

BORACAY SUN
MONTHLY NEWSPAPER & ISLAND GUIDE

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Editor's Note



Raindrops and White Caps

The Department of Tourism's refreshed campaign, *Discover More to Love*, encourages travelers to find their own reasons to fall in love with the Philippines.

Tourism Secretary Dita Angara-Mathay recently explained that the campaign is evolving into something more relatable and personal, less about telling people what to love and more about allowing them to discover it for themselves. Which got us thinking: brilliant, and as it should be.

Especially when it comes to Boracay. This island never ceases to amaze. Just when you think you've seen every sunset, every stretch of powdery sand, every Instagram-worthy angle imaginable, she reveals another side of herself, one that is equally captivating but often overlooked.

Even during the *Habagat* season, with dark skies overhead, whitecaps dancing across the water, and the shoreline transformed by wind and rain, Boracay is simply breathtaking.

For tourists, Habagat in Boracay simply means it is the "off-season," when flights and hotel rates are cheaper, and the island is less crowded. But ask longtime residents and they will tell you that this season has its own magic.

There is something deeply comforting about the smell of rain on the breeze, the swaying of coconut trees, the sound of waves crashing against the shore, and the sight of dramatic cloud formations rolling across the horizon.

Habagat invites us to slow down and settle into a gentler rhythm, to linger over coffee, to finish that book we've been meaning to read, to spend more time with family and friends, to reconnect with ourselves.

Having crossed the midpoint of another year, many of us find ourselves taking stock of where we've been and where we're headed. We think about the setbacks we survived, the lessons we learned, the goals we achieved and the people who helped us along the way.

As the *Book of Ecclesiastes* reminds us, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

A time to celebrate, a time to heal, and a time to pause and simply breathe. This issue explores many of those themes.

September is Tourism Month, with **Malay Tourism Week (Sept. 14-19)** celebrations culminating in **World Tourism Day on September 27**. It is an opportunity to recognize the profound role tourism plays in communities like ours, not only as an economic driver, but as a bridge between cultures, people and ideas.



Tourism remains Boracay's lifeblood. Yet as global uncertainties, rising travel costs and shifting visitor preferences continue to reshape the industry, the conversation can no longer be limited to visitor arrivals alone. The challenge before us is to build a tourism industry that is resilient, sustainable and beneficial to both residents and guests.

August also brings **World Senior Citizens Day (August 21)**, a celebration of the men and women whose wisdom, sacrifice and experience helped build the communities and the freedoms we enjoy today.

In a culture that often glorifies youth and speed, there is tremendous value in pausing to listen to those who have walked the road before us and to life's most important lessons, which can only be learned through time.

Our special feature reveals some tried and tested healthy habits that are crucial for those 50 and above, including how to make your home safer against falls. ("*Lifestyle Checklist*" page 17)

This issue also celebrates women of a certain age with an inspiring profile of Miriam Quiambao-Roberto. The actress, television host, and Miss Universe 1999 first runner-up opens up about motherhood, turning 50, rediscovering her strength, and embracing a healthier, more purposeful life. ("*Miriam Quiambao-Roberto: Stronger Than Ever*," page 11)

And for those of us who are constantly looking for the elusive fountain of youth, **Dr. Marion Salaver-Bassig** gives us her take on anti-aging and a rundown of treatments readily available on the island, plus invaluable advice on coping with Meno and Andropause. ("*The Fountain of Youth, According to a Boracay Doctor*," page 11)

Observances such as **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (August 9)** and **National Heroes Day (August 31)** encourage us to remember our shared history and honor those whose courage and contributions continue to shape our nation.

Meanwhile, **World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10)** serves as an important reminder that not all struggles are visible. The World Health Organization's (WHO) multi-year theme "Changing the narrative" is a call to action to shift from a culture of silence, shame and misunderstanding to one of open discussion, empathy and support. Our special feature explores some lesser-known signs of depression to help you recognize red flags and support loved ones in getting the help and support they need. ("*Surprising Signs of Depression*," page 17)

Connection matters.

In an age when everyone appears connected, many people continue to battle loneliness, anxiety, depression and emotional burdens in silence.

Checking in on family members, friends, colleagues and neighbors may seem like a small gesture, but it can make a meaningful difference. Sometimes the most powerful thing we can offer another person is simply our presence and willingness to listen.

And perhaps nowhere is that lesson more relevant than in our increasingly digital world.

Technology continues to transform our lives at breakneck speed. Artificial intelligence, smart devices, social media platforms, online gaming and algorithm-driven content now shape how we communicate, learn, work and spend our free time.

While these tools offer tremendous

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Truth in Journalism.

SUN TOONS

Lightening up the day with a perky dose of humor



"Island Time" By Sigmund Torre

benefits, they also present new challenges for children and teenagers. Our special feature examines the growing global conversation surrounding social media age restrictions and online safeguards for minors. The reality is that no law, platform, or technology can replace active parenting and meaningful communication. ("*Digital Life*," page 14).

Around the world, governments and technology companies are grappling with difficult questions: How young is too young for social media? How can children be protected from harmful content, predatory behavior, misinformation, and unhealthy digital habits? And what role should parents play in guiding their children's online experiences?

We've also packed these pages with plenty of rainy-day-inspired features designed to help you make the most of the season. From comfort food and indoor escapes to local discoveries and hidden rainy-day gems, you'll find countless ways to enjoy Boracay even when the sun disappears behind the clouds.

So whether you're a visitor seeking refuge from the city, a resident enjoying the slower pace of the season, or someone simply looking for a reason to appreciate the rain, we hope this issue helps you discover something new to love.

Because Boracay, much like life itself, is beautiful in every season, rain or shine, and even on bad hair days. 🌿

Padayon! Vibe high, dive deep!

Peace and good vibes,

Freida Dario-Santiago
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SPOTLIGHT

ALEX EALA: THE REAL DEAL

Eala's her-storic Wimbledon run is just the beginning

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

"In my mind, I always knew that this was what I wanted to do."

That simple statement from Alexandra "Alex" Eala perhaps explains everything.

Long before she became the pride of Philippine tennis, before Centre Court applauded her, before millions of Filipinos stayed awake through the night watching every point, tennis had already become her life's calling.

"Tennis has been in my life for as long as I can remember," the 21-year-old Eala recalled. "I started at four, and it's always kind of been in my family. It just made me love the sport more. In my mind, I always knew that this was what I wanted to do."

Before stepping onto the immaculate grass of the All England Club, she revealed another deeply personal dream.

"Wimbledon is my favorite Slam. When I had big dreams as a young girl, they were always on that court. So I'm living the dream, to be able to fulfill a childhood dream and be part of something bigger than myself, history for my country."

There is perhaps no grander stage in tennis. Since 1877, Wimbledon has been regarded as the sport's most prestigious championship, with its manicured grass courts, strict all-white dress code, centuries-old traditions and royal patronage.

That Wimbledon itself was posting reels featuring Tagalog quotes and music speaks volumes about Eala's remarkable impact on one of sport's most tradition-bound institutions.

This year, another chapter belonged to a 21-year-old Filipina.

Alex Eala did not merely compete at Wimbledon. She arrived ready to prove she belonged among the world's elite.

Already the first Filipino ever to earn a Grand Slam singles seeding after climbing to World No. 30, Eala entered Wimbledon as the tournament's No. 29 seed, carrying tremendous momentum after an outstanding grass-court season.

Only weeks earlier, Eala defeated the Czech Republic's Nikola Bartunkova,

capturing her first-ever grass-court title at the Birmingham Open (June 1-7).



📷 Jaimi Jay, Reuters

A week later, she had reached the semifinals of the prestigious Berlin Open (June 15-21), defeating former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina (World No. 2) and former World No. 3 Elina Svitolina in consecutive matches.

She followed that breakthrough by partnering with seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams in doubles at Bad Homburg, another unforgettable milestone in a rapidly rising career.

Eala opened her Wimbledon campaign with a commanding victory over Mexico's Renata Zarazúa, becoming the first Filipina in the Open Era to win a Wimbledon singles main-draw match. She then defeated Australia's Maya Joint, avenging her Eastbourne Open final loss from a year earlier.

Then came Centre Court, where an even greater challenge awaited.

Standing across the net was defending Wimbledon champion and six-time Grand Slam winner Iga Świątek.

The matchup carried a remarkable full-circle moment. Ironically, only three years earlier, Świątek was the guest of honor during Eala's graduation from the Rafa Nadal Academy in Mallorca, Spain.

Now they were meeting as equals on the sport's biggest stage.

For 84 unforgettable minutes, they battled through one of the finest opening sets of this year's Championships before Eala edged an epic tiebreak, 7-6 (11-9). She dominated the

second set 6-2, eliminated the defending champion and became the first Filipino ever to reach the fourth round of Wimbledon.

Yet it was what Eala said afterward that captured hearts around the world.

Fighting back tears during her Centre Court interview, she reflected on the little girl who once dreamed of simply playing at Wimbledon.

"I went to train with my brother and my grandfather every day after school with my ruffled socks, my light-up shoes and chubby cheeks ... so to her, this is everything."

She quickly reminded everyone, however, that the journey was far from over. "Because I'm emotional doesn't mean I'm satisfied. Next round, let's go."

Her humility, composure and relentless competitiveness have become defining qualities of a player whose rise increasingly resembles that of another Filipino sporting icon, Manny Pacquiao. Like Pacquiao before her, Eala has united Filipinos around the world, giving an entire nation reason to stay awake into the early hours simply to witness history unfold.

Social media erupted in celebration, with the Rafa Nadal Academy, Wimbledon, and international tennis figures praising her achievement.

History, not heartbreak.

Awaiting Eala in the Round of 16 was Italy's No. 1, former World No. 4, and 2024 Wimbledon singles finalist Jasmine Paolini, whom she had defeated earlier that year in Dubai. Their rematch carried the promise of another historic breakthrough.

On July 6, however, it was Paolini who prevailed, ending Eala's inspiring run at the 2026 Wimbledon Championships.

Although her Wimbledon journey concluded in the Round of 16, its impact extended far beyond the scoreboard.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. congratulated Eala, calling her achievement "only the beginning" and thanking her for inspiring young Filipinos to dream bigger.

In just over a week, Alex Eala made Philippine tennis history, becoming the first Filipino in the Open Era to win a Wimbledon singles main-draw match, defeat a reigning Wimbledon champion, and reach the Round of 16 of a Grand Slam singles tournament. Her breakthrough campaign earned her a standing ovation from the Centre Court crowd, a fitting tribute to one of Wimbledon 2026's most inspiring stories.

More importantly, she left London having proven she belongs among the world's elite.

The little girl with the ruffled socks, light-up shoes, and chubby cheeks has become the face of a new era in Philippine tennis.

Following her historic Wimbledon run, Eala now turns her attention to the North American hard-court swing, which leads to the season's final Grand Slam: the US Open.

Wimbledon confirmed what many had begun to suspect: Alexandra Eala is no longer simply one of tennis's brightest young prospects. She has established herself as a legitimate Grand Slam contender. If she continues this level of play, a place in the WTA Top 20 appears well within reach.

And this is only the beginning. 🌱

THE WORDS THAT DEFINE A CHAMPION

Emblazoned on the stands of Roland Garros in Paris are the words of the French aviation hero:
**"Victory belongs to the most tenacious."
— Roland Garros**

Another timeless message is engraved near the players' entrance of Arthur Ashe Stadium in New York, where every competitor passes on the way to the US Open:
**"Pressure is a privilege."
— Billie Jean King**

And now, another quote is inspiring not just tennis fans, but an entire nation.
Printed on the back of the Nike visor Eala wore at Wimbledon were the simple Filipino words:
**"Kapag lumago, hindi na hihinto."
(Once growth begins, it never stops.)**

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continued from front page

economic engine for the country. In 2025 alone, local travelers generated at least ₱3.26 trillion in tourism spending, far exceeding revenues from foreign tourism and reaffirming the importance of the domestic market in sustaining businesses and jobs throughout the country.

Angara-Mathay said the campaign responds to the tourism industry's call for a stronger domestic travel program, especially during off-peak periods when businesses often experience lower occupancy and reduced visitor arrivals. "(The thrust is) local *muna pero* hopefully, we will expand that to international," Angara-Mathay said in an interview with the Philippine News Agency.

A Refreshed Approach, Not a Rebranding

While retaining the well-known tourism slogan, the DOT intends to update its messaging to make it more relatable to today's travelers and more adaptable across different markets.

Speaking during President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s state visit to Japan last May 26, 2026, Angara-Mathay said the agency wants to make the campaign "less emotional and aggressive" while allowing travelers to interpret the concept of love in their own way.

"We just have to spin it in a different way so that it is adjusted to the times and the message and to something relatable," Angara-Mathay said.

The DOT stressed that "Discover More to Love" is not a replacement for the country's tourism brand but rather a domestic campaign under the existing "Love the Philippines" umbrella.

The decision comes in the wake of the controversial ₱49-million "Love the Philippines" campaign launched in 2023, which drew criticism over creative lapses involving promotional materials. However,

Angara-Mathay said continuity and stewardship of the existing brand remain central to the DOT's current direction.

"I don't want to spend money on changing the slogan because I was trying precisely to avoid the inclination of people to say, 'Ours is better than the last one,'" Angara-Mathay said. "We're trying to maintain that identity that we've invested in, build on what has already been successful and continue to evolve it, while targeting the local tourists."

She added that the domestic campaign recognizes that even Filipinos who have already traveled extensively can continue to discover new experiences across the country.

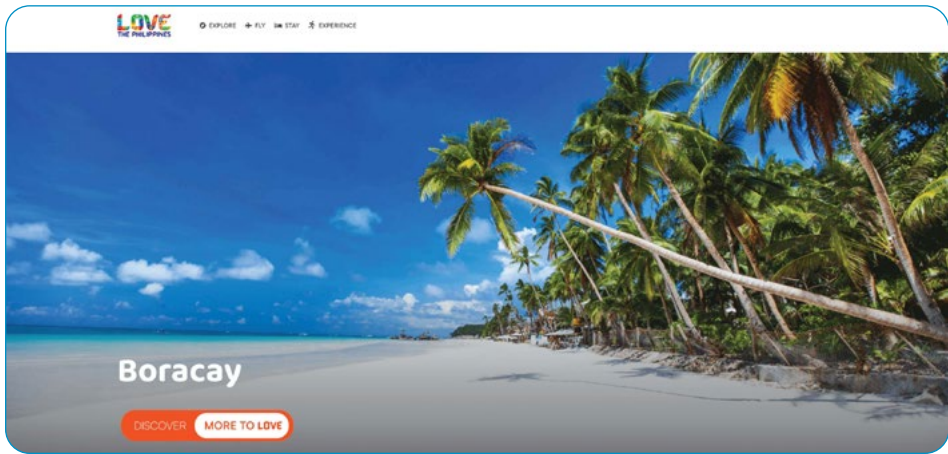
"Not all Filipinos have seen everything. Every day you stumble upon new gems, places or destinations. And even if you've gone to a place before, when you go to the same place, you have a different feeling, a different experience every single time," she said.

Curated Deals and a New Digital Platform

A major feature of "Discover More to Love" is the introduction of curated and discounted travel-related packages and experiences across the country developed by tourism stakeholders nationwide, including hotels, airlines, tour operators and online travel agencies.

According to the DOT website, the initiative is not merely a seasonal sale but aims to make domestic travel more affordable and accessible for Filipinos, to encourage them to rediscover the country while helping sustain tourism enterprises during slower travel periods.

The campaign recently went live through the DOT's main online portal, **tourism.gov.ph**, offering exclusive discounts from hotels and airlines, along with travel deals from online travel agencies and other tourism partners. Financial technology providers and payment platforms, including Visa, Mastercard and Alipay, have also joined the initiative to make booking and payment



more convenient for travelers.

Industry groups including the **Hotel Sales and Marketing Association (HSMA)**, **Philippine Tour Operators Association (PHILTOA)**, **Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA)**, as well as carriers such as **Cebu Pacific** and **AirAsia**, have pledged support for the initiative. Participating establishments are expected to offer discounts of as much as **50 to 70 percent off published room rates** in selected destinations nationwide.

The current promotional phase will run from **July to November 2026**, traditionally considered the tourism industry's lean season due to school schedules and the rainy months. While the DOT has yet to announce whether the campaign's promotional component will continue beyond November, officials have indicated that the digital platform is envisioned as a long-term initiative that may continue to expand as more stakeholders come on board.

An Evolving Platform Shaped by Travelers

The DOT is encouraging Filipinos and tourism stakeholders to actively help shape the future of the platform by sharing feedback and suggestions. "We want to build it together with the Filipino traveling public and our tourism stakeholders," Angara-Mathay said.

"We encourage everyone to explore it,

take advantage of the travel offers, and tell us what works, what doesn't, and what features you'd like to see," she said. "Your feedback will help us create a platform that is truly responsive to the needs of Filipino travelers. This platform will continue to evolve, and we invite every Filipino to help shape it with us," she added.

Driving Growth Across Communities

Beyond stimulating travel demand, the DOT sees the campaign as a means of spreading economic opportunities to communities that rely heavily on tourism.

"By helping Filipinos discover more opportunities to travel during off-peak periods, we can give travelers greater value and more enjoyable experiences while helping tourism enterprises maintain steady bookings, sustain jobs and strengthen local economies throughout the year," Angara-Mathay said.

For destinations such as Boracay, where tourism remains the island's primary economic engine, the campaign presents an opportunity to encourage repeat visits, promote lesser-known experiences and sustain business activity beyond peak travel seasons.

As the DOT invites Filipinos to rediscover the country, the message remains clear: there are still countless reasons and places to love the Philippines all over again. 🌴

NEWS

Tabon Port Development Amid Habagat Disruptions

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The ongoing development of the Tabon Port in Barangay Tabon, Malay, is expected to strengthen the municipality's maritime transport network as Boracay continues to grapple with transportation challenges brought by the southwest monsoon or *Habagat*.

According to a series of Facebook posts by Malay Councilor Maria Victoria "Vicky" Aguirre-Salem, work is progressing on the improvement of Tabon Port, a project viewed as a significant investment in the municipality's transport infrastructure. The upgraded facility is envisioned to improve the movement of passengers and cargo while serving as an additional gateway that supports tourism and local commerce.

On June 7, 2026, Aguirre-Salem, chairperson of the Sangguniang Bayan Committee on Public Safety, delivered a privilege speech before the Malay Council highlighting concerns surrounding the port facility. She noted that among the challenges faced by travelers, particularly senior citizens and persons with disabilities, are the sandy access roads leading to the port. Following her privilege speech, she initiated a series of committee hearings aimed at addressing these concerns and advancing plans for the port's development.

The project comes at a crucial time as strong southwest monsoon winds continue to affect sea travel between Caticlan and Boracay. During the Habagat season, rough sea conditions often force authorities to suspend or reroute boat operations, resulting in stranded passengers, delayed deliveries of

goods, and disruptions to tourism-related activities.

Boracay, whose economy is heavily dependent on tourism, regularly experiences operational challenges during periods of strong Habagat. Boat trips are frequently transferred to alternative ports or temporarily suspended whenever weather conditions become unsafe, affecting hundreds of tourists, workers and residents.

Aguirre-Salem said that improving mainland port facilities such as Tabon Port would enhance the municipality's ability to respond to changing weather conditions and provide more resilient transport infrastructure in support of Boracay's tourism industry.

Aside from improving passenger convenience and accessibility, the upgraded port is also expected to facilitate the movement of supplies and strengthen connectivity between mainland Malay and neighboring communities, contributing to the municipality's long-term economic growth and development. 🌴



Councilor Aguirre-Salem commends Tabon Port management for its efforts in the ongoing development of the facility.

📷 SB Vicky Aguirre-Salem

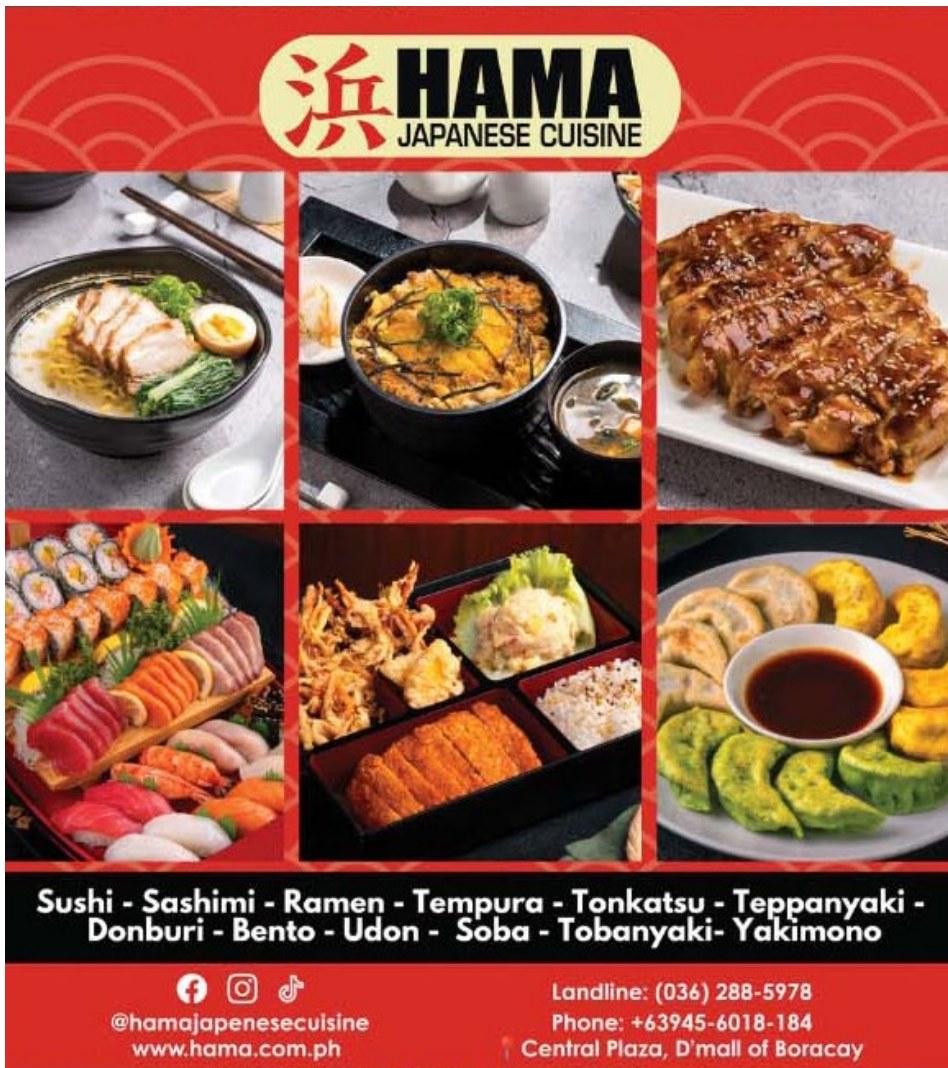


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FUN FACTS

Amihan and Habagat: A Guide to Boracay's Two Seasons

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO



Boracay's beauty shines year-round, but the island offers two very different experiences depending on the season.

From November to May, the northeast monsoon, or *Amihan*, brings warmer temperatures, sunny skies, and generally calm seas. This is considered Boracay's peak season, with ideal conditions for swimming, snorkeling, diving, island-hopping, paraw sailing, parasailing, and other beach activities.

Consistent winds also make **Bulabog Beach** a favorite destination for kiteboarding and windsurfing enthusiasts from around the world.

By June, the southwest monsoon, known as *Habagat*, takes over and lasts until October. This is the prevailing season at the moment.

While this season brings more rain and

occasional rough seas, it offers a quieter side of Boracay. White Beach often sees larger waves that attract wave riders, while watersports activities take place in the more sheltered waters of Bulabog Beach.

Habagat also transforms the island's landscape. Rain nourishes Boracay's tropical vegetation, creating lush scenery and a more relaxed atmosphere. With fewer visitors, travelers can enjoy a slower pace and a more

tranquil island experience.

The months of May and October are considered transition periods, when weather patterns can fluctuate before settling into the monsoon season.

Whether you prefer the bright, breezy days of Amihan or the greener, more laid-back charm of Habagat, Boracay offers something special in every season.

Key Travel Considerations

Visitors during Habagat will notice large windbreak nets installed along sections of White Beach. These barriers help protect beachfront establishments from strong southwest monsoon winds and blowing sand.

Travelers should also be aware that Boracay's arrival and departure ports may change with the seasons to ensure safer sea travel. 🌴

NEWS
Boracay Fishing Festival Hooks 310 Anglers in Successful Debut

JUN N. AGUIRRE

The first-ever Boracay Fishing Festival attracted about 310 anglers from Boracay and provinces across the Philippines, turning White Beach into a showcase of fishing skill, sportsmanship, and community pride.

Held on June 7, the jigging tournament was organized by the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC) and the Boracay Fishing Festival organizers in partnership with the Local Government Unit of Malay, the Malay Municipal Tourism Office and the Municipal Agriculture Office.

More than a competition, organizers described the festival as a celebration of Boracay's fishing heritage and a tribute to the local fisherfolk whose livelihoods have long been tied to the island's coastal waters. Taking top honors in the Heaviest Single Catch category was Michael Abique of Samar, who landed an 11.37-kilogram barracuda and won the ₱100,000 grand prize.

In his opening remarks, Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista said the festival aims to become an annual event that complements Boracay's tourism industry while promoting

sustainable fisheries and marine conservation. He emphasized the importance of recognizing the island's roots as a fishing community, noting that Boracay's identity extends beyond its beaches and resorts.

Festival-goers also had the chance to buy freshly caught seafood at affordable prices during the awarding ceremony, with some fish reportedly selling for as low as ₱100 per kilo.

Meanwhile, Councilor Jhonnell Casidsid highlighted the event's eco-conscious approach, noting that organizers adopted a manual catch format and ensured proper disposal of fishing gear to help protect marine ecosystems.



Malay-Boracay Tourism Office

FUN FACTS
Reef Fish Belong on the Reef, Not on the Plate

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

Avoid catching or buying tropical reef fish, which are highly vulnerable to overfishing and essential to the health of coral reef ecosystems.

One species in particular deserves protection: the **parrotfish** (locally called *loro* or *mol-mol*). These colorful fish help create Boracay's famous powdery white sand by grazing on coral and excreting it as fine sand.



Parrotfish are the makers of Boracay's white sand.

New Police Chief Assumes Command of Malay PNP, Vows Stronger Peace and Security Measures

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has officially deployed Police Lieutenant Colonel Orlando A. Carag Jr. as the new chief of the Malay Municipal Police Station (MPS).

Since assuming command, Plt. Col. Carag has intensified police visibility through regular foot and mobile patrols and public safety initiatives in key areas of Malay and Boracay.

His leadership has focused on crime prevention, ensuring the safety of residents and tourists, and strengthening police presence in major tourism and commercial zones. Carag said the Malay PNP will continue working closely with local government officials and communities to help maintain a peaceful environment that supports the municipality's tourism industry.

Following his deployment, Carag met with Jose Enrique Miraflores, Frolibar Bautista and members of the Malay Council to discuss peace and order concerns and strengthen coordination between the PNP and local government.

Among his priority programs are intensified anti-criminality operations, increased police patrols in tourist areas, improved traffic management and community engagement activities aimed at promoting public trust and cooperation.

On June 20, Carag also facilitated the Adopt-A-Classroom Charity Project under

Project SAVER (Support, Awareness, Victim Empowerment, Enforcement and Recovery) at Manocmanoc Elementary School.

The initiative benefited Grade 5 pupils through the distribution of school supplies and educational materials and underscored the importance of community support in nurturing the next generation.

Through Project SAVER, Malay MPS continues to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders, schools and private organizations in advancing programs that protect and support children, particularly those who are vulnerable and in need of assistance.



Plt. Col. Orlando Carag pays a courtesy call to Gov. Jose Enrique Miraflores. Jose Enrique "Joel" Miraflores (Facebook)

Boracay Dive Operators Seek Relief from ₱2.17-Million Penalty

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The Boracay Business Administration of Scuba Shops (BBASS) and its member dive operators have sought reconsideration from the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) after the anti-trust agency imposed a total fine of ₱2.17 million for violating the Philippine Competition Act (PCA) through alleged price-fixing arrangements.

The PCC recently ruled that BBASS and its 39 member dive shops coordinated minimum prices for scuba diving services, including introductory dives and certification courses. The Commission found that these practices restricted competition and denied consumers the benefits of competitive pricing.

Mike Labatiao, president of the BBASS, said in an interview with Aklan News Channel on July 4 that the pricing guidelines were intended to maintain service quality, safety standards and fair business practices, rather than eliminate competition.

"We are only following Malay Ordinance Number 477," Labatiao said.

During an emergency meeting on July 7 in Sitio Angol, BBASS legal counsel Atty. Richard Fabila said the group plans to elevate the case to the Supreme Court in hopes of reversing the PCC decision.

"Among our concerns for now is that several members listed under the BBASS are either non-operational or have changed management," Fabila said.

Municipal Ordinance No. 477, enacted in 2022 and introduced by former councilor Dante Pagsuguiron, was titled "An Ordinance Fixing and Setting Guidelines in the Implementation of Tariff Rates of all Water Sports and activities in the Municipality of Malay."

BBASS also stressed that Boracay's diving industry is composed largely of micro, small and medium enterprises still recovering from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and previous island closures.

Labatiao said the penalties could place additional financial pressure on small dive operators and their employees, many of whom depend on tourism for their livelihood.

Despite the appeal, the dive operators affirmed their commitment to complying with Philippine laws and pledged to cooperate with the PCC while exploring lawful ways to maintain high safety and service standards.

The PCC, however, maintained that agreements among competing businesses to set minimum prices violate Section 14(a)(1) of the PCA because they prevent businesses from competing freely and may result in higher prices for consumers. The Commission also ordered the immediate cessation of the pricing arrangements and encouraged local government units to align their ordinances with the National Competition Policy.

NEWS

Supreme Court Affirms Conviction of Yapak Chief Over Illegal Dumpsite; COMELEC Rules on Disqualification

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The Supreme Court (SC) has affirmed the conviction of former Barangay Yapak Captain Hector Aguirre Casidsid for violating the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act after allowing the operation of an illegal open dumpsite on Boracay Island.

This information was obtained from *Batas PH* on June 9, 2026.

In a 29-page decision in G.R. No. 260539, the Court's Third Division denied Casidsid's petition and upheld the earlier rulings of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court, the Regional Trial Court of Kalibo, and the Court of Appeals, all of which found him guilty of violating Section 48(9), in relation to Section 37, of Republic Act (RA) No. 9003, otherwise known as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

The SC imposed a fine of ₱500,000 on Casidsid for establishing and operating an open dumpsite on privately owned land in Sitio Ilig-Iligan, Barangay Yapak, without legal authority. Although the decision was issued in February 2026, it was made public in May.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by landowner Leo Neil G. Tirol, who alleged that a portion of his property had been used as a dumping ground for mixed garbage without his consent. An investigation conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) confirmed the presence of heaps of mixed waste, including plastics, food scraps,

bottles, Styrofoam and buried garbage, indicating prolonged dumping operations.

Casidsid argued that the dumpsite had been operated by a private entity and questioned the complainant's ownership of the property. However, the Court ruled that ownership of the land is not an element of the offense, emphasizing that RA No. 9003 simply prohibits the establishment and operation of open dumps regardless of who owns the property.

The High Court also noted that Casidsid had admitted in a notarized reply before the Office of the Ombudsman that the barangay used the site as a temporary dumpsite after its Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) became full. The Court treated these statements as admissions against interest and found no convincing evidence to support his subsequent claim that a private company was responsible for the dumping activities.

In its ruling, the SC clarified that the 30-day notice requirement for environmental citizen suits under RA No. 9003 is a mandatory condition but not jurisdictional. It further explained that the criminal case against Casidsid was not a citizen suit but a prosecution initiated by the Office of the Ombudsman on behalf of the People of the Philippines.

The decision underscores the accountability of public officials in enforcing environmental laws and reinforces the government's policy

against the operation of open dumps, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas such as Boracay.

The Casidsid family told local media that they would not comment on the matter, saying it is already moot and academic.

COMELEC

In a related development, Casidsid is awaiting the Commission on Elections' (COMELEC) final ruling on his removal from office following his disqualification.

On April 22, 2025, the COMELEC ruled that Casidsid was disqualified from running for barangay captain in the 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections. His lawyers subsequently filed a motion for

reconsideration of the decision penned by COMELEC Second Division Presiding Commissioner Rey Bulay.

On March 11, 2026, the COMELEC Second Division canceled Casidsid's Certificate of Candidacy (COC) filed for the 2023 barangay elections.

On July 7, the COMELEC en banc issued an order noting the appeal filed by Crisostomo Aquino seeking the proclamation of Marlyn Villaresis as the duly elected barangay captain of Barangay Yapak. The en banc directed the Second Division to resolve the matter with finality.

Aquino, the businessman who filed the election protest, said the resolution declaring Casidsid disqualified effectively rendered

all votes cast in his favor during the 2023 barangay elections as stray votes. Despite the ruling, the COMELEC Second Division has yet to proclaim an official barangay captain for Yapak.

At present, Casidsid continues to serve as village chief despite the COMELEC ruling.

In an interview with *Boracay Sun News* on July 8, Aquino said he challenged Casidsid's candidacy because the latter had already served the maximum three consecutive terms allowed by law. It was also learned that Casidsid remains interested in running for Barangay Kagawad in the barangay elections scheduled for October.



(Left) Supreme Court ruling on Hector Aguirre Casidsid v. People of the Philippines; (Right) COMELEC Order on the cancellation of Casidsid's Certificate of Candidacy

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“Cheers” to island heroes and moments that matter

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

From Musical Bingo to Solar-Lit Road

How the Bulabog Lighting Brigade Brought Light to Bulabog Beach Road

What began as a simple conversation among residents has resulted in a brighter and safer Bulabog Beach Road.

Frustrated by the lack of lighting in the area, members of the community launched the Bulabog Lighting Brigade (BULB), a grassroots initiative aimed at raising funds for solar-powered street lamps. Leading the effort was restaurateur and community advocate Ronaldo Po, owner of Cathy's Bistro and president of the Small Players Association of Boracay (SPAB), an organization that represents and supports the island's small businesses.

“We simply got tired of waiting for action,” Po said. “We took it upon ourselves to raise funds to light up the Bulabog area.”

The group's main fundraiser was an innovative event at Cathy's Bistro called Musical Bingo, which replaced traditional bingo numbers with songs. Each game featured 75 tracks organized around themes such as boy bands, girl power or movie soundtracks.

“What would make bingo more fun is to play songs instead of

calling out numbers,” Po explained.

The concept proved popular, raising more than ₱35,000 for the purchase of solar street lamps. Organizers also researched lighting options carefully after learning that some units installed elsewhere failed within months or began to dim before the end of the night.

Po credited much of the project's success to community support, particularly from Barangay Balabag Capt. Jason Talapian and Paradise Cable (PCTV), which assisted with light placement and installation.

“We didn't have a ceremony,” Po said. “We just put it up and lit the street.”

The initiative was also backed by a long list of local businesses and individuals, including Barkada Boracay, BPH Heart of Boracay, Café Got Soul, Calma Café, Calma Home, Casa Mezcaleria, DiniBeach Bar, Dungang, Eskinita, Exit Brew, Freestyle Kitesurfing, Greenyard Kitesurfing, Gyukatsu Boracay, Happiness, Hangin' Brew, Helios Spa, La-Ud Restaurant, Lazy Dog B&B, Lemoni Café, Om Bar, Sip Happens, Totally Bananas Café, Tribu, Two Brown Boys, Zugba Grillhouse and DJ Nikki Pring.

Their collective effort stands as a reminder that sometimes the brightest solutions come from the community itself. 🌿



Mangrove Planting at Wetland 6

A community-led mangrove planting and clean-up activity at the Lugutan Mangrove Park or Wetland 6 on June 14 brought together volunteers, environmental advocates, business leaders, and local organizations in support of Boracay's fragile wetland ecosystem.



The initiative, organized by Desiree Segovia, chairperson of the Boracay Women Producers Cooperative (BWPC) or Pinay Boracay, resulted in the planting of 300 mangrove propagules in the protected area.

In a social media post following the event, Segovia thanked the volunteers and members of AKELCO MCOO District 10 Boracay who participated in the activity. “No less than 300 propagules were planted in the mangrove area at Wetland 6,” she shared, adding with a smile, “Next time,

prepare to get wet and dirty for Mother Nature.”

Among those who joined the activity were representatives from AKELCO, the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), the European Union, environmental groups including Friends of the Flying Foxes and We Are Aware, as well as business and community leaders.

For Djila Winebrenner, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Boracay (PCCI-Boracay), the event offered a first-hand lesson in environmental stewardship.

“On Desiree Segovia's invitation, it was my first time planting mangroves and experiencing Boracay's wetlands up close,” Winebrenner wrote. “A good reminder that sustainability isn't just discussed in boardrooms and meetings. Sometimes it's simply showing up, getting wet, getting dirty, and doing your small part.”

The activity highlights the continuing efforts of local stakeholders to protect Boracay's wetlands, which serve as vital habitats, natural flood-control systems, and environmental buffers for the island. 🌿

COMMUNITY NEWS

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

Road Rehab, Drainage Project Set for 2027

Residents of Sitio Diniwid may finally see relief from a flooding problem that has plagued the community for decades.

Funding has been secured for the rehabilitation of Diniwid Road and the construction of a drainage system designed to address the area's long-standing flooding issues, according to an update from Malay Sangguniang Bayan (SB) Member Hope Pagsuguiron.

The announcement followed a June 10 coordination meeting attended by representatives of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Municipal Planning and Development Office, Zoning Office, Municipal Engineering Office, barangay officials, stakeholders and community representatives.

Pagsuguiron said the project stemmed from an SB resolution dated March 22, 2026, requesting DPWH funding for the rehabilitation of Diniwid Road and the construction of a drainage system. The proposal was endorsed to the DPWH and has since secured funding, with implementation targeted to begin in the first quarter of 2027.

For many residents, the development marks a significant breakthrough in a long-running campaign to improve one of Boracay's most problematic roads.

In March, longtime Boracay resident and Diniview Villa Resort owner Julia Lervik appealed directly to DPWH Sec. Vince Dizon to include Diniwid Road in the agency's development plans. In her letter, she described how runoff from surrounding roads turns the low-lying area into a “river” during heavy rains, leaving residents and visitors wading through stagnant floodwater and mud on their way to the beach.

The issue has long been familiar to both locals and tourists. In June 2025, *Boracay Sun News* highlighted Diniwid Road in its “Island Eye” section, noting that residents had endured years of flooding, dust during the dry season, and muddy conditions during the rainy months while awaiting rehabilitation.

Officials said further meetings will be held with affected residents, households, and business owners to ensure proper consultation and coordination before work begins.

Sometimes, progress takes longer than it should. If completed as planned, the project could finally provide a lasting solution to a problem that generations of Diniwid residents have lived with for years, while improving access to one of Boracay's most popular beach communities. 🌿



BFI Brings Boracay Concerns to DENR Secretary Cuna

Representatives of the Boracay Foundation, Inc. (BFI) met with DENR Secretary Juan Miguel T. Cuna on June 24 to discuss key environmental and

tourism issues affecting Boracay Island.

The courtesy meeting, held through the invitation of DENR Region VI Regional Executive Director Ramar Niel V. Pascua, provided BFI an opportunity to present several long-standing concerns, including the review of sewage treatment plant regulations, clarification of land classification and easement issues, identification of sites for public toilet facilities, beachfront management, and strengthening island-wide solid waste management.

Representing BFI were trustees Nenette Graf, Virgilio Sacdalan, and Adel Lumagod, who outlined the organization's recommendations and priorities. According to BFI, DENR officials acknowledged the concerns raised and expressed openness to further discussions.

The organization described the dialogue as a positive

step toward finding practical and long-term solutions that balance environmental protection with sustainable tourism development.

BFI also reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with government agencies, local officials and stakeholders in safeguarding Boracay's natural resources.

Boracay Sun News extends its congratulations to the newly elected trustees and wishes them success as they help steer one of the island's most influential business and environmental organizations. As one of the island's leading private-sector organizations, BFI continues to play an important role in advocating for responsible tourism, environmental stewardship, and policies that support the long-term sustainability of Boracay. 🌿



SPORTS

PICKLEBALL MANIA REACHES BORACAY

BY PAULINE REITZER

Boracay has long been known for its powdery white beaches, water sports and active outdoor lifestyle. Now, another sport is quickly finding its place on the island: pickleball.



News anchor and TV host Cheryl Cosim and movie director Avel Sunpongco joined the author (leftmost) for a fun but intense morning in Masey. © Abegail Clarino



Combining elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis, pickleball has become one of the fastest-growing sports in the world. Its appeal lies in its accessibility: easy to learn, suitable for all ages and social by nature. What started as a recreational pastime elsewhere is quickly evolving into a thriving community in Boracay, with dedicated courts, regular open-play sessions and a growing number of enthusiasts picking up a paddle for the first time.

Three Courts, One Growing Community
The emergence of dedicated pickleball venues across the island suggests that the sport is gaining serious momentum.

Masey Pickleball Boracay is located inside CityMall Boracay. Currently the island's only indoor pickleball facility, it offers players a climate-protected environment that allows games to continue regardless of weather conditions. The venue has become a popular gathering point for both residents and visiting players, hosting regular open-play sessions and helping introduce newcomers to the sport.

Paddles Up Pickleball Academy is an open court located behind Timog Kiteboarding in Bulabog, making it the



HomeCourt: Where Pickleball Feels Like Family

BY PAULINE REITZER

Averille Sacapaño, who was born and raised in Boracay, is a pickleball and beach tennis pro player and coach. She shares how HomeCourt Pickleball began as a family dream.

“We were the only ones in our family playing pickleball,” she recalls. “The property belonged to a relative, and we encouraged them, especially my father, to build a dedicated court. Eventually, they fell in love with the sport too, and that's how HomeCourt was born.”

HomeCourt is regarded as one of Boracay's most welcoming pickleball venues. While players come for the courts, many stay for the community vibe. Open play starts at 5 p.m. and ends at midnight, but often stretches late into the night as everyone enjoys the company.

“We wanted everyone to feel welcome, whether it was their first time holding a paddle or they were already experienced players. Pickleball is one of the most social sports, so building a friendly and inclusive community has always been one of our priorities,” says Sacapaño.

That welcoming atmosphere extends

beyond the game. Players often stay after matches to share a free dinner prepared by the Sacapaño family, enjoy impromptu jam sessions and make new friends.

For those hesitant to try the sport, she offers this advice: “Just give it a try. You don't need a sports background to enjoy pickleball. Everyone starts somewhere, and the community is incredibly welcoming.”

A former competitive tennis player who later switched to beach tennis, Sacapaño admits she wasn't immediately sold on pickleball. But as she discovered its strategy, fast-paced rallies, and close-knit community, she found herself embracing the sport.

Her dedication led her to become the first professional pickleball athlete to represent Region VI. Looking ahead, she hopes pickleball will help showcase another side of the island.

“If we can inspire more people to play while bringing more tournaments and visitors here, it's a win for the sport, for our community, and for tourism.”

For HomeCourt, every match is about more than competition; it's about building a community, one game at a time. 🌿



The family behind Boracay HomeCourt: (left) Averille Sacapaño; (right) Keisha, KR and Samie Magro

perfect spot during kiting season and early morning sessions. Beyond providing court space, the academy focuses on introducing new players to the game while helping more experienced athletes refine their skills, further contributing to the sport's development on the island.

Boracay HomeCourt Pickleball is an open court located near Cagban and is the island's newest pickleball community. It provides another outdoor alternative for players who enjoy playing in the open air and has quickly attracted a growing membership of local and visiting athletes eager to join the sport thanks to the family ambiance it offers.

More than just a trend?

What makes pickleball different from many sports fads is its broad appeal. Children, parents, retirees and competitive athletes can all play together on the same court. The smaller playing area reduces physical strain while still providing a fast-paced and engaging workout.

The sport's inclusive nature has helped fuel its remarkable global growth, and Boracay appears to be following the same trajectory. Visitors who discover pickleball



From left to right: Paddles Up Boracay; Paddles Up Pickleball Academy; Boracay HomeCourt

during their vacation often return to play again, while residents are increasingly incorporating the sport into their weekly routines.

As participation continues to grow and more facilities emerge, the possibility of organized leagues, tournaments and youth development programs becomes increasingly realistic. 🌿

Masey Pickleball Boracay

- 📍 CityMall Boracay, 2nd Floor
- 🕒 Daily: 9 a.m.–10 p.m.
- 🔥 Open Play (all levels): Daily, mornings & late afternoons
- 💰 Open Play: ₱150 | Paddle rental: ₱100
- 💰 Court rental: ₱300/hour (max. 6 players)
- 💰 Paddle rental: ₱100
- 📱 Book through ReClub
- Facebook/Instagram: Masey Pickleball Boracay

Boracay HomeCourt

- 📍 Cagban Road, near Cagban Port
- 🔥 Open Play: 5 p.m. until midnight (reservation required)
- 💰 Open Play: ₱100 (with free home-cooked dinner)
- 💰 Court rental: ₱200/hour
- 💰 Paddle rental: ₱30
- 💡 Coaching available by reservation
- 📱 Book through ReClub
- Facebook: Boracay HomeCourt

Paddles Up Pickleball Academy

- 📍 Behind Timog Kiteboarding, Bulabog
- 🔥 Open Play: 6 p.m. (max. 25 players)
- 💰 Open Play: ₱150
- 💡 Coaching available by reservation
- ☎️ (0962) 284 8686
- Facebook: Paddles Up Pickleball Academy



World Senior Citizens' Day Special (August 21)

LIFESTYLE CHECKLIST

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

Growing older doesn't mean slowing down. In fact, many find that their later years bring greater perspective and freedom to enjoy life. In many ways, it can be the most rewarding stage of life. The key is maintaining habits that help you stay active and support physical and mental well-being. Whether you're in your 50s, 60s, 70s, or beyond, these simple lifestyle choices can help you to be at your best and ready to enjoy life to the fullest.

✔ Move Every Day

- Regular physical activity is one of the best investments you can make in your future health. Exercise helps maintain muscle strength, flexibility, balance and mobility, while also supporting heart health and mental well-being.
- Aim for at least 30 minutes of movement most days.
 - Focus on strengthening your legs, back and core muscles.
 - Try balance-building activities such as walking, tai chi, yoga or swimming.

Remember: consistency matters more than intensity. Even short walks and gentle stretching can make a meaningful difference over time.

✔ Know Your Medications

- As we age, it's common to take medications for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes or other conditions. While these medicines are important, some may cause dizziness, drowsiness or balance problems.
- Review your medications regularly with your doctor.
 - Ask about possible side effects and interactions.
 - Report any unusual symptoms promptly.

Healthy habits for adults 50 and above

- Keep an updated list of all medications and supplements you take.

✔ Protect Your Bones

- Strong bones are essential for maintaining an active lifestyle. Bone density naturally decreases with age, increasing the risk of fractures after a fall.
- Get enough calcium and vitamin D.
 - Include dairy products, leafy greens, fish and fortified foods in your diet.
 - Spend some time outdoors for natural vitamin D exposure.
 - Ask your doctor whether supplements are appropriate for you.

✔ Schedule Regular Eye Exams

- Good vision plays a vital role in everyday safety and quality of life. Changes in eyesight can happen gradually, making them easy to overlook.
- Have your eyes checked annually.
 - Keep eyeglass prescriptions updated.
 - Ensure your living spaces are well lit.
 - Report any sudden vision changes immediately.

✔ Take It Slow

- Many falls occur not because of serious hazards, but because people are rushing.
- Give yourself extra time when answering the door or phone.
 - Rise slowly from chairs and beds.
 - Use handrails whenever available.
 - Pause briefly before walking after standing up.

- A few extra seconds can prevent injuries that may take months to recover from.

✔ Go easy on Alcohol Consumption

- Alcohol can affect balance, judgment, reaction time and sleep quality. It may also

- interact with medications.
- Limit consumption, especially if you take prescription drugs.
 - Drink water regularly throughout the day.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol intake during social gatherings.

✔ Take Care of Your Skin

- As we age, hormonal changes can make skin drier, thinner, and more sensitive. A few simple habits can help keep skin healthy and comfortable.

Cleanse Gently

- Choose a moisturizing cleanser rather than harsh soaps that strip natural oils.

Moisturize Daily

- Apply a rich moisturizer while skin is still slightly damp after bathing to help lock in moisture.

Wear Sunscreen Every Day

- Protect your skin with a broad-spectrum sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher, rain or shine.
- Minimize Fine Lines**
- Skincare products formulated for mature skin can improve hydration and soften the appearance of fine lines.

Protect Your Hands

- Apply hand cream regularly and wear gloves when doing household or gardening tasks.

✔ Eat for Healthy Aging

- Good nutrition fuels every part of the body, from muscles and bones to the immune system and skin.
- Fill your plate with colorful fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants.
 - Include protein with every meal to help maintain muscle mass.
 - Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.
 - Soy-based foods may help some women manage menopausal changes.

✔ Manage Stress

- Emotional well-being is just as important



Photo-Illustration by TIME (Source image Alex Tihonov, Getty Images)

- as physical health. Chronic stress can affect sleep, memory, blood pressure and overall quality of life.

- Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, prayer, deep breathing or yoga.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Make time for hobbies and activities you enjoy.
- Prioritize rest and adequate sleep.

✔ Prevent Falls at Home

- Falls are one of the leading causes of injury among older adults, but many are preventable with simple changes. Because bones are weaker as we age, they can break more easily if you fall.

Make Your Home Safer

- Keep walkways and stairs free of clutter.
- Secure rugs and floor mats.
- Install non-slip mats in bathrooms.
- Use handrails and grab bars where needed.
- Improve lighting throughout the house.
- Store frequently used items within easy reach.
- Wear comfortable shoes with non-slip rubber soles.

- Small changes made today can have a big impact tomorrow. By staying active, eating well, caring for your body and creating a safe environment, you can enjoy greater independence, better health and a higher quality of life at every age. ✨

PEOPLE OF BORACAY

Miriam Quiambao-Roberto, Stronger Than Ever

BY PAULINE REITZER



Miriam Quiambao-Roberto with husband Ardy and their children Joshua, Elijah and Ziki

For many Filipinos, Miriam Quiambao-Roberto will always be remembered on the Miss Universe stage in 1999, representing the Philippines with grace and confidence and finishing as first runner-up. It was a moment that propelled her into the national spotlight and opened doors to a successful career in television, hosting and public speaking.

But more than two decades later, the woman behind the crown says her most meaningful role isn't one that earned applause from an audience.

It's motherhood. "Of all the chapters of my life, motherhood surprised me the most. They are my flesh and blood. I never imagined how much I could sacrifice for my children," Miriam reflects.

Today, life looks very different from her pageant years. Together with her husband, bestselling author and speaker Ardy Roberto, she manages several Airbnb properties, supports their ministry work and homeschools their two young sons.

In 2022, the family moved to Boracay to help establish the local chapter of Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF). Together with their children, they devoted themselves to serving the growing Christian community on the island. Though they have since returned to Manila, they continue to travel regularly to Boracay to nurture the relationships and ministry they helped establish.

Years ago, success meant something entirely different. Like many ambitious young professionals, she pursued achievements, financial security, popularity and recognition. "I wanted to be at the top of the top, and I achieved that," she recalls. Yet despite the fame and opportunities, something was missing.

Behind the glamour was a growing sense of emptiness. The breakdown of her first marriage sent her into one of the darkest periods of her life. The pain became so overwhelming that she struggled with depression and even contemplated ending her life.

Running became one of the first tools that helped her heal. The discipline of putting one foot in front of the other helped rebuild not only her physical strength but also her hope.

World Senior Citizens' Day Special (August 21)

The Fountain of Youth According to a Boracay Doctor

BY GENE LOVES ACOSTA

There's a specific kind of panic that hits when you zoom into a beach selfie under the sun and spot a line that wasn't there last season. For years, the assumed fix was a plane ticket away, in some glossy Makati clinic.

Dr. Marion Salaver-Bassig wants you to know that's no longer true. She's an ENT facial plastic surgeon and the medical director of **Salaver Clinics** in Boracay, which means



Navigating Midlife Changes During Menopause and Andropause

For Her (Menopause)

- Perimenopause can start in your late 30s to mid-40s. Track changes in your cycle, sleep, mood, hot flashes and energy levels.
- Ask about HRT before symptoms get severe, not after. An OB-GYN is the right person to have that conversation with. Bioidentical options and dosing have come a long way. It's worth a real conversation

- rather than ruling it out on old assumptions.
- Bone density drops faster post-menopause. Strength training plus calcium and vitamin D matter more now than they did in your twenties.
- Lower estrogen means drier skin and thinner hair. Richer moisturizers and retinoids (if your skin tolerates them) earn their place in the routine around now.

Despite returning to television and hosting a travel show, she still felt a deep sense of loneliness until a chance encounter with a friend led her back to her Christian faith. "It was the comfort of God that changed everything," she says.

Working with *The 700 Club* gave her a renewed sense of purpose. Through ministry, she rebuilt relationships, found direction, and eventually met the man who would become her husband.

Today, success means faith, family, peace and a life lived with purpose.

That same shift in perspective would later influence another important journey: her health.

Wake-Up Call

After the birth of her youngest child, Miriam found herself at her heaviest weight. Like many women, she tried various diets and repeatedly lost and regained weight. Then came a wake-up call: she discovered she was prediabetic.

Determined to make a change, she signed up for a 21-kilometer race in Boracay. A friend introduced her to a coaching and accountability program called Kaizen, and everything changed.

Over the next 100 days, Miriam committed herself fully to the process. She steadily lost weight, regained strength, and returned to her pre-pregnancy weight.

Beyond the weight loss, she noticed improvements in her mood, energy, confidence and mental clarity. By prioritizing her own health, she discovered she was also setting an example for her children.

Miriam learned to make time for exercise without sacrificing family life. "I realized that filling my own cup helped me become a better mom."

Perhaps the most meaningful realization came while running. "When I run and listen to worship music, that's when I feel most like



myself. It's my time with God," she says.

Fifty and Fearless

Turning 50 earlier this year became another milestone worth celebrating. To mark the occasion, she completed her first-ever marathon at The Bull Runner Dream Marathon in Alabang, something her younger self might never have imagined. And she's convinced that getting older isn't something to fear.

Today, she lifts weights not for immediate results but for the decades ahead. She wants strong bones at 60, independence at 80, and the ability to continue carrying her own groceries well into old age.

With longevity running in her family (her grandmother passed away just weeks before her 102nd birthday), Miriam hopes to enjoy many more years of travel, family, ministry and service.

Then she smiles. "The best is yet to come."

Today, Miriam Quiambao is no longer chasing crowns or public approval. She is chasing something far more enduring: a life filled with faith, purpose, strength and the people she loves.

And in many ways, that may be her greatest achievement yet. ✨

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NEWS

Malay Encourages Seniors to Avail of Benefits and Privileges

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE



Senior Health Tips PH (Facebook)

As the Philippines observes **National Senior Citizens Day** on August 21, the Municipal Government of Malay is encouraging senior citizens and their families to take advantage of the benefits and privileges provided under national laws, reaffirming its commitment to protecting the welfare and dignity of the town's elderly population.

National Senior Citizens Day honors the contributions of older Filipinos to their families, communities, and nation-building. In Malay, local officials continue to strengthen programs that promote active aging, healthcare, and social inclusion.

According to the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) in Malay, there are 1,809 indigent senior citizens in the municipality.

Senior citizens in Malay are entitled to a range of benefits under national laws and local ordinances, including:

Cash incentives for milestone birthdays, including those reaching ages 80, 85, 90,

95, and 100. Under local programs, senior citizens receive ₱90,000 upon reaching age 90, ₱30,000 from the local government upon reaching age 100, and an additional ₱100,000 from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under the Centenarians Act.

A 20% discount and VAT exemption on medicines, medical services, transportation, hotels, restaurants, recreation facilities, and other goods and services covered by the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010.

Monthly social pensions for qualified indigent senior citizens under DSWD programs.

Free medical and dental consultations, as well as access to health services through the Municipal Health Office.

Priority lanes in government offices, banks, hospitals, pharmacies, and commercial establishments.

PhilHealth coverage for qualified senior citizens to help reduce hospitalization and healthcare costs.

The Municipality of Malay also celebrates **Senior Citizens Month** every October through health services, recognition programs, recreational activities, and community events honoring the municipality's elderly residents.

Meanwhile, Malay Councilor Grengo Gelito, chair of the Committee on Social Services, said he has filed a proposed ordinance granting ₱10,000 burial assistance for indigent senior citizens. ✨

HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Lowdown on Salt and High-Sodium Diets

BY JULIANNA PATRICIA VARGA

Salt has been a kitchen staple worldwide for thousands of years. It enhances flavor, preserves food, and most importantly, helps the body function properly. Yet despite its essential role, salt often gets a bad reputation.

So how much do we actually need, and when does it become a problem?

Table salt is made up of sodium and chloride. Sodium is an essential mineral that helps regulate fluid balance, nerve signaling and muscle contractions. Without enough sodium, the body could not maintain proper hydration or blood pressure. However, the issue in modern diets is rarely deficiency, it is excess.

Sodium occurs naturally in foods such as milk, eggs, seafood and vegetables, but these foods usually contain relatively small amounts.

Most excess sodium in modern diets comes from processed foods. Bread, canned soups, sauces, instant noodles, frozen meals, chips, processed meats and fast food are among the biggest contributors. Even foods that do not taste particularly salty, such as pastries and packaged sandwiches, can contain surprisingly high amounts of

sodium. Condiments like soy sauce, ketchup, bouillon cubes and salad dressings are also major sources.

Sodium itself is not harmful in normal amounts. Problems arise when intake consistently exceeds the body's needs. According to the World Health Organization, adults should aim for less than 2,000 milligrams of sodium per day or the equivalent of one teaspoon of salt. However, average global intake is estimated to be more than double that amount.

The main concern with excessive sodium intake is its effect on blood pressure. Excess sodium causes the body to retain water, increasing the volume of fluid in the bloodstream. This places greater pressure on blood vessels and forces the heart to work harder. Over time, the risk of hypertension, stroke, heart disease and kidney disease increases.

That said, sodium sensitivity varies from person to person. Some individuals experience a significant blood pressure increase with high salt intake, while others are less affected. Older adults tend to be more sensitive to sodium's effects on blood pressure, for example. People who already have hypertension, kidney disease, or heart

failure should pay especially close attention to sodium consumption.

People taking blood pressure medications, particularly diuretics and vasodilators, should also keep sodium intake in check, as excess sodium can reduce the effectiveness of these treatments.

While there can be risks with high-sodium diets, there are situations where salt can also be beneficial. Athletes, manual laborers, or people living in hot climates lose sodium through sweat. In these cases, replacing sodium can help maintain hydration and prevent muscle cramps, dizziness or hyponatremia, a dangerous condition caused by sodium levels being too low. Similarly, individuals experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, or dehydration may temporarily require additional sodium to restore fluid balance.

Salt is not the enemy. In fact, the body depends on it. The challenge is finding the right balance. By limiting highly processed foods and making informed choices, most people can enjoy the benefits of salt without the health risks that come with too much of it.

Salt is essential, but as with many things in life, too much of a good thing can eventually become harmful. ✨

Low-Sodium Chicken Adobo

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 kg chicken, sliced into small pieces
- 3 dried bay leaves
- 60 mL low-sodium soy sauce (Marca Piña, Lee Kum Kee, Maggi less sodium soy sauce)
- 65 mL cane or white vinegar
- 10 garlic cloves (crushed)
- 400 mL water
- 15 mL cooking oil
- 2 g whole peppercorns

Instructions

- Combine chicken, soy sauce and crushed garlic in a bowl and mix well. Marinate for at least one hour.
- Pour the cooking oil into a pot. Add the garlic from the marinade and sauté until brown.
- Add in chicken and marinade, peppercorns and bay leaves. Pour in water. Once boiling, cover the pot and simmer for 30 minutes or until the chicken is tender.
- Pour in vinegar. Let boil before stirring. Once boiling, mix and allow to simmer for another 15 minutes.

Note: For a thicker sauce, simmer longer without a cover. For more sauce, shorten the simmering time.



BSN CONSUMER TIPS

- ❗ **Don't be fooled by "sea salt."** It may sound healthier, but sea salt and table salt contain similar amounts of sodium.
- 📖 **Read nutrition labels.** A product can taste only mildly salty yet still be high in sodium. Check the sodium content per serving.
- 🚫 **Watch out for hidden sodium.** Bread, canned soups, instant noodles, processed meats, sauces, and salad dressings are often major sources.
- 💧 **Rinse canned foods.** Washing canned beans and vegetables can help reduce sodium content.
- 🌿 **Flavor foods naturally.** Use herbs, spices, garlic, ginger, calamansi, or vinegar to enhance taste without adding extra salt.
- 🍴 **When dining out, ask for less sauce.** Many restaurant dishes contain most of their sodium in sauces, broths, and seasonings.

NEWS

NGCP Expects Tight Electricity Supply for Remainder of 2026

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) has admitted that electricity supply in the Visayas will remain tight for the rest of 2026 due to rising demand and limited available reserves.

Over the past several weeks, the NGCP has placed the Visayas Grid under Red Alert on multiple occasions after operating reserves fell below the minimum level required to maintain a stable power system. The alerts were triggered by a combination of forced power plant outages, scheduled maintenance activities and increasing electricity demand.

NGCP spokesperson Reagan Alcantara told *Boracay Sun News* in a phone interview underway to improve grid conditions and return the Visayas Grid from Red Alert to Yellow Alert status.

A Red Alert is declared when available power supply is insufficient to meet consumer demand and reserve requirements. Under such conditions, manual load dropping or rotational power interruptions may be implemented to prevent a widespread grid collapse.

For Boracay, Alcantara said a key component of the island's long-term power strategy is the ₱5.27-billion Nabas-Caticlan-Boracay 138-kilovolt Transmission Line Project. Scheduled for completion in August 2026, "the project is expected to significantly strengthen transmission capacity and improve the reliability of electricity supply for the island," he said.

NGCP continues to conduct real-time monitoring of the transmission network,



assess electricity demand and coordinate with power generators and distribution utilities, including the Aklan Electric Cooperative (AKELCO), to maximize available capacity and prepare contingency measures.

NGCP emphasized that the availability of sufficient electricity depends largely on the amount of power generated and supplied to the grid.

For his part, AKELCO General Manager Atty. Ariel Gepty said during the 43rd General Membership Assembly on May 16 that they will continue to implement infrastructure upgrades in Boracay, including the replacement and relocation of electric poles, rehabilitation of aging facilities, and preventive maintenance activities aimed at improving system reliability and minimizing power interruptions.

Despite volatility in global fuel markets earlier this year caused by tensions in the Middle East, the DOE said its coordinated response helped avert potential electricity rate increases of up to ₱7 per kilowatt-hour. AKELCO's June residential rate remained among the lowest in Western Visayas. ✨

ISLAND GUIDE

BSN Guide to Indoor Fun and What's New in Boracay

BY GENE LOVES ACOSTA

Somewhere between the third sunburn and the fourth sudden downpour, every visitor to Boracay realizes the beach isn't an all-day activity. Whether you're escaping the midday heat, riding out a Habagat shower, or simply looking for a break from the sand, the island offers plenty of indoor hideaways worth discovering.

The 19th Hole

Corner Diniwid Road, Brgy. Balabag, Mobile: (0945) 106 2711
Open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Rates: ₱700/hour (solo); ₱1,100/hour (2 players); ₱1,300/hour (3 players); ₱1,700/hour (4 players)



Vibe: All the sleek appeal of a private clubhouse wrapped in a warm, social atmosphere. Built as much for serious practice as for a relaxed night out.

Details: You can leave your clubs at home; premium rentals are included in the bay rate. The lounge houses three high-tech simulators that track swing speed and ball flight with brutal, hilariously honest accuracy. If your golf game is more "happy hour" than PGA Tour, one bay doubles as a multi-sport arcade with 12 different games. You can switch from swinging golf clubs to kicking a football, pitching a baseball, shooting basketball hoops, or (because why not?) surviving a zombie apocalypse. When a major match is on, the simulators transform into giant viewing screens, turning the space into a lively sports bar.

Tip: Traveling solo? Look out for their monthly Golf Social, where you can show up alone, grab a cold beer and get folded right into a group game.

Museum Shine

Mani Road near Shoppes @Station B Mall
Mobile: (0970) 655 981
Open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Rates: ₱1,500 for adults (17 and above); 50% off for students (13-16); free for

kids (0-12) accompanied by an adult. 20% discount for residents, seniors and PWDs with valid ID



Vibe: Boracay's first digital, interactive, and immersive light museum trades the usual sun-and-sand aesthetic for neon lights, mirrors, and spaces that feel worlds away from the beach.

Details: Inside, the experience unfolds like a digital dreamscape. You'll first step into a room mirrored room where waterfalls cascade down the walls and flowers bloom beneath your feet. From there, a massive wrap-around screen surrounds you for a compressed, fast-paced world tour. At the center is an interactive cube that transforms with your movements, shifting from a moonlit dinosaur world to a glowing crystal palace. Perhaps the most surreal space is the digital beach, where a hyper-realistic shoreline transitions from high noon to deep moonlight while you sit and watch. The journey ends beneath hundreds of suspended glowing orbs that ripple and change color with your every step.

Tip: Every room here is built for photos, so budget more time than you think you'll need.

After Boracay

Sunflower Building, Main Road, 3rd Floor
Mobile: (0975) 183 9398
Check out the weekly schedule at afterboracay.com/timetable
Rates: Drop-in classes start at ₱ 1,200; class passes are available



Vibe: Where the rest of the island runs on high energy, this yoga and wellness studio runs on a different frequency: slow, grounded and restorative.

Details: Classes are capped at eight guests and led by a resident instructor from Rishikesh, India. A standout is Island Flow, a sunset Vinyasa class timed to the moment the island exhales for the day. The daily lineup also features a rotating mix of other restorative and strength-focused sessions. Mats and props are provided, so just show up.

Tip: Traveling with a group or planning an intentional celebration? Because the studio is so beautifully intimate, it is the ultimate spot for a private booking. You can reserve the entire space for a custom, small-group movement session completely tailored to your crew's pace.

Boracay Cooking Class

Sip Spot, Tulubhan,
Mobile: (0998) 952 0560, (0968) 760 4790
Two slots daily: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Rates: ₱2,500 (solo); ₱4,000 (2 pax); ₱6,000 (3 pax); ₱2,000 (per additional guest)



Vibe: The class's very first instructor was a local mother, driven simply by her deep love for cooking for her children. Today, that same genuine warmth is the heartbeat of every session.

Details: Groups stay small and hands-on. You start with a walk through a local market, learning to pick out what's fresh that day, then head into the kitchen to chop, sauté and simmer through a four-course menu. Pick your track: The Classics (Chicken Adobo, Bicol Express, Banana Turon), The Comfort Set (Chicken Tinola, Lumpia Gulay, Camote Cue), or The Savory & Sour Set (Fish Sinigang, Dynamite Spring Rolls). Everyone sits down together at the end to eat what they made, and you leave with a class freebie and the recipes to try again at home.

Tip: Want to extend the afternoon? For an extra ₱1,500 per person, you can add on a Cocktail Class to shake up a few drinks and toast your newfound kitchen skills. ✨

BEACH SAFETY REMINDERS

MDRRMO lifeguards are stationed at towers along White Beach and other beaches. However, your safety depends on your alertness to warning flags and on following lifeguard instructions.

- Check the warning flags as soon as you arrive at the beach or approach a lifeguard station.
- Swim only in **designated areas marked by red and yellow flags.**
- A **red flag means NO SWIMMING**, even if you are a strong swimmer.
- If no flags are visible, ask a lifeguard about water conditions before entering the sea.



NEWS BORACAY-CATICLAN BOAT FARE ADVISORY

As previously promised by Caticlan-Boracay Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CBT MPC), effective July 1, Boracay-Caticlan and vice versa boat fares have been reverted back to ₱50.

A provisional fare increase matrix took effect last April 16, triggered by rising diesel prices and operational expenses affecting motorized banca operations servicing Boracay, due to the Middle East oil crisis.

For those with valid IDs, discounted fares can also be available. Discount Cards for Boracay workers may be availed from C B T M P C .

Interested applicants may submit their request to the CBTMPC Office in Caticlan, with a card fee of ₱200. Requirement: Working Permit from BPLO. ✨



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DIGITAL LIFE

Too Young to Scroll

Should the Philippines set a legal age for social media and AI before technology shapes our children more than we do?

BY PAULINE REITZER

When Austria announced plans to ban social media for children under 14 in March 2026, it joined a growing number of countries trying to better protect young people online. Australia had already made headlines by becoming the first country to ban social media for children under 16. France now requires parental consent for children under 15 to create social media accounts, while the United Kingdom has introduced stricter online safety rules that require platforms to do more to protect minors.

These moves raise an important question: Should the Philippines do the same?

The debate is no longer whether social media affects children, but how best to protect them. In a country where social media is deeply woven into daily life, that question feels more important than ever.

Growing Up Online

Today's children have never known a world without the internet. They learn, play, communicate and express themselves online, often from an early age.

Social media can help young people stay connected, learn new skills and express themselves creatively.

Cyberbullying, misinformation, online predators, unhealthy comparisons and excessive screen time have become common concerns for parents and educators. Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged, constantly serving up content



CookCenter.org

chosen by algorithms.

For children and teenagers whose brains are still developing, spending hours in these digital spaces can affect attention spans, emotional well-being, self-esteem and sleep.

Artificial Intelligence

As parents are beginning to understand social media, a new technology has arrived: artificial intelligence, or AI.

AI tools can write essays, create images, imitate voices, answer questions and even hold conversations.

Like social media, AI can help children learn, explore ideas and solve problems. But it also creates new risks.

AI can be used to create fake photos and videos, spread misinformation, impersonate real people and power increasingly sophisticated scams. Child protection groups in the Philippines have also warned that AI is making it easier for predators and criminals to create harmful content involving minors.

Lawmakers and child welfare advocates are exploring ways to protect children from AI-generated abuse, exploitation and deepfakes.

Even everyday actions can carry risks. Earlier this year, child advocates warned parents to think carefully before uploading their children's photos to AI platforms, noting that images can be altered, reused, or shared in ways families never intended.

Can Laws Solve the Problem?

Supporters of age restrictions argue that

children deserve the same protections online that they receive offline.

Like driving, alcohol, and gambling, supporters argue that social media and AI should have age-based safeguards.

Critics argue that age restrictions can be difficult to enforce. Teenagers often find ways

around age checks, while stricter verification systems can raise privacy concerns. Some experts also worry that bans alone do not teach children the digital skills they will need throughout their lives.

Unlike Austria, Australia, France and the UK, the Philippines has not yet proposed a nationwide minimum age law for social media. Still, concerns about children's online safety continue to grow. Child protection advocates warn that social media and AI are creating new avenues for scams, exploitation and harmful content.

Recent events have also brought the conversation closer to home. Following the tragic school shooting in Tacloban City earlier this year, discussions about youth mental health, cyberbullying, online influences and access to violent digital content resurfaced nationwide. While experts caution against linking such incidents to any single cause, the tragedy renewed concerns about the impact of online experiences on young people.

As other countries test new laws and protections, should it introduce age restrictions, strengthen digital safety education, increase parental involvement, or pursue a combination of all three?

Perhaps the real issue is not access, but whether we are giving children the guidance, supervision, and skills they need to navigate these technologies safely.

Technology is now part of childhood. The challenge is making sure children remain in control of it, not the other way around.

Protecting Kids from Social Media and AI

A Practical Guide for Parents

BY PAULINE REITZER

1. Delay social media when possible

The later children enter social media, the better equipped they are to handle online pressures and risks. For example, Messenger Kids allows children to use the Facebook app under a parent's account with strict rules.

2. Keep devices out of the dining table and bedrooms at night

Creating screen-free spaces helps protect mental health, supports sleep quality and family communication.

3. Talk before problems arise

Discuss cyberbullying, online predators, misinformation, deepfakes and scams before children encounter them.

4. Teach the "Pause Before You Post" rule

Remind children that anything shared online can be permanent.

5. Monitor AI use

Know which AI tools your children use and remind them never to share personal information, photos, addresses or school details.

6. Explain deepfakes

Teach children that videos, photos and voice recordings can be manipulated and may not always be real.

7. Set family tech agreements

Establish clear rules for screen time, downloads, privacy and acceptable online behavior.

8. Use parental controls but don't rely on them alone

Technology helps but communication remains the strongest safeguard.

9. Encourage offline activities

Sports, hobbies, reading, volunteering and face-to-face friendships help build resilience and reduce dependence on online validation.

10. Be a role model

Children often mirror the digital habits they see at home.

Bottom line: The goal is not to raise children who fear technology, but children who use it wisely.

INDULGE BSN RECOMMENDS

Top 10 Comfort Dishes

Rain or shine, these top picks will hit the spot and lift your spirits!

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO



Cansi Soup at Island Chicken Inasal

The Ilonggo cousin of *bulalo*, Cansi combines beef shank, corn, *atsuite* and the distinctly sour *batwan* fruit. Rich, hearty and deeply comforting, this bowl delivers layers of flavor that linger long after the last spoonful.



Grilled Cheese Sandwich with Soup at Lemoni Café

Lemoni Café elevates a classic with multigrain bread layered with Gruyère, Black Jack cheddar and raclette. Served with the soup of the day or tomato salad plus house-made potato chips, it is comfort food at its finest.



Kimchi-jjigae at Donenoo

Served bubbling hot in a traditional Korean pot, Donenoo's Kimchi-jjigae combines smoky pork and well-fermented kimchi in a broth rich with heat and umami. Unlimited Korean side dishes make it an especially satisfying meal on a rainy day.



Molo Soup at Lazy Dog B&B

Comforting and familiar, Lazy Dog's Molo Soup features homemade pork dumplings and flat egg noodles in a warm chicken broth. Topped with garlic, spring onions and spices, it is the culinary equivalent of a cozy afternoon indoors.



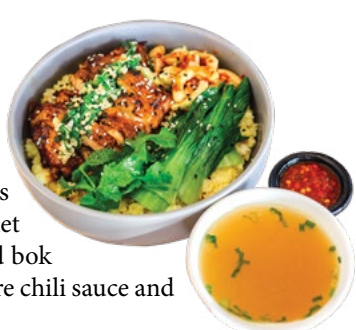
Mussels Marinière at Bistro Des Amis

A generous serving of imported black mussels cooked in a classic creamy white wine sauce, accompanied by Belgian fries. Simple, elegant and satisfying.



Pho Bo (Beef) at Hanoi Pho

This Vietnamese classic pairs soft rice noodles and tender beef slices in a fragrant, slow-simmered broth. Served with bean sprouts, Thai basil, lime and chili, it is a comforting bowl made even better with a touch of sriracha and hoisin sauce.



Roasted Hainanese Chicken Rice at Epic Boracay

A complete meal and a year-round favorite, this dish features poached and roasted chicken thigh fillet topped with ginger-leek sauce, spicy cucumber and bok choy. It comes with fragrant Hainanese rice, signature chili sauce and a flavorful broth on the side.



Sesame Chicken Soup at Bun Bun

A local favorite, this comforting soup combines minced chicken and shiitake mushrooms in a silky pork broth packed with umami. A hint of Sichuan pepper adds gentle warmth, while sesame oil and fresh cilantro provide balance and aroma.



Tom Yum Goong at Congas

Known for its authentic Thai cuisine, Congas serves a flavorful Tom Yum Goong with shrimp and mussels in an aromatic hot-and-sour broth infused with lemongrass, Thai basil, kaffir lime leaves and chili. Hand-squeezed coconut milk adds richness without dulling its vibrant flavors.



Tonkotsu Ramen at Zuzu Ramen

Tucked along Bulabog Back Road, Zuzu Ramen (inspired by the sound of a good slurp) serves a comforting Tonkotsu Ramen with a rich, slow-simmered pork broth, springy noodles, tender chashu and a soft-yolked *ajitama*. Best enjoyed with a side of pan-seared gyoza, crisp on the outside and juicy within.

Hot Thai Kitchen

Top 5 Island Wraps & Flatbreads

Globetrotting, one warm flatbread at a time

BY JAZ MARA

Mexico

If you crave aromatic Mexican flavors, **Tres Amigos** in D'Mall is worth a visit. Their **Birria Tacos** (P565) feature three crisp tacos filled with tender, pressure-cooked beef, cheese, onions and cilantro, served with a rich consommé that is deeply flavorful with just the right amount of heat. Another standout is the **Chimichanga** (P525), packed with your choice of protein, Mexican rice, beans, vegetables and cheese, then topped with salsa and sour cream. A touch of mango on the side balances the savory flavors perfectly.



Greece

Also located in D'Mall, **Cyma Greek Taverna** serves excellent pita bread that perfectly complements its fillings. The **Chicken Gyro** (P230) combines chicken, tzatziki, onions, tomatoes and lettuce in a warm pita wrap finished with honey mustard and parsley. The **Chicken Souvlaki** (P545), featuring grilled chicken marinated in Mediterranean spices, is equally satisfying when wrapped in pita with vegetables and lemon-garlic yogurt.



Middle East

The **Falafel Pita** (P260) from **Falafel Boracay** has become a favorite for good reason. The falafels are flavorful and perfectly crisp, while the garlic mayo, tahini and hot sauce add extra character. The handmade pita, prepared fresh daily and never frozen, is arguably the star of the dish. Their **beef** (P290) and **chicken shawarmas** (P260) are equally enjoyable, filled with tender, caramelized meat, fresh vegetables and generous amounts of sauce.



India

Indian cuisine offers many types of flatbread, and **Little Taj's Stuffed Paratha** (P300) is a delicious introduction. This flaky flatbread is filled with chicken, served with tikka masala sauce and cut into triangles for easy sharing. Well-spiced, hearty and satisfying, it works equally well as a snack with friends or a meal on its own.

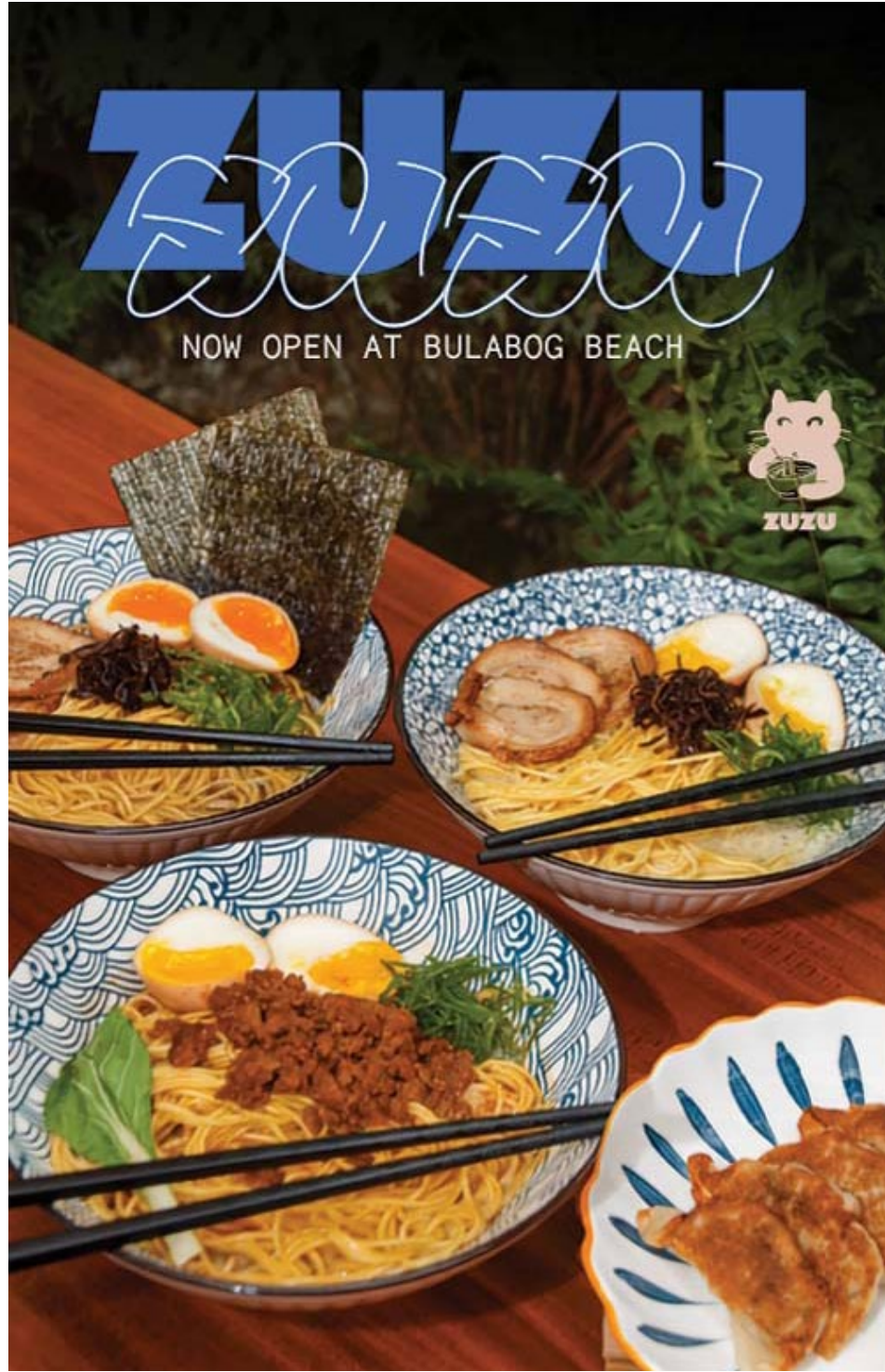


Morocco

Kasbar along White Beach showcases the classic pairing of spinach and cheese with its **Creamy Spinach Pita Pizza** (P499). Rich spinach sauce and mozzarella are layered over baked pita bread, creating a creamy, comforting dish with satisfying cheese pulls in every bite. Pair it with a refreshing cocktail and enjoy the beachfront view for the full experience.



INDULGE is independently curated by the BSN editorial team and presented in no particular order. Featured establishments are selected through editorial and community recommendations, then sampled and reviewed by our writers and editors. **Jaz Mara** is a Boracay-based restaurateur and food enthusiast.



ENVIRONMENT

RESPONDING TO MARINE MAMMAL STRANDINGS

What to do if you encounter a stranded marine mammal

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

Many Boracay residents and tourists were initially delighted when a false killer whale (a species of oceanic dolphin) was spotted swimming near Cagban Port on June 8. Witnesses described the animal as appearing healthy as it circled the waters, drawing curious onlookers eager to catch a glimpse of the rare visitor.

What began as a rare and exciting wildlife encounter, however, soon turned into concern as the marine mammal repeatedly circled the area and moved unusually close to shore.

Witnesses gathered along the waterfront to watch the marine mammal, unsure whether it was simply passing through or in distress. Fortunately, the incident ended well. The mammal momentarily beached but eventually found its way back to deeper waters.

The sighting nevertheless served as a timely reminder of how important it is for the public to know what to do when marine mammals such as dolphins, whales, or dugongs are found in shallow waters, injured, entangled or stranded.

Representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), who responded to reports of the sighting, consulted Boracay-based marine biologist Haron Deo Vargas on the proper way to handle such situations. Vargas is part of the Philippine Marine Mammal Stranding Network and has helped conduct training seminars for Boracay's first responders on proper marine mammal stranding response.

To help educate the public, Vargas shared guidance from the *Philippine Aquatic Wildlife*

Rescue and Response Manual Series: Marine Mammals, a collaborative publication of the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI), DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, and GIZ.

According to the manual, a marine mammal stranding occurs when an animal such as a dolphin, whale, or dugong becomes trapped on a beach, in shallow water, or outside its normal habitat and is unable to return on its own.

Marine mammals may strand for many reasons. They may be sick, injured, exhausted, disoriented, entangled in fishing gear, affected by pollution, disturbed by underwater noise, struck by boats, or impacted by extreme weather conditions. Sometimes healthy animals may follow a sick member of their group into shallow waters.

Whatever the cause, experts stress that stranded marine mammals need professional assistance.

For many, the first instinct is to approach, touch, push, or attempt to rescue the animal themselves. However, the manual emphasizes that **marine mammal response should be handled only by trained and certified responders from DA-BFAR and DENR or authorized partner organizations.**

A live stranded animal is often under significant stress. Crowding around it, making loud noises, taking flash photographs, or attempting to handle it can increase that stress and potentially worsen its condition.

Proper response is important not only for the animal's welfare but also for public safety.



Screen shot from Malayan Alah

Some stranded animals may carry diseases, suffer from injuries, or react unpredictably when frightened.

The manual also notes that response efforts have several goals: helping the animal, preventing further harm, protecting the public, and gathering information that can improve future conservation efforts.

For ordinary citizens, the best way to help is surprisingly simple: stay calm, keep your distance, prevent crowds from gathering around the animal, and immediately contact the proper authorities.

Public awareness plays an important role in marine mammal conservation. Every incident provides an opportunity for communities to learn more about these protected species and understand why they deserve protection.

As Boracay continues to welcome both people and wildlife, knowing what to do during a marine mammal emergency can make a meaningful difference. Sometimes the most helpful action is not to intervene, but to call the right people and give trained responders the space they need to do their work. 🌿

MARINE MAMMAL EMERGENCY

Simple Response Protocol for the Public

👁️ **STEP 1: Observe from a distance**
Do not touch, ride, feed or attempt to move the animal.

📞 **STEP 2: Call authorities immediately**
Report the sighting to DENR, BFAR, barangay officials or the municipal government.

🚫 **STEP 3: Keep crowds away**
Help maintain a safe distance and discourage people from gathering around the animal.

🔊 **STEP 4: Keep noise levels down**
Avoid shouting, loud music, flash photography, or activities that may stress the animal.

🚶 **STEP 5: Keep access to the sea clear**
Do not block trained responders from reaching the animal or accessing the shoreline.

🕒 **STEP 6: Wait for trained responders**
Marine mammal rescue should only be conducted by qualified personnel.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

DENR-Boracay

☎️ (0921) 319 8438

☎️ (0951) 426 4938

☎️ (036) 288 9727

Remember:

The goal is to protect both the animal and the public. When in doubt, report the incident and let trained responders take over.

World Suicide Prevention Day Special (September 10)

SURPRISING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

Suicide Prevention Month and World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10) serve as important reminders that not all struggles are visible.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) multi-year theme, "Changing the Narrative," is a call to action to shift from a culture of silence, shame and misunderstanding to one of open discussion, empathy and support. It aims to inspire communities, governments, and individuals to challenge stigma and foster environments where people feel safe seeking help.

If you or someone you know is struggling with depression, we urge you to ask for help.

Depression doesn't always look the way we expect. It can manifest in unexpected ways that are often hidden in everyday habits and behaviors. Sometimes, it appears in subtle or surprising forms, such as changes in daily routines, irritability, or even forced cheerfulness.

In this article, we explore some lesser-known signs of depression. Recognizing these red flags can be the first step toward healing and may help a loved one get the support they need.

Here are 12 signs to watch out for:

1. Shopping sprees

Is your shopping out of control? Find yourself covering up your spending? For some people who are depressed, it is not uncommon for compulsive buying (in stores or online) to serve as a distraction or self-esteem booster. But "retail therapy" only offers temporary relief and could also be a sign of mania in bipolar disorder.

2. Heavy drinking

Nearly a third of people with major

depression struggle with alcohol abuse. If you feel that you need to drink to cope with anxiety and depression, you may be one of them. While a drink may tend to ease anxiety or sadness, alcohol is a depressant that can worsen symptoms and increase their frequency.

3. Forgetfulness

Feeling foggy or forgetful? Chronic stress and depression can raise cortisol levels, which may affect memory and learning. Older adults seem more vulnerable, but the good news is that treating depression may also help improve depression-related memory problems.

4. Excessive internet use

Do you prefer online interactions to real-life connections? If screen time begins to replace real-world activities, whether through gaming, pornography, social media, or endless scrolling, it may be a red flag. Studies have linked excessive internet use with higher rates of depression and social withdrawal.

5. Binge eating and obesity

Depression has been linked to binge eating and abdominal weight gain, particularly among young and middle-aged adults. Addressing depression can often help restore healthier eating patterns.

6. Shoplifting

About a third of shoplifters suffer from depression. For some people who feel powerless from depression, shoplifting provides temporary relief and a rush to counter depression's emotional "numbness." In these cases, the emotional experience often matters more than the item being stolen.

7. Chronic back pain

Do you have a backache that won't go away? Persistent back pain can sometimes be linked to depression. Studies have found a strong connection between the two, yet depression often goes unrecognized because many people do not associate it with physical pain. At the same time, living with chronic pain can increase the risk of developing depression.

8. Risky sexual behavior

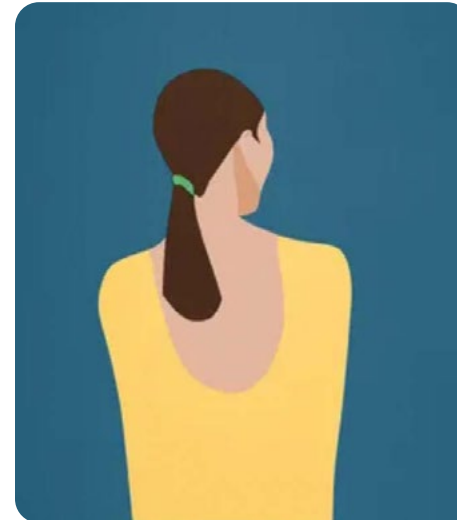
Although depression is commonly associated with a reduced sex drive, it can also lead to impulsive or risky sexual behavior as a coping mechanism. This may include unsafe sex, infidelity, or sexual obsession, and can signal deeper emotional distress.

9. Exaggerated emotions

Often, people who are depressed show little emotional expression. Other times, they show too much. They can be suddenly irritable or explosive. They may express exaggerated feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worry, or fear. If someone's emotional patterns suddenly shift, depression may be at play.

10. Gambling problems

Gambling can create feelings of excitement and anticipation. However, compulsive gambling may be a sign of depression or gambling disorder. Problem gamblers are significantly more likely to experience depression and alcohol abuse. Many report feeling anxious or depressed before they began gambling. While gambling may provide a temporary rush, it does not address the underlying causes of depression.



Marta Lebek/Stocksy

11. Smoking

Having trouble quitting smoking? Depression can double a person's likelihood of smoking. According to the CDC, heavy smoking (more than a pack a day) and lighting up within five minutes of waking are common among smokers with depression. While depressed smokers may find it more difficult to quit, they can succeed. Smoking-cessation programs that incorporate approaches used in depression treatment, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and certain medications, may be particularly effective.

12. Neglecting Self-Care

Skipping basic self-care habits like brushing teeth, wearing a seatbelt, or managing health conditions can signal a deeper emotional struggle. As depression improves, people often find it easier to care for themselves and maintain healthy routines. 🌿

Disclaimer: This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician for personalized care and treatment.

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ISLAND EVENTS

BORACAY VETERINARY MISSION RETURNS FOR ITS FIFTH YEAR

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

The annual Boracay Veterinary Mission is set to return for its fifth consecutive year, bringing together veterinary professionals and local government partners in a continuing effort to promote responsible pet ownership and keep Boracay rabies-free.

The initiative is organized by the Vet Mission Boracay team in partnership with the LGU Office of the Municipal Agriculturist of Malay. Participating organizations include the Office of the Provincial Veterinarian of Aklan, the Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA), and the Philippine Animal Hospital Association (PAHA).

As part of Boracay's goal of becoming a 100% rabies-free island, this year's mission will introduce a new identification system for vaccinated dogs. Through the support of Vet Mission Boracay and Dr. Deyven, dogs that already have collars will receive red vaccination tags, while those without collars will be provided with red collars. The system will make it easier for residents and authorities to identify vaccinated animals.

Organizers also hope to further strengthen animal welfare management on the island by introducing microchip tagging by 2027.

This year's mission will run for four days, beginning in Barangay Yapak and concluding in the Municipality of Malay. Participating veterinarians will remain on-site for an additional day to provide post-operative care and monitor animals that may require further attention following surgery.

Residents are encouraged to take advantage of the free veterinary services and support the island's ongoing efforts to promote animal health, responsible pet ownership, and rabies prevention. 🌿

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AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

Let's be responsible pet owners and care for the animals that live among us. Bring your dogs and cats for free neutering, spaying and rabies vaccination this August. Lets continue to keep Boracay Rabies-free.

SCHEDULE	
August 31, Monday	Yapak Plaza
September 1, Tuesday	Balabag Covered Court
September 2, Wednesday	Manoc-manoc Covered Court
September 3, Thursday	Malay Covered Court

Email: vetmissionboracay@gmail.com
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NEWS | DEEP DIVE

Boracay Eyes Better Emergency Response Coordination

BY RICA VELASCO

An emergency involving an 11-month-old infant has prompted discussions about Boracay's emergency response system. This includes response times at the scene and the transfer of patients to hospitals on the island and the mainland.

The issue started as a complaint from Boracay resident Cris Cahilig. It has since grown into a wider discussion involving the Municipal Government of Malay, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO), the Sangguniang Bayan and the Commission on Audit.

On May 3, an infant suffering from seizure activity needed urgent transfer from the Ciriac S. Tirol Hospital (CSTH) to Kalibo for further medical evaluation. According to Cahilig's complaint, hospital staff told the family that coordination with the receiving hospital had already been completed.

Transportation through the MDRRMO had also been arranged. The ambulance did not immediately arrive, prompting the family to make a follow-up call.

In her complaint, Cahilig said the delay exposed weaknesses in Boracay's emergency referral process.

She questioned communication between agencies, dispatch procedures, response times, contingency planning and the fees collected for emergency transport. She submitted the complaint to the Municipal Government on May 6. It was later taken up during a Committee of the Whole hearing before the Sangguniang Bayan, held on May 14.

MDRRMO released its own explanation of the incident.

The office said the situation came down to a communication gap, not negligence or refusal to respond. Dispatch records show the request for transport assistance was received at approximately 6:42 p.m.



Participants at the Committee of the Whole hearing on May 14

DENGUE FEVER: What You Need to Know During the Rainy Season

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

With the rainy season upon us, be vigilant about dengue prevention. Dengue fever is a viral infection transmitted by female *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which thrive in tropical climates and breed in stagnant water. Cases typically rise during the rainy months, when frequent rainfall creates more breeding sites around homes and communities.

There is still no specific antiviral cure for dengue, so early consultation, proper hydration, and close monitoring are crucial to prevent severe complications. Dengue remains a major public health concern in the Philippines, where thousands of infections are reported every year.

The good news is that the country has seen a significant decline in cases this year. According to the Department of Health (DOH), dengue cases nationwide from January to May 2026 are 56% lower than during the same period in 2025. Health officials attribute the decrease to sustained community clean-up efforts and the continued promotion of anti-dengue campaigns.

Even with this encouraging trend, health authorities warn that the risk increases during the rainy season. Preventing mosquito bites and eliminating breeding sites remain the most effective ways to protect yourself.

Recognizing the Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 3 to 14 days after infection and may include:

- High fever
- Severe headache, especially behind the eyes
- Muscle and joint pain
- Skin rash, which often appears as the fever subsides

Most cases resolve within 2 to 7 days. However, some may progress to severe

dengue, formerly known as dengue hemorrhagic fever, which can be life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention.

What To Do

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Get adequate rest
- Use paracetamol for fever and pain relief
- Avoid NSAIDs such as aspirin and ibuprofen to avoid risk of bleeding

Department of Health's 4S Strategy

- **Search and destroy** mosquito breeding grounds by eliminating stagnant water and water-holding containers.
- **Self-protection** through the use of insect repellent, mosquito screens and protective clothing
- **Seek early consultation** if symptoms develop.
- **Support spraying or fogging** in hotspot areas when recommended by health authorities.

Early detection, proper medical care and preventive measures remain the best defenses against dengue fever.

The DOH further reminds the public to stay alert against W.I.L.D. illnesses during the rainy season: **Waterborne diseases, Influenza, Leptospirosis, and Dengue**. Protect yourself by wearing boots and rain gear in flood-prone areas, drinking safe water, eliminating mosquito-breeding sites, and following the DOH's 4S dengue prevention measures. 🌿

DISCLAIMER: This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Consult a physician if you suspect dengue or experience severe symptoms.

BSN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Aria Gelato
D'Talipapa Branch

Aria Gelato Opens New D'Talipapa Branch in Boracay

Aria Gelato has officially opened its newest branch at D'Talipapa, Boracay, bringing its signature Italian gelato experience to one of the island's busiest destinations.

Established in 2011, Aria Gelato is known for its handcrafted gelato made with quality ingredients and a wide selection of flavors loved by both locals and tourists. The new branch offers guests a refreshing stop for gelato while enjoying the vibrant atmosphere of D'Talipapa.

Complementing the gelato offerings are coffee, cakes, and pastries inspired by Café del Sol, one of Boracay's favorite beachfront cafés serving guests since 2003.

With its warm and inviting space, Aria Gelato D'Talipapa provides another destination for visitors looking to enjoy sweet treats and memorable moments in Boracay. The new branch reflects the brand's continued commitment to sharing authentic flavors and exceptional experiences with every guest.

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