be easily seen, examined, or printed at any time by exporting this data to

Microsoft Excel.

This automated attendance system is done through these components: fingerprint sensor that takes each student's fingerprint and transforms it into a distinct digital ID for attendance verification, guaranteeing precise identification matching. Second, all attendance records are safely stored in a system program called MySQL. After that, a microcontroller processes the sensor's data and sends it to the database.

Furthermore, students' precise date and time are tracked using a real-time clock module. In order to verify successful scans, messages are shown visually on an LCD monitor.

System operations including adding new fingerprints, indicating time-in and time-out, and removing records when necessary are managed via push buttons. Finally, it is exported to Microsoft Excel so that the record may be tracked.

This innovation extends beyond educational settings and can also be applied in corporate offices, healthcare facilities, correctional institutions for inmate tracking, and many other sectors.

Not only does this enhance efficiency for both educators and learners, but it also promotes accuracy and integrity while supporting sustainability.

## eManuscript: Research Study Access Made Easy

by PSALM ISAIAH CASIÑO

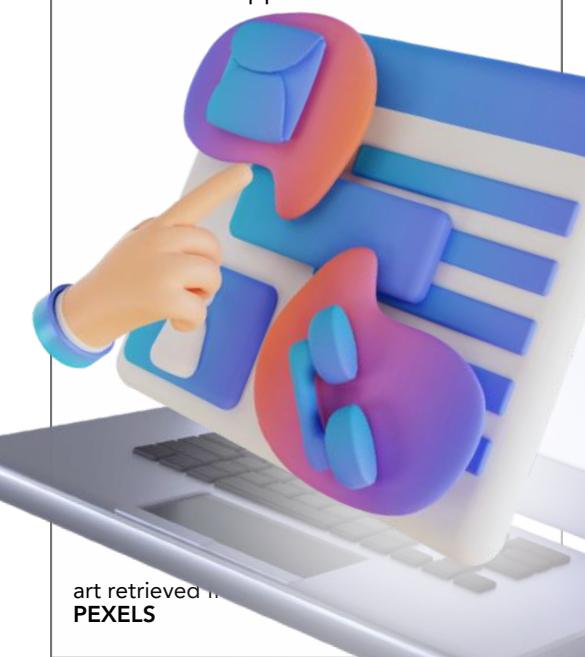
In an innovative stride toward academic excellence, Information Technology students at Liceo de Cagayan University have developed an exceptional capstone project named eManuscript. This system is set to transform how the Liceo community accesses and utilizes academic resources by offering seamless availability to unpublished research papers and other scholarly publications.

Launched with the vision of enhancing scholarly research and fostering a robust academic environment, eManuscript enables students and faculty to engage deeply with a comprehensive repository of unpublished works for citation and study. Its unique integration ensures that valuable academic output—often confined to limited circulation—becomes an accessible resource for future academic pursuits.

The platform can be accessed at the Elsa P. Pelaez Memorial Library's computer laboratory, where users can navigate a digital catalog designed for user-friendly searches and swift retrievals. Whether a student is seeking inspiration for a thesis or a professor is referencing past studies for advanced research, eManuscript promises to be an indispensable tool.

"The idea behind eManuscript was to bridge the gap between existing scholarly work and future research," explained the project leader from the IT department. "We noticed that many well-crafted research papers were left unused, serving no further purpose after submission. This system ensures that such works contribute to the university's knowledge base and inspire continued study."

eManuscript serves not only as a repository but also as a platform that supports citation tracking, thereby promoting proper academic attribution. Users can seamlessly browse works by topics, authors, and publication dates, creating a streamlined approach to research.

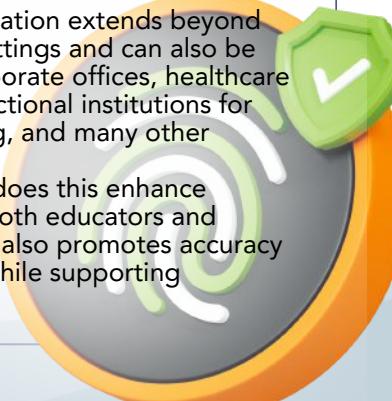


art retrieved from  
PEXELS

## IN FIGURES

**17% to 20%**  
of industrial water pollution comes from toxic textile dyes.

Source: Ecosophy.co.uk





Sports Sentinel

## Shattering Stereotypes

by VAN ALVIN ACEDILLO

Limitations are meant to be surpassed. In the realm of sports, it's often assumed that a specific gender is better suited to play in certain events, which results in unrealistic limitations on the "inferior gender."

Sports such as weightlifting were viewed as a masculine hobby; this, however, undermined the numerous women who succeeded in this sport. Gymnastics, for example, has long been perceived as a sport created to let women demonstrate their femininity; yet, this idea overshadows the fact that male competitors are just as capable in terms of grace and flexibility without surrendering their masculinity.

Such outdated beliefs should be abolished as a way to promote gender inclusivity and inspire young athletes to come forth and showcase their skills and abilities regardless of gender.

In a place that catalyzed to showcase stunning displays of grit, hard work, and sportsmanship, Filipino athletes began to tear down preconceived beliefs about gender roles in sports. It began with Hidilyn Diaz's outstanding gold medal in weightlifting at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and the recent back-to-back success of Carlos Edriel Yulo in the Artistic Gymnastics men's floor exercise and men's vault during the 2024 Paris Olympics. The fact that our weightlifting gold medalist was a woman and now our gold medalist for gymnastics is a man serves as a testament that we are making progress in deteriorating the limitations on our young athletes held down by gender discrimination.

Despite the evident changes Diaz's body developed through rigorous strength training, it is still undeniable that

she possessed all the feminine physical traits and all their advantages and disadvantages. Despite this, Diaz did not allow such setbacks to stop her from securing herself a gold medal, firmly marking her spot as the first Filipina weightlifting gold medalist. This victory defied the stereotypes that saw weightlifting as only a male sport. This not only brought honor to our country, but it also ignited the flame inside young female athletes who sought to follow in her footsteps, and they too wished to create their legacy in women's weightlifting.

Yulo possessed what some may call a man's dream body; his physical prowess and aesthetics are not to be messed with. However, 24-year-old Carlos Yulo proved that just as women are capable of strength and power, men too can be gracious and elegant. His journey further abolished common gender stereotypes, and his recent victory in artistic gymnastics further strengthened the sport's gender inclusivity.

The lengths to which these two exceptional athletes achieved should serve as a beacon of hope for those aspiring Filipino athletes who are afraid to defy the norms set by traditional stereotypes. The medals and honors they have attained will be forever etched in the history of Philippine sports because despite all odds, even with all the pressure and expectations heavily placed on their shoulders, they still managed to persevere, proudly bearing the pride of their country.

## SPORTS FEATURE

# GOLDEN GLORY

## Carlos Yulo's Double Gold Moment

by REGIE LIMBAGA

photos retrieved from  
PHILSTAR NEWS

Carlos Edriel Poquiz Yulo, the Filipino artistic gymnastics legend known for being the first male Filipino to win a gold medal, as well as the first male Filipino to secure two gold medals back-to-back thus far.

Caloy showcased potential at the early age of seven years old; his grandfather Rodrigo Frisco witnessed a young Carlos performing cartwheels and somersaults at a local playground. This prompted Rodrigo to enroll Caloy in the Gymnastic Association of the Philippines (GAP) facility in Manila. The GAP provided him with free training as well as professional coaching at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and was considered a protégé.

Caloy began his competitive career when he represented the National Capital Region (NCR) in the 2009 Palarong Pambansa in Tacloban, Leyte. Together with his elementary team, Caloy won his first gold medal.

Yulo, being a young athlete with only a dream and a passion for gymnastics, initially faced skepticism from his parents

regarding his aspirations. During one of Caloy's competitions in Germany in 2019 for the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, his parents didn't even bother to watch all the way through.

However, they were shocked when Caloy's coach called them at midnight to share the wonderful

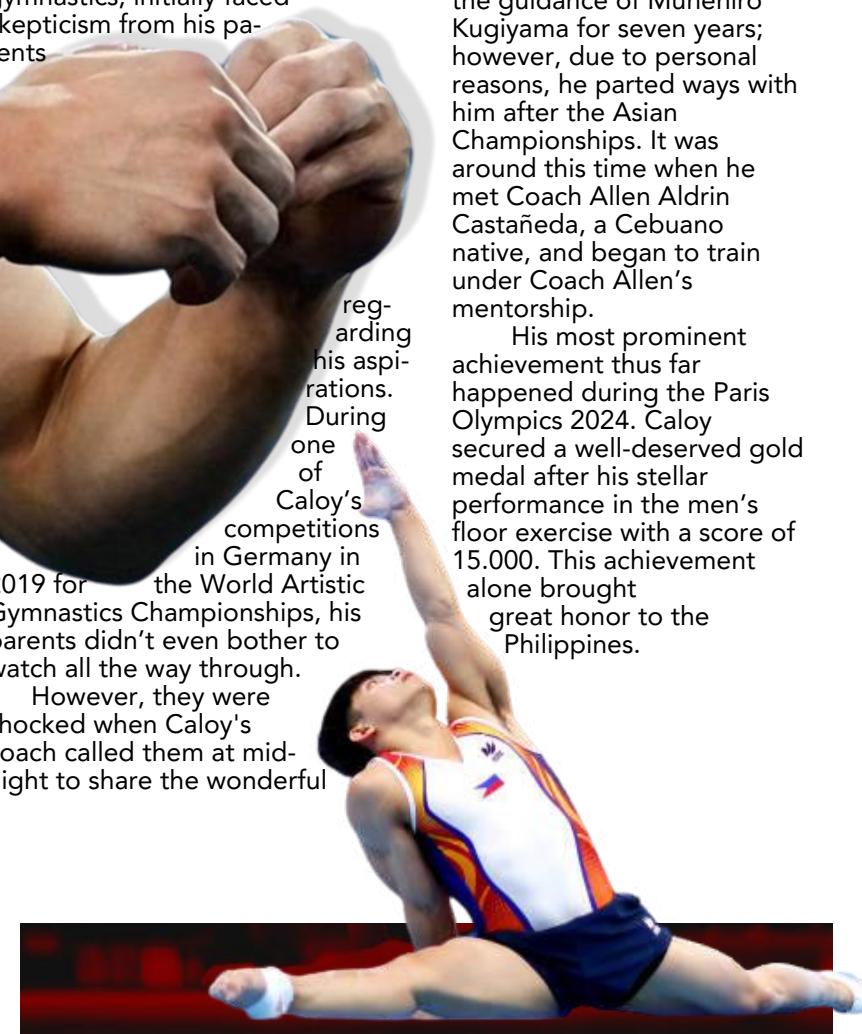
news. "We weren't able to watch live on YouTube because we really did not expect Caloy to win," said Angelica Yulo, Caloy's mother, in a report by Manila Bulletin.

Thanks to his proficiency and athleticism in artistic gymnastics, Japan offered him a scholarship program through the Japan Olympic Association, asking him to train in Japan. Caloy accepted this offer and made his international debut at the Melbourne World Cup 2018, as well as the Asian Games in the same year.

Caloy continued to flourish from there, winning a series of gold, silver, and bronze medals across different events such as the Olympics, Southeast Asian Games, and others. He specialized in Floor exercise but also competed in other categories like Parallel bars and Vault.

Caloy competed under the guidance of Munehiro Kugiyama for seven years; however, due to personal reasons, he parted ways with him after the Asian Championships. It was around this time when he met Coach Allen Aldrin Castañeda, a Cebuano native, and began to train under Coach Allen's mentorship.

His most prominent achievement thus far happened during the Paris Olympics 2024. Caloy secured a well-deserved gold medal after his stellar performance in the men's floor exercise with a score of 15.000. This achievement alone brought great honor to the Philippines.



## INTERNATIONAL SPORTS

## WPA World Championships: Amit outclasses Siming in Women's 9-Ball Final, 3-1

by KINGSTON MOLINA

Filipino billiard walker, Rubilen Amit clinched a commanding triumph, leaving Chen Siming of China with little chance of mounting a comeback in total domination of 3-1, 1-4, 4-2, 4-2, 4-3) in a race-to-four, best-of-five-sets match in the Women's 9-Ball Final during the WPA World Championships held at Claudelands Events Centre in Hamilton, New Zealand on September 8, 2024.

Veteran Amit, a 42-year-old pool shark player, delivered a standout performance, overcoming a 4-2 deficit to win the championship. After Chen took the first set 4-1, Amit rallied in the second set up to the final set.

Amit executed a cut break and navigated the table smoothly, pocketing the seven and securing the initial game. Siming responded with a solid shot on the six balls, followed by an accurate seven-ball position, taking a 2-1 lead.

A perfect jump shot then brought the score to 3-1. Siming maintained a significant lead with a well-executed break, pocketing two balls. A precise back cut on the six-ball sealed the first set with a final score of 1-4.

Siming banked a ball into the corner in the second set to regain the lead.

However, Amit quickly caught up to even the score before surpassing Siming with precise low shots for a 2-1 lead. Amit's positioning and angle control extended the lead to 3-1 with well-placed shots.



WORLD CHAMPION  
Rubilen Amit poses after a commanding win against China's Chen Siming on September 8 at Hamilton, New Zealand.

photo retrieved from PREDATOR PRO BILLIARD

# THIS ABILITY

Greatness Beyond Physical Limitations

by REGIE LIMBAGA

Breaking the chains of physical limitations is no easy task, as is the case for Filipino para-swimmer Ernie Gawilan, who recently placed sixth overall in the 2024 Paralympic men's 400m freestyle swimming finals. His disability did not hinder him from being the Philippines' first gold medalist in the Asian Para Games, which is a testament to his dedication and love for the sport of swimming.

However, Ernie's battle did not begin in the swimming pool; his first fight was inside his mother's womb. Ernie's journey would have never even begun had he not survived his mother's attempt at abortion after his father left them. His mother died due to cholera when he was just five months old, and he was left in the custody of his grandfather, Pedro.

At the age of seven, Ernie learned about his mother's failed abortion. This devastated him. "Badtrip talaga ako nu'n," stated Ernie. What was even more disheartening was his underdeveloped legs and left arm, which left him unable to walk. During the early stages of his life, he could only crawl, resulting in him experiencing mockery from other people due to his physical impairment.

Ernie was sent to a training center for handicapped youth in Davao del Norte, where he met coach Jude Corpuz. Coach Jude taught Ernie the skills that ignited a flame inside his heart and sparked his passion for swimming. "Lagi niya akong nakikitang nakatingin sa dagat kahit high tide o low tide. Kaysa masayang daw ang oras ko, tinuruan niya akong lumangoy," Ernie said. Little did he know that this would change his life forever.

Coach Jude officially made him a part of the swimming team along with other handicapped people. His first competition was the 2008 Philippine Olympic Festival held in Cagayan de Oro.

Just as things were looking up for Ernie, during the competition, he was almost disqualified for failing to bring his swimming trunks. But after careful consideration by the competition officials, they decided to let him compete wearing cargo pants.

There were times when he had to make tough decisions. During the 2017 ASEAN Para

Games, Ernie received the terrible news of his father's death. Despite encouragement from coach Tony to go home, he chose to stay and defend his title in the 400-meter freestyle event, registering 4:57 on board. In addition, he also bagged two gold medals, one silver, and two bronzes.

The swimming pool was everything to Ernie; it was his own personal world where he felt like he was normal. "Pag nasa tubig ako, normal na tao ako." "Hindi ko naiisip na may kapansanan ako," Ernie stated. Despite his troublesome past, which at times made him question why he deserved to be like that. "Madalas akong nagtatanong kung bakit ako ganito. Nakita ko yung sagot. Sa sports ako dinala ng kapansanan ko," Ernie said.

Instead of allowing his disabilities to drag him down and shatter his dreams, Ernie, despite all odds, broke the chains of his limitations and turned his weakness into his strength. His life story was packed with ups and downs; however, he never expected his path would lead to this. "Di ko inaasahan na dito ako dadalhin ng Diyos," added Ernie, and yet here he is, one if not the top para swimmer in the Philippines.

Ernie's story serves as a testament that despite lacking a few limbs, the flame within one's heart is more than enough to drive someone forward. No mountain is too tall, as for Ernie, there was no pool too deep. He swam with determination in his heart and a goal in his mind.

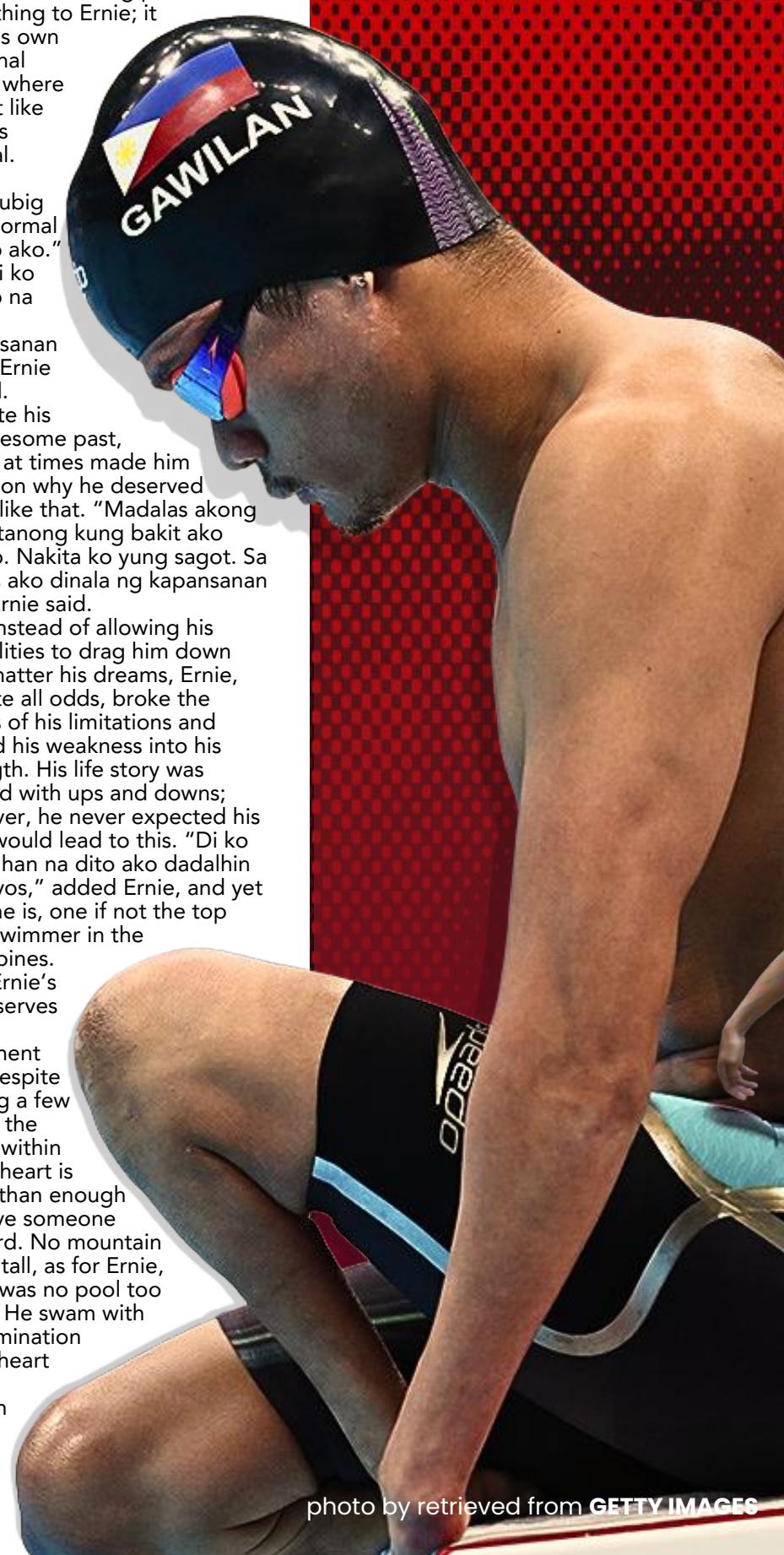


photo by retrieved from GETTY IMAGES

## UNIVERSITY SPORTS

## Blazing Tigers Bags Boys Table Tennis Quad-Gold in Total Domination

by VAN ALVIN ACEDILLO

The Blazing Tigers showcased their unparalleled skills in table tennis as they took first place in the 2024 Liceo U Games, Senior High School Men's Table Tennis Tournament across four categories at the East Academic Cluster (EAC), on October 23.

The tournament was played in four categories namely Team, Doubles, Mixed doubles, and Singles category.

Only the singles category utilized a bracketing system

meanwhile, the rest was played using a round-robin sequence.

The Blazing Tigers bared their fangs, as they stood at 3-wins, 0 losses in the Team, Doubles, and Mixed doubles Categories.

In addition to the Blazing Tigers' score streak, 17-year-old Noel John S. Pulta, a student from Grade 12 STEM 12, displayed outstanding gameplay. His skilled performance during the group events did not diminish, as he played against

Raging Wolves' 16-year-old Jame Alexander Caadlawon.

Both players showcased their aggressive prowess as they aimed for risky yet highly effective shots. Each match was tight, as both players refused to let the other win exchanging powerful shots at every opportunity.

Despite losing the first set, Pulta regained his momentum securing a 3-1 standing in a best of 5 championship round earning the fourth gold for the Tigers in the table match.

## SIDEBAR

## Liceo U Games 2024 Senior High School Overall Ranking

Tabulated and verified by the Office of the Senior High School Sports Coordinator and the SHS Tabulation Committee

RANK	CLUSTER	GOLD
1	BLAZING TIGERS	73
2	VALIANT JAGUARS	45
3	MIGHTY FALCONS	40

## UNIVERSITY SPORTS

## Mighty Falcons edges out Valiant Jaguars, secures Silver in Men's Regu

by JEAN CHLOE APILAT



POWER KICKS. Regu players display powerful kicks at the Sepak Takraw Tournament series during the 2024 Liceo U Games at the SAC Grounds.  
photo by KATE GIGANTO

Mighty Falcons secured their silver medal in men's regu by averting their first set disaster and propelling a 13-15, 15-4, 15-6 romp against the Valiant Jaguars on October 23 at the South Academic Cluster (SAC) grounds.

"Para sa akoa kay expected na namo nga madaog jud mi kay first of all, kusog jud ang among team. But suddenly, napildi lang jud sila sa first lang gyud," Falcons coach Mattlinder Acero commented in a post-match interview. "Sa among cluster pod, grabe among effort and hard work para pod mi makadaog."

The neck-to-neck battle in the first set was ended by Jaguars' Vincent Gregore's rigid block and the Falcons' unsuccessful spike.

Determined to recoup in the second set, the Falcons went on an early set rampage and scored 8 points before letting the Jaguars score reach 2.

The Falcons always kept a huge gap between their scores in the third set and ultimately ended it with a 9-point gap as the Jaguars failed to catch up throughout the whole set.

Kenneth Aca's powerful heading attacks and solid blocks greatly contributed to the Jaguars' points, as well as Brent Dagandara's calculated serves.

The winning team, consisting of Aljun Pagasian, Rudy Jaspe Jr., Cherwin Briones, and Paolo Gales, were Grade 11 STEM students.

Aside from the Falcons' strong teamwork, Cherwin Briones' quick receive and Aljun Pagasian's powerful spike attacks were notable in the team's success.

"Nagsabot jud mi na kanang makuha jud namo ang second place kay dapat makasilver jud ang STEM," Falcons team captain Briones stated when asked about how they rose back up after their first set defeat, eventually claiming 2nd place.



**UNITY IN SPIRIT.** Carmen paddlers move in unity as they clinch their eventual win at the 2nd Kagay-an International Dragon Boat Fiesta Race at the Cagayan De Oro River, on August 28, 2024.

COMMUNITY SPORTS

# Breath of VICTORY

**Carmen Paddlers surge to triumph, pocket Dragon Boat Championship**

by VAN ALVIN ACEDILLO  
photo by LIEUMUEL E. PANTUHAN

Barangay Carmen surged towards triumph against Uz Wildcats Zamboanga, Butuan Dragons, and Amihan Davao as they emerged victorious in the mixed 400m 24-under second Kagay-an International Dragon Boat Fiesta Race at the Cagayan De Oro River, on August 28, 2024.

Carmen's consistency proved to be a vital factor during the championships. Despite their competitors following closely behind, they managed to maintain their lead in first place.

The race commenced with a strong neck-to-neck lead between Carmen and Butuan. However, the Wildcats swiftly regained their tempo and overtook the Dragons.

Alas, Carmen's synchronized team

lead between Carmen and Butuan. However, the Wildcats swiftly regained their tempo and overtook the Dragons.

collaboration and steady tempo paid off, earning them the championship title.



## Valiant Jaguars Pierced Down Blazing Tigers in 5x5 Men's Basketball Game, 36-30

by REGIE LIMBAGA

The Valiant Jaguars ended the periodic SHS Men's 5x5 Basketball Game triumphant as they guaranteed gold on October 24, 2024, at the Liceo Civic Center (LCC).

At the beginning of the first quarter, the Blazing Tigers immediately secured the lead catching the Valiant Jaguars off guard.

Despite trying to recover from the shock, the Blazing Tigers shut down the game early with a score of 12-8.

With conviction, the Valiant Jaguars caught up with the Blazing Tigers but was later outscored during the second quarter by two

points, 16-14.

However, resilience dominated the Valiant Jaguars as they finally tipped the odds in their favor against the Blazing Tigers during the late afternoon game with 22-20.

The audience who were divided based on the teams displayed their support through their vigorous batyle cry with every point their teamscored.

Through grit and consistency, the Blazing Tigers succumbed to the Jaguars during the final stretch which ended the match with a final score of 36-30.

Consequently, the Blazing Tigers bagged silver while the Raging Wolves claimed bronze.

by REGIE LIMBAGA

**SPORTS FEATURE**

# GOLDEN GLORY

## Carlos Yulo's Double Gold Moment

Winning one gold was great; however, the 24-year-old Filipino legend left his country in awe as the following day, the golden boy bagged a second gold medal, earning himself 2 Olympic gold medals back-to-back consecutively.

This caused an uproar of cheers and support as Caloy cemented his legacy as the first Filipino to bring home 2 gold medals, deeply appreciated by the country and all his supporters who believed in him. Carlos "Caloy" Edriel P. Yulo's journey is

a testament that with passion and a dream, the possibilities are limitless. They say "you only live once," and Caloy made sure he left his footprint and ensured his story was filled with greatness.

/continuepage 18



photo retrieved from PHILSTAR NEWS



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Division of Cagayan de Oro Region X

**The  
TITANS  
SPORTS**

## SCOREBOARD

MIXED 400M 24U CATEGORY

**BARANGAY CARMEN CHAMPION**

**UZ WILDCATS ZAMBOANGA SECOND PLACE**

**BUTUAN DRAGONS THIRD PLACE**

INTERNATIONAL SPORTS

## Mangin clinches first gold for PH at World Taekwondo Juniors Championship

by KINGSTON MOLINA

This victory marks a historic moment for the Philippines, as it is the country's first gold medal in this championship in 28 years, following Alex Borromeo's win in the men's 47-kg division at the inaugural event in Barcelona in 1996.

"I was very emotional because it has been a long time since the Philippines has won a gold medal or even a medal on the world stage at the World Junior Championships," she reflected after receiving her medal.

Under the mentorship of, 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympian Kirstie Elaine Alora, Mangin's intensive training regimen paid off, allowing her to persevere through four challenging matches in one day.

During the championship match, Mangin demonstrated her exceptional skills, unwinding four head kicks that secured her the first round.

However, Kim, fought back fiercely in the second round, leveling the competition.

The decisive third round was a nail-biter, both athletes exchanged

points until Mangin clinched the victory with a narrow 7-6 lead.

Driven by her aspiration to represent the Philippines at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, Mangin's determination was palpable throughout the competition.

"My biggest dream is to compete in the Olympics in 2028, and it has become my motivation to bring out the best in me," she expressed in a post-match interview.

Looking to the future, Mangin is eager to compete in the 2025 Southeast Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand, as she continues to strive for excellence in Taekwondo.



photo retrieved from PHILIPPINE TAEKWONDO ASSOCIATION