



POWERHOUSE ENSEMBLE – The bigwigs in Philippine government and finance came together for the ‘Big Bold Reforms: The Philippines 2026’ to explore ways to inspire optimism, renew investor confidence, and encourage greater interments in the country. The event, held in Taguig City on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, drew such stalwarts like, from left, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Ceferino S. Rodolfo, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Director General Paolo Teston, BDO Unibank Inc. Chairperson Teresita Sy-Coson, BDO Unibank Inc President and Chief Executive Officer Nestor Tan, DTI Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque, Singapore Ambassador to the Philippines Constance See, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Eli Remolona, Jr., Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Frederick D. Go, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Conrado Estrella III, Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina G. Frasco, and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Vivencio B. Dizon. (Photo from the Department of Finance)



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS – BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL (ASEAN-BAC) 2026 CHAIRPERSON AND GO NEGOSYO FOUNDER JOSE MA. CONCEPCION III

ASEAN 2026: Chance to showcase PH integrity

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

Hosting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summits this year provides the Philippines a timely opportunity to show the world that it is ready, credible, and open for business, according to ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) 2026 chair and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion.

The year-long ASEAN hosting allows the Philippines to send a clear signal that it can manage international engagement with integrity and professionalism, he said. ▶7



SINULOG TO THE MAX – Celebrate faith, culture, and unforgettable moments as SM Seaside City Cebu and SM City Cebu unite for AweSM Cebu 2026, turning Sinulog into a month-long, high-octane celebration from Jan. 3 to Jan. 28. The celebration hits its peak on Sinulog Day with electrifying performances and the spectacular return of the Illuminight Sinulog Drone and Pyro Show, igniting the Cebu skyline.

Students’ proficiency drops to 0.47% by Grade 12 – study

By MERLINA HERNANDO-MALIPOT

At Grade 3, nearly one in three Filipino children can read, count, and solve problems at a level deemed “proficient.” However, by the time that same cohort reaches the end of high school, or at

Grade 12, that proficiency has all but vanished.

In a statement issued Friday, Jan. 16, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) presented a stark picture: proficiency rates plunged from 30.52 percent in Grade 3 to just 0.47 percent by ▶7

Heavy rains from ‘Ada’ may trigger flooding, landslides in Bicol, Visayas

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) warned on Saturday, Jan. 17, that heavy rains brought by Tropical Storm Ada (Nokaen)—which could intensify into a severe

tropical storm while lingering east of Southern Luzon—are expected in parts of Bicol and Eastern Visayas this weekend, increasing the risk of flooding and landslides.

Catanduanes was forecast to receive more than 200 millimeters of intense to torrential rainfall on Saturday, which may trigger wide-

spread severe flooding and landslides.

Heavy to intense rains (100 to 200 millimeters) are also expected in Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate, and Northern Samar on Saturday, and on Sunday, Jan. 18, in Catanduanes.

These conditions are likely ▶7

Jail Decongestion Summit set at Manila Hotel starting Jan. 21

By REY G. PANALIGAN

Top government officials will convene starting on Wednesday, Jan. 21, in a national summit at the Manila Hotel

to tackle efforts that have been undertaken and will be pursued to decongest jail and prison facilities in the country.

President Marcos is expected to deliver his message like what he did when the first National Jail De- ▶7



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