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## Independent flood control probe pushed

Lacson scores 'shameless hypocrites' who applauded Marcos' SONA



NEW ARMY HEAD - President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. receives a token from outgoing Army commanding general Lt. Gen. Roy Galido and incoming commanding general Lt. Gen. Antonio Nafarrete during the change of command ceremony at the Philippine Army headquarters in Taquig City on Thursday, July 31, 2025. Story on Page 3. (Mark Balmores)

### Marcos all set for 5-day state visit to India

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

resident Marcos will embark on a five-day state visit to India from Aug. 4 to 8, 2025, upon the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Malacañang announced on Thurs-

In a joint advisory from the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Marcos will hold official meetings and events in New Delhi before proceeding to Bangaanniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and India in 2025.

While in New Delhi, Marcos will meet with key Indian officials and members of the business community. He will also hold ▶7

#### Rice output in 2025 on track for all-time record

BV DEXTER BARRO II

he country's rice production is expected to reach an all-time high this year, as government interventions and improved weather conditions drove strong output in the first half, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), production of palay (unmilled rice) from January to June reached 9.08 million metric tons (MT), up six percent from 8.53 MT in the same period last year.

The latest rice production estimate surpassed the first-half record high of 9.026 million MT recorded in 2023.

In the same year, the Philippines saw the highest annual output of its national staple at 20.06 million MT, which was equivalent to 13.2 million MT of milled rice.

With first-half harvest usually making up over 40 percent of the annual production, the latest data indicates that the country may



RICE TARIFF - Sacks of different varieties of rice are sold in a grocery in Quezon City on Thursday, July 31, 2025. The Department of Agriculture is eyeing an increase in rice tariffs to around 25 percent to help local rice farmers compete with market prices. (Santi San Juan)

By HANNAH L. TORREGOZA

xpressing fears of a whitewash, Senator Panfilo Lacson on Thursday, July 31, 2025, said he will push for an independent audit and investigation of the flood control projects as he scored some "shameless hypocrites" who applauded President Marcos' rebuke when he raised the anomalies during his fourth State of the Nation Address

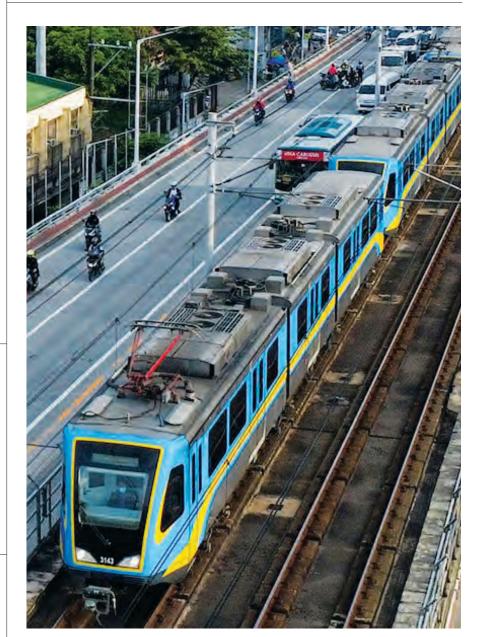
The senator said the investigation ordered by the President should not be limited to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which he said had been allocating nearly ₱2 trillion for flood control projects since 2011 but had so far failed to stop the flooding.

Lacson said the President could task government agencies to undertake the probe but there should also be civilians.

"It cannot be all-government because many perceive the DPWH is involved, and that it may whitewash its findings and give the President a sanitized and untruthful report," he added.

He said the creation of an independent body that will look into the matter and allow civilians to participate in the probe would be better, given that many people will likely volunteer to help out.

"Many people are tired ▶12



DALIAN TRAIN - A Dalian train runs along the MRT-3 tracks in EDSA-Kamuning in Quezon City on Thursday, July 31, 2025. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. announced during his fourth State of the Nation Address that additional Dalian trains will be added to the newly operational three-coach setup, with more expected to become operational later this year and next year. (Santi San Juan)

### 60% gov't share in Malampaya project includes contractors' income taxes, SC rules

By REY G. PANALIGAN

he Supreme Court (SC) has reversed the ruling of the Commission on Audit (COA) as it declared that the 60-percent share of the government in the profits from the Malampaya

Natural Gas Project includes the income taxes of its private contractors.

With its decision, the SC said the COA committed grave abuse of discretion when it declared that the contractors of the Malampaya project should be held liable for their failure to remit ₱53.14 billion ▶12



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