

# THE CARMELIAN

Authentic and Responsible Journalism



## MCS TOPS FIRST-EVER YOUNG WRITERS COMPETITION

By Charles Joseph Z. Cimanos

The Association of Private Schools Administrators (APSA) – Journalism Centrex First Young Writer’s Competition was joined by the delegates from Mater Carmeli School (MCS) representing The Carmelian & Ang Munting Simbahan (TCAMS), placed 5th overall in the Filipino writing categories and swept several awards in both the English and Filipino categories on October 18, 2024.

APSA held its first-ever Young Writers Competition, where MCS stood tall with fourteen awards, one of which was a silver medal awarded to Marian Medina for Pagsulat ng Lathalain, and one trophy for placing fifth overall in the Filipino category.

The APSA was a fulfilling experience for both the delegates and their adviser, Sir Albert Martinez. “Happy, of course. It was less likely than expected. Many of the delegates in Filipino were not very familiar with that medium; however, we were able to get through it and even managed to bag that placement,” states Sir Martinez, speaking about their unexpected triumph.

In a brief interview with Marian Medina, she stated, “Competing for APSA, I had no expectations of winning, especially not being able to place second. I thought to myself that the others had far more chances of winning because they were trained thoroughly by their schools. So, when I heard my name being called on stage, I was utterly shocked.”

She ended the interview with a message to aspiring Carmelian journalists, mentioning that, “To all the aspiring Carmelian journalists who are afraid of stepping into a whole new world like this, believe me, it’s a lot better than you think!”

Despite all the *kaba and takot* (nerve-racking and fearful emotion), give it your best effort, and see just how you flourish and shine. Nothing is impossible with a heart that is willing.”

Juliana Suva’s experience at APSA was surreal; her achievement came unexpectedly, causing her to cry as she raced up to accept her prize. “Everything happened so fast. I cried and was happy, surprised all at the same time, but the feeling that I had made my family, my friends’ family, and school proud made me so grateful that God gave me a chance to be in APSA.”

“It was one of the most unexpected plot twists I experienced this school year, a moment that reminded me that life is only beginning. Many things are ahead of us all, so let us ready ourselves for discoveries, experiences, and surprises like these,” Xchilt Santos remarked, reflecting on her fifth-place finish in Pagsulat ng Balitang Agham.

Santos noted how unexpected it was for her to win in a Filipino category, as English is more her forte. This experience reignited her drive for journalistic writing after a brief period of losing hope in it.

## TRUMP INTENSIFIES IMMIGRATION AND DIVERSITY CRACKDOWN

By Giellene Therese R. Garcia

In a series of measures, President Donald Trump has intensified his administration’s crackdown on immigration and diversity initiatives.

The deployment of an additional 1,500 U.S. troops to the Mexican border aims to bolster security and curb illegal crossings. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed that a Monday executive order would dispatch 1,500 more troops to the border. More than 2,000 U.S. soldiers are deployed to support the U.S. Border Patrol and police in stopping migrants from crossing illegally.

The U.S. Justice Department also threatens local and state authorities if they fail to cooperate with Trump’s pledge to deport ‘millions and millions’ of undocumented immigrants.

Equally prominent on Trump’s agenda has been a full-on battle against so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs—intended to tackle racism and sexism, but which conservatives say discriminate against white people, and white men in particular.



Trump is also eliminating ‘radical’ affirmative action in the allocation of federal contracts, canceling an order designed to address racism that originated during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He also focused on ‘DEI madness’ when hiring staff for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

After he lost the 2020 election, more than a thousand supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol, attacked police, and vandalized the seat of U.S. democracy. Pardoning them was Trump’s first act as president.

**POWER COUPLE BREAKUP: WHAT THE BBM VS. SARA FEUD MEANS FOR THE PHILIPPINES**  
By: [Name] | 04 TC | Editorial

**“FOUR TROPICAL STORMS APPEARING NEARBY PHILIPPINES AT ONCE”**  
By: Thesa Beduyas | 04 TC | Science

**“LABELATIONS”**  
By: Marian Medina & Frejha Dela Cruz | 03 TC | Feature

**YULO’S LEGACY: INSPIRING A GENERATION OF FILIPINO ATHLETES**  
By: Jan Lazaro | 05 TC | Sports

## CARMELIAN ALUMNA DOMINATES SLPLE 2024

By Allysa Kimberly S. Tamayo

Tricia Pascual, a proud alumna of Mater Carmeli School of Novaliches, Quezon City Inc., soared to the top of the 2024 Speech-Language Pathologists Licensure Examination (SLPLE), becoming this year’s topnotcher. Her outstanding performance in the prestigious exam has made her a source of inspiration for her alma mater and a testament to the power of faith and hard work.

But Tricia’s journey to the top wasn’t easy. Along the way, she faced countless challenges that brought her to the brink of breaking. Reflecting on those difficult moments, she shared, “My faith became my anchor—I went to church daily, read my Bible, prayed fervently, and entrusted everything to Him.”

When the results were finally announced, Tricia was overwhelmed. “It felt surreal! It didn’t sink in at first; it took me days to finally grasp the magnitude of this achievement,” she said. “I thought back to the night of tears and prayers and realized that surrendering everything to Him was the best decision I made.”

For Tricia, being the topnotcher is not just about the title or recognition. “It’s about the journey—the struggles I overcame and the faith that carried me through,” she explained. Her success is a testament to the strength found in resilience, trust, and unwavering belief.

As she looks to the future, Tricia offers a heartfelt message to aspiring Carmelians: “Take care of yourself – study diligently, rest when you need to, and surround yourself with people who uplift and support you. Remember that success is not just about achieving a goal; it’s about the character and faith you build along the way. The path won’t always be smooth, and you’ll face challenges, but don’t be afraid to lean on God.”

Tricia hopes to use her success to inspire others. “Know that your journey is not just for you—it’s an opportunity to uplift and inspire those around you. Keep striving, trust in God’s timing, and have faith in the great plans He has for you.”

Her story is a powerful reminder that with perseverance, support, and an unshakeable faith, dreams do come true. Congratulations, Tricia—

you’ve made your school, family, and everyone who knows you incredibly proud. Your journey is just beginning, and the future is bright.



# LAW REMOVES USE OF 'MOTHER TONGUE' IN KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3



Elementary students during the teacher's day program at Mater Carmeli School. (Photo by Francine Ablog)

By Francesca Therese F. Rolle

Quezon City, Philippines — The proposed bill to cease the use of the 'mother tongue' in multilingual classes from Kindergarten to Grade 3 has lapsed into law without the signature of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on October 10, 2024. It is now officially referred to as Republic Act No. 12027.

RA 1202, or the Act Discontinuing the Use of the Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction, makes the use of regional languages optional in monolingual classes as a supplementary teaching tool.

This amends sections 4 and 5 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, or Republic Act 10533, which authorized the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program.

With this new law, the medium of instruction shall revert to Filipino and English, while the mother tongue will be an 'auxiliary media of instruction' only.

Under Section 2 of the law, the optional implementation of the MTB-MLE program in monolingual classes may be practiced under the condition that: an official orthography shall be developed and published by the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino (KWF).

Officially documented vocabulary shall be published by the KWF, and there are teachers

available in the school who speak and are trained to teach in the mother tongue.

The Department of Education (DepEd) will review the optional implementation of the MTB-MLE program in monolingual classes three years after the law takes effect.

The DepEd, in consultation with the KWF, must develop a language mapping policy to evaluate students based on their regional language and identify monolingual classes nationwide within one year after the law takes effect.

Monolingual classes are composed of students who speak the same first language and are enrolled in the same grade level in a school year.

The removal of mother tongue as a subject from the revised K-10 curriculum was criticized by the Filipino advocacy group, claiming it is a step backward in the process of student learning by using their first language.

# THIS BAND IGNITES THE 37TH MCS ANNIVERSARY

By Francesca Therese F. Rolle

A night to remember for Carmelians and visitors as this year's Battle of the Bands' special guest, This Band, made an appearance, performing alongside eight selected bands at the quadrangle for the celebration of the 37th Founding Anniversary of Mater Carmeli School (MCS) on November 8, 2024.

Lead singer Andrea Manzano was warmly welcomed by fans with loud cheers as they performed on stage around 10 p.m. as the last guest band.

The crowd sang along as they opened their performance with

'Di Na Babalik,' also performing their hit songs 'Hindi Na Nga' and 'Di Sapat Pero Tapat.'

Aside from singing, they took time to interact with fans, even bringing along one of the teachers to the stage to perform alongside them.

They covered several songs, such as 'Alapaap' by Eraserheads, 'Kilometro' by Sarah Geronimo, and 'You Belong With Me' by Taylor Swift.

They ended the night with their last performance of their hit Kahit Ayaw Mo Na, which got

the audience singing along.

This Band thanked the audience for their love and participation before leaving the stage. "Maraming salamat sa mainit na pagtanggap, Mater Carmeli family! Sa uulitin!"— posted on their official Instagram account.

The night started with competing bands from JHS and SHS who battled for the title of champion, ending with Echoes of Euphoria standing as the champion.



This Band captivated Carmelians, making the 2024 Battle of the Bands a night to remember. (Photo by Andrew Fernandez)

# BISHOP PABLO, ELEVATED TO CARDINAL BY POPE FRANCIS



Pope Francis elevates Bishop Pablo to Cardinal, marking a historic milestone of faith, leadership, and devotion. (Photo by Rappler)

By Allysa Kimberly S. Tamayo

Quezon City, Philippines — Bishop Pablo Virgilio "Ambo" David of the Diocese of Caloocan has been named a cardinal by Pope Francis in a solemn ceremony held on December 7, 2024, at St. Peter's Basilica.

At 65, Cardinal David becomes the 10th Filipino to join the College of Cardinals. Known for his advocacy for human rights and care for the marginalized, the ceremony included 21 new cardinals from diverse nations, highlighting the Church's commitment to global representation and its mission to reflect Pope Francis's pastoral vision.

Cardinal David received the symbolic red biretta and ring, representing his readiness to sacrifice for the faith.

Pope Francis, who presided over the event despite a visible bruise on his chin from a minor accident, underscored the importance of service and sacrifice in the role of a cardinal.

The Diocese of Caloocan celebrated his appointment as a milestone for the local Church and a testament to its vibrant faith. Parishioners held vigils, offering prayers of gratitude for their bishop's new role.

Cardinal David joins active Filipino cardinals Jose Advincula and Luis Antonio Tagle, further cementing the Philippines' influence in the global Catholic community.

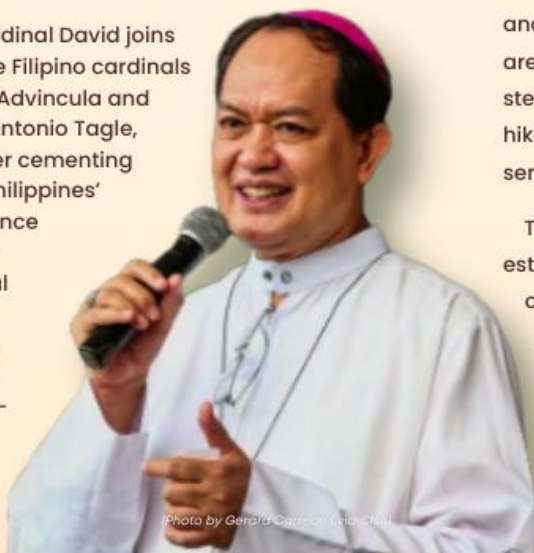


Photo by Gerardo Capason (Rappler)

# PHILIPPINE INFLATION RISES UP IN NOVEMBER 2024

By Giellene Therese R. Garcia

Manila, Philippines — The Philippines' inflation rate rose for the second straight month to 2.5% in November 2024, following a series of tropical cyclones that affected food supply and logistics.

That rate is higher than the 2.3% recorded in October 2024 but lower than the 4.1% posted in November 2023.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said in a press conference on Thursday, December 5, that the main contributor to the increase in inflation was the food and non-alcoholic beverages index, which went up from 2.9% in October to 3.4% in November.

Under that index, vegetables, tubers, cooking bananas, and others logged an inflation rate of 5.9% in November, considerably higher than the -9.2% in October. By commodity, rice and restaurants both contributed 0.4 percentage point to the overall rate. Rice inflation, though, fell from 9.6% in October to 5.1% in November, while the rate for restaurants remained steady at 3.9%.

The National Capital Region (NCR) posted a higher inflation rate of 2.2% in November, up from 1.4% in October. This increase was attributed to higher food and beverage costs and housing-related expenses. Meanwhile, areas outside NCR (AONCR) maintained a steady inflation rate of 2.6%, with notable price hikes in alcohol, furnishings, and healthcare services.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) earlier estimated inflation would settle within the range of 2.2% to 3%. "The latest inflation outturn is consistent with the BSP's assessment that inflation will continue to trend closer to the low end of the target range in the near term. This reflects easing supply pressures for key food items, particularly rice," the BSP said in a statement on Thursday.

"Nonetheless, the balance of risks to the outlook for 2025 and 2026 has shifted toward the upside. Upside risks to the inflation outlook could emanate from the potential adjustments in electricity rates and higher minimum wages in areas outside Metro Manila, while downside factors continue to be linked to the impact of lower import tariffs on rice."

According to their meeting on Monday, December 2, the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) estimated that full-year inflation for 2024 would average 3.1% to 3.3%, "significantly lower than last year's average inflation rate of 6%." The DBCC also maintained its 2% to 4% projected inflation range for 2025 to 2028.

While National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said, "We are committed to maintaining price stability by ensuring inflation remains low and manageable. This will be supported by prudent monetary policies and strategic trade measures in the near term, as well as improved access to quality job opportunities and productivity-enhancing reforms in the medium term."



# SOUTH KOREA'S PRESIDENT LIFTS MARTIAL LAW; FACES IMPEACHMENT CHARGES



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol delivers a national address at the Presidential Office in Seoul, South Korea, on December 12, 2024. (Photo by PBS News)

By Charles Joseph Z. Cimanos



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol lifted the Martial Law decree just hours after issuing an unexpected proclamation that threw the country into political turmoil, provoking strong opposition from lawmakers across all parties.

Han Dong-hoon, leader of Yoon's ruling People's Power Party, issued an apology to the public in a statement to reporters on Wednesday morning. He also called for the dismissal of the nation's defense minister.

Assembly late on Tuesday, December 3, with helicopters landing on the roof.

While hundreds of demonstrators gathered outside parliament, chanting "Arrest Yoon Suk Yeol" and clashing with security personnel, troops briefly entered the premises.

Amid squabbles between his party and the opposition over the national budget, Yoon made the startling announcement that this would be South Korea's first martial law proclamation in nearly 40 years.

"This tragic situation must be explained by the president in a direct and comprehensive manner," Han said. "The defense minister who suggested martial law ought to be fired immediately, and everyone involved needs to face severe consequences."

Although South Korea and nuclear-armed North Korea remain officially at war, Yoon did not elaborate on any threats from the North.

"To safeguard a liberal South Korea from the threats posed by North Korea's communist forces and to eliminate anti-state elements plundering people's freedom and happiness, I hereby declare emergency martial law," Yoon declared on live television.

General Park An-su, the army chief who assumed command under martial law, immediately issued an order prohibiting "all political activities" and locked and locked down the National

In the wake of his unexpected martial law declaration, six opposition parties filed a bill demanding Yoon's impeachment. Plans to file treason charges against the president, as well as the defense and interior ministries, have also been formally set in motion by the main opposition Democratic Party.

"We will not sit idly by and watch President Yoon's crime of destroying the Constitution and trampling on democracy," the Democratic Party added. "President Yoon should immediately resign voluntarily."

# PHOTO JOIN TALISMAN SABRE 2025



A U.S. HIMARS system launches missiles during Exercise Talisman Sabre in Shoalwater Bay, Australia, on July 22, 2023. (Photo by AFP)

By Andrew Lester M. Fernandez



The Philippines will participate in Talisman Sabre, the largest military exercise in the southern hemisphere, for the first time in 2025.

Philippines' global defense collaboration.

maritime operations across Australian training sites.

Spearheaded by Australia and the U.S., the biennial exercise aims to enhance military cooperation among allied nations.

Australia's acting ambassador, Moya Collett, highlighted the exercise's importance in strengthening defense partnerships and regional stability during a maritime security forum.

The Philippines' participation highlights its commitment to regional security and interoperability with allied forces. The exercise will enhance AFP capabilities in large-scale military operations.

The 2025 event, its 11th iteration, will involve 19 invited countries and is set to be the largest yet.

Collett also mentioned Exercise ALON and Balikatan, showcasing Australia's dedication to supporting Philippine defense efforts.

With thousands of troops and advanced military assets, Talisman Sabre will provide valuable combat training. It also strengthens the Philippines' role in joint defense initiatives like Balikatan and Exercise ALON.

Preparations are underway for the mid-July event, marking a milestone in the

Talisman Sabre will feature live-fire drills, amphibious landings, and air and

# QUEZON CITY JOINS RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

By Francesca Therese F. Rolle



Quezon City, Philippines – The local government announced that Quezon City, the most populous city of the country, has joined the Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities) on January 17, 2025, to enhance the city's resilience against the rising number of disaster related concerns.

The local government will also benefit from learning opportunities and technical assistance from the network's information-sharing platforms, knowledge sources, and tools to enhance the city's resiliency programs.

R-Cities is a network led by nearly 100 cities that connects local governments, urban stakeholders, and various organizations that aim to build a resilient future.

R-Cities Executive Director Lauren Sorokin said she is thrilled to partner with Quezon City and their communities to transform schoolyards for children.

According to Mayor Joy Belmonte, Quezon City is at risk for extreme heat, tropical typhoons, flooding, traffic congestion, population congestion, and pollution.

"The city's commitment to understanding and managing the city's shocks and stresses will go a long way to ensuring its residents thrive in the polycrisis reality. We are eager to support them in their resilience journey and connect Quezon City to the network's knowledge and members regionally and globally," she further added.

"These weather conditions are mostly felt by low-income and vulnerable communities," the mayor further said.

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability officer Andrea Villaroman and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office officer-in-charge Maria Bianca Perez head projects under this partnership.

The city's membership in the network is part of its commitment to enhance capacity building in response to the urban transformation and climate change concerns from resilience practitioners worldwide.

# HERBERT BAUTISTA, SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS BY SANDIGANBAYAN

By Charles Joseph Z. Cimanos



Herbert Bautista, ex-Mayor of Quezon City (Photo by Abby Balmiones | Via Manila Times.)

Quezon City, Philippines – Former Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista and former City Administrator Aldrin Cuña have been found guilty of graft by the Sandiganbayan in connection with irregularities in a P32-million permitting and tracking system project from 2019, according to a report by the Philippine News Agency.

Estoesta, with Associate Justices Zaldy Trespases and Georgina Hidalgo concurring, respectively.

According to the prosecution, the payment was made despite the absence of City Council approval and evidence of the supplier's full delivery.

The Sandiganbayan sentenced Bautista and Cuña to a maximum of 10 years in prison, according to a 146-page ruling made public on Monday, January 20, 2025.

To expedite City Hall operations, Bautista and Cuña authorized a P32 million payment for the Online Occupational Permitting Tracking System to commercial supplier Geodata Solutions Inc.

Due to their conviction, Bautista and Cuña have been permanently barred from holding public office.

The Sandiganbayan ruling was written by Associate Justice Ma. Theresa Dolores Gomez-

The Sandiganbayan stated "No civil liability will be adjudged at this instance considering that the amount of PHP32,107,912 cannot be directed to be paid by either accused, the same having been received in full by a private party which is not a party to this case."

However, since the private firm, which is not a party to the case, received the public funds involved, the anti-graft court did not order Bautista and Cuña to pay fines.

Bautista served as mayor of Quezon City for three consecutive terms from 2010 to 2019.

# AFP PROMISES TO RESPECT HUMAN DIGNITY

By Charles Joseph Z. Cimanos

Additionally, he reminded AFP members of their duty to safeguard the Constitution and the fundamental rights of the Filipino people.

Quezon City, Philippines – Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., the head of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), stated that maintaining human dignity is central to the organization's mission of defending the nation and its citizens, according to a Philippine News Agency article.

Every year, from December 4 to 10, Republic Act 9201 mandates the observance of National Human Rights Consciousness Week.

"The protection of human dignity is not separate from our mission—it is at the core of it. The AFP has made significant progress in integrating human rights principles into our operations and institutional culture," he remarked during the flag-raising ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, as the military observed National Human Rights Awareness Week.

This aligns with the observance of December 10th as International Human Rights Day.

This highlights the AFP's continuous efforts to foster an environment of honesty, accountability, and respect within its ranks.

Brawner also emphasized the AFP's steadfast commitment to upholding and advancing human rights as a core component of its mission.



Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. speaks at the flag-raising ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, on December 2, 2024, in observance of National Human Rights Awareness Week. (Photo by AFP)



**KURIKULUHAN**

**Kali Gonzales**

**"NO STUDENT LEFT BEHIND"**

The K-12 reform was a much-needed step to address gaps in the Philippine education system. By adding two more years of schooling, students can focus more on their career paths. Especially now, considering that specialized tracks have been introduced to prepare aspiring students for the modernized job market. However, as positive a change as this sounds, we must raise the question: Are we truly ready to overcome the challenges this system brings?

As promising as the shift from the one-size-fits-all curriculum to a more tailored approach, the implementation can be a struggle, particularly for students and families in rural areas. With around 60% of the Philippine population living in rural areas where educational resources are limited, the cost of expenses is unrealistic. School fees, learning materials, uniforms, and transportation can be expensive for Filipino families in rural areas. Many of these families find themselves struggling even when it comes to necessities such as food and shelter. The additional two years of educational expenses will only burden these families and might be out of reach for many.

While this reform's potential is strong and undeniable, its success does not only apply to the policy itself, but on how it's implemented. Our government must work collectively on improving schools to ensure the reform's success. This means better classroom environments, more training for teachers, and financial aid for students who cannot afford the costs.

However, the government cannot solve this alone. Local communities, private sectors, and our society must work together to ensure that K-12 reform is accessible to everyone. Whether through scholarships, community programs, or partnerships, we need to create opportunities for disadvantaged students to succeed.

The K-12 reform has the potential to transform the Philippine education system and better prepare our youth for the future. But this will only happen when we address the inaccessibility to education. Without equal resources and opportunities, the reform could end up benefiting only a small portion of the population, and hinder the country's economic state. The future of the Philippines is all up to us—government, educators, communities, and private sectors—to ensure that no student is left behind.

**Adviser's Corner**

As I scrolled through social media, a popular trend caught my eye:

In English, we say, "Can I be a child again?"

But in poetry, we say, "take me back to when laughter was endless, and my dreams were bigger than my fears."

As a language teacher with a deep love for literature, this simple phrase sparked a wave of reflection. Beyond the fleeting trend, it's the thought of it that lingers, leaving me to think deeper and wonder, "where has that 'child' in us been?" Leading to deeper and deeper sense of ingenuity, while checking whether those dreams had been a reality.

There was a time in life when the world felt limitless, and every moment was filled with boundless laughter. Those days were wrapped in simplicity, where the biggest challenges were climbing guava trees, or creeping toward the shores for a morning swim or slipping away from our *lolas'* calls for afternoon naps. The echoes of carefree laughter painted the air, a soundtrack to a childhood untainted by the burdens of the

**"WHEN AMERICA SNEEZES, THE WORLD CATCHES ON FIRE"**

A scene reminiscent of the Philippines two years ago took place in America last November. A populist candidate reigned victorious in the elections, sending the blood of many running cold. Ashes of a bygone past swept through, igniting a haunting threat to the future and waning the hope for progress.

On November 5, 2024, Donald J. Trump officially secured his return to the White House as the 47th US president with 312 electoral votes and 74.6 million votes, winning over the Democratic party by a mile. America makes history by electing its first convicted felon as president, whose reputation and campaign was built around the concepts of indecency, prejudice, vengeance, and fascism.

Many have drawn parallels between the 2024 US presidential elections and the 2022 Philippine elections—where the major candidates were men preceded by reputations of indecency and corruption, stacking better odds against women who had relatively cleaner records and more educated backgrounds. Bongbong Marcos Jr. and Trump both used very similar strategies of making strong promises towards better policies without presenting any actual procedure that would support the credibility and feasibility of their platforms. These hollow pledges coated with honeyed words have effectively fooled the greater population and sealed the coffins of its other half. In short, these elections have only proved two things: history always repeats itself, and people never learn.

The United States is one of, if not the most influential country in the world. As the saying goes, "when America sneezes, the world catches a cold." The repercussions of a second Trump presidency will extend far beyond US borders, and the Philippines, given its deep historical and neo-colonial ties with the US, is particularly vulnerable.

One of the most immediate concerns is the economic war between America and China. This conflict threatens to rise to a new level with Trump planning to raise tariffs across the board, with special intensity on China, potentially reaching up to 60 percent on Chinese imports. Economists have warned that such measures could drive inflation higher, hurting the pockets of American consumers—and by extension, the US market-dependent Philippines with it.

Beyond trade, changes in immigration policies puts a target on millions of Filipino migrants. The Philippines is a major exporter of migrant labor to the US, with around 2 million Filipino immigrants residing in the host country. Trump's implementation of stricter border measures and mass deportation puts Filipino immigrants, legal and undocumented alike—though especially those in the latter—at risk of deportation. If his administration follows through on its promises, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) could face displacement, jeopardizing their

lives and the remittances that serve as lifelines for their families back home.

In the long run, his environmental policies will have far-reaching effects on the global climate. The US remains the biggest historic polluter, and with Trump's particular affection for the fossil fuel industry, climate action will likely take a backseat. His withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, a treaty that battles climate change, signifies the possibility of a decrease in funding towards climate initiatives. As the US pulls further away from climate action, less developed nations like the Philippines, already vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, will bear the heaviest consequences of this inaction.

The US has gambled on a second Trump administration hoping for a dramatic change, setting itself ablaze and scorching the world with it. The winds of democracy have fanned the embers, reigniting flames that threaten to consume yet another chapter in history. In the midst of this growing inferno, the Philippines must navigate through the smokes of uncertainty and stand on its own feet—before it, too, is reduced to ashes.



**LUNGGATI**

**Lourese Torres**

**TIKTOK BAN: IS IT THE RIGHT MOVE FOR FILIPINOS?**

TikTok isn't just an app, it's a part of everyday life for millions of Filipinos. It's where people share funny videos, learn new dance steps or craze, get inspired, and connect with others. For some, it is even how they make a living. But now, there is talk of banning TikTok in the Philippines. It's a big decision, and it's got everyone asking: is this really the right thing to do?

Supporters of the ban say TikTok is dangerous. They are worried about the app collecting people's data and possibly sharing it with other countries. In a world where information is power, they argue that we need to protect our personal data at all costs. For them, banning TikTok is about keeping Filipinos safe from risks we might not even see coming.

But what about the people who use TikTok every day? For many Filipinos, TikTok is more than just entertainment, it is a safe space where they can express themselves. It is a place to share their thoughts, their talents, and their stories. Losing TikTok would feel like losing a stage where everyone, no matter who they are, gets to shine.

And then there are those who depend on TikTok to make a living. Content creators, small business owners, and even online sellers have built their lives around the app. It is how they reach customers, promote their work, and earn money. If TikTok is banned, what happens to their income? For them, it is not just an app, it is their livelihood.

Instead of banning TikTok, should we not focus on teaching people how to use it safely? Maybe the solution is not to take it away but to help Filipinos understand how to protect their privacy, avoid fake news, and be responsible online. With the right tools and knowledge, people can make the most of the app without putting themselves at risk.

The question is not just about TikTok, it is about what this decision says about us as a country. Are we willing to take away something that's become a big part of people's lives in the name of security? Or can we find a way to protect everyone while still allowing creativity and freedom to thrive?

In the end, the government must hear the voices of the people. This is not just about policies or politics, it is about real lives, real stories, and the future of how Filipinos create, connect, and thrive. Whatever path is chosen, let it be one that protects the nation's security without silencing its spirit, ensuring a future where safety and self-expression can coexist.



**KUSOG**

**Andrew Fernandez**

**"The Brilliance of Youthful Hope"**

present. Back then, every small victory—be it winning a *'patintero'* or *'tumbang-presos'* game in the neighborhood or going to the *'perya'*—felt monumental. The joy was pure, and the worries were momentary, forgotten as quickly as they came. It was a time when the heart was light, and each day brought a new adventure waiting to be embraced.

Yet as life unfolded, the laughter grew quieter, and the fears began to creep in, slowly outgrowing the dreams that once burned so brightly. Responsibilities replaced spontaneity, and doubts started

to cloud the mind. But even now, the memory of those carefree days serves as a refuge. It calls on us, as adults, to nurture that childlike spirit—to laugh without reservation and dream without hesitation. Perhaps the true challenge isn't just about reliving the past but carrying its essence forward into "the now". It's about finding joy amidst the chaos of our day-to-day hustles, daring to dream again, and holding on to hope and refusing to let fear stand in the way of the life we still have the power to shape.

During those moments, dreams towered over fears. The imagination ran wild, envisioning futures as fearless astronauts, world-renowned performers or world travelers. The "what ifs" were always filled with wonder, not anxiety. Qualms were but a shadow, unable to dim the brilliance of youthful hope. Even failures seemed inconsequential, merely stepping stones to something greater. The courage to dream big was instinctual, fueled by an inner belief that anything was possible. It was an era of innocence and ambition, where the promise of tomorrow always seemed brighter than the inhibitions of today.

# TWO STEPS FORWARD AND THREE STEPS BACK: THE K-12 DILEMMA IN THE PHILIPPINES

The K-12 reform was a much-needed step to address gaps in the Philippine education system. By adding two more years of schooling, students can focus more on their career paths. This is especially relevant now, considering that specialized tracks have been introduced to prepare aspiring students for the modernized job market. However, as positive a change as this sounds, we must raise the question: Are we truly ready to overcome the challenges this system brings?

While the shift from a one-size-fits-all curriculum to a more tailored approach is promising, the implementation can be a struggle, particularly for students and families in rural areas. With around 60% of the Philippine population living in rural areas where educational resources are limited, the expenses are unrealistic. School fees, learning materials, uniforms, and transportation can be expensive for Filipino families in rural areas. Many of these families find themselves struggling even when it comes to necessities such as food and shelter. The additional two years of educational expenses will only burden these



Cartoon by: Kall Gonzales

This reform's potential is strong and undeniable, its success does not only apply to the policy itself, but also to how it's implemented. Our government must work collectively on improving schools to ensure the reform's success. This means better classroom environments, more training for teachers, and financial aid for students who cannot afford the costs. However, the government cannot solve this alone. Local communities, private sectors, and our society must work together to ensure that K-12 reform is accessible to everyone. Whether through scholarships, programs, or subsidies, we need to create opportunities for disadvantaged students to succeed.

K-12 reform has the potential to transform the Philippine education system and better prepare the Filipino youth for the future. But this will only happen when we address the inaccessibility to education. Without equal resources and opportunities, the reform could end up benefiting only a small portion of the population and hindering the country's economic state. The future of the Philippines is all up to us—government, educators, communities, and private sectors—to ensure that no student is left behind.



## KALABKAB

✕ Symara Marcelo

Removing Filipino subjects from our students' academic curriculum is cultural betrayal. It is a deliberate act of severing the sacred lifeline that connects our country's youth to the soul of their heritage—their language, history, and identity. In the rush to appease global academic standards, the decision risks birthing a generation fluent in foreign ideals that toss our ancestral heritage to the wayside—cohorts deaf to their own cultural roots. Far more than an academic change, it is a profound disservice to future generations. This is betrayal. This is treason. This isn't just an oversight; it is a forfeiture of what keeps our country's culture alive.

Language is the lifeblood of a nation's identity. Without those who carry its syllables and tones on their tongues, a language loses its power to bridge the gap between culture and its people. The claim that removing Filipino subjects fosters global competitiveness is completely flawed. Nations like Japan and South Korea thrive globally without sacrificing their language or culture and continuously keep this alive and thriving—and for a country like the Philippines, the preservation and prosperity of culture is more crucial. Their success proves that preserving identity and embracing progress are not opposing goals but should be considered as complementary ones. A strong connection to Filipino culture provides students with the grounding they need to navigate a globalized world confidently—bringing that Filipino pride with them wherever they may go.

## “THE HEARTBEAT OF A NATION LIES IN ITS LANGUAGE”

In the end, removing Filipino subjects from our education system is more than just an academic decision to be made—it's a cultural betrayal. Our language is the heartbeat of our nation, and to sever it is to sever our connection to the past and future. Global competitiveness should never come at the cost of cultural identity. We must preserve and elevate Filipino language and heritage, not discard it. The future of our nation depends on a generation that is both globally aware and deeply rooted in who they are. We should reimagine Filipino education, not erase it.

The Philippines does not and should not need to choose between Filipino and global relevance—it needs both. More importantly, the education of our country's students should not be put in jeopardy just for global relevance and competency. A solid grounding in Filipino culture enables students to approach global challenges with unique perspectives rooted in their heritage. To deny this is to create a generation that may be able to succeed internationally but remains unanchored in their sense of self.

At its core, education is not solely about the skills students acquire; it's about shaping identity. Filipino subjects teach students of pride in their cultural roots and resilience in their own journeys. Removing them diminishes the role of education in building a nation connected—not held back—to its past and prepared for its future.

Instead of removing Filipino subjects, we should reimagine them. Modern tools and modernized approaches can make these lessons more relevant and engaging for today's learners without forgetting the main reason why we keep culturally rooted lessons in our curriculums. Filipino is not just a subject; it is a bridge to the heart of our nation. Let us not burn it down.

## “MY STOMACH HURTS”

It is on November 22nd, 2024, when what should have been an average school day at Mater Carmeli School spirals into disaster. The cause? Generously distributed meals gifted by The National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC).

Students gathered in the school gym in the hot early morning to attend a natural disaster and earthquake seminar held by the NDRRMC team. Brochures were set on each seat, and the lesson overall was engaging. In turn, the learners were attentive and even pushed through the earthquake drill that followed. Afterwards, neatly packaged lunch packs were given and spread out through the whole school, a number of students reportedly eating more than one from the plastic containers and even washing the Tupperware to take home. The contents consisted of chicken adobo with hard-boiled egg, steamed rice, and snacks on the side. A delicious meal, except it brought more turmoil than enjoyment in the end.

Tens of students, all from different grade levels, reported experiencing various symptoms of food poisoning: loose bowel movements, nausea, vomiting and even more. Hurriedly, the victims were rushed to the nearest hospitals or treated in the care of their home. Immediately, the situation resulted in a rise of controversy. Worried cries of parents and a stir between both Mater Carmeli School and the NDRRMC began to emerge. If only there had been more caution with handling these goods in the first place.

And with the worry and the concern, come the complaints. “The school should have taken extra precautions.” “Not only is it unprofessional, but dangerous for the NDRRMC to be handing out possibly expired meals like this!”

It is reasonable, though; the way we so eagerly accepted those sweet gifts from them. Officials of Mater Carmeli School deemed the food safe, knowing that they

came from a trustworthy government organization. And while it was their responsibility to keep the students healthy and in good shape, it is an equal (or an even more crucial) part on the NDRRMC to instill and ensure this safety that they promise.

Nevertheless, the past is the past. Communications are being maintained and the are on their way to steady recoveries.

Now infamously known as “the food poisoning incident”, a small and lighthearted inside joke among students within Mater Carmeli School's walls, there is no changing the past now. Still, the entire predicament lingers on the question: Who was really at fault here?



## LIG-ON

✕ Janelle Ann Simacon



## DALAMHASIK

✕ Mathea Cabalfin

## “TO SEE IS TO BELIEVE”

Amidst the tensions rising among President Bongbong Marcos and Vice President Sara Duterte, many citizens including vloggers and influencers, rallied up at EDSA Shrine with a mission of supporting one against another. Many rallyist criticized media outlets for “spreading false information” with regard to their respective politicians. This begs the question, how did Filipinos end up having more faith towards vloggers and influencers than journalists, themselves?

With the continuous rise of [the use] internet, we have grown to see many explore the possibilities and limitations and how it can be an instrument in effectively spreading information to the masses. With that, many citizens opt to be vloggers or influencers, a role newly created on the internet for those who aim for their content to be easily accessible, direct to the point, and disseminate information in a medium everyone can understand. Meanwhile, the media industry took the traditional route of publishing articles in a medium that only some can understand as well as adding subscriptions in order for them to avail this certain information.

These routes have its own downsides as vloggers and influencers tend to have a biased side leading to inaccuracy and false pretenses, in which they only show what you want to see, what you want to hear. Now this viewpoint can be dangerously unnoticed especially if the content is engaging and interactive.

On the other hand, the inevitable consequences of the route the media industry took has been evident since people are no longer interested in visiting and reading news articles and stories, for they believe that everything should require a subscription in order to obtain crucial information they specifically need. This is particularly concerning since Filipinos are slowly losing interest in our ability to deliver credible news since we allowed greed to get ahead of ourselves.

At the end of the day, it is not the masses' fault if they cannot comprehend the terminologies stated in our stories. Hence, it is up to us to not just impart the knowledge by the means of traditional methods, rather we should be able to adapt to what the people are onto; we have to navigate their world in order for us to be understood and not just to be heard.

# POWER COUPLE BREAKUP: WHAT THE BBM VS. SARA FEUD MEANS FOR THE PHILIPPINES

The strength of a nation lies in the unity of its leaders. But when cracks begin to form within the halls of power, chaos inevitably follows. Filipinos are left questioning the future of leadership in a country built on promises of solidarity. Unity was their rallying cry, yet it now lies in ruins. A facade that has crumbled to reveal the intentions hidden beneath.

The escalating tensions between President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte have taken an alarming turn. Controversy erupted when Duterte allegedly made threatening remarks, claiming to have hired assassins to target Marcos, First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, and House Speaker Martin Romualdez. While Duterte later dismissed these threats as hypothetical, calling them a "plan without flesh", such statements inevitably raise concerns.

Beyond personal rivalries, these actions underscored significant risks, not just to those directly involved but to the Philippines' national sovereignty and security. The very fabric of governance is at stake, leaving citizens to grapple with the implications of a fractured leadership. If unity was the cornerstone



Cartoon by: Alhannah Del Rosario

of their administration, what does its unraveling mean for the nation?

The fractures within leadership reveal vulnerabilities that extend far beyond individual disputes, threatening the stability and resilience of the nation as a whole. For a country whose progress relies on promises of unity, addressing these divisions is imperative. Only through reconciliation and refocusing on shared goals can the Philippines safeguard its sovereignty and uphold the trust of its citizens.

This feud does not just impact the people at the top, it trickles down to the everyday lives of ordinary citizens. Filipinos are left wondering if their leaders can still tackle urgent problems like poverty, education gaps, or disaster preparedness while caught up in political drama. At a time when the country needs strong, united leadership the most, this internal conflict feels like a betrayal. The people deserve leaders who put their welfare first, not ones who get caught up in personal rivalries.

Power struggles like these paint a concerning picture of the country's leadership. When leaders focus on personal disputes instead of the nation's needs, it raises questions about their priorities. It's not just a domestic issue, it makes the Philippines look unstable on the global stage. Diplomats and investors might hesitate to engage with the country, fearing that internal conflicts could affect long-term partnerships and economic growth. A stable government is crucial not only for Filipinos but also for maintaining international trust.

In the end, this situation highlights the dangers of a divided government. Unity should not just be a word thrown around during campaigns, it should be a principle that guides the actions of leaders. If the feud between Marcos and Duterte continues, it could deepen the divisions in an already polarized nation. The real test of leadership isn't avoiding conflict, it's resolving it with the people's best interests at heart. Leaders must rise above their differences and focus on what truly matters: serving the Filipino people.

*"It trickles down ... lives of ordinary citizens."*

## "Kung Hindi Man" (Even if it is not)

This is the question that comes with every act of love that requires effort, patience, and sacrifice; the heartbeat of Filipino courtship. It is a question embedded not just in action, but in song—captured in the essence of the traditional kundiman.

The word Kundiman comes from the phrase "kung hindi man"—translated to English is "if it is not" or "even if not". This is truly beautiful if you take a moment to understand it at a deeper level. When one expresses devotion and selfless love, despite the possibility of it not being reciprocated. Although—with the rise of dating apps, digital communications, and terms like "ghosting" and "situationship", even the bare minimum is being glorified. Has technology made love too convenient?

In today's dating culture, "even if it is not?" is rarely asked. Relationships have become too convenient and shallow. A recent study revealed that 63% of Filipino men and 54% of Filipino women consider profile photos as the top priority when evaluating potential partners on dating apps (Philippine IT Organization). This shows that most people nowadays prioritize physical appearance before anything; which usually results in long term issues. As a result, "fling culture" and casual relationships occur. Genuine relationships are built on shared moments and experiences—falling for something much deeper than a person's physical characteristics. But now, it is built on lust, infatuation, or attachment that is usually mistaken for love. Commitment feels optional, vulnerability is avoided, and love—once built on patience, now runs on

algorithms. The "even if it is not?" has been replaced by "on to the next."

But why is this a major issue? A survey revealed that 43% of singles feel their mental health has been negatively impacted by their dating life. These flaws in dating culture affect an individual's self-confidence and overall mental stability. "Situationships" promise intimacy without stability, leaving people more confused and hurt than fulfilled. The lack of commitment isn't just about avoiding labels; it's a refusal to take emotional risks, to invest in something that might fail.

Although, many would say the "harana" is outdated and impractical. After all, who would risk embarrassment standing outside someone's window with a guitar in hand? Why chop wood for a family that may never call you their own? But perhaps it's not the actions we need to bring back—it's the values they held: the effort, sincerity, and courage to try even when uncertain.

Our ancestors understood that love was never a guarantee, yet they believed in the beauty of pursuit and effort. Even in doubt, they loved fully. This is not about recreating the exact traditions of old, but by rediscovering the courage to show up, to try, and to commit. In a time where love feels disposable, effort is what sets it apart.

Even if it is not. Because to love bravely, despite the risk and uncertainty, is the most meaningful thing we can do.



### TANGLAW

✎ Iverson Perez

## "IS PHILIPPINE CINEMA 'REALLY' DEAD?"

The Philippine cinema has been at the forefront of shaping our cultural identity for decades. From the golden era of the '60s to the modern-day blockbusters, it has consistently reflected our nation's creativity and passion for storytelling. However, as we step into the present, the question looms: Is Philippine cinema facing its end, or is it merely evolving?

The Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2024 paints a complicated picture. While it successfully hit its P800-million sales target, it fell short of the record-breaking P1.069 billion box office haul of 2023. This raises concerns about the industry's sustainability. Some attribute this decline to rising ticket prices, while others point to the increasing preference for streaming platforms over traditional cinemas. After all, the convenience and affordability of streaming services like Netflix have made them an attractive option for audiences.

Yet, looking closer, this is not a sign of the end; rather, it is a sign of change. The MMFF's 50th anniversary introduced bold experiments, with films like Vice Ganda's dramedy 'And The Breadwinner Is' and GMA Films' morality-driven 'Green Bones.' These are significant departures from the formulaic escapist films of the past. Audiences responded positively, with 'And The Breadwinner Is' earning P400 million, proving that quality storytelling still has its place in cinemas.

The shift in audience preferences demands innovation. The Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) is taking steps to ensure the industry adapts. By focusing on producing globally competitive films and supporting filmmakers with programs like the International Film Industry Conference, the FDCP is laying the groundwork for Philippine cinema to reach global audiences.

But this evolution is not without its challenges. High ticket prices remain a major barrier, alienating the D and E markets that once formed the backbone of Philippine moviegoers. Streaming platforms, offering flexibility and affordability, continue to dominate. A family can spend as little as P149 for a month of streaming versus P1,750 for a single movie night in theaters. Understandably, many choose the former.

So, is Philippine cinema dying? The answer is no. It is transforming. The key lies in embracing these changes while staying true to our identity as storytellers. Filipino films have the potential to go global, much like South Korea's cinematic success. It is time to create content that resonates not just locally but internationally, showcasing the richness of our culture and creativity.

As the MMFF 2024 chair Romando Artes said, this year's festival redefined its success metrics, going beyond box office returns to focus on quality and inclusivity. This mindset will be crucial moving forward. Philippine cinema is not disappearing—it is adapting, evolving, and preparing to tell its stories in new ways. The journey ahead may be challenging, but the future holds endless possibilities.



### ALPAS

✎ Kelsey Buyco



## SILAKBO

*Lian Calingasan*

# "COST OF THE CROWN"

The Philippines is known as the Pearl of the Orient Seas because of the country's natural beauty, abundant biodiversity, and rich culture; however, what would happen if a pearl's beauty becomes tainted with greed?

In the recent 73rd Miss Universe pageant that took place on November 17, the crown that was used—Lumière de l'Infini or "Light of Infinity" was created by a Filipino luxury brand named Jewelmer. It was made from extravagant components such as 23 of the Philippines' south sea pearls that were harvested in the coasts of Palawan, along with diamonds and gold that resembled a sun with its long rays. The Light of Infinity was regarded as one of the most beautiful crowns in the history of Miss Universe and a celebration of Filipino artistry; however, every rose has its thorns.

Behind the crown's luster and overwhelming pride that it has given to the country, there hides a dark truth of those who have to pay the cost of the crown. Last June 29, 16 fully armed, masked men came to the island of *Bugsuk* as they were intending to drive away the residents being in favor of an ecotourism development project that is being pushed until the present day. This injustice dates back to 1974 during the regime of the late Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, who was the former chairman of San Miguel Corporation (SMC) as he forcibly took possession of 10,821 hectares of land in Bugsuk, Pandanan, and other islands in Palawan being in favor of the ecotourism and coconut plantation projects. In 1979, even more indigenous people were forced to flee due to the additional embezzlement in regard to the 8,338 hectares of fishing area that Jewelmer corporation—an affiliate company of SMC had intended to build pearl farms in; which in doing so, they closed off two islands which served as a fishing ground and resulted to an obstruction of the residents' access to essential marine resources which remains unreturned and an issue to be simply disregard by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to this day—causing hundreds of indigenous people to lose their homes, source of income, and even rooted the deaths of the inhabitants due to hunger and violence from corporate aggression.

Behind the Miss Universe's advocacy to serve as a platform for social impact and be able to use an individual's voice to create positive change in the world, the voices of those who have to pay the heavy cost of the crown exploitation. When the word "Indigenous" is mispronounced, we get the words "indio" and "genius"; through paving a path to protect Indigenous rights, we will be able to prove the genius of the indios. However, history continues to prove the government's ongoing failure to protect both Indigenous and basic human rights, allowing aggression and oppression from large-scale companies. The lack of action has led to continuous harassment, violence, threats, intimidation, and even gunfire against Indigenous communities.

*"...paving a path to protect Indigenous rights, we will be able to prove the genius of the Indios"*

More than 50 years have already passed since the land-grabbing and injustice first went under way; and yet, thousands of indigenous residents continue to endure displacement, harassment, and systematic exclusion from their ancestral lands and waters—proving that history continues to repeat itself while it demonstrates beyond doubt that corruption and deceit can be disguised in the form of ambition and false promises. Their homes which they once called their paradise now became a battleground to fight for their own land, life, and justice.

While the pearls of the Indigenous people may be lustrous and radiant, their destinies remain tied to a life of darkness and lackluster.



## SIRMATA

*Maria Frianeza*

# "EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY"

Technology in education: the role of technology in teaching has become one of today's most discussed matters within the digital world. Certainly, one of the foundational arguments in this discussion is the matter of allowing or denying cell phones within schools. Some argue that phones are a nauseating nuisance, but it becomes better realized that when used appropriately, they have instructional value as well as serving to be a safety precaution for students as well as parents.

This means that in the right context of the class, smartphones can be quite helpful learning tools. They offer instant access to information, online learning resources, and educational apps that enhance the student's lessons. Already, many teachers are using digital tools in their curricula, and smartphone use will easily be integrated into that environment. From language learning applications to quizzing, smartphones can enhance the learning process in many aspects that traditional ways cannot make a difference in.

Students also use phones as connection instruments between students and family especially in times of dire necessity. In the world with such safety and security hazards present, parents are concerned about a child's whereabouts and their safety. This will also enable parents and teachers to communicate effectively and be in partnership with the student in his academic and social development. With phones in school, the students can easily reach out to their family members if there is an emergency or unexpected situation.

However, no one can disagree that phones can be quite distracting. The urge to send texts to friends, browse the social media, or play games could easily divert a student's attention from the class. Schools can limit phone use during class hours and allow them only in breaks or during certain study activities to prevent such temptations. In this way, benefits of phone use can be set against the need for students to focus on their studies. e.

Another issue is that many schools view phones as a threat because they could eventually cause various cyberbullying issues or other online-related misbehaviors. With most students being constantly online via social media and messaging applications, harmful interactions may very be the norm. It is up to the schools to ensure that it does not happen by instructing responsible online behavior and fostering a culture in which the issues are brought out. Such issues are not fostered when open communication about digital wellness and mental health exists.

The argument to whether students should bring phones to class is multi-dimensional. Phones could indeed be a distraction, or even misused, but they also provide educational, communication, and even security benefits. Schools ought to ensure that technology uses its full potential with as little negative impact as possible. If schools properly guide and set a responsible usage model, the potential of technology can be combined with its risk factor. Most importantly, a balance like that will bring about a shift in the role of technology in everyday life while preparing learners for the future.



## AGARAMID

*Vanessa Besas*

# "CIRCUS SHOW"

It is ironic how the leaders that once promoted unity are now in conflict. The idea of rising together again seems to have been inoperative. How can the leaders of a country effectively carry out this plan to rise again if they can't stand with each other side by side? Are these so-called elected leaders really capable of leading the country to a better future?

Vice President Sara Duterte has said graphic remarks and has shown aggression towards President Bongbong Marcos on many occasions. She has stated in a tell-all press conference that she imagined cutting his head because she deemed him to be toxic. At another midnight press conference, she cursed at Bongbong and Lisa Marcos including Martin Romualdez. In the same press conference she stated that she has already hired someone to kill the three when she herself would be killed. There's no doubt that this behavior is very alarming and concerning especially for a country leader. If she can say those things easily on camera, what more can she say and do when she isn't being presented in the media.

When faced with several charges and criminal complaints, including an impeachment bid, she responds by saying that it was 'taken out of logical context'. She makes it up to be a statement for her security. But what about the security of the



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people? The security of the people from the corruption of their own government and the suffering that comes with it. How will we 'rise again' when the leaders that are seated in the government don't even have the capacity to work together. This isn't how a country leader should be. Her behavior just shows how she lacks the mental capacity to continue being the vice president of the Philippines. Sara Duterte being our elected vice president just reflects the corruption that the Philippines is experiencing today.

*How will we 'rise again' when the leaders that are seated in the government don't even have the capacity to work together.*

Vice President Sara Duterte has said graphic remarks and has shown aggression towards President Bongbong Marcos on many occasions. She has stated in a tell-all press conference

We should take into consideration the impacts of our decisions in voting for our country leaders. We should be mindful and open to what may happen to our country if our leaders aren't able to fulfill their duty in their roles. Should they be elected, we as citizens should recognize if their intentions are genuine and will be for the good of the country. Although it may be hard to determine the truth of their personalities, we should be wise in choosing and we should be open to the realities of how the government truly is.

# FEATURE



By Marian Mae T. Medina & Frejha Amrel L. Dela Cruz

Filipinos woke up on October 4th and received the biggest revelation on their phones—the YG label is now in their area, ready to shine the spotlight on them!

BIGBANG, 2NE1, BLACKPINK, you name it. These big superstars are all under one big name, YG Entertainment. Founded by Yang Hyun-suk, the home of talents has been known in the industry for creating hit K-pop acts, including the newest Treasure and Babymonster, with new records and releases bagging trophies on music shows and rising to fame worldwide—and the Philippines is no exception to that.

BLACKPINK, Korean pop group (Photo by BLACKPINK)

With the influence and impact that YG artists have on the generation of today, it is no wonder that young teens are now aspiring to take the same trail that their idols hiked. Starry eyes gazing at their sparkling idols—they all have the K-pop fever in their systems, pushing them to become like who they adore. But now, it is no longer just a once-in-a-blue-moon occurrence, nor is it a dream. The YG labels dropped the bomb with the recent “labelation”—simply the label’s revelation—on October 4th, revealing the most anticipated Philippine auditions for young Filipinos to potentially become the newest K-pop craze. It was announced on their social media page

on Facebook that YG Entertainment will be holding an audition on Sunday, November 24th, at exactly 1 PM. Located at the ZERO Studio in Quezon City and open to those born between 2006 and 2013, participants could choose one from the following categories: Rapping, Dancing, Singing, and Appearance. Applications kick-started online at yg.auditions.com on November 10th, while successfully selected applicants went through the next phase and received an email on November 20th for the details of the second audition.

Apart from the Philippines, aspiring musicians from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore,

the United States, Malaysia, Indonesia, Canada, Vietnam, and Thailand were given the chance to apply as YG launches Global Auditions; a potential global phenomenon in the making.

This moment will continue to go down in history for hidden gems whose dream is to exhibit their charms and bedazzle the stage, showing the world the star that they are. Now that the talented blood of Filipinos is given the ability to showcase the Pinyo power on a bigger stage, the new generation believes that it will be the pivotal point wherein more big companies will start giving Filipinos a chance to flourish and bloom like the

biggest K-pop celebrities that the YG entertainment has produced.

A once innocent dreamer, now an aspiring star that is way to conquer a journey that is yet to unfold. Showcasing different fruits of efforts, skills, and talents running in the blood of a Filipino to a much broader audience across the world is a dream that is too good to be true. With the promise recognition of YG Entertainment serving it as a stepping stone into a new era of K-pop and international collaboration that could also be the key to making a star’s dreams become a reality.



## HOW WICKED TOOK MUSICAL THEATRE TO NEW HEIGHTS

people’s minds. Regardless, the performance of the cast and the delivery of the movie had not disappointed the media, receiving more potential audiences worldwide. Although “Defying Gravity” was not the only song that left a lasting impression. Ariana Grande’s version of the song “Popular” received widespread praise from both the fans and the casts. Ariana poured her heart and soul into her portrayal of Glinda; even taking the extra mile to go on a musical

## DEFYING GRAVITY

Wicked, the beloved musical adapted from Gregory Maguire’s Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West, has defied expectations by climbing to No. 9 on the Official Compilations Chart—two decades after its original release.

As Wicked marked its 21st anniversary, the new film adaptation, starring Ariana Grande as Glinda and Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, has reignited interest in the musical. Despite its two-decade legacy, the film’s fresh take has captivated audiences in ways the original production hadn’t—prompting a new wave of appreciation for the story.

The film’s success can be attributed to its star-studded cast and due to the hype it had gotten all over social media platforms like TikTok promoted the song “Defying Gravity” which had engraved itself in

By: Martha Nicole A. Hernandez

hiatus while she focused preparing for the film.

The success of Wicked — which has been supported by Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo, and the power of social media — shows how musical theatre continues to evolve alongside new technology and trends. With its ability to grab the media’s attention through the powerful performances and overall quality of the film, Wicked proves that musical theatre remains to be continuously growing in the entertainment field.



If you, Filipino fans, are ready to make memories with some moves like jagger, what else are you waiting for? Hit the nearest payphone and secure your tickets because your favorite pop-rock band is officially gearing up to visit the Philippines once more and perform their iconic hits—not on a Sunday morning, but on January 29th, Wednesday. Yes, Maroon 5 will be coming back to the Philippines for the fourth time!

“There are many reasons, but the number one reason we like to come here is because we know how much you guys love to sing,” frontman Adam Levine announces, explaining why each visit of the band to Manila has been at the same exact venue—Mall of Asia Arena. Although, keyboardist PJ Morton recently performed at last year’s Wanderland Music and Arts Festival in 2022.

“As a singer, I can’t even tell you how much joy that brings. Me and the rest of the band, we come out here to a place that I know, that’s your best thing, you guys love to sing!” the singer exclaims. Self-titled Asia Tour “Maroon 5” will kick start in Manila before heading onto other Asian countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, and Taiwan all throughout the month of February.

Like a lyric from the band’s song Girls Like You that goes, “Spent twenty-four hours, I need more hours with you,” this fourth time visit will also be much more special—it is co-presented by the Tourism Promotions Board and the Department of Tourism. Additional opening acts slated to perform in the sold-out Manila leg are artists such as DJ Mailbox and Culture Wars.

She Will Be Loved, and so will this upcoming tour of Maroon 5! The band is best known for their greatest hits such as “This Love,” “She Will Be Loved,” “Sunday Morning,” “Won’t Go Home Without You,” “Sugar,” “Misery,” “One More Night,” “Memories,” “Makes Me Wonder,” “Give A Little More,” “Maps,” “Animals,” “Daylight,” “Never Gonna Leave This Bed,” and “Love Somebody.”

Popular collaborations also include Wiz Khalifa on “Payphone,” Rihanna on “If I Never See Your Face Again,” SZA on “What Lovers Do,” Cardi B on “Girls Like You,” and Christina Aguilera on “Moves Like Jagger.”

General onsale of tickets started on September 28, 2024. Need a little sweetness in your life like they do? What are you waiting for then? Grab a drink as sweet as a sugar as you make your memories maroon with the Maroon 5 tour!

It's that time of the year again—when the streets shine bright with lights, the aroma of a holiday feast fills the air, and those jingling melodies echo everywhere. Yes, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, a season of joy and reunion. George Yang, founder of McDonald's Philippines, and OPM legend Jose Mari Chan, have come together to gift us a heartwarming short music video, "A Child Again At Christmas"

Dating back as early as 2019, their collaboration began when they appeared on the video, Live Your Dreams, where people were amused with their shared humor,

## A MELODY OF MAGIC: BECOMING "A CHILD AGAIN AT CHRISTMAS" WITH GEORGE YANG AND JOSE MARI CHAN

By: Kenneth Dave R. Garcia

similarities in looks, as well as Yang's unexpectedly sweet vocals. They once reunited again in 2021, for Share the Light, a project that garnered funds for Typhoon Odette relief, and displayed the service of McDonald's Kindness Kitchen, giving out thousands of meals to the affected communities and joy to the world.

This year, 2024, a holly jolly Christmas will be filled once more with Chan's famous holiday

song that gives a special feeling in our hearts. The story unfolds with young Yang's and Chan's reunion. They excitedly roamed around the streets filled with bright decorations and were happy with one of the simplest things. As they drive into a bright merry McDonald's Drive-Thru, it becomes sentimental as the car's window opens, revealing the present Yang and Chan, picking up the food, showing that they are celebrating the season with childlike joy reminiscent of that time when

magic did not lose its glow, as though the holiday will never run dry.

Surely, it's the most wonderful time of the year again, with "A Child Again At Christmas". The short music video tells us to make the most out of every single moment, and it is exactly when we spend our time with friends and family, singing our favorite carols, that the short music video reminds us of the magic of this merry season. Yang and Chan show very well that "You're never too old for the magic of Christmas."



Photo By GMA Network

# WHEN THE STARS ALIGN

By Maliah Iris Bangoy,  
Janelle Ann P. Simacon,  
Sophia Erin C. Roncal

As much as the students appreciated the first activity, what was to come for the next certainly made them enjoy. The second activity sparked the eyesight of the students, as they were tasked to find the hidden messages in the printed stars stuck around the quadrangle. They were given magnifying glasses and each student partnered up together as they tried to trace the messages hidden in the stars. They were left with thrill and excitement, working together to find hidden messages within. After this, the students were allowed to roam around and fiddle with the telescopes in the field.

The former activities were certainly fun, but the most enchanting experience for the grade 9 learners was definitely to come. After all of those, the whole batch got their own mats and pillows and got ready to stare into a sky full of stars and dreams. The feeling sparked the students' minds and hearts, and as they gazed upon the sky the stories of each constellation was being mentioned by the people of PSHS making it memorable for everyone. The sky was as bright as the stars above, and every student got a glimpse of each planet and constellation above.

And as the strike of midnight approached, the learners got up and called it a day. They slept inside the gradeschool classrooms in peace as they finished stargazing and admiring the stars above. If you thought the adventure ends there, well you're certainly incorrect. The last and final activity that would take place was looking and gazing at the moon peacefully, while waiting for the final end of the sessions. The night finally came to an end, as the sun slowly peaked its way through the clouds. With this, they ended this year's stargazing event with awarding each of the participating people of PSHS and also asking some students of their own insights about the whole night, receiving majorly positive feedback. Asking anybody about how they slept afterwards, however, would get you very different answers.

Eventually, the sun rose to start a new day, a reminder that not all things last forever. But even then, it's obvious that the memories shared on that fateful night would be fondly remembered for years to come. And no matter how many days go by, or how many times we might live through our hardest times, the sky remains and it looks down at us lovingly. And we look up, smiling at the specks of light, when the stars sing.

When the lights dim and the buzz of cicadas is the only sound that rings in the quiet evening air, you look up to find that the stars shine the brightest in this hour. Like your ancestors from thousands of years ago, your eyes adapt to the darkness of night, tracing pictures in the abyss above by connecting the little white dots scattered across its vast canvas we call the sky. In that moment, you realize that this is a memory that will be well-remembered even as your hairs begin to grey. You realize that, living in that exact place and time, there will never be another experience as magical as this.

On January 24 to January 25 of 2025, Mater Carmeli School of Novaliches, partnering with Philippine Science High School (PSHS), hosted a life-changing Stargazing event that would leave a mark in the grade 9 students for years to come. The goal was to bring about a night of whimsy and fun, all while providing an entertaining learning experience or everyone to enjoy. To say that the program was a success would be a major understatement, as many left the school in the morning with not only a newfound sense of knowledge and curiosity, but an unwavering connection to the stars.

All of it began around sundown. The sky faded from blues to purples, then purples to pinks. The learners lined up in the quadrangle according to their sections, placing their stuffed bags on the floor next to them. Orientation began with simple house rules and regulations (a few students were already outed for wearing crocs), followed by the introduction of the many talents from PSHS. Quickly, the learners caught onto the many hand signs that were equivalent to varying degrees: pinky finger for one, thumbs up for two, and so on.

The first activity already sparked the need to know more within the large crowd, as even after the orientation ended and they were sent off to eat dinner, bustling groups were already making beelines to the nearest telescopes. Through them, planets like Venus, Jupiter and Saturn felt closer than ever before, rather than only being bright specks in the great night sky. It started to feel personal, like the celestial bodies were making themselves known. And in turn, everyone back down on Earth acknowledges them, marveled in their glory.

For the rest of the night, the facilitators managed a plethora of interactive activities that eventually led up to the main event. Arguably, the easiest of the bunch involved simulating the phases of the moon through cellphone flashlights and a few styrofoam balls. One person would hold the flashlight, acting as the sun, while the other would hold up the "moon", turning to see the shadows fall and transform to its position. Later on, there came an even smaller ball, a marble, used to demonstrate the effects behind the eclipse. Holding up the marble and having a partner raise the styrofoam from earlier made it so the phenomenon taking place was visible through one's perspective.

## Batch 1999's Trip Down Memory Lane

By: Khym Gariel D. Lagundi

Coming together to celebrate the past, embrace the present, and inspire the future!

The Pistang Carmelo: A Grand Alumni Homecoming, spearheaded by Batch 1999, took place on November 30, 2024, at the St. Joseph Gymnasium. Numerous alumni—both students and teachers—gathered for a heartwarming reunion. The Carmelite sisters have also joined the homecoming, including Sr. Gina, a former directress of Mater Carmel School of Novaliches, Inc., who recently traveled to visit the campus.

The grand event began with a mass for the alumni in the morning. This was followed by the championship games of the Carmelian Sports League. Then came the registration and merienda in the afternoon. Apart from the merienda served, the guests have also enjoyed the food stalls set up at the gymnasium that were selling snacks that truly evoked a nostalgic feeling, such as taho and dirty ice cream. PicaCart, one of the food stalls selling dimsum meals that day, was owned by an MCS alumna, Miss Sophia Ortega from Batch 2018.

When a lot of guests were already present, the program proper commenced with the usual opening rites. After the welcoming address of Mr. John B. Balce, the 2024 MCS Grand Alumni Homecoming Steering Committee Chairperson, the raffle began, where the majority has won the minor prizes. After the first part of the raffle, Echoes of Euphoria, the recently held champions of the 2024 MCS Battle of the Bands, opened for the consecutive band performances of MCS alumni bands such as Calle Onse.

After the band performances, dinner took place, followed by the second segment of the raffle, during which major prizes are starting to be claimed by lucky raffle participants.

As the lights went dim, the concert, the highlight of the night, started. The main guest bands, Barbie Almalbis and Soapdish, have put their heart and soul into their performance. Barbie Almalbis and Soapdish, have put their heart and soul into their performance. Barbie Almalbis



Barbie Almalbis lit up MCS with a captivating performance, leaving Carmelians in awe. (Photo by Francine Ablag)

brought the Carmelian community back in time with her hit songs Taging Ilog, Just A Smile, Torpe, and more. Soapdish closed the night with their beautiful rendition of Kahit Maputi Na Ang Buhok Mo, alongside an astonishing performance of their original songs.

After the concert, as the final note faded, the Carmelian community topped the night off with the last segment of the raffle, during which the grand prize, the e-bike, was claimed by T. Noreen Manzano Morales, a former Carmelian teacher. Everyone has also gathered to watch the same-day edit together before heading home with hearts filled with nostalgia and euphoria.

All praise and recognition go to Batch 1999, along with the sponsors, for making this memorable event possible.



Carmelians from every class present gathered for a night of nostalgia and celebration at the MCS Alumni Grand Homecoming. (Photo by Enrica Anabela)



Alexa Samson, 17, received a certification of recognition from the Break Free Mobile Journalism Competition, November 28 2024, at the UPCM. (Photo by The Adviser)

## Pursuing Her Dreams While Inspiring Others

By: Andrea Graziella C. Doctolero

"Nahanap ko ang soulmate ko sa MoJo," Alexa Samson said after securing 9th place as the sole individual entry in the Break Free Alliance Mobile Journalism competition held at the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication (UPCMC) on November 28, 2024.

The Break Free Alliance of the UPCM commemorated its 15th anniversary of the Ampatuan massacre—the deadliest political attack on journalism in the Philippines. Alexa, together with her school paper adviser, Sir Albert Martinez, embraces the uncertainty, "Take the risk or lose the chance," deciding to participate in this year's mobile journalism competition.

Alexa's storytelling journey began in 2022 as a multimedia associate for The Carmelian, Ang Munting Simbahan (TCAMS). In 2023, she took a bold step by joining the District Schools Press Conference (DSPC) for the first time. A year later, she ventured into Mobile Journalism (MoJo) and won 2nd place in the category at DSPC 2024. These experiences further fueled her passion, inspiring her to compete in the Break Free Competition, proudly representing her school and pursuing her dreams.

"Dreams and prayers lang ang baon ko," Samson shared in her interview. Her achievement serves as a powerful reminder to those hesitant about stepping out of their comfort zones. She emphasized that the unwavering support of her family, friends, and the Almighty God made her victories possible.

# ONE FILIPINO;

# A MILLION DREAMS

By Martha Nicole A. Hernando

Sofronio Vasquez, 32, claimed victory in season 26 of *The Voice USA*, making history as the first Asian to win. (Photo by NBC)

When Sofronio Vasquez won his title as the winner of the 26th season of *The Voice USA*, his pure and genuine reaction became the testament of the million dreams he achieved that day.

Vasquez, being the first Filipino and Asian descent to win this international competition, did not only bring pride and joy for his country but also became an epitome of inspiration for all the Asians who yearn to dream just as big. Despite his rapidly-growing fame, his love and loyalty for both his country and his family remained just the same.

Vasquez opened up that his childhood and social class became the reason as to why he pursued music. Ever since the singer's father died, it became the pushing point for Vasquez to pursue a music career to help with his family's financial burden. Vasquez also confessed that when his name was called as the grand champion, he believed that his father was proud of all the hard work and sacrifices he had done for his family.

he song "A Million Dreams" was the winning piece that led to his incredible milestone.

Although the singer's achievement was not a surprise to both judges and audiences. His musical talent did not only touch hearts, but he also consistently performed like a champion.

When the singer was asked what he thought made him the grand champion, his sincerity and humbleness became evident as he answered that his heart was the main reason.

"I really showed how you can be a vulnerable person no matter how big a person or an artist you are. All you have to do is show your heart. I know everyone in the Top 5 poured their hearts out." – Vasquez mentioned in an interview

The singer was also asked what he was looking forward to the most. Vasquez proudly answered that he has been looking forward to going back to the Philippines and sharing his win. Vasquez's answer only proved how much love he has for his country and to all Filipinos.

Sofronio Vasquez is the personification of the quote "Nothing is impossible for believers." His triumph is a step for all Filipinos to dream, and to have millions of them.

## Life Lesson

By Janelle Ann P. Simacon

On October 4, 2024, Mater Carmeli School celebrated Teachers' Day. Although the actual Teachers' Day is officially held on October 5, it was decided that showing our unwavering appreciation for the teachers in person would be more meaningful. And as I watched the students dance and sing in tribute to them, I could not agree more with the decision.

I sat cross-legged on the yellow-painted gymnasium floor, unbothered by the thin layer of sweat on my skin. While it did irk me only slightly, I figured that tolerating the heat was only a small price to pay for the enjoyment and the heart of this special event.

Just earlier that morning, my class surprised our advisor with a small party. From 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM, we were given time to spend with teachers and show them the love they deserved. Pictures were taken, gifts were given, and laughter was shared. After recess ended at 9:30 AM, a short program was held at the gymnasium as the main part of the celebration. Students of all levels flocked to their respective spaces and sat down, brimming with a sort of joy that was almost palpable. Cheers erupted and echoed as performances took place and certificates were awarded on stage, commemorating these special people in our lives.

Even on ordinary mornings and afternoons, teachers work tirelessly for both our sake and theirs. At that moment, I thought about how much they had to do on an average day. Grading papers, preparing the next lessons, waiting for their students to submit their requirements... and that is not even all of it! And in spite of the overwhelming tasks they need to complete each passing day, teachers are still able to keep their well-rounded demeanor and relentless determination, hoping to drive their students to become the best versions of themselves. One of the main reasons why they are dubbed our "second parents" is because they tend to care about us like a parent would.

As Carmelians and firm believers in Jesus, we are taught to value our moral character as well as strive to live a God-centered life. The teachers here are no exception. Through the example that Jesus has become for them, as He is a teacher Himself, they are able to work with Him in mind and shape their students into versatile, optimal members of their community.

Teachers do not just teach us the academic lessons they're required to. They do not only give us modules, things to memorize, and exams to take. They also teach us life lessons and values. They teach us to be patient and punctual and to put effort into our work. They teach us to stay passionate and to persist in spite of it all. They teach us to be honest and good—to be good role models.

We should not just show our teachers that we care for them on designated dates on a calendar. Instead, let us acknowledge their hard work and dedication every day, whether through a letter or a simple "good morning" as you pass them in the hallways.

To all teachers of all kinds here and across the entire world, we see you. Your passion and hard work do not go unnoticed, and we wholeheartedly encourage you to keep doing what you love. You are the foundation on which intelligence and talent thrive. And if there is anything that I would want you to take away from this, it is this: You are important, and you are amazing. You can never reach your full potential without a teacher.

# CLICKING PAUSE AND SWIPING LEFT

By Frejha Amrel L. Dela Cruz

Tick-tock! Tick-tock! Time moves so fast that no one is ready for a pause or a quick stop. As time flies in a world of uncertainties, we experience many unexpected turns and endings, proving that not all things in this world are permanent. Just like what happened to an app in the United States—one moment, users were scrolling through their For You page, showcasing unique talents, and creating viral trends, and the next, they were bidding farewell and making the most of their remaining time. An app that was once a comfort zone, a source of income, and a big part of life suddenly vanished. That is what TikTok users in the U.S. felt and experienced after President Donald Trump signed an executive order banning the app in their country.

At exactly midnight on a seemingly normal Sunday, January 19, the app TikTok faced its curtain call in the United States. All user accounts in the country were restricted and became inaccessible. Ahead of the shutdown, influencers who had dominated the platform shared nostalgic videos, making audiences reflect on the app's cultural impact. As they were among those who brought the app to life, users from other countries felt a sense of emptiness as Americans formally left the platform.

However, following this shutdown came an unexpected comeback, as President Trump signed an executive order delaying the enforcement of the ban. On a Wednesday morning, TikTok remained inaccessible on all Apple and Google app stores in the United States, despite the delay. After facing a dark weekend, longtime TikTok users were able to continue using the app, but new users struggled to download it as it was no longer available. With this, existing users happily retrieved their accounts and returned to the TikTok world—albeit for a short period of 90 days.

Looking back at how this issue began, TikTok was owned by a Chinese firm, raising concerns about data privacy since the app collects personal information. The United States feared this posed a national security threat, suspecting that the Chinese government could access the data of U.S. citizens. As TikTok's user base grew, there were also concerns that the platform could be used for propaganda.

According to Eric Lagatta, after the 12-hour shutdown on Sunday, TikTok's Chinese parent company, ByteDance, was required to sell its U.S. assets in order to resume operations in the country. The law only mandated ByteDance to remove the app from download platforms. However, if the company failed to meet the sale deadline, executives chose to shut down the app entirely.

# BALIK MATER:

## In Alumni Homecoming Special



Carmelians from past and present gathered for a night of nostalgia and celebration at the MCS Alumni Grand Homecoming. (Photo by Francine Ablog)

### Behind The Spotlight: Constructing The Night Of Nostalgia

By: Mary Jillianne M. Ocenar

Batch reunions fill the air with bliss and excitement. From the sparkling neon lights and loud pop music, to seeing unexpected faces and reuniting with past batchmates, this is an event worthy of remembering. However, behind this show is the unseen dedication and hard work from certain alumni. To explore more about the pillars of batch reunions, let us illuminate the people who spearheaded the Batch 1999 Grand Alumni Homecoming to success.

John Balce, president of alumni Batch 1999, stated how they divided the responsibilities to the following: finance and liaison, program, logistics, publicity, coordinating the bazaar, and organizing the alumni sportsfest. Furthermore, the additional manpower from the other batches that celebrated their 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th-year milestones aided in making this project fruitful.

But before planning anything, he mentioned, "Prior to moving forward with any plans, however, we tried to secure the support of our batchmate first. We organized a homecoming kick-off meeting with our batchmates in April 2024 at Uncle Chefe in Sta. Maria, Bulacan, to present the challenge before us, and more importantly, to secure their buy-in on our plans." After doing so, the batches constantly communicated their progress and ideas via Facebook. He added, "Aside from regular communication with our batchmates, we also ensured proper coordination with the school administration. It was very encouraging how supportive the school is to our initiatives."

He expressed, "At the onset, we knew there were two major challenges: (1) securing funding for the homecoming and (2) attendance." Fortunately, they were able to collect money by selling limited-edition MCS Alumni jackets, acquiring sponsorships from businesses and solicitations.

### The Alumni Game of Throws

By: Marian Mae T. Medina

They are not playing just for the roars of the crowd or the claps that resound. Taking a further look into the game of throws, from ideas to arenas, the Mater Carmel School's Alumni Sports League isn't all about glory. But, what could it be?

Recently holding a 5-week Homecoming Basketball event from October 13, 2024 to November 30, 2024, the Alumni Sports League is an organization established by Mater Carmel School designed for the once champions to keep the legacy alive and bring together the Carmelian alumni community, proving that they are still champions. But reviving the legacy left by the alumni athletes was not just a move made to bring back the rivalries and the fight for victory.

In an interview with the Homecoming Basketball event organizer Giuseppe Martin Punzalan, he revealed that, "Actually, one of the people who inspired us talaga is Sir John Balce. So, he's one of the... I think he is the president of the Alumni Association of our school right now but he always told us kasi na we need to have something to, pa'no ba, maibalik lahat ng Carmelian sa school."

He then adds, "So, sakto naman noong time na yun is nag-iisip kami magpa League na din talaga sa Mater sa school natin and then ang maganda naman dun, they supported us batch 1991 ata yun so, they supported us, even helped us sa pag-meeting kanila sister and all and I think pati yung pag gu-guide dun sa pinaka League namin, tinulungan kami nila Sir John eh."

Revealing a deeper reason as to what inspired the establishment of the organization, he reveals, "...I think the big inspiration

from alumni, ticket sales, and setting up a bazaar in the homecoming. Additionally, they integrated sports and music in the event, as well as reducing ticket costs to ensure attendance.

To organize the alumni sportsfest, Jeremiah Tablizo of Batch 2004 and Giuseppe Martin Punzalan of Batch 2012 planned to create an alumni basketball league. After discovering this, Mr. Balce stated, "We immediately got in touch with them to express our support for the initiative. Six alumni basketball teams were fielded consisting of players from various batches. It culminated in the championship games being held in the morning of the alumni homecoming."

With all that preparation, the most awaited homecoming was here with the theme of, "Pistang Carmelo: A Grand Alumni Homecoming." It was truly full of festivity, as the event consisted of bright decorations, professional lights, bazaar booths, photobooths, catered Filipino merienda and dinner, and raffles prizes, games,

and awards like the early bird, youngest batch, oldest batch and most attendees.

Performances were executed by the members from Batch 1999, 2024 Battle of the Bands Champion, and two alumni bands, namely, The Superios and Calle Onse. With the help of Francis San Luis, a member of Batch 1999, they were able to include concerts from Barbie Almalbis and Soapdish, who performed popular songs from the late '90s and early 2000's. Moreover, the program included special segments tributed to batchmates who have passed away, the unveiling of the legacy project, and the passing of the key of responsibility to Batch 2000.

Arranging this event was truly walking into a path full of hurdles, but the alumni prevailed over these challenges as the homecoming ended with flying colors. The Carmelian batches certainly left with wide smiles, stronger friendships, and another memory to cherish.



for this would be yun nga yung pinaka-dedication din ni Sir John Balce sa mga alumnis natin and I think naging ano lang tayo, naging parang help lang kami to communicate with the people and to give activities para yung mga alumnis natin is to go back sa school talaga."

Truly, the Sports League brought the Alumnis' competitive spirit back—more pumped and hyped than ever to keep the togetherness of the former Carmelians alive. They may have gotten older, but their growing wisdom was something that pushed them to keep igniting their burning passion for playing. Lacing up their sneakers and dribbling the ball, they geared up to establish a



With a theme of "Pistang Carmelo: A Grand Alumni Homecoming," was celebrated on November 30th at Mater Carmel School Gymnasium. Years may have passed, but the memories and bonds of alumni remain strong. (Photo by Francine Ablog & Enara Ancheta)

For the alumni of the batch 1999, high school was more than just a phase in their lives — it was a foundation that shaped them as a person. Batch 1999 had reunited in means of expressing their love and gratitude through a legacy project that will benefit generations of Carmelians to come.

What made the legacy project of batch 1999 special was their collective effort, transparency, and voluntary giving. The batch set a clear goal of Php. 500,000, ensuring that every step of the fundraising process was reported and well-monitored. Despite having a high goal to reach, no batchmate was obligated to contribute. Donations were kept confidential to highlight that the project was a collective effort rather than an individual showcase.

The decision to use their funds on a project that will benefit everyone in the Carmelian community was not made lightly. The batch worked closely with the school administration, led by Sr. Flor Presquito, to determine the best use of their funds. Through thorough research and several criteria that were considered, it became evident that the most valuable contribution would be something that enhances the daily experiences of the school community. Considering its impact on the school community, the number of people who would benefit, the affordability, and its long-term sustainability, the batch decided to focus on the gymnasium; which is the central venue for school events, assemblies, and activities. They have decided that the gymnasium would benefit with improved ventilation — thus, the decision to install helicopter fans.

They've expressed that whether or not an alumni homecoming took place, this legacy project was top priority. But, as if the universe was on their side, they achieved installing the helicopter fan just in time for their grand alumni homecoming. The success of this legacy project surprised some of the teachers as the fan was installed before the alumni homecoming. Although some did not expect both two helicopter fans to be installed early on, batch 1999 insisted that this legacy project must be separate from the results of the homecoming — ensuring that it will happen no matter what.

The batch spent around Php. 547,156 for the supply and installation of the two helicopter fans, which was a bargain as they managed to get a good discount from a parent in MCS, Mr. Allan Caldit. Despite having bagged a good deal for both helicopter fans, the batch had to spend on additional wires to connect the fans to the power source, in addition to that, they had to extend the rental of scaffolding due to overlapping schedules with the school intramurals at that time. The exact amount was solicited from the other batchmates, 60% of the amount came from the batchmates living in the Philippines, while the remaining 40% came from those working and living abroad.

The events of placing the fans were as followed: the batch signed the contract and paid the initial 50% down payment around October 30, 2024. Following that, the fans were delivered to the school on November 8. As fate would have it, a mass was happening at the school at that time, which was the opportunity for both fans to be blessed by the priest. On November 18, the installation started. It was supervised by Mr. Caldit, the supplier of the fans. The fans were installed on different days; the first fan (near the stage) got fully mounted on November 22. While the second fan was mounted on November 26. Following that were the electrical works, which was done on November 28. Then, on November 29, the fans were tested to be fully operational, which was just in time for the homecoming the following day.

Through this heartfelt initiative, Batch 1999 left something greater than two big helicopter fans, but a legacy of love and lasting impact.



Keeping it cool at Mater Carmel School Gymnasium, thanks to the giant 'helicopter fan' of batch 1999 — a legacy project, a present that makes the Carmelians comfortable during heat. (Photos by John Balce)

full-fledged organization dedicated to symbolize the glory and legacy they left, as well as to keep the spirit of camaraderie they aim for the now Carmelians to exemplify.

When asked about how the league was organized, Punzalan states, "In terms of it kasi, for us medyo may kulang pa dun sa pagkaka-organize namin but I think more on ano yan eh learning curve for us para mas mabigay yung mas magandang services for the Alumni League."

Despite the flaws and challenges that arose, the creation of the organization remains a celebration of their love for sports and a way to foster a community with shared dreams and passions. The sweat that dripped and the rush of adrenaline keeps them pushing their limits while reliving their beloved memories from when they were still a young Carmelian, playing for victory and glory.

"May siguro namin masimulan yung Season 2. And then gusto din namin itap kasi yung volleyball so, I think the goal of the sports league naman kasi talaga is not all basketball.

### Paying it Forward: Batch 1999's Heartfelt Contribution to MCS

By: Martha Nicole A. Hernando

So, we want to give everything lahat ng sports na pwede natin buuin for this one para yun nga yung maging parang key para lahat ng students ni Mater is, and alumnis talaga is bumalik sa school."

Setting the age bracket aside, he added, "And, siyempre, we want din sana engagement from the current students talaga but we're just planning pa kung pano namin magagawa yan. But as of now, the second season is on the books naman na so we're planning it na and I think for the first season nung volleyball inaayos pa din namin."

It is crystal clear how the Alumni Sports League continues to show that a spike and throw of the ball is not a score for the title, it is a vision that brings out the true purpose of sports. Their electrifying performance at the Homecoming is just the beginning of their journey and reunion. They were once shaped by Mater Carmel school, and now, they are back as Alumnis to bridge the past and present, proving that once a champion, always a champion.

# SCIENCE



## SCIENTISTS DETECT UNFAMILIAR ENTITY IN THE MILKY WAY

By Thesa Deolien Beduyas and Giellene Therese R. Garcia

Scientists have discovered a pair of icy balls in a distant region of the Milky Way. These icy balls are unlike any discoveries previously witnessed. Japanese researchers first observed the peculiar objects in 2021.

Based on this recent research, the light emitted by these far-off objects does not align with the expectations set by existing theories regarding star formation. While they appear to be thick clouds of gas or stars in the early stages of formation, they are completely detached from areas where stars typically develop.

"We tried our best to reproduce the properties, but currently, we cannot find any theories that can explain the spectral energy properties," said Dr. Takashi Shimonishi, a lead researcher at Niigata University in Japan. The icy balls were first observed using the Japanese AKARI space spectrum from 2006 to 2011, which examined the infrared range in the Milky Way.

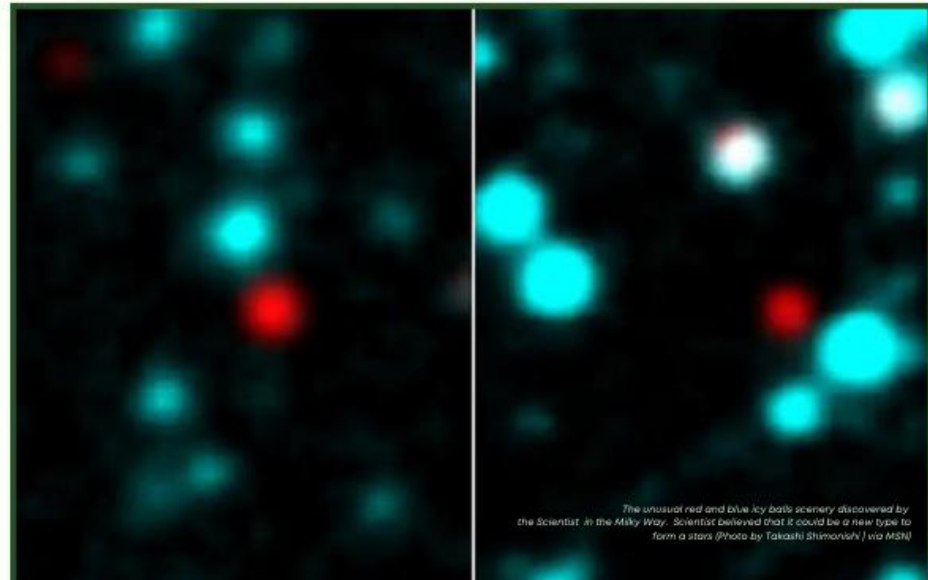
Dr. Shimonishi described the objects as small, with a large amount of ice content, and their isolation is unlike any other variant of star discovered in scientific research. Dr. Shimonishi and his team determined that Object 1 is located approximately 9.3 kiloparsecs (30,332 light years) from the Sun, situated in the Crux-Scutum Arm of the Milky Way.

Meanwhile, Object 2 is located 13.4 kiloparsecs (43,704 light years) away, positioned in the Carina-Sagittarius Arm.

Researchers attempted to use the Atacama Large Millimeter or Submillimeter Array (ALMA) in Chile, hoping to resolve this mystery. However, the new set of measurements raised more questions. The ALMA observations showed that the balls are between one and ten times the size of our solar system.

The presence of abundant silicon relative to carbon is what one would expect to observe in regions where a young star is aggressively expelling new material. Nevertheless, Dr. Shimonishi states that the small dimensions, significant ice composition, and seclusion of the objects do not correspond to any other kind of star recognized by science.

An astronomer from the University of Cardiff, Professor Jane Greaves, who was not involved in the study, told New Scientist that it is a fascinating piece of work, albeit rather puzzling.



The unusual red and blue icy balls scenery discovered by the scientist in the Milky Way. Scientist believed that it could be a new type to form a star (Photo by Takashi Shimonishi / via MSN)



## 2024'S YEAR-END SMARTPHONES

## TO BUY AT EACH BUDGET

By Thesa Deolien Beduyas

Don't miss out on the best smartphones you can buy before 2024 comes to a close.

Smartphones continue to enhance their features, thanks to artificial intelligence (AI). AI is the hottest trend in the world of devices, with almost every gadget produced this year relying on and revolving around this technology. Major smartphone brands, such as Samsung, Google, and Apple, integrate AI in their new device releases. In 2025, we can expect even more improved features aligned with AI advancements.

Here are the top picks across various price ranges to help you decide which phone fits your budget:

### Budget smartphones under P10,000:

The Xiaomi Redmi 13 4G stands out with its stunning 6.7-inch LCD display and impressive 108-megapixel camera, all powered by the agile MediaTek Helio G91 Ultra and a robust 5,030mAh battery.

Priced at P7,999, it's a strong contender despite some drawbacks, such as the lack of 5G support and average 1080p video recording. Alternatives like the Realme C65, priced at P9,999, offer stereo speakers and excellent battery life.

### Mid-range smartphones (P10,000 - P15,000):

In this bracket, the Infinix Note 40 Pro+ 5G shines with its 6.78-inch AMOLED display, 120Hz refresh rate, and powerful 108MP camera—all for P13,999.

While it supports 5G and rapid 100W charging, it lacks an ultra-wide lens. Alternatives like the Honor X8b, priced at P12,999, impress with its 108MP camera and 512GB of storage, while the Poco X6 5G, priced at P14,999, offers a 6.67-inch AMOLED screen, Snapdragon 7s Gen 2, and a robust battery.

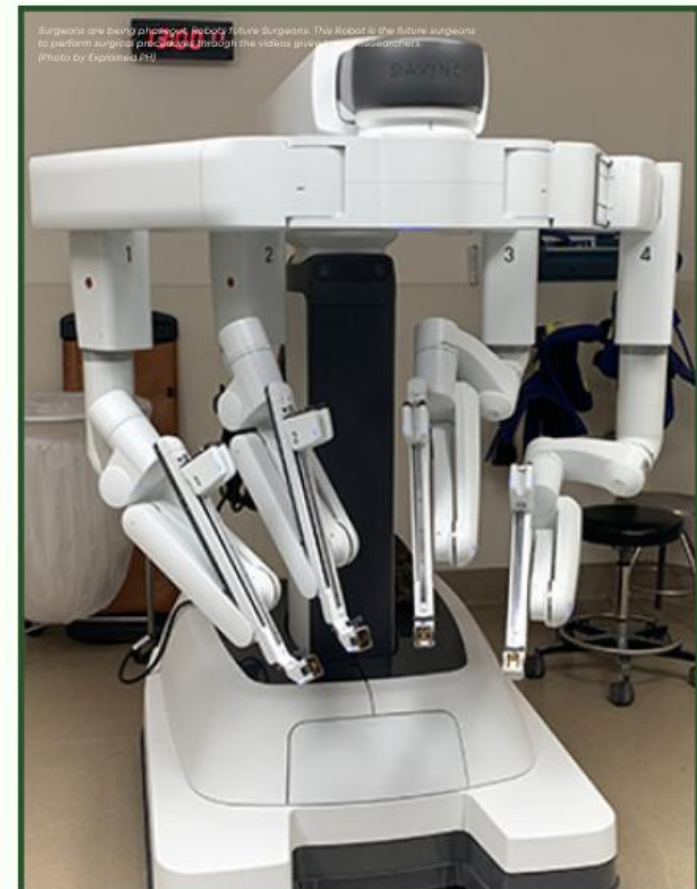
### Premium smartphones (P15,000 - P20,000):

The Honor 200 Pro, priced at P29,999, offers a stunning 6.78-inch AMOLED display, the powerful Snapdragon 8s Gen 3 processor, and a robust 5,200mAh battery with 100W charging. Its tri-camera setup stands out, although the curved display may not be for everyone.

### Flagship smartphones:

For those willing to spend a little more, the Xiaomi 14T Pro at P37,999 competes with premium flagships, featuring Leica lenses and a 144Hz AMOLED display, although it has some minor camera limitations.

The iPhone 16 Pro Max and Samsung S24 Ultra are vying for the top spot in 2024. Both flagship phones boast unique features that make them stand out as the best devices. The Samsung S24 Ultra offers a camera with a 100x zoom, capturing images with eagle-like precision. Meanwhile, the iPhone 16 Pro Max's impressive performance and durability make its price worthwhile.



Surgeons are being phased out by future surgeons. This robot is the future surgeons to perform surgery precisely through the video given by the surgeons (Photo by Explains 23)

## ROBOTS TO REPLACE SURGEONS: MASTERING SURGERY THROUGH VIDEO OBSERVATION

By Jaika Juris B. Sanchez

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and Stanford University have developed a robot that can execute surgical procedures with remarkable precision. This breakthrough could enable full autonomy in surgeries while reducing medical errors and improving surgical accuracy.

The researchers used the Da Vinci Surgical System, which consists of instruments that mimic a human hand but offer a greater range of motion. This system, which costs over \$2 million, provides surgeons with a 3D high-definition view of the surgical area and precise control.

Axel Krieger, an assistant professor at JHU, said, "The robot not only performed the tasks with human-level skill, but it also learned to fix its own mistakes. If it drops

the needle, it will automatically pick it up and continue." The researchers trained the robot on three surgical tasks: controlling a needle, lifting body tissue, and stitching. To achieve this, they combined imitation learning with a technology similar to that which powers chatbots like ChatGPT.

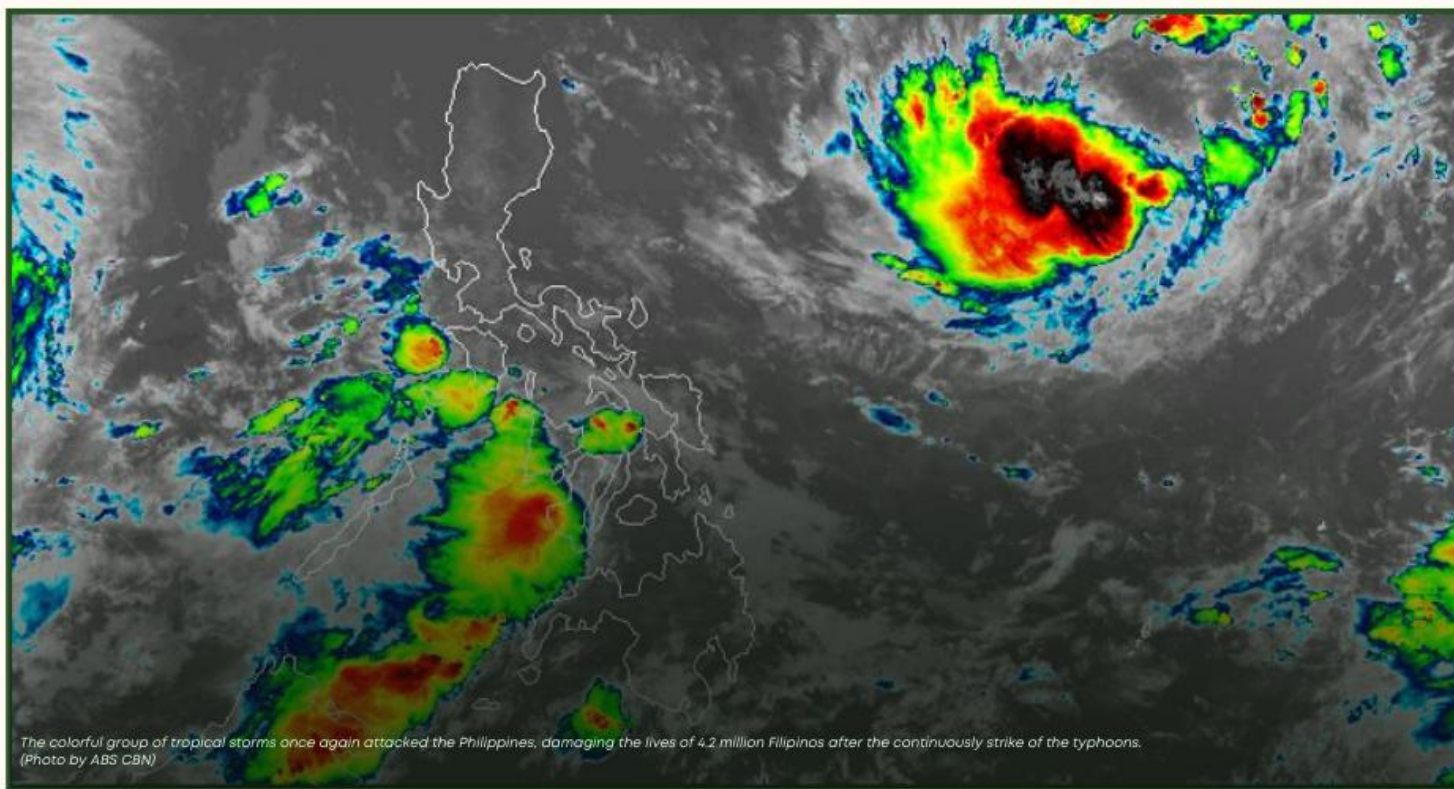
However, instead of processing text, it produces kinematics—a language that translates the angles of robotic motion into mathematical expressions.

The researchers trained their model by providing it with hundreds of videos recorded from wrist cameras placed on the arms of Da Vinci robots during surgical procedures. Surgeons from around the world recorded these videos for two purposes: first, to help examine a surgical procedure after it has been completed,

and second, to store the recorded data for future reference.

Prior to this advancement, Krieger explained that programming a robot to perform even a basic aspect of surgery required manually coding each step, which can be time-consuming. "Someone might spend a decade trying to model suturing," he added. The team is now focused on applying the imitation learning method to their robots for full surgeries. Surgery has traditionally required years of training and hard work, but as technology advances, robots could soon learn these skills more quickly. With fewer medical errors and more accurate surgeries, these robots may soon save millions of lives across the globe.





The colorful group of tropical storms once again attacked the Philippines, damaging the lives of 4.2 million Filipinos after the continuously strike of the typhoons. (Photo by ABS CBN)

# ANTARCTICA SLOWLY TRANSFORMS INTO GREEN

By Angela Christine Ramirez

Antarctica, known for its icy white landscapes, is experiencing the effects of climate change as patches of green emerge and plant life begins to thrive in parts of the frozen continent. Extreme heat events are driving this transformation, with scientists observing a rise in vegetation.

A study by scientists from the Universities of Exeter and Hertfordshire in England, along with the British Antarctic Survey, published in Nature Geoscience, reveals that vegetation, primarily mosses, on the Antarctic Peninsula has expanded more than tenfold over the past four decades. Thomas Roland, a study author and environmental scientist, explained that while the landscape remains largely covered in snow, ice, and rock, these green patches have grown significantly since the mid-1980s. What once covered less than 0.4 square miles now spans nearly 5 square miles as of 2021, with the rate of greening accelerating by over 30% between 2016 and 2021.

The Antarctic Peninsula, which has warmed faster than the global average, has experienced record-breaking temperatures. In March 2022, some parts of the continent recorded temperatures up to 70°F above normal, marking one of the most extreme heat events in Antarctica's history. Scientists predict that as fossil fuel emissions continue to warm the planet, the greening of Antarctica will likely accelerate.

This rapid vegetation growth could have significant implications for the region. Plant-covered surfaces absorb more heat, reducing the area's ability to reflect solar radiation. While these effects are expected to remain local, they could further accelerate plant growth as temperatures rise, said Olly Bartlett, a senior lecturer in remote sensing and geography at the University of Hertfordshire.

Scientists have also warned of the potential introduction of invasive species, which may be carried by tourists, researchers, or migrating birds. These species could threaten native wildlife and permanently alter the Antarctic ecosystem.

Matthew Davey, an associate professor of physiological ecology at the Scottish Association for Marine Science, called the study an "important progression" in understanding Antarctic plant life. He noted that additional vegetation, including lichens and snow algae, may be undetectable by satellite methods. While the increase in vegetation appears small, Davey emphasized that its rapid growth reflects an ongoing trend of plant life gradually spreading across the continent. Future research will focus on how plants colonize newly exposed land as Antarctica's glaciers continue to retreat.

This greening trend underscores the far-reaching impacts of climate change, even in one of Earth's most remote and extreme environments. As Bartlett put it, "This iconic landscape could be changed forever."



Whites turning to green, Antarctica ice snows gradually evolving to green due to the effects of climate change. (Photo by AFP | via Deccan Herald)

By Thesa Deolien Beduyas

Typhoons Yinxing (Marce), Toraji (Nika), Usagi (Ofel), and Man-yi (Pepito) entered the Pacific Basin and made landfall in the Philippines over a span of 10 days, from November 7 to November 16, 2024.

"The Japan Meteorological Agency reported that it was the first time since records began in 1951 that so many storms co-existed in the Pacific Basin in November," stated the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Experts have pointed to global warming as one of the contributing factors, due to the gradual increase in sea temperatures, which are rapidly generating extreme typhoons.

Typhoon Yinxing, known as Marce, struck northern Luzon on November 7, 2024, with winds of 155 km/h. It was classified under Tropical Cyclone Signal No. 3 by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). Over 160,000 residents were evacuated due to the expected immense damage. On November 8, 2024, Typhoon

Marce exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Four days after Typhoon Marce, Typhoon Nika, with sustained winds of 130 km/h, advanced toward the border of Isabela and Aurora provinces. As the storm intensified, the Northern Luzon sector was placed under Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 4. By November 12, 2024, approximately 52,313 families had been affected by the typhoon.

Typhoon Ofel, classified as a super typhoon, had maximum sustained winds ranging from 185 to 175 km/h and a central pressure of 970 hPa when it struck the Cagayan area. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provided supplies and restocked food packs to districts affected by the recent tropical cyclones to prepare for the anticipated risks.

The last typhoon to hit the Philippines was Typhoon Pepito. Luzon and parts of the Visayas experienced a life-threatening situation due to Typhoon Pepito, which was classified under Signal No. 5, with winds reaching 195 km/h at its peak. As a result, the State Weather Bureau declared that

sea conditions would remain at high risk across multiple regions. PAGASA also warned that storm surges could occur in the Ilocos area, Metro Manila, Calabarzon, and Samar within the next 48 hours.

The landfalls of these four typhoons have made it increasingly difficult for Filipinos to recover from the persistent disasters. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported that at least 13 Filipinos lost their lives due to Typhoons Nika, Ofel, and Pepito. Additionally, 4.2 million people have been affected by the consecutive storms.

## FOUR TROPICAL STORMS APPEAR NEARBY PAR AT ONCE



The falling guest from the sky attract Filipinos residents who live at Luzon, this asteroid change the color of the sky for each few seconds, emphasizing the hidden beauty of the sky. (Photo by Karen Bea | via Facebook)

# ASTEROID 2024 RW1: A GLOWING VISITOR BY LUZON

By Annber Christene S. Veginom

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's an asteroid!

This morning at 12:39 a.m., residents of Luzon were treated to a spectacular celestial show as a bright and harmless fireball, named 2024 RW1, streaked across the sky. The asteroid, approximately 1 meter in diameter, was a rare sighting as it became the ninth asteroid ever spotted before making impact with Earth, according to the European Space Agency (ESA).

Many witnesses expressed their admiration for the Catalina Sky Survey's discovery. Businessman Allan Madelar remarked on how mesmerizing the event

was, noting the beautiful colors displayed as the black sky transitioned from blue-green to orange and back to black.

Another witness, Audie de la Cruz, compared the fireball to a tadpole with a large bright head.

The sight of 2024 RW1 underscores the importance of asteroid tracking and monitoring. By identifying and observing these space rocks before they reach Earth, scientists can better understand their behavior and potential impacts, thereby enhancing our preparedness for future cosmic encounters.

This event not only highlighted the beauty of the universe but also the advancements in our ability to foresee and study these celestial visitors.

### WHAT ARE ASTEROIDS?

NASA defines asteroids as "small, rocky objects that orbit the sun." In contrast to planets, these are considerably smaller and can vary greatly in shape and size, ranging from a few meters to hundreds of kilometers in diameter.

Asteroids are remnants of the early solar system. Most are found in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. They are primarily composed of various types of rocks, and some also contain clays or metals such as nickel and iron.

### ASTEROID VS METEOR AND METEORITES

NASA explains that when an asteroid enters Earth's atmosphere and starts to burn up due to friction with the air, it creates a bright streak of light known as a meteor. If a portion of this meteor survives its fiery passage through the atmosphere and lands on the Earth's surface, it is called a meteorite. Therefore, the term "asteroid" describes the object while it is in space, "meteor" refers to its visible streak in the atmosphere, and "meteorite" is the term for any fragments that reach the ground.

### A NOTABLE ASTEROID EVENT

Asteroids frequently enter Earth's atmosphere, but most of them are small and burn up before reaching the ground. One notable recent event was the Chelyabinsk meteor. In February 2013, a 20-meter-wide asteroid exploded in the atmosphere over Chelyabinsk, Russia. The explosion created a significant shockwave, injuring around 1,500 people and causing extensive damage to thousands of buildings.

Phil Plait, a professional astronomer and science communicator in Virginia, describes the Chelyabinsk meteor as a "loud wake-up alarm for Earth."



# TAN-AW

✕ Mikeila Xchilt N. Santos

# A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE:

## SUSPENSIONS ARE NO CELEBRATION

Late October to mid-November brought a wave of class suspensions across the Philippines, a phenomenon that seemed to spark an unusual sense of enthusiasm among students. For weeks, the drumming rainfall became an anticipated event, as people began to look forward to announcements of class cancellations. However, this anticipation overtook us with blatant ignorance, masking the reality of the dire cause-and-effect relationship behind these weather events.

From October 21 to November 18, the country endured six consecutive typhoons, ranging from Severe Tropical Storms to Super Typhoons. These storms – Kristine, Leon, Marce, Nika, Ofel, and Pepito – left widespread damage and depicted the increasing severity of our country's weather patterns brought upon by climate change.

In the 178th Climate Forum, Kristel Anne Villasica, a weather specialist under PAGASA's Climate Monitoring and Prediction Section, pointed the series of typhoons back to the warm temperatures of the Pacific Ocean. Villasica stated, "There is an anomaly of 1°C to 2°C compared to the usual sea temperature. These warm ocean temperatures were the main reason that fueled the strong, consecutive cyclones."

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has long warned us of the impacts of climate change onto the ocean. Warmer temperatures fuel stronger storms, as it leads to rising sea levels and unusual weather patterns, worsening the challenges faced by vulnerable countries such as the Philippines. The series of typhoons that struck the Philippines serves as a reminder of climate change's presence.

While it brings cancelled classes and temporary relief from everyday responsibilities, the implications it has on the livelihoods and conditions of our nation's people are far more alarming. With a country like ours that is highly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, these storms disrupt lives, destroy infrastructure, and threatens our economy and food security every single time it hits.

The next time the rain comes, let us remember those who will bear the weight of its aftermath and unite in our efforts to support those in desperate need during these trying times. As students, let us not only be mindful, but also take bold, proactive steps to assist those affected by disasters such as these typhoons. Together, we can work toward a future where the anticipation of rainfall is not followed by celebrations that diminish the value of people's livelihoods, but rather – towards building a collective understanding of the significance these events have on our society.



Cartoon by Ysabelle Garcia

# FIRST-EVER SNOWFALL CREATES A BREATHTAKING EXPERIENCE IN SAUDI ARABIA

✕ By Zhianna Therese P. Nieva

On November 3, 2024, Saudi Arabia witnessed an extraordinary event when the normally hot and dry Al-Jawf desert encountered its first recorded snowfall. This rare phenomenon was the result of a low-pressure system that formed over the Arabian Sea, bringing moist air into the arid location.

The event brought thunderstorms, hail, and rain to Saudi Arabia and the neighboring UAE. As reported by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the region's temperature can reach 55°C, so the sudden arrival of frost was completely unexpected.

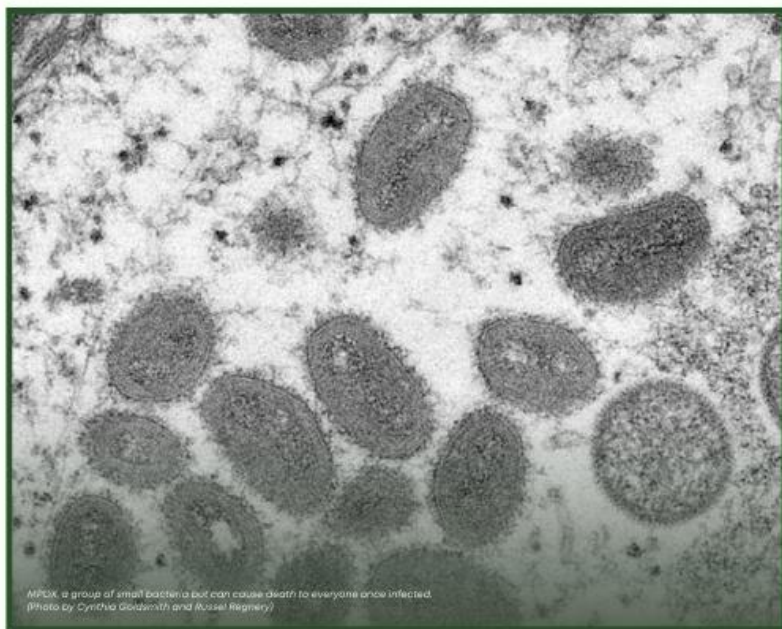
The once-in-a-lifetime snowfall in Saudi Arabia's Al-Jawf desert left both locals and visitors captivated, turning the arid region into an unexpected winter spectacle. Images of the unusual sight of snow covering the golden sands of the desert rapidly became viral on social media.

Discussions regarding climate change were immediately brought on by the incident, with many people speculating that an increasing number of extreme weather events might be linked to global warming. Although it is particularly uncommon in desert areas, snow has been observed in the Sahara and other deserts worldwide. This recent incident in Saudi Arabia serves as a reminder that shifting weather patterns can cause significant changes to even unexpected weather environments.

Al-Jawf's snowfall serves as a reminder that unexpected occurrences happen in nature, no matter how unlikely they may appear. This rare event in the desert emphasizes the unpredictable beauty of nature by proving how even harsh environments undergo unpredictable transformations.



A group of Camel, was seen at the Saudi Arabia during the first ever snowfall experience on November 3, 2025 (Photo by Associated Press/via Newsweek)



MPOX is a group of small bacteria but can cause death to everyone once infected. (Photo by Cynthia Golden/istock and Russel Rejzner)

# MPOX: INFORMATION, DETECTION, AND PREVENTION

✕ By Annber Christene S. Veginom

As of nearly a month since the first case was detected, the Philippines has eight active cases of mpox, previously known as monkeypox.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes mpox as a viral infection that is part of the same family as the virus that causes smallpox. Its mode of transmission is through close contact (including intimate contact) with a person with mpox, as well as through contaminated items such as bedding, garments, and needles that have been contaminated. Animals can also be affected by the virus. Symptoms on people include rashes, headaches, fever, swollen lymph nodes, and muscle aches.

### TYPES OF MPOX

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that mpox has two known types, clade I and II. Clade I causes more severe disease and deaths. Its new subtype, clade 1b, led to the declaration of a public health emergency as it is responsible for most of the ongoing spread. In contrast to that, clade II is a milder variant and was the cause of the worldwide outbreak that led to a global health emergency declaration from July 2022 to May 2023.

On September 1, the Department of Health (DOH) confirmed three new cases of mpox: two from Metro Manila and one from Calabarzon. All three have clade II and this sums up the total number of active cases to eight.

### PREVENTION

According to the CDC, "Most people with mpox fully recover within 2 to 4 weeks without the need for medical

treatment." However, caution is advised. In response, DOH has been implementing preventive measures.

On August 26, Health Secretary Ted Herbosa confirmed that 2,000 doses of mpox vaccines offered to the Philippines are in the process of being secured.

DOH updated prevention guidelines for this matter and encouraged people to adhere to basic preventive measures against the viral disease. In Department Memorandum No. 2024-0306, DOH emphasized that individuals should refrain from close and intimate physical interactions, such as touching and cuddling, with those who are suspected, probable, or confirmed cases of mpox.

Additionally, frequent and proper handwashing or use of alcohol-based sanitizers is advised. DOH-MMCHD Regional Director Rio Magpantay assured in a report from 24 Oras on August 30 that the virus is effectively neutralized by washing hands with soap.

The Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) also added preventive measures and included mpox questions in its e-travel form for its screening. DOH explained, "If, based on the electronic form, a traveler is determined to be from a country listed by the WHO as an outbreak area, has a history of exposure to a mpox case, or displays any signs or symptoms, the e-travel.gov.ph system will also alert the Department of Justice (DOJ) Bureau of Immigration (BI) and the DOH-BOQ."

The Baguio Health Services Office (BHSO) confirmed on Friday, February 7, that the city has a record of four cases.



The once healthy hands had been affected by the MPOX virus, shows small sores on the hands of the person and appear to be itchy and painful to the body. (Photo by Chicago)



# NU PEP SQUAD TAKES THEIR 8TH GOLD MEDAL FOR UAAP SEASON 87 CHEER DANCE COMPETITION

By Miguel Lorenzo P. Hofileña



Stronger, Better, Together, the National University pep squad, the joy and shock on their faces did not expect their 8th Gold Medal for the UAAP Season 87 Cheer Dance Competition. (Photo by UAAP)

On Sunday, December 1, 2024, The cheer dance competition was held in the Mall of Asia Arena, wherein the National University pep squad scored 1st in all categories which garnered them 713 points for their overall score, establishing a comeback from last years journey that was cut short, as they were beaten by the FEU pep squad, and was held as the 1st runner up for its 86th season.

The theme of the squad's outfit was intergalactic, wearing astronaut-inspired outfits with the men showcasing dyed buzz cuts and platinum bob wigs for the women, highlighting the overall performance with all of the tumblers, flips,

and majestic turn outs, but the most highlighted part of the routine was the "Ferris wheel" pyramid, that made the team shine like a supernova of the competition.

After experiencing their 8th champion title and 11th podium finish, they are now tied up with the UP varsity pep squad and the UST Salinggawi dance troupe.

"Sobrang nag step up silang lahat. Grabe pinaghirapan at dedication ng bawat team. Kaya di namin in-expect". - Head Coach of the NU pep squad Gabby Bajacan expressing to the other teams.

Aside from being the champion of the competition, the Soaring Falcons of the Adamson University pep squad placed as the 1st runner-up of the competition, ranking higher than last year, they scored 679 overall, showcasing a karaoke-themed performance and bringing back top hits like dancing queen and I will survive.

From the reigning champions last year to 2nd runner-up, despite being one of the teams who had the highest penalties, The Far Eastern University Pep squad garnered an overall score of 650 or 81.25% in the competition, displaying a Frozen-themed routine. .

Regardless of the podium finishers, the one university that failed to place was the University of the East, losing by 9 points to FEU garnering a score of 641 or 80.13% with -2 penalties, ranking higher than their performance in season 86 from 6th place to 4th.

The Universities that placed lower than 4th place are 5th - UST, 6th - UP, 7th - DLSU, and in last place, ADMU, regardless of these placements, these universities represented their school well, displaying the fruits of every pep squads' hard work

## SWING TRIUMPHS AT THE 10TH DAEDO TAEKWONDO OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

By Iverson Led B. Perez

Mater Carmeli School's very own Edric Juno G. Swing made history as he proudly represented the Philippines at the 10th Daedo Taekwondo Open Championship, held from December 6-8, 2024, at Our Tampines Hub in Singapore. Competing against top athletes from various countries, the young Carmelian delivered an outstanding performance, securing a gold medal in the Team Poomsae category and a bronze medal in the Individual Poomsae Super Junior Division.

Juno's remarkable success was the result of unwavering dedication and rigorous training. Leading up to the competition, he committed to an intense regimen, training four times a week for two to three hours per session. His disciplined routine also included maintaining a healthy diet and ensuring ample rest.

"I am just happy that I was there," Juno shared when asked about his experience in Singapore. "I also met other kids from different countries. We became instant friends. We talked and laughed a lot, even though we had just met."

Bringing home two medals was a dream come true for Juno. "I feel so proud and thankful to the Lord. Every night, I prayed that I could hold the Philippine flag in Singapore and win my first gold in Taekwondo. I want to bring honor to the Philippines, my team, my school, and my family."

Behind every great athlete is a strong support system, and Juno's parents have been by his side every step of the way. His mother and father ensured that at least one of them was present during his training sessions, providing encouragement and motivation.

"We watched videos of past Daedo competitions with Juno to help him familiarize himself with the setup," they shared. "It was surreal when we learned about his win. We honestly didn't expect it because this was his first international competition, and he's only six years old. We just wanted him to enjoy the experience and create core memories. But God is amazing! He gave Juno his first gold in Singapore, and we are beyond happy and grateful."

Watching Juno perform on an international stage was an emotional moment for his parents. "We felt a mix of excitement, nervousness, happiness, and pride. It was a sense of fulfillment knowing that his hard work, dedication, and passion paid off at an international level."

Juno's journey in Taekwondo is far from over. He is already preparing for his next competition, a local tournament on February 16, 2025, and is training hard to achieve another victory. He also plans to participate in more international competitions throughout the year, with hopes of continuing his winning streak.

As for his long-term goals, his parents expressed their hopes for him to grow into a confident, respectful, and determined individual, embodying the core values of Taekwondo. "We hope that Juno will one day achieve his dream of becoming a black belter and competing in prestigious international tournaments, possibly even the Olympics. More importantly, we want him to be a good role model and apply the skills and discipline he has learned in all aspects of life."



Edric Swing at the 10th Daedo Taekwondo Open Championships (Photo by Joy Genesales)

## YULO'S LEGACY: INSPIRING A GENERATION OF FILIPINO ATHLETES

By Jan Christen A. Lazaro

Carlos Yulo's historic gold medal victory has ignited inspiration among Filipino youth, motivating them to pursue their sporting passions with renewed determination.

Yulo's gymnastics journey began at the age of seven when he first discovered his love for the sport. This passion led him to compete in the Palarong Pambansa in Tacloban in 2009. As his skills developed, he trained for the Philippine National Games as part of the NCR gymnastics team.

In 2016, Yulo seized a life-changing opportunity when he accepted a scholarship from the Japan Olympic Association to train in Japan. He moved to Tokyo, where he enrolled at Teikyo University and graduated in 2022 with an associate's degree in Literature.

Yulo made his international debut at the Melbourne World Cup in 2018, quickly establishing himself as a formidable competitor. He continued to impress with strong performances at the 2018 Asian Games.

At the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Yulo proudly represented the Philippines, finishing an impressive tenth in the all-around final.

In 2024, he made history as the first Filipino male to win an Olympic medal. He secured his first gold in the men's floor exercise final on August 3, scoring 15.000. The following day, he clinched his second gold in the men's vault final with a near-perfect score of 15.116, becoming the Philippines' first-ever multiple Olympic gold medalist.

Yulo's remarkable journey continues to inspire young athletes, encouraging them to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams with unwavering dedication.



Photo by Naomi Baker / via Getty Images

Photo by Loic Venence / via Inquirer.net

# INTRAMURALS 2024 WINNERS



## SIBOL MLBB WOMEN'S CLUTCHES A SILVER FINISH AT THE 2024 INAUGURAL ASIAN ESPORTS GAMES

By Zen Ezekiel C. Alejo



In a hard-fought confrontation at the Indoor hall Hua Mak, Team Sibol, representing the Philippines' Women Mobile Legends Bang-Bang (MLBB) team, would ultimately be subdued by the Indonesian team to secure a Silver place finish in the Grand finale of the Inaugural Asian Esports Games on November 27, 2024.

In the course of the event, Team Philippines and Team Indonesia both held respective statuses, it was only until the semi-finals when the two powerhouses faced off one another, where the Philippines would lose to Indonesia 0-2; the Philippines would bounce in the lower bracket, securing a 2-1 finish against china, but Indonesia would dash their hopes by defeating them in the Grand Finale 4-2.

Securing a second place finish, Team Philippines would be rewarded with a \$2,000 cash pool, "It was a well-fought series for our team Sibol MLBB Women's team. Congratulations on your silver medal and thank you for representing our country", PESO executive director Marlon Marcelo remarked, expressing his gratitude.

But the two teams weren't all strangers to each other, having faced off in the previous finale at the SEA Games, a strong rivalry had been brewing up between the two.

However, no credit can be taken off of the Filipinas for falling short, Indonesia had already been cruising on a steady streak this year as they took home the IESF World Esports 2024 Championship Cup, nearly sweeping the entire playoff brackets, only losing a single game to Egypt, 2-1.

Yet, in the face of this loss, only one direction lies ahead: forward -- "We will rest and regroup to prepare for our next campaign in the 2025 SEA Games Thailand", Marcelo stated, laying out their future endeavors.



The Joy on the face of Sibol MLBB Women's team and coaches after winning Silver Medal against Indonesia, November 27, 2024. (Photo by Sibol / via philstar Global)

GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
CHES (B): PURITY	CHES (B): JUSTICE	CHES (B): DIGNITY	CHES (B): HARMONY	CHES (B): BL. ESPERANZA	CHES (B): ST. ELIJAH THE PROPHET
CHES (G): CHASTITY	CHES (G): COURAGE	CHES (G): LIBERALITY	CHES (G): DOCILITY	CHES (G): BL. ESPERANZA	CHES (G): ST. EDITH STEIN
BADMINTON (B): PURITY	BADMINTON (B): FREEDOM	BADMINTON (B): LIBERALITY	BADMINTON (B): HARMONY	BADMINTON (B): BL. ESPERANZA	BADMINTON (B): ST. ELIJAH THE PROPHET
BADMINTON (G): PURITY	BADMINTON (G): LIBERTY	BADMINTON (G): LIBERALITY	BADMINTON (G): DOCILITY	BADMINTON (G): BL. ESPERANZA	BADMINTON (G): ST. ELIJAH THE PROPHET
VOLLEYBALL (B): MODESTY	VOLLEYBALL (B): LIBERTY	VOLLEYBALL (B): INTEGRITY	VOLLEYBALL (B): DOCILITY	VOLLEYBALL (B): BL. REFUGIO	VOLLEYBALL (B): ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS
VOLLEYBALL (G): CHASTITY	VOLLEYBALL (G): LIBERTY	VOLLEYBALL (G): NOBILITY	VOLLEYBALL (G): DOCILITY	VOLLEYBALL (G): BL. GABRIELA	VOLLEYBALL (G): ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS
BASKETBALL: MODESTY	BASKETBALL: LIBERTY	BASKETBALL: LIBERALITY	BASKETBALL: GENTLENESS	BASKETBALL: BL. GABRIELA	BASKETBALL: ST. ELIJAH THE PROPHET
ML E-SPORTS: PURITY	ML E-SPORTS: LIBERTY	ML E-SPORTS: LIBERALITY	ML E-SPORTS: HARMONY	ML E-SPORTS: BL. ESPERANZA	ML E-SPORTS: ST. EDITH STEIN

# OTHER AAPS WINS



The Victory on the Court, the Triumph of MCS Volleyball teams during AAPS. Set a spike as players showcase their talents, skills, teamwork, and determination to take home the trophy. (Photo by Francine Ablog)

## MCS INTRAMURALS KICK OFF WITH A FIERY OPENING CEREMONY

By Jan Christen A. Lazaro

A wave of excitement swept through Mater Carmeli School on October 18, 2024, as Carmelians eagerly anticipated the start of the annual Intramurals.

The event kicked off with a vibrant parade, as each grade level marched into the St. Joseph Gym, filled with cheers and anticipation, the program formally commenced with a captivating showcase of the class muses and escorts from both the junior and senior high school.

The excitement reached its peak as the awards ceremony unfolded. The Muse of Grade 12 St. Elijah of the Prophet and the Escort of Grade 9 Liberty were crowned Mr. and Ms. Congeniality, capturing the hearts of the crowd.

The announcement was followed by the award of Best in Production Number, Escort of Grade 12 St. Elijah of the Prophet and the Muse of Grade 10 Docility.

In the realm of sports, the students displayed incredible athleticism and teamwork. Grade 7 Decency, Grade 8 Freedom, Grade 9 Nobility, Grade 10 Gentleness, Grade 11 Bisd. Daniela and Grade 12 St. Elijah of the Prophet were recognized for their outstanding sports attire.

The climax of the event was the highly anticipated announcement of Mr. and Ms. Intramurals. As each section's representatives took the stage, the crowd erupted in cheers.

Ultimately, the titles were awarded to Grade 7 Purity, Grade 8 Courage, Grade 9 Nobility, Grade 10 Docility, Grade 11 Bisd Esperanza, and Grade 12 St. Elijah of the Prophet.

The event culminated in a moment of pure joy as the Muse of Grade 12 St. Elijah of the Prophet and Escort of Grade 9 Liberty was crowned Mr. and Ms. Royalty.

"I feel honored and I feel proud to have this title," she shared. "To my section I'm very thankful for their unwavering support to me. And my escort, his emotional support to me has played a big part of me winning this award."

Beyond their athletic prowess, the Carmelians showcased their artistic talents through stunning jersey designs. The winning designs hailed from Grade 7 Modesty, Grade 8 Freedom, Grade 9 Liberty, Grade 10 Gentleness, Grade 11 Bisd. Esperanza, and Grade 12 St. Simon Stock.



The MCS S.Y. 2024-2025 Intramurals, on the left Ashley Clark, the Muse of Grade 12 St. Elijah of the Prophet, the right Just Zuriel Flores, the Escort of Grade 9 Liberty, and the Muse of Grade 10 Docility, the right Justine Palacios.





Miguel Hofilena, 16, the team Captain of the Men's Volleyball team of Mater Carmel School ends the match with a spike, winning against the Seagulls. (Photo by Isaac Acupan)

## MCS SAINTS END RUN AGAINST BETHEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

By Zen Ezekiel C. Alejo

Bethel Catholic School (BCS) battered The Mater Carmel School (MCS) Saints on November 28, 2024, dashing their hopes of a championship shot at the U17 Basketball AAPS league.

"[Mas] may height sila, may points, at may sistema", Sir Jerrick, the Saints' basketball head coach remarked about the players of BCS and what edge they had over the Saints.

Throughout their journey, it could not be helped that issues out of their control would arise, especially in balancing schoolwork with their love for the game.

Coach and player alike, it could not be helped that the time allotted simply wasn't enough; "Gusto ko man, kulang [lang] talaga sa time.", Sir Jerrick stated.

In line with this, the team also faced its own issues within, especially regarding discipline and chemistry.

"Some [were] nakikinig [and were] willing to learn, [but] some were boastful" - Sir Jerrick added - "They prioritize points over winning, [that when] they step on the court, they want to showcase their talent".

But setting these turmoils aside, it could not be denied that the Saints did show up when they had to.

Falling into a heavy 54-93 first-game loss at the hands of Mother of Perpetual Help School (MPHS), the Saints would rebound on their 2nd and 3rd games as they regain their stance over the Falcon School 57-27, and Sacred Heart Academy of Novaliches (SHAN) 65-53.

For the recourses that they were handed, there is no denying that the Saints put up a great fight;

"Since new, hectic [talaga] they did their best naman, it depends [lang] sa competitiveness." Sir Jerrick remarked.

As of the moment, the MCS Saints are waiting to be appropriately placed on either 4th or 5th place, of which would be decided by a point system through the other semi-finalists.

## THE SAINTS SEIZE THEIR SECOND WIN UP AGAINST THE SEAGULLS

By Miguel Lorenzo P. Hofilena

The Men's Volleyball team overpowers the Seagulls with a fierce 3-set match of 29-31, 25-16, and 25-20 earning them their second win.

The match started with even scores for both of the teams pouring all their energy into trying to dominate the start of the match.

Both teams kept on trying to take the lead, from the blazing spikes of MJ Tiangson to the dependable defense of Isaac Acupan, the Saints gained momentum in the later part of the set but were still overpowered by the Seagulls, resulting in a 29-31 tight knit first set.

The battle wasn't over, the Saints picked up the pace to show the strength that the whole team has been training for, as the 2nd set starts, the team noticed that their other 3 key players were now ready to fight for the win, from swift spikes of Jehan Constantino, to the monster blocks brought by Yvan Isola, into the sharp angles of attacks of Miguel Hofilena, the team continues to take advantage of the 2nd set, unfolding new strengths that the Seagulls had never seen before.

The second set ended with 25-16, the Saints being able to keep up their momentum as the third set began.

"We can't let our guard down, let's fight for it." is the motto that kept the Saints playing with whole-hearted passion as they continued to dominate the set until the score was 22-17. some unexpected errors came into play.

Miscommunication and faults were hindering the Saints from attaining the win, but it was only when the connection of Harvey Dominguito and Miguel Hofilena clicked to make and elevate the score for the final push of the team.

Hofilena attacked twice to end this set, his attacks turned the tides to 24-20, and it was now his final service that made the match officially theirs to win.

The crowd erupts as the Saints break the cycle of the seagulls' notorious win-streak against the Saints; it is now them who took the upper hand.

As a result of this matchup, Hofilena obtained the Player of the Game title alongside his teammates, gathering their last victory for this year's AAPS.



## MCS ALUMNI CHERISH MEMORIES AT HOMECOMING BASKETBALL GAMES

By Patricia Denise G. Mendaro and Zen Ezekiel C. Alejo

Slowly but surely, the essence of the past was reignited at the 5-week Mater Carmel Homecoming Basketball event from October 13, 2024, to November 30, 2024, at the Mater Carmel School (MCS) gymnasium.

6 teams fought for the elusive championship title: Dudebros with Captain Ball Migs Conception, Carmelian Titos with Captain Ball Japs Esteban, Two Squad with Captain Ball Rap Andrade, Team Hype with Captain Ball Angelo Talan, The Carmelians, with Captain Ball Pascua Hilfranz, and Team 2008 with Captain Ball Geritz Regalado.

Team Hype opened the 1st day of the tournament with a win of 58-50 over the Carmelians, The Carmelian Titos showed similar outcomes as they bested Dudebros 61-53, whilst the Two Squad demolished Team 2008 in an 18-point victory to secure an 86-68 victory, of which Julius Rabino led with an astonishing triple-double of 26 points, 10 rebounds, and 10 assists.

But in the heat of the competition, the spark of their reunion burns brighter, as Patrick Buraga exclaims "Isa to sa mga pangarap namin na magkaroon [ng alumni homecoming games] kasi magkikita ulit ung mga players and mga other batches'.

Sharing their sentiments, only more was to come for the second week as Team 2008 rebounded their loss in a win over the Carmelian Titos 64-51, Dudebros likewise shared their first victory as they overtook The Carmelians 65-57, but Two Squad shared a different narrative as they claim their

second victory against Team Hype, narrowly getting away with a 77-71 victory.

Concluding the second week, Ralph Chan was hailed as the X-Factor of the week with 12 Pts, 3 Rebs, and 2 Ast - Gian Gicaraya would also claim the Defensive Player of the Week (DPOW), amassing 11 Rebs, 2 Stls, and 3 Blks.

Heading into the third week, Two Squad would continue its undefeated legacy over the Carmelian Titos as they scored 95-88, Team Hype would improve upon their defenses to overtake Dude Bros in a 60-52 win, and concluding the week, The Carmelians would claim their first victory in a 67-65 victory.

Gian Deligero would claim the X-Factor of the week with 15 Pts, 10 Rebs, and 3 Ast, whilst Kyle Velez would claim the DPOW with 3 Rebs, 5 Stls, and 1 Blk.

Excitement entails following the championship week of the 5th week; in the final regular season game before the playoffs, Dudebros claimed the win over Team 2008 in a 67-54 victory, following this, Team Hype would then claim their 3rd victory after besting Carmelian Titos in an 87-73 scoreboard, and lastly, the Two Squad extended their undefeated record by denying The Carmelians of the win in an 87-73 match.

In the Semi-Finals the following day, Team Hype would showcase their immense 'clutch genes', as they narrowly beat DudeBros in a 67-65 victory, whilst Two Squad would share a different narrative, as they pursue their dominance as they defeat Team 2008 92-64.

"Masaya... Need maging consistent lang every time, every game." Two Squad Captain Ball Rap Andrade remarked regarding the Two Squad's success in the recent games.

Heading into the Finals, both teams set their eyes on the Trophy, despite the glaring passion, only one team could yield the trophy, hence, in an intense finals game, both teams gave no room for their error, but ultimately it was Two Squad that claimed the trophy and asserted themselves in an undefeated season, with their Team Captain, Rap Andrade, leading the way and claiming the Finals MVP.

But as the event concluded, one player shunned most in his games: Julius Rabino of Two Squad would go on to claim the overall season MVP, with his astonishing 27.0 PPG, 11.8 RPG, 5.4 APG, 3.0 SPG, and 1.0 BPG, he would prove as a testament to the depth that Two Squad had on their roster.

With the shared sentiments of the players, it can be confidently said that this game was an utter success; bringing back the old memories of friends and competitors alike.

But despite this, event organizer Guiseppe Punzalan refuses to remain complacent in the event's success, sharing his remarks in further improving the alumni games, "It might be a success for some people, but we know we can do better."



Jersey no. 14, Julius Rabino, father of Cristoforo Rabino, who held the ball tight towards the ring and successfully make a 2-points shot. (Photo by Enaira Ancheta)