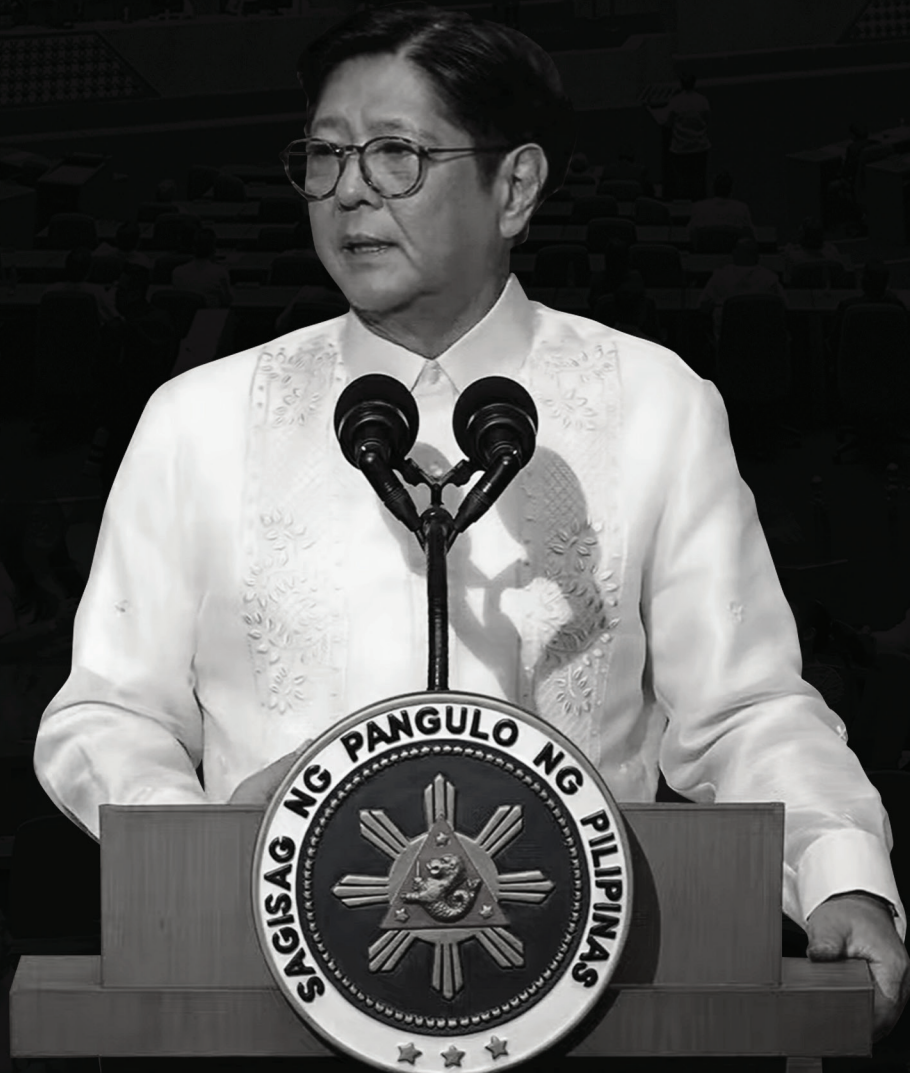




A BRIEFER ON STATE OF THE NATION 2025

A review of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr.'s
Fourth State of the Nation Address, key leadership
shifts, and implementation focus



Overview

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. delivered his fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 28, 2025, lasting one hour and eleven minutes, at the Batasang Pambansa Complex in Quezon City. As he enters the second half of his six-year term, following an election that favored candidates aligned with rival factions, the President acknowledged his administration’s achievements by noting the need to further improve the delivery and speed of government services.

The President, together with First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos, arrived via helicopter at 3:30 p.m. They were welcomed by Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero, Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, and other lawmakers, including his son Majority Floor Leader Ferdinand Alexander “Sandro” Marcos.

The Continued Rift

Notable in the aftermath of the widening rift between the Marcos and Duterte political clans, Vice President Sara Duterte was absent from the SONA for the second year in a row. This time, attending a Filipino community gathering in South Korea to call for the release of her father, former President Rodrigo Duterte, from detention. Also absent from the SONA were Senators Robin Padilla, Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa, Bong Go, and Imee Marcos, highlighting potential fissures within the administration’s Senate coalition.

The President’s address carried subtle references to recent political tensions, including a slight jab at Davao City Mayor Sebastian Duterte and the former Education Secretary over the procurement of new laptops for teachers.

Mixed Progress Across Sectors

Marcos acknowledged that while economic indicators showed improvement, Filipinos remained “disappointed and dismayed” with government services. The speech emphasized accelerated implementation during what he termed the “legacy phase” of his administration’s final three years, focusing on tangible service delivery improvements rather than statistical achievements alone.

The President addressed key sectors, including agriculture with the successful launch of the P20-per-kilo rice program, infrastructure development with major projects such as the Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge, and energy sector reforms following recent power crises.

Against the backdrop of four consecutive typhoons, Marcos ended his SONA with a call for immediate flood control audits and accountability measures for all infrastructure projects.

A Shift in Tone and Style

The 2025 SONA reflected a deliberate stylistic change from previous addresses, with President Marcos delivering most of his speech in Filipino rather than English. Some online sentiments noted that his delivery bears a resemblance to that of former President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III, who spoke in a measured, conversational style focused on concrete details rather than grand rhetoric. This shift from the more English-heavy presentations of his first two SONAs may also suggest a deliberate attempt to connect more directly with ordinary Filipinos as Marcos enters the last three years of his term.



Highlights & Plans



Economy

"And my singular resounding message to the international business community is this: The Philippines is ready. Invest in the Filipino."

Marcos again acknowledged that while economic indicators show progress, such progress means little to ordinary Filipinos who still struggle with high costs of goods.

Major Accomplishments:

Piloted P20-per-kilo rice program

Significant Pledges:

Expand P20-per-kilo rice program nationwide, aid the 4% unemployed, boost MSME support, add P113 billion to DA budget, go after price manipulators.



Environment

"Kaya sa mga nakikipagsabwatan upang kunin ang pondo ng bayan at nakawin ang kinabukasan ng ating mga mamamayan, mahiya naman kayo sa inyong kapwa Pilipino."

Following the recent flooding disasters, Marcos emphasized crisis management and accountability measures.

Major Accomplishments:

Upgraded disaster tech: Doppler radar, seismic stations, landslide sensors

Significant Pledges:

Build more evacuation centers, deploy mobile command vehicles to 11 LGUs, require DPWH flood control report for transparency.



Technology

"Sa pinagsama-samang serbisyo sa isang mobile app, ang pamahalaan ay talagang mas malapit na, at nasa inyo nang mga kamay."

Marcos noted the importance of strengthening the country's internet infrastructure to keep up with global standards.

Major Accomplishments:

First 3 phases of National Fiber Backbone completed, eGov app adopted by 40+ agencies

Significant Pledges:

Distribute 1M free SIM cards with data to schools, expand free WiFi in GIDAs



Peace & Order

"Then as now, our foreign policy remains the same: the Philippines is a friend to all. The Philippines is an enemy to none. That will be our main focus as we host the ASEAN Summit in 2026."

The President emphasized AFP and PNP modernization, while focusing on internal security rather than external challenges like the West Philippine Sea.

Major Accomplishments:

Livelihood aid for ex-insurgents, ₱83B in drugs seized, 153K drug arrests.

Significant Pledges:

End terror groups in BARMM, 5-minute police response time



Infrastructure

"Sa Build Better More, higit ang kapakanan at kaligtasan ng mamamayan."

Marcos highlighted several achievements and plans under his infrastructure program, stressing the importance of accountability in project quality and timely completion.

Major Accomplishments:

Transport discounts for PWDs/students raised to 50%, 3 Dalian trains deployed after 10 years unused

Significant Pledges:

Completion of 32-kilometer Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge, renovation of the PNR Bicol Line, new Binahan and Guadalupe Bridges, Mindanao Transport Connectivity Improvement Project "Love Bus" revival



Energy

"Hindi ko palalampasin ang nangyari kamakailan sa Siquijor. Dahil sa malawakang brownout, napilitan pang magdeklara ng state of calamity sa lalawigan."

Major Accomplishments:

2.5M households connected to electricity in 3 years, Net Metering Program

Significant Pledges:

Finish nearly 200 power plants by 2028, hold negligent power firms accountable, power 1M more homes with solar systems by 2028



Health

"Sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon, ang bawat bayan po sa Pilipinas ay mayroon nang doktor."

Major Accomplishments:

Expanded PhilHealth coverage for major illnesses, Opened 53 BUCAS centers in 32 provinces, achieved "1 doctor, 1 town" under Doctors to the Barrio

Significant Pledges:

More funding for HPV vaccination, MAIP integration into the eGov app for easier access

Legislative Agenda Retrospective: From Policy to Implementation

From 2024 to 2025, the Philippines enacted significant priority legislation under the Legislative-Executive Advisory Council (LEDAC) framework that collectively advances national resilience, economic modernization, and sovereignty.

2024 LEDAC Completion Status

President Marcos has enacted the following 2024 priority bills in LEDAC to ensure the implementation of proposed legislative amendments in the following areas:

Economic and Investment Laws:



CREATE MORE Act (RA 12066)

Reduces corporate income tax rates for registered business enterprises from 25% to 20% and extends fiscal incentives up to 27 years to attract strategic investments



Value-Added Tax on Digital Transactions Act (RA 12023)

Revised the National Internal Revenue Code to include 12% VAT on digital services consumed in the Philippines

Education Recovery:



Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act (RA 12028)

Strengthens penalties against agricultural smuggling and price manipulation to protect farmers and consumers



Enterprise-Based Education and Training Framework Act (RA 12063)

Institutionalizes apprenticeship programs to address job-skills mismatch and develop a globally competitive workforce through industry partnerships

Agriculture and Food Security:



Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act (RA 12022)

Strengthens penalties against agricultural smuggling and price manipulation to protect farmers and consumers

Maritime Sovereignty and Defense:



Philippine Maritime Zones Act (RA 12064)

Declares the Philippines' maritime zones in accordance with UNCLOS standards, reinforcing legal control over territorial waters



Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act (RA 12065)

Establishes designated sea lanes and air routes for foreign vessels, preventing arbitrary passage through the Philippine archipelago



Self-Reliant Defense Posture Revitalization Act (RA 12024)

Promotes the domestic defense industry to reduce dependence on foreign military suppliers

2025: The Implementation Focus

Rather than announcing major new legislative priorities, President Marcos emphasized accelerated implementation of existing programs and administrative accountability. His administration's remaining three years will focus on four key approaches: ensuring conducive business environments through sustained anti-criminality campaigns and police responsiveness; fast-tracking major connectivity projects and internet expansion; completing rural electrification through solar and new power plants; and empowering PhilHealth while expanding healthcare access through digitized processes.

Limited New Legislative Agenda

The 2025 SONA marked a strategic shift from policy creation to policy execution, with only one major legislative priority mentioned: the amendment of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Act to better serve coconut farmers' needs.

Key Leadership in the 20th Congress

Leadership in both houses are unchanged for the 20th Congress, demonstrating the abilities of Senate President Francis Escudero and House Speaker Martin Romualdez to maintain their respective coalitions despite the shifting political landscape.

Senate



Senate President Francis "Chiz" Escudero

Escudero secured his position with support from 19 of his peers.



Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada

Senator Jinggoy Estrada retained his position

Majority Bloc



Senator Joel Villanueva

retains his position as Majority Leader and chairperson on the Committee on Rules

Minority Bloc



Former Senate President Tito Sotto

Former Senate President Tito Sotto now leads the five-member minority bloc, which also includes Risa Hontiveros, Loren Legarda, Juan Miguel Zubiri, and Panfilo Lacson.

One key change for this congress is having both Senators Bam Aquino and Kiko Pangilinan, who have traditionally been opposition figures, aligned with the majority coalition in order to secure the chairmanships of the education and agriculture committees, and their respective advocacies.

Hontiveros was the sole remaining member of the minority from the previous congress after the exit of Senator Koko Pimentel, until the four other legislators expressed interest in forming a "veterans bloc" to act more independently from the leadership of Sen. Escudero.

House of Representatives

House Majority Leader

Presidential son Ferdinand Alexander "Sandro" Marcos made history as the youngest House Majority Leader in modern Philippine Congress at 31 years old, signaling continued family influence in the lower chamber.



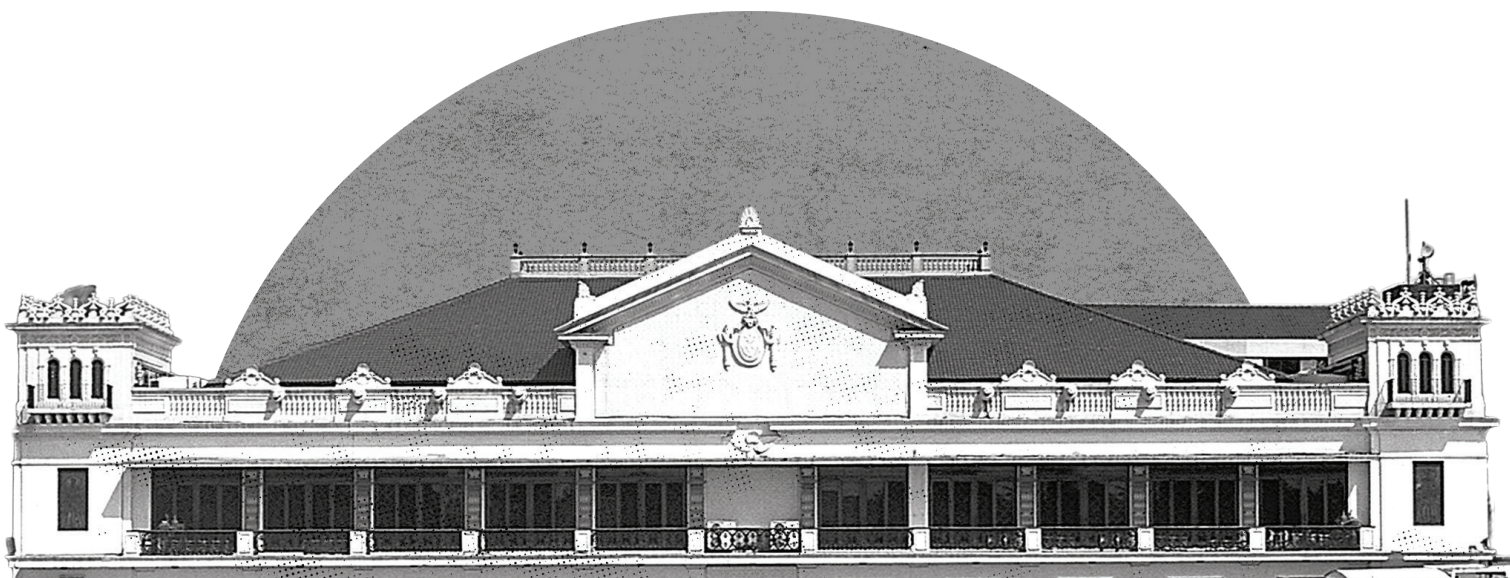
Senior Deputy Speaker David Suarez

Quezon 2nd District Rep. David Suarez was chosen senior deputy speaker.



House Majority Leader Ferdinand Alexander "Sandro" Marcos

Presidential son Sandro Marcos made history as the youngest House Majority Leader in modern Philippine Congress at 31 years old, signaling continued family influence in the lower chamber.



The House also elected nine Deputy Speakers representing various regions:



Janette Garin
Iloilo, 1st District



Paolo Ortega V
La Union, 1st District



Jay Khonghun
Zambales, 1st District



Ronaldo Puno
Antipolo City, 1st District



Ferjenel Biron
Iloilo, 4th District



Yasser Alonto Balindong
Lanao del Sur, 2nd District



Kristine Singson-Meehan
Ilocos Sur, 2nd District



Faustino Dy III
Isabela, 6th District



Raymond Democrito Mendoza
TUCP Party-list

Senate announces committee chairmanships:



Camille Villar
Environment



Win Gatchalian
Finance



Kiko Pangilinan
Agriculture



Jinggoy Estrada
Defense



Bam Aquino
Basic Education



Bong Go
Health
Sports
Youth



JV Ejercito
Tourism
Local Government



Mark Villar
Public Works



Pia Cayetano
Energy
Ways and Means
Sustainable Development Goals



Imee Marcos
Cooperatives
Labor
Foreign Relations



Erwin Tulfo
Social Justice and
Welfare Development
Games and Amusement



Raffy Tulfo
Migrant Workers
Public Services



Rodante Marcoleta
Blue Ribbon Committee
Trade, Commerce,
and Entrepreneurship



Alan Cayetano
Accounts Committee
Higher Education
Justice and Human Rights
Science and Technology

SONA 2025 in Numbers

PLANNED BUDGET

P113B

DA programs

P1B

Barangay Child Development Centers and Bulilit Center to be built across the country

P60B

Free tertiary and TechVoc education

P1.7B

Cancer Assistance Fund

P2.1M

PhilHealth Kidney Transplant patient coverage (up from P600,000)

P47K

PhilHealth Dengue patient coverage (up from P16,000)

P187K

PhilHealth Cataract patient coverage (up from P16,000)

FILIPINOS HELPED

8.5M

farmers and fisherfolk have received assistance since 2023

2.5M

additional households connected to electricity in 2025

60K

teaching positions added

>1M

SIM cards with free data distributed to schools

>5M

households benefited from the conditional cash grants of the 4Ps program since 2023

600K

households to be assisted for the 2nd year of the Walang Gutom Program

>3.5M

students in daycare centers and public schools are supported by joint feeding programs of DSWD and DepEd

1,493

municipalities and 149 cities covered by the Doctors to the Barrio (DTTB)

>600

convicted OFWs pardoned due to various violations of the law in other countries

PROJECTS

400K

classrooms targeted before the term ends

200

power plants to be completed in the next three years

>1M

homes to be connected with solar power electricity by the end of 2028

19K

Free Wi-Fi sites

53

Bagong Urgent Care and Ambulatory Service (BUCAS) centers across 32 provinces nationwide (up from 4,000 in 2022)

P83B

worth of drugs onfiscated

>153K

drug personalities arrested (with >9,600 being high-value targets and 677 being government officials)

50%

discount for PWDs, senior citizens, and students for MRT and LRT (up from 20%)

48

MRT Dalian carriages to become operational (with 3 already working as of July 2025)

3

priority bridges in Tawi-Tawi in development

32KM

Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge to begin construction

428KM

Mindanao Transport Connectivity Improvement Project

Conclusion

As President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. reaches the midpoint of his six-year term, his fourth State of the Nation Address marked a strategic shift from policy creation to the urgent implementation while carefully navigating the significant political tensions between him and his Vice President.

The Elephant in the Room

The President did not address the ongoing impeachment complaint against Vice President Sara Duterte, or the recent Supreme Court decision on this complaint. Instead, Marcos chose subtle political messaging, taking a lighthearted swipe at the Duterte family through his praise of PNP Chief Gen. Nicolas Torre III as a “new boxing champion,” a reference to Torre’s default victory over Sebastian Duterte. These carefully calibrated remarks reflect an administration walking a delicate line between political rivalry and institutional stability.

Shifting Political Dynamics

The 2025 SONA occurred against a backdrop of evolving political calculations. While Marcos continues to enjoy overwhelming support in the House of Representatives, his position in the Senate tells a different story. With only six of his 12 endorsed candidates winning in the midterm elections, and the absence of several Duterte-aligned senators during the event, the President faces a more complex upper chamber dynamic.

The Senate’s realignment, particularly the movement of opposition figures Bam Aquino and Kiko Pangilinan to the majority while veteran administration allies join the minority, serves as a signal that the second half of his term may require more negotiation, compromise, and coalition-building – a potential test of both his leadership acumen and political resilience.

Policy Achievements and Persistent Gaps

The 2025 SONA demonstrated substantial accomplishments: the launch of the ₱20-per-kilo rice program, the connection of 2.5 million households to electricity, the establishment of 53 BUCAS centers, and major infrastructure milestones. However, persistent challenges remain evident in public concerns over the cost of goods, the Siquijor power crisis, and complaints from over six million water consumers nationwide, highlighting the gap between economic investments and reliable service delivery.

Significantly, the President’s speech omitted discussion of wage increases, a pressing concern for workers facing continued high costs of living, and made no mention of online gambling or POGO-related issues despite their prominence in recent political discourse.

The Legacy Phase Test

With minimal new legislative priorities and emphasis on accountability measures, the administration has pivoted to execution over policy creation. The commitment to publish project performance reports represents a noteworthy transparency initiative, but the true test lies in bridging the persistent gap between statistical progress and public satisfaction.

As Marcos navigates his final three years, he faces the dual challenge of proving he is not a lame duck president by delivering tangible improvements ordinary Filipinos can feel. His legacy will also be colored by how he navigates the fragmented political dynamics under his administration. Whether this careful balancing act between political survival and policy delivery will define a successful legacy remains the central question for the remainder of his presidency.





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