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CASH IN / OUT



PERA PADALA



SANGLA



JEWELRY SELLING



**INTERNATIONAL
REMITTANCE**



BILLS PAYMENT



INSURANCE



**PADALA TO BANK
ACCOUNT**



E-LOADING



MONEY CHANGER



**CASH CARD/
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MAY PANGANGAILANGAN?

I-PALAWAN MO NA!

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The Official News Organ of
the Rotary Club of Manila

balita

ISSUE NO. 4105 • SEPTEMBER 10, 2026



Guest Speaker

MS. KRISTIN KAREN DAVILA

Journalist • News Anchor • Host

**A Brave
New World**

**Turnover of Neonatal
Care Equipment
to PGH**

**A Long Walk
Toward Hope**

*RC Manila Visits Bayanan
Elementary School in
Baco, Oriental Mindoro*

**Welcoming the
Rotary Club of
Kangjin-Tamjin
Delegation**



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10th WEEKLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING Rotary Year 2026-2027

Guest Speaker

Ms. Kristin Karen Davila

Award-winning Journalist • News Anchor & Host • Digital Content Creator

Thursday, September 10, 2026, 11:30 AM

Makati Rooms A & B, Makati Sangri-La Manila

Moderator: Rotarian Francisco Roberto "Coco" DC. Mauricio

PROGRAM

PART I

11:00 AM Registration /Lunch

11:30 AM **Call to Order**

President Reginald T. Yu

Invocation

Past Director Henry S. Go

Philippine National Anthem (AVP)

Rotary Club of Manila Hymn

RCM World-Famous Music Chorale

The Four-Way Test

DSAA Stefan Yordanov

Introduction of Visiting Rotarians & Guests

Rotarian Philip H. Recto

Welcome Song

RCM World-Famous Music Chorale

12:00 PM **Birthday Celebrants of the Week**

- Sept. 11 – PD Art Lopez
- Sept. 13 – PD Rami Chahwan, Rtn. Che Soler
- Sept. 16 – Rtn. Roger Cabuñag, Rtn. Mike Tejumal, Rtn. Sonny Dominguez

Maligayang Bati / Happy Birthday Song

RCM World-Famous Music Chorale

PART II

12:10 PM **President's Time**

President Reginald T. Yu

MOA Renewal Signing for the LEAP Awards
Office for Alternative Dispute Resolution (OADR)
• Philippine Institute of Arbitrators (PIArb) •
Rotary Club of Manila (RCM)

Director Teodoro Alejandro "Teddy" Y. Kalaw, IV - Chairman, LEAP Awards

12:20 PM **Introduction of the Guest Speaker**

Past Director Amado D. Valdez

Address:

Ms. Kristin Karen Davila

*Award-winning Journalist | News Anchor & Host
Digital Content Creator*

12:35 PM **Open Forum**

12:50 PM **Response**

Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation

1:00 PM **Adjournment**

President Reginald T. Yu

The Fourth Estate and the Weight It Carries

THERE is a reason the press has long worn the name "Fourth Estate." The phrase, attributed to the eighteenth-century statesman Edmund Burke, situated journalism alongside the three formal estates that once composed the deliberative order — the clergy, the nobility, and the commons, or in the modern rendering, the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. Burke's insight was that a body of citizens armed only with the printing press had become as consequential to shaping society as any branch of government seated in a parliament or a palace. The press does not legislate, adjudicate, or



Rotarian Senen T. Mangalile
Editor-in-Chief

command armies. What it commands is attention - the power to decide what a nation notices, questions, and remembers. In a democracy, that power is not decorative but rather structural. A public that cannot see what its officials are doing cannot meaningfully consent to be governed by them.

That is why the vocation of journalism is so often described in a single, demanding phrase: speaking truth to power. It sounds simple until one considers what it requires in practice — the discipline to verify before publishing, the patience to file requests that officials would rather ignore, the willingness to name a wrongdoer even when that wrongdoer controls advertising budgets, broadcast

franchises, or the machinery of the state. In the Philippine experience, this has never been an abstraction. It was the press that documented the extravagances and abuses of the Marcos dictatorship even as newsrooms were padlocked and broadcast frequencies seized in the early hours of martial law. It was the so-called mosquito press - small, defiant publications operating at the margins of legality - that kept dissent alive through the 1970s and helped set the stage for the peaceful uprising of 1986. Every subsequent Philippine administration, whatever its other legacies, has been measured in part by how much room it allowed reporters to ask uncomfortable questions.

The consequences of narrowing that room are neither hypothetical nor distant. When the press is curtailed, the public does not simply lose stories; it loses its early-warning system. Corruption that would have surfaced in an investigative report festers instead in silence. Officials who would have moderated their conduct under scrutiny act with impunity. The chilling effect is often more corrosive than outright censorship, because it does not need to shut a newsroom down - it only needs to make journalists calculate the cost of a story before they consider its truth. The Philippines has paid for this in blood as well as in silence: the 2009 massacre in Maguindanao, in which more than outright censorship, because it does not need to shut a newsroom down - it

only needs to make journalists calculate the cost of a story before they consider its truth. The Philippines has paid for this in blood as well as in silence: the 2009 massacre in Maguindanao, in which more than thirty journalists were murdered in a single act of political violence, remains one of the deadliest attacks on the press anywhere in the world. The denial of ABS-CBN's broadcast franchise in 2020, and the years-long legal campaign against Rappler and its executive editor, showed that in a modern democracy the instruments of suppression need not be a rifle or a padlock; a regulatory ruling or a tax case can accomplish the same end while wearing the appearance of due process. Whatever position one takes on the merits of any single case, the pattern across decades is the same - when the state's tolerance for scrutiny shrinks, so does the space in which citizens can hold power accountable.

None of this, however, should be mistaken for an argument that the press is beyond reproach. It is not. Philippine media has its own record of abuses, and honesty about the Fourth Estate demands naming them plainly. There is the sensationalism that trades context for spectacle, chasing a viral clip at the expense of a fuller story. There is the long-standing practice critics call "envelopmental" or "AC/DC" journalism, in which coverage - favorable or hostile - can be quietly purchased, corroding the

very independence the profession claims as its reason for being. There is trial by publicity, in which the accused are convicted in headlines long before any court has weighed the evidence. There is partisan capture, where a newsroom's political sympathies bleed so thoroughly into its reporting that its audience can no longer distinguish disclosure from advocacy. A press that abuses its own freedoms hands ammunition to those who would restrict it for everyone, and it forfeits the public trust on which its authority ultimately depends.

The remedy for this cannot be state control, which trades one danger for a worse one. It has to be self-regulation, pursued with the same rigor journalists demand of everyone else. This means empowering and actually using the ethics codes already maintained by bodies such as the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, the Philippine Press Institute, and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, rather than treating them as ornamental. It means newsrooms appointing readers' advocates or ombudsmen with real authority to correct the record. It means editors enforcing a firm separation between the newsroom and the advertising or public-relations arms of their own companies, and being transparent when errors occur instead of quietly editing them away. It means journalism schools teaching verification and sourcing as rigorously as they teach

storytelling. A profession that polices its own ranks credibly is a profession that can resist external policing altogether - and that, ultimately, is the strongest defense press freedom has against those with vested interest in its curtailment.

These are the very tensions that institutions like our beloved Rotary Club of Manila do well to place before their members. For more than a century now, RCM has invited figures whose work touches the public interest to speak plainly about the state of their trade or vocation. Its invitation to Karen Davila to speak before it today sits comfortably within that tradition. Across more than three decades on air - from Bandila and TV Patrol to Headstart, and internationally as the Philippines' first UN Women National Goodwill Ambassador — Davila has built a career defined by the same tension this editorial has traced: the discipline of asking hard questions of the powerful, sustained through an industry that has itself weathered franchise battles, shrinking revenues, and public skepticism. Of her own three decades in the profession, she has put it simply: "I consider it a privilege and a big responsibility, and I don't take what's been given to me for granted. I use my voice with integrity." That, in the end, is what the Fourth Estate asks of anyone who claims its mantle, and it is fitting that the Rotary Club of Manila has asked one of its most influential practitioners to account for it in person.

GUEST SPEAKER

KAREN Davila is a multi-awarded broadcast journalist with 32 years of television and radio experience in the Philippines and the FIRST UN Women National Goodwill Ambassador.

Karen was appointed UN Women National Goodwill Ambassador last October 2023 for her influential voice, years of integrity as a national broadcast journalist and her work on women & children on social issues.

As UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, she founded HER LEGACY PROJECT Foundation, to implement advocacies that push for gender equality & programs to uplift the lives of women & girls.

As a TV broadcaster, she has won the much coveted TOYM (The Outstanding Young Men) Awards for Broadcasting in 2008 and TOWNS (The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service) Award for Broadcasting in 2013.

Last 2021, she was declared the National Winner of the Asian Academy Creative Awards in Singapore for Best News or Current Affairs Presenter.



KRISTIN KAREN DAVILA

Journalist | News Anchor | Host

GUEST SPEAKER

She is a Hall of Fame Awardee with the Anak TV Awards, consistently considered a top role model for the youth for 8 straight years.

In 2010, Karen was chosen as a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, an honor given to young professionals below 40 yrs of age. This has allowed Karen to take exclusive leadership courses at Harvard Kennedy School, Yale and Lee Kwan Yew School of Government. She has moderated televised sessions for the World Economic Forum East Asia Summits in Manila and Jakarta.

She curated the first Young Global Shapers Manila Hub putting together 9 excellent individuals in their 20s. The YGS is now a strong organization in the Philippines that participates in the World Economic Forum yearly.

She started her broadcasting career as an investigative journalist, reporting and writing documentaries, winning the UNICEF Child Rights Award for her documentary on Children in Jail in 2005, a Silver Medal from the New York TV and Film Awards in 2007 for her documentary on children and street drugs. As a contributor for CNN Special Report in 1999, she was awarded the Bronze Medal for her environmental report on the

Marinduque Mine Spill. She has won numerous local awards including Rotary Club's Journalist of the Year in 2004 and several accolades from UST, UP, De La Salle Award giving bodies in the Philippines.

Karen was wearing multiple hats - doing three live daily TV and radio programs - interviewing newsmakers on Headstart, a news talk show that airs 8-9 am on the ABSCBN News Channel or ANC; anchoring the primetime newscast TVPATROL. She is also known for hosting a weekly news magazine TV show, called MY PUHUNAN, an inspiring business program that features rags to riches stories on ordinary Filipinos hitting it big thru entrepreneurship.

Today, Karen still anchors Headstart & TVPatrol on different ABSCBN's media & digital platforms.

She has strengthened her social media presence, creating her YouTube channel with more than 2.7 MILLION subscribers and became #1 with her limited The Karen Davila podcast series.

As a staunch advocate of empowering women and educating children, she has involved herself for years with Habitat for Humanity and World Vision.

A Brave New World

By President Reginald T. Yu



University of the Philippines President Jijil Jimenez delivers a compelling address on the power of education, science and principled leadership in nation-building. He urged Filipinos to challenge narratives of defeat, strengthen institutions worthy of public trust, and ensure that poverty or geography never limits a young person's potential. His message was both hopeful and demanding: our country's problems are real, but so are our people's courage, ingenuity and capacity to build a better future.

AT Rotary Club of Manila meeting, the UP president calls for principled leaders, trustworthy institutions and opportunities that reach communities long excluded from the country's premier state university.

University of the Philippines President Angelo “Jijil” Azura Jimenez challenged Filipinos to resist defining the country solely by corruption, instability and institutional failure, urging civic and professional leaders to advance a more truthful national narrative grounded in scientific achievement, public service and the demonstrated capabilities of the Filipino people.

Speaking before the Rotary Club of Manila during its 9th Weekly Membership Meeting at Fairmont Makati, Jimenez said the country’s many serious problems should neither be denied nor allowed to become the entirety of the Filipino identity.

The meeting, presided over by Rotary Club of Manila President Reggie Yu, brought together two institutions with more than a century of history. Founded in 1908, UP is the country’s National University, while the Rotary Club of Manila, established in 1919, is the first Rotary club in the Philippines and Asia.

The gathering also took on an international character with the presence of a 19-person delegation from the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tangjin in Korea. The Korean Rotarians attended the meeting as part of a fellowship visit highlighting the cross-border friendship and shared commitment to service between the two clubs.



President *Reginald Yu* with UP President *Jijil Jimenez*, whose message reminded everyone that education must do more than produce accomplished individuals. It must form leaders of honor, excellence and service, strengthen institutions that people can trust, and open doors for talented Filipinos regardless of poverty or geography.



Rotary Club of Manila members and guests share a warm moment of fellowship before the formal program. Gatherings like this reflect the enduring spirit of Rotary, where friendships are strengthened across generations, professions and nationalities. Around the table, conversations become connections, connections inspire collaboration, and collaboration opens new opportunities to serve our communities and create lasting impact.

The program opened with an invocation, the Philippine National Anthem, the Rotary Club of Manila Hymn, the Four-Way Test, the introduction of visiting Rotarians and guests, and a welcome song performed by the RCM WF Music Chorus.

Rotarian Romeo “Romy” C. Nones introduced Jimenez, describing UP and the Rotary Club of Manila as institutions joined by a common tradition of service. While UP prepares its graduates not only for professional success but also for service to the nation, Rotary calls upon its members to use their professions, talents, leadership and resources for the betterment of society.

What is the Filipino identity?

Jimenez began his address with characteristic humor, describing the challenges of leading an institution with one of the country’s largest concentrations of scholars and doctorate holders — many of whom, he joked, believe they could perform the president’s job better.

The lighthearted opening soon gave way to a more uncomfortable question: How do foreigners see the Philippines, and how have Filipinos come to see themselves?

Jimenez recounted how an international gathering of university leaders that UP had successfully bid to host was cancelled after overseas participants reacted fearfully to news reports about conditions in the Philippines.



Past President [Archit Bartolome](#) skillfully moderated the open forum, drawing out a deeper and more engaging discussion with President [Jijil Jimenez](#). His thoughtful question on whether UP’s “Iskolar ng Bayan” should render service to the country before pursuing opportunities abroad led to an insightful exchange on legal obligations, moral accountability, and the enduring responsibility to give back to the communities that helped shape one’s success.



Club Auditor USec. [Gani Macatoman](#) solemnly opens our meeting with a universal prayer, invoking divine guidance for wisdom in leadership, unity in fellowship, and compassion in service. His prayer reminded everyone present that while we may come from different faiths and backgrounds, we remain united by our common humanity and our shared desire to serve others.

The incident, he said, reflected the persistent international image of the country as a place marked by corruption, instability, crisis and inefficiency.

More troubling, he added, is the danger that Filipinos may eventually internalize these descriptions and accept them as the complete story of their country and themselves.

Jimenez asked whether Filipinos still felt proud and confident about their national identity or whether they had already been persuaded that they were incapable of building a better society.

His proposed response was not blind nationalism or manufactured optimism. Rather, he called for a credible counter-narrative based on actual achievements, measurable results and institutions that work.

Such a narrative, he emphasized, already exists in the contributions of Filipino scientists, educators, healthcare professionals, researchers and public servants. The challenge is to bring these stories to the surface and ensure that the country's failures do not overwhelm evidence of its ability to innovate, care and lead.

Scientific Evidence as Public Service

Jimenez cited the work of UP scientists as examples of how research can directly protect lives and improve governance.



*House Committee Chairman **Dean Cid** acknowledges the distinguished VIPs, visiting Rotarians and guests who joined our weekly meeting. His warm recognition reflected the Rotary Club of Manila's tradition of hospitality, ensuring that everyone present, especially our international visitors, felt welcomed and appreciated as part of an afternoon devoted to fellowship, meaningful dialogue and service.*



*The RCM World-Famous Music Chorale, led by Past Director **Oscar A. del Rosario**, warmly serenades our guests with the Club's traditional Welcome Song. More than a cherished part of our weekly meetings, the performance expresses the genuine warmth, fellowship and hospitality for which the Rotary Club of Manila is known, making every visiting Rotarian and guest feel immediately at home.*

He discussed efforts by university experts to establish objective, evidence-based standards for evaluating flood-control proposals. Scientific parameters, he explained, can help determine whether projects are appropriate for particular geographic and environmental conditions before billions of pesos in public funds are committed.

Even an initial scientific assessment had reportedly identified a substantial amount in proposed expenditures that could be removed from consideration because the projects failed to meet sound criteria.

Jimenez acknowledged that such work could be dangerous. Scientists who present evidence that challenges financially or politically powerful interests may expose themselves to threats and pressure.

The courage to follow evidence, therefore, is not merely an academic virtue. When public funds and public safety are involved, scientific integrity becomes a form of moral and civic leadership.

Jimenez also pointed to UP's work in disaster science, particularly the predictive tools and hazard maps associated with Project NOAH.

The Philippines experiences numerous typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic hazards and floods every year. Scientific forecasting and risk mapping enable



*Rotarian **Romy Nones**, a former Director of the UP Alumni Association (UPAA), formally introduces President Jijil Jimenez by highlighting a journey defined by leadership, public service and devotion to the Filipino people. His introduction underscored the natural kinship between UP's ideals of honor, excellence and service and the Rotary Club of Manila's enduring commitment to "Service Above Self."*

citizens and local governments to anticipate danger, plan evacuations and avoid hazardous routes instead of simply reacting after a calamity has occurred.

Jimenez noted the significant reduction in average disaster-related deaths during the years in which these scientific capabilities were developed and increasingly used. Although he cautioned that the relationship could not be presented as direct scientific proof of causation, the figures offered compelling counterfactual evidence of the number of lives that improved preparedness may have saved.



University of the Philippines President Jijil Jimenez challenges his audience to reclaim the Filipino narrative through stories grounded in science, integrity and genuine public service. While candidly acknowledging the country's difficulties, he reminded us that our failures do not tell the whole story. Across our nation are Filipinos whose courage, compassion and ingenuity prove that a better future remains well within our reach.

The millions of engagements recorded by UP's predictive flood maps also showed that ordinary citizens would use scientific information when it was made understandable and accessible.

A map, model or algorithm becomes an act of public service, he said in substance, when it helps a family choose a safer route, enables a community to evacuate earlier or prevents the government from wasting limited resources on projects that fail to address the real problem.

UP's Ambitions in Innovation

Jimenez also outlined fields in which UP

seeks to expand its national role, including artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductors, genetics, nuclear science and engineering, satellite-based resource mapping and AI-assisted medical diagnostics.

These investments, he said, are essential to the country's future competitiveness, healthcare system, food security, energy capacity and disaster resilience.

He cited research involving the use of artificial intelligence and computer vision to improve the detection and monitoring of diseases such as breast cancer. He also referred to satellite technologies that could identify mineral resources and support responsible scientific research.

UP has created an Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation as part of its effort to strengthen the university's research culture and global standing.

Jimenez said UP intended to become a genuine research university and ultimately enter the ranks of the world's top 100 institutions.

The university's limited financial resources, he declared, should not be allowed to limit its aspirations.

"The limits of our resources are not the limits of our dreams," Jimenez said.



A rare and meaningful gathering with University of the Philippines President Jijil Jimenez and fellow UP alumni of the Rotary Club of Manila. Bound by our shared formation in the country's National University and united through Rotary's ideal of "Service Above Self," we carry the same responsibility to transform honor and excellence into service that uplifts our communities and strengthens our nation.

Filipino Professionals as Goodwill Ambassadors

Beyond the university's laboratories, Jimenez identified Filipino professionals working overseas as another source of a more positive and truthful national narrative.

He spoke of the strong demand for Filipino teachers in countries such as Thailand, Cambodia and the United States. Their competence and ability to teach in multicultural environments have made them highly sought after by foreign schools and education systems.

Their departure, however, presents the Philippines with a serious dilemma. The country itself needs more teachers, but educators can receive substantially higher compensation abroad.

Jimenez said their decision to seek opportunities overseas should not automatically be interpreted as a lack of patriotism.

It is not enough to ask teachers and other professionals to love their country, he suggested. The country must also demonstrate that it values and supports them.

Drawing from more than a decade of experience in labor and migrant-worker affairs, Jimenez also discussed the continuing international demand for Filipino doctors and nurses.

Through their competence, warmth, patience and compassion, Filipino healthcare professionals have become informal ambassadors of goodwill. For many foreigners, an encounter with a Filipino nurse or caregiver is their most personal and meaningful experience with the Philippines.

That human connection has built goodwill that no conventional public-relations campaign could easily reproduce.

The same international demand, however, has intensified the shortage of doctors and other healthcare workers in the Philippines, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

A Medical School for Mindanao

Jimenez said UP was preparing to open a medical school in Mindanao as part of its response to the severe shortage of physicians in the region.

He contrasted the number of doctors available in the country — and especially in Mindanao — with the ratio recommended by the World Health Organization.



Fellowship around the table before the afternoon's thought-provoking conversation with University of the Philippines President Jijil Jimenez. Beyond the formal program, moments like this capture the heart of the Rotary Club of Manila, bringing together members and guests in friendship, open conversation, and a shared commitment to service. Through these personal connections, ideas take root, partnerships begin, and our collective resolve to create lasting impact grows stronger.

The shortage, he emphasized, is not merely a healthcare problem. In communities where people experience basic government services as distant, inaccessible or nonexistent, social distrust and conflict can deepen.

The establishment of a medical school in Mindanao should therefore be viewed not only as a health initiative, but also as an instrument of peace-building, inclusive development and national integration.

The proposed school would focus on training doctors for the communities that need them most, rather than merely adding specialists to already well-served urban centers.

This plan became the subject of the first substantive question during the open forum moderated by Past President Arsenio “Archit” M. Bartolome.

Club Secretary Albert Alday asked whether the new medical school would follow the curriculum of the UP College of Medicine in Manila or the community-oriented and ladderized model of the UP School of Health Sciences in Palo, Leyte.

Jimenez explained that the new program would adopt a hybrid curriculum, but would have a decisively community-based orientation.

The country does not lack only medical specialists, he said. It also needs doctors who will remain on the ground, practice preventive medicine and serve communities that have historically lacked access to healthcare.

The curriculum had been reviewed with leaders of the UP College of Medicine, UP Manila and the School of Health Sciences.

The program would provide a pathway for qualified nursing graduates from the School of Health Sciences’ ladderized system to proceed to medicine. It would also accommodate outstanding students from Mindanao who could not be accepted by the medical program in Manila because of limited capacity.



*Club Secretary **Albert Singson Alday** asks President Jijil Jimenez about the curriculum of UP's proposed medical school in Mindanao. His question prompted an insightful discussion on its hybrid and community-based approach, combining the strengths of the UP College of Medicine with the ladderized model of the UP Manila School of Health Sciences to train doctors who will serve where they are needed most.*

Doctors from Within

Jimenez described the UP School of Health Sciences’ ladderized model as a distinctive approach to medical education.

Under the system, communities participate in selecting the students they will send for training. A student may initially qualify as a midwife, proceed to nursing after passing the required licensure examination, and later advance to medicine.

This process develops healthcare professionals one stage at a time while maintaining their connection to the communities that entrusted them with the opportunity.

According to Jimenez, the model has already produced hundreds of doctors and achieved an exceptionally high retention rate in rural areas.

Its effectiveness rests not only on formal return-service requirements, but also on a powerful sense of belonging and accountability. Graduates know that their barangays and neighbors collectively invested in their education and placed their hopes in their success.

The proposed Mindanao medical school would carry this principle forward: identify talent within underserved communities, provide rigorous professional formation and return much-needed health capacity to the areas from which the students came.

UP and RCM'S Shared History

The open forum also highlighted the longstanding connections between the University of the Philippines and the Rotary Club of Manila.

One Rotarian recalled that George A. Malcolm, founding dean of the UP College of Law, served as President of the Rotary Club of Manila in 1937–1938. Past District Governor Hermie Esguerra added that Carlos P. Romulo served as RCM President in 1935–1936 before becoming UP President from 1962 to 1968.



*Past District 3780 Governor **Alex Cureg** shares a fascinating historical connection between UP and the Rotary Club of Manila: Justice George A. Malcolm, the first Dean of the UP College of Law, also served as RCM President from 1937 to 1938. The remarkable link reflects the long, intertwined legacy of our two institutions in developing leaders committed to justice, nation-building and service.*

The historical connections reinforced the theme introduced at the beginning of the meeting: UP and the Rotary Club of Manila have repeatedly intersected through leaders who combined professional achievement with public and civic service.

Producing the Right Kind of Leaders

Jimenez traced UP's beginnings to 1908, when it was established during the American colonial period as a Western institution on Asian soil.

The university was created to educate professionals and administrators who could operate the emerging institutions of government, including systems for public health, education, engineering, law and finance.

At the time, the country had a population of roughly seven million and only a small number of higher-education institutions. More than a century later, the Philippines has a population approaching 120 million and a university system composed of thousands of public and private institutions.

UP's influence on the country's development is undeniable.

Jimenez cited the university's record of producing presidents, Senate presidents, speakers of the House, chief justices, National Artists, National Scientists, social scientists, public officials and captains of industry.

No other educational institution in the country, he said, has produced a comparable concentration of individuals capable of shaping the Philippines' political, cultural, scientific and economic direction.

He then posed what he described as an overarching moral question: After more than a century of producing so many national leaders, why does the Philippines remain one of the world's



*Our special guest, **Robert Lester "Bobby" Aranton**, Immediate Past President of the UP Alumni Association (UPAA), shares brief remarks during the meeting. His presence further strengthened the meaningful connection between the Rotary Club of Manila and the UP community, two institutions united by a proud tradition of developing leaders and inspiring them to place their talents at the service of the nation.*

most unequal societies?

The question transformed a celebration of UP's achievements into an examination of its responsibility.

It is not enough for a university to produce leaders, Jimenez argued. It must help produce the right kind of leaders—men and women who love the country, uphold ethical standards and dedicate their abilities to serving others.

This conviction led Jimenez to add "service" to UP's longstanding institutional motto of "honor and excellence."

Excellence without honor can be dangerous, while honor without service may remain a purely private virtue. Together, honor, excellence and service describe the kind of leadership the country urgently needs.

Building Institutions Worthy of Trust

Jimenez's second major lesson was that even principled leaders cannot transform society by themselves.

Good leaders must be supported by strong institutions and credible processes. Even a well-intentioned person can be swallowed by a system that rewards antisocial behavior, favoritism or corruption.

Institutional trust develops when people believe that rules are fair, processes are transparent and outcomes are not merely the spoils of competing political families, factions or interest groups.

Freedom of expression and robust debate remain essential in a democracy, Jimenez said, but citizens must also agree upon basic rules and respect legitimate institutions.

Without such trust, politics becomes a continuous struggle for advantage, and reforms disappear whenever individual leaders leave office.

The Nation Cannot Always Wait for a Savior

Jimenez's third lesson was directed at the Filipino tendency to search for heroic individuals who might rescue the country.

Referring to José Rizal's warning about the unfortunate nation that is always looking for a hero, Jimenez said a healthy society should not place its entire future in the hands of a single leader.

A strong country requires strong citizens and strong civic institutions, not merely a powerful government.

It was in this context that Jimenez praised the Rotary Club of Manila and the broader Rotary movement.

Civic organizations help citizens work together outside the formal machinery of government. They create networks of trust, mobilize professional expertise, encourage voluntary service and provide a safeguard against illegality, arbitrariness and oppression.

Rotary projects, viewed in this light, do more than deliver goods, facilities or services. When properly governed, they demonstrate that citizens from different professions and backgrounds can organize themselves, manage resources responsibly and solve problems collectively.

Each credible project becomes evidence that institutions can still work.

Are UP Scholars Required to Remain?

During the open forum, Bartolome asked whether UP students, as Iskolar ng Bayan, could be required to work for the government or remain in the Philippines for two, three or five years before accepting employment abroad.

Jimenez responded that a blanket requirement would raise constitutional concerns involving the freedom to travel and pursue opportunities outside the country.

Specific scholarships and professional programs, however, may carry return-service obligations. He cited the service requirements imposed upon students in certain medical programs, including those at the UP College of Medicine and the UP School of Health Sciences. Jimenez stressed that legal compulsion was not the only—or necessarily the strongest — reason graduates returned to their communities.

Many graduates of the School of Health Sciences go back because the communities themselves selected and supported them. Their professional achievement is tied to the barangay that placed its confidence in them.

That relationship creates a form of social and moral accountability that can



University of the Philippines President Jijil Jimenez fields questions during the open forum, offering candid and thoughtful insights on community-based medical education, return service, inclusive admissions and UP's responsibility to the nation. His responses brought the university's mission to life, showing how how honor, excellence and service can open opportunities, strengthen communities and help build institutions worthy of the Filipino people's trust.

be more enduring than a contractual obligation. Graduates understand that their success belongs partly to the people who invested their collective hope in them.

The same principle has implications for civic and development organizations. Programs are more sustainable when beneficiaries are treated not as passive recipients, but as participants, partners and eventual owners of the undertaking.

Confronting the Charge of Elitism

Jimenez also addressed the perception

that UP had become an elitist institution increasingly dominated by students from privileged families and private schools.

He responded with statistics and accounts of students whose circumstances are often absent from public discussions of university admissions.

Only a small percentage of those who take the UP College Admission Test are admitted. Many other qualified young people do not even apply because they assume they have no realistic chance of entering the university.

Some students who pass the examination are nevertheless unable to enroll because their families cannot afford the expenses surrounding a subsidized education, such as transportation, lodging and daily meals.

Other students are needed at home to work or contribute to the family's income.

Jimenez spoke of UP students from households with no reliable or documentable source of earnings. Some students regularly go hungry. Others send part of their allowances home so their younger siblings can eat, leaving themselves without sufficient food.

UP has responded through free-meal initiatives, food assistance, opportunities for working students and the Lingap Iskolar program introduced during Jimenez's administration.

According to Jimenez, these interventions have contributed to a reversal in the composition of UP's student population. From a majority previously coming from private schools, a majority of entering students now come from public schools.

UP has also waived application fees, expanded testing centers and brought the admissions examination closer to communities that previously sent very few applicants.

Jimenez cited the results in areas such as Nabunturan in Davao de Oro and Marawi, where the placement of accessible testing centers resulted in significant increases in successful examinees.

Bringing the examination closer to underserved areas did not lower the university's requirements. It simply removed unnecessary financial and geographic barriers that had prevented capable students from competing.



Fresh from the airport, the newly arrived delegates of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin in Korea are warmly presented to the Rotary Club of Manila's general membership. Their decision to join our meeting immediately upon arriving in Manila reflects the strength of Rotary fellowship and their sincere commitment to deepening the friendship between our two clubs through shared service and meaningful cultural exchange.

Talent Beyond Privilege

Jimenez also reported an increase in the number of first-generation college students at UP.

These are young people from families in which no parent or earlier family member had ever attended college. The university has similarly expanded opportunities for students from indigenous and tribal communities.

Such initiatives, Jimenez maintained, should not be viewed as charity disguised as admissions policy. They are part of a more determined search for intellectual ability in communities that traditional educational systems have often overlooked.

He firmly rejected the suggestion that greater inclusion required UP to lower its academic standards.



President Reginald Yu at the presidential table with UP President Jijil Jimenez, Rotary Club of Manila officers and members, and representatives of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tangjin from Korea. This gathering brought together academic leadership, civic service and international fellowship under one shared purpose. With “Service Above Self” as our guide, meaningful conversations can cross institutions and borders, deepen friendships, and inspire partnerships that create lasting impact.

“No compromise in quality,” he stressed.

Instead of reducing expectations, the university provides bridging programs in English, mathematics and science to help students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds meet UP’s standards.

Jimenez recalled an earlier university experiment involving students admitted outside the conventional entrance route. After receiving intensive academic preparation, the students eventually achieved an average higher than the general university population.

The experience demonstrated that students from impoverished families were “bankable,” provided they

received sufficient nutrition, preparation, guidance and support.

A great university’s role, he suggested, is not simply to select students already polished by privilege. Its greater test is whether it can discover potential in ordinary circumstances, develop that potential rigorously and prove that excellence can emerge from every social class and every region of the country.

Reclaiming the Filipino Story

Throughout his address and the open forum, Jimenez avoided presenting a romanticized picture of the Philippines.

He acknowledged corruption, inequality, institutional weakness, migration, inadequate public services and the country’s shortage of resources.



President **Reginald Yu** formally presents the Rotary Club of Manila bannerette to President **Kim Hong Un** of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin. More than a cherished Rotary tradition, the exchange symbolizes the friendship between our two clubs and our shared commitment to strengthening international fellowship through meaningful service and lasting collaboration.

What he rejected was the habit of allowing these failures to become the Filipino people's only national identity.

A fuller and more truthful story can already be found in scientists who use predictive maps to protect communities, teachers sought by education systems around the world, healthcare professionals whose compassion has shaped international perceptions of Filipinos, barangay-nominated scholars who become rural doctors, and poor and first-generation students who excel when longstanding barriers are removed.

The same story is reflected in civic institutions that demonstrate



Fellowship Committee Chairman Atty. **Chris Tamesis** invites members to two major fellowship events lined up for September, promising more opportunities to reconnect, strengthen friendships and welcome newer members into the Rotary Club of Manila family. Beyond our meetings and service projects, fellowship remains the bond that keeps our Club vibrant, united and ready to work together in creating lasting impact.

trustworthiness through sustained and transparent service.

Jimenez urged Filipinos to surface these achievements and use them to push back against a culture of defeatism.

A positive national narrative unsupported by evidence would be propaganda. But evidence without a compelling narrative can be ignored or overwhelmed by scandal and pessimism.

The country needs both: achievements that can withstand scrutiny and institutions capable of explaining why those achievements matter.

Seeking a Newer World

Jimenez concluded his address by reciting the closing lines of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "Ulysses."

The poem's summons "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" reflected his message to both UP and the Rotary Club of Manila—two institutions that have existed for more than a century but must continue seeking new ways to serve.

UP, his address suggested, must not yield to the belief that world-class research is beyond the reach of a developing nation. It must reject the idea that poverty, geography and family background should determine who may become a doctor, scientist or national leader.

The Philippines must not surrender its self-image to those who see only its failures. Civic institutions, meanwhile, must resist complacency at a time when trust, cooperation and public-minded leadership are urgently needed.

Following the open forum, President Reggie delivered the Club's response and presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Jimenez.

The Rotary Club of Manila and the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tangjin then exchanged bannerettes, symbolizing the friendship between the clubs and the shared international fellowship of Rotary.



*President **Reginald Yu** in an engaging post-meeting conversation with President **Jijil Jimenez**, long after the formal program had ended and the luncheon plates had nearly been cleared.*

The exchange provided an apt conclusion to a meeting centered on the importance of institutions and the possibilities created when people organize around a common purpose.

UP's mission tells a gifted child from a remote community that present circumstances need not determine the limits of the future. Rotary's example reminds citizens that they need not wait for a national savior before beginning to serve.

Together, these institutions advance a broader message: the Philippines' problems are real, but so are the courage, ingenuity, compassion and capacity of its people.

A newer world remains within reach — but reaching it will require Filipinos to build it together.

Meeting Fellowship

A meaningful moment of camaraderie was shared during the weekly membership meeting, reflecting the strong bonds and fellowship among members and guests.



Rotary
Club of Manila



**CREATE
LASTING
IMPACT**

Quezon Club

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT
DINNER SHOW



A STAR STUDDED PERFORMANCE

CARLA GUEVARA & DAVID EZRA

Performing songs of

BARBRA STREISAND & FRANK SINATRA



PLS SAVE DATE
SEPTEMBER 23
WEDNESDAY
6:30 PM



QUEZON CLUB
in
SOLAIRE
NORTH QC



SPOUSES ARE
ENCOURAGED TO JOIN



ROTARY WAY
Minimum order of
P1500/pax



RCM Members' Attendance Report RY 2026-2027

ATTENDANCE REPORT September 2026

SEPTEMBER 2026	
	September 03, 2026
	ATTY. ANGELO "JUJIL" AZURA JIMENEZ
MEMBERS PRESENT	37
MEMBERS PRESENT %	18%
MAKE UP ATTENDEES	0
EXEMPTED	5
ON LEAVE	0
Total Active Members	37
Total # of Members	203
TOTAL %:	18%
ROTARACTORS	5
MEDIA	1
EMBASSIES / DIPLOMATIC CORPS	0
DG, DGE, DGN, PDG	0
GOHS / GS	2
VISITING ROTARIAN	18
Guests of RCM MEMBERS	2
TOTAL ATTENDEES	64

ATTENDEES September 3, 2026

MIKE ALBAÑA	GANI MACATOMAN
ALBERT ALDAY	PACO MAGSAYSAY
ARCHIT BARTOLOME	GUNTER MATSCHUCK
VINCE CARLOS	COCO MAURICIO
KARLO CASTRO	KAZU NOMURA
ROBERT CHAN	ROMY NONES
DEAN CID	PHIL ONG
VAL CO	AJ PANGILINAN
RAOUL CREENCIA	INGILL RA
ALEX CUREG	PHILIP RECTO
RAY DAVIS	DAVE REYNOLDS
OSCAR DEL ROSARIO	JACKIE RODRIGUEZ
HERMIE ESGUERRA	BERND SCHNEIDER
JJ FERNANDEZ	SHIGERU SHIMODA
JOB GESMUNDO	CHRIS TAMESIS
BOY GUEVARA	ROD VALENCIA
TEDDY KALAW	HENRY VILLARICA
ALVIN LACAMBACAL	REGGIE YU
NICK LOCSIN	

List of Members Who Have Paid Their Annual Dues for RY 2026-2027

As of September 8, 2026

1	ACOSTA, CRISPINIANO
2	ALBAÑA, MICHAEL JAEY
3	ALDAY, ALBERT S.
4	BARTOLOME, ARSENIO
5	BAUTISTA, JOHN JR.
6	BELLA, GERONIMO, JR. D.P.
7	BENEDICTO, SIXTO T.
8	BERTELSEN, BERTEL INGMAR
9	BLANCO, MANUEL M.
10	CAMPOS, JOSELITO D. JR.
11	CARRANCEJA, ARVIN ARIK
12	CASTRO, KARLO EUGENE JOSEF M.
13	CATALAN, RODILLO
14	CHAHWAN, RAMI
15	CO, VAL CONSTANTINE
16	CREENCIA, RAOUL C.
17	CUREG, ALEXANDER P.
18	DAVIS, RAYMOND
19	DEL ROSARIO, OSCAR
20	DE VENECIA, JOEY
21	DOMINGUEZ, CARLOS III
22	ELDEBS, ISSAM
23	ENRIQUEZ, EDUARDO III V.
24	ESGUERRA, HERMINIO S.
25	FERNANDEZ, ANTONIO JAIME JOSE V.
26	FOLLOSCO, CEFERINO JR. G.

27	GARCIA, THEODORE Q.
28	GARCIA, VICTOR III G.
29	GESMUNDO, JOSEPH BENEDICT
30	GO, HENRY SY
31	GONZALES, JONAS
32	GUARIN, MICHAEL ARCATOMY H.
33	GUEVARA, DOMINGO JR. S.B.
34	GUEVARA, RICARDO S.B.
35	HALLARE, NICO GIUSEPPE S.
36	HESSE, UWE
37	IBUYAN, BENEDICT JULIUS F.
38	JUCABAN, JERIC J.
39	KALAW, TEODORO ALEJANDRO IV
40	KANDA, HIROYASU
41	KATIGBAK, J ALFONSO L
42	KOH, PAUL ANTHONY
43	KUNACK, LUTZ
44	LAYA, JAIME C.
45	LEDDA, JAIME VICTOR B.
46	LIAMZON, ROMEO THADDEOS P.
47	LONZAGA, REINERIO C.
48	MACATOMAN, ABDULGANI
49	MAGSAYSAY, FRANCISCO D.
50	MANALAYSAY, CESAR P.
51	NONES, ROMEO C.
52	OBRADO, DANIEL

53	ONG, PHILIP
54	PAGDANGANAN, ROBERTO M.
55	PARWANI, RAJ
56	PELIÑO, WILFREDO M.
57	PINEDA, PATRICIO JR.
58	RANKL, PETER
59	RECTO, PHILIP
60	REYNOLDS, DAVID JOHN
61	RODRIGUEZ, JACKIE SR.
62	ROXAS, MICHAEL D.
63	SCHMITZ, STEFAN
64	SCNEIDER, BERND
65	SEVILLA, LUIS ANGELO L.
66	SHIMODA, SHIGERU
67	SIBAYAN, JOSELITO H.
68	TAGAYSAY, HECTOR
69	TAMAYO, VICTOR L.
70	TAMESIS, CHRIS
71	TAN, MYLES
72	TILLMANN, HANSEL JOSEPH MICHAEL
73	VALDES, JOEL C.
74	VALENCIA, JOHN NICO P.
75	VILLARICA, HENRY
76	YU, REGINALD T.
77	ZALDARRIAGA, FELIX FRANCISCO S.
78	ZIALCITA, XAVIER

A Long Walk Toward Hope

*Rotary Club of
Manila Visits
Bayanan Elementary
School in Baco,
Oriental Mindoro*

By President Reginald Yu



President Reginald Yu walking along the craggy, rocky slopes of the Bayanan River, reflecting on the difficult journey many of Bayanan Elementary School's pupils endure every day just to attend their classes.

FOR most children, going to school begins with a short walk or a familiar ride. For many pupils of Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro, it begins with an extraordinary test of endurance.

Some children trek for as long as three hours each day through rocky terrain, often without adequate footwear and exposed to harsh weather. Along the way, they must cross the Bayanan River on a rickety makeshift bamboo bridge, an already dangerous passage made even more treacherous by rain and rising water.

Yet they continue to come.

A Long Walk Toward Hope

Rotary Club of Manila Visits Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro

They walk because, at the end of that difficult journey, stands their school and the hope of a better future.

On September 1, the Rotary Club of Manila conducted an ocular inspection of Bayanan Elementary School, located in one of Baco's most remote barangays and within the ancestral domain of the Mangyan indigenous people.

The RCM delegation was led by President Reginald T. Yu, together with Director Nico Valencia, Director Teddy Kalaw, Club Secretary Albert Alday, Club Auditor Gani Macatoman, and RCM Global Grant Chair Aries Balanay.

Each member of the delegation came with a shared resolve: to see the conditions firsthand, listen directly to the school and community leaders, identify the most urgent needs, and determine how Rotary could help turn a long-delayed aspiration into concrete action.

The school currently serves approximately 197 pupils from Nursery to Grade 6, about 75 percent of whom are Mangyan children from geographically isolated communities.

What the delegation witnessed was both moving and deeply concerning.



President Reginald Yu, Director Nico Valencia, and Club Auditor Gani Macatoman share a heartwarming moment with some of the pupils of Bayanan Elementary School. Their bright faces and hopeful spirit remind us why every effort to provide them with a safer and better place to learn truly matters.

A School in Urgent Need

The two-classroom building has serious structural and functional deficiencies. It has no ceiling, only makeshift windows and doors, and a roof that leaks whenever it rains. There is also no proper partition between the two classrooms, causing lessons and classroom activities to overlap and making it difficult for pupils to concentrate.

A Long Walk Toward Hope

Rotary Club of Manila Visits Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro

The school's comfort rooms likewise require significant improvement to provide children with safe, sanitary, and dignified facilities.

These are more than defects in a building.

A leaking roof means lessons are interrupted by rain. A missing ceiling leaves children exposed to uncomfortable conditions. Inadequate doors and windows offer little protection from the elements. Poor sanitation affects the health, dignity, and attendance of the pupils.

For children who already endure an arduous journey just to attend class, these conditions impose yet another obstacle to learning.

Listening to the Community

During the ocular, the delegation interviewed Mrs. Ednalin Dunday, School Head of Bayanan Elementary School, and Barangay Chairman Nitoy A. Remnayon regarding the school's needs and the daily circumstances of its students.

Mrs. Dunday, who has led the school since 2013, has witnessed generations of pupils arrive after long and exhausting journeys, determined to learn despite poverty, distance, difficult terrain, and inadequate facilities.



President Reginald Yu listens as a Bayanan Elementary School teacher shares her "wish list" of much-needed improvements to the school's facilities, while Director Nico Valencia looks on. Her firsthand insights helped us better understand what must be done to create a safer, more dignified, and more conducive learning environment for the children.

Her appeal was not for luxury or convenience, but for the most basic conditions necessary for education: a roof that does not leak, classrooms with ceilings and proper partitions, secure doors and windows, and functional comfort rooms.

Barangay Chairman Remnayon likewise described the hardships faced by families in the area. Their accounts confirmed what the RCM delegation saw firsthand. The needs of Bayanan Elementary School are urgent, genuine, and long overdue.

A Long Walk Toward Hope

Rotary Club of Manila Visits Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro



President Reginald Yu confers with Bayanan Elementary School Head Mrs. Ednelyn B. Gunday as they survey the school grounds and discuss its most urgent needs. Seeing the conditions firsthand strengthened our resolve to help provide the children with a safer, more dignified, and more conducive place to learn.

The ocular visit allowed the Rotary Club of Manila not only to document the physical state of the school, but also to listen to the people whose lives are directly affected by it.

Behind every damaged wall is a teacher struggling to conduct a lesson. Behind every leaking roof is a child trying to protect a notebook from the rain. Behind every request for assistance is a community that has waited patiently for someone to listen and act.



Director Nico Valencia, accompanied by his personal engineer, joins Bayanan Elementary School Head Mrs. Ednelyn B. Gunday in surveying the school grounds and assessing the improvements needed to provide pupils with safer and more conducive learning facilities.

From Inspection to Immediate Action

The Rotary Club of Manila's visit did not end with documenting the school's condition.

Acting on Mrs. Dunday's request, the Club immediately began addressing a crucial requirement that had long delayed government intervention: the formal donation of the land on which the school stands.

A Long Walk Toward Hope

Rotary Club of Manila Visits Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro



President Reginald Yu, together with School Head Mrs. Ednelyn B. Gunday, Club Secretary Albert Singson Alday, and RCM Global Grant Chair Aries Balanay, inspects the school's dilapidated comfort room. With only a functioning toilet bowl and cramped facilities separating the boys' and girls' sections, its condition underscores the urgent need to provide Bayanan's pupils with safe, sanitary, and dignified facilities.

Director Nico Valencia was asked to facilitate the securing of a Deed of Donation from the Valencia family, which owns the property occupied by the school. Once completed, the deed will be submitted to the Department of Education, enabling the agency to begin the formal process of mobilizing the construction and rehabilitation of the school's infrastructure.

This intervention could finally remove the legal and administrative obstacle that has prevented the long-awaited



Manila Rotarians confer on the concrete steps needed to address the many pressing challenges facing Bayanan Elementary School. What began as an ocular inspection quickly became a collective resolve to turn concern into coordinated action for the children and their community.

improvement of Bayanan Elementary School.

By helping bring together the school, the landowners, the community, and the Department of Education, the Rotary Club of Manila hopes to transform years of waiting into meaningful and lasting action.

A Comprehensive Commitment

The proposed rehabilitation will include:

- Installation of classroom ceilings;
- Repair of the leaking roof;
- Installation of proper doors and windows;

A Long Walk Toward Hope

Rotary Club of Manila Visits Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro

- Replacement of the partition between the two classrooms; and
- Improvement of the school's comfort rooms.

The Rotary Club of Manila has also committed to undertake two auxiliary projects:

- Installation of a Rotary Four-Way Test marker; and
- Donation of diapers and milk to families and children in need.

The Four-Way Test marker will be more than a symbol of Rotary's presence. It will serve as a daily reminder that education is also about character, truth, fairness, goodwill, friendship, and concern for the welfare of others.

The donation of diapers and milk recognizes that the well-being of pupils is closely connected to the circumstances of their families and the larger community. These necessities will provide practical assistance to households facing economic hardship, particularly those caring for infants and young children.

Together, these initiatives reflect a holistic approach to service. They will improve the school's physical condition while also responding to the values and everyday needs of the community.



Delegates from the Rotary Club of Manila receive a briefing on the island of Mindoro through a three-dimensional relief map at Filipiniana Hotel in Calapan City. The accompanying situationer on our target beneficiaries gave us a deeper appreciation of their circumstances and a clearer understanding of how our initiative can create meaningful and lasting impact.

More Than a Building

At first glance, the project may appear to be about repairing a roof, installing ceilings, replacing doors and windows, building proper partitions, and improving comfort rooms.

Its true purpose, however, goes much deeper.

It is about telling every child in Bayanan that the hardships of geography should not determine the quality of education available to them.



Manila Rotarians share a heartfelt moment with the teachers of Bayanan Elementary School, forming the “heart sign” as a symbol of our solidarity, gratitude, and shared commitment to creating a safer and brighter future for every learner.

It is about honoring parents who send their children to school despite the dangers of the journey. It is about supporting teachers who continue to serve under difficult conditions. It is also about standing with the Mangyan people and affirming that indigenous children deserve the same opportunities, protection, and dignity as every Filipino learner.

After walking for as long as three hours, crossing rocky terrain, enduring the elements, and navigating a precarious bamboo bridge, these children deserve to arrive at a school that is safe and worthy of their courage.

Their perseverance should not be met

by a leaking roof.

Their determination should not be rewarded with makeshift doors and windows.

Their dreams should not be confined within classrooms lacking the most basic facilities.

As Nelson Mandela once said: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

For the children of Bayanan, repairing a classroom is not merely rebuilding a structure. It is strengthening their chance to change their lives and transform their community.



United in service and hope, the students and faculty of Bayanan Elementary School join members of the Rotary Club of Manila in a spirited call to “Create Lasting Impact!” Together, we affirm our shared commitment to building safer classrooms, brighter opportunities, and a better future for every child.

Building a Bridge to a Better Future

The September 1 ocular marked an important beginning. It transformed a long-standing concern into a concrete course of action.

There remains much work to be done. Documents must be completed, government processes followed, resources mobilized, and the rehabilitation carried out. But for Bayanan Elementary School, the path forward is finally becoming clearer.

The fragile bamboo bridge crossed by the children every day is a powerful symbol of their present reality. Through this project, the Rotary Club of Manila hopes to build another kind of bridge, one connecting a remote indigenous community to opportunity, support, and a future filled with hope.

Sometimes, creating lasting impact means traveling beyond the paved road, crossing rivers, entering distant communities, and listening to people who have waited far too long to be heard.

A Long Walk Toward Hope

Rotary Club of Manila Visits Bayanan Elementary School in Baco, Oriental Mindoro

In Bayanan, the Rotary Club of Manila found 197 compelling reasons to act.

Each child represents a dream worth protecting, a mind worth nurturing, and a future worth building. By helping restore their school and extending assistance to their community, Rotary is not merely repairing two classrooms and a comfort room. It is rebuilding confidence, renewing hope, and affirming a fundamental truth:

No child should have to struggle so hard to reach a school that cannot adequately shelter them.

And no community, no matter how remote, should ever be beyond the reach of compassion and service.



Over a simple merienda, delegates from the Rotary Club of Manila listen intently as Barangay Chairman Nitoy A. Remnayon provides a firsthand account of the conditions and pressing needs of the Bayanan community, giving them a deeper understanding of the people we hope to serve.



The Rotary Club of Manila delegation pauses for a quick photo aboard a Montenegro Lines RORO ferry en route to Calapan Mindoro, carrying with them a shared commitment to reach communities where service is needed most.



President Reginald Yu and Club Auditor Gani Macatoman walk toward the boarding dock for their journey back to Manila. They departed Mindoro carrying not only memories of the day, but also a renewed sense of purpose and a firm commitment to turn what they witnessed into meaningful action for Bayanan Elementary School.



Formal Turnover of Neonatal Care Equipment to the Philippine General Hospital

Through the partnership of the Rotary Club of Manila and the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin, South Korea, funded through The Rotary Foundation Global Grant #2682583

Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia presented the project background for Global Grant #2682583, including the initial meeting with then-President Kim Hong Un of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin on 12 July 2025.



The presentation traced the development of the partnership that led to the implementation of the life-saving neonatal intensive care equipment project.



**DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT**



**MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH**

Formal Turnover of Neonatal Care Equipment to the Philippine General Hospital



Background: The Rotary Club of Manila signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin on July 12, 2025 for Global Grant #2682583.



Rotarian Ingil Ra served as a translator for the messages delivered by Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia.



Formal Turnover of Neonatal Care Equipment to the Philippine General Hospital



RC Manila President Reggie Yu, District Governor Nominee Hermie Esguerra, and RC Kangjin-Tamjin President Kim Hong Un delivered their messages during the turnover ceremony. Rotarian Ingil Ra served as translator.

Formal Turnover of Neonatal Care Equipment to the Philippine General Hospital



Dr. Gerardo "Gap" Legaspi of UP-PGH; Dr. Aljohn Gonzales, Officer-in-Charge Medical Director; Dr. Edilberto Garcia, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics; and Dr. Esterlita Uy, Chief of the Division of Newborn Medicine, delivered their messages during the turnover ceremony. Rotarian Ingil Ra served as translator.

Formal Turnover of Neonatal Care Equipment to the Philippine General Hospital



Past Secretary Anton Mauricio moderated the turnover program with professionalism and ease, ensuring a smooth and engaging flow throughout the proceedings.



Dr. Gap Legaspi and President Reggie Yu sealed their partnership with a firm handshake, symbolizing a shared commitment to advancing life-saving healthcare initiatives.



Also recognized were Immediate Past President Bang Jae Nam of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin, Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia of the Rotary Club of Manila, and Immediate Past District Governor Mary Mei.



District Governor Bing Carrion and President Reggie Yu

Formal Turnover of Neonatal Care Equipment to the Philippine General Hospital



Dr. Hans Bondoc belting out a song — the kind of performance that leaves an impression.



A commemorative photograph was taken with the project partners and beneficiaries: the Rotary Club of Manila, the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin, and UP–Philippine General Hospital. Also present were District Governor Bing Carrion, Immediate Past District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo, First Gentleman Alex Rodrigo, and District Governor Hermie Esguerra.

The photograph captured the collective commitment of Rotary leaders, partner clubs, and UP–PGH to the success of Global Grant #2682583 and the advancement of life-saving neonatal care.

Unveiling of the Global Grant #2682583 Four-Way Test Marker



The formal unveiling of the Global Grant #2682583 and Four-Way Test Marker marked the culmination of the turnover program. Installed at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Ward, the marker serves as a lasting symbol of the partnership among the Rotary Club of Manila, the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin, Rotary International Districts 3610 and 3810, The Rotary Foundation, and UP-PGH.



At the unveiling were RC Kangjin-Tamjin's President Kim Hong Un and IPP Bang Jae Nam; Rotary Club of Manila President Reggie Yu and IPP Raoul Creencia, witnessed by Immediate Past District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo, members of the Rotary Club of Manila and Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin, and UP-PGH management team.



Unveiling of the Global Grant #2682583 Four-Way Test Marker



Immediate Past District Governor Mary Mei Rodrigo and Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia



President Kim Hong Un and President Reggie Yu



From left: Past Secretary Anton Mauricio, President Kim Hong Un, President Reggie Yu, and and IPP Raoul Creencia



*Standing, from left: District Governor Nominee Hermie Esguerra, Internal Auditor Gani Macatoman, Past Secretary Anton Mauricio, RC Kangjin-Tamjin President Kim Hong Un, President Reggie Yu, Rotarian Ingil Ra, Secretary Albert Alday, Past Director Nick Locsin;
Seated, from left: RC Kangjin-Tamjin Assistant Governor/Club Global Grant Chair Choi Je Yong, Director Mike Roxas, Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia, Vice President Karlo Castro, and RC Kangjin-Tamjin IPP Bang Jae Nam*

Unveiling of the Global Grant #2682583 Four-Way Test Marker



Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin Delegation

An 18-member delegation from the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin participated in the Global Grant #2682583 turnover ceremonies and related fellowship activities. Their presence reflected the club's strong commitment to the partnership and to improving neonatal intensive care services at UP-PGH.

No.	Name	Position / Title
1	CHOI JE YEONG	Assistant Governor / Global Committee Chair (Club)
2	KIM HONG UN	Club President (2026–2027)
3	BANG JAE NAM	Immediate Past President (2025–2026)
4	PARK DUCKHWAN	3rd Past President
5	KIM YUNGBAE	12th Past President
6	KIM YOUNJO	13th Past President
7	YOON KWANSEOK	15th Past President
8	NOH SANGNAM	23rd Past President
9	KIM CHANGSEOK	27th Past President
10	LEE EUNSU	President-Elect
11	OH JONGSU	Member
12	KIM DUHWAN	Member
13	MA JAEHYUK	Member
14	LEE DONGJUN	Member
15	AN JIHYUN	Member
16	YOO GINAM	Member
17	PARK YANGHEE	Spouse of Yoon Kwanseok
18	YOON HAEYOUNG	Spouse of Noh Sangnam

Rotary
Club of Manila



Where constraints become expressions, and boundaries become starting points. Discover how grit, imagination, and relentless dedication soar past every barrier.



BEYOND LIMITS

The 5th Annual Art Exhibit of the Angels of Rendu

Join Us for the Vernissage & Opening Night

Date: Thursday, October 1, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Venue: LRI Design Plaza, Makati City

Public Viewing: October 2 – 25, 2026

A joint fundraising initiative by the Rotary Club of Manila and Hospicio de San Jose to support Physical Therapy PT Rehabilitation of Manila's oldest social welfare institution.

The sky is the limit. Look up and believe.

#BeyondLimits2026 | www.angelsorendu.org

Past Director Henry S. Go

Inducted on: June 25, 2020

Pau Harris Fellow 2021

Membership Classification:

Business Services - Business Assistance Service

Club Position: Director RY 2024-2025 |

Assistant Secretary RY 2020-2022

If you could have dinner with one person—living or dead—who would it be, and why?

I think I would choose my younger self.

Maybe it sounds strange, but I would really like to sit down with him and talk. I would want to sit with my younger self and see him with the understanding I have now.

I would probably tell him not to worry too much about some of the things he was worrying about. Some things that seemed very important then really were not. I would also remind him that not every decision would turn out right, but even the wrong choices would teach him something.

I don't intend to change the past. What happened has happened. But looking back, I can see how those experiences shaped the person I am today. Some things I learned easily, and some I had to learn the hard way.

Maybe that is what I would take away from that dinner—not a wish to change the past, but a better understanding of where I am now and a greater appreciation for the years still ahead.

What's one hobby or interest that most people in Rotary probably don't know you have?

I am not sure if you can call it a hobby. I like observing people and what is going on around me.

People are really interesting. I have learned a lot just by being around people of different ages and backgrounds. Sometimes they teach me things I never expected to learn. When I am around people, I notice their character, how they behave, and how they handle situations, especially those challenging ones. Sometimes knowing what someone has been through helps me look at things more positively and put them in better perspective.

From these observations, I try to pick out what I find meaningful or interesting, put my thoughts together, and turn them into a lesson or message about life. I share these thoughts every day with my friends and my RCM family, together with a prayer and the Gospel verse for the day.



Past Director Henry S. Go

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

I do not think there is one thing that has guided me through my life. When I look back, I think a lot of what has made me who I am today came from my parents, my family, my friends, people I have met, and the things that have happened to me; they all taught me something. There were other things I had to figure out for myself, and some of them were tough.

I am a fairly reflective and private person. I like to think about how I can make my life better. I don't always talk about what's on my mind, so sometimes people may misunderstand me. I usually like to think things through first before I talk about them.

But thinking things through also means that I must be honest with myself. I know I can't be right all the time. When I realize I was wrong, I admit it and correct it so I don't make the same mistake again.

Over time, I learned that knowing myself doesn't mean I have to have all the answers in life. I know there are still many things I don't know. That's why I want to keep learning—not only about life, but also about myself.

It means being comfortable with who I am and not always feeling like I have to prove myself to other people. I believe God sees what I do, and for me, that is enough. He knows what is in my heart, and that is what matters to me.

If you had one free day with no meetings, emails, or responsibilities, how would you spend it?

I don't think I would make any plans for that free day. If I plan everything, it can start to feel like just another day with things to do. I'd rather take it easy, spend time with my family, and see where the day takes us.

I would probably spend most of the day with my family, talking about things we normally don't get to because there is always something going on. Just being together, taking our time, and not worrying about what comes next would be nice.

And if I get some time by myself, that's fine too. Nothing special. I think the whole point of a rare free day is simply to slow down and enjoy it.

I would probably end the day quietly, thanking God for the blessings in my life and for the years ahead of me.



Past Director Henry S. Go

What's one item on your bucket list that you hope to accomplish someday?

These days, I find myself asking less about what I can have and more about what I can learn, what I can give, and what I can leave behind.

It doesn't have to be anything grand. In my modest way, if I can reach out and give something back to society, that already means a lot to me. It means more than doing something just for myself.

That's the kind of legacy I would be proud of. If I can make life a little better for someone, that would be enough for me.

That's really what my bucket list is these days—those few things I still hope to do.

What is your favorite part of Rotary?

What I like best about RCManila is our membership meeting. I don't get to go as often as I would like, but whenever I do, I usually leave with something.

As a premier club, the Rotary Club of Manila is fortunate to invite seasoned resource persons from different fields to share their experience and thoughts with us. I learn a lot from listening to them. Even when they talk about their own field, I often come away with a better understanding of people, business, society, and what is happening around us.

Of course, aside from listening to the speakers, I enjoy having a meal together, talking, and catching up with fellow Rotarians. Unfortunately, I don't get to join the evening fellowship gatherings as much as I would like because my 90-year-old mother lives with me and I have responsibilities at home. My social life is somewhat limited, so whenever I do get the chance to join, I treasure it.

Beyond that, I appreciate what Rotary stands for. The Four-Way Test and “Service Above Self” are things I can understand and relate to. For me, they are a reminder to ask myself if what I say and do is right, fair, builds goodwill, and helps others.

Maybe that is what keeps me connected to Rotary. I get to keep learning, stay connected with people, and hopefully be of some help to others. At this stage of my life, those things mean more to me than recognition.



COGS IN THE WHEEL

RCManila Foundation Secretary Anton Mauricio Attends Senate Hearing



On September 3, 2026, Global AI Council Philippines was invited as a resource to the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Sen. Risa Hontiveros, to address substandard steel production and unfair labor practices in the industry.



Last June, GACPh joined a multisectoral statement of support on the matter. Quality steel production is a critical component of AI infrastructure being planned for the Philippines, including AI capacity-building projects like Pax Silica. Founder & President Catz Jalandoni and Co-Founder & Trustee Anton Mauricio represented Global AI Council Philippines.



DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

District Monthly Meeting of Rotary District 3810 for the Month of September



President Reggie Yu, DGN Hermie Esguerra and DDPIC/Club Secretary Albert S. Alday attended the District Monthly Meeting of Rotary District 3810 for the month of September last September 7, 2026 at the Centennial Hall of the Manila Hotel in Manila.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Welcoming the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin Delegation



The 18-man delegation from the Rotary Club of Kangjin–Tamjin arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to a warm and gracious welcome from the Rotary Club of Manila, represented by IPP Raoul Creencia and PD Nick Locsin. They were accompanied to Kingsford Hotel for check-in—marking the beginning of a meaningful fellowship and collaborative engagement.



IPP Raoul Creencia welcoming President Kim Hong Un and IPP Bang Jae Nam. The Rotary Club of Manila provided an Avis coaster to serve the transportation needs of the Rotary Club of Kangjin–Tamjin delegation, ensuring their mobility and comfort throughout the three-day visit to the Philippines.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Welcoming the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin Delegation



The 18-member delegation from the Rotary Club of Kangjin–Tamjin with IPP Raoul Creencia and PD Nick Locsin at the lobby of Fairmont Hotel

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Welcoming the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin Delegation



Each delegate received a guest card at the registration table.



RCManila Foundation - RCM Golf Cup collared T-shirts were distributed to each member of the Rotary Club of Kangjin–Tamjin as a gesture of goodwill and fellowship, commemorating their visit and strengthening ties between the two clubs.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Welcoming the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin Delegation



RC Manila members warmly welcomed the delegates from the Rotary Club of Kangjin–Tamjin, fostering an atmosphere of fellowship and camaraderie.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Meet and Greet with the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin

District Governor Nominee Hermie Esguerra hosted a lunch fellowship with delegates from the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin at The Aristocrat restaurant on September 4, 2026.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Meet and Greet with the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin



The gathering gave members of both clubs an opportunity to build personal connections, exchange Rotary experiences, and celebrate their shared commitment to the success of Global Grant #2682583. The occasion further strengthened the friendship between the Rotary Club of Manila and the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin, reinforcing the spirit of international service and collaboration that underpins their partnership.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Meet and Greet with the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin



Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin President Kim Hong Un presented gifts to each member of the Rotary Club of Manila, starting with President Reggie Yu. President Reggie then delivered a message of appreciation on behalf of the club, thanking the delegation for its generosity, friendship, and steadfast partnership on Global Grant #2682583.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Meet and Greet with the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin



Left photo: Immediate Past President Bang Jae Nam with President-elect Lee Eunsu presented the gift to Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia and Past Secretary Anton Mauricio.



The delegations of the Rotary Club of Manila and the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin gathered for a commemorative photograph, capturing the spirit of friendship, fellowship, and international cooperation that defined the Global Grant #2682583 equipment turnover activities.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Farewell Fellowship Dinner

The fellowship activities concluded with a farewell dinner at Golden Bay Seafood Restaurant. The occasion brought together the Rotary Club of Manila and the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin for one final evening of friendship, appreciation, and shared celebration.

The dinner affirmed the enduring relationship between the two clubs and their commitment to continued international cooperation in service of communities in need.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Farewell Fellowship Dinner



The farewell dinner fellowship, hosted by members of the Board, featured authentic Oriental cuisine that was enjoyed by all participants. The shared meal provided a warm and fitting setting for the Rotary Club of Manila and the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin to celebrate their friendship and the successful completion of the Global Grant #2682583 turnover activities.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Farewell Fellowship Dinner

The joyful fellowship was further enlivened as members and guests took turns belting out their favorite songs, adding music, laughter, and memorable moments to the farewell dinner.



*First Gentleman
Alex Rodrigo*



*District Governor Nominee
Hermie Esguerra*



*Past Secretary
Anton Mauricio*



Rotarian Ingil Ra



*Vice President Karlo Castro and
Secretary Albert Alday*



*President Reggie Yu and
Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia*

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Farewell Fellowship Dinner



Immediate Past President Raoul Creencia and Secretary Albert Alday encouraged Vice President Karlo Castro and members of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin delegation to join the singing, further enlivening the evening's fellowship.



Director Mike Roxas



*Internal Auditor
Gani Macatoman*



Members of the Rotary Club of Kangjin-Tamjin delegation joined in the singing.

FELLOWSHIP

Aleco Breakfast



Aleco Monday Breakfast Fellowship on September 7, hosted by Philip Ong. He presented the state of Hospicio San Jose.

PVP Ricky Guevara, former member Jorge Salazar, PD Phil Ong, PDG Jackie Rodriguez, former member Eric Severino, PD Pepo Nuñez, PP Ebot Tan, PD Rod Valencia, former member Tony Montinola, PD Jun Hallare, Rtn Romy Nones, PD Nick Locsin, PP Archit Bartolome, former member Raoul Villegas, PD Abe Pascual, PD Ner Lonzaga, and PD Edwin Hernandez.

PUBLIC IMAGE

RCM's Weekly Membership Meeting Featured on Sen. Risa Hontiveros's YouTube Video



RCM Past President/Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban's Column in Philippine Daily Inquirer

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OPINION

Editor
Juliet L. Javellana

FLP's futuristic museum finds a home

Days ago, the time capsule for the "Museum for Liberty and Prosperity" was laid at a 3,350-square-meter commercial lot at the Alabang Global City (AGC) donated by the State Properties Corp. (SPC). This milestone marked the birth of my long-held dream of a futuristic, immersive, interactive, artificial intelligence-powered and tech-driven museum embodying the philosophy of safeguarding liberty and nurturing prosperity under the rule of law. This museum is not a memorial of the past, but a forebearer of the future.

THE SPECIAL GUESTS WERE Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo (with several justices), former finance secretary and now Monetary Board member Benjamin E. Diokno representing Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Eli M. Remolona (with other BSP officials), SPC chair and president Allen Roxas (with SPC directors and officers), and yours truly (with officers of the Foundation for Liberty and Prosperity or FLP).

Since my school days when I founded and headed the National Union of Students of the Philippines, I have always battled for liberty of the mind and for the ability to conquer poverty and enjoy prosperity. Hence, my mantra was and still is: Justice and jobs, freedom and food, ethics and economics, liberty and prosperity must always go together. One is useless without the other.

I expanded these ideals when I practiced and taught law, dabbled in business, grew in Catholic faith, engaged in socio-civic-philanthropic work and authored judicial decisions. The phrase "under the rule of law" was implied in my mantra but Canadian Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin—during the Global Forum on Liberty and Prosperity held here in October 2006 during my term as CJ—advised, and I agreed, that the phrase must be expressed, not implied.

These ideals and dreams remain abstractions unless they mature into actions and multi-dimensional paradigms. Philosophies grow and take root when institutions give them life and vigor. In this endeavor, FLP has found steadfast



WITH DUE RESPECT
ARTEMIO V. PANGANIBAN

partners in two of our country's foremost independent institutions: the Supreme Court to safeguard liberty, and the BSP to nurture prosperity.

I believe that these independent institutions are the bedrocks of our philosophy because as technology surges and casts unprecedented shadows over liberty, FLP's sanctuary shall be the sacred halls of justice. While the museum explores new digital frontiers, the Court remains the most vigilant guardian of emerging rights against the state powers amplified by technology.

In turn, the BSP helps nurture prosperity through its prudent stewardship of financial stability. Truly, the BSP fosters conditions in which enterprises can prosper, people's entrepreneurial genius can flourish, and jobs can spring up.

Of course, to be effective and efficient in our work, we need the cooperation and assistance of the presidency and of Congress. FLP will always turn to these political branches to complete its work.

NOTABLY, BOTH THE COURT AND THE BSP HAVE INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY. In time, political leaders may be replaced and their programs altered, but the nonpartisan leadership in these two nonpolitical institutions endures and their legacies last ad infinitum. For example, a rare breed of justices may also pass in time, but their thoughts and decisions live on. The same is true for FLP. Since its inception

in 2011, it has been sustained by three generations of distinguished jurists, business titans, and professionals. Its founding board was dominated by leaders from divergent fields: retired Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr., the late management guru Washington SyCip, education icon Edilberto C. de Jesus, retired Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, my late wife, Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Prof. Elenita C. Panganiban, and yours truly. Today, from this first generation of leaders, only Dr. De Jesus and I remain as FLP trustees.

Gradually taking over are the second-generation FLP leaders led by former BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr., retired Senior Associate Justice Estela M. Perlas-Bernabe, Baron Travel Corp. Chief executive officer Maria Elena P. S. Yaptangco, AIM Prof. Maria Theresa P. Mahalac, and FLP's executive director Susan Gavino.

Comes now the third-generation leaders like British-educated Joel Emerson Gregorio, young, brilliant lawyer Arvin Paolo Cortez (who represents the FLP Scholars Society), Miguel P. Sandejas (fresh from his MBA at Babson College in Boston and Master of Science in Law at Northwestern University in Chicago), Jacob Barbosa (an Esmel fellow from AIM) and lawyer Rachel Lois Gella (2024 first placer in the FLP dissertation writing contest).

THIS GENERATIONAL RELAY IS CARRIED IN THE CAPSULE WE LAID. By filling it with the museum's blueprints, the AGC masterplan, newspapers of the day and the BSP banknote and coin commemorating the Court's 125th anniversary, we practice the very continuity we preach and the ideals we cherish.

The capsule is a seed planted on fertile soil. Though small now, with time and care, it would grow into a giant Narra rooted firmly in the rule of law. By inspiring a deeper appreciation of liberty and prosperity, the seed will grow into a living monument for generations yet unborn.

Comments to chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com



Infrastructure in crisis: Flash floods and broken bridges



BABE'S EYE VIEW FROM WASHINGTON D.C. - Ambassador B. Romualdez -
The Philippine Star ①
September 6, 2026 | 12:00am

News from home has been deeply unsettling. Across several provinces in Luzon, communities have disappeared beneath floodwaters, families driven from their homes and livelihoods swept away. Particularly appalling were images of houses crumpling like accordions under the force of rushing water. In seconds, a family's lifetime of sacrifice was reduced to debris.

Along the North Luzon Expressway, flooding near the San Simon interchange trapped motorists in punishing queues. For those stranded, the ordeal meant hours of exhaustion, uncertainty and anxiety. When a major expressway becomes impassable, the consequences extend far beyond the people behind the wheel. Deliveries are delayed, agricultural produce risks spoiling, businesses lose income and communities struggle to obtain essential supplies. Roads that sustain the economy become bottlenecks that choke it.

Even more alarming are bridges that give way, turning an ordinary journey into a tragedy. In Tarlac City, the Aquino Bridge partially collapsed on Aug. 28 amid heavy monsoon rains and powerful river currents. The following evening, the nearby Agana Bridge, which became an alternative route, also collapsed. By Sept. 2, reports indicated two bodies recovered while two people remained missing. Behind those numbers are families whose lives have been changed forever.

These incidents raise a question no Filipino should have to ask before crossing a bridge: will we reach the other side safely?

A recent episode of "Memo" with Korina Sanchez-Roxas examined precisely this concern. With her characteristic directness, Korina asked structural engineer John Archie dela Cruz to explain what these failures tell us about the safety of our bridges.

The discussion brought renewed attention to the recently reopened Cabagan-Santa Maria Bridge in Isabela, a section of which collapsed on Feb. 27, 2025, less than a month after its reported completion on Feb. 1. A heavily loaded truck was crossing when the structure failed. This was infrastructure the public expected would serve communities for years. Instead, it became another troubling question mark over the quality of public works.

Overloading must never be dismissed. Weight limits exist for a reason, and violations endanger everyone using a bridge. But pinpointing an overloaded truck cannot be the end of an investigation. The DPWH itself subsequently identified severe overloading as the immediate cause while also raising concerns about the bridge's unusual design and construction arrangements.

However, the public deserves a complete explanation of how these factors interacted and who was responsible for ensuring the structure's safety.

The Philippines has talented engineers and capable construction firms. Their expertise, however, cannot protect the public if sound recommendations are disregarded, workmanship is compromised or inspections become paperwork exercises.

For bridges exposed to flooding, the danger also lies beneath the surface. Fast-moving water exerts powerful forces on bridge supports. Equally dangerous is scouring – the erosion of riverbed material around foundations. A bridge may appear reassuringly solid from the roadway while the soil supporting its foundations is being washed away underneath. Once sufficient support is lost, stability can be seriously compromised.



Infrastructure in crisis: Flash floods and broken bridges



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This is why an inspection cannot stop at what motorists can see. Engineers must assess the foundations, the river channel and the conditions that could undermine them during the next flood. Dredging and quarrying near bridges must likewise be governed by proper engineering assessments. Removing material from a river is not automatically a solution to flooding. Where and how excavation occurs matters. Flood control work must never compromise the infrastructure it is supposed to protect.

Maintenance is just as essential. Bearing pads, expansion joints and other bridge components deteriorate and require attention. Older structures also need reassessment against present traffic loads and flood conditions. Watershed degradation and changes in land use must form part of that evaluation.

A fresh coat of paint cannot establish structural integrity. Neither can a project completion certificate substitute for an independent assessment of a bridge's safety. Filipinos are therefore entitled to ask difficult questions. Were correct materials used? Were defects reported and acted upon? Were maintenance funds properly spent? Were warnings ignored?

Corruption must be investigated wherever evidence points to it. So must negligence, inadequate maintenance and failures of professional oversight. Accountability requires establishing the facts and following them wherever they lead.

DPWH's announcement that it has begun inspecting major bridges nationwide is welcome. Its recent directive prioritizes structures with significant scouring, exposed or undermined foundations and visible damage. This must be sustained with clear responsibilities, repair deadlines and public reporting.

Independent engineering experts should help assess vulnerable structures, including locally managed bridges. Inspection frequency must reflect risk, with additional checks after major floods and earthquakes. Dangerous crossings must be restricted or closed promptly, with safe alternative routes identified and assessed.

The findings must lead to action. Communities should know which bridges need urgent repairs, who is responsible and the deadline for work completion. Otherwise, another inspection risks becoming just another report filed away until the next disaster. Above all, maintenance must receive dependable funding. We cannot keep celebrating new construction while allowing existing infrastructure to deteriorate until emergency repairs become the only option.

Our response must extend from the watershed to the roadway: protect forests, regulate extraction, improve drainage, enforce loading limits and maintain structures throughout their service lives. Building a stronger nation requires more than ribbon-cuttings and impressive project totals. It requires the discipline to protect what we build and the integrity to ensure that every peso serves its intended purpose.

A bridge carries more than vehicles. It carries children going to school, workers earning a living, farmers bringing produce to market and families expecting to return home. Every crossing is an act of public trust. No Filipino should have to pay for that trust with his life.



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