

# Fewer party-list groups eyed in 2025 elections

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Over 23,000 people gathered at the Mall of Asia Arena for the Autism-OK Philippines yesterday. Leading the Angels Walk for Autism were SM Prime chairman of the executive committee Hans Sy, SM Supermalls president Steven Tan, SM Supermalls SVP for operations and SM Cares Program director for disability affairs Bien Mateo, Autism Society Philippines chair Emerita Dang Koe, ASP president LJ Sumulong, European Union Deputy Ambassador Ana Isabel Sanchez Ruiz, Miss Philippines Universe 2023 Michelle Dee and her mother Melanie Marquez. Simultaneous walks were held at SM Seaside City Cebu and SM City Davao. JESSE BUSTOS

# Agri import barriers eased

*Rice retail prices up by P2 per kilo*

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Citing constraints that increase importation costs and limit the supply of farm goods, President Marcos has ordered the removal of non-tariff barriers on the importation of agricultural products and streamlining of administrative procedures to address rising commodity prices.

Non-tariff barriers are policy measures, other than customs tariffs, that restrict trade, including quotas, import licensing systems, regulations and red tape, he said.

Despite existing measures, these barriers and administrative constraints continue to persist, increasing the domestic prices of farm commodities, Marcos noted.

"It is imperative to further streamline administrative procedures to foster transparency and predictability of policies on the importation of agricultural products in order to help ensure food security, maintain sufficient supply of agricultural goods in the domestic market and improve local production," Marcos said in Administrative Order No. 20, dated April 18.

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Remnants of the old Pantabangan town in Nueva Ecija resurfaced again yesterday as drought in Luzon caused water levels to drop. The 300-year-old town was submerged decades ago amid the construction of the Pantabangan Dam in 1977. WALTER BOLLADOZ

## Phl lauds G7 support in sea dispute with China

By PIE LEE-BRAGO

The Philippines welcomed yesterday the Group of Seven (G7)'s support in rejecting China's baseless and expansive claims, and the use of water cannons against Philippine vessels in the South China Sea.

In a strongly worded statement, G7 foreign ministers criticized China's "dangerous use of coast guard and maritime militia in the South China Sea" and the use of "water cannons against Philippine vessels" – the first time seven of the world's most powerful democracies specifically referred

to China's use of water cannons on Philippine resupply missions near Ayungin Shoal.

"The Philippines welcomes the G7 Foreign Ministers' reiteration of their collective commitment to the rule of law and to the rules-based maritime

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## BBM, Qatar emir meet today to tackle bilateral ties

President Marcos and Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani will meet today at Malacañang to talk about bilateral and regional issues.

"The two leaders are expected to exchange views on regional issues and to discuss Philippines-Qatar bilateral relations which now cover cooperation in the areas of labor, climate change, trade and investments, energy security, education, youth and sports, among others," the Presidential Communications Office said in a statement.

## House optimistic Senate will pass Cha-cha in May

By DELON PORCALLEA

Administration lawmakers in the House of Representatives are pinning their hopes

"anachronistic economic provisions that continue to spook investors despite the Philippines' trademark as one of Asia's best-performing econo-



## Big day for Phl sports

Gymnast Carlos Yulo bagged gold in parallel bars and silver in vault in the 16th Artistic Gymnastics

