

“There is nothing impossible to they who will try.”]]dsds— Alexander the Great

Young Population give PHL an Edge

However, competition from other countries such as India will be challenging
As Asia deals with declining birth rates, Philippines wants fewer babies ONLINE PAGE 27

MANILA - Unlike its wealthier neighbours such as Japan and South Korea, an ageing society is likely to be the least of the Philippines’ problems in the next decades, making it capable of supplying the world with needed manpower.

“The challenge of demography will not be on an ageing population but more on a young population that needs to find jobs either domestically or internationally,” Quay-Toan Do, a Washington-based lead economist in the World’s Bank’s Development Research Group, said in Manila.

“In the horizon we are com-

YOUNG page 21



Postcard
Balara Swimming Pool, 1960's

Philippines writes off US\$1 billion in farmer debt to boost food production



MANILA — Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos on Friday wrote off \$1.04 billion in land-related debt owed by more than half a million farmers, a move aimed at boosting food production.

The “New Agrarian Emancipation Act” he signed into law waived all property-related debt owed by farmers who had been given land on 30-year payment terms under a 1988 land reform programme, but had been unable to pay.

“We know these farmers do not have the means to pay this huge debt. So putting it under the government’s tab is the right thing to do,” Marcos said at a signing ceremony at the presidential palace.

The writing off of the loans, which were issued by government banks, meant “we are doing everything in order to feed our people”, he added.

Under a law passed about a year after Marcos’ father and namesake was toppled in a bloodless “People Power” revolt in 1986, about 4.8 million hectares (11.9 million acres) of plots were distributed to almost three million landless farmers.

The total was equivalent to 16 percent of the country’s land area.

Congress passed the new legislation because nearly 1.2 million hectares of redis-

FARMERS page 21



Conrad Ricamora plays Ninoy Aquino.

Philippines rejects China’s demand to remove ship from shoal

MANILA— The Philippines’ defense chief rejected on Thursday China’s renewed demand that it remove its outpost on a disputed South China Sea shoal and said Chinese coast guard ships should leave the area and stop blocking Manila’s supply boats.

Philippine forces use a grounded warship, the BRP Sierra Madre, as an outpost on the submerged but strategic shoal that is at the center of an ongoing dispute with China.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the Second Thomas Shoal lies within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines under the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, which China has ratified. He said a 2016 ruling by a U.N.-backed arbitration tribunal also invalidated China’s claims to the busy waterway, leaving them without any le-

AYUNGIN p17

Lea Salonga opens Marcos Broadway Musical “Here Lies Love” ONLINE PAGE 27

Chatham resident wins Miss Philippines Canada 2023

Chatham resident, Julia Dueñas, who is proud of her Filipino heritage, has taken that to a new level winning the Miss Philippines Canada 2023 pageant.

This was the first pageant the 24-year-old has entered, noting she only learned about it while at a family event when the pageant director met her and suggested she enter. The pageant was held July 15 in Toronto.

"I did some research about the pageant," Duenas said. "I was more interested in the part that I would be doing charity work if I won."

She will be heading to the Philippines in January to do some charity work in the Lucena City area, where her father Gerry Duenas is from.

The pageant has partnered with Philippine-Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF), a non-profit organization that aids the less fortunate in the Philippines. Duenas hasn't received details about the work that will be done, but said she knows in the past they have built houses in communities.

Duenas said she was recently in the Philippines to visit relatives in Lucena City as well her on mom Vivian's side of the family in the Cagayan De Oro area.

Her family moved to Chatham in 2008 and have been here ever since, she said.

Her parents played a role in helping Duenas win the pageant by joining her in performing a traditional folk song called "Lawiswis Kawayan." Duenas played the marimba, which she described as a "giant wooden xylophone," accompanied by her mom on the piano and her dad played guitar.

The question and answer portion of the pageant is



where Duenas was able to express how proud she is of her Filipino heritage.

She was asked about how important it is for her to maintain her Filipino roots and how she can promote her Filipino culture to others. Duenas said a way she shares her culture with others in Chatham is by inviting friends and family to the Filipino-Canadian Community events where the culture is shared through music, dance and food.

"These events welcome everyone to join, just as Canada embraces diversity," she said.

After winning the first pageant she entered, it didn't take long for Duenas to get noticed in Canadian pageant circles.

"I've been encouraged a lot by people to be joining other pageants, but as of right now I'm still thinking about it," she said.

Duenas is on a career path to becoming a registered nurse.

The Ursuline College Chatham graduate completed the practical nursing program at St. Clair College in Chatham then worked for a year full-time at the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance.

She's still working casual part-time shifts at CKHA while enrolled in the registered nursing program at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Duenas said being in the pageant was a good, fun experience, but she wants to see how this year goes before considering pursuing pageants further.



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Pops Fernandez enjoys being single, hopes to find someone special someday

Pops Fernandez is currently single but is hoping to find someone to be with someday.

"I think there was a time siyempre sad ka, siyempre mas younger ka, I think you are more needy. You are unsure of yourself and you feel you need someone," said the singer-actress in a press conference for TV5 and Viva Entertainment's For the Love weekly series.

"I'm not saying I don't need anyone (but) it would be nice to have an understanding, loving partner. Somebody who can, like watch movies with, travel with, of course. But right now, I am also enjoying doing my own thing," she continued.

"And I'm taking advantage of that because I get to spend a lot of time (with myself and children). Although they've grown up and they're now in the US, I get to make my own decisions, I get to make my own schedules, so when I want to see my boys anytime, I don't need to ask permission (from anyone) and all that."

But she is not "closing doors" on the possibility of meeting "somebody whom I can watch movies, hold hands with, travel with" in the future.

If there's one piece of advice she would have given herself 20 years ago about love, it would be: "Be more sure of yourself and don't be scared."

Pops recalled, "Back in the day, I was shy. (When) I felt something, I didn't say it. I kept it to myself. So, I think part of a very healthy relationship is really communication. That's what I would like to tell myself then. Sana mas sure lang ako, (I wish) I was not afraid to express myself. When I felt something, I was honest enough to say it."

On her advice to people who have cheating partners and how they can move forward, Pops acknowledged that "everyone is different (but) whatever it is, it's painful."

"The actual or just the looking, you know, just the texting to another person, it's all painful. It's hard to give advice about that because it depends on how strong you are... It takes both kasi. Again, two people have to be willing to work it out," she mused.

"But what I can say is that, at the end of the day, when all of that is done, and somehow you will get over it, you have to. You have to be strong enough

to get over it. Obviously, you will become a stronger and better person. Hopefully, you won't allow it to happen. Hahaha!"

In For the Love romance drama anthology, the 56-year-old host is the narrator of the show, featuring the tales of love and loss as presented by some of this generation's rising actors. In the show, she also serenades the viewers with classic and modern Original Pilipino Music (OPM) hits from Viva Records. The 13-episode series airs Saturdays at 3:20 p.m. on TV5.

Speaking of music, Pops picked her newly-dropped single titled Always Loved as



Pops Fernandez is the host and narrator of TV5 and Viva Entertainment's For the Love weekly series. In the show, she also serenades the viewers with classic and modern Original Pilipino Music (OPM) hits from Viva Records per episode. She is joined by Viva artists Jairus Aquino, Aubrey Caraan, Bea Binene, Heaven Peralejo and Marco Gallo.

the current soundtrack of her life. She will be staging a concert next year, she shared.

Following the viral dressing room incident of Lea Salonga and her fans, Pops was also asked about how she would deal with fans eager to meet her backstage during her concerts.

"There's always say, we have a system kasi 'di ba? That's why everyone is given a pass so that we would know who's part of the production (team) and (who are the) artists. Before the show starts, we have to prepare, we dress up and everything," she said.

"I think people should understand that there's kumbaga sa rules, 'Ito, dito ka, ito dito ka pwedeng pumasok and all.' And so far, they (people we talk to) all understand that. Of course, we know that they are also excited. I'm also a fan. As a fan, we do get excited and that's understandable. I hope that they also get to understand that," added the Philippines' Concert Queen.

Pauleen Luna, Vic Sotto expecting second child

Pauleen Luna and Vic Sotto announced they are expecting in a cute way by tapping their firstborn, Tali, to star in the video clip announcing their good news.

Pauleen posted on Instagram Saturday a video of her daughter Tali playing with balloons. The balloons were marked with the words "Big Sister."

"Someone's excited to be a..." Pauleen wrote in the caption, leaving readers to



guess the obvious implication of her post.

Several of the couple's friends sent warm wishes to the expecting parents.

Their relatives also expressed their joy at another Sotto being born.

Vic's daughter, Danica, showed her excitement. "Baby Mochi!!" she replied.

His "E.A.T." co-hosts Ryan Agoncillo and Ryzza Mae Dizon also congratulated the couple.



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Life's brighter under the sun



Xian Gaza sa kinakaharap na isyu nina Vice at Ion: 'Yung isipan lang po natin ang malaswa

WALANG nakikitang masama ang social media personality na si Xian Gaza sa naging eksena ng mag-partner na sina Vice Ganda at Ion Perez sa isang segment ng "It's Showtime".

Sa kanyang Facebook page ay ibinahagi niya ang kanyang saloobin hinggil sa pagpapatawag ng Movie and Television Review and Classification Board o MTRCB sa Kapamilya noontime program dahil sa umano'y malaswang pagkain ng dalawa ng icing sa harap ng mga bata sa segment ng "Isip Bata".

Panawagan ni Xian, "Movie and Television Review and Classification Board alam ko po na yung opinyon ko ay walang bilang sa mundo pero gusto ko

lang po i-express na wala akong nakikitang kalaswaan sa ginawa ni Vice Ganda at Ion Perez. Yung isipan lang po natin ang malaswa."

Aniya, ang mga matatanda lang raw ang nag-iisip no'n at hindi raw ito maii-



sip ng mga bata.

"Kung babae at lalaki po silaceh hinsi niyo po yan sisilipin at iisipan m ng masama. Dini-discriminate niyo lang po sila dahil sa kanilang gender orientation," dagdag pa ni Xian.



♥ A Politicians eat everywhere but stay slim 🤔🤔🤔

There’s one video I do not see politicians like Mp Rechie and others, and specially PM Trudeau doing; exercising or going to the gym. Is it on the advise of political advisers not to be seen sweating? Are they metabolically gifted? If politicians have to eat at every function - you have to or it might offend the host person / group - I’m pretty sure they’ll gain weight. The only people who can eat at a buffet morning, noon and night and not gain weight are teenagers, meaning anyone below 20 years old. And the last time I checked, no politician is below 20. Imagine if I won as Mayor. I’ll be exercising in my off hours. Wala na akong time to all the girls I love. Paano na iyan? 🤔

I’m not the third party in the Trudeau Split

Canada’s first couple, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and wife Sophie have gone splitsville. Before anyone start a rumour, I am not the third party in the split. I assure you I am not the reason for their separation. I

cannot blame PMJ. I’m good looking. Natural lang na pagdudahan niya ako. Mahirap talaga maging guwapo. Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya. LOL 🤔

Maybe, the Philippines is at war

The flag shown with red on top means we are at war. That is what happened at the drone presentation at the Palarong Pambansa. The supplier apologized but the Marikina government (MG) wants to sue or fine the supplier. Really? They already apologized. Move on na lang. Well, politically, MG has to show it is angry at the mistake that happened. But things happen. Baka naman we are at war talaga, ayaw lang ipa-alam. 🤔

Michelle Madrigal confirms she’s now “single” months after rumored split with American boyfriend

Kinumpirma ng aktres na si Michelle Madrigal na “single” siya ngayon.

Ito’y matapos ang ilang buwang haka-haka tungkol sa hiwalayan nila ng American boyfriend niyang si Kyle.

May 2023, unang umugong ang balitang hiwalay na sina Michelle at Kyle matapos mapansin ng ilang netizens na burado na sa Instagram feed ng aktres ang mga litrato at videos nilang magkasama.

Sa pamamagitan ng Instagram video nitong July 31, 2023, tinuldukan na ni Michelle ang haka-haka tungkol sa tunay na estado ng kanyang love life.

Sa naturang video, makikitang naglalakad si Michelle habang makikita ang mga salitang “I’m 34. Divorced. Single. Mom of 1. Healing & Happy.”

Dagdag pa rito ang makahulugang caption niya: “I’m proud of her. She’s courageous, wiser & full of wisdom.

“Don’t underestimate what GOD can do to heal you. You just have to ask and surrender.”

MICHELLE-KYLE RELATIONSHIP

Noong August 22, 2022, ipinakilala ni Michelle si Kyle bilang kanyang boyfriend, apat na buwan matapos masapinal ang divorce nila ng dating asawang si Troy Woolfolk.

Pag-amin noon ni Michelle, wala sa plano niyang mag-ka-boyfriend agad matapos nilang mag-divorce ng kanyang ex-husband. Kung tutuusin, handa raw siyang maging single sa mahabang panahon pero marunong daw talaga ang Diyos at binigyan siya ng panibagong pag-ibig.

November 8, 2022, sa eksklusibong panayam ng PEP.ph kay Michelle, ikinuwento niya kung paano sila nagkakilala at ang unang pagkikita nila ni Kyle sa Texas. Paglilina niya noon, siniguro niyang naka-move on na siya sa separation nila ni Troy bago siya nakipag-date kay Kyle. Binuo muna rin daw niya ang sarili at inalam ang kanyang boundaries, kaya raw nang magsimula siyang makipag-date uli ay may kumpiyansa na siya sa pagsabi kung ano ang mga katangiang hinahanap niya sa isang lalaki. Lahad ng aktres: “At some point, I was casually dating. I haven’t been dating in a long, long time. I just wanted to see what does it feel like.

“I go on coffee dates, mga walk lang. Hindi naman mga formal na wine and dine. I wanted it to be casual, like getting to know a new friend.

“And then, ayun, eventually I was on dating apps, kasi where would you meet guys?

“I wasn’t partying every night. I’m a single mom, so I have my responsibilities.”

Karamihan daw sa dating scene sa Austin, Texas ay mga “bags.” Pagbabahagi pa ni Michelle, “Here, pag gumigimik ako, a lot of the guys are in their late 20s. Ayoko naman ng sobrang bata, ayoko rin naman ng sobrang older than me rin.

“I want someone na at least yung close to my age pero mature enough to be open sa concept na I’m a single mom.

“Siyempre some are interested. But when you’re gonna date, especially kay Anika, di ko siya in-expose kahit kanino.”

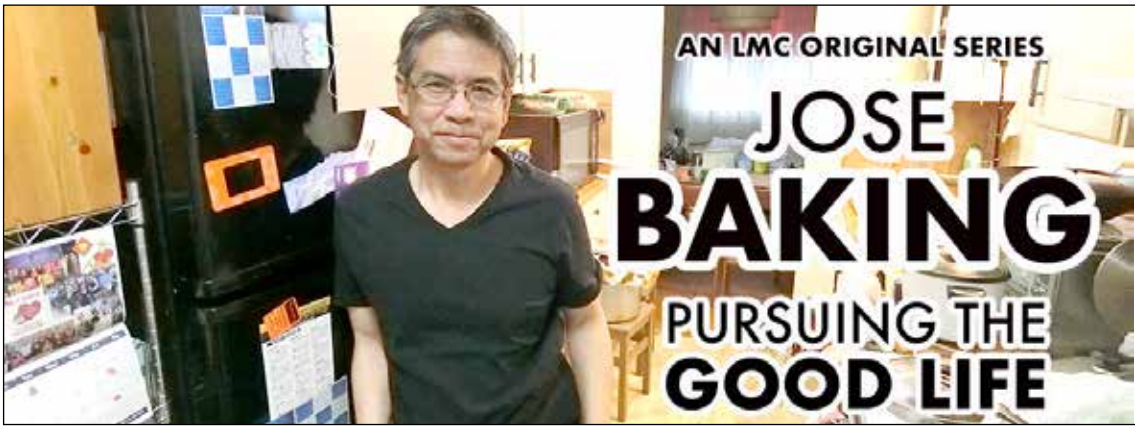
Si Anika ay ang anak ni Michelle kay Troy.

Hangang noong December 17, 2022, isiniwalat ni Michelle sa kanyang vlog na katulad ni Troy ay sa isang dating app din niya nakilala si Kyle. Aniya, “We met through Hinge, so it’s a dating app. Obviously, hindi ako masyadong lumalabas being a single mom. And nag-swipe siya at ako rin, and then we started chatting.” Ang Hinge ay isang dating app ng mga nais magkaroon ng long-term relationship. Isa raw sa traits na nagustuhan ni Michelle kay Kyle ang pagiging wholesome nito sa kanyang profile sa dating app.

Lahad niya, “Nandun yung pictures ng kids niya. I also had my daughter sa profile ko. “You could really tell kung ano yung character ng lalaki the way they are sa kids nila.

“When I saw how he is around his kids – the way he talks to them, the way niyang i-treat sila – I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, lagot.’”

Samantala, habang isinusulat ang artikulong ito ay wala pang sinasabi si Michelle tungkol sa dahilan ng hiwalayan nila ni Kyle.



“Donate to typhoon victims instead of wedding gifts,”

Maine Mendoza, Arjo Atayde urge guests

Even before “TV Patrol” news anchor Noli de Castro took a swipe at people getting married while a typhoon was ravaging some parts of the country, actors Maine Mendoza and Arjo Atayde have already asked their guests to be “sensitive” to the “challenges and disruptions caused by the weather” by refraining from posting on social media about the wedding. They also encouraged their guests to donate to victims of all kinds of calamities in lieu of wedding presents.

Guests were told:

“We hope this message finds you well and looking forward to celebrating Maine and Arjo’s special day with everyone. We are writing to inform you about a situation that has arisen and to kindly request your understanding and cooperation.

“As you might be aware, there is an unexpected storm that we are experiencing at the moment. While the couple is early anticipating sharing this momentous occasion with all of you, their top priority is the safety and well-being of our guests and loved ones.

“Due to the storm’s potential impact, we kindly request that all guests refrain from posting anything related to the wedding on social media or other platforms during the day of the event.”

According to the message the couple sent, the request



was made “to ensure that we remain sensitive to any challenges or disruptions caused by the weather.”

In addition, the couple’s godparents or asked guests to give donations to the victims of all kinds of calamities and any other type of assistance to the people more so in District 1 of Quezon City, which Arjo represents in Congress.

It can be recalled that in the closing spiel of “TV Patrol,” the day of Arjo and Maine’s wedding, de Castro said that there are people suffering while there are people who are getting married.

“Kayo habang kinakasal, kawawa naman ‘yung mga binagyo,” he said.

De Castro then drew criticism from Internet users, including one of Arjo and Maine’s ninongs, Joey de Leon.

Jomari Yllana, Abby Viduya want a ‘Jennifer Lopez-Ben Affleck’ Las Vegas wedding

Celebrity couple Jomari Yllana and Abby Viduya are set to marry in a civil ceremony in Las Vegas this November.

At the Motorsport Carnivale presscon, Jomari revealed that they will tie the knot while he’s on break as a Parañaque City councilor.

“We’re getting married soon, sometime in November,” he announced.

“I cannot be away from work. As a councilor, as a legislator, hindi ako pwedeng mawala ng Thursday, so ‘yung timing ng Halloween, for a break, para makaalis lang ako ng mabilis. Tuloy naman siya ng November,” he added.

Jomari then said that they will also wed in a church ceremony in 2025. “Then mag-church wedding kami, latest is 2025, in my hometown Peñafrancia in Naga City, Camarines Sur,” he said.

For her part, Abby said that they will do a Jennifer Lopez-Ben Affleck moment

in Las Vegas. “We’re going to Vegas. We’re gonna pull-off a JLo and Ben Affleck wedding. Kasi, gusto namin na kami lang dalawa at first,” she said.

“A few of our family members will be joining us there, like my daughter. My eldest daughter will be joining us in Vegas and some of Jom’s relatives,” she added.

Jomari organized the Motorsport Carnivale, an ongoing sporting event in Okada Manila Boardwalk running until August 6.

Apart from gathering collectors of rare race-cars and motorsports gadgets, among the event’s highlights is a race featuring at least 150 cars.

There will also be a whole-day drifting exhibition and an awards ceremony to be held on Sunday. Among those who will be honored are actor Richard Gomez for his achievements and contributions to motorsport; actor and singer Matteo Guidicelli for his contributions to Philippine motorsports as a former racecar driver; and retired racecar driver Michele Bumgarner.



Bea Alonzo ready to pass the baton

During a recent television guesting, Bea Alonzo was asked about her feelings regarding the possibility of losing the popularity she currently enjoys. In response, the actress expressed, “Honestly, no. I firmly believe that it’s inevitable for all of us to experience that phase. The key is to handle it with grace.”

According to Bea, one cannot remain at the pinnacle of fame forever. She acknowledged, “Yes, everyone has their time in the spotlight and the opportunity to pursue their desires. Eventually, it’s essential to give others a chance.”

Bea likened this situation to passing the baton to another individual with grace in a relay race. She expressed her delight in knowing that her body of work is being appreciated both online and on social media. She felt gratified that the characters she portrayed will forever be immortalized in the hearts of her audience.

Hypothetically speaking, if Bea were to quit showbiz at this very moment, she confidently asserts that she could indeed live comfortably. With a sense of humility, she reveals that her hard work has spanned over 22 years, during which she managed to save significantly for herself and her future family. Bea attributes her financial security to



her disciplined approach, having abstained from leading an extravagant lifestyle.

Bea is thankful that she learned to value money through the advice of some important people who are close to her.

“There’s my mom for one. Then, there’s my manager Ms. Shirley Quan. Mr. Johnny Manahan, during the time when both of us were still with Star Magic, he also taught me when it comes to handling money properly.”

The actress also shed light on the issue that she and Alden Richards allegedly had a fight when they were doing their hit soap Start-Up PH.

“No, for the record, we didn’t fight. We just had a little misunderstanding which has something to do with our profession. I guess, we have different backgrounds as artists. But everything’s water under the bridge now. We were able to sort things out. In one of our promotional trips for our show, we were able to talk about the issue and all’s well that ends well. I think that’s what’s important,” Bea ended.

Enrique Gil deny split with Liza

Enrique Gil belied the rumor that he and Liza Soberano have already parted

ways. It’s more than a year now that said issue has been circulating.

“Actually, we’re both okay at present,” he avers. “We’re busy with our respective projects.”

What’s good is that even if they’re both busy, they support each other.

“We’re good. I’m busy with my projects. She’s also busy with hers. She’s focusing on building an international career and it is super good for her. Of course, we’re supportive of each other no matter what. So, yeah, I’m super happy for her and vice-versa.”

To prove that nothing has changed between them, the good-looking actor posted on his Instagram account his birthday greetings for Liza last January which read: “We might be worlds apart, but you’ve never been closer to my heart. To the most beautiful soul in the world. To my best friend and baby [emoji] I love you so much [emoji] Happy Birthday!”



Maja Salvador reveals Valentine’s civil wedding with Rambo Nuñez before Bali



Actress Maja Salvador revealed that she had an intimate civil wedding with husband Rambo Nuñez in Manila before they tied the knot in Bali, Indonesia.

In her interview with Preview, Maja said the civil ceremony happened last Valentine’s Day in time for their fourth anniversary.

Maja said their wedding in Bali will not be honored in the Philippines, so they had a civil wedding in the country.

“Dapat talaga isang beses lang,” Maja said.

“Pero, since pinili namin to have a destination wedding, hindi kasi i-o-honor ng Philippines ‘yung wedding namin sa Bali,” she added.

The private ceremony was attended by Maja and Rambo’s relatives.

Maja and Rambo tied the knot again in Apurva Kempinski, Bali last Monday.

Celebrities spotted in the wedding included Maine Mendoza, John Lloyd Cruz, Richard Gutierrez, Sarah Lahbati and ABS-CBN Chief Executive Officer Carlo Katigbak, among others.

Maja and Rambo got engaged last April 2022.

Maja confirmed that she and Rambo got back together in March 2019. The couple first dated in 2010.



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2 House reps urge Marcos to take more decisive steps vs China

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. should take more decisive steps against China after its coast guard fired water cannons at Philippine vessels in the West Philippine Sea.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez and Rep. Arlene Brosas of the Gabriela party-list made the same call in separate statements issued on Monday.

“I ask the President to downgrade our embassy in Beijing to show our deep indignation, anger and protest over the water cannon blast by the Chinese Coast Guard on our personnel,” Rodriguez said.

“The President should also order our unusually quiet and inactive ambassador there to return to Manila and to replace him with a lower-level diplomatic officer.”

The Chinese coast guard fired water cannons at two ships — one from the Philippine Coast Guard and one from the Navy — last Saturday, Aug. 5. The ships were bound on a resupply mission for Filipino troops aboard the BRP Sierra Madre, which had been deliberately sunk at the Ayungin Shoal to served as a Philippine military outpost in the West Philippine Sea. The Chinese coast guard blocked and fired water cannons at the Filipino ships, which were not able to continue with their mission.

China had been claiming the entire West Philippine Sea as part of its so-called nine-dash line. But in 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled on a case filed by the Aquino ad-

ministration against China. The court said the nine-dash line had no historical or legal basis and that the Philippines should enjoy sovereign rights over its exclusive economic zone.

Marcos should now show his resolve in addressing the latest incident, which is a violation of those rights, Rodriguez said.

“We cannot allow these harassment and bullying tactics and encroachment on our maritime territory to continue. We have to take more drastic actions, instead of filing the usual diplomatic protest note,” he said.

For her part, Brosas said the incident was a chance for the Marcos administration to openly condemn China for its actions.

A China Coast Guard (CCG) ship on Saturday, Aug. 5, 2023, is seen preparing to strike a Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) vessel with a water cannon as it is on its way to Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal. The AFP and the PCG criticized the “dangerous maneuvers,” urging the CCG to “act with prudence.” (Photo from the PCG Facebook page)



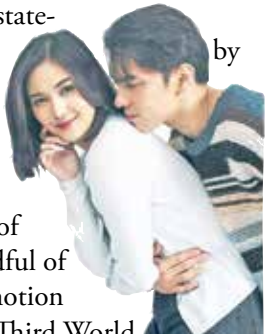
“These brazen actions by China jeopardize the safety of Filipino service members and hinder the lawful activities of the Philippines in its own exclusive economic zone. We call on the international community to stand with the Philippines in upholding the rules-based international order and respecting the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),” Brosas said.

“We urge China to cease its aggressive actions to resolve territorial disputes. The safety and security of Filipino service members and the peaceful navigation of international waters must be upheld,” Brosas said.

The celebrities defying the odds in love and career

“Kung masaya ka naman, bakit hindi mo pangangalandakan?”

That’s the bold statement made by Charlie Dizon about her now public relationship with Carlo Aquino. The two of them faced a handful of press for the promotion of their new film *Third World Romance*, which will be showing in cinemas on Aug. 16. This is also the film where they got close to one another beyond professional ties.



Real-life couple Charlie Dizon and Carlo Aquino are paired for the first time on screen in *Third World Romance*.

Both Charlie and Carlo entered the premises of their press conference in Marikina last Thursday casually that if you were out of the loop, you wouldn’t think they’re an item off camera. But once questions rolled in about their relationship, their demeanor transformed.

But once questions rolled in about their relationship, their demeanor transformed.

We saw Charlie and Carlo arm-in-arm professing their admiration for one another and their happiness being together. Back in July, it was the first time Charlie admitted on television that Carlo is her boyfriend when she guested in the TV5 morning show *Gud Morning Kapatid*.

Carlo also told us that he found Charlie’s confession cute, saying, “Ganoon naman talaga. Sobrang na cute-an ako.

Matagal ko na rin sinasabi na nagde-date kami.”

He also added that they are aware that there are people who are at loggerheads about their love life, to which he replied, “Madaming tao nagagalit... nanglalait. Pero wala na kami magagawa doon basta iyong mga tao na malalapit sa amin masaya para sa amin at iyon na lang pinapakinggan namin.”

Apart from his film with girlfriend Charlie, Carlo seemed to be today’s hottest leading man for many producers. He is also starring in the *Viva One* mini-series *Kung Hindi Lang Tayo Sumuko* alongside Coleen Garcia.

Now let’s talk about Coleen. She is now in a long-distance relationship with husband Billy Crawford who is busy with his summer tour in Europe where he has been drawing in fans by the thousands!

Coleen told us that she realized how she should take this time as an opportunity to find her way back to showbiz.

“I was left behind these past three years. My mental health took a backseat. Ngayon, si Amari, pinapayagan ako mag-work (He allows me to work). I didn’t realize how much I missed showbiz. I miss this,” she said.

For Coleen, it is about time she fills her cup and she is ready to get back on the saddle of embracing challenges in the craft that she loves so much.

In her mini-series with Carlo, she even agreed to do some spicy scenes, explaining, “Ayoko maging corny lalo na if kailangan para sa storya.”

She further admitted that she discussed the scenes with her husband and this is how it went: “It’s not gonna help him if we don’t talk about it. Tapos na when we discussed it.

“I would be lying if I said he wasn’t affected. Sinuportahan ko rin naman siya sa *Dancing with the Stars* na touchy-



While husband Billy Crawford is busy with his summer tour in Europe, Coleen Garcia is using this time to find her way back to showbiz.

feely siya. I even told him kailangan for the chemistry sa kanila.”

Meanwhile, Coleen clarified the set-up she has with Billy now after reports surfaced

last month that she almost called off their wedding years ago.

“Wala naman problema!” she said.

“Usapang sukuan kasi last time and which is the truth, I canceled the wedding before.

“But now, we’re in a super good place, especially when we had Amari. I do wanna acknowledge that it happened kasi iniisip ng mga tao ‘pag artista perfect, tapos bigla nag-hiwalay. But we’re super okay.”

I would be lying if I said he wasn’t affected

Another star balancing love and career is James Reid.

Despite all the doubters and naysayers on what he does at the helm of his music company *Careless*, it is business as usual for James until he reaches his goal of making local artists in the Philippines earn their space in the global scene.

James recently teamed up with Singaporean singer-songwriter Benjamin Kheng for a captivating collaboration on the single *Rock Bottom Blues*. The song delves into the depths of emotions experienced during difficult times and toxic relationships. It explores the pain of feeling stuck in a cycle of self-redemption and longing for redemption.

The song is the exact opposite of James’ love life right now. He clarified, “That’s Ben. I’m happy right now. Hahaha! That’s the direction for his new album.”

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Even if James manages many artists,



including big star Liza Soberano, James is also nurturing his career now here and abroad. He also has a big gig coming this fourth quarter of the year.

“I have a big collaboration coming up. Can I say October? Hahaha! Well, I said it already. (It’s) October-ish,” he said. “It’s with a Korean feature. It is going to be for my next single with a South Korean artist and we’ll be flying them out here to the Philippines.”

He was also ecstatic to share that he will have a show in his hometown in Australia for the first time ever and he will be announcing the dates soon. This proves that despite all the doubters and naysayers on what he does at the helm of his music company *Careless*, it is business as usual for James until he reaches his goal of bridging the gap and making local artists in the Philippines earn their space in the global scene.

He said, “I think there has to be people like us, people who need to push the boundaries, people that would do things differently. It is a very uncomfortable place to be in because you’re getting a lot of pressure from within the Philippines for not being what is expected.”

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Jose "Joey" Baking

Dolly de Leon to fly to Munich in August to work with Nicole Kidman

When Actress Dolly de Leon was invited to vote for the annual Oscar Awards she asked her American management team to check whether it was a scam.

“I asked, ‘Is this a scam?’ It’s because we would often get emails from people we don’t know, including scammers. They said, ‘No. You’ve been invited.’ That’s when I asked about the benefits of being a member,” Dolly said.

Dolly explained that “it’s mostly for prestige,” but what has more weight to her is the fact that “we now have the right to vote not just in the Actor’s branch, but in the officers’ as well.”

Huge honor

She continued: “The impact that I see from this is that we’ve become empowered. It’s not just me as a Filipino actor, but all of us Filipinos ... we now have the right to vote. It’s a huge honor... The thing is, it’s not for free. There’s an annual fee. So I asked, ‘Is it worth it?’”

Dolly said that since she is already

a member, it’s also possible that she would still get invited to attend the Oscars ceremony even if none of her films are nominated. “I may have to eventually get a sponsor for that because it’s not cheap to go there and dress up for the event,” she pointed out.

Speaking of trips, Dolly will be leaving for Munich, Germany, in August to shoot for the second season of the Prime Video drama series “Nine Perfect Strangers,” starring Nicole Kidman. She is expected to stay there for six months to work on nine episodes.

on a film opposite Kathryn Bernardo, titled “A Very Good Girl.”

“It’s all about women power. We’re done with 70 percent of the movie. Konting kembot na lang,” quipped Dolly, adding that working with Kathryn and director Petersen Vargas was a breeze.

“Kathryn is very down-to-earth. Like a normal person, she is easy to get along with. No attitude whatsoever,” she stressed. “When it came to acting,

I didn’t have to give pointers to her. If you think about it, she’s more seasoned in acting than I am because she’s been acting since she was a young girl. Acting is already in her system—that’s all her body knows—so I’m convinced that she actually knows more than I do.”

Handpicked for the project

She added: “I know this is a cliché, but Kathryn’s acting here is something she has never done before. It’s true that she will be showing a very different side of her in this project. This is not an easy one. You will know when you watch it.”

Since she was handpicked for the project, was there anything she requested from her producers prior to saying “yes” to doing it? “A good script plus a director I can work with, who is also wonderful and pleasant. I also asked for coactors who I can rely on for support. Even if Kathryn is the lead here, of course, I still needed her to back me up. I have nothing to complain about with Star Cinema at all.”

A timeless piece

Currently, Dolly is helping in the promotion of two entries to the 19th Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival: Dustin Jose Celestino’s “Duyan ng Magiting” and Carl Joseph Papa’s “Iti Mapupukaw.”

She plays support to lead actor Paulo O’Hara in “Duyan ng Magiting” and to Carlo Aquino on “Iti Mapupukaw.” The first film is an exploration on social injustice, a social commentary on the condition of the country. It tackles how corruption happened in government, particularly in the police force, explained Dolly. “It’s a timeless piece. I play a social worker who is so sick of the system,” she added.

Dolly said she has long wanted to work with Carlo. In fact, she has seen most of his film projects. “It’s so frustrating that he plays a mute person here, so we never had any real exchanges of lines. We ‘acted’ with our eyes. I’m still happy that I agreed to do the film because I finally saw how very generous an actor he really is,” said Dolly. Cinemalaya 2023 will run from Aug. 4 to 13 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Wherever Ian Veneracion goes, his ‘Army of Titas’ follows

After five years of actively pursuing live music, Ian Veneracion couldn’t be happier to have finally found his audience: They’re the moms whose kids no longer need supervision, former professionals enjoying their retirement or simply older women who want to have a good time.

Ian fondly calls them his “Army of Titas.” And wherever he goes, they follow.

“I’m proud of my demographic. One time I went on tour, did a show in Davao and saw the same people from my previous date in Manila. I was like, ‘But you guys just saw the exact same show the other night in Manila!’ And I find it flattering because they enjoy the show,” he said at a recent press conference.

“I would find myself trying to imagine their expenses—their tickets, airfare, accommodations, food. And some of them would even bring their families with them!” Ian added. “I don’t understand it, but I’m thankful.” And because many of these titas run the household, it’s not unusual to see some of them attending his show with family members in tow. “That’s the advantage of having the titas ... Sino ba ang nasusunod sa bahay? So when they say, ‘Pupunta tayo sa concert ni Ian,’ wala silang magawawa,” Ian said, laughing.

“So sometimes, they bring their husbands or kids. Thankfully, they seem to enjoy the show as well,” he said.

Same music taste

Needless to say, his good looks and the fact that he’s one of his generation’s biggest action stars and matinee idols are big factors to his popularity among the titas. But more than anything else, Ian feels that it’s their shared pop culture experiences that bind them together.

“The songs I perform in my shows are based on my own taste in music. And it just so happens that the music I like resonates with the titas of my generation ... because we all



grew up listening to the same songs,” pointed out Ian, whose musical influences include John Lennon, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan and Cat Stevens.

“For me, the most important thing is connecting with a live audience. I enjoy that.”

“The audience is very much aware of that. And it just creates an energy loop in which everyone is just into the music,” he added.

Right time and place

With conversations about intrusive fans recently making headlines, Ian was asked about his thoughts on artists setting boundaries. Luckily, he hasn’t had bad encounters with his fans. “My supporters aren’t super bagets; they get excited, but [they don’t get rowdy]—very different from the fans back in the day,” he said.

He did stress, however, that there’s always a right time and place for everything. “If I’m eating, for instance, I can simply tell the fans that maybe we can do it later,” Ian said.

“Of course, I don’t want random people going inside my dressing room, because I could be changing clothes or what. You have to have privacy,” he said.

Music has always been part of Ian’s life. He started playing piano and guitar at 11.

“Back then, if you’re a celebrity, you can just have someone else’s song, record it and sell an album. But I didn’t want to do that. I had too much respect for the craft. Music has always been there for me; it’s my therapy. So I didn’t want to take it lightly,” said Ian who also admitted to having stage fright at first.

Make him fly a plane or sky dive, and he will do it without blinking twice. But give him a guitar and put him onstage and

he begins to get all jittery.

The 2017 ABS-CBN drama series “A Love to Last” was also a catalyst for his foray into live performing. Because the character he played was into music, Ian had to sing. I was surprised the bosses loved it and I ended up recording songs for the show’s soundtrack,” he said.

“They encouraged me. ‘Why not record?’ They asked me, “That’s how it started,” he added.

While acting has been his bread and butter for 40 years now, playing music, Ian said, is just as important to him. “I can’t choose one. The two things are incomparable. My system looks for the thrill of playing different characters. That’s what I love about acting—I get to be someone different,” he said.

“But at the same time, there are also things and emotions that can be better expressed through music. And I enjoy having different outlets to express myself,” Ian said.

Herlene Budol changes mind, says she is not signing off pageantry yet

Days after Herlene Budol announced that she will no longer be joining beauty pageants, the comedian-beauty queen appeared to have changed her mind as she is now saying that she is just taking a breather from pageantry in order to improve her skills.

Budol made the revelation in an interview with TV hosts Kim Atienza and Susan Enriquez. “Herlene, sasali ka pa ba ulit sa ibang beauty pageant or end of the road na ba ang pagiging beaucon-era mo? Yes or no?” Enriquez asked the actress-beauty queen, who responded

with an “oo ata” before changing to “maybe.”

“Edi ‘yung pag-goodbye mo sa YouTube, hindi pala tunay na goodbye ‘yun (So it means that your goodbye on YouTube wasn’t a real goodbye)?” Atienza said in a follow-up question.

Shaking her head, Budol clarified that her earlier declaration was made after she initially thought that she wouldn’t be representing the Philippines at a global tilt. She, however, didn’t disclose which international pageant she would compete in.

“Hindi po. Sinabi ko po na ‘I’m signing off’ kasi wala pa po akong Miss Philippines Tourism na ipagdadayo ko po. Kumbaga, wala pa pong franchise na kukuha d’un sa international na paglalaman ko. After n’un, lalaban pa rin ako sa international,” she said.

“After n’un, baka magpahinga muna ako at papagalingin ko muna sarili ko. Focus muna ako sa kung anong meron ako ngayon. [M] agpapatalino po ako at tsaka magpe-pray” she continued.





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Rice prices in Soccsksargen rise as supply dwindles

KIDAPAWAN CITY, Cotabato — A dwindling supply has pushed prices of both local and imported rice up by as much as P55 per kilogram in the last two weeks and was projected to rise further in the coming days, grain retailers in Soccsksargen warned.

Carmelito Bacus, president of the Grain Retailers Association Confedera-

tion in Soccsksargen, said they were only getting a limited supply of rice during the lean season, causing prices to increase at an average of P5 per kilogram in the last week of July and the first week of August. While traders expected the mid-October harvest season in the region to boost local supply, rice prices would not likely go down because of existing rice export restrictions from India that have been keeping up the rice prices coming from Vietnam, a major source of rice imported to the Philippines, said Bacus.

Soccsksargen, formerly the Central Mindanao region, is composed of the rice-producing provinces of South Co-

tabato, Cotabato, Sarangani, and Sultan Kudarat, and the cities of General Santos, Kidapawan, and Koronadal.

As of Saturday, the rice sold at the Kidapawan Mega Market ranged from P44 per kilogram (local variety) to P55 per kilogram (imported grain), depending on its variety and country of origin.

This was an increase from the prices in June when the cheapest local rice varieties only cost P39 per kilo while the imported kind ranged from P45 to P47 per kilogram.

No NFA rice available

“The successive increases in prices

prompted consumers to buy in kilograms instead of in sacks,” Bacus said.

Since the cheap rice sold by the National Food Authority (NFA) could no longer be found in any public market in the region except in Kadiwa stores of the Department of Agriculture, it also meant that the poor had been forced to buy expensive rice in the market, Bacus said.

This developed as more than 30,000 individuals had already benefited from the cheap rice sold at P20 per kilogram by the city government of Kidapawan since March this year.

Aiko on handling exes, protects her kids from bashers

I don’t want to complicate things,” said actress Aiko Melendez as a way to explain the kind of relationship she opted to have with the fathers of her two children, Andrei and Marthena.

Andrei, 24, is Aiko’s son with Jomari Yllana, while Marthena, 17, is her daughter with Martin Jickain. Both men have their respective partners now and Aiko is dating Zambales Rep. Jay Khonghun.

“I’m a single parent—I’m both mom and dad to my children. I also have to be the disciplinarian and the spoiler at the same time. With Marthena’s relationship with her father, I really don’t meddle. Martin and I talk only when we have to. That’s my way of showing respect to our respective partners,” Aiko told Inquirer Entertainment in a recent interview.

“It’s different when people see us together, even though we no longer like each other romantically, kahit wala nang malisya. People always react, especially when they see us on social media. In fact, there’s this one instance a few years back during Marthena’s birthday,” the actress began.

“I posted a picture of Martin, Marthena, Jay, me and Andrei. It got so many reactions from bashers that Marthena asked me to take it down. I was like, ‘Can’t they be happy that I have this setup with the fathers of my children?’ It seems like they aren’t. Marthena said, ‘I think people will really have a hard time understanding. Like what you told me before, we don’t owe anyone any explanation about what’s happening in our lives.’ This is why I talk with my exes only when I have to. We don’t need to be textmates,” Aiko pointed out.

Aiko said she has a similar experience with Jomari, whom she opted not to hang out with any more “to avoid complications.” She explained: “People know this—we tried to be friends for a time, but we would al-

ways feel pressured by people’s reactions because they all want us to get back together. We have moved on. I don’t want to be put in an awkward situation with Jom. Since Andrei is already of age, he can very well tell his father what he needs,” Aiko said.

Jomari is set to tie the knot with former actress, Abby Viduya, in November.

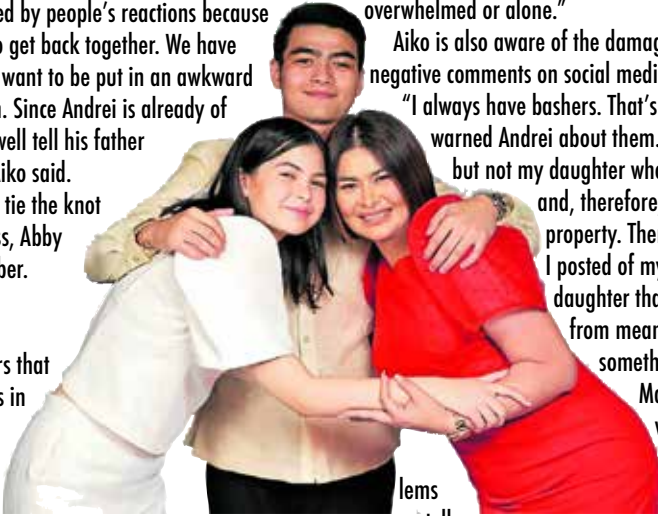
Hands-off
Aiko also swears that Jay never meddles in her relationships with her exes.

Meanwhile, Aiko just finished her college degree in mass communications at Philippine Women’s University and eventually plans to take up her masters. At 47, she said returning to school at this time in her life was tough.

“Studying is not easy, but once you finish it, you will realize it’s all worth the trouble.”

Mental well-being
What Aiko is also focusing on is the mental well-being of her kids. “I don’t think I went through any kind of mental illness on my own during the pandemic because maybe I was too preoccupied watching over my two children. I’ve read that it’s really today’s youth who are more affected. They are more exposed to social media and have easy access to information on what’s happening in the world.”

She added: “Andrei is turning 25 in September and Marthena just turned 17. I always ask them how their



day was and whether or not something is bothering them. I think simple words like, ‘Are you OK?’ are important to individuals like themso they won’t feel so overwhelmed or alone.”

Aiko is also aware of the damage of getting negative comments on social media to young minds. “I always have bashers. That’s why I’ve already warned Andrei about them. I’m used to them, but not my daughter who is not an artista and, therefore, is not public property. There’s this one photo I posted of myself and my daughter that got comments from mean people. They said something bad about Marthena that I felt was really unfair. If you have prob- with me, you can me, but please spare my daughter. You don’t know her,” she declared.

Melai Cantiveros defends kids, pleads for understanding

Melai Cantiveros urged netizens to spare her kids from bashing, reiterating how well behaved they are.

Recall that her daughter Mela was bashed recently for what many described as “rude” behavior, after she was heard describing her mom as somebody who looks like an “unggoy.”



On Instagram, Melai posted a video of her asking her eldest: “Ate Mela do you mean it to say your mama is a monkey?”

Her nine-year-old daughter with Jason Francisco answered: “Hindi, mama. I love you naman. Prank lang. Joke joke lang ‘yun.”

Melai reiterated: “Ayan. Joke joke lang kasi ‘yun, guys. Sa mga hindi nakakaintindi, papaintindi ko sa inyo ha? Joke joke lang ‘yun guys. Ganun talaga ang happiness namin, ang kulitan naming family.”

In the caption, Melai also said: “Mga Kamsamii di na sana ako magreact pero pag anak na ang pag usapan di pwede guysssssss , kasi bata lang ang anak ko guys . Di ako papayag na kng anu anu sasabihin nyu sa anak ko dahil ako ang dumidiplina sa mga anak ko ,kilala ko mga anak ko madasalin mga yan pati mundo pinagdarasal nga ng mga yan.”

She also reiterated how her two children are “disciplined” and “cheerful.”

“Alam ng mga anak ko guys kung kailan ang kulitan at kailan ang seryosohan. Sa mga seryoso macyado sa role nila sa buhay magstretching dn kayu guys importante ang happiness and enjoymnt sa pag-sasama nyu sa buhay,” she said. “Wag nyu kalimutan mag enjoy sa guys.”

She then thanked those who understood the situation.

“Sa mga nakakaintini naman sa kulitan nmin, Kamsamiiii sa inyo. SarangeyoOoO. Sa mga hindi nakakaintindi, Mai-intindihan nyu rin kami pagdating ng panahon, panoorin nyu nalang kami araw araw para umabot na kayu sa punto na naiintindihan nyu na kami at masasabi nyu “ah-hhhhh ganun lang pala tlaa sila” Love You Mga Kamsamiiiiiiii.”

Khalil Ramos makes waves on-screen and on-stage

Khalil Ramos makes movie comeback in ‘As If It’s True’, theatrical debut in ‘Tick, Tick...Boom!’

It has been a busy year for Sparkle artist Khalil Ramos as he returns to the silver screen in a new romantic-comedy film and makes his theatrical debut this August.

In the upcoming Cinemalaya festival, Khalil will be starring as James in the film As If It’s True, alongside fellow Kapuso, Ashley Ortega, who will play the character of Gemma.

To add another milestone to his career, the 27-year-old actor is set to hit the theater stage as he takes on the lead role of an aspiring musical composer, Jon, in the musical Tick, Tick... Boom!

In As If It’s True, Khalil will be captivating the audience with his acting prowess. Known for his versatility and ability to immerse himself in various characters, the 27-year-old actor shared during the press conference that somehow, he could relate to James.

“Yes, in a way, I could relate to my character, who is a musician. I know how it feels to be a struggling artist. I could relate to him [in the aspect of] adjusting and compromising his passion for financial stability, especially during the pandemic,” explained Khalil.

He also mentioned that when it comes to handling



Khalil Ramos (left) marks his first project with Ashley Ortega (right) in the upcoming Cinemalaya film, ‘As If It’s True’

a relationship, he and his character have their differences.

The 27-year-old artist shares his excitement on his theatrical debut

Sharing the spotlight with Khalil is Ashley, who recently finished her Heart on Ice drama series. The film marks their first project together.

“This is my first time working with Ashley on a project. We have met at endorsement events before. This is the first time we have collaborated on a drama.

The experience was fantastic because she’s very collaborative and enthusiastic, and the material we worked on resonated with both of us,” said Khalil.

“As If It’s True” is an official entry to this year’s Cinemalaya Festival and promises to captivate the audience with its relatable storyline.

Khalil also expressed his excitement as he embarked on a new journey of performing on the theater stage with Tick, Tick...Boom!

Khalil Ramos is on a roll debuting in the local adaptation of ‘Tick, Tick...Boom!’

In an interview last year, Khalil revealed that he al-

ways finds solace in singing and loves performing on stage. Now that he has been allowed to star in a musical, Khalil shared that he is “enjoying every single bit of it.”

“I am enjoying it very much, as I mentioned earlier, as an actor, I don’t come across a process like this every day because this is the first-ever theater and stage production that I am a part of,” he stated. “It’s such a different experience for me to be given the time to immerse myself in a character for that long. I’m enjoying every single moment of it,” added Khalil.

Presented by 9 Works Theatrical, Tick, Tick...Boom! runs until August 13 and on all weekends of the month.

Janno Gibbs saddened by “negative comments bordering on insults”

Ikinadismaya ni Janno Gibbs na muli na naman siyang nakaranas ng bashing dahil sa kanyang age filter video sa TikTok.

Sa nasabing video, gumamit si Janno ng viral ngayong age filter kung saan pinatanda ang kanyang hitsura at naging kamukha niya ang amang si Ronaldo Valdez.

Sabi niya sa caption, “Janno - Ronaldo #tiktokfilters” Ikinatuwa ni Janno na isinulat ng GMA News Online ang tungkol sa kanyang TikTok video.

Pero nahaluan ng lungkot ang kanyang tuwa dahil sa mga insultong nabasa niya sa comments section sa Facebook post ng nasabing article.



Komento ng ilan, mas guwapo at professional sa kanya ang ama.

May tumawag din sa kanyang “manong Leo Martinez.”

Ayon sa isa pa, “The senior is fairer than the junior. And wiser too.”

Sabi ng isa pa, “I’m sorry to say but your Dad’s shoes are too big for you. You should be proud of him anyway.

Ang ilan pang komento:

“d hamak na gwapo c ronaldo valdez magling p n

actor hindi corny... mlyo sa anak.. lol”

“No to Ronaldo, Yes to Leo Martinez. Okay kaba tiyan?”

Ipinost ni Janno ang hindi kagandahang mga komento sa Instagram ngayong araw, July 18, 2023.

Sabi ng singer-comedian sa caption, “Flattered to be featured on @gmanews .This Tiktok has reached 7M views. Just sad to read the negative comments bordering on insults. FB can be a nasty place. Still grateful tho. Read the comments.”

May mga dumepensa naman kay Janno sa Instagram.

Sabi ng isang netizen, “Marami talaga nega na bashers sa fb. You are a great actor and comedian sir Janno. Don’t mind them. They can never reach what you have right now. Fb is really full of bashers na walang magawa.”

Depensa ng isa pa, “Kinu compliment ang dad by bashing the son. Guys, come on! Kung hindi ka magulang, sure ko na anak ka! You think hindi masasaktan ang dad sa pag bash nyo sa anak nya?”

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Miss Supranational first runner-up Pauline Amelinckx appeals for kindness toward Miss Ecuador

MANILA, Philippines—Days after her warm homecoming in Bohol, 2023 Miss Supranational first runner-up Pauline Amelinckx took to social media to share her international accomplishment with the people responsible for making her the woman that she has become, her parents Paul and Erlinda.

“Victory is sweeter when I get to share it with them [blue heart emoji],” the Belgian-Filipino beauty queen said on social media, posting a photograph of her with both parents, wearing the crown and sash she received at the culmination of the international pageant in Malopolska, Poland, last month. Ecuador’s Andrea Aguilera captured the top title.



Miss Supranational first runner-up Pauline Amelinckx with her proud parents Paul and Erlinda.

“Papa taught me discipline and dedication to [oneself]. Mama taught me kindness. And it’s about kindness that I wanna talk about now,” continued the 27-year-old host and model in her post.

“It has been about three weeks since the coronation night of [Miss Supranational] where [Aguilera] was crowned [red heart emoji]. In a competition like that, we all give our heart and soul to be the best representation of the country and its people we bring forth,” Amelinckx said.

She said she saw Aguilera’s dedication and passion to be her best for Ecuador. “This journey has taught me that even when we didn’t achieve what we set our minds to, we could have still achieved so many other things, things we didn’t expect or prayed for but which still hold so much meaning and value if we allow ourselves to see that [praying hands emoji],” she added.

Amelinckx reiterated her declaration of finding “pride and peace” in bringing the Philippines back to the Top 2 of the Miss Supranational pageant, and

then lamented the online vitriol within the global pageant community. “Recently I heard about all the hate that Andrea has received. I know very well how it feels like to receive PMs or even e-mails with hurtful messages. But no one deserves to go through that,” she revealed.

She reiterated her plea for kindness and sobriety. “That’s why I want to speak up about this. I will never tell you how to act or how to feel, but I can only hope that we always [choose] to be kind and not add to the hate already present in our world. To make life even more beautiful is up to us [twinkling stars emoji],” she said.

Amelinckx said she still believes that “pageantry is a platform that brings people together, and it’s by uniting that we can make the greatest change.”

She concluded her message with the line, “I’m sending love, smiles and warm hugs.”

Her journey to the Miss Supranational pageant

spanned years. She first captured a national title at the 50th anniversary edition of the Mutya ng Pilipinas pageant in 2018, but her international competition in Korea was later scrapped. She then joined the first Miss Universe Philippines contest in 2020, and finished as third runner-up.

In 2022, she went for another shot at the title, but fell short and was proclaimed as Miss Universe Philippines-Charity. She enlisted for the national search for the third time this year, and eventually got the Miss Supranational Philippines crown.

The hunt for her national successor has already begun with the call for applicants for “The Miss Philippines Culture and Heritage Celebration,” the newest national competition in the country that will also proclaim the successor of Miss Charm Philippines Krishnah Gravidez.

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Oh, the jolly month of July



Fun, as in Fun Philippines Festival is back on the streets of Bathurst and Wilson. It was a fun two-day weekend that was enjoyed by all. On a disappointing note, inulan po iyong

Sunday, from 2:30 top to 3:30 pm.. After that, there were no presentations on the stage anymore for safety reasons. There was still a bit of rain falling. Then, at 5:30 pm, it rained hard



Ibanag Picnic

again until it eventually closed. Strangely, FPF's biggest and only "star" this year is Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (PMJ). With appearances becoming rare because of hecklers, some of his appearances have either been canceled or shortened.



Ariel Rivera

Feeling in friendly territory, PMJ walked the length of the festival shaking hands, having selfies with anyone who would want one. Of course, I heard a heckler shouting "you haven't kept your promise," but I did not bother finding out where it was coming from. Definitely, he is not a Filipino. Whether PMJ's got the Filipino vote, you can't



Mel Galeon

tell from the people who lined up just to shake his hands or selfies' with him. We Filipinos are not known to be rude to any politician.

Toronto Kapuso Lions (TKL) club held a yard sale at the Markham Baptist church to raise funds for a medical charity drive. On another occasion, TKL also donated boxes of clothing & household stuff to newcomer caregivers/overseas foreign workers through Canadian Caregivers Assistance Organization (CCAO), arranged by Lion Chinky Del Mar.

I was invited by Roy and Angie Berlin to their annual Ibanag

SOCIALLIST page 23

Ashley Ortega ticks off another item on her acting bucket list

After her stint in the TV series Hearts on Ice as the leading lady of Xian Lim, Ashley Ortega will be seen in the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival entry, As If It's True, as the on-screen partner of Khalil Ramos. It's a back-to-back main role for the Sparkle GMA artist, who aspires to become a versatile actress. This crossover from TV to film is a welcome change for Ashley.

"I'm very grateful that it was Khalil, who was my partner in it. It's my first Cinemalaya movie," said Ashley of her leading man. "Grateful ako dahil isang napaka-galing na aktor ang nakasama ko dito. I really admire him. He is very professional and he's such a gentleman. He (made) me comfortable, that's why when we were on set, so-brang light lang (work was light). (Being around him) made my work easier and lighter."

As If It's True is a sneak peek into the lives, love and relationships of the younger gen-

eration. This is a stark contrast to the Hearts on Ice narrative that explored the struggles and triumphs of a figure skater. By the way, the GMA Telebabad primetime series gave her the opportunity to play a lead role and a character that is close to her heart. Ashley was a competitive figure skater prior to joining show business. That's why she considered it a dream role.

The actress also found her character in As If It's True relatable.

"I play the character Gemma and I can relate to her. She's a content creator," said Ashley about her character in the movie and found Gemma's social media world somehow similar to showbiz world.

She continued, "Gemma lives alone and she's independent. She's working on her career. As a vlogger, she would do everything to have a career and (make it)

The actress also found her character in As If It's True relatable.

consistent. Nag-start kasi siyang mag-viral through a video na ginawa siyang meme or na ginawa siyang joke (She first went viral through a video that used her as a meme or a joke). Perhaps, my similarities (with Gemma) are we're both independent and we're trying our best to make our career consistent." Yes, a career

that is for keeps, as one may add. Guiding Ashley in depicting Gemma's motivation and aspiration was young director John Rogers, who gave Ashley and Khalil the liberty to share their insights on how to approach their characters.

"He gave us the freedom to do whatever we wanted (or we felt right or) suitable in playing our characters," shared she, "and even in our lines, sometimes there were long monologues (to deliver), sometimes he would tell us there was no need to

follow the script (and would encourage us to) just do what we felt about what our characters would like to tell, and that we could say it."

All in all, Ashley had fun working with direk John.

Again, being encouraged by the director to find her voice in the portrayal or in a scene, like, as Ashley put it, "do your own thing as your character" and act in an impromptu way, is among the new experiences she had while filming the Cinemalaya entry.

"I would always memorize my script, but I also appreciated (being asked to bring something new and my ideas to the table) because it challenged me more as an actor to make (the portrayal) look natural and to be in character."

Asked to describe her participation and debut in the upcoming

ing Cinemalaya, Ashley said, "Perhaps, hindi mawawala yung kaba mo talaga kasi (your nervousness won't go away because) people will always have (something negative and positive to say). It's challenging and I consider it a new door for growth as an actor. It's also exciting because I got to experience a lot of new things, (working) with my director and my co-actors."

"It's very different from doing television. The whole filming experience (was) really nice and it's something I will never forget because, again, this is my first Cinemalaya movie and I've always wanted to do an indie film," added she.

"So, I'm just really grateful that I was given the opportunity (to do that) and leading pa ako dito (I was even tapped to play a leading role here). It's something memorable, it's a goal I was able to achieve. I'm just really proud because this year I got to do things that are really part of my bucket list as an actor."



Pia Wurtzbach makes defends women who don't want to have kids

Still fresh from her very private wedding with Scottish entrepreneur Jeremy Jauncey in March, Miss Universe 2015 Pia Wurtzbach made a case for women who are not keen on having children, saying a woman's worth shouldn't be based on her ability to bear children.

Wurtzbach admitted that she hated being asked about having children at this point in her career.

"People just ask me, 'When are you gonna have kids?' After I got married, I just kept hearing that question," she said.

The former beauty queen pointed out that some women may have priorities and commitments other than having

children. "As an empowered woman, I think your worth as a woman is not measured by you being able to bear a child. There [are] really so many more things to a woman that just bearing children," she said.

"Some women do not want to have kids. Some women want to be amazing in their careers, they want to put all their effort [into] that. Maybe they want to take care of their parents all their life. Maybe they want to commit their life to social work. Maybe they just have different plans. That doesn't mean that a woman is less valuable or less capable or less able," she continued.

Wurtzbach said

she wants to defend women who "choose not to have kids," saying she salutes them for doing so.

"I really want to stand up for women who choose not to have kids," she said.

Jeremy 'filling the gaps' in Pia's heart

During the interview, the beauty-queen let out a smile as she spoke about how Jauncey "fills the gaps" in her heart, saying he is a combination of various roles "molded into one person."

"I am so blessed and grateful that somehow, some way, God said that this is the person who will fill all the gaps in your heart. And he just filled all the gaps in my heart. I don't feel that, 'I don't have a dad anymore.' I have a mentor, best friend,

lover, father figure, and coach, all molded into one person," she said.

Wurtzbach then said that while her husband had an "amazing childhood," he's the type of partner who was strong enough to handle one who is a "handful" like her.

"He has so many roles in my life, not just my husband. Like he knows about the struggles I went through. Fortunately, for him, he had an amazing childhood, the best kind of relationship with his parents and siblings," she said. "I was given somebody strong enough to help me and be strong for me. I'm a handful but it works."

Wurtzbach also shared that she and Jauncey "always" communicate, and are "transparent" with each other at all times, including their finances and "gender-based roles or expectations."

"There's no sugar coating, no flowery

words, no beating around the bush. We talk about everything."

"We [also] talked about our gender-based roles or expectations in the relationship. We talk about these 'expectations' of each other. You gotta talk about it, even situations that aren't happening yet but they could happen. They're easier to talk about when you're in a good place. If you guys are happy, then you should talk about the hard things," she further added.

Wurtzbach previously spoke about being asked whether she wants to have kids in the future last June, where she pointed out that it's "so personal" on her Instagram Stories. She also dismissed pregnancy speculations in the same month.

She tied the knot with Jauncey in Seychelles last March, although she confirmed their union only two months later.



Markus Paterson stands firm on not dating fellow celebrities

Almost a year after saying his remark to “never f***ing date someone in the industry,” Markus Paterson is standing by his belief saying this is based on his own experiences, but he conceded that he should have said this in a better way.

Paterson drew backlash for his statement which he stated in a September 2022 podcast wherein he gave a drunken advice to aspiring stars to never date celebrities. The remark also came in the same month as his ex-partner, actress-singer Janella Salvador (Jea), confirmed that she’s a “single mom” to their son Jude.

Speaking to showbiz writer Ogie Diaz in an interview, the actor maintained that he remains firm on this stand, while maintaining that this is just his “personal preference” in terms of dating.

“Kasi dito sa industriya, ang notice ko lang na sobrang competitive ang lahat. And the one thing that you shouldn’t be competitive in is relationships with someone. Hindi mo talaga maiiwasang maging competitive sa significant other mo kapag pareho kayong actor or naghahanap ng project,” he said.

“And then kapag [mas sumikat ‘yung

isa], lalo na kapag guy, nahu-hurt ‘yung ego namin eh. At hindi namin maiwasan ‘yun. So, to avoid that, just don’t date someone in the same industry, especially in such a competitive industry,” he added.

Paterson then clarified that he wasn’t referring to Salvador in his statement, while confessing that he knew that his statement would draw backlash from netizens.

“Baka isipin ng mga tao na para kay Jea ‘yun, eh alam niyang hindi naman para sa kanya ‘yun. Alam naman niya na mahal ko siya. Pero inexpect ko ‘yung bashing (People thought that I was referring to Jea, even if she knows that it’s not about her. She knows that I love her so much),” he said, referring to Salvador using her nickname.

The “Viral Scandal” star also pointed out that he should have framed his statements about his sentiments better, so that others would understand where he’s coming from.

“Sana nasabi ko [siya] nang mas maayos, and coming from a place where they would understand my point. Kasi ang pagkakasabi ko talaga, ‘don’t date

someone in the industry,’ mukha talaga akong demonyo d’un. I don’t blame them for bashing me, sobra,” he said.



On Janella Salvador During the interview, Paterson sang praises for Salvador, saying he “couldn’t ask for a better mother” for his son.

The actor then admitted that their relationship was “perfect” when they were based in the United Kingdom, but “a lot of realities set in” when they returned to the Philippines.

“A lot of realities set in. Ang daming naging problem na ito got to a point na we weren’t talking anymore.

“I’m working towards being a better father, just showing my son the love that he deserves,” he said. “Hindi pumapasok sa isip ko na (It doesn’t enter my mind if) I do want to get back with her? It’s just not a priority right now, for the both of us, I feel. Mas priority namin si Jude.”

Despite this, the “Pira-Pirasong Paraiso” star said he’s “glad” that his relationship with Salvador happened since she was the “first one” who taught him how to “love

unconditionally.”

Paterson and Salvador went public with their relationship in September 2020, where they’ve been together for one year and eight months during that time. They introduced Jude in January 2021, despite being born three months earlier.

The actor confirmed their split in September 2022, saying they’ve been “broken up for almost a year.”

Claudine Barretto’s daughter Aryan-na tries hand in acting with Dennis Padilla

Dennis Padilla and Quia Aryanna Barretto, daughter of actress Claudine Barretto, are set to work together in the upcoming film “Magic Hurts,” which is helmed by filmmaker Gabby Ramos.

Barretto made the confirmation through some behind-the-scenes photos of her daughter and former brother-in-law, as seen on her Instagram account. This comes months after her emotional reunion with Padilla, which took place during the dedication of the actress’ children.

Padilla expressed his excitement for Quia’s acting prowess in the comments of Claudine’s post, as he described her as a “natural.”

The photos, however, drew mixed reactions from netizens in the comments, with some wondering if Padilla would ever reconcile with his ex-wife Marjorie and children Julia, Claudia, and Leon.

The movie, produced by RemsFilms, also stars Beaver Magtalas, Mutya Orquia, and Maxine Trinidad.

Details about its storyline and premiere date, as well as Padilla and Quia’s roles, are yet to be disclosed, as of this writing.

Prior to the film’s production, Claudine assured Padilla that he’s “welcome” to visit her children Santino and Sabina “anytime” last June, after the latter expressed how much he misses his ex-in laws.



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Shanaia Gomez reveals the challenges in portraying Selene in FPJ's Batang Quiapo

In conquering the world of acting, Shanaia Gomez dares to come out of her comfort zone. Some of us might know her as the sweet and pretty Pinoy Big Brother housemate and online host, but she's more than what you expect. And she's proving so by her impressive 'kontrabida' performance in FPJ's Batang Quiapo. The 21-year-old actress wants nothing more than

to push her talent to its very limits. On her days off, she practices her Tagalog, dancing, and acting skills for her role as Selene in FPJ's Batang Quiapo, without neglecting proper rest. The hard work likely comes from the fact that she wanted to join the show so bad and almost didn't. According to Shanaia, she auditioned during the



” I wanted to take this opportunity to show na actress talaga ako, na kahit anong role ang ibigay sa akin kakayanin ko. Lalaban ako kahit anong role. He (Coco Martin) really gave me this opportunity. Parang, in a way, he really asked me to try for this role.

SHANAIA GOMEZ
on portraying 'Selene' in FPJ's Batang Quiapo

teleserye's pre-production, specifically for Coco Martin and Lovi Poe's love triangle, but didn't get a call until months later. We can only imagine how elated she felt when she was finally given the role of Selene, though she was a bit hesitant as well. She said that Selene is her first big role and she doubted that she can pull off the sexy dance scenes. "I'm only 21 years old, so medyo baby pa ako. I'm scared of being sexualized by so many out there." "It is kind of difficult kasi this is a role that I've never done before. I've never met a club dancer before. I don't know kung paano 'yung personality, how they act. That's also something that I'm learning by

SHANAIA page 21

Former child star headlines new romcom with rising showbiz newbie

Former child star Mutya Orquia and showbiz newcomer Beaver Magtalas are currently in Baguio for the production of Magic Hurts, a romantic comedy aimed at young audiences. In the film, Mutya plays the character of a young girl who deeply loves her parents despite the difficulties in their relationship. Mutya shared her thoughts on what viewers can anticipate from the film, expressing that it may evoke feelings of compassion, annoyance, or amusement, as they are unsure how her character will be received by the audience. "We're not yet sure how my character will be accepted by moviegoers. I just



From left: 'Magic Hurts' stars Mutya Orquia, Beaver Magtalas, and Maxine Trinidad want to thank Direk Gabby for giving me that role," she said expressing her gratitude to film director Gabby Ramos for entrusting her with the role. Excited about her first movie project, Mutya revealed her enthusiasm after reading the script and meeting with Di-

rek Gabby. It's also her first time working with Beaver and Maxine Trinidad in a movie. Mutya conveyed her delight in collaborating with the director, praising Gabby for maintaining open communication and being receptive to the actors' suggestions, resulting in a light and enjoyable shooting experience. "I'm really super excited to film my first movie. I felt super excited after I read the script and during our meeting with Direk Gabby. He communicated with us. He was very open to the suggestions of the artists. That's why I know our shoot will be smooth and light," the teen star added. Beaver, on the other hand, talked about the natural connection he shares with Mutya as friends, believing that it will help them convincingly portray their characters in the film. "I feel that when it comes to our con-

nection, there are still many things we need to improve on. However, in some cases, it's pretty natural because we're very close friends. So hopefully, we can show that to the people watching," Beaver shared. Mutya echoed Beaver's sentiments, emphasizing that their existing close friendship will aid them during the scenes and promotional activities. Their authentic bond as friends will undoubtedly be evident to the audience, as their fans are well aware of their shared experiences. Completing the cast are Angelica Jones, Dennis Padilla, Claudine Barretto, Arianna Barretto, Archie Adamos, Aileen Papin, Blumark Rocas, Pantene Palanca, Cassie Kim, Dennah Bautista, Ricardo Cepeda, and Julian Roxas. Magic Hurts is scheduled for a forthcoming premiere in cinemas and on streaming platforms.



1. Chyrell Ronquillo celebrates her birthday at Congee Queen; 2. Birthday celebrant Chyrell serenades her guests; 3. Josie de Leon gets a birthday hug from her son Joseph Cunanan; 4. Lexie Alexa and Shaine Jaramillo perform a dance number for birthday celebrant Josie de Leon



Kathryn Bernardo inulan ng papuri sa pasilip ng 'A Very Good Girl', lalong lumabas ang husay sa pag-arte

TRENDING ngayon sa social media ang aktres na si Kathryn Bernardo. Simula kasi kagabi hanggang sa mga oras na sinusulat namin ang balitang ito ay pinag-uusapan ang tungkol sa trailer ng upcoming movie niya na "A Very Good Girl" kasama ang batikang aktres na si Dolly de Leon, who gained international success dahil sa pelikulang "Triangle of Sadness." Tweet nga ng aktres, "In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different." Tama nga naman ito dahil dapat may bagong mapanood para hindi mawala o makalimutan ng lahat. Trending din ang trailer ng pelikula na may nakalagay na "#AVeryGoodGirlTeaser." Baka Bet Mo: Kathryn Bernardo, Dolly de Leon sumabak na sa taping ng 'A Very Good Girl', fans kinilig: 'We're so ready for this! Marami kaming nabasa na sinasabing mahusay si Kathryn



sa nasabing pelikula na idinirek ni Petersen Vargas under ABS-CBN Star Cinema na mapapanood sa mga sinehan sa Setyembre 27. Ayon kay @godtierkn, "THE kathryn bernardo invented the mata-mata acting. #AVeryGoodGirl-Teaser" Sabi naman ni @penkandorens, "Ang lala ni kathryn bernardo?! is she even aware that despite how she always ends up only getting nominated for best actress for some prestigious award giving bodies and not taking that awards home... she is the only actress NOW who can do mata mata acting." Sey pa ng isa oang netizen, "From one iconic kathryn bernardo character to another!! We're beyond excited for u @bernardokath #AVeryGoodGirlTeaser #AVeryGoodGirl" Para kay @jochendria, "Kathryn Bernardo's acting range is unmatched." Nakipagsabayan daw siya sa husay ni Dolly plus naging tsikahan din sa group chats ang tweet ni Chie Filomeno na,

"MGA PUTANGINA NIYO0000 THAT'S THE TWEET!!! #AVeryGoodGirlTeaser." Naaliw kami sa ibang komento na sinasabing papansin ang dating miyembro ng dance group na GirlTrends sa It's Showtime na nag-shift na into acting career. May nagsabi ring baka nakainom o sadyang masaya lang talaga dahil kasama pala siya sa pelikula. Pinanood namin ang pinag-uusapang trailer ng "A Very Good Girl" at oo nga, ibang Kathryn Bernardo ang mapapanood sa pelikulang ito na malayo na sa mga ginawa niyang pelikula na rom-com with heavy scenes. Mapapanood din sa pasilip ng pelikula na kumawala na si Kathryn sa loveteam at lalong lumabas ang husay niya sa pag-arte plus nakadagdag pa na kasama niya ang kilalang si Dolly de Leon. Mukhang inaabangan na rin ito ng KathNiel o Kathryn supporters sa mga sinehan at sana manumbalik na ang mga dating pila sa local films. Anyway, bukod kina Dolly at Kathryn ay kasama rin sina Jake Ejercito, Donna Cariaga, Gillian Vicencio, Ana Abad Santos, Kaori Oinuma, Althea Ruedas, Nathania Guerrero, Nour Hooshmand, Chie at Angel Aquino.



Gillian Vicencio reveals Yves Flores' lighthearted request

The Kapamilya actress Gillian Vicencio revealed that her co-star, Yves Flores, asked her if he could “court” her after two years. This revelation came during the press conference of their new series. Gillian shared that it happened while they were still shooting 2 Good 2 Be True. She said, “He asked me if he could court me after two years when we were still shooting 2 Good [2 Be True].” Yves and Gillian first worked together in the series as friends of Daniel Padilla’s character, Red and Tox, respectively. “It was just a joke, I was just kidding. But actually, it’s been almost a year now, so there’s still one more year to go. Let’s see,” quipped Yves. In her defense, the actress quickly clarified that she wasn’t sure if the actor was joking or not. “I didn’t know



Yves Flores (left) and Gillian Vicencio (right) star in the spinoff series, ‘ReTox 2 Be Continued’ if he was serious or not, so I just laughed it off,” explained Gillian. Meanwhile, when asked about their real relationship status, both answered that they were just friends. Gillian said, “For now, let’s focus on work first. Then let’s see where it really goes.” She added, “Probably, there’s a mutual understanding about each other’s feelings.” They admitted though that they see each other as boyfriend-girlfriend material. Yves stated, “First of

all, she’s easy to please, easy to make laugh. She’s a simple person, doesn’t need expensive things. She has simple desires. She’s easy to communicate with, and she listens to me.” “Because she’s really sweet, and she puts effort into it...because she’s selfless. When she loves someone, when someone is important to her, she will make an effort and show her feelings,” Gillian added. Yves also shared that even their co-stars in 2 Good 2 Be True were curious about the status of their relationship. “This is just how we are with Gill. Maybe that’s what others notice, that they think we’re together, but we’re not. This is just us, this is our natural way,” explained Yves. Following the success of their unexpected love team in the series, Yves and Gillian became the lead roles in their own series, ReTox 2 Be Continued. “I didn’t expect that there would be a spinoff and that Gillian and I would be the leads,” Yves said. Helmed by director Paco Sta. Maria, ReTox 2 Be Continued is a spinoff of the KathNiel series, but this time,

it focuses on Red and Tox’s characters, their respective families, their friendship, and their relationship. “We didn’t expect ReTox at first; it wasn’t in the script given to us initially, it wasn’t in the story. Then in some scenes, ReTox’s banter would just happen spontaneously without being scripted,” Yves said. Yves also credited film director Mae Cruz Alviar for how their love team started. “During the first cycle, Director Mae said, ‘Why not make them a love team?’ I was surprised because in my eyes, Gillian was like a kid. We three (Yves, Daniel Padilla, and Matt Evans) are all tall, like we’re the big brothers, and then there’s this young girl with us,” he continued. “And then over time, it’s like they see something that we don’t see on the screen. Eventually, we realized that there’s something when we watch, which we don’t intentionally do,” the actor added. “Of course, it’s heartwarming and delightful because even Yves and I don’t see it, we don’t understand what people find cute. So, we don’t really understand,” agreed Gillian.

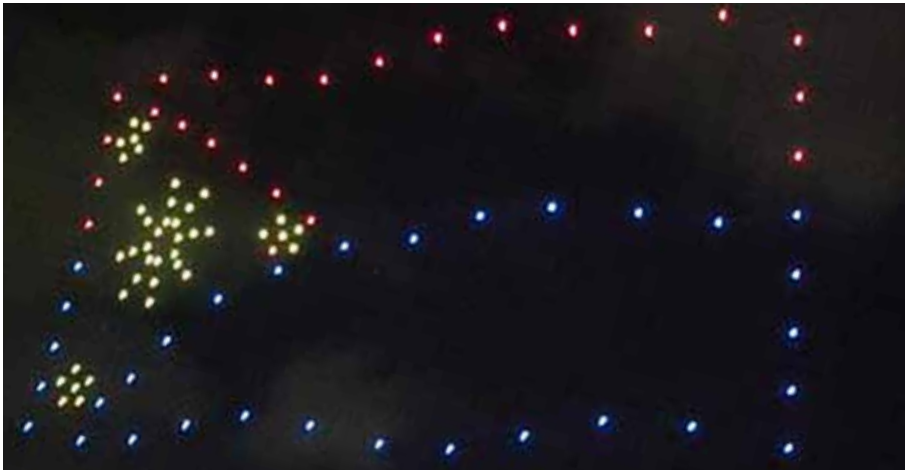


FUN PHILIPPINES FESTIVAL

1. Philip Beloso assists Harina Bakeshop owner Danny Hernandez; 2. Nene Panganiban (2ND FROM RIGHT) and staff sells Harina foodstuff; 3. Fun Philippines founder Theresa Torralba (STANDING)pose with volunteers; 4. Joy D'aoust poses at banner with her picture at Fun Philippines; 5. Inang Ligaya Sarmiento poses with friends; 6. Mitzi Faigal and Joy D'aoust gets a selfie with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; 7. JDL Cultural group performs at Fun Festival.



TOP: Little Miss Canada 2019 Hagian Sophia Daclan and runner-up Kathryn Rodricks pose with current contestant. BELOW: Former Little Miss Philippines Caanda Samantha Esporas and Sophia Sambrana pose with Raeschelle Joy Gavina, Little Miss Philippines Canada 2023!



Palarong Pambansa drone supplier apologizes for PH flag mishap; Marikina plans legal action

MANILA, Philippines – Disaster struck in the very last moments of the Palarong Pambansa 2023 at the Marikina Sports Complex as the closing ceremony drone show supplier mistakenly depicted the Philippine flag in a state of war, as seen on the city's livestream of the final event on Saturday, August 5. DroneTech Philippines has since apologized for the error, but the city government is nonetheless pursuing legal action against the supplier. “The Marikina City Government under the leadership of Mayor Marcy Teodoro is condemning the mishap and is pursuing legal action against Drone-Tech PH to determine the company’s faults and the accompanying punishments and fines,” said a Marikina PIO statement in Filipino. In the portion of the closing concert introduced by Teodoro himself, drones were seen forming different images while the Paloro 2023 theme was played in the background. Right after the Philippine archipelago was formed mid-air, the country’s flag was depicted, but with the red portion distinctly on top, before again rearranging to show a warrior running, then the

word PALARO, and finally, the word MARIKINA with an image of a shoe above it. Under the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines, displaying the flag with the red field on top means that the country is at “a time of war.” DroneTech admitted that it was not able to test and make corrections to the drone routines because of “severe weather conditions and signal interference” at the Marikina Sports Complex prior to the closing ceremony. The first few days of the Paloro 2023 were indeed hampered by torrential rains brought by the enhanced monsoon in the flood-prone city, leading to multiple game delays and other difficult conditions for athletes, fans, officials, and media personnel. “Moving forward, we will make sure to execute proper protocols in testing our future shows. The company is sincerely sorry for this unintentional error in programming,” DroneTech said. “As God as our witness, we have innocently made this mistake and have no malice or bad intentions on anyone – the people of Marikina and the Philippines as a whole.”

Why Ivana Alawi feels so blessed

Actress and social media personality Ivana Alawi solidified her commitment to ABS-CBN by signing an exclusive network contract on July 19. This move comes as exciting news for her legion of fans and reaffirms her dedication to the Kapamilya network, where she has found a nurturing platform to showcase her talents.



“I feel so happy and I feel so blessed. I am here where I’m supposed to be,” she shared, speaking about her strong sense of belonging within the ABS-CBN family. During the contract signing, Ivana took a moment to express her heartfelt appreciation for three key elements in her journey. Firstly, she conveyed her deepest gratitude to the execu-

tives and decision-makers at ABS-CBN, fondly referring to them as “bosses.” Their unwavering trust, continuous support, and the love they have shown her have played a pivotal role in her growth as an artist. “I have three things that I’m very, very thankful for. First and foremost, to our bosses here at ABS-CBN, thank you very much for your trust, support, and love for me. Of course, to my manager, Kuya Perry, Star Magic, and Sir Lauren, thank you very much,” she added. ABS-CBN COO of broadcast Cory Vidanes expressed her gratitude to the Kapamilya actress for staying with ABS-CBN. “Thank you very much, Ivana, for continuously placing your trust and value in ABS-CBN, in all of us, and in our Kapamilya. I assure you that we will continue to take care of you, and we will build

an even stronger relationship, as I promised you. Thank you for your sincerity, for your love, and for choosing to stay with us in bringing joy, inspiration, hope, and service to all Filipinos around the world,” Vidanes said. Meanwhile, Ivana revealed that she is currently occupied with workshops and gym sessions as part of her preparations for the upcoming projects lined up for her this year. “We have teleseryes and there are also movies. So, there are many exciting projects ahead,” she shared enthusiastically. Looking ahead to the coming years, Ivana expressed her hope of collaborating with acclaimed actors such as Coco Martin, Joshua Garcia, and the iconic KathNiel tandem. Ivana’s journey with ABS-CBN began three years ago when she signed her first exclusive contract after appearing in Mea Culpa: Sino Ang May Sala and FPJ’s Ang Probinsyano. Her career soared when she took on her first lead role as Cherry Red in the revenge drama series A Family Affair alongside Gerald Anderson, Jake Ejercito, Jameson Blake, and Sam Milby last year. Not stopping there, she also starred alongside the renowned Vice Ganda in the blockbuster movie Partners In Crime.

Geneva Cruz reveals Smokey Mountain bandmates courted her, says she still believes in love

As she looked back on her days with singing group Smokey Mountain, Geneva Cruz revealed its three other original members tried to win her heart. During her guesting on “Fast Talk with Boy Abunda,” singer Geneva Cruz shared that her former Smokey Mountain bandmates — Jeffrey Hidalgo, Tony Lambino, and James Coronel — courted her. Cruz did not divulge specific details of their courtship of her, but recalled memories with her bandmates, with whom she recorded hits such as “Kailan” and “Can This Be Love.” “Grad ball date ako ni Jeffrey...Tapos, si James (I was Jeffrey’s grad ball date. Then, James was) napakatorpe,” shared Cruz, who demonstrated how Lambino was the confident type who was able to tell her “I love you”

before a performance. Cruz, who left the group before the release of Smokey Mountain’s second album in 1991, expressed immense gratitude to National Artist for Music Ryan Cayabyab, who co-created the band in 1989. “I am nothing without our National Artist for Music. I am nothing without Ryan Cayabyab,” claimed the “In the Name of Love” singer, who released her debut solo album in 1992. The 47-year-old “Little Princess” actress has embraced aging, and said that she is



thankful for everything that she has been through — from when she was a very popular teenage singer to when things started to slow down in her life and getting married twice. “I realized na itong mga di-naanan kong mga bagay na maliliit na masakit or malaki na masakit (I realized that these small or big painful things I went through), it actually made me a stronger and a better woman,” shared Cruz, who described aging as “a wonderful thing.” “That’s why I love being 47 years old. I love aging. Aging is not a bad thing. Aging, actually, is a wonderful thing. And I’m glad that I am my age,” she said.

Bea Alonzo says ‘Yes’ to Dominic Roque, proposal trends on Twitter

Actor Dominic Roque has finally popped the question to longtime girlfriend Bea Alonzo, the actress took to Facebook to share the heartwarming moment. In her social media post, the actress recounted how the day started like any other with a shoot, little knowing that it would be a day that would change their lives forever. “It was a balmy afternoon in Las Casas. I was there for a shoot, but little did I know that the next thing that would happen would change our lives forever,” Bea started. During the shoot, Bea noticed something unusual when photographer Mark Nicdao persistently requested her to turn around, focusing on the back of her dress. Unknown

to her, Dominic had planned this moment meticulously. When Bea finally turned around, she was met with a heartwarming sight—Dominic kneeling before her with a box in hand, ready to ask for her hand in marriage. Bea expressed her emotions, admitting that despite acting in countless proposal scenes throughout her career, nothing compared to the authenticity and beauty of this real-life proposal. “You see, I have done so many proposal scenes in my entire career, but nothing beats the real thing. I have been doing it all wrong! Hahaha, Dom said his speech, and it’s like time stood still. Everything went in slow motion. And I felt different emotions all at the same time—joy, excitement, love.

I started bawling,” shared the 35-year-old actress. “But I didn’t want that moment to end. I want this real thing to happen forever... and right then there... In front of the people we love... we decided on forever,” she added. The couple’s love story has been a journey of friendship turning into something more profound. They had known each other for years, but it was during a trip to Japan in 2019 that Bea began to see Dominic in a different light. The pair confirmed their relationship in April 2021, and they recently celebrated their second anniversary as a celebrity couple on January 28 this year. On the other hand, friends and

colleagues of the celebrity couple flooded the comments section with messages of joy to celebrate the special milestone of their lives. It’s Showtime host Anne Curtis expressed her excitement with the comment, “Omg!!!!!! Bei and Dom!!!!!!!!!!!! CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!!!” A fellow bride-to-be, Maja Salvador, also congratulated the newly-engaged couple, “Congratulations Bea and Dom.” “Congratulations[,] Papa Doms and Ate Bei!!!! [S]o so so happy for you both!!!!!!!!” wrote Sparkle artist Gabbi Garcia. Heart Evangelista also said her



best wishes to Bea and Dominic, “Beaaaaaaaaa[!] I am so happy for you both!!!” Angelica Villanueva



Kassandra Adajar is with Jamille Cunanan Adajar. 6d Happy birthday to my beautiful mother! Thank you for always supporting me and loving me endlessly. You always know how to make me happy, even when times are rough. Thank you mommy for everything. I wish you blessings, good health, and overwhelming happiness on your special day! I love you mom



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Jessy Mendiola eager to work with Marian Rivera

Jessy Mendiola expressed her desire to collaborate with Kapuso actress Marian Rivera in the near future, especially now that GMA and ABS-CBN are working together.

Jessy stated that she would be honored to work with Marian and that many have suggested they could portray sisters onscreen due to their Mestiza looks. Jessy even mentioned that she would gladly accept a role as Marian’s Personal Assistant (PA) if that opportunity arose.

“Even if my role will be her PA, I will accept it,” she said in jest.

The actress also revealed her admiration for Marian, saying that she looks up to her. Jessy shared that she follows Marian’s family on social media, which illustrates the level of respect she has for her.

When asked about the reasons for her high regard towards the Kapuso actress, Jessy praised Marian’s dedication to her family, particularly as a hands-on mom. She believes that this aspect is something they both have in common and could bond over. Jessy also commended Marian’s acting skills, acknowledging her as the Queen of her craft and expressing her genuine eagerness to collaborate with her.



As for the GMA roster of actors, Jessy mentioned that given the chance, she would love to work with Marian’s husband, Dingdong Dantes. Having met Dingdong once before and being impressed by his kindness, she expressed her wish to be part of a project with him.

Interestingly, in what genre does she want to appear in her comeback project if ever?

“I prefer to play mommy characters. It will be a joy to see myself on screen with a kid. It’s heartwarming and inspiring. I’m really looking forward to go back to acting.”

The pretty actress clears though that her comeback will be gradual.

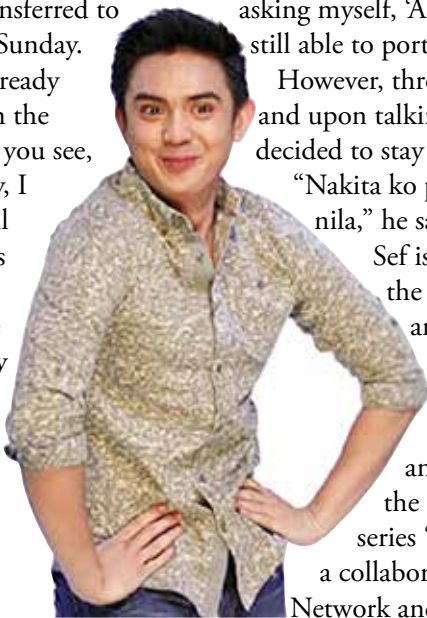
“I really requested to be given at least six months more so that I can witness and focus on the growth of my daughter Isabella Rose. I might do a mini-series first before I go full swing once again,” Jessy ended.



Sef Cadayona almost Quit Showbiz

Sef Cadayona revealed that he almost left showbiz especially when the public observed that he’s no longer part of Bubble Gang when the popular gag and comedy show transferred to a new timeslot every Sunday.

“I thought it was already time to graduate from the ‘biz,” he said. “But as you see, I’m still here. Actually, I haven’t left. If you still need me, I will always be around. Months before, this wasn’t the scenario. I was already contemplating quitting the business and looking into a different side of my life. I told myself, ‘I don’t want to be in showbiz anymore.’”



What was the reason why he came to that decision?

“Honestly, it’s because I wasn’t getting meaty offers then. It’s like, I was asking myself, ‘Am I still okay? Am I still able to portray my roles well?’”

However, throughout the months and upon talking to his bosses, Sef decided to stay in the industry.

“Nakita ko po yung pagmamahal nila,” he said.

Sef is known for his roles in the movies *Gayak* (2012) and *My Big Bossing* (2014).

He will star alongside Bea Alonzo and Dennis Trillo in the highly anticipated TV series ‘*Love Before Sunrise*,’ a collaboration between GMA Network and Viu Philippines.

YOUNG from page 1

portable making predictions that by 2050, the Philippines is still an expanding and a young population,” he said, noting that the number of children per woman in the Philippines is about 2.8, well above the 2.1 replacement rate.

In its *World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies*, the multilateral agency said wealthy countries as well as a growing number of middle-income nations, which are traditionally the main sources of migrants, face declining populations. This will intensify the global competition for workers, it said.

Middle-income countries “are growing older before they become rich”, according to the report discussed with Philippine government officials, recruiters and civil society groups on Monday. In contrast, the young people in countries whose populations are booming “are entering

the workforce without the skills needed in the global labour market,” it said.

These trends make it necessary to guide policies based on how migrants’ skills match the needs of destination countries. There are about 184 million migrants worldwide, the World Bank said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas expects the country’s remittances, a key driver of consumer spending, to grow 3 per cent this year and the next, supported by steady demand for Filipino workers and labour shortage in host countries.

World Bank’s Do forecasts the Philippines’ remittances to keep growing as people migrate and have better jobs. He cautioned the Southeast Asian nation known for its English-proficient workers, however, about increasing competition from other countries such as India. “It’s good to be competitive; the main challenge is to remain so,” he said.

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Jasmine Curtis shares tips on the art of “dedma”

ISA ka rin ba sa mga sawang-sawang atakihin ng mga basher? Heto, may advice diyan ang aktres na si Jasmine Curtis-Smith mula sa kanyang personal na mga karanasan.

Sa programang “Fast Talk with Boy Abunda” kamakailan lang ay tinanong si Jasmine ng King of Talk na si Tito Boy kung paa-no nga ba niya napapanatili ang kanyang private life.

Sa umpisa ay inamin ni Jasmine na hindi talaga maiwasang makarating sa kanya ang mga masasamang komento tungkol sa kanya, lalo na’t laganap ang social media sa panahong ito.

Nauunawaan naman daw niya na mga personal na pananaw lamang ang mga ito na hindi na dapat pagtuunan ng pansin.

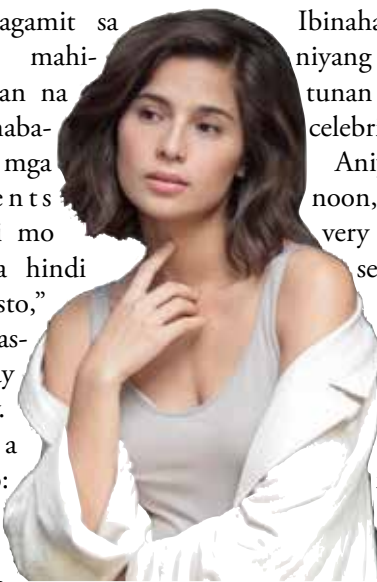
“Mahirap sabihin na hindi or magpa-ka-strong to say na ‘I don’t care, I don’t give it any notice.’ pero dahil ‘yung panahon, itong last ten years, itong evolution ng social media, kung gaano natin

siya ginagamit sa trabaho, mahi-rap iwasan na hindi maba-sa ‘yung mga comments na hindi mo gusto na hindi ka gusto,” sey ni Jasmine kay Tito Boy.

B a k a Bet Mo: Carmen C u r - tis-Smith

super happy sa kanyang May-December affair, deadma sa bashers

Patuloy pa niya, “Pero kailangan mo lang din intindihin na these are only personal opinions. I have my personal opinions about people, so minsan ayoko rin sa ibang tao pero hindi ko lang nati-tweet, pero sa akin umaabot ‘yung mga ibang tao. So learn to brush it off.”



Ibinahagi pa niya ang tinatawag niyang “art of dedma” na natutunan niya sa kanyang kapatid na celebrity na si Anne Curtis.

Aniya, “Laging sabi ni ate noon, ‘art of dedma’ which is not very easy to learn lalo na kung sensitive kang tao.”

“Pero it’s a muscle na kailangan mo lang i-exercise everyday, especially kapag nabasa mo na ‘yung ayaw mong mabasa and na-rattle ka na about it kasi mahirap ding pigilan na na-hurt ka or apektado,” Paliwanag pa niya.

Bukod sa “art of dedma,” ibinahagi rin ni Jasmine ang isa pang advice ng kanyang ate pagdating sa buhay.

“Yung pangalawa Tito Boy, matagal ko nang sinasabi is kapag hindi buong puso, huwag mo nang gawin,” saad niya.

Paliwanag pa niya, “Kasi mahahalata e. Makikita ng tao ‘yun and that goes for work, for relationships, friendships, anything all across the board na pag hindi buo ang puso mo – or kahit simpleng bagay bibili ka ng t-shirt, ‘di buo ang puso mo na bilhin ‘yan, ‘wag na.”

“Maybe ibig sabihin ‘nun, you’re saving your finances for something better in the future,” aniya pa.

Rachael Ray’s Adobo Recipe Disappoints Uncle Roger and His Ancestors



Screaming in Asian disappointment. “Haiya.”

Rachael Ray, how could you?

In Uncle Roger’s latest cooking reaction video, Filipino cuisine was the latest Asian food to be butchered by Western chefs. Uncle Roger and his ancestors were reduced to tears by Rachael Ray’s Filipino cooking. There was an attempt, we recognize that. It started off strong at the beginning but quickly plummeted when Ray added coriander seed and sesame seed to the classic Filipino comfort food of garlic fried rice. As per Uncle Roger, “What the hell?”

Rachael Ray’s first blunder was when she

added olive oil to cook the meat. Strike one.

“No olive oil for Asian food,” cried Uncle Roger.

Then things went downhill when Rachael said, “Now it’s gonna get spicy and good!” Last time we checked—and by that we mean at lunch—adobo is sour, not spicy.

To make matters worse, Ray used jalapeños in her adobo, which isn’t even Filipino. Wrong former Spanish colony.

“Why you using jalapeño? That Mexican. If you want to use chili, use Filipino chili—siling labuyo.” He might be Malaysian, but Uncle Roger knows his Filipino food.

Things then became a little weird when the chef measured her vinegar pouring with “six turns of the pan.” We could see Uncle Roger’s mind turning, probably wondering “What kind of Caucasian measurement is that?”

As per Uncle Roger, the best way to cook Asian food is with feeling: “Listen to your ancestor’s spirit.”

But the biggest faux pas in the adobo might

have been when Ray used Tamari, a gluten-free soy sauce, instead of the beloved Silver Swan soy sauce.

“Who are these weak people who can’t handle soy sauce?” joked Uncle Roger.

That’s not to say Ray’s Filipino attempt was bad. She definitely got some things right, like the chicken, black pepper, and bay leaves. But things all came crashing down when we got to the garlic rice. Garlic rice might be the easiest Filipino dish to make. You just need leftover rice and minced garlic.

But Rachael Ray committed the worst sin when she dumped crushed clumps of garlic into a pot of olive oil. Then she really infuriated Uncle Roger when she sprinkled—wait for it—coriander seeds and sesame seeds into the rice.

“What the hell? Why you putting random shit into the rice?” shouted Uncle Roger with all his disappointment.

Listen, Rachael. The Adobo actually looked good, but the rice made our ancestors weep.

As Uncle Roger always says, “Haiya.”

Gary Valenciano on nephew Donny Pangilinan’s music career: ‘I’m really proud of him’

Gary Valenciano also said he couldn’t be any prouder of how well Donny’s parents raised him and his siblings.

Gary Valenciano couldn’t be any prouder of the success of Donny Pangilinan — a person he has known his entire life — as an artist.

Donny is the son of Anthony Pangilinan, the brother of Gary’s wife Angeli.

With so many projects lined up for him, it’s undeniable that Donny is one of the most sought-after actors today — and one that people should watch out for in the coming years.

Apart from his good looks, Donny has proven to be a talented young man who has dabbled into acting, hosting, singing, and dancing — a man at par with his contemporaries in the industry right now.

But what Gary is most proud of Donny is the fact that he has been pushing for advocacies outside of his craft as an actor, particularly one focusing on victims of sexual abuse.

“Right now, Donny, as an artist, is more fo-

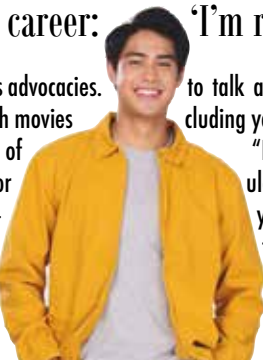


cused on acting. I believe also in his advocacies. He’s doing stuff. I think if you watch movies in cinemas, you’ll see a short clips of it’s called to rescue. I think it’s for those who have been, unfortunately, sexually abused. It’s, I think, a five-minute short-clip that he has. So, he’s focusing on that and he’s acting,” Gary said on the sidelines of his contract signing event at the ABS-CBN.

Having witnessed Donny’s growth as an artist, Gary couldn’t help but feel proud of what Donny has achieved throughout the years as a musician. “But I think as a musician, he can write, too. I think you haven’t seen the best of Donny just yet,” he said, teasing about what Donny has in store for his fans.

Last June, Universal Records managing director Kathleen Dy-Go shared a photo of Donny’s visit at their headquarters in Quezon City.

In the said photo, Kathleen teased about the release of Donny’s upcoming EP. “Missed this guy...It’s so nice to catch up with you, Donny! Glad you found the time to visit the UR office



to talk about lots of surprising stuff, including your upcoming EP,” Kathleen said.

“Likewise, I would like to congratulate you on the massive success of your series & movies which made to #1 on Netflix. I’m sure your upcoming film and series will be so successful too. You’re a born winner, Donny! We’re always glad that you’re part of the UR Family,” she added.

Meanwhile, Gary shared how proud he is of Donny and how well his parents have brought him and his siblings up.

“I’m really proud of him. He’s been brought up very well. Actually, silang magkakapatid. Every time they come to the house or I see them ‘Tito!’ You know, it’s always a joy to be with them. I’m really, really happy for Donny because he doesn’t just have a pretty face on his shoulders but he also has a good heart that goes with it and a good head on his shoulders as well and his spirit is in the right place,” Gary said.

Donny is also set to star in the upcoming teleserye Can’t Buy Me Love.

SHOWBITS



Robi Domingo assures fiancée diagnosed with autoimmune disease: ‘Whatever happens, I choose you’

Robi Domingo admitted he has been having a “tug-of-war of feelings” as he couldn’t stop thinking about his fiancée, Maiqui Pineda, who has been diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease.

“What an emotional day. This moment has given me a deeper appreciation of what it is to be a KAPAMILYA,” Domingo spoke of the contract-signing event.

“I just couldn’t stop thinking about my fiancé and her condition while signing this contract. There has been that tug-of-war of feelings so maybe that’s why the flood gates just kept pouring,” he continued.

Domingo expressed his gratitude to the Kapamilya network, then addressed Pineda whom he assured, “Whatever happens, I choose you. Can’t wait to sign our contract.”

Pineda, meanwhile, disclosed her condition while showing glimpses of her hospital visits through her Instagram page.

“What was supposed to be an exciting year of wedding planning, preparing for a new home and working on my career, life had other plans for me... I got sick. I have a rare autoimmune disease called Dermatomyositis that causes muscle weakness, inflammation and a skin rash,” she revealed.

Dermatomyositis, as defined by Mayo Clinic, is an “uncommon inflammatory disease marked by muscle weakness and a distinctive skin rash.” This condition has “no cure but periods of symptom improvement can occur.”

“I already started treatment but the journey to recovery is far from over. There are good days but there are still bad days,” Pineda stated. “I am hopeful that this is just temporary and I will work on getting better one day at a time.”

“Thank you to everyone who sent prayers and messages of love and support! It meant a lot to me,” she added.

Fans and celebrities took to the comments section to extend their prayers and well-wishes for Pineda’s recovery.

Domingo and Pineda got engaged in 2022 after being in a relationship for four years. The TV host moved out of his bachelor pad last June as he has been preparing to build a new home with Pineda.

Kazel Kinouchi thanks AKNP serye for big career boost

Isa sa popular na karakter ngayon sa telebisyon ay si Zoey Tanyag na ginagampanan ng Sparkle actress na si Kazel Kinouchi sa top-rating na Abot Kamay Na Pangarap (AKNP) ng GMA-7.

Ano ang pinakamalaking natutunan ni Kazel mula sa pagiging bahagi ng Abot Kamay Na Pangarap?

Lahad niya, “So isa po sa mga natutunan ko sa show is, pag masaya yung environment mo, magre-reflect yun sa work mo.

“Kasi mahirap din pong magtrabaho if hindi ka... parang mabigat yung paligid mo, yung katrabaho mo.

“Pero yun nga po, kasi masasaya kami ditong mga... yung cast po. So ayun po, that’s one thing I’ve learned po.”



KAZEL PLAYS HER KONTRABIDA ROLE TO THE HILT

Kontrabida at maldita si Zoey sa kapwa doktora niyang si Analyn Santos, na ginagampanan naman ni Jillian Ward bilang bida sa Abot Kamay Na Pangarap.

Dahil karamihan sa mga Pinoy telenovela fans ay mabilis maapektuhan ng kanilang napapanood, marami ang galit kay Zoey/Kazel.

Naranasan na ba ni Kazel na makaharap ng mga bayolenteng fans kapag nasa pampublikong lugar siya?

“Fortunately, wala pa naman po akong na-e-experience na ganun kasi hindi pa naman ako masyadong lumalabas,” at tumawa ang aktres.

“Pero malay natin baka pag lumabas ako may mga ganun,” at muling natawa si Kazel. “Pero nung huli po kaming nag-mall show sa Pampanga po meron pong caught on video na yung mga tao, ‘O, Zoey huwag mo nang awayin si Annalyn,’ may mga ganun.

Aminado si Kazel na malaki ang nagawa ng Abot Kamay Na Pangarap para sa kanyang career?

Pag natapos na ang AKNP, payag ba si Kazel na sa susunod niyang proyekto ay kontrabida siyang muli o magre-request siya sa GMA at sa Sparkle na “pabaitin” muna siya?

“Kung ano naman po yung ibigay sa akin, siyempre that’s work, so tatanggapin ko po yun.

“Kung ano man po yun, thankful po ako kung ano man ang ibigay sa akin, kasi po para sa akin kung ano yung nandiyan, it means that it’s meant for me.”

New Pinoy pop group draws inspiration from SB19’s success

BY now, every Filipino boy band coming out with layered and hook-laden pop songs wants a slice of the pie laid hot by the success of SB19. Why not, the group has become the yardstick of what a Tagalog-singing-and-dancing bunch should be, especially in a Southeast Asian country bewitched by South Korean pop.

For a quick illustration, SB19 is the first Filipino and Southeast Asian artist to have earned a nomination at the Billboard Music Awards (for Top Social Artist), and entered the top 10 of Billboard Social 50 weekly and year-end charts.

New act BILIB, which came out with their debut “Kabanata” early this month, certainly believes they still have a space in the hearts of Pinoy pop fans. Again, why



not. They took a strong first step towards public recognition with a catchy song. The song’s opening verse introduces them rightfully so, with a hint of what the members have gone through before reaching this crucial period in their lives.

“Bagong simula/ Narana-

JMac, Carlo, Yukito, RC, Zio, and Rafael, described by observers as “all passionate performers with diverse talents and experiences.” Every good boy band would more or less do fine if backed by a producer with the business know-how and, more importantly, full trust in the capacity of the act. Enter AQ Prime Music.

The song “Kabanata,” credited to AQ Prime, takes pride in its lyrics that delve, according to a musical expert, “into themes of love, self-discovery, and personal growth.” The chorus seems to inform listeners that BILIB has pre-

pared well enough for their breakout and how they will sustain their momentum. The boys sing: “Di sasayangin ang panahon/ Upang matapos ang lahat ng aking gagawin/ Mahuli man ngunit darating pa rin/ Dahil walang atrasan/ Patungo na sa laban.”

As for the music, there’s no doubt the genuine excitement that can be heard from the first to the last note does not cease. No boring passage whatsoever.

I recall a few years back, I was present as a music journalist when the then relatively unknown SB19 was being formally presented to the public. At that time few may have thought they’re going to be as big as they are now.

So, what’s the fitting message for this new boy group? Well, they just have to (pun intended) BILIB.

Enrique Gil returns to silver screen with hilarious new role

Kapamilya actor Enrique Gil embarks on a new journey as Ticket2Me’s chief marketing officer

After a three-year hiatus from the entertainment industry, actor Enrique Gil is set to make his much-anticipated return. Recently announcing his comeback to the acting scene, fans can expect to see a lot more of him after his last onscreen project, Make It With You, alongside his former love team partner, Liza Soberano.

During the pandemic, Enrique took a break from the limelight, but now he’s eager to grace our screens once again with his undeniable charm and acting prowess.

At 31 years old, the singer-dancer is more than ready to showcase his talent and captivate audiences once more.

In his upcoming film, I Am Not Big Bird, Enrique will star, also co-produce, collaborating with renowned production houses ABS-CBN Films, Black Sheep, and Anima.

In the comedy film, Enrique plays Luis Carpio, who is on vacation in Thailand and will be mistakenly identified as ‘Big Bird,’ a famous porn star in the country.

“First of all, I’m not Big Bird. But at some

point, I will also become Big Bird. Basically, Big Bird is a famous porn star in Thailand. My character, Luis Carpio, travels to Thailand and there, he gets mistaken for Big Bird because they look like identical twins. That’s where the adventure begins,” said Enrique.

But that’s not all. Alongside his return to acting, Enrique has also ventured into a new business endeavor. With his natural entrepreneurial spirit, he has embarked on a new venture and partnered with the digital ticketing and video platform, Ticket2Me, as its newest chief marketing officer.

“It started with me wanting to give back to the entertainment industry,” he began.

Enrique aims to empower artists, creators, and performers in the entertainment industry by bringing them closer to their fans through Ticket2Me’s direct and convenient platform.

“From the screen to the stage, we just want to put creative events and content. Even if we are no longer there and I don’t have to perform, I’m still giving entertainment to the fans in my own way,” he added.



“Even if I’m no longer able to work with my physical body, I’m still providing content. Not only to the fans but also to my colleagues in the industry for future artists as well, for international acts or just to connect the fan with their idols. That’s the legacy we want to leave,” he stated.

The actor said that this new role means everything to him.

“This is the reason why I came back. For three years, I was gone, and I said I would never go back to showbiz or the entertainment industry. My life was quiet, and we were just doing business with my mom. But, you know, deep inside my heart, there was something missing. So, this is it. This is me, finishing my story,” answered Enrique.

“It completes my story and the legacy I want to leave behind in the entertainment industry. I said, even if I’m no longer here, it’s like I’m still, in a way, giving back, giving people entertainment,” he concluded.

EX beauty queen Francesca Taruc posts pics with Skusta Clee; are they an item?

Usap-usapan ngayon sa social media ang latest Instagram post ni Miss Tourism World Intercontinental 2019 Francesca Taruc.

Dito ay makikita ang sweet photos nila ng rapper-singer na si Skusta Clee.

Kuha ang mga larawan sa music video ng bagong labas na kanta ni Skusta kung saan si Francesca ang leading lady niya.

Kitang-kita sa mga litrato ang saya at kilig ng dalawa.

Hindi naman napigilan ng netizens na paghinalaang higit pa sa magkatrabaho ang turing nila sa isa’t isa, lalo pa’t parehas daw single ang dalawa.

NETIZENS REACT

Sa comments section ng nasabing post ni Francesca ay bumuhos ang mga negatibong komento sa pagkaka-link niya kay Skusta.

Saad ng isang netizen (published as is), “True ba na sila? @francescatruc wala kang taste dai, pumapatol ka sa babaerong exotic.”

Dagdag pa ng isa, “Iniwan yung anak tapos ending single mom din pala haha.”

Ang sexy actress na si Ava Mendez ang huling napabalitang karelasyon ni Skusta matapos ang kontrobersiyal na hiwalayan nila ni Zeinab Harake.



AYUNGIN from page 1

gal basis.

China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the Philippines Wednesday to “honor its commitment” and remove its grounded vessel on Ren’ai Jiao, the name Beijing uses for the shoal, which Filipinos refer to as Ayungin. Chinese coast guard ships have allowed Manila’s boats to bring food and other supplies to Filipino forces at the shoal for humanitarian reasons, it said.

But defense chief Lorenzana told reporters he was not aware of any Philippine government commitment to remove its navy ship, which has been grounded upon the shoal since 1999.

“We can do whatever we want there and it is they who are actually trespass-

ing,” he said.

Chinese coast guard ships have surrounded the shoal in a years-long territorial standoff and tried to block Philippine supply boats in past years. In the latest confrontation, Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons to forcibly turn back two supply boats manned by Philippine navy personnel last week, sparking outrage and warnings from Manila.

Following the Chinese blockade, the United States said it was standing by the Philippines and reiterated that an armed attack on Philippine public vessels in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments under the two allies’ 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty.

The Philippine navy successfully transported supplies and fresh personnel to the Sierra Madre this week then left without

any major incident after Lorenzana talked with China’s ambassador to Manila. President Rodrigo Duterte, who has nurtured close ties with Beijing, angrily condemned the Chinese blockade in a video summit of Southeast Asian leaders with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Xi did not specifically react to Duterte’s remarks but said China will not bully its smaller neighbors.

It was the latest flareup of long-simmering disputes in one of the world’s busiest waterways, where China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have overlapping claims.

President Joe Biden has assured U.S. allies that American forces will continue to patrol the disputed waters to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight and regional stability. China has warned the U.S. to stay away from what Beijing con-

siders a purely Asian dispute.

Greg Poling of the U.S.-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, which closely monitors the South China Sea conflicts, said China’s recent move may have been aimed at testing the response of the Philippines and its allies if it blockades the Sierra Madre anytime.

“I expect this will happen again and, eventually, China will make a concerted effort to maintain a blockade to force Manila to withdraw,” Poling said.

The World War II-era Sierra Madre is now effectively a shipwreck but the Philippine military has not decommissioned it. That makes the rust-encrusted ship an extension of the government and means any assault on the ship is tantamount to an external attack against the Philippines.

Alden Richards wants Joshua Garcia to portray his life story



Kung mabibigyan ng pagkakataong ma-feature ulit ang life story ni Alden Richards sa Magpakailanman, mas pipiliin ng aktor na iba ang magbigay-buhay sa kanyang kuwento.

“Si Joshua Garcia nasa GMA na, bakit hindi siya, di ba?”

bulalas ng aktor. Si Alden ang bida sa apat na bagong episodes ng Magpakailanman simula August 5, 2023.

Sampung taon na ang nakaraan mula noong ma-feature sa Magpakailanman ang kanyang life story noong 2013. Kaya naman open siya na magkaroon ito ng Part 2 na “feel-good episode yet inspirational.”

Aniya, “Parang gusto ko po sana na kung yung unang part po ng buhay ko is, 2013 pa po iyon, e, ten years ago na po ipinalabas yung life story ko po...

“Kasi dun po, parang life story ko po when we were kids, mahirap po kami, yung condition po ng mom ko towards her deathbed, tapos nag-start po akong naging artista, etc.

“So kung may second part man po, sana from that part going na to where I am po now. Sana ganun.”

Siyempre, nais pa rin niyang maipakita ang ups and downs na kanyang pinagdaanan.

Paliwanag ng Kapuso actor, “Siyempre, the journey naman po ng buhay, hindi naman lahat nagiging masarap ang jour-

ney. Lagi yang, kumabaga Yin and Yang yan.

“In every good, there’s always a bad. And in every bad, there’s always a good. So it’s a cycle, it’s a continuous journey and yun po.”

Samantala, tinanong din ng PEP.ph si Alden kung kaninong life story ang gusto niyang bigyan ng buhay sa Magpakailanman. Alden Richards would love to play the life story of GMA CEO Atty. Felipe Gozon

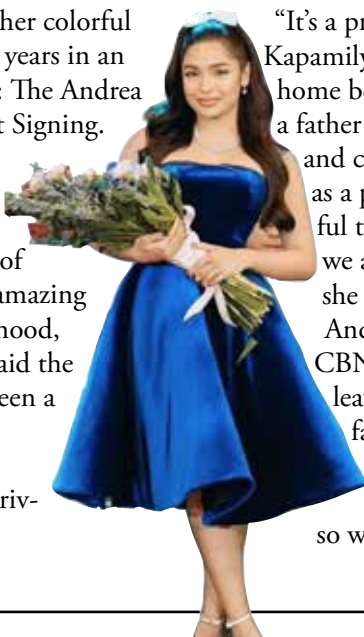
Andrea Brillantes reflects on colorful journey from child star to adulthood

Andrea Brillantes, a homegrown Kapamilya actress and social media star, renewed her exclusive ties with

ABS-CBN and reflected on her colorful journey from her childhood years in an event dubbed Keep Shining: The Andrea Brillantes Network Contract Signing.

“I started here in ABS-CBN when I was seven years old, and you have been my family, taking care of me since my youth. It feels amazing that now I’m entering adulthood, and you are still with me,” said the former child star, who has been a Kapamilya since 2010.

She described her growth years with ABS-CBN as a ‘privilege, home, and happy.’



“It’s a privilege for me to be a Kapamilya artist. Secondly, it’s home because everyone here is like a father and mother, like a loving and caring family that sees you as a person. And thirdly, it’s joyful to be a Kapamilya because we are one complete family,” she shared.

Andrea emphasized how ABS-CBN never gave her a reason to leave. “I have my friends and family here, and I have truly grown up here. It’s like I’m already married to them, so why would I break away? I’m

excited about the projects they are giving me,” Andrea said.

The Star Magic artist began her formative years as one of the child stars of the gag show Goin’ Bulilit. She went on to become a household name in Philippine teleseryes with hit shows like Annaliza, Hawak Kamay, Huwag Kang Mangamba, and Kadenang Ginto under her belt.

Andrea continues to break boundaries with her starring role as a drag queen in the iWantTFC original series Drag You and Me, which premiered its finale last week. Now, she is set to showcase a new side of her in the upcoming Dreamscape series Senior High.



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Joshua Garcia, Barbie Forteza spark potential screen collaboration

DURING the recently concluded GMA Gala 2023, a number of Kapamilya personalities were in attendance, which can be attributed to the collaboration between Kapuso and ABS-CBN of late. Notably, the hit soap opera Unbreak My Heart and the airing of the noontime show It’s Showtime on GTV, a sister station of GMA, strengthened the connection between the two media companies.

One of the highlights of the Kapuso event was the presence of Joshua Garcia, a Kapamilya star who currently stars in Unbreak My Heart alongside fellow



ABS-CBN talents Jodi Sta. Maria and GMA artists Gabbi Garcia and Richard Yap.

When asked about the best-dressed female star at the gala, Joshua picked popular Kapuso actress Barbie Forteza. He admired her elegant mint green gown designed by Ehran Montoya, describing it as fabulous and elegant, yet not overly flashy.

During the event, Joshua and Barbie had a brief interaction at the Grand Marriott lobby. They exchanged greetings and planted a friendly kiss on each other’s cheeks, showing a cordial relationship between the two.

Interestingly, in an earlier vlog inter-

view with broadcast journalist Karen Davila, Barbie expressed her interest in collaborating with Joshua in the future, praising his acting skills.

To the surprise of many, Barbie chose to walk the red carpet without an escort, foregoing the company of her real-life boyfriend Jak Roberto or love team partner David Licauco. Her decision garnered praise from fans as it made her stand out among the attendees.

A day after the GMA Gala, the actress wrote on her Twitter account, “What’s a girl going to do? A diamond’s got to shine!”

Barbie also retweeted Joshua’s short



clip interview and commented: “Tama ka naman diyan. Ha-ha-ha! Salamat! (heart emoji)”

As a response, Joshua also retweeted Barbie’s post and said in jest: “Pa-tip na lang po o pa-five star! Salamat po!”

With their exchange of messages on their respective social media accounts, fans got tickled pink and this early, a screen collaboration will be most welcome.

Fans were thrilled by the playful exchange of messages between the two on their respective social media accounts, sparking excitement and anticipation for a potential screen collaboration in the future.

Pops to host TV5 show

Pops Fernandez is delighted to be hosting a new show on TV5, a drama anthology titled For the Love. She likes the concept, where she starts each episode by singing a particular song that serves as its theme.

However, the Concert Queen admits that she’s still adjusting to some songs catering to the Gen-Z audience. While she can sing these songs, she needs to study them first, as they differ from the songs of her generation. Once she familiarizes herself with them, she can perform them gracefully.

Pops points out the differences between contemporary songs and those she sang during her younger years. The melodies and phrasing in today’s songs are distinct, with shorter sentences and frequent transitions, requiring her to adapt to the new style.



She also appreciates how expressive contemporary songs are, conveying emotions and telling stories effectively to the listeners. Pops is determined to learn and master these songs to deliver captivating performances in For the Love.

“One thing I also notice with contemporary songs, they’re more expressive with the feelings they want to convey to the listeners. They can really tell the story. So, I just have to make sure that I learn it more,” ends Pops.

Why Kim Chiu became emotional after renewing ties with ABS-CBN

Actress and TV host Kim Chiu recently signed a new exclusive contract with ABS-CBN, solidifying her commitment to her home network for the past 17 years.

“I started with nothing in my hand and in my pocket. I didn’t know how to sing, dance, act, and even speaking was painful to the ears,” she reminisced during the Keep Shining: The Kim Chiu Network Contract Signing. “But here I am, living my dream.”

The It’s Showtime host also reflected on how her life has transformed throughout her journey with Kapamilya, which began when she was proclaimed the grand winner of Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition 1 in 2006.

“Because of ABS-CBN, our lives improved. It wasn’t just my dream that came true, but also the dreams of my siblings. I’m tremendously grateful and blessed. I’m simply returning everything to my home network, ABS-CBN, because they helped me when I had nothing, so now they need my help, and I’m here. I will always be here, and I will always be a Kapamilya,” she added.

Joining her at the contract signing were ABS-CBN chairman Mark Lopez, ABS-CBN president and CEO Carlo Katigbak, ABS-CBN COO of broadcast Cory Vidanes, ABS-CBN head of TV Production and Star Magic head Laurenti Dyogi, and Star Magic’s Edith Fariñas.

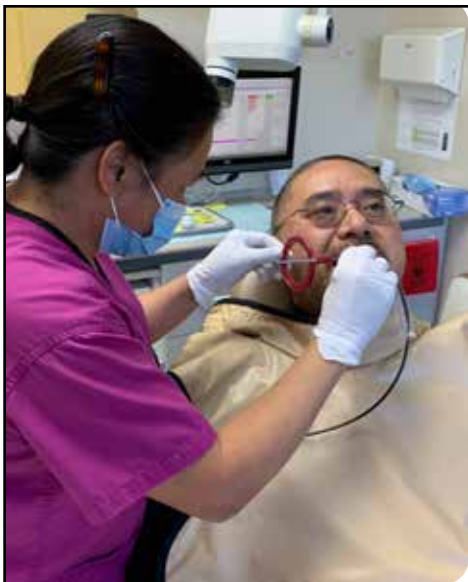
Following the contract signing event, Kim shared that her fans should watch out for her upcoming projects aside from her hit Prime video series Fit Check and Dreamscape series, Linlang with Paulo Avelino and JM de Guzman.

Through the years, Kim has captured the hearts of Kapamilyas for her charm, charisma, and acting



Actress and TV host Kim Chiu during the renewal of her contract with ABS-CBN

prowess, which made her one of the country’s bankable stars. Some of her notable works include Sana Maulit Muli, My Girl, Tayong Dalawa, Minsan Lang Kita Iibigin, My Binondo Girl, Love Thy Woman, and Star Cinema films Till My Heartaches End, Bride For Rent, Etiquette for Mistresses, The Ghost Bride, and a lot more. Aside from It’s Showtime, she is also a mainstay of ASAP Natin ‘To.



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Issa Pressman undergoes vocal cord surgery

Singer Issa Pressman is currently recuperating after undergoing vocal cord surgery.

She took to Instagram to explain things to fans.

She said: "If, in case, you see me sitting in the corner, not being sociable or just being quiet and not talking at all, that's just because I am healing from an operation."

According to her, she had to undergo surgery after doctors found a cyst on her vocal cord.

"By the time I upload this video, it's already out. And I'm already not allowed to talk for two weeks and I'm gonna be in vocal rest and vocal rehab for three months," actress-singer-dancer Yassi Pressman's sister reiterated.

"That means, no crazy talking and no singing, also. There's a lot for the healing process but then it's gonna be fine and I'm gonna be okay," she related. "Letting you guys know just in case you think I'm sungit or anti-social or whatever. This is my reasons. I'll see you guys!"

"Apparently it wasn't just one cyst



there were a couple but regardless, the operation was a tiny incision. I think what was major was the anxiety leading up to it, the uncertainty of how much my voice will change, the sensitive healing process. Right now, I'm on total vocal rest. I haven't spoken in days.

But I've been sleeping well, eating even better & healing good," she told her followers.

Kris Aquino explains eternity ring she gave to Mark Leviste

Kris Aquino has come out to issue a reaction to a viral photo of ex boyfriend Mark Leviste still wearing the eternity ring she gave him as present.

Note that some fans are actually confused given that earlier on Kris already announced that she's putting their relationship on hold given the health troubles she is dealing with.

According to Kris, she gave Mark the ring to symbolize their "love and friendship," which she said will remain whether they "make the journey together."

"Marc and I both know we still

have a lot of work to do as far as communication and not misinterpreting each other's words—the important thing is that we both know our kids come first," Kris said.

"The reason I gave him the ring was first of all, we were very much together then BUT whether we can make the journey together reach the finish line: the love, friendship, and the fidelity (meaning loyalty and commitment) to honor and respect what was and what is shall remain SOLID," she added.

Kris admitted that given her condition, the odds of her "getting to the point of remission are very much against (her)."

This, she said, is the reason why she is "learning to be grateful" for each day and why she avoids "discussing the future."

"The old me would be messaging Vice Gov. Marc (it's really with a C) to argue with him on why he couldn't keep this private, but I've learned to accept him in his totality in the same way that he has learned to accept me for me," she added.



Careless CEO Jeffrey Oh, James Reid's business partner, allegedly detained, to be deported

Careless Management Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jeffrey Oh was reportedly arrested last July 28 because his company has no permit to operate in the Philippines.

Veteran showbiz columnist Cristy Fermin said in her "Cristy Fermin-ute" program on One PH that authorities visited Liza Soberano's new manager in his home in Makati.

"Yun pong bagong manager ni Liza Soberano na si Jeffrey Oh ay pinuntahan ng mga alagad ng batas sa kanyang opisina sa Poblacion Makati," Cristy said.

"Baka ipa-deport itong Jeffrey Oh na ito. Haharap siya sa deportation. Papaano, hiningi ang mga dokumento sa kanya, wala pala siyang mga papeles na nagsasabi at nagbibigay ng kalayaan sa kanya to operate business in the Philippines.

"Wala rin siyang SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] registration. Sinet up 'yung paghuli sa kanya nu'ng Friday. In-inquest na rin siya nu'ng hapon."

According to Cristy, the Korean-American businessman also faces charges from James Reid's father Malcolm Reid.

"Sa dami ng nagrereklamo, isa pala ang tatay ni James Reid sa nagrereklamo laban dito kay Jeffrey Oh," she said.

"Dahil 'yung pera ng anak niya, dahil parang sosyo sila [ni James] 'di ba? Hindi nakakarating kay James Reid 'yung kaukulang pangako na perang ibibigay bilang partner," she added.

Jeffrey is currently detained in Bureau of Immigration, according to reports.



From left: James Reid, Liza Soberano, Jeffrey Oh and Issa Pressman of Careless

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Netizens call out Carlos Agassi over transphobic lyrics in ‘Milk Tea’ song

After Carlos Agassi dropped his latest single titled ‘Milk Tea,’ social media users expressed intense outrage over certain lyrics perceived as transphobic.

Two weeks after the song’s release, the handsome actor faced a barrage of criticism on Twitter as some of the song’s lines seemingly conveyed disappointment upon realizing that his partner was a transwoman.

“Venti ang kanyang milk tea. Sa dami ng binibini, nakabingwit ako ng binabai,”



stated in the lyrics of Carlo’s song.

The song felt like it was talking about the beverage drink milk tea but as the song went on reaching its bridge part, it seemed to talk about something else.

During its release, the 43-year-old actor even took to Twitter to promote his latest single promising those who would like, tag someone, and share the video would get a chance to win cash prizes from him.

“I’m giving away 10,000 to a lucky

person! All you have to do is like, tag someone in the comment section, and share this video on your feed,” wrote Carlos.

While some had participated and supported Carlos’ giveaway, others quickly called out the actor.

“MASS REPORT FOR TRANSPHOBIA,” one wrote.

“i remember you on Tinder and Bumble, and that all you’d do is hookup with random girls, you actually chatted some of my friends, good thing they have standards and they didn’t went through with you,” a netizen replied.

“He should’ve stayed in his cave,” added another netizen.

Breaking his silence over the issue, the model requoted some of the netizens’ tweets.

“I respect all genders, [it’s] not my fault

[that’s] your interpretation of the song. Will be praying for your happiness & enlightenment,” said Carlos.

A netizen tweeted, “Yeah, this would never gain traction if it wasn’t transphobic. It’s also hilarious how the girl defends the washed-up actor from the 90s. [D]oes she realize she’s portraying the supposed tranny in the video?”

In response, the actor clarified, “She is my wife[,] @sarinayamamoto[,] she helped me compose the song [and] she directed the music video. [W]e would never do anything to harm anyone. [J]ust love and good vibes.”

Carlos even engaged with another Twitter user who questioned, “Dami mo namang time wala [ka] na bang career[?]”

Carlos seemed unfazed by the criticism and remained proud of his song’s increasing popularity, as it continued to trend.

Dawn Zulueta, Anton Lagdameo Jr. still together



Actress-socialite Dawn Zulueta shut down rumors that she and her husband Special Assistant to the President Antonio Lagdameo Jr. have separated after she posted photos on social media.

Dawn uploaded photos of her and her husband taken during Mark Padernal’s art exhibit held at the Provenance Art Gallery in Taguig City. She also shared photos with their friends taken at the same art event which opened last Aug. 5.

The photos only show that the bond between Dawn and Anton as a couple is solid. Dawn also shared a cryptic message about happiness and being undisturbed.

Her full post:

“Do you know what happens when you decide to stop worrying about what other people might think of you?

“You get to dance. You get to sing. You get to laugh loudly, paint, write, and create. You get to be yourself.

“And you know what? Some people won’t like you, but it just won’t bother you all that much.”

Last Dec. 27, 2022, Dawn and Anton celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

The celebrity couple have two children Jacobo Antonio and Ayisha Madlen.

‘Legit Dabarkads’ Carren Eistrup: The Cebuana who followed TVJ to TV5

After she was hailed as Bida Next grand winner, Carren Eistrup earned a coveted spot as the newest and youngest addition to the longest-running noontime show “Eat Bulaga!”

She was welcomed to the official roster last February 4, a day before her 14th birthday. This was also three months before EB parted ways with its producer, Television and Production Exponents, Inc. (TAPE).

Clarifying reports that she was forced to leave EB under its controversial new management, Carren will be among the so-called ‘Legit Dabarkads’ joining the iconic TVJ.

Here are seven things to know about noontime television’s latest darling:

1.) Her name has a backstory

Carren Emol Eistrup Frederiksen, better known as Carren Eistrup, is a Filipino-Danish who hails from Cebu City. Her first name is a combination of Carsten and Renelda, who are her parents.

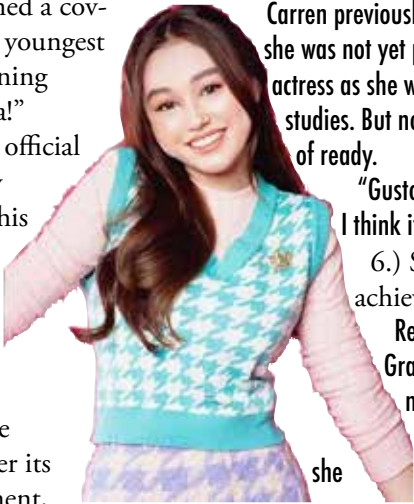
2.) She was raised by a single mom

Carren and her two elder brothers were solely raised by their mom. She has said in a vlog interview with GenE! NewsPH that her communication with her dad is “very rare.” After learning of her entry into showbiz, he congratulated her via chat.

3.) She’s loved music since she was four years old

It was her mom who discovered her talent in singing at the tender age of four. She was enrolled in a bunch of music workshops to hone her skills.

The first song she rehearsed was Frozen’s “Let it Go”



by Idina Menzel. She started playing the piano at seven and later on, learned the guitar too.

4.) She is little Miley Cyrus

Eight-year-old Carren came to light in “Little Big Shots PH”, where the show’s host Billy Crawford could not help but notice her uncanny resemblance to Miley Cyrus.

5.) She is open to an acting career

Carren previously told her mom that she was not yet prepared to become an actress as she wanted to focus on her studies. But now, she is nothing short of ready.

“Gusto ko na po talaga ngayon. I think it’s time,” Carren said.

6.) She is an academic achiever

Recently, Carren finished Grade 9 at Starland International School with high honors. Since elementary, she has been a consistent

academic awardee and a student leader. This proves that she can manage her work and studies, even excelling in both.

7.) She is a competition enthusiast

Her first competition was a beauty pageant in 2016. At seven years old, she joined Little Miss Calendar Girls where she showcased her musical chops and emerged the winner. In the same year, she joined Bidang Bata and Santa Kids, where she was also hailed winner in both tilts.

Prior to “Bida Next”, Carren first appeared in Eat Bulaga! as a contender of the talent competition “Hype Kang Bata Ka!” where she finished as grand finalist. In 2018, she joined the World Championships of Performing Arts (WCOPA), an international competition held at Long Beach, California. She concluded her journey as a semi-finalist, collecting eight gold medals and seven division championship plaques in total.

Candid SPOOF

(Pop-ups are not supposed to be taken seriously - EDITOR)



A well-wisher gets a selfie with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at Fun Philippines festival.

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Look for Macky or Monica..

Emilienne Vigier declares ‘My person is back,’ tags Joshua Garcia

Did Emilienne Vigier just confirmed her rumored relationship with hunk actor Joshua Garcia?

This is the question of netizens after she shared on her Instagram story her “First meal of the day + Cheat meal of the week.”

It shows a man cooking carbonara.

Note that the Kapamilya star was tagged in the post.

Joshua, meanwhile, reposted it.

Prior, Emilienne re-shared on her Instagram story Joshua’s post about him appearing on the cover of Mega Man.

Talks about the two making sweet music started circulating a few weeks ago after fans noticed how a number of Emilienne and Joshua’s social media posts seem to indicate them being at the same place together - from the elevator mirror photo of Emilienne to their respective cooking diary and beach photos.

Then recently, they were spotted together.



Congratulations to the winners of the Little Miss and Miss Philippines PIDC 2023!

1. Eirille Ortega, Miss Philippines PIDC, 1st Runner-Up; Kaila Enriquez, Miss Philippines 2023; Courtney Love Ambas, Miss Philippines PIDC, 2nd Runner-Up; 2. Kaila Enriquez, Miss Philippines 2023 and Cheryl Lacson, Mrs. Philippines Canada Ambassador 2022; 3. Iliana Rose Alonzo, Little Miss Philippines, 1st Runner-Up; Kazel Faith Sapipi, Little Miss Philippines 2023; Yzabella Magbag, Little Miss Philippines, 2nd Runner-Up

SOCIALLIST from page 10

picnic. having no plans for that day, I went and enjoyed a cloudy Saturday with friends and their friends.

And Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF)and Philippine



Premiere Doug Ford, FV Foods’ Mel Galeon, Councillor Michael Thompson at Taste of Lawrence

Independence Day Council (PIDC) held their Little Miss and Miss pageants also.

On July 9, the Filipino Centre Toronto

held a dental clinic courtesy of the Filipino-Canadian Dental Hygienists’ Society.

On July 22, the hygienists society also held their First Fundraising Gala and raised \$10,000 towards their first dental mission to the Philippines to serve poor children. So, in closing, they say “Whether you made a donation, attended the Gala or sponsored our event, YOU helped us reach our \$10k GOAL and work toward our dental mission in the Philippines. For this, we thank you.”

Vaughan Extravaganza festival (VEF)



FCT at the Hygienists’ gala



Rachelle Cruz, Rosary Escano, Chiqui Pineda, MP & Minister of Small Business Rochie Valdez at the hygienists’ gala

I did miss one food vendor at VEF, FV

Ivana Alawi’s topless IG snap goes viral

Ivana Alawi sure knows how to please fans.

Seemingly sensing how the incessant rain might have keep some of them sulking indoors, the actress took to social media to post a photo meant to warm their hearts.

Note the photo is her most daring yet.

Indeed, where prior she is only too happy to display her God-given assets wearing the skimpiest of bikinis, this time, the 26-year-old hottie decided to do away with her top.

Not that she actually displayed her chest full-on. She has one arm covering much of it.

But it was enough for fans who eagerly showered it with more than 300,000 likes.

Some of the comments:

“Game too strong...”

“Perfect for rainy days...”

“Sexiest woman alive...”

Note that Ivana recently signed with ABS-CBN anew, promising fans more exciting films, series, to come.



Filipino-Canadian Dental Hygienists’ Society at their first gala



was blessed with a week-end of sunny weather. The festival was closed by Philippine star but Canadian immigrant Ariel Rivera who humbly declares why he rarely performs in Canada.

“When I’m in Canada, I’m not a star. I’m one of you,” he modestly says.

Foods. But, VEF happened the same time as Taste of Lawrence so FV decided to stay at Lawrence. Anyway, I’m looking forward to seeing FV Foods owner Mel Galeon and his servers at Taste of Manila on August 19 and 20 at Bathurst and Wilson, if not dancing with D’Ageless like last year, serving behind FV booth.

With this, I bid everybody Godspeed and Good night.



Filipino-Canadian Dental Hygienists’ Society at the FCT seniors dental clinic

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Janella Salvador confirms 'noted' tweet was about Star Magic: 'Valid naman siguro 'yung tampo ko'

Janella Salvador confirmed that her earlier cryptic tweet was about Star Magic, after the talent agency did not include the actress on the artists featured on the cover of its catalogue.

Salvador shared a tweet that read "Ah k. Noted" last July 8, days after Star Magic held a launch event for the Star Magic 30 catalogue. While Salvador did not provide context in her tweet, it can be noted that alongside the texts were a star and a magic wand emoji.

Fans were then quick to assume that the cryptic tweet was about Star Magic's catalogue, which has Kathryn Bernardo, Daniel

Padilla, Joshua Garcia, Kim Chiu, Gerald Anderson, Angelica Panganiban, Zanjoe Marudo, John Arcilla, Arjo Atayde, Enchong Dee, Shaina Magdayao and Jane de Leon on its cover.

Salvador then confirmed through a text message to host DJ Jhaiho that the tweet was indeed about the material, as disclosed by the latter in a vlog on the Marites University's YouTube channel on Tuesday, July 11.

DJ Jhaiho said he sent a copy of the



tweet to the actress, saying, "Palaban," to which she replied, "Palaban 'pag tama 'yung pinaglalaman. Valid naman siguro 'yung tampo ko (sad face)."

However, Rose Garcia, DJ Jhaiho's fellow host in the vlog, said she already saw the content of catalogue and pointed out that the material includes a spread page dedicated to Salvador.

Laurenti Dyogi, ABS-CBN's head of TV

production, then said that he would apologize to Salvador on behalf of the talent agency, as per a statement obtained by comedian Ogie Diaz.

"Sinabi sa akin ni Direk Lauren nung July 8, 5:49 ay hindi pa raw niya nakakausap si Janella, at hihingi na lang daw siya ng dispensa kay Janella," Diaz said in a vlog released on Tuesday as well.

"Kasi sabi ni Direk Lauren, 'Last minute, may nabago sa layout at kailangang magdagdag ng pahina,'" he quoted Dyogi. "Medyo marami din naman daw sila na hindi naisama."

It was not immediately known if Salvador and Dyogi have already talked to

each other to address the issue, as of this writing.

Meanwhile, JC Alcantara, who was also speculated to have also taken a swipe at Star Magic, clarified that his earlier tweet "[Sana all may] favoritism, lagi na lang tayong option" was not about the talent agency.

He further noted that he was included in the catalogue and that he was not aware of Salvador's issue when he shared the tweet.

The Star Magic 30 catalogue was launched to celebrate the talent agency's 30th anniversary. According to Dyogi, the material was "three years in the making."

Alexa Ilacad's "first-ever investment piece" is a diamond ring

Abala ngayon si Alexa Ilacad sa taping ng bagong teleserye niya para sa ABS-CBN.

"Taping po for my new teleserye, Pira-Pirasong Paraiso, which is malapit na pong ipalabas, so that's what's keeping me busy."

"Monday-Wednesday-Friday po yung taping namin, and, at the same time, ngayon po focused kami on promos, so kung saan-saan kami napapadpad to promote our show," umpisang kuwento ni Alexa sa grand opening ng Manila Diamond Studio sa 5th floor ng EDSA Shangri-La Plaza Mall sa Mandaluyong City noong July 8, 2023.

Kuwento pa ni Alexa, naiiba ang kanyang papel sa upcoming TV project.

"Well, it's a much more matured version of Alexa that you've ever seen, not matured necessarily meaning sexy or anything like that, but more on the depth of the character."

"So I play Angela, I'm a journalist, so I fight for the truth, very hardworking boss lady, I would say."

At hindi lamang sa kanyang TV role magiging journalist si Alexa kundi maging sa tunay na buhay!

Nangyayari ito sa TV Patrol two weeks ago.

Lahad niya, "Honestly... actually I'm going to try to be a Star Patroller to promote Pira-Pirasong Paraiso!"

At the time of this interview, hindi pa niya na-i-experience kung paano maging broadcaster kaya may konting kaba raw siyang nararamdaman.

"I'm nervous and also excited, it's something na people would always tell me na, 'Bakit hindi mo i-try, parang bagay kang newscaster', etc... So sabi ko

okay let's try, try lang, I'm not sure if I'm going to fall in love with it, but yeah, I'm excited to try."

ALEXA ADMITS FASCINATION WITH JEWELRY

Samantala, bagay maging endorser si Alexa ng isang jewelry brand dahil mahilig daw talaga siya sa alahas kumpara sa designer at mamahaling bags.

Aniya, "Actually, bags not so. More on jewelry, lately lang po ako nagkaroon ng hilig or knowledge about bags."

Ang kapwa niya aktres at endorser na si Jessy Mendiola ang rason ng pagkahilig ni Alexa sa alahas.

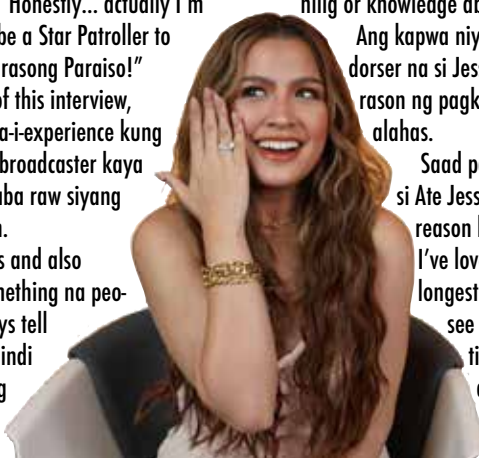
Saad pa niya, "Actually, si Ate Jessy rin talaga yung reason kung bakit, coz I've loved her for the longest time, and I would see her posts all the time about jewelry, and, specifically, Manila Diamond Studio, so dun ako nagkaroon

ng hilig.

"...they were very nice to help me buy my first-ever investment piece, so ever since then, sobrang nabaliw na po ako sa alahas."

Ano aag piece of jewelry ni Alexa na prized possession niya?

Sabi niya, "I would say... I'm not wearing it po right now, but it's a ring, for



maybe more than a year ko pa lang siya nakukuha, I bought it as a gift for myself.

"It was a one-carat solitaire ring, but the band is very, very unique, it's not your usual band na may diamonds lang sa side."

"I've talked about it a lot also, I have a vlog about it as well, but I'm really fascinated with rings to be specific, sa jewelry."

"So, I was really eyeing that piece for a long time, kaya sabi ko po na when I'm able to work hard enough, this is what I want to buy next for myself."

"So it will always be special to me kasi talagang pinaghirapan ko po."

ALEXA: 'SAVING FIRST BEFORE SHOPPING'

Nireregaluhan daw ni Alexa ang kanyang sarili kapalit ng pagod at puyat sa mga showbiz projects niya.

"Yes, actually! Kaya nga po ngayon nagtitingin-tingin din ako, kasi although nagte-taping pa kami, hindi ko pa siya deserve," at tumawa ang magandang Kapamilya actress.

"Pero nagtitingin-tingin na po ako, kasi, well that's also a way to keep yourself inspired, you know, to keep that passion burning, kasi hindi puwedeng magastos lang tayo," at muling tumawa si Alexa.

"Kailangan hardworking din para ma-sustain natin yung luho natin and yung mga wants natin, sabi nga ni Mimiyuuuh bawal daw ang tamad," at muli itong natawa.

"So iyon po, kaya whenever I eye something I really know I have to work hard for it, kasi ayoko naman bili lang nang bili, and I'm not able to save money, yun naman po ang pinaka-importante sa akin, yung makapag-apon ako."

At dahil endorser siya ng isang jewelry store na ang specialty ay diamond, tinanong ng PEP.ph (Philippine Entertainment Portal) si Alexa kung paano niya ikukumpara ang sarili sa isang diamond.

"There's this quote I love na sabi nga, diamonds form under pressure, through pressure, di ba?"

"So that's something I would always remind myself of when I would feel down or pressured. I always remind myself na, 'Oh just work through this, work hard through this and you'll come out a diamond,' under all of this chaos and under all of this pressure."

"Iyon ang goal ko, to always come out as a diamond."

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Lea Salonga heads the first all-Filipino cast of a Broadway show in ‘Here Lies Love’

Lea Salonga is back on the stage where her Broadway journey first began. But she isn't playing someone Vietnamese or Chinese or Japanese at the Broadway Theatre.

For the first time in her storied career, the Filipino musical legend is actually playing a Filipino. What's more, she is surrounded by an all-Filipino cast and she is part of a team of mostly Filipino producers that includes singer H.E.R., comedian Jo Koy and Black Eyed Peas' Apl.de.Ap.

Even when she was the lead at the same theater in "Miss Saigon" in 1991 and acted her way to a Tony Award, Salonga never imagined a Filipino-dominated production would become reality. She's topped other all-Asian Broadway casts ("Flower Drum Song," "Allegiance") but Filipino culture was never the one spotlighted.

"There's absolutely no 'effing way that I would have seen this happening. Ever," Salonga told The Associated Press in an interview earlier this month. "So, for it to be happening while I'm still actually strong enough to be on my feet and be a part of it, I'm just incredibly grateful."

The anticipation of getting to play a Filipino character for the first time is something shared by the entire company of "Here Lies Love." The first Broadway show with an

all-Filipino ensemble opened July 20, a decade after it played off-Broadway.

But this isn't some light and airy musical. It chronicles the dictatorship of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s and '80s and the pro-democracy People Power Revolution movement. Jose Llana, who was in the original iteration, and Arielle Jacobs play the dictator and first lady Imelda Marcos. Musicians David Byrne and Fatboy Slim provide the soundtrack. The theater is laid out like a nightclub complete with disco ball. Audiences can choose to join or be in a standing-only area, making them feel a part of the party.

The praise for the groundbreaking representation has nearly been eclipsed by criticism, a lot of it from other Filipinos, arguing that the Marcos regime should not be musical fodder. This comes over a year after Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. was proclaimed president in the Philippines. He has ignored his father's massive human rights violations.

Salonga has vivid memories of watching news reports with her parents at home in the Philippines as the anti-Marcos People Power Revolution instigated a government overthrow. She also had friends who were out there in the chaos. So she understands why some people may have reservations about the

show.

But "Here Lies Love" is more about the sacrifices made by anti-Marcos leaders like Ninoy Aquino (played by "How to Get Away with Murder" star Conrad Ricamora), she argues. August will mark 40 years since Aquino was assassinated at the airport in Manila, creating a flashpoint in the movement.

"It seems to be more of him and how his death sparked this anger and rage in a country and how it led to the People Power Revolution and how that led to the ousting of the Marcoses," said Salonga, who plays Aquino's mother, Aurora. "I come away with feeling hopeful when the show comes down. Because I saw in real time what was happening."

Llana, who was born in Manila but raised in the U.S., is playing the man who drove his family to flee their country. When he told his parents 10 years ago he'd be portraying Marcos off-Broadway, they watched the show without hesitation and liked it enough to make repeat visits. A decade later, they'll be there for opening night on Broadway.

"They know that I would never be a part of the show that glorified the Marcoses," Llana said. "Telling the history of the Philippines, sometimes it's not easy... When history repeats itself is when you don't talk about it and when you don't remember the bad things that happened. And that's really what our show is about."

In fact, after all these years, Llana's confidence in the show has only grown.

"There's less fear of whether it's going to work," said Llana, who was Salonga's love interest in "Flower Drum Song" over 20 years ago. "Now, it's just about polishing it and really fine-tuning the story and really resting into the new elements, which are our Filipino producers, Clint Ramos and Jose Antonio Vargas."

Arielle Jacobs, known for lead Broadway roles in "Aladdin" and "In the Heights," recently unearthed old emails from when she auditioned for the off-Broadway production.

"The feedback my agent was told from the casting director was they loved my audition, it's not going to work out right now but maybe potentially for future productions," Jacobs said. "That's so funny because at the time they didn't even know when or if it might come to Broadway."

Being in the show has helped Jacobs not be as "naive about the history." She has been doing

research on her own to try and not make her Imelda one-dimensional. Born in San Francisco, Jacobs said her Filipino mother didn't really talk about the Marcos' era. But, nobody cried more happy tears than her mom when Jacobs landed this role.

Her mother was "just so proud that I'm getting to tell the story and lead this company and play a Filipino and a Filipino story." Since childhood, Jacobs and her brother, Adam (also a Broadway actor), always got so-called "ethnic" theater parts from Puerto Rican to Middle Eastern because of their half-white, half-Asian makeup.

"It has been a blessing in terms of our career growth. At the same time, we've always felt that, because nobody knows we're



Lea Salonga and Arielle Jacobs Know That 'Here Lies Love' Is Controversial, But They Stand By It

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As Asia grapples with declining birth rates, Catholic-majority Philippines wants fewer babies

- The Philippines hopes to achieve broad economic success by addressing demographic issues, and is prioritising family planning
- High fertility rates in the Catholic-majority nation are linked to religious, cultural expectations, and underscore weak access to contraceptives

As birth rates plummet across Asia and beyond, the Philippines stands out for having among the highest fertility ratios in the region.

For years, the Southeast Asian nation has wrestled with a dilemma considered enviable in countries like Japan and South Korea, where governments are offering cash incentives for couples who have children. As many countries record more deaths than births, the Philippines is a bright star for those who believe a young labour force portends greater productivity.

But officials in the Philippines, which has 113 million people, see the issue differently. The government, led by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, warns that the country cannot achieve broad economic success without addressing demographic challenges.

The Philippines, despite sterling growth rates for most of the past decade, still ranks among the poorest in the neighbourhood and lowering the birth rate – which is more than twice South Korea's – is a key strategy for development metrics.

Changing attitudes around family planning has proved a tall order in the Catholic-majority country. Elevated fertility rates are intertwined with religious and cultural expectations, and also underscore

weak access to contraceptives and health-care services.

One-third of the output gap between the Philippines and its well-off Asian peers can be “attributed easily to the fact that we haven’t entered the demographic dividend”, said Arsenio Balisacan, secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority.

Though a smaller labour force might be a problem in wealthy nations, Balisacan said officials in those places have the money to invest in technology and development. In the Philippines, more people are putting great strain on limited resources. The government has made family planning one of its biggest budget priorities this year.

“The most basic, most fundamental problem is to get our poor out of their situation and improve access to services so that everybody is lifted up,” he said.

The verdict is mixed on what a declining population means for the world. Fertility rates are easing as incomes rise and access to contraceptives improves, on top of changing attitudes among women about having children later in life, or not at all.

The United Nations now expects the number of people to peak at 10.4 billion by 2100, a decline from earlier estimates exceeding 11 billion.

Even if shrinking population is good for things like environmental sustainability, greying demographics present challenges, including rising healthcare and retirement costs. Nowhere is that thesis more testable than in Asia, where fertility rate declines are among the most extreme.

In Japan, where birth rates have dropped for years, the government announced fresh measures to boost the numbers, paving the way for doubling the budget spent on children. In China, the



population shrank last year for the first time since the 1960s, and officials are campaigning to change decades-old attitudes about the size of families.

The numbers are even starker in South Korea, which holds the unfavourable crown of having the world's lowest fertility rate, at 0.78 children per woman. Officials are turning to robots and drones to fill gaps in military recruitment.

The Philippines is among a handful of places that will account for more than half of the projected increase in global population through 2050, according to the United Nations.

Balisacan, a prominent Filipino economist, said the Philippines must capitalise on a “demographic sweet spot” in which population growth is less than the rate of growth of the labour force. The country cannot push up gross domestic product unless enough quality jobs are created.

From that vantage point, Balisacan said it is relatively easy for policymakers in wealthy nations like Japan to address declining birth rates. “Just relax your immigration policy,” he said. “I’d rather have that problem.”

The Philippines is among a handful of places that will account for more than half of the projected increase in global population through 2050, according to the United Nations. Photo: AFP

The Philippines is among a handful of places that will account for more than half of the projected increase in global population through 2050, according to the United Nations. Photo: AFP

There are some signs of progress. The Philippines’ fertility rate fell to 1.9 children per woman in 2022, according to preliminary government data, though it’s hard to gauge the impact of pandemic-related restrictions. That is down from 2.7 five years earlier – and below the 2.1 typically viewed as the level at which a population replaces itself from one generation to the next.

As the Philippines aspires for demographic dividend, it has to pay attention to the quality of the workforce, the participation of women and other minority groups and other factors that tend to breed inequality, said Lisa Grace Bersales, executive director of the country’s Commission on Population and Development.

The population commission is working on a five-year action plan targeted for release this quarter or next, according to Bersales. Aside from addressing repro-

ductive health needs, the action plan will bring issues like education, employment, migration and climate change in a holistic approach on demographics, she said.

Family planning also saw a boost after the passage of a landmark reproductive health law in 2012. The legislation expanded access to contraceptives, fertility control, sexual education and maternal care in the Philippines.

In Manila, the nation’s capital, Junice Melgar said more women in poorer neighbourhoods now seek out her organisation for advice.

“We discovered there was a great need,” said Melgar, executive director at Likhaan Center for Women’s Health Inc, a non-profit group established in 1995. Since the pandemic, she said, there’s been “an open clamour” for information about contraceptives.

The uptick in public awareness has paid dividends. About half of today’s married Filipino women do not want additional children, according to the statistics agency. Women in rural areas – where contraception is typically less accessible – had a higher fertility rate of 2.2 children per woman last year, compared with 1.7 in urban areas.

The Marcos government is giving “prime importance” to its youth labour force by allocating funds to hire graduates for internships and helping them look for jobs, according to the Budget Secretary Amemar Pangandaman.

During a speech before investors at the New York Stock Exchange in September, Marcos underscored that push and touted the youth’s readiness to work.

“We are, I believe, the youngest country in Asia,” he said. “And with the greying of other countries around the region, this gives us an advantage.”

Alden on soon-to-be bride Maine: She’s getting the love she deserves

They may have had their share of “differences and misunderstandings” in the past, but Alden Richards couldn’t be more thankful that he and Maine Mendoza have remained “good friends.”

“She’s a huge part of my life. That’s how I feel. I haven’t been vocal about this for the longest time and I think now is the right time, but I have immense gratitude for her, for trusting me,” Alden told reporters at a recent press conference for GMA 7’s new talent show “Battle of the Judges,” which he will be hosting.

And now that Maine is about to get married later this month, Alden had nothing but well wishes for his former screen partner.

“She’s going down a path that, she told me, she has wanted ever since. Maine is very goal-oriented in life—by this age, I should be this. And now she’s there,” related Alden, who believes that Maine is getting the “love she deserves” from her soon-to-be husband, Arjo Atayde.

“I’m happy for them, sincerely. And I tell her that. I really wish her well. She deserves it,” he said. “Show biz came unexpectedly [in]to her life, so I think this is her reward.”

But despite Maine’s upcoming wedding, many ardent “Aldub” supporters continue to hope against hope that it’s still going to be her and Alden in the end. Some even concoct and hold on to tales that the two stars are secretly married and are hiding a baby.

‘Let them be’

Even with Alden’s and Maine’s repeated denials and clarifications, such rumors continue to circulate in some local Aldub fan clubs or circles. At this point, Alden, with an air of resignation, surmised that he’s better off letting those people believe what they want to believe.

“Let’s just give it to them. We said our part. We addressed the speculations—we don’t have a child, we’re not married ... everything. The reality is this: Maine is engaged to Arjo and they’re getting married. But I don’t want to crush them (Aldub fans) or rub it in their faces by saying it over and over again,” he said.

Maine has said her piece. I’ve said my piece. But if [believing we’re married] will make them happy, let’s just let them be. Whatever it is that they want to speculate about,



it’s up to them. But we’re still grateful for all the support we have received during our time. It’s the truth,” the 31-year-old actor added. The phenomenal rise of Alden and Maine’s love team all started in the “Kalyeserye” segment of “Eat Bulaga!” While Maine was able to join Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto, Joey de Leon (TVJ) and the rest of the “Legit Dabarkads” in their new noontime program “E.A.T.” on TV5, Alden can’t follow suit because of his contractual obligations with GMA 7 as an exclusive talent.

It’s saddening, Alden admitted that he can’t appear on “E.A.T.” But the actor also acknowledges that he’s “just an employee” and has no actual say in the situation.

“I had been in talks with people I’m close with in Team Dabarkads—hosts, members, etc. I love these people dearly. The past seven or six years of my life and career I spent with them. Half of my career I was in ‘Eat Bulaga!’ I’m just an employee. I have no right to meddle with their decisions. But personally, I feel sad I won’t be able to come back,” he said.

Friendships remain intact

But they’re all friends, Alden said, adding that his friendship with Jose Manalo—one of the judges in “Battle of the Judges”—has only grown stronger. “Mas lumalim pa ... because of the challenges,” Alden stressed. “They say that you see a person’s real character in circumstances like this. True enough, we remained intact.”

Out of respect for his former cohosts, Alden doesn’t see himself becoming a regular or making gratuitous guest appearances on the revamped “Eat Bulaga!” on GMA 7 or “It’s Showtime” on GTV. And Alden personally has the blessing of the Kapuso network’s senior vice president Annette Gozon-Valdes, who’s also a judge in “Battle of the Judges.”

“I told her that I had a request amid everything that had happened in the noontime setup. And I didn’t have to explain myself. She knows where I came from,” he said.

Alden might be required, however, to do promo on either show. “I may do promo [for my projects]. But a regular hosting job or normal guest appearances? Not now,” she said.

His heart is still with TVJ and their move to another network won’t change that. “I can’t let go of the experiences we shared in the past seven years just because they changed networks. I feel like it’s my right to defend the relationship I have with people in show biz,” he said.



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