

Philippine VP faces 2 new impeachment bids after surviving attempt last year

MANILA, FEB 3: Activists filed two impeachment complaints against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte Monday, accusing her of large-scale corruption after an initial attempt to unseat her a year ago was shot down by the Supreme Court on a legal technicality.

The new impeachment bids filed before the House of Representatives are the latest episode in the stormy political life of Duterte, a 47-year-old lawyer and former city mayor who has been touted by supporters as a potential presidential contender in 2028.

She is the daughter of ex-President Rodrigo Duterte, who oversaw bloody anti-drug crackdowns while in office from 2016 to 2022. He was arrested and detained in the Netherlands by the International Criminal Court last year for alleged crimes against humanity.

The vice president had blamed Pres. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., once her political ally, for allowing what she called the illegal arrest and kidnapping of her father last year by the global court. Her camp has claimed opponents were resorting to fabricated criminal cases to block her from running for president in 2028.

"We are prepared to confront these allegations squarely through the proper constitutional processes,



confident that a fair and impartial review will demonstrate that the accusations are devoid of both factual and legal basis," the vice president's lawyer, Michael Poa, said in a statement.

The new complaints centred on her alleged illegal use and mishandling of 612.5 million pesos (USD 10.3 million) in confidential funds from the vice president's office, and also from her time as education secretary under Marcos.

The allegations were investigated two years ago by members of the House, which was dominated by Marcos's allies, but the vice president refused to respond in detail to questions and skipped some of the televised hearings. One of the complaints also accused the vice

president of having unexplained wealth, including in personal bank accounts. A leading anti-graft prosecutor said his agency was trying to gain access to those accounts as part of a separate criminal investigation.

The vice president's threat during an online news conference in November 2024 to have the president, his wife and House of Representatives speaker killed by an assassin if she herself were killed amid their disputes was also cited in the one of the impeachment complaints.

The vice president, "while occupying the second highest office of the land, has repeatedly and brazenly conducted herself in a manner that strikes at the very foundations of constitutional or-

der," the complaint said. "Her acts constitute grave abuses of power, open defiance of constitutional restraints, and a sustained betrayal of the public trust."

Most of the allegations were already included in an impeachment complaint filed against her more than a year ago.

The House rapidly voted to impeach Duterte in February last year and sent the case to the Senate for trial. The Supreme Court, however, later ruled that the lower chamber of Congress violated a constitutional rule that only one impeachment case could be processed by it in a single year against an impeachable official.

Marcos is also facing two impeachment complaints in the House, which is dominated by his allies. The allegations against the president include his failure to veto budgetary appropriations for infrastructure projects in recent years where he and allied lawmakers are accused of taking kickbacks.

Officials have strongly denied the allegations against the president. The vice president, however, has said that Marcos should be investigated and sent to prison for approving questionable allocations in last year's budget for flood control projects, where influential legislators, including his close allies, earned huge kickbacks. (AP)

PDUNASS National Workshop Emphasises 'Member-First' Approach in Social Security Delivery

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2: The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Academy of Social Security (PDUNASS) today organised a National Workshop, marking a significant push towards a "Member-First" approach in social security administration, with special focus on pensioner dignity, implementation of the CITES Project and preparedness for the Code on Social Security.

Addressing the workshop virtually, Central Provident Fund Commissioner (CPFC) Shri Ramesh Krishnamurthy underlined the need for digital transformation anchored in compassion and accountability. He stated that timely and reliable service delivery, especially for pensioners, is a matter of dignity and trust, and not merely an administrative benchmark. Emphasising the growing subscriber base, he said modernised processes and institutional alignment are essential to meet expectations effectively.

The workshop devoted



considerable attention to improving the pensioner experience. Shri Chandramauli Chakraborty (ACC-HQ), Smt. Aprajita Jaggi (ACC) and Shri S. K. Gupta (RPFC-I), representing the Pension Division, highlighted measures to streamline pension processing, standardise procedures across zones and enhance clarity and speed in handling pension cases, par-

ticularly for senior citizens.

Shri Salil Shankar, ACC, IS Division, presented the roadmap for the CITES Project, describing it as a key initiative to promote ease of living through enhanced digital capabilities, faster claim settlements and greater transparency.

Shri P. B. Verma, ACC (Compliance, Recovery & Legal), spoke on strengthen-

ing compliance mechanisms while ensuring ease of doing business during the transition to the Code on Social Security.

Welcoming the participants, Director PDUNASS Shri Kumar Rohit said the academy's capacity-building initiatives are now firmly oriented towards responsive governance. He stressed that alignment with the Code on Social Security is crucial for extending comprehensive protection to workers and pensioners.

The workshop was conducted under the supervision of Course Director Shri Harish Yadav, RPFC-I, whose coordination facilitated meaningful deliberations and exchange of field-level experiences among officers.

The event concluded with a collective resolve to uphold EPFO's commitment to its members by leveraging digital initiatives to build an efficient, accessible and humane social security system for pensioners across the country.

Russia fires 450 drones and 70 missiles at Ukraine, day before US-brokered talks

KYIV, FEB 3: Russia fired around 450 long-range drones and 70 missiles of various types at Ukraine in a major attack overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday.

The barrage came a day before the two countries were due to attend US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on ending the all-out war, which Russia launched nearly four years ago.

The bombardment of at least five regions of Ukraine specifically took aim at the power grid, Zelenskyy said, as part of Moscow's ongoing campaign to deny civilians light, heating and running water amid the coldest winter in years. At least 10 people were wounded, officials said.

"Taking advantage of the coldest days of winter to terrorize people is more important to Russia than diplomacy," Zelenskyy said.

He urged allies to send more air defense supplies and bring "maximum pressure" to bear on Russia to end its full-scale invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022.

Officials have described re-



cent talks between Moscow and Kyiv delegations as constructive. But after a year of efforts, the Trump administration is still searching for a breakthrough on key issues such as who keeps the Ukrainian land that Russia's army has occupied, and a comprehensive settlement appears distant.

The Abu Dhabi talks were scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday.

Russia has tried to wear down Ukrainians' appetite for the fight by creating hardship for the civilian population.

It has tried to wreck Ukraine's electricity network, targeting substations, transformers, turbines and

generators at power plants. Ukraine's largest private power company, DTEK, said that the overnight attack hit its thermal power plants in the ninth major assault since October.

In Kyiv, officials said that five people were wounded in the strikes that damaged and set fire to residential buildings, a kindergarten and a gas station in various parts of the capital, according to the State Emergency Service.

By early morning, 1,170 apartment buildings in the capital were without heating, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

That set back desperate repair operations that had restored power to all but 80

apartment buildings, he said. Russia also struck Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, where injuries were reported, and the southern Odesa region.

The attack also damaged the Hall of Fame at the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War, at the foot of the Motherland Monument in Kyiv, Ukrainian Culture Minister Tetiana Berezhna said.

"It is symbolic and cynical at the same time: the aggressor state strikes a place of memory about the fight against aggression in the 20th century, repeating crimes in the 21st," Berezhna said. (AP)

Eager to hand over power to elected government: Nepal interim PM Karki



KATHMANDU, FEB 3: Nepal's interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Mon-

day said she is eager to hand over responsibilities to a new government that will be formed after the March 5 general elections.

In her maiden address to the National Assembly after assuming the post, Karki, 73, expressed confidence that the election of the House of Representatives (HoR) would be held within the stipulated time in a free, fair and impartial environment.

Addressing the fifth meeting of the 19th session of the National Assembly, which began two weeks ago, she informed the members about the preparations for the HoR election, calling it one of the top priorities of the government. She also spoke about her government's ongoing efforts in the areas of good governance.

Karki said that she assumed the office as prime

minister not out of a desire for power but due to extraordinary circumstances, and expressed her eagerness to hand over responsibilities to the new government that will be formed after the polls.

She recalled that the interim government was formed following the Gen Z movement of September 8 and 9, which led to the resignation of then-prime minister KP Sharma Oli.

Rahul On India-US Trade Deal: PM Buckled Under Pressure, Farmers' Hard Work 'Sold Out'

NEW DELHI, FEB 3: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has buckled under US pressure to finalise a trade deal and has "sold out" the hard work of Indian farmers through the agreement.

Addressing reporters in the Parliament House complex after he was not allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha as he insisted on quoting from an article that cited former Army chief MM Naravane's unpublished "memoir", Gandhi said it is for the first time in history that the Leader of Opposition has not been allowed to speak on the president's address.

We need to understand why a trade deal stuck for about four months was suddenly finalised last evening," Gandhi said adding that "there was huge pressure on



Prime Minister Modi".

Asked what kind of pressure he was referring to, Gandhi alleged there is a case against industrialist Gautam Adani in the US and a lot

more is to come in the Epstein files.

He alleged that Prime Minister Modi "has been compromised" and that Indian farmers must under-

stand their hard work "as well as their blood and sweat" has been "sold out" through the India-US trade deal. He also said the entire country had been "sold out".

Over 96 lakh elderly enrolled in Ayushman Vay Vandana health coverage scheme

NEW DELHI, Feb 3: More than 96 lakh Ayushman Vay Vandana cards have been created across all states and Union territories till December 31, 2025, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

The Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) provides health coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for

secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to 12 crore families constituting the bottom 40 per cent of India's population.

In October 2024, the scheme was expanded to cover six crore senior citizens aged 70 years and above belonging to 4.5 crore families, irrespective of their socio-economic status, through the Ayushman Vay Vandana card. As on De-

cember 31, 2025, a total of 10.33 lakh hospital admissions, costing Rs 2,154.37 crore, have been authorised for the Ayushman Vay Vandana card beneficiaries, Jadhav said in a written reply.

Out of 10.33 lakh hospital admissions, 3.93 lakh admissions, costing Rs 820.42 crore, pertain to female beneficiaries and 6.40 lakh admissions, costing Rs

1333.94 crore, pertain to male beneficiaries across the implementing states and UTs.

Till December 31, 2025, more than 33,000 hospitals are empanelled under AB-PMJAY including 15,733 private hospitals. The Ayushman Vay Vandana card beneficiaries can avail the services of any AB-PMJAY empanelled hospitals. (PTI)

Members can quote documents if relevant to business: Parliamentary expert on Rahul citing from 'memoir'

NEW DELHI, Feb 3: Amid a controversy over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi quoting from an unpublished "memoir" of former Army chief M M Naravane in Parliament, an expert on Parliamentary procedures on Tuesday said Rule 349 bars members from reading from any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House.

However, the Rule does not elaborate about published or unpublished.

The Lok Sabha on Monday saw a stand off between Speaker Om Birla and Gandhi when the Speaker disallowed the Leader of the Opposition to quote from the unpublished memoir of the former army chief on the 2020 India-China conflict citing a House rule.

Speaker Birla cited Rule 349 to disallow Gandhi from quoting from the retired general's unpublished memoir.

"Rules to be observed by members in House" falls under Rule 349. The rule has 23 sub clauses dealing with a variety of issues.

Sub clause one deals with members quoting from documents. "Whilst the House is sitting, a member (i) shall not read any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House," it reads.

"It also means that a member can refer to any of these if it is in connection with the business of the House," former Lok Sabha secretary general P D T Achary told PTI. He said while the rule is "negatively framed", it has a "positive meaning" also which allows members to quote from document if they are relevant to the business of the House.

On Monday, the business before the House was Motion of Thanks on the President's address which may have referred to foreign policy

or relations, he said.

He underlined that though it is not in the rule, speakers have ruled in the past that members who want to quote something in the House should authenticate it.

"He or she has to mention that they stand by it and also verify the content of the document being quoted," the constitution expert said.

According to Achary, once the document is authenticated, the speaker allows the member to quote it. Then it becomes the responsibility of the government to respond and the role of the speaker ends.

He cautioned that the House should only be told the truth and a member who quotes from an incorrect or fake document is held responsible.

"A privilege motion can be moved against the member," he underlined.

When Gandhi started quoting the from unpub-

lished book, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh questioned as to how material which is not published can be cited in the House.

The House saw repeated adjournments as the Congress leader sought to quote from a news report which carried the excerpts from the unpublished memoir despite Speaker disallowing him.

While Gandhi said the government is "afraid" of a line that he wants to quote from the book and asserted that he would state that line in the Lower House, the BJP alleged that the Congress leader undermined the dignity of Parliament and hurt the morale of the Indian soldiers with his false accusations, in defiance of Speaker Birla's ruling.

The ruling party's leaders, including ministers, asked Gandhi to stop "speaking the language of anti-India elements". (Agencies)