SCAN ME!

Sapigao Strikes in Chess Finals

CHRISTLYN BUCTUAN

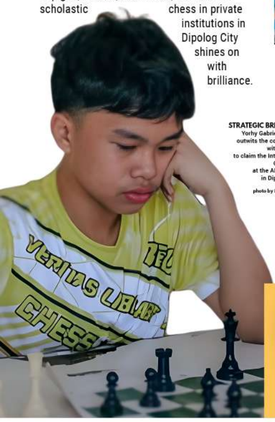
Young chess wizards from various private schools in Dipolog City assembled together to showcase their brilliance and wit in the realm of chess. The peaceful halls of the ABC Library became an arena of strategy filled with high school students ready to battle the Inter-Private Chess Selection for High School Boys on October 16, 2025.

Yorhy Gabriel Sapigao triumph as the champion in Chess finals after scoring of 4 ½ points throughout the tournament, defeating 8 of his opponents who are much older than him. His intelligence and mastery allowed him to outplay his competitors and helped secure the championship title.

Following closely is Zudi Navaro who garners an impressive score 4 points, falling short of the coveted title. His discipline play and patient strategy placed him at the top. Karnie Khane Heniel completed the top three with 3 ½ points, gaining a recognition for his creativity in navigating harsh middlegame positions in the board.

Their performace during the tournament signifies a strong foundation for young wizards in the City of Dipolog. Sapigao's calm composure, whether facing aggressive openings or harsh endgames proves his maturity on the board.

The Inter-Private Chess selection ended with new found talents from rising stars like Sapigao, Navaro, and Heniel, the future of scholastic chess in private institutions in Dipolog City shines on with brilliance.



STRATEGIC BRILLIANCE
Yorhy Gabriel Sapigao outwits the competition with mastery to claim the Inter-Private Chess title at the ABC Library in Dipolog City.
photo by NIAN LIPAYO





CLAIMING THE COURT
Team Captain Kurt Latoreno and the SVCI Valiants clinch the 1st Runner-Up spot after a high-stakes championship battle at the ESAH Cup Season 3 in Labason.
photo by RYAN ESOLANA

VINCENTIAN VALIANCE

SVCI Shines at ESAH Cup Season 3, secures 1st Runner-Up in Senior Division

CHRISTLYN BUCTUAN

The crowd was beaming with excitement as eight high schools from all across the province of Zamboanga del Norte joined together to compete in the ESAH Cup Inter- High School Basketball Tournament Season 3, Senior Division. Among these strong challengers, Saint Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) showcases remarkable determination, teamwork, and skill during the championship game against Malayal NHS. They stood out delivering a spectacular performance and ultimately earning 1st Runner-Up. The match held at Lopoc Covered Court, Labason, Zamboanga del Norte on September 24, 2025.

SVCI's journey during the tournament was marked by their determination and drive to pursue greatness in this field. They endured travelling 8 hours back and forth every weekend just to compete, but that did not stop them from doing their best. Their unwavering commitment to playing brought them to the finals with each player showing all their strength every time they step on the court even when faced with strong opponents. The unfamiliar court bought a lot of uncertainties but their ability to adapt under pressure allowed them to advance against formidable opponents.

Several SVCI players shone through the tournament receiving recognition for their admirable performance. Team Captain, Kurt Latoreno shows brilliance both off and on the court by securing the Best Free Throw Shooter along with the Academic Athlete Award. Following behind is one of the top scoring players, Glen Dale Ponggan who dominated the court, claiming the Top Block Shooter and Best Rebounder, proving that he is an asset in both offense and defense. Itok, the rising star, impresses everyone in his very first season by winning the Rookie of the Year in his debut performance. This win is signaling a bright future for the team. The awards were a testament of their hard work and perseverance all throughout the tournament.

Other participating schools, including Liloy National High School, Gutalac National High School, Baliguian National High School, Alam Mudja Sai National High School, Southern Philippine College Incorporated, and Kipit Agro-Fisheries High School, deliver an outstanding performance and competitive spirit, making SVCI's accomplishments more remarkable. Baliguian NHS secured 2nd Runner-Up and Liloy NHS brought home 3rd Runner-Up. The line-up of contenders was filled with strong willed high schoolers whose dream was to take home the championship title.

Season 3 of the ESAH Cup was a celebration of school pride, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Beyond the awards and victories, for SVCI, this was an opportunity for them to showcase their skills and commitment to representing Señor San Vicente with great pride and honor. Their performance and individual recognitions were a sight to behold as they set a high benchmark for future tournaments and for student-athletes who aspire to continue striving for excellence.

editor'spick

Low farm wages push youth away from agriculture

I am Kate Zara J. Bero, the current Associate Editor of The Vincentian, and I have been a news writer since fourth grade. Through years of reporting, I have come to realize that many of the country's most pressing issues grow quietly, and the steady decline of youth participation in agriculture is one of them. This article examines how low wages, unstable income, and the absence of long-term security continue to push young people away from farming, even as it remains essential to the nation's survival. Rather than framing agriculture as sacrifice alone, the piece challenges readers to recognize it as skilled, indispensable work that deserves fair pay, protection, and dignity. If farming continues to offer hardship instead of hope, the question is no longer why the youth are leaving, but how long the nation can endure their absence.

est. 1990
The Vincentian

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ROOTED IN DEDICATION
Joseph Ram Mayormita balances the fields and the classroom, embodying resilience and passion as he sustains his family's livelihood through the noble craft of farming.
photo by RYAN ESOLANA





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schoolnews

Teen devotes days to school and family farm, chooses passion over ease

KATE BERO

While most 17-year-olds are still asleep, Joseph Ram Mayormita is already in the fields, tending to crops and livestock as he balances the demands of school and family responsibilities.

Joseph Ram, a Grade 11 student at St. Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) - Basic Education Campus (BEC), works on the farm not only to help his family but because farming is a craft he loves, one he learned from his father at a young age.

Farming has become a way of life for him, teaching discipline, patience, and responsibility that he carries into his classroom and daily routines.

His day starts early with caring for crops and livestock, and after school, he continues planting, weeding, harvesting, and preparing the soil for the next day, demonstrating dedication that goes beyond necessity.

"Farming is more than work for me. It is my life, my passion, and my way of showing love for my family," Mayormita enthused.

Mayormita also shared that despite having other opportunities, he chooses to devote himself to agriculture because it brings him fulfillment and allows him to contribute meaningfully to his family's livelihood.

"Every drop of sweat and every long hour in the field teaches me strength, patience, and hope for the future. I will continue farming no matter how hard it gets," he added.

His commitment extends to weekends, where he continues helping on the farm whenever he can, proving that hard work and determination are not just part of his routine but a way of life.

Through long days of balancing school and farming, Joseph embodies resilience and perseverance, showing that true dedication and passion can overcome challenges and shape a promising future.

PLANTING DREAMS

nationalnews



FADING HARVEST
Young Filipinos turn away from the fields as low wages and limited stability threaten the future of Philippine food security.
photo from PHILSTAR

Low farm wages push youth away from agriculture

Who will grow the nation's food of tomorrow?

KATE BERO

Concerns over the future of Philippine food production continue to rise as more young Filipinos avoid farming, a shift largely driven by the reality that agricultural work offers low income, limited stability, and few long-term opportunities.

Farmers' groups pointed out that low income remains a major reason the youth avoid agriculture, noting that farmworkers in Laguna earn only about P300 a day for transplanting palay, leaving many to depend on short planting seasons and take on house helping, laundry work, sampaguita picking, construction jobs, and other blue-collar labor just to survive.

Studies on the agricultural workforce also showed that many young Filipinos view farming as outdated, physically demanding, and less promising than the technology-driven careers expanding across the country.

Data from the Commission on Higher Education, cited by economist Cielito Habito, revealed that enrollment in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries programs rose from 63,471 students in 2010 to 115,458 in 2020.

"My parents worked the fields every day, but we still struggled. I want a job that can guarantee a stable income, and farming does not feel like it can provide that," said a 19-year-old agriculture student who shared that his decision not to pursue farming came from what he witnessed growing up.

This shift reflects a growing belief within farm families that agriculture has not been a reliable pathway out of poverty, leaving the sector at risk of further aging as young people pursue work in other industries.

Advocates warn that unless farmer income improves, learning sites are fully utilized, and stable, technology-supported opportunities are strengthened, the country faces the possibility of losing not only its future farmers but the future of Philippine agriculture itself.



DepEd launches K–10 curriculum rollout to enhance education quality

CYRIAH MANGUBAT

To improve the overall quality of basic education for Filipino youth, the Department of Education (DepEd) has officially begun the gradual rollout of the revised K–10 curriculum, set to be implemented over five years starting in School Year 2024–2025.

The curriculum will be introduced in phases, with the first phase covering Kindergarten, Grades 1, 4, and 7, which will serve as key transition levels toward a more effective education system.

Many students have raised concerns about the current education system, noting that they are required to complete numerous school-related tasks that are not always useful for the future, a concern also recognized by DepEd and teachers.

In response, the new curriculum reduces minor subjects and places greater emphasis on core and essential subjects to make learning more meaningful.

According to the DepEd, the previous curriculum was overloaded, with too many lessons to teach and not enough time for effective learning, leaving both teachers and students exhausted yet still falling behind.

The Department of Education is currently continuing its efforts to fully implement the K–10 curriculum nationwide.

The success of the revised curriculum will depend on the support and collaboration of the education sector, while its overall results remain to be seen as implementation is still ongoing.

CRISIS IN LEARNING

Philippines faces education crisis as 18.9M Filipinos fall short on literacy

NYL DELABAJAN

According to the Department of Education (DepEd), around 18.9 million Filipinos are considered functionally illiterate, based on the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The findings were presented during a Senate Committee on Basic Education hearing, raising concern over the nation's basic education system and highlighting that the issue affects not only high school graduates but a wider age population.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Basic Education and co-chairperson of the Second Congressional Commission on Education, led the hearing to examine the implications of the survey on the country's education sector.

"No one should graduate from our basic education system without being functionally literate—unable to compute and comprehend," Gatchalian said. The PSA manages the FLEMMS, a nationwide survey that gathers data on educational background and literacy levels, and the initial data revealed that about 18.9 million Filipinos who completed basic education struggle with comprehension despite finishing high school.

DepEd Undersecretary Ronald Mendoza clarified that it is inaccurate to attribute the entire number solely to high school graduates, noting that only about 11.6 million Junior and Senior High School learners were enrolled in the 2024–2025 academic year.

"There are approximately 5.8 million people who are not basically literate," Gatchalian added, emphasizing the seriousness of the situation and supporting the updated definition of literacy for a clearer assessment of the nation's standing.

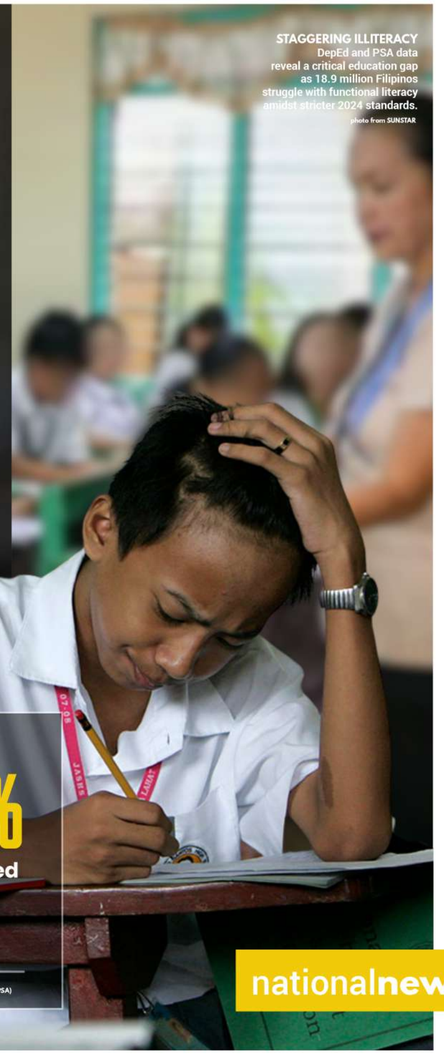
The PSA recently revised the definitions of basic and functional literacy, stating that basic literacy requires reading, writing with understanding, and computing, while functional literacy now also requires comprehension, differing from the 2019 definition.

Under the stricter 2024 criteria, DepEd noted that national literacy rates shifted, with basic literacy dropping to 90.0% and functional literacy to 70.8%, compared with 95.1% and 93.1% under previous standards.

After the release of the FLEMMS results, Education Secretary Sonny Angara reaffirmed DepEd's commitment to improving literacy across all levels of education.

"Hindi namin hahayaang may batang nahuhuli sa pagbasa at pag-unawa [We will not let any learner fall behind in reading and comprehension]," Angara said, emphasizing that literacy must remain the core of education reforms.

DepEd officials also highlighted that addressing functional illiteracy requires coordination beyond the education sector, including factors such as nutrition, which directly affect learners' ability to read, write, compute, and comprehend.



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The Vincentian
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First-ever Dipolog Marathon unites thousands in a run for health and unity

BILL AGIAS



On October 19, 2025, Dipolog City streets came alive as 3,000 runners from Mindanao and the Visayas gathered for the city's first marathon, turning the Dipolog Sunset Boulevard into a celebration of endurance and determination.

The marathon featured 42 km, 21 km, 10 km, and 5 km races, welcoming professional athletes, casual runners, and first-time participants all aiming to cross the finish line.

Organized by Trisome Dipolog in coordination with the City Government of Dipolog, the Dipolog Marathon 2025 aimed to promote physical fitness, unity, and active participation within the community.

Start times were scheduled from midnight to 4:00 a.m. to ensure safety, while cheers from supporters echoed along the streets, encouraging the runners as they prepared for the challenge ahead.

Participants pushed their limits, testing both physical strength and mental stamina as they made their way through the course.

Jason Padayao claimed the championship, finishing the full marathon in 2 hours, 33 minutes, and 52 seconds, showcasing the results of months of training and dedication.

"It was exhausting, but every step was worth it. Crossing the finish line made me feel proud and showed me that I can push myself farther than I ever imagined," said Claire Ytang, a senior high school student from SVCI-BEC, after completing the 5 km race.

Participants received finisher's shirts, medals, race bibs with timing chips, and post-race refreshments, adding to the festive atmosphere and highlighting the sense of camaraderie and city pride throughout the event.

The event ran seamlessly thanks to the dedication of volunteers, local organizations, and city officials, who worked together to ensure safety, smooth operations, and a memorable experience for all participants.

Family, friends, and spectators lined the streets, cheering every runner across the finish line, celebrating each accomplishment and showing that the marathon was a triumph of perseverance, teamwork, and the spirit of shared achievement.

> "It was exhausting, but every step was worth it.
>
> CLAIRE YTANG
> SVCI Marathon Runner

schoolnews

No More Monthly Dues:

SVCI-BEC eases financial pressure on student organizations

KATE BERO

In a move welcomed by many students, St. Vincent's College Incorporated – Basic Education Campus (SVCI-BEC) has halted mandatory monthly sinking funds, allowing members to participate in organizations without financial strain.

The decision ends a long-standing practice that required students to pay regular fees, which had often created financial pressure for organization members.

Under the new policy, organizations are only allowed to collect a one-time ₱50.00 fee per member per semester, while any additional contributions may be accepted only if given voluntarily.

Due to the sudden announcement, the SVCI Senior High School Student Supreme Government (SHS-SSG) Adviser clarified that collections intended for the first semester, specifically those made up until October, may still be completed.

"This policy ensures that no student will be forced to contribute beyond their means while allowing organizations to function smoothly and responsibly," SVCI SHS-SSG President Elyssa Balladares emphasized, highlighting fairness and inclusivity for all members.

The move addresses long-standing concerns about the financial burden on students, as SVCI-BEC has historically collected relatively large monthly fees from organization members.

"This change makes it easier for students like me to join clubs and participate without worrying about finances," said a SHS student and organization member, adding that it promotes fairness and equal opportunity for everyone.

School officials emphasized that the change aims to make organizational participation more inclusive while maintaining purposeful and effective student activities.

Many students welcomed the announcement, seeing it as a positive step toward encouraging participation based on interest and commitment rather than obligation.



03news
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datashows

44%

of fishers experienced emotional trauma from extreme climate events like typhoons.

source from MDPI CLIMATE STUDY

Climate change puts Filipino fishers' livelihoods at risk

NYL DELABAJAN

Coastal fisherfolk in the Philippines faced growing challenges as climate change intensified, putting their livelihoods and the country's food security at risk.

Recently, Typhoon Tino (Kalmaegi) struck the Visayas, while Super Typhoon Uwan (Fung-Wong) hit Luzon, destroying homes, fishing boats, and gear in coastal communities.

"The super typhoon split my boat, and the nets disappeared. My boat was already on higher ground, but the sea still reached it, taking everything," said George Molina in an interview with Rappler.

For decades, small-scale fishers had depended on the ocean for survival, but declining fish stocks and unpredictable weather forced fish to swim deeper, making trips longer, riskier, and less productive, which reduced household income.

"Sometimes, the sea is all about luck," said Marionito Reyes, a fisherman from Luzon, telling TIME Magazine he returned home with only eight sardines and a mackerel after five hours at sea, barely enough for a meal or to rebuild his home after six consecutive storms.

According to Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, coastal communities were on the front lines, facing rising seas, brutal storms, and tidal surges that destroyed millions of homes, businesses, and public infrastructure.

"Constant threats of displacement created chronic anxiety and trauma, particularly among children," noted Gwendolyn Pang, secretary general of the Philippine Red Cross, highlighting the emotional toll of repeated evacuations and relocations.

Governments, NGOs, and local groups worked to improve housing, protect livelihoods, and expand income opportunities, but building a better future for the next generation remained difficult.

"What people told me was simple: they wanted their families, communities, and livelihoods to be better protected," Stiell said, emphasizing the urgent need for stability so coastal families could invest in life rather than just survive the next disaster.



Student entrepreneurs channel business profits toward tuition and allowance

Full-time students, hands-on entrepreneurs

KATE BERO

In a display of determination that rises above ordinary student routines, Grade 12 ABM learners from St. Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) - Basic Education Campus turned their small spam musubi venture into a source of financial support for their education.

The initiative, led by Laila Lomarda, Feliz Mabuting, and Earl Bagundol, demonstrated how students can balance academic responsibilities while earning income to help cover their allowance and other school-related needs.

Their business effort highlighted how young people can transform regular school days into opportunities for learning responsibility, financial discipline, and personal growth.

Lomarda shared, "We take things one at a time because we want to finish our school tasks first before we start preparing the musubi," emphasizing their commitment to managing their priorities with intention.

Teachers from SVCI remarked that student entrepreneurs like them inspire their peers to explore practical ways to support their studies without compromising their academic performance.

For these students, their spam musubi business serves not only as a source of income but also as a reminder that every purposeful step can bring them closer to the future they hope to build.

datashows

4 out of 10

Filipino youths are already engaging in entrepreneurial activities early in life

source from JOURNALS E-PALLI



These are the affected victims of Typhoon Tino 2025, highlighting the scale of the storm's devastation in the Philippines:

232	People Dead
112	People Missing
523	People Injured
5,000,000+	People Affected
370,000+	People Displaced

CHECK OUT THE STORY HERE
TYPHOONomenal Force: How Tuvs Typhoonus Shook the Archipelago
SCI-TECH | PAGE 16

source from MANILA BULLETIN/NDRRMC & PHILSTAR



Danger on the Shortcut: Safety concerns grow as residents continue sliding down Linabo Peak railing

How safe is the fastest way home?

KATE BERO

Public safety is once again in the spotlight in Zamboanga del Norte after videos showed residents sliding down a two-kilometer metal railing that runs beside the 3,003-step staircase of Linabo Peak.

The unusual shortcut, used daily by students, teachers, and locals, has raised questions about whether convenience is being prioritized over safety.

Instead of spending about an hour walking down the steep concrete steps, many students sit on net bags, cloth, or even their clothes to glide along the railing, reaching the lower areas in just minutes.

"We know it is dangerous, but this is the only way we can get down fast. We just hope nothing bad happens because many of us do this every day," a resident shared, explaining that people rely on the shortcut because it is the only quick route they have for daily travel from the peak.

Local officials have raised ongoing safety warnings, emphasizing that the railing slide remains a serious risk for those who use it.

"We have always tried to discourage them from doing that practice because it is a hazard and someone could get into an accident," Dipolog City Information Officer Lorenzo Aseniero II said in an interview featured on Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho.

Despite repeated reminders, the railing-slide remains a daily routine for both students and adults who say the long staircase is difficult to take on foot, especially after school or work.

Residents pointed out that limited transportation options and the absence of an alternative pathway leave them with no choice but to continue using the railing, even with the risk involved.

The situation has renewed calls for improved infrastructure, safer access routes, and long-term solutions for remote communities like Linabo Peak, where the fastest way home continues to be one of the most dangerous.

Bangon Cebu: Student leaders join forces in donation to support Typhoon Tino victims

CYRIAH MANGUBAT

To provide humanitarian aid for families severely affected by Typhoon Tino, St. Vincent's College Incorporated–Basic Education Campus collaborated with the Interact Club of Dipolog in the Bangon Cebu Relief Operations and Donations.

Food packs and other essential supplies were collected from students of the school and were turned over to the club on October 14 for official delivery to Cebu, where these will be distributed to affected families.

As many residents lost their homes and properties when the typhoon struck Cebu, resulting in hardship and deprivation, the Vincentian community was moved to extend help by partnering with the Interact Club in the relief effort.

"Being part of this donation drive makes me proud as an SVC student, knowing that even in small ways, we can help bring hope and comfort to families affected by the typhoon," said Kathlyn Salasayo, a Grade 12 student, as she expressed her happiness in witnessing and taking part in the collaboration between the school and the club.

Meanwhile, recipients of the donated goods expressed gratitude to those who extended assistance, saying the support helped them cope with daily needs as they slowly recovered from the disaster.

The collaboration between SVCI-BEC and the Interact Club of Dipolog continues to reflect generosity, compassion, and solidarity as both groups remain committed to helping communities affected by calamities.



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Atienza's loss prompts lawmakers to file Mental Health Bill

FAITH BUSTALIÑO

Senator JV Ejercito introduced the "Emman Atienza Bill," or "Anti–Online Hate and Harassment Act," a measure that aims to address online hate, harassment, and digital abuse by promoting efforts to bring back kindness in online spaces.

The proposal is named after Emmanuelle "Emman" Hung Atienza, daughter of Filipino television host Kim Atienza, who passed away on October 22, 2025, after long struggles with mental health issues and extreme online bullying, which she endured alongside the pressures of being active on social media.

The bill aims to reinforce the implementation of laws against online hate and strengthen protections for individuals who experience cyberbullying, harassment, sexuality-based discrimination, or other forms of digital harm.

"While social media serves as a platform to advocate for truth, it has also given room for ruining reputations, spreading fake news, rumors, false accusations, and violence. In reality, there are no delete or edit buttons for the ones we have hurt," Ejercito stated.

He emphasized that freedom of expression should never come at the expense of another person's dignity, reminding the public that many suffer silently because of harsh online behavior.

"We hope Emman's passing will not be in vain as we push for the immediate passage of this measure. We need to bring back kindness online, where people pause and think before they post," he said.

An advocate voiced this call for change, saying, "This is a wake-up call. Young people are struggling silently, and we cannot afford to lose more lives, and Emman's story must lead to action," urging the public to become more aware not only of what is happening around them but also of what each person may be going through.

The measure stands as a reminder of the challenges faced by today's youth and highlights the hope that stronger protections, kinder online spaces, and more responsive systems can help save lives.

ECHOES OF EXCELLENCE

Marching bands set Dipolog ablaze in 20th Dahunog sa Dipolog Band Competition

BILL AGIAS & KATE BERO

Dipolog City burst into rhythm and color as pounding drums and synchronized steps filled the streets during the 20th Dahunog sa Dipolog Marching Band Competition on October 6, 2025, bringing together audiences from across the city and nearby provinces.

The competition officially began at Plaza Magsaysay, as participating schools marched with confidence, showcasing gleaming uniforms and synchronized formations driven by the powerful sounds of brass and percussion.

Bands continued their route toward the Explore Dipolog Landmark Sunset Boulevard, where the much-anticipated showdown took place, turning the area into a stage of musical excellence and spirited rivalry.

This year's competition featured high school marching bands from Colegio de San Francisco Javier of Rizal (CSFJR), Dapitan City National High School (DCNHS), Polanco National High School (PNHS), Sindangan National Agricultural Integrated School (SNAIS), Sindangan National High School (SNHS), St. Vincent's College Inc. – Basic Education Campus (SVCI - BEC), Sulangon National High School (SNHS), and Zamboanga del Norte National High School (ZNNHS) – Main Campus, all showcasing months of preparation and discipline.

After a series of dynamic performances, ZNNHS – Main Campus emerged as champion, followed by SVCI - BEC as first runner-up and SNAIS as second runner-up, highlighting their musical and choreographic precision.

Adding excitement to the event, the competition introduced an elementary school category for the first time, giving young performers the chance to showcase their talent and gain early exposure to marching band discipline.

Elementary schools including Bacong Central School (BCS), Baybay Central School and SPED Center, Dipolog Pilot Demonstration School (DPDS), Ilaya Elementary School (IES), and Polanco Central School (PCS) impressed audiences, with PCS claiming the championship, DPDS as first runner-up, and IES as second runner-up.

The event also featured a special performance by Zamboanga del Norte National High School – Turno, last year's Grand Slam Champion, under the guidance of Band Master Solitario Cañoneo, whose leadership continues to inspire excellence among young musicians.

As the final notes faded and applause echoed along the boulevard, the 20th Dahunog sa Dipolog Marching Band Competition concluded on a high note, proving once again that music unites communities and celebrates dedication, growth, and shared passion.



> "When I marched in the Dahunog Parade, my heart overflowed with pride because the cheers, music, and brilliance of all the bands made the experience unforgettable."
>
> WIN EVOLET SABEJON BUGAHOD
> SVCI Majorette 2025

PULSE OF THE CITY
Win Evolet Sabejon Bugahod leads the SVCI - BEC Marching Band to clinch the 1st Runner-Up spot during the 20th Dahunog sa Dipolog at the Sunset Boulevard.
photo from SNGT BY AG

DepEd unveils ARAL program to boost learners' academic recovery

FAITH BUSTALIÑO

As part of the government's efforts to address the country's learning crisis, the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued a memorandum directing all schools to implement the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program.

DepEd Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Fatima Panontongan issued DepEd Memorandum 64, which applies to all public and private school officials, directing them to roll out the ARAL–Reading program.

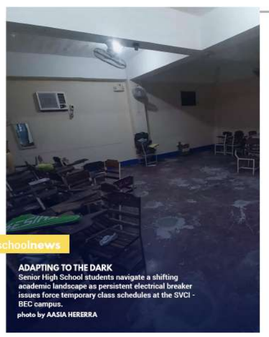
"The ARAL–Reading program aims to provide timely, responsive, and effective support to learners who are below the expected reading proficiency levels, helping them catch up with grade-level expectations," Panontongan stated.

DepEd Memorandum 64 also establishes the implementation of the ARAL program for Key Stages 1 to 3, in accordance with Republic Act (RA) 12028, which formalizes the ARAL initiative.

"ARAL–Reading will begin in the second quarter of the 2025–2026 school year, and schools needing additional time to organize personnel and resources are advised to coordinate with their Schools Division Office regarding the appropriate timeline," Panontongan added.

The program offers free tutorials to students who have learning gaps, with about three million of the 24 million enrolled learners struggling academically.

Through ARAL–Reading, DepEd aims to strengthen students' skills, make learning more engaging, and support education that aligns with each learner's needs, ultimately improving the overall quality of basic education in the Philippines.



Electrical issues disrupt SHS face-to-face classes at SVCI - BEC

NYL DELABAJAN

Senior High School students at St. Vincent's College Incorporated - Basic Education Campus (SVCI - BEC) have attended limited face-to-face classes since July 8, 2025, due to a technical problem with the main electrical breaker, which led the school to adopt a temporary class schedule.

A school memorandum reported that inspections of all air-conditioning units, including classrooms, computer labs, and faculty offices, showed that the systems were in good condition. However, the school could not operate all facilities simultaneously for a full day, prompting schedule adjustments.

Initially, Grades 9, 10, and 11 attended classes from 6:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m., while Grades 7, 8, and 12 attended from 12:05 p.m. to 6:05 p.m. A revised schedule later rotated Grade 11 for face-to-face classes and Grade 12 for online learning on certain weekdays, alternating roles through the week, until the electrical system is fully restored.

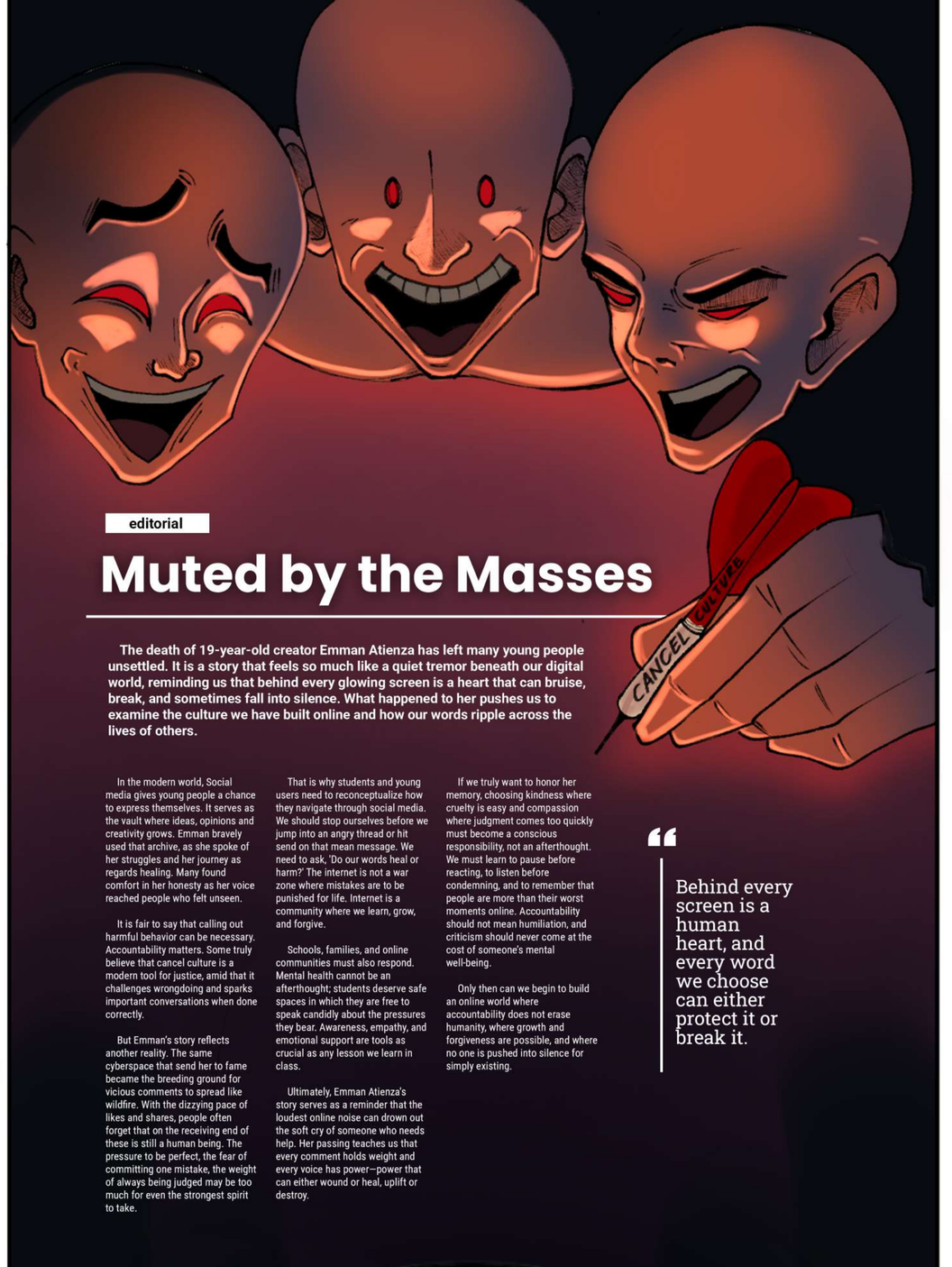
Despite the changing schedules, students expressed mixed reactions. While some students have managed to cope, others hope for the return of the normal class schedule, citing its negative impact on learning.

Another student added, "It's not an efficient and effective way for students to learn. Classes are often interrupted, so lesson retention is lower," emphasizing that the setup discourages productivity among students.

Parents have also been affected, as they continue to pay full school fees while students receive limited learning time.

"It's disappointing that the school promised fully air-conditioned SHS classrooms before enrollment, yet in the second semester, only one air-conditioner per room is available and the normal class schedule has not resumed, disrupting learning time. But because of certain unavoidable problems, we have no choice but to adjust and adapt to this kind of set-up," SHS-SSG President Elyssa Balladares, enthused.

The school has yet to release a plan for resuming normal classes, leaving students to remain patient while awaiting restoration.



editorial

Muted by the Masses

The death of 19-year-old creator Emman Atienza has left many young people unsettled. It is a story that feels so much like a quiet tremor beneath our digital world, reminding us that behind every glowing screen is a heart that can bruise, break, and sometimes fall into silence. What happened to her pushes us to examine the culture we have built online and how our words ripple across the lives of others.

In the modern world, Social media gives young people a chance to express themselves. It serves as the vault where ideas, opinions and creativity grows. Emman bravely used that archive, as she spoke of her struggles and her journey as regards healing. Many found comfort in her honesty as her voice reached people who felt unseen.

It is fair to say that calling out harmful behavior can be necessary. Accountability matters. Some truly believe that cancel culture is a modern tool for justice, amid that it challenges wrongdoing and sparks important conversations when done correctly.

But Emman's story reflects another reality. The same cyberspace that send her to fame became the breeding ground for vicious comments to spread like wildfire. With the dizzying pace of likes and shares, people often forget that on the receiving end of these is still a human being. The pressure to be perfect, the fear of committing one mistake, the weight of always being judged may be too much for even the strongest spirit to take.

That is why students and young users need to reconceptualize how they navigate through social media. We should stop ourselves before we jump into an angry thread or hit send on that mean message. We need to ask, 'Do our words heal or harm?' The internet is not a war zone where mistakes are to be punished for life. Internet is a community where we learn, grow, and forgive.

Schools, families, and online communities must also respond. Mental health cannot be an afterthought; students deserve safe spaces in which they are free to speak candidly about the pressures they bear. Awareness, empathy, and emotional support are tools as crucial as any lesson we learn in class.

Ultimately, Emman Atienza's story serves as a reminder that the loudest online noise can drown out the soft cry of someone who needs help. Her passing teaches us that every comment holds weight and every voice has power—power that can either wound or heal, uplift or destroy.

If we truly want to honor her memory, choosing kindness where cruelty is easy and compassion where judgment comes too quickly must become a conscious responsibility, not an afterthought. We must learn to pause before reacting, to listen before condemning, and to remember that people are more than their worst moments online. Accountability should not mean humiliation, and criticism should never come at the cost of someone's mental well-being.

Only then can we begin to build an online world where accountability does not erase humanity, where growth and forgiveness are possible, and where no one is pushed into silence for simply existing.

> "Behind every screen is a human heart, and every word we choose can either protect it or break it.



art by JIRAH ARTAJO & GIO JANG

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The Vincentian
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morethanbooks

Learning Outside the Classroom

by **PRECIOUS ODIN**

Some of the most important lessons I learned in school didn't come from a textbook—they came from moments of pressure, failure, and discovery.

Students get up early every day to go to school, sit in class, hear teachings, and finish their assignments; it's practically a daily ritual. However, school life is more than simply academics. Students learn in a different way outside of the classroom through extracurricular activities that let them develop their interests and skills, such as athletics, clubs, music, the arts, and student groups. Students are encouraged to express themselves and develop in these settings rather than feeling constrained by grades.

Extracurricular activities help students develop important life skills that are difficult to learn inside a classroom. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, extracurricular activities significantly boost lstudent life skills, with over 70% participants reporting improved academic performance, time management and helped develop curcial transferrable social, and emotional skills. These activities foster essential teamwork, leadership, and resillience, which are linked to reduced dropout rated. These skills are practical and useful in real-life situations, especially in the future.

A school-based study from the official journal of Siena College of San Jose, Inc. found that about 57% of Filipino students participate in 1–2 extracurricular activities, 27.3% in 3–4 activities, and only 6.7% in 5 or more. This indicates that the majority of students participate in some extracurricular activities, whereas 9.1% do not. These numbers demonstrate that a large number of Filipino kids already participate in extracurricular activities, and those who do frequently improve their social skills, dedication, and teamwork.

Despite the extra work involved, extracurricular activities give students skills that help them in life beyond school. Students improve their communication and teamwork abilities through group projects and activities. Organizing events or assuming leadership positions in clubs fosters self-assurance, accountability, and decision-making skills. Resilience and adaptability qualities that are crucial in both academic and real-world contexts are also taught by juggling academic and extracurricular obligations. Furthermore, children are still shaped by extracurricular activities in ways that go well beyond the classroom.

In the end, learning goes far beyond textbooks and classroom. By fostering character development, enhancing wellbeing, and preparing children for the real world, extracurricular activities enhance student growth in ways that classroom instruction alone cannot.

After all the challenges and hardships we've overcome, aren't we really preparing for life itself?



datashows

Extracurricular Involvement of Filipino Students

74%
of Filipino students participate in 1-2 extracurricular activities.

27.3%
of Filipino students participate in 3-4 extracurricular activities.

6.7%
of Filipino students participate in 5 or more extracurricular activities.

source from **SILAB: (Scholarly Inquiries for Learning and Academic Betterment)**



editorial

Rice Prices Rise, Farmers Fall Behind

Everyday, a Filipino buys rice, and every grain carries the silent suffering of our farmers who can barely earn what they've grown. Farmers spend ₱14.52 to produce one kilo of palay, only to be returned with just ₱0.61. How can the price of rice rise so fast while the very people who grow it remain so poor? Why is it that our farmers remain slaving away in the scorching heat, while the price of their work rises as fast as the temperature?

Well, the truth is — these farmers don't actually set their prices. When these farmers harvest, they have to sell their palay at low prices to middlemen due to the fact that they lack the proper equipment. They lack dryers, buyers, and so much more. These middlemen dictate the prices, take the profits, and leave what's left to the farmers, with barely enough to live off of. In fact, over the span of 2 months between July - September 2025, the average price of Palay dropped to approximately ₱16.29 per kilogram.

Moreover, the costs of seeds, fertilizers, and more continue to increase. By the time they sell their rice, their earnings barely cover the expenses. While the backbone of our community remains poor, politicians preach food security, yet our farmers drown in debt. They talk about how food is important, yet barely leave enough for farmers to feed their family.

A major reason for this inequality is the lack of support — a lot of farmers don't have access to modern technology, and the irrigation system is weak, so they rely on loans. LANDBANK states that as of September 2025, AGRISENSO+ Lending Program has given loans to over 12,300 borrowers, a majority being farmers and fishers. The ERCA-RCEF Program, run by LANDBANK has benefited over 17,600 farmers and 270 cooperatives, with more than 47,100 member-beneficiaries in total. While helpful, these programs are still not enough to fully support our farmers.

Furthermore, climate change also adds to the burden. Typhoons, drought, and floods devastate their crops, leaving farmers with no income. The Department of Agriculture (DA) stated that preliminary estimates placed total agricultural and infrastructure losses at P1.38 billion as of Sept. 27, with 55,595 farmers and agricultural workers affected by severe weather. When harvests fail, rice prices in the market rise—but the farmers themselves gain nothing.

> The contradiction is painfully clear; prices go up, but farmers stay poor. The system rewards middlemen, importers, and large distributors, while punishing the very people who keep us fed.

We can help them in more ways than you think and break the cycle. Ordering in bulk directly from the farm, volunteering and donating things like seeds, supplies, and equipment can make a difference. Primarily, the government must invest in better irrigation, rice dryers, tractors, and flood control systems, to help farmers withstand natural disasters and earn fair wages.

If the Philippines truly values food security, then we should start improving. We must treat our farmers with respect, dignity, and proper support, for they are the ones who give us hearty meals yet are not fairly compensated.

This endless cycle will keep on repeating unless we as one will stop it. Rice prices will keep rising, our farmers will continue to be treated unfairly—unless this country and the people take meaningful steps to support those who feed the nation. So here's a question, how long will we let the hands that feed us stay hungry?



art by **JIRAH ARTAJO**

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breakingpoint

Drowning in Deadlines

by **JANNAH JOYOHOY**

We laugh about pulling all-nighters and surviving on little sleep, but behind the jokes are students quietly breaking under pressure, carrying the heavy burden of grades, expectations, and a burnout that no backpack can hold.

When the middle of the school year comes around, that's where a majority of students start to burn out. While we try our hardest, most of our parents say we're just tired, or we're making excuses, but maybe — just maybe, it's a cry for help. The deadlines, the quizzes, exams, and the performance tasks — they all pile up, little by little.

Sometimes you just need time to stop. But that can't happen. Not with deadlines creeping closer by the second. From the activities to the presentations, students everywhere are falling asleep in their classrooms to catch up with the hours of rest they lack.

I'm sure a lot of other students can relate to the feeling of being weighed down by the underlying pressure when our parents make small comments like — "Just try harder next time." Yet underneath the strained smile, we know in our minds — that was our best. The pressure comes from all around us. Teachers expect excellence, even when deadlines pile on top of each other, while parents compare us to their friends' and coworkers' children.

At first, we think we're doing good — we think that we'll go through the school year without burning out, yet by second quarter, our head is in our hands, memorizing formulas, but we can't even feel present in our own lives.

Social media glorifies all-nighters, while we suffer silently over a grade. A grade that's never enough. A grade that we reach for, so close, yet so, so far. Philippine Ejournals state that 88% of Senior Highschoolers are getting less than the recommended amount of sleep.

We laugh about feeling dead inside, or how tired we are, but when is it that it becomes serious? Academic burnout has become normal and a part of us, and that should be concerning. We could be smiling in class, but crumble apart when we get home, sitting at our table at 2AM trying not to cry. We could be surrounded by our friends, yet still feel alone. Burnout doesn't leave bruises, but it leaves a mark.

Teachers should start treating burnout seriously, not just a student complaint.

Reasonable deadlines, balanced workload, mental health days, maybe even a checkup on the students, because it helps. It makes them feel like the teachers care. A weight is lifted off their shoulders, and these should be a standard, not something that has to be pointed out to be done.

At the end of the day, students aren't machines that work 24/7. We're humans. We process emotions, we cry, we laugh, and we hurt. Burnout isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign that we can still feel. And unless schools, families acknowledge this, students will be running on fumes, knowing they're at their limit.

Somewhere along the way, schools began equating success with constant productivity, expecting students to perform at their best no matter the cost. Rest is seen as laziness, struggle as an excuse, and silence as proof that everything is fine. Students are praised for pushing through exhaustion, even when it's clear they're running on empty. And in a system that demands perfection without pause, we are left wondering—Why do schools expect us to be at 100% when we have nothing left to give?

datashows

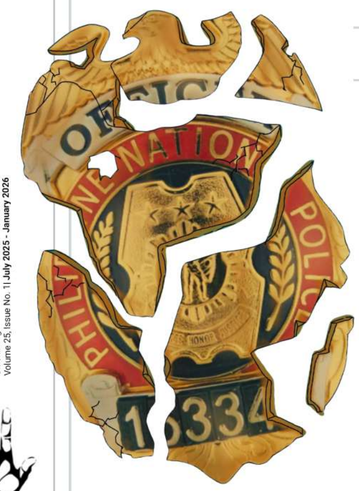
74%

OF FILIPINO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE STRESS

driven by heavy workloads, high expectations, and academic and personal pressures, while over 96% suffer from stress symptoms.

source from **E-SALIKSIK: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH PORTAL**





art by **NAIARA EBAL**

morethanbooks

Broken Badge of Justice

by **GLEEZEL GALLEPOSO**



A police badge is meant to symbolize safety, justice, and protection. Yet for many, it has become a reminder that power often outweighs principles, and justice is not always served to those who deserve it.

In every place there is that safety feeling of knowing that we are protected by police officers who took an oath to serve and protect the people. But in reality, when power speaks louder and when they put their principles aside because of the fear and greed that they might lose that shiny badge they wear like a trophy. We are then pushed aside by the people who swore to protect us. We are left to fight for our own safety and rights, while police officers stand their ground in serving the powerful instead of protecting and serving the public.

I believed men and women in blue uniforms uphold the principle of serving and protecting the public, but now, I am seeing that this principle has been buried along with their morals. Especially at times like this, it's more about serving the people in power and blaming the innocent. The police has long been infamous for the allegations of human rights violations and protecting criminals.

For some ordinary citizens that comes from a low-income family. I've noticed that they have a difficult time trying to reach out to police officers. Some have shared stories of feeling helpless as they're too scared of not being taken seriously. Given that they lack connections and money.

The world we live in feels so different, especially when an individual doesn't have the resources and influence to protect theirselves. It's just upsetting how the system is so different when you have money and power. I've come across a story where some have experienced suspicions simply because of how they look and where they came from. It's very concerning because I believe our system is supposed to be fair, whether their rich or poor.

In addition, there had been events in which instead of resolving the problem, it resulted into violent tactics. Violent ways that involved the loss of innocent lives, those were the lives that got caught in the crossfire, lives that were wrongly accused.

Reports have shown that police officers not only protect big criminals but also follow the orders of corrupt people in power. It shows the reason why powerful people walk free and have never been held accountable.

Aren't police officers supposed to keep us safe? But with what they're doing, we are at risk. We can no longer easily place our trust and safety with police officers who only serve people in power and let criminals walk free. We can never be safe when bad people walk along our streets due to the cowardice of police officers who allowed them to roam around the very ground we walk on. We deserve men and women in uniforms who uphold the true principle, morals, and value of a well-respected police force. We deserve better law enforcement that ensures the public safety, law enforcement that would never hold favors, and police officers that do their best to protect and serve every citizen.

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor,

As a new academic year unfolds, The Vincentian once again stands firm in its mission to uphold truth, integrity, and responsible journalism. In an era where narratives are often shaped by convenience and popularity, St. Vincent's College Incorporated – Basic Education Campus continues to nurture a publication that values depth, balance, and the voices that truly matter.

While recognition and achievements may follow our work, they are never the reason we write. Journalism, at its core, is not a pursuit of applause, but a commitment to truth. Every school year marks another opportunity to sharpen our craft, yet every ordinary day already holds stories worth telling—stories from classrooms, corridors, and communities that deserve to be heard.

As the nation grapples with pressing concerns—educational challenges, social inequalities, and recurring injustices—we, as campus journalists, must listen more intently and write more courageously. Our role extends beyond competitions and publications; it lies in amplifying voices, questioning systems, and reflecting the realities of the people we serve.

May The Vincentian continue to embody the spirit of fearless and compassionate storytelling, guided by the hope for meaningful change. And to the studentry, may we never shy away from speaking up, for in our words lie the seeds of awareness and progress. As future leaders, may we always uphold what matters most in journalism and in life: truth.

Best regards,
Aithane Patacsil
Grade 12

lifelessons

Am I Real-World Ready?

by **JOSH CABRERA**



I know how to socialize, get good grades, and study for exams, but I would definitely be petrified if you asked me how to manage my savings, apply for a job, or deal with taxes and health insurance. My typical class day are loaded with assignments, projects, and deadlines. All of this is supposed to prepare us for the future, but as my time in high school draws to a near end, a silent question begins to scratch my mind: am I truly prepared for the real world?

Our education is meant to lay the groundwork for any career or path we choose in life. We learn responsibility, discipline, and deference to authority in schools, values that are fundamental to our growth and understanding of our own culture. These make it easier for us to operate in structured settings, but they frequently don't actually prepare us for obstacles and challenges in real life and in working. In the end, education focuses more on meeting standards and achieving high grades than on assisting students in developing into self-assured, self-sufficient adults.

Some students show initiative outside of school as a result of this gap. To obtain practical experience, others join student governments, volunteer organizations, youth organizations, or campus publications. However, these alternatives aren't always available, particularly for students who already have too much schoolwork and duties in their respective lives. Students often feel discouraged from pursuing interests outside of the classroom by the pressure to maintain high grades, which is fueled by college applications and scholarships.

Learning needs to move beyond memorization and tests in order to close the gap between the classroom and the real world. Students are already exposed to real workplaces, duties, and expectations in Senior High School through programs like Work Immersion. Applying lessons into practice in real-world contexts, such as Hospitals, Government agencies, or businesses. Students are better able to appreciate the importance of what they learn in class as a result. Learning becomes more engaging and interesting when topics are linked to real-world scenarios.

Schools must put more of an emphasis on real-life skills, passion-driven learning, and meaningful experiences if they are to genuinely prepare Filipino kids for the real world. Education should not only produce high-achieving graduates but also capable, considerate, and socially conscious individuals.

In a world shaped by rapid technological and societal change, education must go beyond textbooks and exams to teach real-life and digital skills. Only then can schools truly prepare students not just to graduate, but to navigate the real world with confidence.



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unwind

Time for Productivity

by **GLEEZEL GALLEPOSO**

There will always be moments where everyone feels exhausted after a whole day of class. It is a constant cycle and the phrase "I can't wait till Friday". That phrase alone indicates how a student pushes through just to get the week over and have a time of relaxation on the weekend.

In schools it is inevitable that after a long day of presenting projects or doing an activity. Students grow exhausted. Especially after a long day, but there are still so many things to do the following days, having so minimal time to prepare.

In my stand, the SVCI annex campus through its reduced class days in SHS. It helps students have a more flexible time to rest and prepare or to do projects. Through the reduced classes, SHS students become more engaged to do their performance tasks because they were given the time to rest and prepare. Through the rest they've gained, it boosts their ability to be more engaged in their studies and in preparation, and it gives them the time to present an amazing outcome. It also gives students the chance to study more and retain the lessons they have learned.

Some may argue that it only fosters students to be lazy, but in deep reality, it actually helps students make the best of their time. Having more free time to learn enhances one's own pace of learning. As well as being able to study more due to reduced classes, SHS students are equipped to learn in the way they understand best, resulting in great achievements. SVCI-Annex in SHS helps develop more time for greater outcomes.

It's important also that as students we give importance to the given reduced classes as an opportunity to learn in studies, take rest, and grow as an individual. It's crucial to not take advantage of a great chance to learn and foster great heights of learning.

datashows

68%

of SVCI-SHS students

are satisfied with the reduced number of classes in SVCI-BEC.

source from SVCI-BEC SURVEY



corrupted

The Cost of Power

by **PRECIOUS ODIN**

We all can agree that power is great, but it is also something that we shouldn't tolerate blindly. Today, in our society, power is often used by leaders as a tool — and sadly, instead of using it for the good to guide, they used it as a way to satisfy themselves.

When leaders become too comfortable, they lose sight with the people they were meant to serve. They've gotten so used to their power to the point that their behavior changed for the worse. They not only tolerate it, but also recklessly used it as a shield to protect them from the people who criticizes them.

This is why power isn't always positive. We all know that leadership exist anywhere whether in society, companies, and specially in school. But when we choose the wrong leader, things may not go smoothly. Because, if you chose the right leader the society wouldn't suffer. This is the reason why the saying "vote wisely" should be engraved in our minds. In the end, we will be the one to suffer.

Sometimes, having power makes the people show their true intentions and influence to one. Why? Because even though they know it's wrong they still carelessly do it, relying on the fact that they have power and can easily overcome the consequences. Especially when it is not used properly, it can even blind the most promising leaders, making them forget the reason they once stood for.

The current issue today with corruption; many Filipinos are furious right now because of that situation — wanting justice from it, and still justice is not yet served. This is the cause of poor leadership, they tolerated their power choosing personal gain over the public welfare.

A leader who thinks critically and stay humble is what the society needs today. Rather than having irresponsible one's that can't even be slightly considered guiding is a leader who dominate their actions stops being a public servant and began to be the problems they once vowed to solve.

As citizens, students, and future members of the society. It is essential that we recognize power that has gone wrong and stay mindful that leadership should guide, serve, and have some humility and accountability. Only then can we prevent the mistakes today and stop power from becoming the force that destroys leadership.

> The true leadership is not measured by how much one has control to the society, but by how willing you are to take responsibility to your actions.

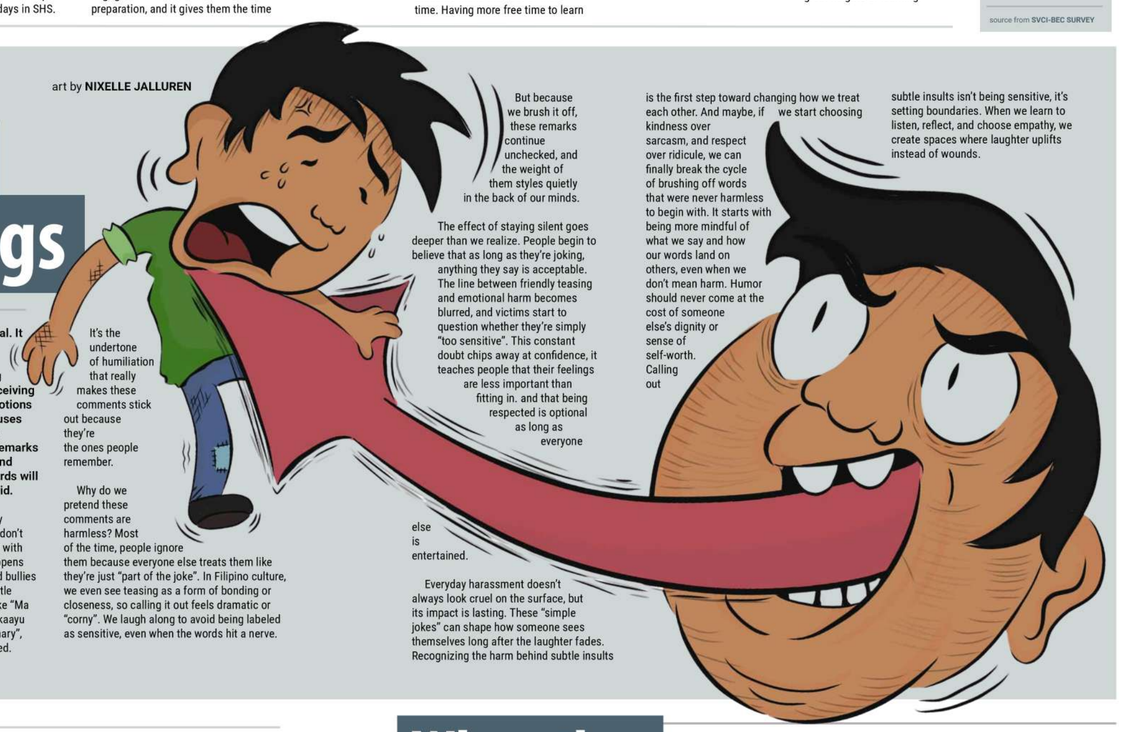
In the end of the day, we are all hoping for the same thing, for our country to improve and stop corruption. And for that we must also learn to choose the righteous leader.



editorial

art by **NIXELLE JALLUREN**

Humor that stings



Dopamine is the brain's "go" signal. It is released whenever someone experiences something rewarding, engaging in movement, succeeding something, and especially when receiving a compliment. Strong, negative emotions can overpower dopamine. What causes these emotions are often offensive comments. When someone hears remarks like these, their confidence drops and there's a high chance that those words will stay with them long after they're said.

Many subtle comments are frequently playing the part as a joke. Some people don't even realize that they are hurting people with these so-called "jokes". This usually happens among students, where both victims and bullies are affected by the normalization of subtle bullying and verbal abuse. Comments like "Ma guba bitaw na ang bangko." or "Brighta kaayu nimo." are perceived as "funny" or "ordinary", but they deeply affect the person targeted.

It's the undertone of humiliation that really makes these comments stick out because they're the ones people remember.

Why do we pretend these comments are harmless? Most of the time, people ignore them because everyone else treats them like they're just "part of the joke". In Filipino culture, we even see teasing as a form of bonding or closeness, so calling it out feels dramatic or "corny". We laugh along to avoid being labeled as sensitive, even when the words hit a nerve.

But because we brush it off, these remarks continue unchecked, and the weight of them styles quietly in the back of our minds.

The effect of staying silent goes deeper than we realize. People begin to believe that as long as they're joking, anything they say is acceptable. The line between friendly teasing and emotional harm becomes blurred, and victims start to question whether they're simply "too sensitive". This constant doubt chips away at confidence, it teaches people that their feelings are less important than fitting in. and that being respected is optional as long as everyone else is entertained.

Everyday harassment doesn't always look cruel on the surface, but its impact is lasting. These "simple jokes" can shape how someone sees themselves long after the laughter fades. Recognizing the harm behind subtle insults is the first step toward changing how we treat each other. And maybe, if we start choosing kindness over sarcasm, and respect over ridicule, we can finally break the cycle of brushing off words that were never harmless to begin with. It starts with being more mindful of what we say and how our words land on others, even when we don't mean harm. Humor should never come at the cost of someone else's dignity or sense of self-worth. Calling out subtle insults isn't being sensitive, it's setting boundaries. When we learn to listen, reflect, and choose empathy, we create spaces where laughter uplifts instead of wounds.



repayment

The Unsettled Debt Myth

by **MAREYCA TAÑARA**

Have you ever wondered what a child's purpose is to their parents? The obvious answer, at least according to many Filipino elders, is to repay your parents for all the sacrifices they've made for you. Seems reasonable, right? I'm sure every Filipino has heard their parents say something like, "You have to study hard and finish school so you can take care of mama and papa in the future, okay?"

And they're right, in a way. You'd be crazy to abandon the very people who raised you, supported you, and made you the center of their lives instead of keeping it for themselves. So as expected, you make that promise. You take accountability for all those sacrifices. From studying hard to landing a stable job, you invest not only in yourself but in your parents as well.

But that promise you made years ago suddenly feels easier said than done now that you're finally in the position to fulfill it. At this point, giving your parents a comfortable life feels more mandatory than meaningful. And you can't help but wonder, will it ever be enough?

Many Filipino parents rely on their offspring as their "retirement plan", discarding ideas of saving money for themselves in the excuse of saying "My children will handle it." Studies in 2023 show over 70% retired parents live off of their children's income. Only 20% of seniors have insurance, and merely 10% are actively preparing themselves independently for retirement.

A global caregiving study in 2022 revealed that 7 out of 10 young adults in the Philippines delay their personal goals just to provide for their parent's expenses. Aside from that, a study by the Philippine Institute for Development studies in 2024 states that 42% middle-income young adults are now apart of what they call a "sandwich generation", wherein they support both younger siblings and their aging parents.

In most Filipino households, children are expected to do more than enough than their parents have ever done. Yet, we rarely talk about those parents who had neglected their children for half their lives? Would they still deserve their child's respect? Are they even allowed to live off of their children's support?

I believe that children should not have to be entirely burdened with the expenses of their parents. Not all working people earn enough for themselves, what more if they had to support their parents, and their siblings too? It's unfair to expect children to grow up fast. It's situations like these that often lead to the delays or lost opportunities because of the promises they made for a comfortable tomorrow.



Yes, it is important to care for family, to love and build stability for them is crucial, but why bore the children with everything? While the idea of repaying a parent's sacrifice is the best portrayal of gratitude, it builds pressure on the children, whether if they're older or younger, their compassion is greatly taken advantage of. A child's love for their parents is just as big as a parent's love for their children. Both roles should be equally played out.

Children are not retirement plans. We have our own goals, our own dreams we want to fulfill. But amidst those endeavors, no one will ever forget from where they came. Despite wanting independence, family is what we value most.

datashows

7 out of 10

young adults in the Philippines of 2022

delay their personal goals just to provide for their parent's expenses.

source from STATE OF FILIPINO YOUTH NATIONAL YOUTH SURVEY

Strong Enough to Welcome All

editorial

Have you ever walked through a Catholic school and noticed someone of a different faith pass by? It raises an important question: How can a Catholic institution remain true to its beliefs while welcoming students of all religions?

Catholic schools open their doors to students of different faiths by fostering a warm, respectful, and inclusive environment. This openness allows students to learn beyond their own beliefs and understand that faith differences should never be a reason for division. Whether one is Muslim, Buddhist, or belongs to another religion, every individual deserves the same dignity, respect, and sense of belonging within the school community.

At the same time, Catholic schools do not abandon their identity to be inclusive. They remain firm in their mission by continuing religious traditions that shape their values and daily life. Practices such as daily prayers for guidance and protection, Holy Masses offered in gratitude and repentance, and the praying of the Holy Rosary in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary remain central to school life. Non-Catholic students are not pressured to participate in these activities; instead, they are given the freedom to observe respectfully, allowing the school to uphold its Catholic image while honoring religious freedom.

This balance shows that inclusivity does not require the removal or weakening of Catholic beliefs. Rather, it reflects the very teachings of the faith—love, compassion, and respect for all. By being clear about their Catholic identity while remaining open to others, these schools prove that faith and acceptance can coexist.

Respect is not a value exclusive to Catholicism; it is a principle shared by many religions. Catholic schools demonstrate this through kindness and hospitality, ensuring that students of different beliefs feel welcomed, safe, and valued. Inclusivity, in this sense, is not a compromise but a lived expression of faith.

Collaboration further strengthens this sense of unity. Through group projects and shared activities, students work together regardless of religious background, learning from one another's perspectives. These interactions help break misconceptions and promote understanding, turning diversity into a learning opportunity rather than a source of division.

Beyond the classroom, Catholic schools practice what they teach through the works of mercy. Students are encouraged to help the poor, serve the community, and show compassion to those in need. By keeping Christ at the center of these actions, the school continues its mission while inspiring all students—Catholic or not—to live out values of service and love.

Religion classes deepen Catholic students' understanding of Church teachings and the sacrifices made by God out of love for humanity. Meanwhile, Values Education reinforces lessons of inclusivity, empathy, and respect, reminding students that everyone deserves to feel accepted and protected within the school environment.

> Diversity is not something to fear—it is something that strengthens unity and wisdom. Catholic schools show that it is possible to remain faithful to one's beliefs while embracing others, building a community where different religions coexist without erasing identity.

In the end, Catholic schools remain rooted in their faith while growing a community that welcomes all. No matter one's religion, every student is recognized, respected, and accepted—proving that many faiths can truly share one campus.



art by **PIERSEA SOLICAR**



clickculture

Clicks Aren't Enough

by **GLEEZEL GALLEPOSO**

The work of online platforms spreads easily with a single click and share. Online activism helps in disseminating awareness. Creates a voice for a lot of unsolved issues, it speaks up for the problems that can't be seen by many. It may raise awareness and digital support but awareness and online support alone without offline action would not drive the authorities to respond effectively.

When you think about it, online platforms can be a tool to raise awareness—it lets people see what's happening around us. It can make viral campaigns to fight for our rights but at the same time if it's not followed by offline actions, the outrage could be forgotten by the public within days or weeks. It has happened often than we realize. Just like, every time a new issue arise people forget what they first fought for. We then fail to produce lasting change.

Real world actions like petitions, protest, volunteering, and many more, make the government actually take us seriously. In that sense, they're aware of our dissaproval and it pressures them to take an action with our concerns. Pushing them to hold accountability. This kind of way leaves a mark that cannot be ignored.

To make activism truly successful, it's better to use online activism and transform it into action that drives change. In reality, online activism needs traditional forms to make tangible change possible. Example of this is the Million People March. Through the usage of digital media, it organized and informed many people but the big impact came from the physical presence of citizens that showed up, turning online momentum a powerful drive of action that pressured for a change.

All in all, I want to make it clear that, online activism alone is insufficient for a lasting world change without offline actions. As online activism alone can only enact fleeting change. It's important that as citizens we don't stay passive on issues and we must turn our voices in social media into on the ground action that calls out for a change, transparency, and accountability. It's essential to understand that change is made in how people act on it.

Ultimately, the true power of activism lies not in how loudly we speak online, but in how consistently we act beyond our screens. Social media can spark conversations and ignite awareness, but conversations alone cannot rewrite policies or correct injustices. When online movements fade without real-world follow-through, they risk becoming mere trends rather than forces for change. Activism should not end with a hashtag—it should begin there and continue through meaningful participation, commitment, and collective effort.

Online platforms may give us a voice, but it is action that gives that voice power. Awareness alone cannot challenge systems or demand accountability without people willing to act beyond their screens. True change begins when digital support transforms into collective action that refuses to be ignored.

When the Drumbeat Trembled

editorial

The Dahunog Band Competition begins well before throngs of people arrive to fill the school grounds, where a young musician stands under the burden of practice, repeating the same steps until the sun dips, repeating the same notes until the sound becomes mere muscle memory. For so many, that stage is but the last chapter of months of effort, sacrifice, and hope.

Bands from towns near and far once again walked onto the wide field, each carrying instruments like promises. Every school came with a goal, but some did carry heavier expectations than others. Among them, three schools stood under the closest watch: ZNNHS Main, Saint Vincent College Inc., and Sindangan National High School.

Bands from towns near and far once again walked onto the wide field, each carrying instruments like promises. Every school came with a goal, but some did carry heavier expectations than others. Among them, three schools stood under the closest watch: ZNNHS Main, Saint Vincent College Inc., and Sindangan National High School.

But when the results were announced, a hush fell over the field.

Champion: ZNNHS Main
First Runner-Up: SVCI
Second Runner-Up: Sindangan

For SVCI, it meant another year of standing one step from the crown. Another year of almost. Another entry in what has become an unplanned Grandslam of First Runner-Up. For some, the feeling was bittersweet. The place had become all too familiar, never quite the one reached for. Others accepted it with quiet pride, knowing how much practice and heart their band had poured into this performance.

Yet beyond the emotions of one school, the result stirred something deeper across the competition.

To some onlookers, judging seemed fair and reflected the champion's strong performance. Others questioned the weighting of the scores and felt that certain performances, if weighted differently, were worthy of higher places. A few insisted that the criteria seemed unclear; this sense of confusion trickled into conversations long after the field had emptied.

As with so many competitions previously, Dahunog carried with it the inevitable element: rivalry.

Most of the competition did not come from the performers themselves, who, according to many witnesses, treated each other with sportsmanship and respect on stage. Instead, it grew around them, fanned by supporters and students, whispers passing behind the scenes. To some, it was a silent rivalry-one that was barely noticeable above the surface but heavier if one listened to the murmurs. Others said tension sharpened only after the event, when online posts and reactions began circulating, fanning sparks into something larger.

The problem for many was not the rivalry but the rumors that came with it. In the absence of clear evidence, with emotions running high, small misunderstandings grew into bigger conversations. Social media soon carried frustration, confusion, and questions about judging; the noise drifted far from music, closer to doubt.

Still, beneath all the reactions, something else was visible: maturity.

Some students accepted the results with grace, choosing to stand proudly with their schools regardless of placement. Some were just glad to have the opportunity to compete at all. Others, quietly disappointed, still chose understanding over anger.

What this year's Dahunog revealed was something simple but indeed often forgotten.

Competitions demand skill, but they demand character just as much. They call for transparency from the organizers.Guidance by school leaders. Responsibility from students speaking both offline and online. And humility from all spectators, be they for or against.

As Dahunog looks to another year, the lessons stay with him. Let judgment be clear so that no confusion leads to conflict. Let the rivalry remain healthy, based on respect, not rumor. Let performers remember that their journey matters just as much as the trophies they chase. Let supporters know that words can either build unity or fracture it.

ZNNHS Main claimed a crown that raised questions, while SVCI again stood as First Runner-Up in a bittersweet Grandslam and Sindangan left with efforts recognized by many but not reflected in rank. Yet Dahunog's true victory lay beyond the awards—in the discipline of every marcher, the courage of every performer, and the call for a future marked by fairness, clarity, and respect above rivalry.



art by **JIRAH ARTAJO**

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AMID THE RUMBLE AND RAIN

Stories of loss, resilience, and everyday heroism in the wake of recent typhoons and earthquakes

Amid the devastation brought by the latest typhoons and earthquakes in the Philippines, countless families have faced the loss of homes, livelihoods, and their sense of security. Yet in the midst of ruin, brave community members, first responders, and volunteers have risen with unwavering courage and compassion—protecting, rescuing, and supporting those in need. Their actions remind the nation that while disasters expose vulnerability, they also reveal the enduring strength of solidarity, empathy, and shared responsibility in times of crisis.

art by JIRAH ARTAJO

THE STRONGEST OF THEM ALL

MIEL JALOSJOS

Quiet and broken sobs echoed amidst the heavy rain. "Mommy, we lost everything." A child, so innocent, knowing nothing but fun and play, cried the words no mother ever wanted to hear. In the morning of the 4th of November 2025, Katya Marie Magale faced the biggest and most heartbreaking challenge a mother could face: keep her children alive.

Little bodies crouched, hiding from the harsh storm, voices shaking, eyes welling with tears. Their life had flashed before their eyes, and for a mother, her whole world had turned upside down. For a mother, she would never imagine her children — the ones she raised so carefully, to face death itself at such a ripe age. But who'd stay strong for her children but a mother? Who'd be resilient enough to hope for an end to their nightmare?

Typhoon Tino and the floodwaters that came from it was a threat to the strong and the weak. It tested a mother. A mother who faced the strong winds. A mother who fought for her children and stayed strong despite threatening to fall apart. A mother who stood on sheer will and adrenaline. A mother who would stop at nothing just to keep her children safe.

The physical, emotional, and mental damage the faced during Typhoon Tino was a living nightmare to say the least. On the brink of giving up, a mother saw the hope in her children. They were the bright light that shone through amidst the disaster. And all the while, she may have faced the horror alone with her three children and companion — they made it out alive. "You are my everything anak, and I refuse to lose you." Typhoon Tino was no match for a mother who had the strength to endure.

BEHIND THE LENSE, FRONT AND CENTER

DANA NAZARETH

Amidst Typhoon Uwan's devastation in Albay, Bicol, News5 camera man Mac Ortiz stepped in as a reporter. Turning a usual routine coverage into a moment of courage and dedication.

During the height of Typhoon Uwan's rainfall in Albay, the News5 cameraman Mac Ortiz bravely stepped into an unfamiliar role. With the situation in Albay worsening, and information urgently needed, Ortiz stood in-front of the camera and delivered the report, demonstrating that when in crisis, adaptability is a form of courage.

Ortiz was live and in communication with news anchors Gretchen Ho and Ed Lingao, who were reporting from the Manila studio. During his report, Ortiz was visibly nervous which Lingao noticed. "Mack, mack, you are too formal." Lingao said to Ortiz in Filipino after the cameraman indicated a number of statistics from his phone.

"Talk to me like you're telling a story. Walk around and tell me what you see, what you experienced earlier, and how are things now. Tell the story just like how you would talk over drinks." Linghao said

"First time, first time." Ortiz responded.

"That's okay." Linghao responded.

Ortiz continued reporting, with Lingao's encouragement, he gradually gained confidence as he described His surroundings during His report.

Mac Ortiz's quick decision to step in as a reporter during Typhoon Uwan showed how essential versatility is in crisis coverage. Even without preparations, script-readings, and trainings, he ensured that the public received accurate and relevant updates on the weather conditions in Albay. He highlighted the dedication and bravery of journalists including those who work behind the cameras. Ortiz's quick-response to the situation reminded us that in times of crisis, every role is needed.

THE LOVE THAT SAVED A FAMILY

JAMAICA PARAGOSO

Under the ruins of her collapsed home, Juvy Ytang held her infant closely to her chest as her arms reached for the pulse of her daughter's lifeless body. "It was love. She protected her mother, her siblings, her family." Juvy Ytang, a mother of two says as she stares into her first born's coffin, while carrying the most valuable gem her beloved had died for.

It all began on the final day of September, when a sudden shake deep within the grounds of Bogo City in Cebu struck; leaving 72 people forsaken. Juvy Ytang can still clearly recall how her daughter rushed into their room, frantically shouting as she calls for her parents' presence to protect her two month old baby brother from the continuous grumbles of their abode. Lady Jane, without hesitation threw herself over her family as the ground trembled beneath them. Countless fragments of rocks and debris poured down when a landslide acted mercilessly upon their home. All of Juvy Ytang's strength perished at the sight of her selfless daughter buried under the wreckage she had tried to shield her family from. Her two month old son withstood the disaster with only minor bruises, while her husband, Silvestre, bore the marks of the calamity himself, nursing head and foot injuries.

"She saved us. She was the reason we lived, but she was the one who died," Silvestre mourns before his daughter's casket, enunciation trailed with grief and devastation.

Ytang's family remains shattered, wrapped in a state of uncertainty. Their once shared abode—where foundation was built on love and familiarity now lies fatally underneath millions of debris and aftershocks still rattling the area. Only then they grasp how returning would be impossible. "We prayed for her," Juvy Ytang cries as her voice trembles in misery. "We just pray and leave it to the Lord."

In the midst of turmoil and rubbles, their grief unravels upon the vagueness of reality, yet their faith endures. A fragile thread of hope lingers in the aftermath of tragedy.

VOICES OF THE VOICELESS

MIEL JALOSJOS

No man left behind, or in this case, no fur-baby left behind. With little paws struggling to reach the surface, little paws fighting to survive, the animals who fell victims to Typhoon Tino could do nothing but try to save themselves — try to be survivors despite being left behind for the dead.

Yet, how do you ask for help when all you can do is silently drown? Drown in the faults of those that were supposed to protect and care for you. Drown in your own pain and suffering, unable to speak.

People weren't the only victims of Typhoon Tino and the strong floods that occurred on the 4th of November 2025. Our furry friends struggled immensely too. Some were fortunate enough to be saved. Some fought with all their might going against harsh and rising flood levels. And some who unfortunately lost all the strength to fight.

In every calamity, in every storm, we owe the surrounding animals our protection — a plan to protect those that have helped sustain us. They wait for us. Silently waiting for us to make a change. Silently waiting for us to give back to them, be it salvation, be it their lives.

EMPOWERMENT AND SACRIFICE

MIEL JALOSJOS

The poor were damaged the most but were empowered to stay strong—stay strong for the sake of their lives. During the onslaught of the floods brought by Typhoon Tino on November 4, 2025, several rescue teams and first responders arrived on the scene trying to save as many lives as they could. Despite prior advice on the unsafe environment and what's to come, they persisted. Heroes who went above and beyond in the name of public service.

In a matter of their lives or the lives of the many, Paul Brian Dacalos and his team chose the many. At the crack of dawn they worked with agility and haste, waking up residents to save them from the coming terror. Prior to this they had already taken all the necessary precautions to take. Having been evacuating residents on the eve of the flood, they took every possible outcome in mind. They weighed the weight of their responsibility in saving the victims. Yet although the weight was heavy, they pushed through. Not for their ownweight was heavy, they pushed through. Not for their own personal gain, but for the precious lives of the innocent.

When Mother Nature claims its dues, the consequences follow; with that, the responders felt this immense pressure. The pressure to think and act quickly. A heavy pressure they must balance so that no innocent life becomes a sacrifice and a consequence because of our own unrighteous decisions. The pressure was indeed intimidating, but what is i intimidation when it's the lives of the many that are at stake? What is intimidation when there's something far more terrifying than it?

Victims of the floodwaters faced many sacrifices they had to make. But despite the sorrowful sacrifices, they were empowered. Empowered by the thought of being and having been saved. Empowered by those behind the success of every rescue. Empowered by those who chose to be courageous, those who became the pillars of strength.

COURAGE AGAINST THE CURRENT

DANA NAZARETH

When the rain drops hit our roof, the first thought that comes to mind would be "Will there be classes tomorrow?". How condescending it may sound, it's the reality for the most of us, but for some? They wake up worrying about their flooded houses, inedible food, and most of all their safety.

Calamities like floods are thieves. They steal homes, and may even steal lives. But for Joyboy Magdadaro, no flood is high enough to drown his courage and determination to save other people.

When Joyboy's family, who lives in Villa Lara, Jubay, Liloanan, saw how the clouds turned dark grey, signifying the arrival of Typhoon Tino, they evacuated to his sister's house in Sitio San Roque, hoping to be saved from the Typhoon's devastating storm. However, Typhoon Tino did not show any remorse. In just one day, it dumped over 200 millimeters of rain water. With Cotcot River being full, it spilled over its banks, flooding homes in Liloan.

"We were at my sister's house when the flood hit." said Jayboy. "The water had already reached the roof in just seconds, just three inches from the roof."

But even when they were already rescued, Jayboy couldn't help but look back at his fellow Cebuanos who are suffering in the freezing waters. He felt as if being safe meant nothing, if others are still suffering.

"I didn't know who to help first because everyone was asking for help," the 15-year old said.

His uncle continued to rescue as many people as he could, but over time, hunger and exhaustion got to him, forcing him to leave the small wooden boat. Jayboy, who saw the tools, knowing that there were still many lives suffering, he bravely wandered to the waters and rowed towards the people in need.

Early morning to dawn, Jayboy steadily navigated the boat to those who were most vulnerable: pregnant women, children, and the elderly. The small boat could only accommodate four people at a time, so he continuously rowed back and forth to those still trapped, saving numerous lives.

There were times wherein his life was endangered, times where he saw bodies flow past him as he rowed his boat towards the people still trapped in the water.

"When you see them begging for help, you don't think of fear. I wasn't scared because I wanted to help." Jayboy said.

At the end of the day, Jayboy Magdadaro saved over 50 lives.

If Jayboy Magdadaro, a 15 year-old boy, with nothing but a small boat and a lifebuoy saved 50 lives, what more if government officials finally listen and give importance to these issues, could we possibly have a flood free future?

OOPS... THEY DID IT AGAIN:

The Philippines' Golden Back-to-Back Win in Miss Grand International

MUNEERA AL SIEH

Stage lights shine on each candidate, stunning the audience with beauty, grace, and intelligence, while the contestants take uneasy breaths, each carrying a narrative the public has yet to hear. Pageantry is more than just glitz and glamour; it's about the aspirations, dreams, and hope that exist beyond the stage. That has a significant meaning for each contender.

The back-to-back win of Miss Grand International confirm the Philippines' reputation as a formidable competitor on the international stage. The Philippines erupts in pride and delight over the stunning victory as Christine Juliane Opiaza, better known as CJ Opiaza, hands the crown to Emma Tiglao, another Filipina Beauty Queen.

The Philippines emerged and fought with an even greater and more powerful fire just a year after bringing home the golden crown. Emma Tiglao was a symbol of the loving and resilient Philippines. Emma Tiglao has once again demonstrated that the Philippines can excel on the global stage in pageants where culture and beauty collide.

The depths of pageantry extend beyond its beauty. from countless training sessions, workshops on public speaking, cultural immersion, mastering that "hundred dollar smile," and the walk that lights up the stage that leaves millions in awe, the "Filipina walk"—this victory is the result of perseverance, pride, and discipline.

Her support for peace, which echoed the pageant's primary objective, resonated powerfully. The judges were drawn to her message as much as her beauty. She disseminated her message with genuine ideas and compassion, while also representing Filipino hospitality, resilience, and the sharing of their tales.

Her words, "We are not born in fear, but to hope, to love, and to live in peace," inspired optimism for a more promising future. It reminds us that we shouldn't live by fear because we weren't born with it. but to live by peace, love, and hope instead.

On that stage, she represented millions of people, not just herself. Her background as a journalist is reflected in her statement, "My heart aches for my country drowned by corruption, for the lives lost to earthquakes and typhoons," which emphasizes "Let love be the grandest voice to peace," while also expressing hope for a world in which people don't lie to survive.

Moreover, Back in the Philippines, it drove people into a tailspin. People gathered and burst into cheers in a variety of locations to celebrate the golden and beautiful victory.

Pageantry is more than just entertainment in the Philippines; it is the cultural heartbeat. Filipinos are known for their cultural diversity, inner beauty, and inventiveness. This Back-To-Back win brought pride to the nation and its people.

Beyond that, This monumental moment will live on in the pageant world. The Philippines has left an indelible mark: brilliant, bold, and majestic.



> "Cause one day, I hope we lived in a world where **no one should deceive just to survive.**"
>
> Emma Mary Tiglao
> Miss Grand International 2025

datashows

100%

COMPLETION OF THE BIG FOUR PAGEANTS

The Philippines has won all 4 major international pageants: Miss Universe, Miss World, Miss International, and Miss Earth — the first Asian country to do so.

source from **PHILSTAR**

datashows

6 out of 6

CONSECUTIVE YEARS WITH AT LEAST ONE BIG FOUR WIN (2013-2018)

From 2013 to 2018, the Philippines won at least one major international crown every year, showing global pageant dominance.

source from **PHILSTAR**

THE DEPTHS OF PAGEANTRY:

Emma Mary Tiglao's journey from pageant stage to national pride

MUNEERA AL SIEH

Emma Mary Tiglao, who embodies beauty, purpose, and intelligence, etched her name in pageant history as Miss Grand International 2025, a victory that heralded not just personal triumph but also a historic back-to-back victory for the Philippines.

Emma's victory in Bangkok was more than just a coronation night success; it marked the end of a decade-long odyssey in pageantry. Before winning the golden crown, Emma competed in various national and international pageants, including Binibining Pilipinas and Miss Intercontinental 2019, where she finished in the top twenty. Her extensive theatrical experience offered her a distinct advantage, combining confidence with seasoned poise.

Emma captured hearts and made heads turn from her arrival till the coronation night. In the preliminary competition, she dazzled judges and fans with her stage presence and poise in both the swimsuit and evening gown categories. She donned a pantsuit with traditional solihiya weaving, emphasizing Filipino ancestry and workmanship while reiterating her desire to portraying the Philippines not just with beauty but also with cultural significance. One of the pivotal points in Tiglao's career was earning the Country's Power of the Year title, a first for the Philippines, which earned her spot in the semifinals via global online voting.

Emma's background as a news caster and journalist shone during the Q&A, where her Top 10 speech tackled corruption, empathy, and the pursuit of peace.

datashows

40%

OF MISS INTERNATIONAL CROWNS WORLDWIDE BELONG TO THE PHILIPPINES

Out of 15 Miss International winners, 6 are Filipinas, making the Philippines the top-winning country in that pageant.

source from **PHILSTAR**

Tiglao drew on her real-world experience, calling for balanced education, accountability, and justice to safeguard disadvantaged populations. Not just herself, but millions of others were represented by her on that stage.

When Emma Mary Tiglao was named the winner on October 18, 2025, the Philippines rejoiced. She stood out among 77 contestants, defeating competitors from all over the world and capturing the country's second consecutive Miss Grand International title—the first time a nation has won back-to-back in the pageant's history.

Her triumph demonstrated the Filipino spirit of perseverance, pride, and bayanihan (community support), and it did more than simply add another crown to the Philippines' collection. It also validated the nation's standing in international pageantry. Tiglao thanked Filipinos for their unwavering support and acknowledged this team effort.

Beyond that, this momentous occasion will live on in the pageant world forever.

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BEYOND THE CROWN

Chelsea Fernandez's journey of purpose and pride

MUNEERA AL SIEH

In the glittering realm of pageantry, stage lights illuminate each contestant, impressing the audience with beauty and intelligence. Few contestants stand out more than others, such as Filipina beauty queen Chelsea Fernandez, who stole the show at Miss Cosmo 2025 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Chelsea competed with poise, intelligence, and elegance. Furthermore, she transformed her advocacy into a voice that can reach millions of pounding hearts, garnering her admiration among Filipino pageant lovers and people all over the world.

Chelsea has been involved in pageantry for a long time prior to her appearance on the Miss Cosmo stage. She has already established a name for herself. This includes a Top 15 finish in The Miss Globe 2022. But Miss Cosmo 2025 marked a new phase in her career, one that would put her to the test in every way: elegance, intellect, cultural understanding, and activism.

It takes a lot of courage to stand on stage in front of millions of people, not knowing what they think of you. It takes a really daring person to do something so exceptional. Chelsea stood on the stage not as one, but as a complete country, the Philippines.

Moreover, she was really proud to represent our country from the moment she was crowned "Miss Cosmo Philippines 2025". She carried the weight of national pride. In an elegant gown made by Louis Pangilinan, she proudly stated her objective, "Ilalaban kita, Pilipinas!" Such simple words have profound meaning. It struck a chord with many people that someone so bold would be representing the Philippines on such a big stage.

She not only turned heads, but also won hearts. Her national costume was a Sarimanok-inspired masterpiece that celebrated Filipino Muslim ancestry with brilliant colors and cultural symbolism. Her presence was anticipated long before she appeared. She also demonstrated her versatility by finishing in the Top 5 of the renowned Ao Dai task, which celebrates elegance and cultural interpretation, and soon became a fan favorite in the Miss Cosmo People's Choice poll, becoming the first contestant to receive more than a million votes.

Chelsea Fernandez presented a spectacular performance on December 20, 2025, at Vietnam's Creative Park. She really drew breaths during her evening gown performance. A great blend of bold, elegance, and ethereal that suited her intelligent and passionate statement in the debate portion.

Chelsea fought valiantly, although she did not take home the crown. Chelsea's performance wasn't an ordinary one. She finished as the first runner-up, emphasizing both her stage presence and her strong advocacy for change.

Chelsea's road to Miss Cosmo 2025 was about more than simply the crown. It was more about national pride, and her advocacy touched millions of hearts. Nonetheless, she continues to receive numerous honors. included the Best in Evening Gown award and received overwhelming support through the People's Choice prize, demonstrating that her appeal extended far beyond the judges' scorecards.

T hough the Miss Cosmo crown may have narrowly eluded Chelsea Fernandez, her path demonstrates a vital truth: pageantry is about more than simply beauty; it's about purpose, influence, and impact. With that, Chelsea has already won.

> I would like to empower every women to immerse yourselves in activities that can enrich your skills.. **Because we women, we can stand in our own and women can also have it all.**
>
> **CHELSEA FERNANDEZ**
> Miss Cosmo 2025 First Runner-up



datashows

Philippines earned 15 total Big Four titles:

- 4 MISS UNIVERSE
- 1 MISS WORLD
- 6 MISS INTERNATIONAL
- 4 MISS EARTH

source from **PHILSTAR, INQUIRER ENTERTAINMENT**

100%

MISS UNIVERSE PLACEMENT RATE FOR 12 STRAIGHT YEARS (2010-2021)

For 12 consecutive years, the Philippine representative always reached the semifinals — a rare record in Miss Universe history.

source from **ABS-CBN NEWS**

> I fell a while ago on stage. And the thing with me is, **whenever I fall in life, I always make sure I come back stronger.**
>
> **AHTISA MANALO**
> Miss Universe Philippines 2025

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CROWNED BY GRACE

How Ahtisa Manalo proves beauty is built on courage, resilience, and dreams

DANA NAZARETH

"I want to be the hope of people." said Miss Universe 2025 - 3rd Runner Up, Ma. Ahtisa Manalo.

There are stories about journeys that unfold in quiet confidence, there is the journey of Ahtisa Manalo, a journey blazed by fierce ambition, unshakeable grace, and burning passion that burns its path ahead. From the moment Ahtisa first stepped in the spotlight and made headlines, her story has been one of relentless pursuit, unbeatable passion, and a dream that carried the hopes of the entire nation.

For years, Ahtisa carried her dreams in her heart similar to an ember waiting to catch fire. Every triumph, every setback, and every moment of preparation molded her into the woman made to represent the Philippines in the grandest stage of all.

Ahtisa's journey towards the universe was not made of glitz and glamour. Her pageant journey started quite early, at just 10-years-old, Ahtisa joined her first ever beauty pageant. Her early start in pageants taught her both resillence and resourcefulness, turning pageants into places for growth and self improvement.

Ahtisa continued to compete and started to win regional titles like Reyna ng Aliwan 2017 - 2nd Runner Up. At the age of 20, Ahtisa won Bb. Pilipinas International and became the Philippines' representative on the international stage securing the title of Miss International - 1st Runner Up. She then returned to the stage in 2024, she finished as 2nd Runner Up and was awarded Miss Cosmo Philippines 2024.

Now in 2025, after three times of joining, Ahtisa finally clinched the Miss Universe Philippines title. When she was crowned Miss Universe Philippines 2025, the coronation was not just a crowning moment, it marked a culmination of years navigating through criticism and negativity for her to reach the person she was meant to become.

As the Miss Universe 2025 competition unfolded in the beautiful city of Bangkok, Thailand, Ahtisa's presence was nothing far from mesmerising. She glided down the runways and stages like light dancing on water, radiant in the national costume that captured the vibrant spirit of Filipino festivals and breathtaking in her evening gown that seemed to be woven from the stars themselves.

Night after night, she carried her heritage forward, not as a weight or burden, but as a banner which carried pride, resilience, and hope.

When the final announcement came, a collective sigh of admiration and even confusion washed over her supporters. Ahtisa Manalo is Miss Universe 2025 - 3rd Runner Up.

It was Ahtisa's response to the moment that revealed the heart behind the grace. In her candid interviews after the pageant, Ahtisa admitted she felt that the crown could have been within reach.

For Ahtisa, this journey was never just about a title. It was about proving herself and to all the dreamers out there that the stage is not the destination, but the echo of the challenges you have conquered along the way.

Today, Ahtisa's journey continues, not defined by a crown, but by the fire in her soul and the legacy she has just begun to craft. Her story is not simply celebrated, it is carried in the hearts of those who dared to dream alongside her.

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Where Christmas Begins in September

How Filipinos Celebrate the Longest Holiday in the World

JAMAICA PARAGOSO

As the speed of months arrives, September saunters its way into the hearts of Filipinos—embracing tightly the Christmas spirit that gradually grows as days pass by. Televisions begin to shimmer with familiar tunes, and roads begin to smell like firecrackers as small lights huddle around houses and flicker against the evening sky.

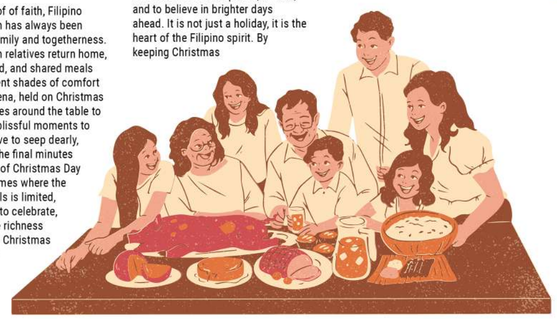
In the Philippines, Christmas is more than just a single day anticipated on the calendar. It does not wait for December, as it is built on anticipation and warmth that stretches across the notable arrival of "Ber months," from September to December. Malls decorate early, neighborhoods glow with colorful lights, and people slowly prepare for celebrations that seem to last forever.

Unlike in many countries where Christmas swiftly turns into ordinary days, Filipinos choose to extend the joy, believing that happiness is something worth holding on to. The Christmas season in the Philippines arrives as early as it wants to and stays longer than the actual celebration itself—the spirit it creates lingers like magic as if unwilling to leave the place where it feels most at home.

Moreover, what drives this long-kept Christmas tradition is the faith around which Filipinos center their lives. One of the most cherished practices of this Christmas tradition is Simbang Gabi, also known as Misa de Gallo—a series of nine devotional Eucharistic celebrations attended by families, friends, and communities in which the spirit of Christmas begins to take root. Before the bask of the sun even takes place, dawn wraps in wintry howls, and churches glow with candlelight as prayers rise in anticipation of the birth of the Lord, of hope arriving humbly, embraced not in grandeur but in faith shared across generations.

Beneath this roof of faith, Filipino Christmas tradition has always been rooted deeply in family and togetherness. It is a season when relatives return home, bonds are rekindled, and shared meals are eaten in different shades of comfort and joy. Noche Buena, held on Christmas Eve, gathers families around the table to feast on food, for blissful moments to capture, and for love to seep dearly, as families await the final minutes until the threshold of Christmas Day arrives. Even in homes where the abundance of meals is limited, families find ways to celebrate, nourishing the true richness of the holiday; that Christmas lies not in material gifts, but in moments that are shared and cherished together.

In a country often disturbed by storms, struggles, and daily challenges, stretching the holiday season becomes a quiet act of hope. Filipinos hold onto the celebrations as a reminder that joy can bloom even in difficult times. Christmas here is a moment to pause, to heal, and to believe in brighter days ahead. It is not just a holiday, it is the heart of the Filipino spirit. By keeping Christmas alive for months on end, Filipinos show that true happiness is not measured by what we have, but by how fully we choose to celebrate love, joy, hope, and togetherness.



FOOTSTEPS ACROSS THE ARCHIPELAGO

JAMAICA PARAGOSO

A man of sheer will and endurance has embarked on one of the longest journeys ever set on foot—tracing the innermost veins of the Philippine Archipelago. After 10 long months of training at the Academic Oval of the University of the Philippines Diliman, he finally began his journey on January 2, 2025. Beginning at the grounds of Luneta Park in Manila, Ferdinand Dela Merced, widely known as the 'Philippine Looper,' set both his mind and body on a compelling journey.

To inscribe his name in the Guinness World Records for walking through all 82 provinces in the Philippines; throughout this pilgrimage, he carries a profound quest for personal healing and connection, to find his father as he holds onto hope that he might reach him and bring him back; and at the heart of it all, beyond his deep and personal reasons, every step he takes aims to inspire others, letting Filipinos feel the power of perseverance, courage, and unwavering determination.

However, his journey has not been without turbulence. In recent weeks, Ferdinand Dela Merced found himself at the center of public scrutiny after concerns were raised about his actions toward the local officials of Negros Oriental.

"Yong bagyo, may bagyo naman talaga tayo, e. Wala namang problema sa bagyo natin kasi 'yong bagyo, taon-taon naman talaga. Ang hirap bang intindihin na magpapa-tap lang ako?" Ferdinand Dela Merced voices his frustration during the time he deemed his arrival wasn't accommodated properly in Negros Oriental on a facebook post.

With this, the Philippine looper was imposed a 'persona non grata' in all of Negros Oriental's areas. His remark left many residents and local officials dismayed, grasping on the idea that it downplayed the urgency of the preparations for the incoming storm. During the time of his frustration, the Local Government Unit workers of Negros Oriental were busy organizing resources, warning their people, and securing evacuation for the possible tragedy that may happen in their province. Furthermore, his walk continues in a linear pattern while simultaneously receiving backlash for not being officially registered as a participant in the Philippine Loop Adventure Tour; having failed to submit a doctor's certificate, with his hypertension deemed as medically invalid.

Amidst all these, Ferdinand Dela Merced continues his trek, there are some who critize and there are those who defend. The question remains: will his journey be remembered solely for the setbacks, or will it endure as a story of determination and inspiration for generations of Filipinos? Only time, and the miles ahead, will tell.



ROOTed in Passion

DANA NAZARETH

While many young people spend their free time going out with friends or endlessly doom-scrolling on their phones, 16-year-old Joseph Ram Mayormita, a Grade 11 student from St. Vincent's College Incorporated - Basic Education Campus, begins and ends each passing day with his hands in the soil. A student farmer by heart and by passion, Joseph carefully balances academics and agriculture, his lids shaped and molded by discipline, dedication, and deep love for farming.

Born into a middle-class family, Joseph Ram had every opportunity to choose a much more comfortable and convenient routine, the type of routine a teenager would usually choose. Instead, he chose to stay rooted in farm life instead of stepping away from it. Farming is not an obligation, farming for him is a passion. Introduced to agriculture at a young age by his father, Mr. Ramil C. Mayormita, Joseph Ram learned the importance of patience and the value of hard work early on. What began as a simple childhood task slowly grew into a lifelong commitment and a source of purpose.

Joseph Ram's day starts earlier than most teenagers'. He wakes up at 4:30 in the morning, allowing himself enough time to prepare for the day ahead. By 4:45 to 5:45 a.m., he is already at the farm, assisting by watering crops, feeding livestock, and carefully checking the condition of the plants. After breakfast, he heads to school where he spends the entire day, attending classes from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Yet, his responsibilities do not end in the classroom. Once he returns home, Joseph Ram heads straight back to their family farm to continue planting, weeding, harvesting, and preparing the soil. Only after completing his farm duties does he finally settle down at night to work on his school requirements. Despite the physical demands and long hours, he remains committed, proving that passion, when nurtured with discipline, can thrive even in the busiest of lives.

Even during the weekend, when everyone else is resting, Joseph Ram continues to help whenever he has free time. For him, farming is not merely about supporting the family farm, it is a source of fulfillment and purpose.

"My passion for farming didn't come overnight. It was shaped over time—by early mornings, failed harvests, and quiet, hard-earned successes. I see agriculture not simply as labor, but as a long-term responsibility to the land, the people it feeds, and the future of food security." Joseph Ram shared.

In a generation where fewer young people are drawn to agriculture, Joseph Ram Mayormita remains rooted in the soil that helped raise him. He is a testament to commitment and passion. His story is a quiet reminder that passion is not shaped by need alone, but by love for the land, for heritage, for security, and for purpose. With every seed he plants and every dawn that he greets, Joseph Ram proves that farming is more than a way of life, it is a legacy carried across multiple generations. And in the hands of young farmers like him, the future of agriculture continues to live with purpose and promise.

HIGHjacked Control

How Drugs Silence Inhibition

CHRISS MIRANDA

**What if the voice telling you to stop learned how to whisper?
The human brain is the center of our nervous system meant to help us choose, resist, and survive. But under the influence of drugs, it can slowly turn against itself, every inhibition thrown out the window. Addiction isn't a failure of will but rather a rewiring by repeated chemical deception.**

At the center of it all is dopamine, the "pleasure chemical" as some might falsely label it. In truth, dopamine is less about indulgence and more about motivation; teaching the brain what does and doesn't merit echoing. When we eat, socialize, or achieve a long-sought-after goal, dopamine is released in careful, balanced amounts, telling our nervous system that this action is good for us, that it should be done again, that it's worth repeating. Drugs, however, flood the brain with dopamine far beyond our body's natural levels, creating an artificial signal that not only screams a message shifting from "this is good for me" to "this is a necessity."

To protect itself from overstimulation, it reduces the number of dopamine receptors, dulling their sensitivity, a dangerous hole that only gets dug deeper and deeper. As a result, everyday activities that once brought joy feel muted and unrewarding in comparison, forcing users to seek out that familiar 'kick' that drugs can bring them, helping them feel "normal" again.

Over time, addiction doesn't stop at the brain's reward center. It alters the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for decision-making, impulse control, and long-term planning. This region weighs an action's consequences and says "no" when something equates to harm. As substance use continues, this control system weakens, making it harder to resist cravings even when the individual is entirely aware of the destructive result to come. The brain's balance shifts, heightening desire and muffling reason.

From a neurological perspective, addiction is a disorder deeply tied to learning and memory. Environmental cues, places, people, even emotions become linked to drug use. A familiar street, a song, or stress itself can trigger intense cravings, long after the drug has left a person's system. These learned associations are deeply wired, explaining why relapse can occur even after long periods of abstinence. Which means the body does too.

As more intoxicating drugs emerge and stressors like poverty, trauma, and isolation persist, addiction becomes an even more complex hurdle. The addicted brain is not broken beyond repair, but is altered, and healing takes time, support, and sustained intervention. The voice never truly disappears – it's simply drowned out. Addiction is the slow silencing of the brain's warning system, and recovery is the long, difficult work of teaching it how to speak again.



Too GREEN To be True

When Sustainability Isn't What It Seems

CHRISS MIRANDA

What if the color green was less of a promise and more of a disguise? What if the solution to a global crisis started to become an entirely new problem in itself? As plastics choke oceans, clog landfills, and infiltrate the food chain, bioplastics swoop in and become the supposed "hero" of a long-mulled-over dilemma. Marketed as cleaner, greener, and kinder to the planet, bioplastics promote eco-friendly alternatives to replace non-green choices. But beneath a wholesome label lies a more complicated truth. The truth is that not all "bioplastics" are created equal, and not all of them are as sustainable as they seem.

At the heart of the bioplastic conversation is a simple and often misunderstood question: "what makes a plastic 'bio'?" Despite popular belief, bioplastics are not automatically biodegradable. The term broadly refers to plastics that either are "bio-based", meaning derived from renewable resources like corn, sugarcane, cassava, or "biodegradable", meaning they can break down under specific conditions. Some bioplastics are one, some are both, and some are completely neither despite being marketed as such.

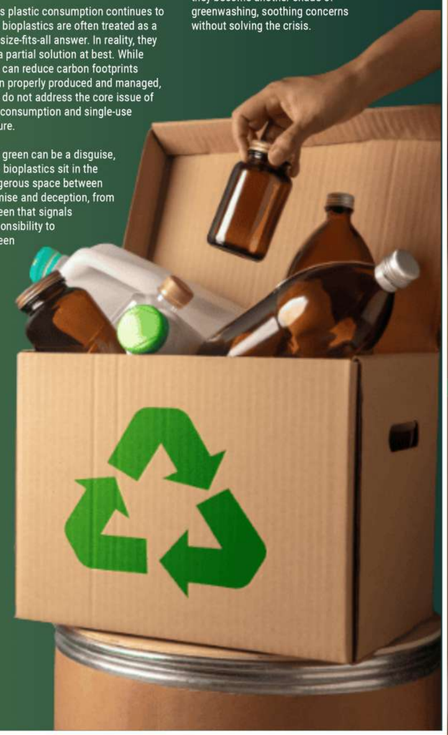
From a scientific perspective, the environmental promise of bioplastics depends heavily on their chemical structure. Polylactic acid (PLA), one of the most common bioplastics, is derived from fermented plant starch and is often advertised as compostable. What they don't specify, though, is that PLA typically requires industrial composting facilities with controlled heat and moisture to properly break down. When disposed of in landfills or the ocean, bioplastic can persevere much like conventional plastic, ultimately undermining its green reputation.

The production of bioplastics only complicates the narrative. While bioplastics reduce dependency on fossil fuels, they shift environmental pressure elsewhere. Large-scale cultivation of crops and organic material used for bioplastic feedstock demands land, water, fertilizer, and pesticides. This can contribute to deforestation, soil degradation, and competition with food production, particularly in developing countries. In such cases, the environmental cost is not eliminated but rather redirected.

Waste management is where the illusion of sustainability often collapses. Many communities lack the infrastructure to properly break down bioplastics, causing them to end up in landfills, where low oxygen levels slow decomposition. The promise of biodegradability, without the proper facilities to aid it, becomes a little more than a marketing slogan. This is where greenwashing enters the picture. Labels like "eco-friendly" or "compostable" are frequently used without clear explanations or conditions for such tags to come true.

As plastic consumption continues to rise, bioplastics are often treated as a one-size-fits-all answer. In reality, they are a partial solution at best. While they can reduce carbon footprints when properly produced and managed, they do not address the core issue of overconsumption and single-use culture.

If green can be a disguise, then bioplastics sit in the dangerous space between promise and deception, from a green that signals responsibility to a green that misleads and reassures without the truth. Bioplastics are not inherently bad, nor are they the cure they are often branded to be. In the right systems, honest labeling, and proper disposal, some bioplastics can reduce harm. But without these safeguards, they become another shade of greenwashing, soothing concerns without solving the crisis.



PAWsitive Chemistry

The Science Behind Companionship

CHRISS MIRANDA

What if our love for our furry friends goes beyond wagging tails and cute faces? What if it's written deep inside our biology? Long before leashes and pet toys, before pet food aisles and treats, humans and animals were already finding their way toward one another. What began as mutualism for survival slowly evolved into companionship, deeply intertwining pets in our hearts. Science suggests this bond is no accident, but the result of evolution, chemistry, and the infrastructure of the brain itself.

From an evolutionary standpoint, human-animal companionship offered mutual benefit. Early humans profited from an animal's ability to guard camps, hunt prey, and detect danger. In return, animals were kept fed, protected, and given shelter. Over generations, certain species, most notably dogs, underwent domestication, gradually developing traits that favored cooperation with humans. Friendliness, reduced aggression, and loyalty turned once-wild animals into social partners capable of understanding and responding to humans.

But companionship goes beyond give and take. At the center of the emotional bond between humans and pets is oxytocin, a hormone often associated with bond and trust. According to National Geographic, studies have shown that when humans interact affectionately with their pets, oxytocin levels rise in both species. This same hormonal pathway is involved in parent-infant bonding, suggesting that the human brain processes pet relationships using systems designed for close attachment.

Neuroscience further explains why pets feel emotionally significant. Interacting with animals activates the brain's reward circuits, releasing dopamine and serotonin, chemicals linked to satisfaction and motivation. In tandem, cortisol, the hormone associated with stress, is often shown to decrease. This neurological shift helps explain why pets are linked to reduced anxiety, lower blood pressure, and improved mental well-being.

Pets also thrive alongside humans because they fit naturally into our social wiring. Humans are highly attuned to faces, voices, and body language, and many animals have evolved to communicate in ways that we intuitively understand. Dogs can read human gestures and emotional cues with remarkable accuracy, while cats, though more subtle, respond to tone and routine. These interactions create feedback loops of communication that feel meaningful to both sides.

Our bond with pets is more than affection. It's a story written in evolution, in our nerves, in our very own DNA. From the first domesticated wolves to the cats and dogs curled up at our sides today, companionship has shaped both species in profound ways. In every shared gaze, gentle touch, and playful interaction, science reminds us that this connection is real, reciprocated, and fundamental to our biology.

datashows

40%

of bioplastics are bio-based but NOT biodegradable

source from SCIENCEDIRECT

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QuakeUp Call



Nature's Warning Beneath Our Feet

CHRISS MIRANDA

A series of earthquakes struck parts of Davao and Cebu, affecting multiple municipalities and cities across the Davao Region in Mindanao and the island of Cebu in Visayas that showed an increase in seismic activity over the course of the past few months. According to geologists from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), the tremors were caused by sudden movements along the active local fault lines, reflecting an ongoing buildup of stress beneath the Earth's crust

PHIVOLCS scientists explained that the ground shaking occurred due to deep crustal pressure accumulating along the Philippine Fault System and smaller, minor faults running under Mindanao and Visayas. These faults routinely absorb energy from plate movements, but when the pressure exceeds their capacity, the rocks slip and release seismic waves that the surface feels as shaking.

The recent tremors in Davao and Cebu ranged from light to moderate intensity, with some felt in urban centers and others detected only by instruments. Major structural damage was recorded in Cebu, where multiple heritage churches bore the brunt of the ground shaking, while numerous houses and buildings in Davao were also affected. These events have raised concerns about the long-term behavior of these active faults, especially as the Philippines remains one of the world's most seismically active countries, experiencing an average of 30 earthquakes per day or roughly 10,950 per year according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

From a scientific standpoint, the increase in activity is not unusual, especially with the country being located within the Pacific Ring of Fire, however, it is safe to say that the occurrences are notable. PHIVOLCS reports that the Davao Region, positioned near several segments of the Philippine Fault and Cotabato Trench system, is particularly prone to tectonic disturbance. Similarly, Cebu, though not located directly on any major fault line, sits above a complex network of smaller faults capable of producing moderate level earthquakes.

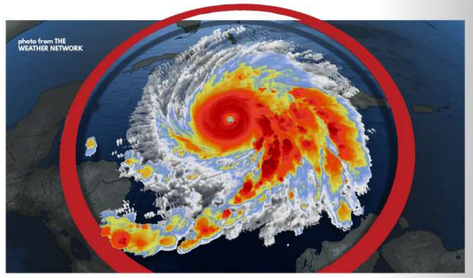
Experts highlight that these quakes are part of the natural seismic cycle of the country's archipelago. With its geography having multiple tectonic plates interact, collide, and grin against one another. This geological environment makes both sudden slips and slow stress accumulation inevitable.

Local governments in both affected areas have since renewed calls for earthquake preparedness, reminding residents to review emergency plans, identify safe spots in buildings, and participate in regular drills. Nature has shaken Davao and Cebu, and it will shake again. In the Philippines, seismic activity isn't a question of if, but when — highlighting the importance of preparedness and vigilance.

TYPHOONomenal Force

How Two Typhoons Shook the Archipelago

CHRISS MIRANDA



A series of typhoons struck the Philippines in early November 2025, with Typhoon Tino first impacting parts of the Visayas and Mimaropa regions, followed by Super Typhoon Uwan approaching only days later, together leaving a trail of displacement, destruction, and deep economic scars.

The back-to-back storms affected millions of residents, flooding communities, damaging homes, and disrupting essential services across the multiple provinces. According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), both typhoons intensified rapidly due to unusual warm sea surface temperatures and favorable atmospheric conditions, highlighting the vulnerability of the archipelago to extreme tropical cyclones due to its particular geographical standpoint.

Meteorologists explained that Typhoon Tino's strong winds and heavy rainfall resulted from a combination of low pressure systems and deep convection over the Western Pacific, while Uwan's rapid intensification was fueled by the same warm ocean waters and high humidity. Such conditions allow the storms to quickly escalate to major typhoon status, producing destructive winds, flash floods, and landslides across multiple regions.

Typhoon Tino brought heavy rain and winds to Visayas and Mimaropa, forcing over 150,000 residents into evacuation centers. Agriculture, particularly coconut, abaca, and rice crops suffered heavily, with the Department of Agriculture estimating losses of over 6.5 billion pesos. Infrastructure including schools, hospitals, and transport networks were also severely impacted, delaying recovery efforts and complicating relief operations.

Despite the occurrence of the two powerful typhoons in rapid succession with one another not being unusual in the Western Pacific due to the Pacific Ring of Fire, especially during typhoon season, there is no question that the events still roused concern over the warming ocean temperatures and increased atmospheric moisture that contributed to storms in the area growing stronger and more unpredictable.

Experts stress that Tino and Uwan are part of a broader pattern of extreme weather events that the country faces due to climate change. With the Philippine islands situated at the convergence of tropical storms and warm Pacific waters, these conditions make both sudden intensification and prolonged rainfall inevitable, challenging disaster preparedness.

The twin storms of Tino and Uwan are proof that the Philippines will always face nature at its fiercest. Ignoring climate risks is not an option — preparedness and resilient infrastructure are the only shields between life and catastrophe.

Dying Shield of Luzon: Sierra Madre

CHRISS MIRANDA

A nation without its shield is a nation exposed, isn't it? Now what if I tell you that for decades, man has become its very own enemy, poisoning one of its guardians, taking it for granted, wearing it down faster than even nature can heal it.

The Philippines faces an average of 20 tropical cyclones each year, with many of which making landfall in Luzon. Yet behind every typhoon that weakens before devastating Central Luzon or Metro Manila is the Philippines' silent guardian, our Sierra Madre. Spanning over 500 kilometers from Cagayan down to Quezon, the Sierra Madre is the country's longest mountain range, and undeniably its most important, shielding the country against onslaught after onslaught of overwhelming storms.

But with each passing year, as the Sierra Madre succeeds to protect the nation, little realize that our first line of defense against climate-driven cyclones – is dying. With deforestation, illegal logging, mining activities, and dubious proposals of new infrastructure take root; as the inevitability of climate change brings stronger and stronger typhoons each year, the proud shield of Luzon, struggles to keep up, forcing the country to face the fact that if proper action ceases to take place, the Sierra Madre will go from our home's mighty guardian to a broken fort, stripped of greatness.

Despite the importance of the mountain range when it comes to mitigating storm destruction, the Sierra Madre is one of the most exploited landscapes in the Philippines, being victim to decades of immoral human activity. Proposals such as dams and road networks coupled with mineral extractions threaten to aim for the Sierra Madre's interior, targeting the mountain range's land stability and loosening its soil in the process. Logging and mining activities disrupt the Sierra Madre's natural absorbent capacity, ridding it of its vegetation, causing its slopes to become vulnerable to floods, debris flow, and erosion, putting nearby communities at risk.

From a scientific perspective, the Sierra Madre is so significant because it acts as a physical buffer between the Pacific Ocean and the mainland, notably weakening each typhoon that collides with the mountain range's harsh terrain before reaching highly populated areas. The mountains push warm, moist air upward, causing it to cool and condense into rain in a process called orographic lifting which results in rainfall concentrated on its very own mountainsides as opposed to pouring down on low-lying areas that are prone to flooding. By obstructing the direct path of storms that form in the Pacific, the Sierra Madre minimizes destructive winds and waves that usually cause storm surges in coastal areas, effectively lessening damage.

With rising ocean heat climbing each year making the Pacific the perfect breeding ground for mean storms, each typhoon entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility is deemed stronger and more devastating. The Sierra Madre's roles become more and more significant each year. But instead of strengthening it, human activity continues to eat away at its ability to stand strong as our protector.

This leaves us with the question, "what happens to Luzon when its greatest shield against calamity grows weaker and weaker each year?"



Sierra Madre Mountain Range Map
photo from DAKILANGLAAGAN

art by NIXELLE JALLUREN

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sci-techeditorial

Your Mind Deserves a Prescription

What if, in our culture, going to therapy were as normal as visiting a doctor for a check-up—no longer a privilege reserved for the wealthy, nor a label of weakness attached to those who seek help? What if asking for professional support was seen as an act of self-respect and responsibility, rather than something to be hidden in whispers?

Mental health care is now necessary because depression and anxiety are more evident because everyone is socially online. From recent news about suicide, abuse, bullying and many more injustice problems, we wonder who can be next to experience it. According to WHO statistics, some 3.3 million Filipinos suffer from depressive disorders, and another 3 million struggle with anxiety.

However, our culture as Filipinos despise of it, we are seen as emotionally strong individuals whom are carrying the dreams of entire families future, so when time comes we are ill-prepared to react to a very real invisible enemy, leaving millions of people to deal with stress, burnout, and loneliness on their own. Why shouldn't structured therapy be recommended for mental healing if medication can be provided for physical healing?

There is no denying the effectiveness of therapy. Research indicates that digital mental health apps, guided therapy sessions, and structured counseling can all significantly lower stress, anxiety, and sadness.

Therapy can be the difference between functioning and failing for Filipino workers abroad who are separated from their loved ones or for students balancing part-time jobs, deadlines, and tuition. However, many people cannot afford care due to systemic obstacles such high costs, stigma, culture, ignorance and unequal access. This may be changed by providing free or institutionally funded therapy in businesses and schools, making mental wellbeing a public good rather than a privilege.

Yet therapy is more than a checklist or an app. True healing requires empathy, trust, and human understanding. AI and digital platforms can help, but they cannot replicate the subtle, compassionate connection that fuels resilience. Politicians, educators, and employers must recognize mental health interventions as both scientific necessity and moral imperative. As Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman reminds us, "We are prone to overestimate how much we understand about the world and to underestimate the role of chance in events." When it comes to mental health, acknowledging the limits of our current systems may be the first step toward real, equitable solutions.



art by JIRAH ARTAJO

datashows

3.3 million

OF FILIPINOS SUFFER FROM DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

source from WHO STATISTICS



virtualcomfort

Can You Code Empathy?

by JOSH CABRERA

"A response isn't the same as true understanding." A line that hasn't been so true until this day and age of technology.

In our modern age world, where stress, depression, peer pressure and uncertainty are common, many people find comfort in AI chatbots. A study in Metro Manila from 2025 found that students who chatted with a bot for 40–60 minutes each day for a week reported feeling much less stressed. These chatbots use calming language and provide coping strategies, yet it's important to remember that their responses are just programmed replies, not reflections of a human heart. AI can recognize sadness and offer advice, it doesn't actually feel the worries of students' struggles and deadlines, or the loneliness of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) missing their families.

Despite this, AI does have its benefits. Mental health services in the Philippines are quite limited, with only about 2 mental health professionals for every 100,000 people, most of them psychiatrists and psychologists are found in cities. Only 3–5% of the national health budget is allocated for mental health, focusing mostly on hospital care. With over 3.6 million Filipinos facing mental health challenges, many in rural areas find it hard to access counseling or psychiatric care. Students, workers feeling the pressure of rising costs, OFWs, and seniors living alone all face obstacles in getting support, challenges that AI might help address, offering a constant and patient presence.

But we have to be cautious about how we perceive AI's "empathy." Even if machines seem to care, remember that their responses come from analyzing data, not from any real experience, which can lead to overreliance or even being manipulated. Understanding comes from shared stories, experiences of pain and joy, and our collective resilience, something that machines simply can't replicate. AI can be a helpful resource and provide comfort, but the richness of human empathy is something uniquely ours. Recognizing this difference is really important as emotional AI continues to evolve.

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REIGNING SUPREMACY
MVP Xenithen Inofenio and the SVCI Lady Spikers display unwavering resilience as they dominate a four-set thriller to clinch the DICAA 2025 Gold at the DHSS grounds.
photo by IVAN LIPATO

BLOCKBUSTER WIN

SVCI Volleyball Spikes for Gold at DICAA 2025

AYUMI ABELLON

On the 27th day of November 2025, at Dipolog Pilot Demonstration School (DPDS), the SVCI women's volleyball team marks a triumph at DICAA and bags gold for this year's city meet.

Sunshine Inoferio, the key player of the SVCI volleyball team, showed her dominance in the court in this year's city meet, being the MVP in every match.

During the 1st match against ZNNHS Main, Saint Vincent's College won by a score of 9-25 and 15-25 in two sets. On the 2nd match, Punta National High School was overpowered by SVCI, garnering 14-25 and 19-25.

In the final match fighting for the title, champion SVCI sweeps a 4-set thriller match against Punta NHS with outstanding numbers of 25-14, 22-25, 25-19, and 25-16.

The outstanding love and passion of these players secured their win and gold medal in this DICAA 2025 city meet.



TRIPLE CROWN GLORY
The SVCI Valiants assert their volleyball prowess to secure a historic third title during the DiVA tournament at Sta. Isabel Covered Court
photo by IVAN LIPATO

SVCI Valiants secures their third DiVA Crown

CHRISTLYN BUCTUAN

Saint Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) Volleyball Valiants secures their third Dipolog Volleyball Association (DiVA) crown. The tournament held at Sta. Isabel Covered Court on November 15, 2025 was filled with excitement as local high schools around the city all came together to showcase each of their volleyball prowess. Eight competing teams namely, SVCI, Punta NHS, Blue Knights, Iconic, JRC, ABC, Dapitan NHS, and Galas NHS, all came prepared and battled in intense series of matches to win the coveted crown.

Before the matches began, the teams were split into brackets, with SVCI, Galas NHS, Iconic, and ABC in Bracket A and Punta NHS, Blue Knights, JRC, and Dapitan NHS in Bracket B. SVCI then went on dominating their bracket, continuously defeating everyone who came in their way. The Valiants control on the floor and strong serves turned their opponent into dust. The hit after hit attacks suffocates everyone in their bracket, not allowing the rival team to seize any opportunity to gain a point.

During the crossover, SVCI Valiants faces the daunting Blue Knights, a team known for their unstoppable attacks and aggressive plays. The face-off proved to be one-of-a-kind with both teams not letting their guard down, but in every match, only one emerges at the top. SVCI held tight on their ground, their capabilities to recover and their will to work well under pressure paid off. They secure their ticket to the championship round for a chance for the third crown.

Then came the championship battle with SVCI vs. JRC, the most awaited match of the whole tournament. Both teams having something at stake, SVCI eyeing for their third win and JRC for their very first win after joining the association. The game commenced and it was a sight to behold, with viewers watching on the edge of their seats. A three grueling sets was witnessed with every point being fought fiercely. Cheers echoed throughout court as both teams countered each other's strikes ferociously.

As the final set kicks off, the shouts of the fans were palpable. Every rally was intense up until the last points. The scoreboard locked in a nerve-wracking 14-14 tie with the ball on SVCI's court. A flawless serve was the final blow, clinching the match 2-1 and winning the championship crown for the third time. This win marks SVCI Valiants standing in the Dipolog City Volleyball Association (DiVA). They solidifies their legacy as a powerhouse of volleyball greatness showcasing their dedication to representing San Vicente Ferrer.



rebound

Lessons I learned from Losing

by CHRISTLYN BUCTUAN

Losing is one of the results when competing, it comes quietly and sometimes unexpectedly. It is often a disappointment when you know for yourself you did everything but still come up short from your goals. It makes us question our abilities and strengths or if we really are suited for this. However, painful as it is, losing often teaches us lessons that we can use to improve ourselves and be better.

Losing teaches us that success is not always certain, no matter how hard we try. It's like a knife pierced through our hearts but we all learn the hard way. Improvement comes from acceptance and losing allows us to see our weaknesses and we can use it to reflect on our performance. Instead of how we view losing as an end, we should look at it as a starting point for self-improvement.

Every setback we face helps build our resilience, promotes humility, and improves teamwork. In the moment, winning can be perceived as a sense of success and fulfillment but the lessons learned from losing are a lifetime. Therefore, true success is not just in sports but also in life comes not from never losing but learning how to stand up after a defeat.

Learning how to keep going even when motivation fades tests our character and prepares us in the future. It teaches us discipline, which is also a huge factor that comes with loss. We learn that to be able to get the results that we want, these require consistency and perseverance. It encourages us to train harder and to commit to the process of becoming better.

In the end, losing is not a sign of weakness but a testament that failure is a step to achieving greater heights toward progress and growth. I strongly believe that winning is not the opposite of losing, but as a part toward it. Victories may be sweet however, losing is how we build our character. The road may be tough yet we know that what awaits ahead is worth every tear we shed.

Spike Ball Debuts in Vinfeta 2025

AYUMI ABELLON

On September 30, 2025, at St. Vincent's College Incorporated - Main Campus, spike ball marks its very first appearance in the sport category for the intramurals of Vincentians Festival of Talents 2025.

Day 2 of the intramurals kicked off with the start of the sport tournament, and the very first game, and the debut of spike ball, with every department team (ABTECH, ASTEIHM, CCJ, & BEC) ready to grab gold and aim for the title of champion.

The rules of spike ball also known as round net are simple: each team should have two players with the objective of scoring points by hitting the ball onto the net so the opposing team can return it legally. A team scores a point when the opposing team fails to return the ball legally. Lastly, a rally ends when a team's ball hits the ground or rim and when a player makes a double hit or consecutive hits. Games are played to a set score (often 11, 15, or 21) and must be won by two points.

Spike ball does not only mean winning and playing the sport, but it also builds resilience, sportsmanship, communication, and honesty, fostering a positive community among Vincentians. The debut of this sport showcased how each student's determination and discipline resulted in well-deserved rewards, while also promoting core values and guiding each student toward success, making it truly worthy of being one of the sports to be played by the Vincentian community in this year's Vinfeta.

Cheer Dance Competition Brings Energy to Vinfeta 2025 Crowd

AYUMI ABELLON

On October 2, 2025, at St. Vincent's College Incorporated (SVCI) - Main Campus teams from every department gathered, competing for the title of champion and ready to perform their energetic and dynamic routines, bringing excitement and energy to the crowd during the Vincentians Festival of Talents (Vinfeta) 2025.

On the day of the competition, each participating department of BEC, ABTECH, ASTEIHM, and CCJ prepared to present their most awaited performance, sending high spirits and anticipation to all Vincentians.

ASTEIHM triumphs as victors in the cheer dance competition, with their out-of-the-ordinary stunts and high-powered delivery, going above and beyond, accomplishing and bagging the title of champion.

The results of the competition also showed the teams: BEC secures the spot of 1st runner-up, CCJ places 2nd runner-up, and last but not least, ABTECH wins 3rd runner-up in the cheer dance competition with their outstanding performance and their lively spirit bringing life to the campus of SVCI.
This year's Vinfeta's Cheer Dance Competition truly deserves to be the sport to be featured, for it is not only a physical activity but it also fosters sportsmanship, discipline, and hard work, promoting unity in the Vincentian community.



RHYTHM AND UNITY
Student performers light up the stage with energy, creativity, and teamwork as departments compete in the Cheer Dance Competition during Vinfeta 2025
photo by RYAN ESOLANA

CHEERIFIED

Eala made her story as the first Filipino Star to enter Top 50 of the WTA

CHRISTLYN BUCTUAN

Alexandra Maniego Eala, a professional tennis player who made a name in the industry by being the first in Philippine history to rank among the Top 50 Women's Tennis Association (WTA), making her the highest ranked Filipino to do so. Eala broke ground as the first Filipino to win a junior Grand Slam singles title at the 2022 US Open. At just 20 years old, she is redefining how people perceive the game of tennis in the country and along with her momentous "firsts" she is inspiring an entire generation.

Born in a sports-oriented family, Eala was able to build a strong foundation for her skills at such a young age. After her early training in the Philippines, she moved to Spain to enter Rafa Nadal Academy in Manacor to train full-time. Being accepted in a top-tier academy allowed her to be exposed in multiple opportunities in a high-performance tennis environment. While in the academy, she won her first professional tournament at an ITF in Manacor, marking her a foothold in the pro circuit and helped her break into the WTA rankings.

Alex's junior career laid the groundwork for her rise in the professional league. Some of her notable achievements were the 2020 Australian Open – Doubles with Priska Nugroho, 2021 French Open – Doubles with Oksana Selekhmeteva, and the 2022 US Open – Singles, all of which help her to reach a top junior ranking of No. 2 in the world. These breakthroughs allowed her to turn pro at 14 years old. In 2021, she made her Women's Tennis Association (WTA) debut as a wildcard in the Romanian Open and became the first Filipino to win a main-draw WTA match.

This year, Eala made multiple breakthroughs in her tennis career. She had a breakout performance at the Miami Open, defeating big-name players like Ostapenko, Keys, and Swiatek. Her wins against Top 30 players helped her break into the WTA 100 and Alex also reach the WTA semifinal. During the Eastbourne Open in June 2025, she became the very first Filipino to reach the WTA singles final.

Along with this, she also made her Wimbledon main-draw debut while playing in the Centre Court and along with it, she won her first WTA-level title at the Guadalajara 125 Open. With that win against Pana Udvardy, she made more history by becoming the first in Philippine tennis association to win a title in WTA singles.

Later in 2025, Alex Eala cracked the Top 50 in the WTA rankings, marking a significant achievement in her career. At the time of reaching No. 50 she made other history-making runs in Grand Slams and WTA events. Eala breaking into the Top 50 at such a young age is a major indicator of a promising career ahead of her. For a country not traditionally known to produce tennis stars, she stands as symbol of possibility in Philippine sport. Her story is still being written.

> "I have no words to describe what 2025 brought me. My dreams have truly come alive.



MAKING HISTORY
Alex Eala celebrates a breakthrough moment as she becomes the first Filipino to enter the Top 50 of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) rankings
photo from TENNIS WORLD USA

EALAvating

An Arnis Rising Star

CHRISTLYN BUCTUAN

In an arena filled with displays of skill and precision, SVCI's Fience John Jamarolin, took the spotlight and dominated the Single Sword ANYO category. A grade 8 student of Saint Vincent's College Incorporated captured 3 golds that placed him on top during the Division of City Schools (DCAA) Meet in Dipolog City.

His performance was nothing short of spectacular, in a sport known for testing the athletes limit in mastery and agility over the sword, Fience showcased that despite his young age-he could compete with the cities best martial artists.

The 2025 DCAA Meet saw the rise of Jamarolin in the martial art world. The budding athlete gave an all-out performance solidifying his position as one of the brightest young talent in Arnis. His precise strikes and fluid movements left the spectators in awe as he triumphed in all three of his competitions and earned gold medals in all.

"I have trained for years and this victory means a lot to me," Jamarolin enthused with his voice filled with pride. "To be able to represent my team and school is a great honor, and I will continue to strive harder in the years ahead. Thank you Lord God"

His achievement in qualifying to the ZANDIDAA Meet 2025 was a result of relentless training throughout the years and a strong commitment to mastering Arnis. Under the guidance of his coaches and peers, the young star honed his skills and is now preparing to take on a much bigger stage.

For Fience, this achievement is just the beginning. His mind is set on achieving greater heights in the future. Jamarolin's success is the evidence that with discipline and dedication you can reach whatever you put your heart into. As he continue to rise, his future in the world of martial art is brighter than ever.



RISING WITH PRIDE
Fience John Jamarolin displays strength, skill, and precision as he dominates the Single Sword ANYO category during the DCAA Meet in Dipolog City
photo by AASIA HERRERA

Taekwondo Girls Clinch Gold, Qualify for DICAA

AYUMI ABELLON

On October 16, 2025, at Dipolog Olingan Sports Complex, Julienne Alym M. Lagutin and Zep Elce P. Retes qualifies for the Davao Inter-Collegiate Athletic Association (DICAA), bagging gold at the Inter-Private Taekwondo Competition 2025 school meet, representing St. Vincent's College Incorporated.

Julienne Alym M. Lagutin of SVCI (Category A) clinches gold at the Inter-Private Taekwondo Competition 2025 and qualifies for the DICAA in the taekwondo girls division.

Zep Elce Retes P. Retes competes in the taekwondo girls division (Category B), representing SVCI, earning her spot in qualifying for the DICAA, marking a victory, and bringing home gold at the Inter-Private Taekwondo Competition 2025.

The perseverance and unyielding spirit of these two gold medalists, Lagutin and Retes, made a mark at the Inter-Private School Meet, earning them a spot for qualifying for DICAA, making their Vincentian family proud. This milestone will truly be one for the books.

> "I trained hard for this competition, and winning gold is a reward for all the sacrifices. Qualifying for DICAA motivates me to push even harder and represent SVCI with pride.
>
> JULIENNE LAGUTIN
> SVCI Taekwondo Continstant

BASIC EDUCATION CAMPUS
Vincentian Festival of Talents (VinFeTa) 2025 Medal Tallly

12
Winning gold medals in the Parade's Grandest Team, CODM, Creative Singing, Song Solo, Radio Broadcasting, Extemporaneous Speech, Mobile Journalism, Declamation, Sports Writing (English and Filipino), News Writing (English and Filipino), Copyreading (English and Filipino), and Feature Writing (Filipino), and Radio Broadcasting.

9
BEC also placed second in Spelling Bee, Speaking Bee, Song Impersonation, Battle of the Brains, Editorial Cartooning, Short Film Making, Poem Writing, Editorial Writing (English and Filipino), Feature Writing (English), and Cheerdance.

11
The department earned third-place finishes in Tetris, Mobile Legends, Philippine Folk Dance, Street Dance, Vocal Duet, Boggle, Debate, Spoken Poetry, Balak, Banner Making, and Column Writing (English and Filipino).

Playing Favorites

sportseditorial

School Sports is meant to teach discipline, sportsmanship, and respect, but what happens when even the officials of the game don't follow that?

Favoritism in sports is more common than people think. It starts subtly, like an average player getting subbed in to replace a player for a single mistake while they out there making much more than the previous play Sometimes players are chosen not because of skill and determination, but because of things like relations to that player. It's one of the biggest threats to the integrity of a sports team. When coaches has their clear favorites and turn a blind eye to their actions, it sends a message to everyone around the Status matters more than character. Not only does this hurt their confidence, it weakens their trust and builds resentment.

An article from Manila Bulletin features the head coach of UST, Kungfu Reyes, where he speaks out against the "unethical" recruitment of athletes during their final years of high school, specifically Grade 11 and 12. He argues that while UST invests significant effort into developing "zero to hero" talent through its grassroots program, rival schools often swoop in with high-value offers just as these players are ready for the collegiate level. While Reyes acknowledges the "free will" of students to choose their path and takes pride in the high demand for his players, he maintains that poaching from fellow UAAP grassroots programs violates a code of professional respect among coaches. Ultimately, he emphasizes that loyalty and integrity are more valuable than championships won through such methods, prioritizing the long-term welfare and education of the athletes over short-term sporting success.

Favoritism and unethical practices in school sports ruin the very values these programs are meant to instill. When skill, dedication, and character are won over by personal connections or short-term gains, the lessons of discipline, teamwork, and respect lose their meaning. Coaches, officials, and institutions have a responsibility not just to win, but to cultivate integrity in young athletes. As Kungfu Reyes highlights, true success is not measured solely by trophies or titles, but by the character, loyalty, and growth of the players themselves. Upholding fairness and ethics in sports ensures that the next generation of athletes competes not just with talent, but with honor.

Although it may seem difficult for this problem to be solved, with enough patience, determination and dedication, we can make things right. The solution to this is accountability and transparency. Schools and coaches have to establish clear criteria and standards for selection, play time, and recruitment to make sure that they're choosing solely based on skill, not personal connections. If we do this, our athletes can get a fair chance to compete and really showcase their skills.



art by NIXELLE JALLUREN

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