



JANUARY 2023

confidential



Happy New Year 2023

WEST PHL SEA IS OURS

Bongbong Marcos: Oil search in West PH Sea may skip 'gov't to gov't' talks

MANILA - President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. on Thursday said last November the Philippines was looking

for other ways to explore for oil and gas in the West Philippine Sea, admitting that talks on joint exploration with Chi-

na have reached a stalemate.

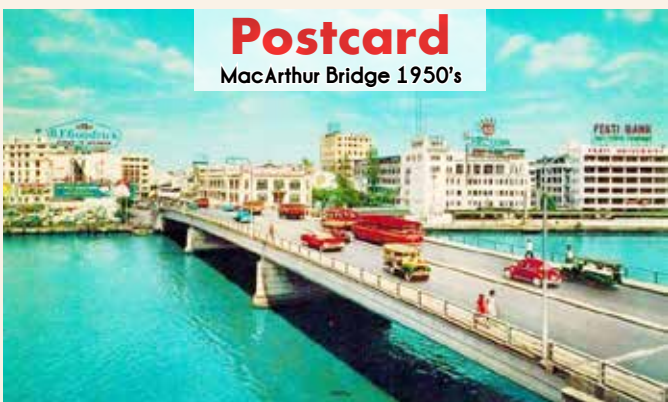
The President said the administration might veer away from government-to-govern-

ment (G2G) talks with China.

“I think there might be other ways so it won’t be G2G. We’ll have to find a way

because we really need it. The Philippines needs whatever we can find there,” Mr. Marcos

ECONOMY page 15



Postcard
MacArthur Bridge 1950's

Injunction filed vs Taste of Manila

TORONTO - Event organizer International Entertainment Company (IEC-Plaintiff) has filed an injunction against 5012252 Ontario Inc., with business name Taste of Manila Production, its CEO, Rolly Mangante, and Society of Philippine Artist, Recreation and Community (defendants) for its unlawful action in violating the contract between IEC and Taste of Manila.

The injunction seeks to stop the defendant from continually breaching the contract of IEC and to force the defendants to honour its obligations. IEC is also seek-



Rolly Mangante (LEFT) and Cecille Araneta (RIGHT) at Taste of Manila 2022.

ing a total of \$1.5-Million for breach of contract and punitive and damages.

IEC claims that founding president Rolando Mangante and his 5012252 Ontario Inc. (Defendant) company together with SPARC

TASTE DISPUTE p16

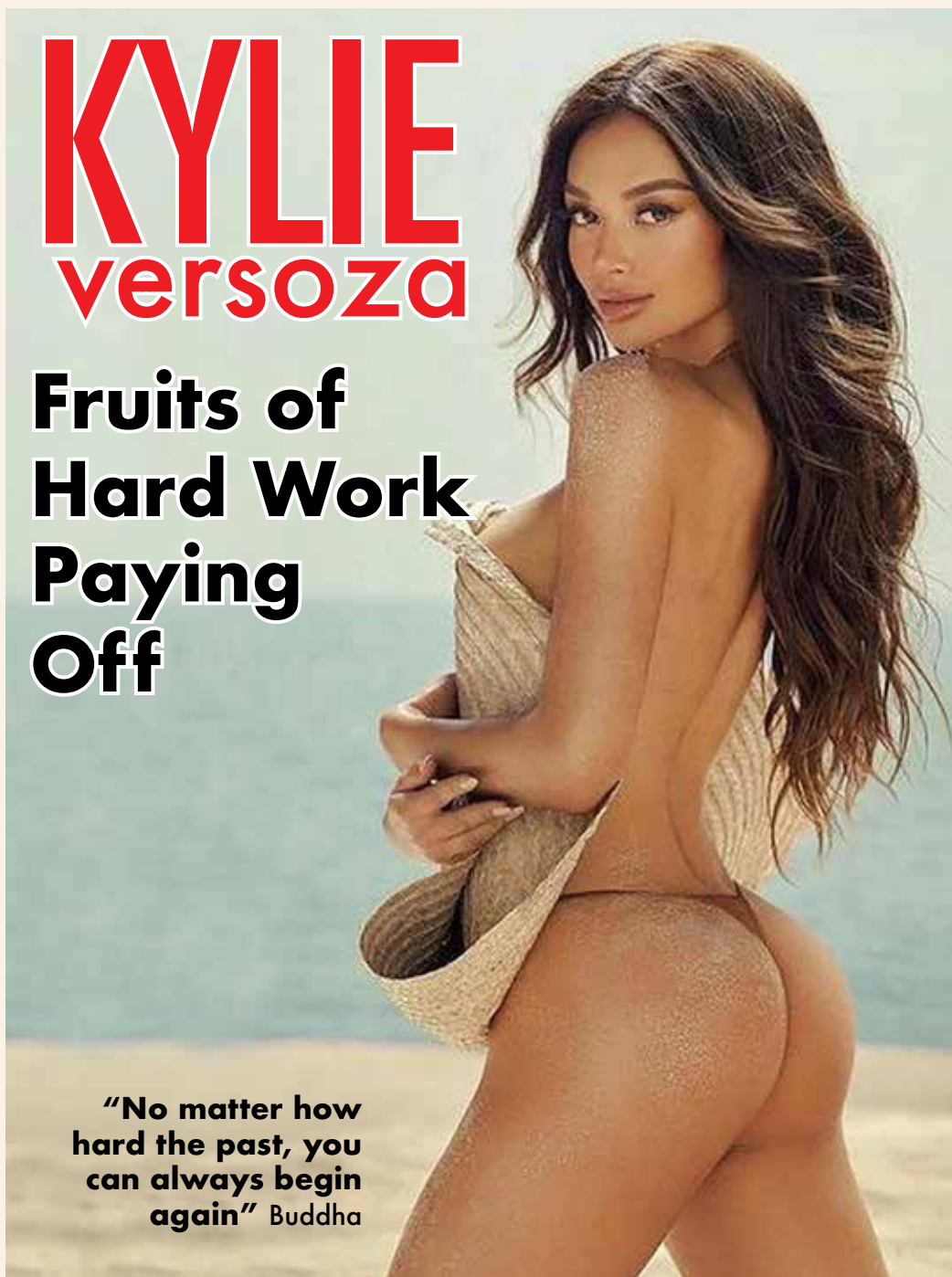
Inflation makes OFWs stay abroad

MANILA, Philippines – “I have an onion in my hand,” said overseas Filipino worker (OFW) Mark Aquino as he presented the vegetable to a Zoom conference with reporters last month. This was a symbol of the Marcos administration’s shortcomings, he said.

“Here in the Middle East,

when we go grocery shopping and see onions, we don’t know if we should be happy, angry, or sad, because one kilo of onions costs just P30 here if you convert it to pesos. And we’re in countries that import onions,” said Aquino, Migrante Middle East’s regional coordinator.

OFW p3



KYLIE versoza

Fruits of Hard Work Paying Off

“No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again” Buddha

Philippine ports poised to restart testing travelers

MANILA - All airport and seaport terminals have been alerted for a possible reestablishment of testing requirements for arriving travelers from China and other countries tagged as “high-alert” for COVID-19.

“All bureau personnel are hereby directed to continuously intensify the quarantine

protocols,” Bureau of Quarantine director Ferdinand Salcedo said in a memorandum.

Among the protocols, Salcedo said, was to “coordinate with airport and seaport terminal authorities for possible reestablishment of testing of inbound travelers from high-alert countries.”

The Department of Health

earlier ordered the Bureau of Quarantine to heighten surveillance of all respiratory symptoms in travelers coming from China.

Infected and symptomatic passengers should be reported during arrival, it said.

The World Health Organization met Chinese officials

TESTING p19

With a Little Help from her “Family”



“We are family, not just friends and co-workers,” said Cely Tutay. So, when they found out that Mirachelle Capulong’s mother was sick in the Philippines, her “family” rallied around to help. And this explains the pictures of Mirachelle (with crown), Felina Tutay (in black) and Dr. Victoria Santiago (in red) teary-eyed during their Family Dentistry Office Christmas party.

Coco Martin to do another TV reboot of FPJ classic

After the astronomical success of FPJ’s Ang Probinsyano, Coco Martin is set to star in Batang Quiapo, the 1986 hit movie that paired the late King of Philippine Movies Fernando Poe, Jr. with Maricel Soriano.

The TV adaptation of Batang Quiapo is scheduled to be released in 2023.

Lovi Poe, who is the late FPJ’s daughter will be Coco’s love interest in the TV version while Charo Santos-Concio will play his grandmother.

“Isang FPJ classic ang muling bibigyang-buhay ni Coco Martin kasama ang anak ng nag-iisang Da King, Lovi Poe,” Dreamscape shared, noting that the adaptation of Batang Quiapo coincide with FPJ’s

18th death anniversary commemoration.

Some of the stars who are part of the main cast and will give strong support include Christopher de Leon, John Estrada, Lito Lapid, Cherry Pie Picache, Alan Paule, Pen Medina, Mark Lapid, Mercedes Cabral, and Tommy Abuel.

The plot of the original film centers around Baldo (FPJ), a pickpocket who was just recently released from prison and is determined to start a new life. Along the way, he meets Maria (Maricel) who herself is a young pickpocket, and leads her to the right path.



Brianna Bunagan is out to make a name for herself

Brianna with parents Michael V and Carol Bunagan. Brianna, the daughter of ace comedian Michael V., is among the new talents who have graced the recently-concluded GMA primetime series, Start-Up PH, with Alden Richards and Bea Alonzo in the leading roles. She is grateful for such opportunity and considers it a blessing and a whole new experience. Although she is open to do any genre, Brianna is interested to act in romcoms and drama.

“As for the experience so far, it’s been still surreal. It hasn’t

fully sunk in.” That was Brianna Bunagan. “I didn’t expect that my first project would be big as this,” said the daughter of ace comedian Michael V., referring to her stint in the primetime series, Start-Up PH, with Alden Richards and Bea Alonzo as leading actors.

“It’s such a blessing, sobrang (I’m very) grateful for this opportunity, it’s a whole new experience,” added she, who, after doing acting workshops, was



tapped to be part of the show’s ensemble.

Brianna is open to try her hand at any genre, be it in a teleserye or in a movie.

“Lagi niya lang pong sinasabi sa akin na (He would always tell me to) enjoy what I’m doing,” shared Brianna of her dad’s pieces of advice. “For instance, if I get burned out, I just have to always remember the reason why I started in the first place, which is to enjoy.

When I was young and I started singing, he was very supportive when I wanted to do covers and post them on YouTube... He was also supportive

when I decided to pursue theater in college. I always (feel and get the) support from both my parents.”

Aside from acting, Brianna is also into singing. “Obviously, I can’t just sit around like waiting for opportunities. So, when she is tapped for a role, Brianna will be ready.

“I’m just hoping for the best, especially after this first serye (of mine) sana madagdagan po... I’m really excited and you know this is just a beginning for me,” she concluded. “I’m looking forward to what the future holds for.”

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An extra look back: Darna’s past enemies and their powers

From the trending fight with the Martean warrior Luna (Kira Balinger) to the thrilling confrontations with Valentina (Janella Salvador), the new season of “Mars Ravelo’s Darna” came in swinging with action-packed scenes that showcased Darna’s (Jane de Leon) powers and abilities. With new villains and even more exciting face-offs that are unfolding this season, take a look back at Darna’s previous enemies, the “Extras,” that tested her wisdom and strength as “protector.”

While Extras may seem as bad in the eyes of many, Darna believes that they are also victims who need help. It is certainly true for Javier (Dominic Ochoa) who tried to expose the corruption behind the construction of a government facility that was being built using substandard materials. After being buried alive, Javier emerged as “Lindol Man” who has the ability to generate earthquakes.

On the contrary, Silent Shocker (Boom Labrusca) opposed Darna’s way of serving justice and prefers Valentina’s killing spree to eradicate the evil beings in Nueva Esperanza. He also used his electrokinesis abilities to orchestrate several accidents that tarnished Darna’s reputation.

Another memorable Extra is the Ex-Triad group consisting of Inno/



Drag Mouth (Karl Gabriel), who spits acidic liquid from his mouth; Klara/The Seductress (Jef Gaitan), a red-haired extra who uses hypnotism to manipulate minds; and Miguel/Boy Chop-Chop (Henz Villariz) who can detach his limbs from his body. No one is safe from becoming an Extra, not even Brian Robles (Joshua Garcia) who had an evil clone. His dop-pelgänger was brought to life when shards of chrysalis landed on the mirror that Brian was looking at. His duplicate known as “Dark Brian” locked up the real Brian in a cell and used his position as a police officer to fulfill his evil desires.

Some other Extras that Darna also fought are Strength Man (Jerald Napoles), Killer Ghost (Christian Bables), Clone Man (Neil Coleta), Human Urchin (Loren Burgos), and Levitator (Enchong Dee).

As Darna wholeheartedly fulfills her mission, who will be the next villains to challenge her grit and strength?

Chito Miranda details ‘worst’ gig for 2022

Parokya ni Edgar vocalist Chito Miranda wrapped up his last gig for the year.

But he deemed his performance last Dec. 21 as his “worst.”

“Huling hirit. Last gig ng 2022. Tonight’s gig was definitely my worst for this year...but also one of the best for Parokya,” he related.

Then he went on to share: “Tu-luy-tuloy kasi ang gigs ng Parokya buong December, and dapat di na daw tuloy ‘tong gig na ‘to...so akala ko last gig na namin nung 19 (Monday) at nag-sked na ko ng bakasyon with my kids ng Tuesday (20-21).”

“Eh biglang natuloy. Ayoko naman i-cancel yung plans ko with my family...so ayun: nag-Pico kami at naligo kami sa beach habang umu-ulan at nag-enjoy naman kami ng todo hehe (sulit naman dahil sobrang



nag-enjoy yung kids) Pero yun nga... nawalan na ko ng boses. My worst nightmare bilang bokalista.”

After the family trip, Chito directly went to his hotel room to rest.

“Todo tubig at tulog,” he noted. However, his voice got affected.

“Wala talaga...sama talaga ng boses ko,” was how he put it.

“Ginising na ko at tutugtog na daw kami. Buti nalang sobrang saya ng crowd...and wala silang paki sa boses ko. Sinabayan lang nila kami buong set.”

“Ayun...ang ending, napadami pa kami ng kanta at sobrang enjoy yung gabi. I was struggling buong set at nahihiya talaga ako kasi di ko mabigay yung best ko... pero ni once never pina-feel ng crowd na kulang yung binibigay namin bilang banda. Sobrang saya talaga. Maraming, maraming salamat po!!!”

OFW from page 1

“Meanwhile, in the Philippines, onions cost [around P300] per kilo, even if we have onion farmers,” Aquino added.

The thought of onions hits hard even on another side of the world. In the same media conference, United Filipinos in Hong Kong chairperson Dolores Balladares-Pelaez said that her family has to consider noche buena (traditional Christmas Eve dinner) recipes that don’t use onions because of how expensive they are. “Our family has said that they have to cut down for their Christmas dinner. It’s not like before, where if you could afford dessert, you would serve it too. Now, they won’t,” said Pelaez.

With the Philippine inflation rate hitting a 14-year high of 8% in November, some OFWs face a gloomier Christmas than usual. Not all gift requests from family members may be fulfilled this year, and some who were hoping to come home deal with the reality that it’s just too expensive

for now.

Global inflation

“Instead of us being able to send the amount we were able to send before inflation hit this high, we can no longer afford it because our salaries don’t increase just like that here in Europe,” Pasion said.

Even with higher exchange rates, it is still difficult for some OFWs’ remittances to keep up with rising prices in the Philippines.

No homecoming this year

Gio Alonzo, an international student in Canada who also works full-time, is looking for something to do this Christmas.

All his relatives who were with him in Mississauga were able to “revenge travel” this year, but it wasn’t as easy for him.

“Some OFWs like my relatives can afford to travel because they didn’t travel last year, and dollars are more powerful now, so they don’t think much of [money]. I hear from



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Life’s brighter under the sun



Heart Evangelista is Boy Abunda’s top wish interviewee

King of Talk Boy Abunda said top of his wish list of subjects to interview is socialite Heart Evangelista who has been in the news lately because of reported issues about her married life with Sen. Francis ‘Chiz’ Escudero.

“I would like to do an interview with Heart only because her story has no clear narrative yet. I don’t know if I can do an interview with her,” Boy said.

“Heart is special to me. I remember when she was just starting, she became one of my students in hosting and we became friends after so many years. We have not seen each other for a long time. We were supposed to see each other sometime during the elections but it has not happened. (She) has an interesting story,” Boy observed.

If unable to get Heart, Abunda has another option. “I’d love to be able to do a fun interview with Marian (Rivera),” he bared. “I’d love to do Maine (Mendoza) and Arjo (Atayde) together,” he added. “I’d love to be able to do the younger artists na hindi ko pa masyadong kilala like the



Julie Anne San Jose, the Barbie Fortezas.”

There are a few other stars that are “high on my list,” Tito Boy mentioned Carla Abellana, Alden, Tom Rodriguez, Dennis Trillo, Jennylyn Mercado, Paolo Contis and many others.”

He is still in deep discussion with the GMA team on what new approach to take, considering that the media landscape has changed ever since his last talk show with GMA 23 years ago.

Boy would like to “invent interview tools and discover interview styles” like the one using the “mahiwagang salamin” or magic mirror that he’s been famous for.

“We are asking ourselves what’s our equity, what can we offer so that people will watch us? We are in the questioning stage because this has to be done well,” he added.

The full details of his new talk show still has to be finalized, but it “should happen in January, maybe third or fourth week.”

“We are still talking whether it will be a daily or weekly show. I would like weekly but daily is also good provided it has a shorter format,” he noted.

'Not Mr. Christmas': Jose Mari Chan featured in Time

Popular singer-songwriter Jose Mari Chan has once again refused any moniker or title relating to Christmas. In his most recent interview with Time magazine, the balladeer said he is not comfortable being referred to as "Mr. Christmas."

He shared that as a devout Catholic, he would prefer that the "spotlight remain focused on God."

In past interviews, Chan also declined the tag "Father of Philippine Christmas Songs" for the same reason.

Apart from his stand on the monikers being given to him, the feature also detailed how music came to be for the then-sugar scion from Bacolod.

The young Chan released his first album in 1969 while taking care of the sugar trading business

he inherited. His family had to move to the United States after the sugar crisis hit Negros Islands in the 1970s. They only returned after the 1986 EDSA Revolution.

Five years later, Chan recorded "Christmas in Our Hearts" with his then-teenage daughter Liza. It was a song that he could have recorded with then-promising young singer Lea Salonga but the project did not push through.

Today, "Christmas in Our Hearts" is one of Chan's most iconic Christmas songs played around this time of the year.



Cherry Pie Picache, Edu Manzano shut down breakup rumors

Celebrity couple Cherry Pie Picache and Edu Manzano shut down breakup rumors.

Fans of the pair were alarmed with their relationship after the couple didn't post photos of them on Instagram for months, sparking split speculations.

In her Instagram account, Cherry Pie posted photos of her relatives in New Zealand with Edu and Edu posted a photo of him with the actress, hanging out in a new bar in Quezon City.

It was December last year when Edu's son Luis



Manzano confirmed the relationship between the two. "Kung maibabalik ang prangkisa ng ABS-CBN next year, baka si Daddy at Tita Pie, itapat sa KathNiel," Luis joked. "Sobrang we were caught off guard. No one saw it coming. I don't even think Dad and Tita Pie saw it coming," he added.

Luis shared that he was able to confirm the relationship when a friend sent him a photo of his dad and Cherry Pie.

"It would boil down to the same thing, kung paano niya nirespeto ang kanyang kasama. That's one thing na nakikita ko kay Daddy. How he takes care of his partner talaga. Nakikita ko rin naman how happy he is with Tita Pie," he added.

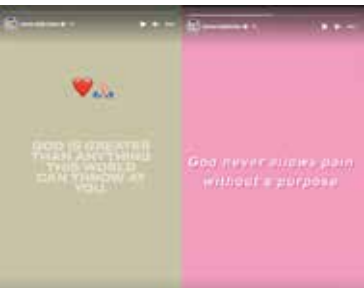


Loisa Andaliao, Ronnie Alonte fall victim to 'basag-kotse' gang

Celebrity couple Loisa Andaliao and Ronnie Alonte lost three phones to thieves who broke into their parked car in Bacoor, Cavite, recently.

In the photos released by Bacoor City Police, the broken right rear passenger window of their Jeep Wrangler Wagon could be seen.

There's also a picture of Ronnie seeming-



ly filing a police report.

A few hours later, Loisa shared some cryptic posts on her Instagram account.

It read: "God is greater than anything this world can throw at you."

"God never allows pain without a purpose."

Loisa and Ronnie celebrated their sixth anniversary only recently.

Alice Dixson on 'act your age' comment



Now in her 50s, actress Alice Dixson recently revealed how she would always receive comments like "act your age" and "you're too old for that" from bashers.

But she has this message for them:

"Hahah, i think if I acted my age - I probably wouldn't look this young," she quipped. "boom x3 shake the roooom - tick x3 boom. sorry not sorry."

Her post compliments about She shared: when my suki said Alice, bagay sa yo"! natural looking it has

"Walking in Market? ang Ganda ng hair mo Didn't realize how light & become."

AJ Raval breaks silence on supposedly giving birth to Aljur Abrenica's love child

Controversial actress AJ Raval took to social media to comment on a news site's headline about her now allegedly a mother to her and Aljur Abrenica's child.

In a post, AJ maintained those spreading the issue are simply "sira ulo."

She added, "Nanahimik ako dito." Note it all started with Ogie Diaz disclosing the same in his vlog only a few days ago. Talk about AJ's alleged pregnancy has been going on for some time.

AJ as with her father, action star, Jeric Raval, already refuted the matter in interviews.



FCT Search for Ten Outstanding Filipino Canadian Seniors in Ontario



By Tony A. San Juan, OCT

TORONTO - The Filipino Centre Toronto - FCT, a prominent and progressive Filipino Canadian community service hub in the Greater Toronto Area, proudly announces its search for the "Ten Outstanding Filipino-Canadian Seniors for 2022" commencing on December 15, 2022. The initiative is following the heels of the 2022 Outstanding Fil-Can Students Awards to Filipino Canadian student graduates in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions. This time, the FCT is engaging to conduct purposefully a public tribute of recognizing, honouring, and appreciating Senior Citizen Achievers in the Filipino Canadian community in Ontario.

The "10 Outstanding Filipino Canadian Seniors of the Year" - 2022 OFCSY Awardees will be selected from any of the following areas of the profession, discipline, or service, namely: 1)Business and Entrepreneurship, 2)Certified Profession/Trade, 3)Public, Non-government, & Community Service, 4)Education, Health, Wellness, and Sports, 5) Arts, Media, and Public Relations.

Every awardee or winner will be given a prize in the form of a "Plaque of Recognition", "Congratulatory Certificate", and "Cash Award"(the amount of which is to be determined by the FCT Board of Directors). Completed applications and requirements may be submitted with hard copies or online via www.filipinocentretoronto.com, c/o FCT-OFCSY

The Candidate must meet the following Application Requirements:1) Must complete

and submit an Application Form, with 2-coloured headshot photos. 2) Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Ontario and of Filipino heritage (photocopy of an Ontario SIN Card is required). 3) Must be at least 65 years or older, at the time of application (photocopy of a government-issued Senior Citizen Card is required). 4) Must show proof of age and residency in Ontario for at least the last 5 years (a photocopy of an Ontario Health Card is required). 5) May be nominated by a recognized professional /community-based organization or may directly apply on his/her own accord. 6) Must submit at least two (2) Recommendation / Reference Letters from a current or previous employer or from a senior officer of a professional /religious/community organization. 7) Must write in no more than 250 words the rationale or reason(s) for his/her application.

The winners will be presented and honoured at the FCT gala event on April 15, 2023, Saturday.

Application / Nomination Forms are now available at the FCT- Filipino Toronto Centre, 4395 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough, Toronto, ON M1S 1T9 or by phone: 416- 335-0485 or online at www.filipinocentretoronto.com. The Deadline for submission of the completed application/nomination and requirements, either by hand, mail, or online, is February 10, 2023, Friday. The decision of the FCT Outstanding Seniors Award Committee is final and binding. Winners of the search will be informed accordingly. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).

Bea Alonzo refutes Ogie Diaz's 'fake news' claim on film with John Lloyd Cruz

Bea Alonzo disproved Ogie Diaz's report about her and John Lloyd Cruz's upcoming reunion project being "fake news."

Bea cleared this in a recent interview with Nelson Canlas.

She said: "May lumalabas na sinabi daw ni John Lloyd na fake news yung movie namin. Si-yempre tinawagan ko siya agad. Sabi ko, 'Di ba ang sabi mo ako na lang yung iniintay mo? Parang hindi ko naman papahintayin si John Lloyd. Magkai-bigan naman kami tinawagan ko siya and he denied that he said that."

Bea revealed more details about the film. According to her, she and John Lloyd will be starring in a Star Cinema film.

Last month, Ogie revealed a conversation he had with a source claiming that John Lloyd was shocked hearing news of him working with Bea anew.

"Si John Lloyd naloka sa balita na gagawa sila ng pelikula," was how Ogie put it, adding: "Dahil unang-una wala raw ngayon – as per John Lloyd: walang offer. Walang lumalapit sa kanila para duon sa kung meron mang proposal ng Bea-John Lloyd movie."

Ogie continued: "Dahil unang-una ayaw magpaasa ni John Lloyd Cruz sa mga fans. Nahihiya si John Lloyd Cruz na paasahin yung mga fans na

meron silang comeback movie ni Bea. Yan daw ang di alam ni John Lloyd kung saan nakuha ni Bea."

"Alam mo lahat naman, sa totoo lang, lahat naman ay umaasa na magkakaroon ng John Lloyd-Bea movie. Lahat, pati nga tayo manunuod niyan e, if ever e. Kaya lang nga, yun ang masaklap na katotohanan na walang dumarating na offer kay John Lloyd Cruz. Sabi nga kung i-quo-quote natin si John Lloyd Cruz na sinabi sa atin ng source natin: 'Fake news yan! Fake news ang John Lloyd-Bea movie.'"

It was in 2015 when Bea and John Lloyd last shared the screen in "A Second Chance," the follow up to their 2008 blockbuster film "One More Chance."

John Lloyd has expressed hope to reunite on a project with Bea.

"Ang tagal niya na nga eh. Ang tagal na po akong naka-standby Miss Bea," he quipped then. "Waiting lang po, any time po on your cue."

In 2020, the reel partners did a live script reading, marking John Lloyd's first major public appearance after two years away from the limelight.

They later did an online content for a certain fast food chain.



Justin de Dios from obscurity to SB19 stardom

To help celebrate its 25th anniversary in the retail industry, Puregold has decided to shine a spotlight on feel-good “panalo” stories that will inspire its loyal customers. These episodes are a series of uplifting videos on Puregold’s social media channels.

Justin de Dios has been a role model on achieving a balance between school obligations and chasing after his dream.

Among the stories depicted was that of Justin De Dios, who recently came into prominence as a member of the uber-popular P-Pop group, SB19. Justin may be the youngest in the lot but he’s an integral part of SB19, and has his own set of adoring

fans. In fact, according to an on-line poll, Justin was ranked 3rd among the top Asian Celebrities of the Year.

It wasn’t always that way for Justin, though. As all aspiring artists will tell you, the road to stardom has numerous speed bumps. It’s an exhausting journey where rejection may await at every turn, and where each step one takes may be the moment that makes them want to quit.

Few things illustrate this better than the fact that at a young age, Justin worked on achieving a balance between school and chasing after his dream. He was taking multimedia arts degree at the College of Saint Benilde when he began the rigorous singing and dancing training

required of a P-Pop star.

At one point, Justin nearly gave up his studies to focus on his aspirations. His brother even once tweeted about Justin crying over such a tough call. But the young man persevered and eventually graduated with honors before moving on to SB19.

Now, the multifaceted Justin is known for his artistic spirit and creativity. Not only is he a singer for SB19, but he’s also done the creative direction for several of their music videos. He even won the P-Pop Male Main Visual of the Year at the 7th PPop Awards, showing the great skill he has as a creative visionary.



This past year, Justin, alongside the rest of SB19, took their talents abroad. In September, they announced their first-ever world tour. Following dates in the Philippines, they spent the end of the year performing all over the world in Dubai, New York, Los Angeles, and Singapore.

It is with great pride that Puregold presents Justin’s “panalo” story, while reaffirming that going after our passion takes hard work but it is all worth it in the end.

Alex Gonzaga grateful for success of her podcast

Actress-singer Alex Gonzaga thanked her followers on the audio streaming and media services provider, where her podcast “Ano na Catherine? by Alex Gonzaga” received high ratings.

According to Spotify, Alex released three video episodes this year and they were in the top 1 percent of most viewed.

Also, the listeners scored her podcast 4.9. Here’s Alex’s reaction to her latest milestone: “Opening my heart and sharing my thoughts to all of you has always been my dream. So thank you netizens and podzsters for giving me your time to listen.”

She added: “We live, make mistakes but the best part is we learn together. Love u all. #AnonaCatherine every wed on @spotifyph.”



Tom Rodriguez on accusations he is gay: ‘I don’t mind hearing it’

People are still speculating on the root cause of Tom Rodriguez and Carla Abellana’s split.

The internet has a thousand reasons for it.

Among these is that Tom is actually gay and Carla found out about it only after their marriage.

But is he really?

Tom haven’t confirmed or denied the same until recently.

In Ogie Diaz’s vlog, the actor came out to make clear he is not gay as alleged.

Not that he minds that people think of him as such.

He said, “That’s not an insult to me. Most of the best people I know happen to be of that persuasion. So I don’t mind hearing it.”

He added, “It’s not the truth

but it doesn’t bother me.”

“It’s up to them if they believe me or not but personally I don’t care.”

Tom was game enough to answer another conjecture: That she had another girl while married to Carla.

He even joked, “Ngayon o dati?”

The actor denied it altogether



in the end, saying simply, “Wala.”

With that out, what exactly was it that broke the camel’s back so to speak?

Tom is not eager to share

details.

If anything he offered, “I have my mistakes. Siguro hindi yung mga binibintang sa akin per se but I have (done) things that I have to (hold myself) accountable for.”

“May mga mali ako na kinailangan kong pagbayaran, at pinagbayaran ko.”

Asked if he still loves Carla, Tom was quick to answer.

“Of course. Hindi naman agad agad mawawala yun.”

Rafael Nebres of Action Honda receives Lifetime Service Award • PAGE 13



ACTION Honda

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Ambassadors must make PH's position known to the world

As he highlighted the different tasks of ambassadors, President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. encouraged the country’s newly appointed and confirmed envoys to make the Philippines’ position on all aspects to the rest of the world, especially amid present challenges.

Marcos said this during his meeting with newly appointed and confirmed Ambassadors.

The President said the ambassadors are now on a “different kind of mission” as they advance the interest of the Philippines, particularly as the world grapples with multiple challenges, including moving out of the pandemic.

“You no longer are concerned solely with the diplomatic contact and the diplomatic ex-

changes. We are no longer limited by distance, by geographical and physical positioning.” “We look to our envoys to be able to achieve to one, consistently make known to all our friends, all our own partners, the position of the Philippines on all the aspects of the world discussion that we are all part of,” he said.

The country’s envoys must continuously talk to people, corporations, and entities and look for opportunities that benefit the Philippines.

For instance, Marcos said they have to look for ideas and partnerships with other countries offering assistance on climate change and other things that can be helpful to the Philippines.

“That probably is the newest feature of an envoy’s duties. It is a new world out there; we

must adjust,” he said.

“I believe that for the Philippines, for the national interest, that this is the way to adjust,” he added.

The President also pointed out that the country benefits from a government-to-government level of negotiation and mediating with the private sector in terms of investment tie-up with foreign investors.

Marcos said Filipino ambassadors must keep these things in mind so the country can maximize its resources and partnerships to manage the economy effectively. He added that this would help Filipinos have a better life as the nation slowly emerges from all of its present challenges.



It has undoubtedly been an eventful year for Director Paul Soriano and his wife, actress-host Toni Gonzaga. Paul also became the newly-installed Presidential Adviser on Creative Communications, adding to his role as a husband, father, and director. Nonetheless, he remains dedicated to his purpose and responsibilities while maintaining the values he believes.

As a husband and father

Gaining media fame throughout the year also meant receiving backlash from the public.

In their upcoming movie, *My Teacher*, Paul fulfills a goal for Toni, who holds teachers in

The many roles of Paul Soriano

high regard. He simply follows the mantra “happy wife, happy life” when it comes to his relationship with the actress-host. Paul also remains his wife’s biggest fan.

“If I can a step back, and from a perspective of not being her husband, or her producer or director, I believe Toni is probably the most powerful celebrity today,” Paul said during a press conference at Winford Manila last Monday, December 5.

His stance comes from seeing Toni take criticisms from bashers but continue to get up and face another day.

“I’ve seen her in her darkest moments. I’ve seen her vulnerable, but she chooses to get up and face that camera. She could have easily just moved out, taken all the criticisms, and gone somewhere else,” the director said.

Moreover, despite their busy schedules, he and Toni always find time to look after their only son, Sevi.

During his busy days, Toni would spend some time with Sevi and vice versa. The noted director also shared that he makes adjustments to pick up their son from school whenever possible.

As a director

For the upcoming film *My Teacher*, Paul

directed Toni again, but it’s his first time doing it with her as his wife. Although Toni conceptualized and wrote the film during the pandemic, Paul still exercises his authority on set.

He admitted there were creative differences between him and Toni, but he’s not rigid in accepting others’ ideas. He welcomes debates to get a better perspective of things.

Joining Toni in *My Teacher* is veteran actor and comedian Joey De Leon. Like Toni, Joey also shares insights on certain scenes, which Paul also considers.

As the Presidential Adviser on Creative Communications

His position in the government gives Paul a unique opportunity to advance the creative industry and relate President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.’s idea that communication is an essential tool in shedding light on the true meaning of public services.

“We shall endeavor to bridge the need to enhance our creative industry and create that synergy of culture, history, and the performing arts to re-awaken the pride and patriotism in our country,” Paul said.

Paul will hold the position for six years. Everyone now has their sights on him and Toni and where they’ll go next.

Alfred Vargas’ new year’s resolution: ‘Iwas na ako sa mga taong plastic at nega’

Former congressman Alfred Vargas said he’s raring to go back to showbiz, adding that he’s excited to do a project with National Artist Nora Aunor and movie director Adolf Alix Jr. for the first time.

“First time ko silang makakatrabaho. Drama siya na may halong action and suspense.”

Vargas admitted that he’s nervous to be

working with Ate Guy.

“Honestly, may kaba sa akin. Bata pa ako fan na niya ako. Paano pa kung kasama mo na sa eksena? I met her na personally to talk about the project at napakabait at hospitable niya. Na starstruck ako noon. I was just trying to act calm sa harap niya. Nagpa picture ako sa kanya at super happy ako,” he said.

The actor-politician said that he is excited for the coming year.

On his new year wish, Vargas said: “Sana lalo kung ma-nur-



ture yung mga important relationships ko sa buhay. I realized kasi that life is about meaningful relationships. I realized that life is about meaningful relationships talaga. Yan ang mag-papaligaya sayo at ang mga tunay mong kaibigan ang mag-aangat sayo at tutulong sayo sa buhay. Tumatak yan sa akin nitong pandemic.”

Vargas also revealed his new year’s resolution. “Iiwas nako sa mga taong plastic at nega. Tatanggalin ko na sila sa buhay ko haha!”



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Fe Delos Reyes builds happy family in US, announces latest single ‘Hoy, Ikaw Na Naman’

Almost 30 years in the US, Filipino singer-comedian Fe Delos Reyes revealed she had no regrets when she left the Philippines at the peak of her career.

“I was 35 then when I decided to go to the US. Gusto ko na rin kasi magkapamilya. So it was a choice to build a family,” said Delos Reyes.

“No regrets because I was able to do both – family and showbiz,” she said. “I also went to the US to search for my sister but that’s another story.”

“We’re together now. We’re so close. Meron akong adopted mom, biological mom at stepmom. But they all passed away,” she added. “During the pandemic, I am blessed because unang-una walang tinamaan sa amin. My husband has work and ako naman kahit walang show, I was working as a pre-school Montessori teacher. I was teaching little kids.

“Yung ibang school kasi sa US hindi puwede pero sa area namin puwede naman pero may precautions pa rin naman. Our family was solid during the pandemic,” Delos Reyes also said. She stopped teaching in June.

Delos Reyes arrived in the Philippines in November. “We’re hitting two birds with one stone – first I’m here for a concert with Kuh Ledesma and Odette Quesada. Now I’m promoting a single.” She wrapped up the two-night concert.



“Right now I’m not here for good but next year I’ll be here longer and more often kasi magre-retire na ang husband ko and then yung mga anak ko tapos na sila. I have two daughters and my husband has two daughters from a previous marriage,” she said.

‘Hoy, Ikaw Na Naman’

And to open the year 2023, Delos Reyes releases her song entitled “Hoy, Ikaw Na Naman.”

“Hoy, Ikaw Na Naman” is an upbeat song that depicts the typical and romantic Filipina who likes to play hard to get. Written by the one and only Miss Cecile Azarcon-Inocentes, she said “my being homesick inspired me to write this song.”

Azarcon, whose family migrated to the USA in 1984, thought that it was the end of her songwriting career, which was pretty much at its peak at that time, with hit songs like I Think I’m In Love, Reaching Out, Even If, So, It’s You and Special Memory, among others.

Hoy, Ikaw Na Naman was recorded and released in 1994 by Ciel Perlas as part of an all-Azarcon penned album compilation entitled, “Ciel at Azarcon” under VIVA Records.

And now, after almost three decades, “Hoy, Ikaw Na Naman” is being given a chance to shine on its own as a single release.

Vice Ganda really wants a baby this year

Ace comedian Vice Ganda has opened up again on having a baby with real-life partner actor Ian Perez.

Vice said that she really wanted to have a baby but cannot attend to it because she is so busy. “Mahirap magka-baby pero hindi ko siya maharap. Gustong gusto ko na.

“Actually ang laking part sa buhay ko na ayokong i-subject yung anak ko sa cruel world like scrutiny sa pamilya, sa jowa. Pero now kaya ko ng protektahan ang anak ko. Gusto ko na pero hindi ko talaga siya maharap dahil ang dami-dami kong ginagawa.

“Nagpunta ako ng America noong tour. Inayos ko na yung schedule kung kanino pupunta. Nakapagpa-schedule kami pero hindi ko napuntahan.

“I still don’t have the luxury of time to do other things that I want to do.

“Kahit meron (time) naagaw pa rin talaga,” Vice Ganda said.

Ate Vi on being a granny

Wilma Santos can hardly contain her excitement for the birth of her first grandchild. So, instead of joining their annual Christ mas family vacation, Ate Vi is staying put in Manila to keep Luis Manzano and Jessy Mendiola company as they wait for the arrival of their little princess.

“We will fondly call her Peanut,” says Ate Vi. “I want her to call me Momsie, not Lola. Gusto ko siya lagyan ng earrings agad.” Then, I chided her, “How many karats?” She shot back chuckling, “Wala munang karats. Baby pa lang ‘yun. I would rather not spoil her, but pamper her.”

Ate Vi is the gift that Peanut will be born with. Congratulations in advance, Momsie Vi. Grandmotherhood never looked so good.



‘Naloka po me:’ Angelica Panganiban shocked over added charge for package

Angelica Panganiban wants to reach out to custom officials.

This, after a package she had delivered was charged an additional amount.

She tweeted: “Hmmm... pano ma contact ang customs? May binili akong swimsuit, 7k yung amount. Pero pinapabayaran ako ng 8,211 pagka deliver sa akin. Naloka po me.”

Note that last March, Angelica also asked netizens for “enlightenment” relating to a tax quandary.



She said then: “Nakakapng hinayang lang na wala akong choice kundi bayaran yung singil nila. Kung alam ko lang na 70% yung babayaran kong tax sa customs. D na ko bumili online.”

Last year, Angelica’s good friend Bela Padilla also called out the Bureau of Customs for the delayed release of her packages.

Customs, on their part, apologized for the inconvenience.

Tao Tsuchiya and Ryota Katayose are engaged, expecting first child

Japanese actress Tao Tsuchiya, most popularly known for her role as Usagi in series Alice in Borderland, announced that she is getting married to Japanese singer Ryota Katayose and is pregnant with their first child.

The couple disclosed that they’ve been making preparations for their wedding upon the advice of their seniors.

“Since we first met, during all these years, we have continued to help and support each other with much respect, stimulating each other throughout various milestones as individual artists,” they said.

The two added that at the end of 2022, while in



the middle of preparing for their marriage, they’ve “discovered and are blessed that a new life has been brought to [them].”

The couple then asked their fans for their continued support as they “strive to work together with much love and devotion to nurture this miracle.”

Tao and Ryota starred in the 2017 Japanese series My Brother Loves Me Too Much.

Tao, 25, is best known for her roles in Japanese films Rurouni Kenshin and The 8-Year Engagement. Meanwhile, Ryota Katayose, 28, is a vocalist of GENERATIONS from EXILE TRIBE.

Why Matet De Leon is hurting

Matet De Leon took to YouTube recently to air her side on Nora Aunor’s new business venture, Ate Guy’s Gourmet Tinapa and Tuyo.

According to Mater, Nora sent her photos of the products last Nov. 30. “Naloka ako talaga, as in, nag-hyperventilate ako,” she said. This was because she was also selling something similar.

“Alam ni Mommy ito, alam niya ito na meron ako nito. So, hindi ko alam kung bakit napagdesisyunan nila na gumawa ng sarili nilang brand,” Matet said.

But she didn’t react that time as Nora’s products are yet to be released publicly.

“Iniyak ko lang, tinawagan ko ang ate ko (Lotlot de Leon), tinawagan ko ang kuya ko (Ian de Leon). Pero yun nga, hindi ko para i-post pa dun kasi family matter nga siya,” she said. “Tsaka hindi pa naman inilabas ni Mommy. Baka mapaisip din naman si Mommy na, ‘Wag, wag ko namang gawin sa anak ko yan,’ di ba?”

However, on Dec. 3, her husband saw a post about Nora’s products.

“How do I feel about it? I feel very sad. I feel betrayed. Para akong trinaydor. Para akong... grabe, ampon na



ampon yung pakiramdam ko ngayon mga tol,” she told her viewers.

“Ang lakas makaampon nung ginawa nila. Ang lakas makaampon, damang-dama ko pagkaampon ko.”

She pointed out: “Walang gagawa ng ganito sa anak nila. So, ibig sabihin nito, hindi talaga ako tinatratong anak. Hindi niya gagawin ito kung mahal niya kami, ngayon ko lang na-realize.”

Meanwhile, in an Instagram video, Matet reiterated: “I will clear this out for the blind ones, it’s not about the products, may Neri’s Gourmet Tuyo naman, yung kay Neri (Naig), di ba masarap din yun? Di naman nagalit si Neri sa akin e. Pwede naman yun. Ano ba yun? Pwede. Kaso hindi mo gagawin sa sarili mong anak na alam mong may ganung produkto na hindi ka nagsabi, na tinago niyo habang binubuo niyo. You don’t. Bakit nila tinago? Ilalabas ko yung mga screenshot ng mga chat namin ni Mommy para makita niyo na alam niyang may ganun ako at wala siyang paki kasi marami naman daw akong taping.”

“Guys, wala na akong taping kaya nga nag titinda na lang,” she added.

Filipino diplomat elected as top Permanent Court of Arbitration official

MANILA, Philippines – A veteran Filipino diplomat, Philippine Ambassador to the Hague Eduardo Malaya, is set to lead the administrative council of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) as its new president.

The PCA is the world's oldest tribunal dedicated to resolving international disputes through peaceful means. From 2013 to 2016, it also served as the registry or venue of the proceedings in the Philippines' case against China

over the South China Sea.

Malaya, who will hold the position from 2023 to 2024, will be the first Filipino to serve in this role since the PCA was formed in 1899.

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines made the announcement on Thursday, December 29, as it expressed "pride and happiness" in Malaya's election.



The opposition senator makes this appeal ahead of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s state visit to China in January 2023

"The IBP considers this as an opportunity to uphold its commitment to advance all interests in the preservation of the rule of law. In this regard, the IBP strives to safeguard the ideals of achieving justice and peace through law," the group said.

After his election last December 15, Malaya said he looked

forward to serving at the PCA as it prepares to mark its 125th anniversary in 2024, "a time for reflection as to how it can remain dynamic and relevant in our troubled world."

The latest role is a milestone for Malaya, who was among key officials who pushed for the Philippines' accession to the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes – a move that later paved the way for the country's membership in the

PCA.

Malaya's moves later proved fruitful as the Philippines filed its historic case against China at the PCA in the Hague in 2013. Years later, in 2016, the Philippines went on to win its landmark case against the regional giant, although China continues to reject the ruling.

"With us as a member already, of course, the secretariat of the PCA facilitated the assumption of and conduct of the case. So, really, international law can work! Not only for countries but also for people," Malaya said.

Kat Alano cries: 'Evil wins'



Kat Alano flooded her social media account with cryptic posts recently.

On Instagram, Kat uploaded a video of her bursting into tears.

Then she tweeted: "I feel sick. This is so wrong. It's all wrong. Bahala na kayo Pilipinas. You deserve what you asked for. Sana hindi mangyari sa inyo to. It's a nightmare that keeps going. Evil wins."

She also wrote on Twitter how she can't stop crying because she felt "broken and defeated."

"Ayaw ko na talaga."

Kat's post came after "It's Showtime" host and comedian Ferdinand "Vhong" Navarro posted P1 million bail set by the court and was released from the Taguig City Jail Male Dormitory.

For quite some time, Kat has been vocal about her rape allegations.

It was in 2014 when she first revealed her rape story via Mo Twister's radio show "Good Times."

According to her, it happened when she was 19.

She didn't identify her rapist, relating simply he is a public figure and that they had met because of work.

Years after the said interview, Kat revealed she was raped by someone whose name "#rhymeswithwrong."

Star Magic to produce a movie in Canada this year

TORONTO - Star Magic, the training school for the talents of ABS-CBN is unmatched in the Philippine world of entertainment.

In 2020, it started doing online workshops in Canada during the pandemic.

Now Star Magic and AMP Studios Canada are linking up to help aspiring Filipino-Canadian artists to expand their skills in performing arts.

Director Rahyan Carlos is heading the training of the official partnership with AMP Studio Canada headed by executives Rechelle Everden and Chalen Lazerna.

At the presscon last December 14, director Rahyan shared that the artists from Canada will also get the same training from artists in the Philippines. "Yung binibigay namin na training sa Canada is what we're giving our artists in Star Magic. So they will experience an intensive training that we're doing with our own actors in ABS-CBN," Rahyan shared. Carlos said they use the Chubbuck Technique in training.



From left: Emcee PJ Gutierrez, Ed Capulong (Star Magic Head of Finance and Operations), Chalen Lazerna and Rechelle Everdeen (AMP Studios Canada) Director Rahyan Carlos (Star Magic Head of Training Department), Liza Dino-Seguerra, Ice Segueria and Julie Anne Reyes (Star Magic Voice Coach)

Asked how they can use their training, Capulong gave the students something to look forward to.

"We are actually making a movie in Canada in 2023," said Capulong.

Just like any performing arts school, a recital at the end of the program was held last December 16 at the Toronto Pavilion.

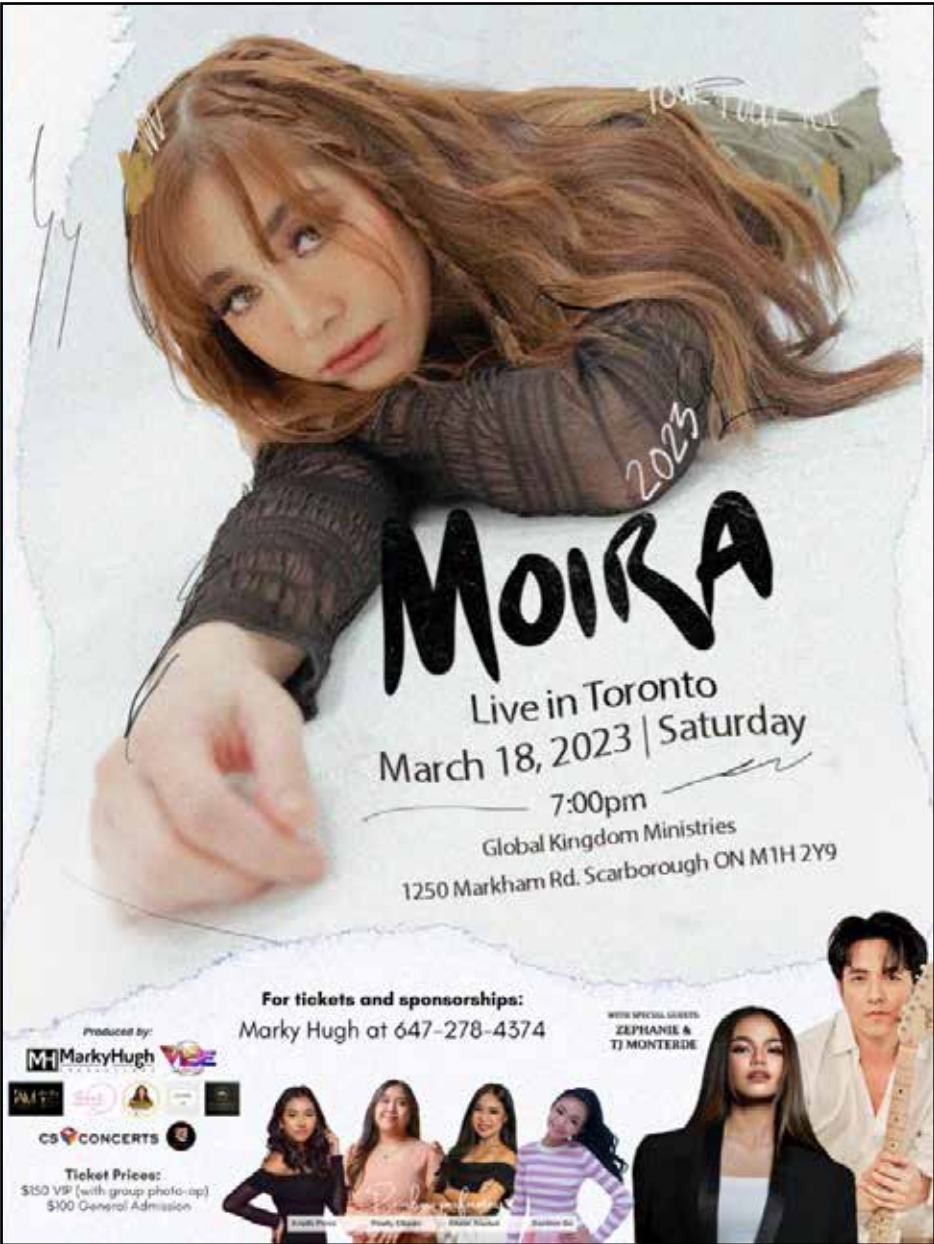
Award-winning artists Ice Segueria had a special performance during the recital while his

partner, Liza Diño-Seguerra did a monologue. "Thank you so much for supporting this initiative of Star Magic to globalize the kind of training that we can offer not just for our local film industry but also for Filipinos all over the world," Liza shared.

The partnership between AMP Studios Canada and Star Magic Workshop aims to train and discover talents to help them become world-class artists in their own fields of expertise.



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Life's brighter under the sun



Joey de Leon recalls walking out of the program due to latecomers: ‘Pinasara ko yung show’

It happened a long time ago but comedian Joey de Leon remembered how he stopped and closed a weekly TV program due to late comers several years ago.

De Leon made the revelation during the grand media conference for the 2022 Metro Manila Film Festival movie “My Teacher” held at the Winford Hotel in Manila.

“Yung ibang artista nag-aaway dahil late yung isa.. Wala sa akin yang mga kuwento na yan. Ako matindi.

Pag may nale-late, nilalayan ko yung show. Pinapasara ko,” said De Leon.

He continued: “Noong araw may show ako yung T.O.D.A.S. sa Channel 13. Bakit natigil yun? Dahil sa akin. Nagalit ako dahil na-late yung ibang cast. Sabi ko tigilan na natin ito. So pinatigil ko yung show. Hindi naman nila magawa na wala ako.”

De Leon advised his fellow stars to inform the office or anyone on the set if they would be coming late.

“Ang importante ngayon pag-na-late ka, lalo na ngayon may cellphone naman, tatawag ka lang. Ma-le-late ako. “Kasi yung ibang artista sinungaling. Nasaan ka na? Pagtinanong mo nandito na ako sa EDSA. Pero actually nasa Bulacan pa yun.



“Tutao ito. Seryoso ako. So tatawag ka lang.

“Yung nangyari kasi noon sa T.O.D.A.S., may nakarating sa akin, nag-date lang pala ‘yung iba. E hindi tumawag. Wala pang cellphone nun. Puwede naman sila tumawag sa opisina. Ako kasi ang aga ko lagi sa set,” said De Leon.

De Leon however said he did not encounter any problems on the sets of “Iskul Bukol” and “Eat Bulaga.”

“So ayun, pinasara ko. Sabi ko, ‘tama na, tigilan na natin ito. Wala ng taping next week,” he added.

Asked what he wanted to do in life now that he’s 76, De Leon said: “Wala na akong gusto pang mangyari sa career ko. Mas gusto ko ng makilala ako ngayon bilang writer kesa artista.”



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No cotillion? It’s ok

A cotillion is an “elaborate dance with frequent changing of partners carried out under the leadership of one couple at formal balls.” I attended the debut of Katelyn Mohan and did not miss the cotillion. If you have time to rehearse the cotillion, that’s fine. If not, that’s fine too. The logistics involved for rehearsing the cotillion are time consuming for everyone from the participants to the parents who have

to drive them to the rehearsal location, to each one trying to make the time to make themselves available to feeding them and more. However, debuts include the 18 roses and 18 candles in the program. More elaborate ones now add 18 wishes and 18 treasures. Who know what else will be added in the future.? Instead, the other parts of the program was taken by some of Katelyn’s friends performing a dance and song number. After that, it was dancing for the rest of the evening for everyone.

Melissa Ventocilla had her 20th birthday last December 16. Well, she couldn’t celebrate her 18th because it fell on the year of the pandemic. Her party only had the traditional 18 wishes. For variety, guests had to take as many selfies with her, with everyone, with the food for a prize. It was a different and novel idea. The evening also involved games. On a non-birthday celebration, the Filipino Centre Toronto held their San-ib Saya Christmas party last December

16. Corie Coutts donated 50 bags of rice for attendees and Agnes Miranda sponsored the event also with gift bags for everyone. Kumukuti-kutitap’s October 4 event was so successful they held another one last December 4 with more retailers and artisan food vendors. Bicol Canada launched their initiative “Tabang Bicol” which literally translates to “Aid Bicol” wherein they will launch an aid drive, to raise either goods or cash, whenever a natural disaster occurs in the areas of Bicol. FV Foods sponsored a Christmas day thanksgiving mass at Canadian Martyrs church. Attendees were asked to bring their kids. Gifts for kids were given. Refreshments were provided by FV foods after the mass.

Jeric Raval tells media: ‘Kasalanan ang mambabae’

Action star Jeric Raval has revealed he stopped being a womanizer because it’s a sin. During the story conference of his upcoming movie “Lanao,” Jeric admitted her got serious with many women in showbiz and non-showbiz. “Kasalanan ang mambabae. Na-realize ko na hindi pala tama ang mambabae. Nauubos lang kasi yung panahon na dapat sana ay sa family at anak mo. Narealize ko yan mga year 2004. “Lahat naman in good terms ako sa mga ex ko. Magkakai-bigan naman lahat sila. Meron taga-showbiz meron naman hindi.

“Yung huli magka-ka-edad. Sabay-sabay kasi nanganak eh. Alam naman ng lahat yun eh. Dati tinatago ko yun eh dahil nahihiya ako noong araw. “So ngayon malaki na yung mga bata. Twenty-two na sila pare-pareho. Yung 22 ko lima. “Imagine paano ka natawid lahat yun sa hirap ng buhay kaya until now hindi ako humihinto. I mean hindi ako humihinto sa buhay. “Kailangan good provider. Huminto na ako sa pambabae. Semi-retired na ako (sa pambababae). Patingin-tingin na



lang ako,” said Jeric. Jeric, 47, is the father of Vivamax star AJ Raval. Aster Amoyo, former talent manager of Jeric, said that the hunk action star has 18 children from different women. When asked if he got serious with only four women, Jeric simply laughed.

Vhong Navarro makes up for lost time with kids

Actress Bianca Lapus has shared that her former partner Vhong Navarro is wasting no time in spending time with their two children. Bianca tweeted: “Been on hiatus , been very busy attending to personal / family matters. And I decided to just rest my social media first. Medyo checking ako now. Thank you all for your prayers and support. My son is very happy nagbabawi Ng oras ang mag aama.” Recall that A Taguig court has granted bail to detained “It’s Showtime” host and comedian who is accused of raping model Deniece Cornejo in 2014.



Bianca Lapus and Vhong Navarro (2nd from right) with their kids

Meanwhile, Vhong’s camp reiterated that they’re ready for his rape trial that will start in February. Bianca has stood by Vhong. She wrote: “Standing by this GOOD MAN. Not perfect but definitely a good kind hearted man. Otherwise it won’t be easy for me to become friends and co parent with him. The truth will prevail. Walang iwanan.” Vhong and Bianca tied the knot in 1998 and had their marriage annulled in 2008. In November 2019, Vhong exchanged “I dos” with her girlfriend of more than 10 years, Tanya Bautista.

Dina Bonnevie only talks smart

Perhaps to get Dina Bonnevie to sit down and converse with you, you definitely have to be like her: a good conversationalist. It is a known fact this side of the world that Dina is one of the few actresses who’s both smart and articulate. In fact, it is an exaggeration to say that guesting with her on a talk show maybe can be an intimidating experience. Dina has this “dating” that makes you feel you weren’t born with as much grey matter as she was. In fairness though to her, Dina can also share her thoughts so much. Politics for a topic? I doubt if Dina has ever been passionately interested in dwelling on it. Yes, she may have married a politician (former Ilocos Sur Governor JV Savellano) but that’s just about it. Never have the netizens chanced upon a single entry posted by Dina on social media on the country’s political or social goings-on. It doesn’t make her “un-woke” or “walang pakialam” though. It is simply not her cup of tea. Same thing with her seeming reluctance to engage in a huddle with Pauleen Luna, her “predecessor” in Vic Sotto’s colorful lovelife. Matter-of-factly, Dina finds it awkward to be chewing the fat with her ex-husband’s present, “Ano naman ang pag-uusapan namin ni Pauleen, si Vic?” What Dina is actually driving at is that the TV host-comedian is part of her youthful past long before relegated to her archives of sorts, no point of digging up the files. It’s not Vic that Dina and Pauleen can solely talk about. It can be about motherhood or how to maintain longevity in the business or how to remain beautiful in their respective husbands’ eyes. Oh, there can be too many talk points for a glib talker like Dina you wouldn’t want to be caught with your pants down.



OGIE DIAZ LOSES MONEY

Multi-hyphenate Ogie Diaz got wind that cager Terrence Romeo’s estranged wife Beatrice Pia White is no longer behind bars. To refresh our readers’ memory, Ogie is running after Pia who owes him millions of pesos from a botched business transaction last year. Ogie, however, is resigned to the fact there’s no way Pia will return the money. Ogie has set up Kasuso Foundation which is for the benefit of breast cancer patients who cannot afford to spend on their check-ups, medications, etc. No longer detained, Pia — say Ogie’s sources — is allegedly back in her MO (modus operandi). If proven true, Pia will likely relive her preso days.



Sylvia Sanchez on Zanjoe Marudo: ‘Gustung-gusto ko siya’

Sylvia Sanchez fully supports the blossoming romance between her daughter Ria Atayde and Zanjoe Marudo. Alora asked Sylvia: “Naughty or nice ba sa relationship si Ria?” Sylvia answered: “Nice siya. Kasi ibinigay niya lahat, sinusuko lahat... Sinasabihan ko siya talaga: ‘Magtira ka para sa sarili mo.’ Ayun lagi, kasi sabi ko sa kanya, ‘Hindi ka kasing tapang ko...’ Si Ria yung umiiyak, lumalaban man pero ganun, iba siya sa relationship niya. Mas matapang ako.” Alora then asked: “Feeling mo ba, Tita, may nagbago sa dati at sa ngayon sa mga relationship ni Ria?” Sylvia teased: “Sino ba?” Alora then quipped: “Makatanong si Tita, parang (hindi pinu-post), e, sa iyo nga galing.” So turning serious, Sylvia said: “Ay, oo, ang laki ng pinagbago. Ang laki ng kaibahan.” “Masaya ako, saka napaka-respectful ni ano,” she teased. Then she added: “Kaya ko pinu-post kasi gusto ko (siya)... Mabait si Z, marespetong bata and gustung-gusto ko siya.” Recall that a few months ago, Sylvia revealed the two are dating. Later, she uploaded photos of the actor bonding with their family. Last November, Ria and Zanjoe flew to Japan along with some friends.



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FCT SANIB-SAYA 2022



Billy Crawford to Korina: 'I almost gave up'

BILLY Crawford is a certified international star. As grand international champion of Dancing With The Stars in France, one of the most watched TV shows in Europe, Billy didn't think he would make it.

"Halos nagkabali bali ang buto ko, nagpaturok ako ng kung anu-ano sa sakit ng buong katawan ko, halos di na ako makatayo minsan," says Billy about his training and practice before the championship.

How did he win it? Does he have a secret agimat? Well, you'll have to watch Korina Interviews this Sunday, 5:00 p.m., on NET 25 to find out.

Hosted by multi award-winning broadcast journalist Korina Sanchez Roxas, Korina Interviews is decidedly one of the most talked about and polished interview shows TV has produced in years.

"We try to just keep it as real as possible. Like two friends talking over drinks. No pretensions. Equal kami. It works. Fun, connected, and totoo. Kaya siguro ang tao, kumakapit," says Korina.

Billy talks about working at the age of 3; leaving for America; working as a pizza delivery boy; failing and rising to stardom in Europe and leaving it all behind to return to the Philippines. And then Europe embraced him again on Dancing With The Stars.

"What a life. Billy is more than just this moment," Korina says after tearing-up with Billy's amazing life story.



1. Filipino Centre, Toronto's Sanib Saya founders Cherry di Gregorio, Nitz Rejdik, Judith Gonzales, Jackie Cristini, Jeanette Rosales and Steve Pagao
2. Winterra and mom Joy D'Aoust
3. FCT Painters Choir
4. JDL Mississauga singing group Triple Act
5. Councillor Jamaal Myers (far right) witnesses Feliza Palumbarit (3rd from left) donate to FCT.

Heaven Peralejo shows talent in 'Nanahimik Ang Gabi'

Proud at masaya ang Kapamilya star na si Heaven Peralejo sa kaniyang naging performance sa pelikulang Nanahimik Ang Gabi kasama ang mga aktor na sina Mon Confiado at Ian Veneracion.

Ang Nanahimik Ang Gabi ay isa sa mga pelikulang kalahok sa 2022 Metro Manila Film Festival. Ito rin ang first ever movie ni Heaven sa MMFF.

Ayon sa Kapamilya leading lady, hindi niya na-imagine na level up ang kaniyang



magiging performance sa MMFF movie nang una niyang masilip ang teaser sa social media.

"First time ko po nakita ang sarili ko na ganun, para akong ah, "Si Heaven ba talaga 'yan?' Parang I didn't see myself doing it, parang I gave my all in this film and the one that you'll see in this film is another Heaven, so I am very excited for you to watch the whole film," ani Kapamilya star.

JUBILEE AWARDS

Marking the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne, Filipino-Canadians were awarded the "Platinum Jubilee Award of Queen Elizabeth II" in 2022. In photo are awardees Mel Galeon of FV Foods and community leader Philip Beloso



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LM confidential

Alex Gonzaga has disturbed a beehive opening up about her being painted as “the bad guy” on a podcast.

Note that she did so relating a story about her being “traumatized” with a certain actress supposedly doing the very thing to her back when she was just a showbiz newbie.

“May mga tao na who did you wrong or who traumatized you and then you wouldn’t even talk about it. Parang you would just let it be. And then pag sila na yung nagkwento, sila pa yung

Netizens are pouncing on Alex Gonzaga, here’s why

mabait, ikaw pa yung masama na parang ibang iba na yung kwen-to,” she shared.

Inadvertently, it triggered mixed reaction.

While there were some who perfectly understood where she is coming from, there were also those seemingly only too eager to lecture her about it.

Some of the comments:

“Growing up

means stopping this ‘pa-victim mentality.’

“Try to improve yourself.”

“I’ve been there, dahil sa pagka prangka ko lagi ako na misinterpret.”

“You’re way too comfortable and entitled.”

“Don’t let them affect you. We love you Alex!”

“Ang magandang sagot lng tla sa knila is SILENCE, bahala na si Lord. hindi deserve ng energy natin yung mga ganung tao.”



“At times you’ll learn important lessons in life in the most unpleasant way.”

“Ilugar mo kasi ang ugali mo.”

The issue blew up on Twitter Friday, with the hashtag #Team Dina making it to the trending topic list.

Apparently, some people believed Alex was taking a dig at Dina Bonnevie.

Supposedly, it was the awarded actress who scolded the young Alex for always coming in late for work.

Dina is still silent on the issue as of writing.



1. Ava Julianne Conchada is carried by grandpa Ed Tubale at her baby dedication; 2. The family of Ava with the grandparents pose for a picture; 3. Singer Maria Panaligan performs at the occasion.



Karla Estrada reveals to Korina: ‘I will get married again!’



Korina Sanchez-Roxas and Karla Estrada

Queen Mother is what she is called. Karla Estrada rose from near poverty in Tacloban and stowed away on a boat to Manila just to catch a dream.

Luckless in love, she is blessed with well-mannered, wonderful, and successful children, including superstar Daniel Padilla of course, all as a single parent.

But Karla admits to Korina, on the latest episode of NET25’s Korina Interviews, “Lahat ng babae nangangarap magsuot ng traje de boda... pwede pa rin naman ako humabol doon,” says the actress-turned politician about her current love. “Yes, I’m in love.”

Usapang magkaibigan in this chit-chat was inside a beauty salon between Karla Estrada and Korina Sanchez-Roxas on Korina Interviews.

Melissa Ventocilla’s 20th Birthday



Kylie Padilla welcomes 2023 with rumored new love

Over a year after her breakup with Aljur Abrenica, Kylie Padilla welcomed the New Year in Thailand with a mystery man rumored to be her new boyfriend.

For the past two days, Kylie shared videos on her Instagram Stories and feeds of her sojourn in Thailand. Most of the videos featured her visiting temples and scenic locations. Many internet users, however, noticed that in some of her videos there is a man whose limbs are inked with tattoos but whose face is never seen. “Wandering with another fellow wanderer,” she wrote on her video touring the town of Kanchanaburi by train. In another post, Kylie shared a video of her visiting a temple in Thailand. “All there is, is gratitude. Paalam, 2022,” she wrote.

Aljur and Kylie broke up in 2021. Kylie’s dad, Robin Padilla, revealed that the reason of the split was an alleged third party. Aljur was linked to actress AJ Raval, but he denied that the actress was the reason of the breakup. Aljur had admitted that he and the VivaMax star were in a “getting to know each other” stage. The actor had recently said that he was open to reunite with Kylie.

Kylie and Aljur were married in 2018. They have two sons, Alas and Axl.

Dimples still Careful

Dimples Romana has an interesting story when she recently attended the premiere night of My Father, Myself in which she’s part of the cast. The movie, which is an entry to the ongoing 48th Metro Manila Film Festival is produced by 3:16 Media Network and Mentorque Productions and is under the helm of award-winning director Joel Lamangan.

According to Dimples, she felt uneasy and nervous when she was at the venue. It was her first time attending a grand showbiz event once again where there are lots of people. After the red carpet, she apologized to everybody for being a bit evasive and for wearing a face mask since she is still being careful not to contract COVID-19.

“It’s still different when you’re cautious. That’s why I put on my mask as much as possible. While watching the movie, I still had it on,” she added.

“I really hope that the viewing public will support our offering!” Dimples concluded.



FV Foods’ Mel Galeon Christmas Day 2022 Mass



FV Foods’ Mel Galeon sponsored a Christmas day mass. He is joined by realtor Gemma Pascual, employees and kids.



Rafael Nebres of Action Honda receives Lifetime Service Award

1. Sylvia is a picture of happiness as husband Rafael Nebres, manager of Action Honda receives the Lifetime Service Award from Bicol Canada Community Association. Joining them are BCCA president Earl Dacara (FAR LEFT) and Consul general Orontes Castro (FAR RIGHT). 2. BCCA launches Tabang Bicol, a program to assist Bicol in times of need. 3. Sylvia (2ND FROM RIGHT) and Rafael Nebres (FAR RIGHT) poses with friends at the BCCA Christmas dinner. 4. From left, Mike Cruz, BCCA president ear Dacara, Consul General Orontes Castro and Fr. Sherwin Holandez at the Bicol Christmas dinner.

Jake Cuenca gives condition in doing frontal nude scenes



Award-winning actor Jake Cuenca revealed that he’s will do frontal nude scenes provided that the movie is a big project that will go to Hollywood or other prestigious film festivals abroad.

During a solo presscon for the upcoming movie “My Father, Myself,” Jake also said that he’s an actor without limitations.

“If it’s a regular movie lang, no. Kung hindi naman makakarating tayo roon sa Hollywood, Cannes or Venice, then I won’t do it.

“Ako, even if I haven’t done any frontal scenes, I have shown a lot. I’ll

save that for the big one. I’ll save that for the big movie,” said Jake.

Asked what he learned from his role as gay father, Jake said: “It’s hard to suppress your true self.”

Jake, 34, said that he’s not expecting to bring home the MMFF best actor trophy this year.

“To be honest, I’m not expecting kasi maraming beses na akong nalagay sa position na akala ko mananalo tapos hindi naman ako nanalo. Isang taon ako na-depress noon.

“Noong pinuri ako ni Direk Joel Lamangan noong unang press conference, para na akong nanalo nun. Hindi man ako manalo sa awards night, yun na lang ang panghahawakan ko, yung papuri ninyo,” he said.

Asked if he would be depressed if he would not win, Jake said: “Hindi na. Matapos ang mga pinagdaanan natin, medyo tumapang din tayo because of the pandemic.”

Jake said that he is not competing with anyone in the filmfest, adding that the movie industry needs the help of moviegoers. “Kailangan natin buhayin muli ang movie industry (we need to revive the movie industry), so let’s support all the films in the Metro Manila Film Festival,” he said. “But in the real world, I hope this movie makes money. And I’m

“It’s hard to suppress your true self.”

really proud of ‘My Father, Myself.’ But if the other movies will make money, we should be proud of that. But I hope they can also catch our movie.” Jake also said that moviegoers will be surprised at his daring scene with Sean.

“I think there are factors kung bakit ito binigyan ng R-18 rating. Una is yung tema ng pelikula and pangalawa yung eksena namin ni Sean (De Guzman) pero isa lang naman yun na intense. Hindi talaga kami nag-hold back ni Sean. Akala ko nga makakapasa ito ng R-16 because may ibang mga pelikula na mas grabe pa. At kung tatanggalin naman yung eksena na yun baka wala na yung pelikula,” he said. “Magugulat kayo sa ginawa namin.”



Tradition

Vins Sichantha celebrates his birthday with his tradition: Dinner at Mandarin with the family & a Black Forest cake. Joining him is wife Heidi and children Liam, Felix, Preston.



Fortune and fame aside, this simple thing would make Vice Ganda truly happy

In spite of being on top of his game, comedian-TV host Vice Ganda admitted that he still continues to work hard for things he doesn’t have, something that, at this point, has to do with time.

“I’m in constant need of more time. If I could only ask God to add more hours to a day, more days to a week, more weeks to a month, more months to a year, I’d definitely do it,” Vice told a group of writers over lunch recently.

“People will probably react to this article and ask, ‘You’ve already been given so much in life, but you’re still unhappy?’ I tell you, not everything is about fame and fortune. Sometimes, the simplest things are valued, like time—time to be silent, time to just be myself, time to talk to myself and, most of all, time to be unfunny,” the comedian pointed out.

He said that because of his work, people expect him to be funny all the time. “I don’t always allow this. Sometimes, even though I know people will get disappointed, I become unfunny just so I’d get my personal space,” he pointed out.

Source of happiness

Vice was also quick to point out that there are a lot of things that make him happy, too.

“My family makes me happy, that’s a given, but doing ‘It’s Showtime!’ is also my source of joy. Its set is my safest place, aside from my actual house. Even though I would quarrel with the staff, sometimes—this is normal because ours is a live show and I’m head of creatives—I would automatically feel happy when I’m already holding the mic and talking with people.”



GOLDEN VOICES

Congratulations to Philip Beloso for the successful Christmas Dinner Concert at Republika. Audience were treated to amazing performances by Alyssa Datu, Shaira Garrido, Martha Joy and Maria Panaligan. Showing support is Filipino-Canadian MP Rechie Valdez (3RD FROM RIGHT)

Kylie Verzosa reaps the fruits of her hard work

Kylie succeeded the challenging start of an acting career after winning the Miss International 2016 title

The year 2022 is a landmark year for beauty-queen-turned-actress Kylie Verzosa. Not only was she named a calendar girl for a liquor brand — an elusive feat for celebrities — she also had her first acting recognition this year, a Best Actress from DIAFA Awards.

“I feel so grateful, hindi ko ine-expect na ito yung mangyayari sa akin this year,” Verzosa said at her Tanduay 2022 Calendar Girl launch, just a few days after receiving her acting award in Dubai.

“You know what they say — whatever you plant, you reap the fruits of your labor. I’m just so grateful. I’m really so overwhelmed,” she added.

Verzosa won for her role in the sensual thriller “The Housemaid.” A local adaptation of the 2010 Korean movie of the same title, Verzosa played Daisy, the innocent house help who got in trouble after her boss seduced her.

It was her first leading role in a movie after playing supporting characters.

In her acceptance speech, the 30-year-old actress recalled how it was only her dream to receive an acting award when she started her career in show business four years ago. She hopes that her award can be an inspiration and reminder for other women to dream big.

“I want to remind all young girls and all young women out there, to keep on dreaming, to never give up on their dreams and don’t let anyone tell you that you don’t deserve it or that you started late or that you are not good enough, not pretty enough or not smart enough, because you are.”

Days after her winning moment and Verzosa maintained that it was challenging to start an acting career after winning the Miss International 2016 title.

“Sobrang nagpapasalamat ako kasi mahirap pasukan ang industriya na you didn’t really start in. So coming to acting as a beauty queen, there’s so many stereotype and mahirap kasi iba talaga yung discipline, practice.”

It would take her a few years and a few more roles before finally achieving the feat she used to only dream of.

“Finally all my hard work has paid off and finally na acknowledge na ako ng isang award-giving body na nasa Dubai in a nos.”

And as if her recent win wasn’t enough, Verzosa was also launched as a calendar girl, which she called “another dream come true.”

“It feels so good, so great, I feel like it’s another dream come true

of mine.”

Verzosa shared how from the moment Viva — her management company — big boss Vic del Rosario told her of her endorsement, she already started preparing.

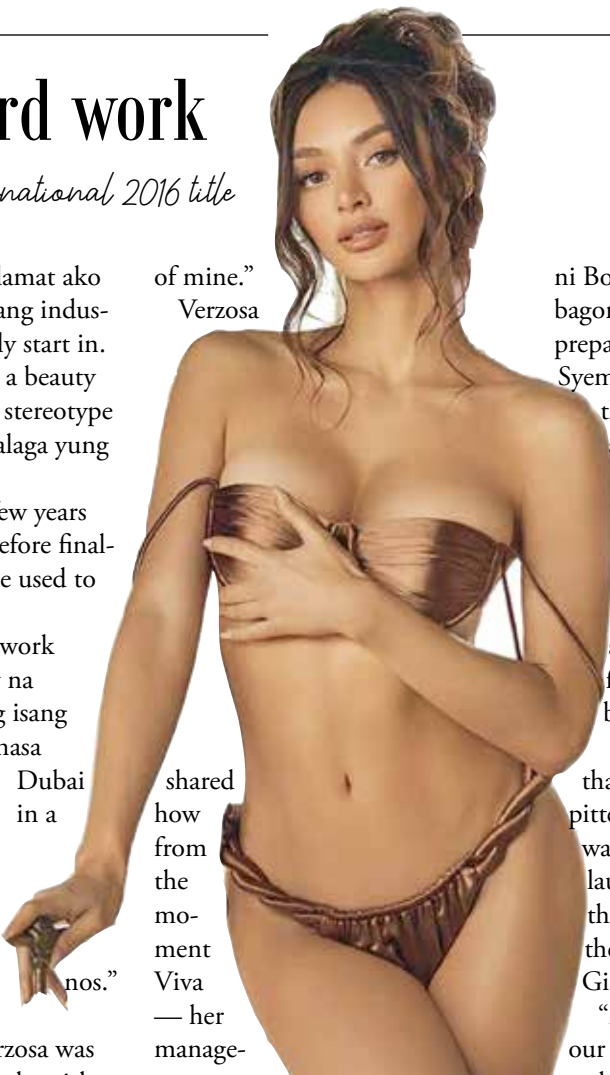
“Umiyak ako nung sinabi

ni Boss Vic sa akin na ako ang bagong calendar girl. I really prepared so much for this shoot. Syempre gusto natin na we’re in the best shape so I really did a lot of cardio and became even more strict with my diet.”

She said she wanted to exude fun and confident vibes in her layouts and was satisfied when she saw her final photos looking every bit dreamy and aspirational.

Finally, Verzosa pleaded that calendar girls be not be pitted against each other. This was after he was asked at her launch how she felt following the footsteps of Bea Alonzo, the 2021 Tanduay Calendar Girl.

“Each one of us is different in our own ways, that’s why there’s a calendar girl each year. Sana makita nyo kung sino yung babae nasa harap nyo for who they are, na walang comparison,” Verzosa ended.



Pinoys have mixed emotions to Song Joong Ki’s new girl

The news confirming that South Korean actor Song Joong Ki is dating someone earned mixed reactions from Filipinos on social media.

The actor’s agency High Zium Studio expressed hopes that the public will welcome the “Reborn Rich” star’s relationship with former actress Katy Louise Saunders.

Despite hopes that there might be a reunion between Joong Ki and his former wife Song Hye Kyo, Filipino fans said that they are happy for their idol. Some also asked the public to move on.

“Mixed emotions. Nakakamiss lang talaga yung Song-Song. But still happy for you Joong-ki!,” a Facebook user said.

“We need to move on. Katatapos lang ng pasko eto agad ang laman ng balita. Mahirap but we need to accept na lang,” an online user

commented.

“He deserves to be happy... Though my songsong heart hurt,” a Twitter user said.

“Awwwww. Happy for you my dearest Song Joong Ki. You deserve to be happy in love.”

Ouchy, a bit,” a social media user commented.

“No more Song-Song Couple. Still happy for them in their separate lives,” an online user said.

“Happy New Year!!! May pila na naman pong natapos,”

a Facebook user jokingly wrote.

“Ay di naman masyadong masakit. Mapapashot puno na lang. Happy for my Big Boss,” an online user wrote, referring to Joong Ki.

Katy Louise Saunders’ IMDB profile stated that she was born in London in July 1984, and was known for appearing in “The Lizzie McGuire Movie” in 2003, “Los Borgia” in 2006, and “Third Person” in 2013.

“She’s of English and Colombian descent. She moved to Rome, Italy, when she was a child,” according to IMDB.

Song Joong-ki is 37 years old while Saunders is 38.

After these reports were published, Korean netizens have commented about Song Joong-ki’s new relationship and majority of them are opposed.



Why Nadine Lustre ditched James Reid’s music label

Nadine Lustre is no longer with Careless, ex-boyfriend James Reid’s music label.

No, it has nothing to do with Liza Soberano as alleged.

In an interview with Rico Robles on DWRX that streamed on YouTube recently, Nadine explained she left the label simply because “the vision isn’t really aligned anymore.”

“I kind of want to do my own thing. They’re doing their own thing (and) iba na rin yung gusto kong gawin. The things I want to do and the things they want to do are very different things already.”

Nadine released one album for the label



titled “Wildest Dreams” two years ago.

And based on the DWRX interview, she is seemingly not happy with it.

She said, ‘Every time I would listen to my previous album it makes me feel like ‘parang sayang.’ I was nanghihinayang.”

Nadine didn’t elaborate.

For now, she’d rather not do anything related to music.

“I want to focus on business and acting for now but I’m not closing my doors on music. I don’t have anything planned as yet but hopefully next year. Ang hirap ng sabay sabay.”

Katelyn Mohan’s 18th Birthday



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Sunshine Dizon: 'I want to free myself from the stigma'

Actress Sunshine Dizon was recently hospitalized. And while there, she has come to some significant realizations.

She wrote: “Some people will love you enough to move mountains just to be with you, and some will have lame excuses because you are not and will never be their priority.”

“Im turning 40 next year i have so many regrets but, i don't know how to go back to where i used to be, this not about work this about life altering decisions,” she added. “Laying in a hospital bed alone at 3am, i ask my self was it all really worth it? Im may never now the answers but i pray to god that i can let go of all my baggages, hurt and guilt. Finally find someone who will sleep be-



side me in this small hospital bed till i fall asleep. #mytwocents.”

In another pot, being alone and feeling overwhelmed, Sunshine went on to admit what she has been going through lately.

Sunshine said that she was diagnosed with PTSD, depression, and panic attacks.

“And thats just skimming the surface. Im on xanor, jovia, revotril for emergencies and stilnox,” she said. “You may ask why now? Only because i want to free myself from the stigma. There's nothing wrong to ask for help. I know it's very hard to get stuck in your head. But we can do it, baby steps. One day at a time.”

Karla Estrada reacts to her family being compared to that of Donny Pangilinan’s

Karla didn't like it that a fan took to social media to compare her family to that of actor Donny Pangilinan's in an effort to disparage her son Daniel Padilla.

The post read:

“Si DJ, cheater. si Donny, hindi. yung nanay ni DJ, problematic. yung nanay ni Donny, hindi. si DJ, chaotic yung fam. si Donny, complete & happy family. gusto niyo talaga mag-compare? okay.”

Karla reposted it on Twitter, replying: “Huh? Saan galing ang mega judgment na ito? Dito ka ba naninirahan sa pamamayhay ko? at Akala mo alam mo lahat?!? Mag hunos Dili ka huy. Maka problematic at chaotic ito?? hala inday pagtarong diha! Wag manda-

may ng pamilya panget yun.”

In another post, Karla reiterated,

“Lahat ng family Ay broken kapag Hindi nag kakasundo. Hindi lamang dahil Hi-walay ang magulang. Importante Ay mag palaki ang mga anak na Hindi bastos At mapagkumbaba.””

ECONOMY from p1

said, referring to oil and gas in the resource-rich but disputed West Philippine Sea.

The President cited the long-standing maritime dispute between Manila and Beijing in the South China Sea as the “roadblock” in proceeding with negotiations.

“What really happened there is what? Because China claims it (West Philippine Sea) as theirs, but it’s actually ours,” Mr. Marcos noted.

Beijing has sweeping claims in the South China Sea. In July 2016, however, the United Nations invalidated China’s claims to nearly the entire South China Sea.

China, which did not take part in the arbitration, does not recognize the ruling.

Resumption of talks

In November 2018, the Philippines and China signed a memorandum of understanding on joint oil and gas development in the West Philippine Sea, but President Marcos said the negotiations with China had reached an impasse because the Asian superpower wanted its own terms to be followed.

According to the President, the Philippines has been insisting that “the West Philippine Sea is ours and our law should be followed. But the Chinese are saying, ‘no that is ours, that is why we have to follow Chinese [laws].”

He admitted that the resources in the West Philippine Sea were a “big thing” for the Philippines “so we

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really need to fight for it and benefit if there is really oil there.”

In 2019, then President Rodrigo Duterte had claimed that Chinese President Xi Jinping had offered the Philippines a controlling stake in a proposed joint energy venture in the West Philippine Sea if it would set aside an international arbitral ruling award that went against China.

But his foreign secretary, Teodoro Locsin Jr., refuted this, saying China gave no such locsion to the proposed joint exploration.

Locsin said the memorandum of understanding he signed with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi “applies only in disputed areas, not in areas everyone, including China, admits belongs to the Philippines.”

Gas reserves

A target of the proposed joint venture with China is the development of gas deposits in Recto (Reed) Bank, located in the West Philippine Sea and within the Philippines’ 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that is being claimed by China. This is particularly important considering that the reserves of the Malampaya gas field, which supplies fuel to several power plants in Luzon, is projected to be depleted in 2027.

Businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan’s company PXP Energy Corp. holds a 50-percent interest in Service Contract (SC) 75, while its London-listed unit Forum Energy has a 70 percent participating interest in SC 72,

two permits covering northwest Palawan.

In April 2022, however, the Department of Energy (DOE) ordered PXP to “put on hold all exploration activities for SC 75 and SC 72 until cleared to proceed,” due to the harassment of the survey vessels by China.

The same month, the DOE confirmed the Cabinet-level SJPCC terminated negotiations with China.

Last Oct. 11, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla granted the declaration of force majeure on the work commitments for SC 75 and SC 72 effective from April 6 until such time it is lifted by the agency. This entitles them to an extension of the exploration period under the service contract, for the activities that were suspended in April.

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What Nadine Lustre wants to delete in life

Multimedia Princess Nadine Lustre said she's excited to go back to the theater now that restrictions have eased up.

"Nakakatuwa dahil this time ay makikita ko na rin uli yung sarili ko sa big screen. Excited talaga akong makapanood uli sa sinehan. Wala pa kasi talaga akong chance na manood uli although medyo matagal na rin nag bukas ang mga sinehan," said Nadine, during the mediacon for her horror movie "Deleter." Nadine, who got used to drama and rom-com films, realized that it was difficult to shoot a horror movie. "Dito kasi na experience ko yung lahat like halimbawa 'yung climax na ng movie namin so dapat tense ka palagi," she said. Some of the scenes in "Deleter" were shot out of her comfort zone, Nadine said. The award-winning actress said that she was grateful to work with director Mikhail Red. Nadine said that she's not ready to be called a horror queen because she hasn't done a lot of horror flicks.

Asked what she wanted to delete in

life, Nadine said: "Siguro yung mga fashion moments ko back then. Pero kung meron man akong gustong pang i-delete, yung pagiging magastos ko before when I was much younger. I guess back then, gusto mo lang magspend ng mag spend on anything. Tapos ngayon pag-iniisip ko sya, I ask myself bakit nga ba ako gumastos dun? Sayang. Spur of the moment stuff. Pero now mas nagiging maingat na ako when it

Love teams can be deleted

comes to spending."

Ulysses Lustre is one proud father to actress Nadine Lustre after she won the Best Actress Award at the recent Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) Awards Night for her performance in "Deleter."

Ulysses proudly show Nadine's acting trophies in a FB post.

"Waiting for the new one to come home," Ulysses wrote on the caption,

referring to the MMFF trophy.

In another post, Ulysses took pride in his daughter's talent, even without a love team.

"Congratulations Ate! With real talent, hardwork and termination, have proven 'Love Teams' can be..... Deleted," he wrote.

Apart from Nadine's Best Actress win, "Deleter" also won other awards such as Best Picture, Best Director for Mikhail Red, Best Cinematography for Ian Guevarra, Best Sound, Best Visual Effects and Best Editing.

The film also ranked second to Vice Ganda's "Partners in Crime" in the blockbuster race.



Vina's love life reactivated

My "sis" Vina Morales and I have this running joke that says, "Ang ganda naming, walang nakikinabang."

But since Vina has reactivated her love life, she cheered me on by sending me this quote, "Lord, I am not rushing you for my soulmate. I'm just asking for the tracking number." Then, I replied in jest, "Quota na si Cupid sa akin, sis. I want to poke Cupid with his own arrow so he will leave my heart alone."

So happy for Vina that she has found love anew with Andrew Kovalcin. Her heart has been in limbo for quite some time. Hopefully, it's now en route to paradise.

"I met Andrew 21 years ago in Hawaii during my concert tour. He's from Washington, DC. He's into advocacies and has his own Advanced Advocacy Company. Since then, we have been in touch," says Vina "He asked if we could meet during this year's tour, and I agreed to meet him in Miami after my concert there. Then, he visited me here in Manila.

What makes you and Andrew click?

"We have a lot in common, and so far, I found out that our relationship does not need a lot of effort for us to please each other. It's effortless. He treats me with love and respect. And that's very important to me."

What's her daughter Cena's reaction?

Ceana is very understanding. My happiness is what matters to her and my family. Andrew treats me and my family, especially Ceana, well, so it's all good. I'm just going where God takes me. Sunod lang ako kay God this time. Huwag ko nang unahan at kontrahin (laughs).



Shaina is loveless but content

For a long time now, Shaina Magdayao's love life is silent. According to the 33-year-old Kapamilya actress, she has told herself many times that she's ready to fall in love again but it always gets delayed or interrupted.

"All my plans don't just push through," she said in a recent interview.

Personally, Shaina set 30 years old as her ideal marrying age, "But as you can see, I'm 33 now. Perhaps, I still

have lots of unfinished tasks."

When she exited Ang Probinsyano before, the actress thought that she could already focus on her love life.

"That's what I thought. That I would have the time to go out and mingle with people. But as I've said, it always gets interrupted. It's not that it's on pause but I guess, I still have things to do. But definitely, we'll get there," she stated in an optimistic tone.

In the same interview, Shaina ad-



All my plans don't just push through

mitted that she is not dating someone at this point.

"When I was younger, I told myself that I didn't want to have any distractions. But I guess, if it's the right person, he won't be a distraction but an inspiration for me to become a better person in all aspects of my life," Shaina said.

If ever she would plunge into a new relationship, the actress said that the public will know.

"I have nothing to hide. Everything that's happening in my life, I'm open about it. So, the time will come when I can tell you about it. At the moment, there's no specific person yet," she ended.

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Rica Peralejo shares perspective on celebrity-fan interaction

Rica Peralejo understands the need for celebrities to accommodate fan requests. As an actress, she was taught to be “nice and kind and accommodate everyone when you’re going out.” This she shared via a TikTok video, after a netizen told her: “Your tiktok makes me really like you. Ayoko sayo dati as artista kasi nagkasalubong tayo sa moa nagsup-lada ka. Pero as I mature, I realized tao ka din.”



According to Rica, it’s hard for her as she’s an introvert. “It takes me a while to warm up to someone. It’s not that I don’t like to engage, it’s just that kung meron akong kakausapin gusto ko ng enough time na makilala ko siya, makausap ko siya,” she related. Though over the years, she has learned to adjust. But Rica reiterated: “When we’re out, it’s not as if we’re out because we’re going to engage (with) people, it’s really more for like running errands or being with ourselves. So it’s like catching the celebrity

in a very ordinary kind of day mood. Like seriously, sino ba ’yung tao na gustong magpa-picture 24/7 ng buhay niya?” She admitted that there are days when she feels “very friendly” and sometimes, the exact opposite. But why is she saying all these? Rica explained, “Binigyan ko lang kayo ng perspective kasi siyempre minsan we also feel bad when we can’t accommodate everybody. Kasi tama (kayo), when we’re out, were actually doing normal people things. But iniintidi na lang namin na it comes with territory na siyempre ganun (talaga) kapag public figure ka.”

Heart Evangelista, Chiz Escudero together for New Year’s Eve

Celebrity couple Heart Evangelista and Senator Francis Escudero have appeared to finally shut down rumors of them going separate ways, as the couple were together for New Year’s Eve. A series of photos in Evangelista’s Facebook post on Saturday, December 31 showed the fashion icon together with Escudero and his children, ending speculations that they are no longer a couple. There were other photos of Evangelista holding Escudero’s hand. “Happy 2023,” Evangelista

said, pairing the caption with several emojis. Talks that Evangelista and Escudero called it quits became apparent after the socialite made several trips abroad, especially during one incident where Evangelista was spotted crying during a magazine shoot for L’Officiel Philippines’ Fall 2022.



Joey de Leon explains “Toni Gonzaga, most powerful celebrity” claim by Paul Soriano

Naisip ba ni Joey na magkakatra-baho sila muli ni Toni, na tinaguri-an ng husband nitong si Direk Paul bilang most powerful local celebrity today? “Nabasa ko yun. Mal mga bashers. Pinuputol nila dun sa ano, e!” bulalas ni Sir Joey. “Ang sinasabi ni Paul dun sa kabuuan, sabi niya, equally powerful yung mga tumitira kay Toni. E, hindi naman ito nagre-react, hindi natitinag. So powerful ito... mas powerful. “Kasi hindi niya pinapansin, e.” Naisip ba niya na magkakatra-baho sila ni Toni sa pelikula? “Well, kasabihan, habang may

buhay, may possibility. Hindi pag-asa, possibility, lahat ng bagay,” pagmamatawid ni Joey. “So hindi ko inalis sa isip ko yun na isang araw, makaka-partner ko si... si Meryl Streep kunyari. Lahat posible, e. “Lalo na nung nagkaroon ng pandemya, worldwide, e. So pantay-pantay ang lahat ng tao, kahit anong bansa. So lahat posible.”



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Finally! BLACKPINK’s Jisoo to make solo debut in 2023

This is it, BLINKs: Jisoo of South Korean girl group BLACKPINK is set to make her debut as a solo artist. “BLACKPINK’s Jisoo is currently working hard on recording her solo album,” her label, YG Entertainment, announced on Monday, January 2. According to a Soompi report, Jisoo has already finished the photo shoot for her album jacket and is working on the album’s music production. “She will greet [fans] soon with good news,” YG Entertainment was quoted as saying. Final details such as the album’s title and release date have yet to be announced. Jisoo will be the last member of BLACKPINK to have a solo debut. Jennie released her single “Solo” in November 2018, Rosé released the single album, R, in March 2021, and Lisa released the album Lalisa in September 2021. Outside of music, Jisoo has also ventured into acting. Her acting debut was through a cameo role in the 2015 series The Producers, while she landed her first leading role in the 2021 drama Snowdrop. BLACKPINK, who made their debut in August 2016, is known for hits such as “Pink Venom,” “As If It’s Your Last,” and “How You Like That.” They are set to hold a two-night concert at the Philippine Arena on March 25 and 26.



Is Catriona Gray engaged to boyfriend Sam Milby?

Nagdulot ng ingay sa social media ang post ka-makailan ni Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray. Nag-iwan kasi ng palaisipan sa mga netizen ang Instagram post ni Catriona December 24, 2022, kung makikitang magkasama nobyong si Sam Milby sa isang picnic date sa Australia. Sa picture ay makikita na tila nag-enjoy silang nakatanaw sa kulay asul na karagatan. Naka-tag pa si Sam sa litrato na ngunit makapicture may simple caption na: “Today made me the happiest (cloud emoji).” Dahil dito, maraming netizens ang naging curious sa tila misteryosong caption ng beauty queen. Sa comment section ng post ni Catriona ay mababasa ang mga tanong ng fans kung pahiwatig na ba ito ng pagpo-propose ni Sam. Komento ng isang netizen, “Why does my mind think of a proposal the moment I read the caption.” Hula pa ng isa, “I’m guessing this is a proposal (ring emoji).” Tanong pa ng kanilang fans, “Did Sam propose to you? when is the big day. Will it be held in the Philippines, Australia or somewhere else?” Saad pa ng isa, “I’m sensing someone got engaged.” Sa gayon ay wala pang sagot sina Sam at Catriona tungkol sa haka-hakang engagement nila.



Maxene Magalona reminds people to ‘Be kind, be nice and be good’

With the holiday schedule getting hectic for everyone, actress Maxene Magalona took to her Instagram account to remind her followers to always choose kindness when dealing with other people and with themselves. On her social media account last December 24, Maxene wrote: “This is your friendly reminder to be kind, be nice and be good for goodness’ sake this holiday season. Even though this is a beautiful and wonderful time, we can’t deny that it can also be a very sensitive and triggering occasion. Now that we are all getting ready to see our families and loved ones, it is very important to stay connected to ourselves—to our souls.” “Please keep your mental health, emotions and consciousness in check by focusing on your breath, catching yourself before you get triggered, practicing mindfulness by being as present as you can be and always, always treat others the way you would want to be treated,” she added. She went on: “Would you like it if someone asks you why you’re single or childless? If someone pressures you about your job and finances? If someone questions your life choices? If someone points out that you gained weight? Instead of asking these invasive and personal questions, why don’t we ask each other, “How are you? How is your heart?” “Christmas will definitely be more special and meaningful when we can consciously exchange good energy with one another. When we can sincerely hold space for our loved ones without judgment. When we can just let each other be and spend time together in peace and harmony,” she continued. Maxene also reminded her followers about the true meaning of Christmas. “More than the gifts that we are all excited to give and receive, let’s never forget the true meaning of Christmas: love. Just pure, unconditional and genuine love. The kind of love that God gives us every day, even when we don’t deserve it.” Maxene reminded her followers to treat themselves before the year ends. She wrote: “Enjoy the holidays, everyone! Don’t worry about your weight and just eat whatever you want! Christmas calories don’t count anyway.” In an earlier post, Maxene also shared why she is inspired to bake cookies for sale. “I have a passion for compassion, kindness and cruelty-free cookies! I’m just really out here trying to get more of you to go vegan.”



Catriona Gray disappointed after being cut off

Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray couldn't help but feel upset after she wasn't able to finish her 15-minute speech at the recent Global Peace Festival in Pampanga.

She tweeted: "I'm so disappointed." "To everyone who has been waiting in the heat I'm sorry. I worked on a 20min speech, but I was cut off not even 10mins in. Just know I love and appreciate you guys and I'm so sad I wasn't able to have my proper time with you."

Catriona was among those who graced the organization, which aims to promote "an innovative, values-based approach to peacebuilding, guided by the vision of One Family under God."

During the event, Catriona noted, "I think the message that I have to share with you today is something I hope you'll take home, that you'll

think about – hopefully- will make you ponder some things and go on to do great things in the future."



She started by reiterating how being called to serve is something that people can all do in all of their circles and whatever they do in their lives. Then Catriona pointed out that Filipinos really value such, that we even have the term "bayanihan."

"It's like our version of altruism which is life compassion but it means to give selflessly without any personal gain," she related.

A few minutes after, Catriona was asked to hurry up.

So after sharing her story, Catriona then introduced the founder and chairman of the Global Peace Foundation, Dr. Hyun Jin Preston Moon.

Rhian Ramos, Sam Verzosa unfollow each other on social media

All is not well with Rhian Ramos and Sam Verzosa.

That is, according to some eagle-eyed netizens who were quick to notice the two are not following each other anymore on Instagram.

Some of them insist this is a telltale sign the two have called it quits.

But have they really?

Note photos of them together could still be seen on their respective accounts.

Maybe they're just having a spat?

Only a few days ago, Rhian posted a video with the caption, "Sometimes I'm sad and



insecure but then I remember..."

A quick peek into the same shows the actress posing rather seductively in a beach somewhere wearing a white bikini.

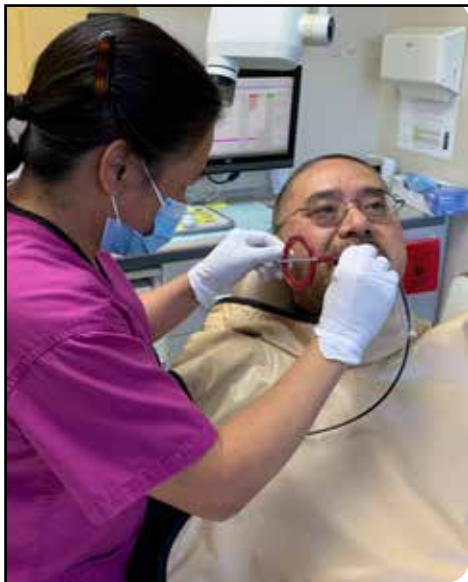
Some maintain it is Rhian's way of expressing her blues relating specifically to her and Sam's situation.

Well, until one of them actually come forward to confirm the matter we could only wonder.

Note they only made public their relationship a mere three months ago.

Surely it couldn't end just like that.

Then again, Carla Abellana and Tom Rodriguez were together far longer.



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FILIPINO-CANADIAN TRUSTEE ELECTED SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Luz Del Rosario, one of the long-serving School Trustees in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board(DPCDSB) in Ontario, Canada is elected Chair of the Board. A Filipino -Canadian serving as Trustee for Wards 6 & 11 in Mississauga, L. Del Rosario assumed the position, after being chosen by the 11 members of the Catholic school board on November 22, 2022.

In addition to the election of the Board chair and vice chair, trustees elected or acclaimed the chairs and vice chairs of various standing committees of the Board. Another Filipino- Canadian, former Mississauga high school principal Herman Viloria, was elected Vice-Chair of the DPCDSB Faith and Program Committee.

DPCDSB is one of the largest and fastest-growing school boards in Ontario with 151 elementary and secondary schools, almost 81,000 students, and 11,000

teachers and employees. The board's jurisdiction extends throughout the municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton, Bolton, Caledon, Orangeville, and Dufferin County.

Ms. L. Del Rosario is the first Filipino elected as Chair of the DPCDSB. She was also elected Vice-Chair in December 2020. As a school trustee, she serves as a system leader of publicly-funded education in their community of schools in the electoral district. L. Del Rosario has served in various leadership capacities during her twelve (12) years on the Board of Trustees having been elected first in the 2006-2010 term, then



in 2014-2018, and was reelected in 2018. Trustees in the Catholic school system "work collaboratively with their community to shape the vision that is reflective of the input of parents, students, and community members."

She has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from the Philippines and also completed the Human Resource Management program at the University of Toronto and was given the Certified Human Resource Professional (CHRP) designation in 1996. On September 29, 2020, Trustee L. Del Rosario spearheaded the approval of the Proclamation to celebrate the Quincentennial Jubilee of Christianity in the Philippines in all schools at the DPCDSB in 2021. A community leader and long-time resident of Mississauga, she is a recipient of various civic, cultural, and community awards. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

TESTING from page 1

for talks about the surge in COVID-19 cases. China has triggered concern worldwide and questions its data reporting, with low official figures on cases and deaths despite some hospitals and morgues being overwhelmed.

In Jan. 5, the Canada and Australia started requiring travelers from China a negative COVID-19 result, joining other countries including the U.S., U.K., India, Japan and several European nations in imposing tougher COVID-19 measures on Chinese travelers

Spain started screening passengers from China airports from China following an explosion of cases in China.



1. Jerome Peralta and MsKim helps a contestants win; 2. D' Ageless dancers performs; 3. JDL gives organizer a plaque of Appreciation; 4. Hannah Pendon sells some pastries; 5. MP Rechie Valdez announces her private member's bill making November 19 a Women's Entrepreneur day as Rose Ami looks on.

Heaven Peralejo not ready to go nude

Even if she had a quite steamy love scene with Ian Veneracion in “Nanahimik ang Gabi,” Heaven Peralejo is not about ready to strip in her future projects.

When asked if she was ready to throw all caution to the wind the way other sexy stars do nowadays, Peralejo said she can’t disrobe for the big screen.

“Siguro ibibigay ko na po sa kanila iyon (Maybe, I will give it to them),” she said.

“I think, when it comes to my craft, siguro parang planado lahat ng ginagawa ko (maybe all the things I do are planned). Whatever I choose, whatever character I put myself into, parang everything is calculated. I don’t think I can see myself in that kind of sense pa. I want to respect also my parents’ opinion. If hindi okay sa kanila iyon, I think I will respect that,” she explained.

But this is not to say that Peralejo did not give her all in portraying her character of Me Ann, the

love of Ian Veneracion’s chief character.

“I think I gave my all in this film. What you will see in this film is Me Ann and not Heaven,” she said, noting that she and Veneracion had been very comfortable with each other so that doing love scenes together was not a problem.

“About sa comfortability doon sa pagkandong ko kay Chief, kay Ian (About the comfortability of having Chief, Ian, sit on my lap), kasi he made me feel so comfortable around him. Since we’re comfortable with each other, we get to laugh at each other’s joke. ‘Yung pag-

kandong (sitting on the lap), it’s work, it’s not malicious,” she said.

“I think iyon ang ma-ganda sa aming dalawa. We have set the boundaries very clearly. Once na nakita kong si Chief na siya, ang bilis kong magpunta doon sa character na Me Ann kasi kaming tatlo, it’s teamwork kasi, eh. Nakakahiya naman sa mga beterano na actor na hindi ko galingan,” she explained. (I think that’s what’s beautiful between [Ian and me]). We have set the boundaries very clearly. Once I saw him as Chief, it was fast for me to get to the character of Me Ann because all three of us, it’s teamwork. It would be a shame to these veterans if I did not work hard.)



Mikey Bustos snag first acting role in Hollywood: ‘It’s a dream I’ve secretly been hoping for!’

After celebrating his 10th anniversary with his partner RJ Garcia, vlogger Mikey Bustos broke some major news to his followers on social media right before Christmas.

Mikey announced that he had just wrapped up shooting his first acting role in Hollywood.

On his Instagram account last December 24, the 41-year-old singer and actor wrote: “It’s a wrap!” Wrapped yesterday for my first-ever Hollywood tv/ film role. Crazy right?!”

“Never imagined this day would come, as it’s a dream I’ve secretly been hoping for/working toward since I was a kid. If you’re an actor friend of mine, I’ve probably bugged you at least once about how to get into professional acting,” he added.

He went on: “But as Lady Gaga once said, ‘It only takes one person to believe in you.’ Someone finally

did, and my heart couldn’t be more grateful! It feels like the start of something truly exciting. I never want it to end! Ever. I also was able to work with some of the most incredible human beings I’ve ever met in my life!”

Mikey also gave his holiday greetings to his followers. He also assured fans more updates soon.

“Stay tuned for more about its worldwide premiere in 2023! May you all have a Happy holidays, Merry Christmas, & Happy New Year! Love you, guys! Xoxo”

In 2019, Mikey and RJ bought an 82-acre fruit and vegetable farm in Cavite where they built their dream home and company house which they called the “Mabuhay Squad Farm.”

In 2021, the couple bought another 4,200-square-meter lot adjacent to the first one they purchased.



Anne Curtis teases acting comeback

Actress Anne Curtis assured an online user she’ll be returning to acting soon.

This, after the netizen shared a scene involving her as seen in the 2006 drama “Maging Sino Ka Man.”

“Idk but teleserye writing kinda peaked with maging sino ka man (relieved face emoji) @annecurtissmith,” the Twitter user wrote, adding, “@annecurtissmith miss na talaga kita sa primetime but you do you (face with tears of joy and loudly crying face emojis).”

Anne eagerly replied, relating to the netizen how she misses Celine Mag-character in the aforementioned soap.

The netizen urged Anne, drama ka na ulit please? at the material (loudly crying face emoji).”

The TV host then teased: “Hi Bye, Mama feels (heart emoji) but seriously, wait na lang for next year. Ready na me.”

Is Anne hinting about her starring in an adaptation of the Korean Series? “Hi Bye, Mama!” revolves around a woman

who gains a second chance at life, reappearing in front of her husband and young daughter.

Anne ended her showbiz hiatus early this year with a concert.

She also started appearing on “It’s Showtime.” Prior, Anne also attended a virtual meeting with GMA executives, talking about a potential film.

Anne’s last TV series was the 2014 fantaserye “Mars Ravelo’s Dyesebel.”

Maureen Wroblewitz: ‘I already have someone’

Actress-beauty queen Maureen Wroblewitz made a bit of noise via TikTok recently, uploading on the platform a video of her playing with the Cards Against Humanity filter.

There, it said that she will have more of “men” in 2023. Maureen made a face.

Her caption read, “I’m just kidding lol I already have someone (eyes emojis).”

It received mixed reactions.

Some of the comments: “Yung may bago na agad (skull emoji).” “Nung June pa sila nag break, di naman mabilis.” Maureen corrected the fan, writing, “May actually.” Her breakup with singer JK Labajo was made public last June.

Meanwhile, someone asked Maureen: “Kala ko b nag-break para sa career.”



She replied: “It is!!! I’ll share my plan when the time comes.. but it’s not yet time.”

Recall that in JK’s goodbye message then, he noted how he wants to see his ex-partner succeed.

“I love seeing you achieve your dreams. You will. We will. Here’s to growth and love for ourselves. For

there is no greater love than self-love.”

On the other hand, others encourage Maureen to reveal her “someone.”

She answered: “When the time is right (smiling face with three hearts emoji).”

Recall that last month Maureen created buzz reposting an Instagram story of a man and a woman getting cozy on a swing.

Candid SPOOF

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



Roy Berlin and Frank Cruzet help cut the lechon at the Filipino Centre Toronto Sanib Saya Christmas party.

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K-drama a new lease on Nico’s shot at stardom

Change starts from within,” said actor Nico Antonio, who is a cast member of the Korean drama series “Big Bet,” which also features the Philippines as a country where gambling is fierce and ruthless.

Nico, who plays a Filipino agent investigating the series of killings of Korean nationals in the Philippines, was reacting to comments saying the country could be put in a bad light because of its negative depiction in the series.

Kang Yun-sung’s “Big Bet” is a story of a man (played by veteran actor Choi Min-sik) who rose to the top and became the legendary king of the casino in the Philippines. His involvement in a murder case forces him to make the ultimate bet, his life, in order to put himself back in the game.

“We should not be ashamed of the story. It’s part of reality. If we want to change our image, then we should start by improving ourselves,” Nico told Inquirer Entertainment over lunch recently. “What our director liked about shooting the series here is that, culturally, Filipinos are not innately bad. Most of us simply do what we can to survive. The series is merely a slice of life. The characters can either be good or bad. It all depends on how the audience interprets them,” the actor explained.

Inspired by a real event

Nico plays Mark Flores, an operative of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) who is helping a Korean cop (Son Suk-ku) solve the killings as a consequence of illegal gambling. “Yes, this is inspired by a real event. Mark and the two other Korean characters are based on real people,” Antonio stressed.

To prepare for the role, Nico underwent immersion at the CIDG office in Camp Crame. “I was able to observe the police officers there. I asked them what they usually do in a day. I made sure to take notice of their demeanor, how they walk and talk,” he said.

Nico added that he had to wait for months for confirmation from the Korean production team on whether or not he indeed got the role. “When I was finally on the set, all dressed up in my character’s clothes, and was finally facing the camera along with my Korean coactors, that’s when I said, ‘This is it! At last!’ Prior to that, I wasn’t too confident because I knew I could still lose it. This has happened to me many times before,” he recalled. “And because I’ve experienced so many rejections in my life, I would just always say, ‘If it’s for me, it’s for me.’”

Nico worked on the series for three whole months here and then flew to Korea, where he stayed for



Antonio (background) with coactor Son Suk-ku

19 days. “But I only worked there for five days,” he added. “I was a bit overwhelmed when I saw Choi Min-sik for the first time because he is one of my acting idols. Working with the younger Korean actors felt normal to me. I guess it helped that I didn’t know how big a star they are. I’m not a fan of K-drama, that’s why.”

Nico admitted feeling excited and expectant because of the series. “I hope this opens doors for me not just locally, but also abroad. After all, it is shown worldwide. Hopefully, people will take notice, and will lead me to more international projects.”

“Big Bet” premiered on Disney+ on Dec. 21.

Nico said another great thing about working on “Big Bet” was the chance to bond with the Korean actors. “We dined out together. They love to resto hop. It’s part of their culture. They would eat in one place, then transfer to another—we transferred three times in one night!”



Nico Antonio (right) on the set with “Big Bet” director Kang Yun-sung

The hard way Nico even got to prank Suk-ku one time, he said. “We just finished work and were on our

way back to the hotel. I saw him withdrawing money from the ATM, so I snuck behind him and whispered, ‘This is a stickup! Give me your money!’ He turned around and I saw that he was genuinely frightened. Then, he smiled and told me, ‘Don’t do that! You almost frightened me to death!’”

Nico continued: “He told me I could ride with him, but we first had to walk from the restaurant to where his car was. Koreans enjoy walking so much. We got to talk about his artistry. He’s a very deep person. He is not into material things. In fact, he owns an SUV, but he said it’s just out of necessity since he is already a big star. He also said he is saving up to buy a house for himself, since owning a house in Korea is expensive.”

When asked whether his experience made him feel either proud or humble, Nico said: “It made me feel both. If you don’t check on yourself, you’ll eventually turn into a conceited person. It’s good that I already know all about this after what happened to me in ‘On the Wings of Love.’ The audience embraced and loved my character. I even did a commercial with Bianca [Manalo] because of that. My followers on Instagram doubled in number. Admittedly, lumaki ang ulo ko. Eventually, I crashed. Hopefully, if I hit it big with this project, this won’t happen again. I’ve learned my lesson the hard way.”

Jackie Lou Blanco on Ricky Davao and their separate journey together

Singer, actress, TV host and health buff Jacqueline Lourdes Blanco-Davao or popularly known as part of the royal family in showbiz as Jackie Lou Blanco is non other than Asia’s Queen of Songs, Pilita Corrales and the late Gonzalo Benitez Blanco’s daughter. Now 58 with two grandkids (ages 1 and 3) from son Kenneth Davao, she shared the joy of being a grandparent with actor, television director and husband, Ricky Davao and how they still manage to have a great relationship, living separately after more than 10 years of marriage.

“Iba ang anak, iba ang apo,” Jackie delightfully shared with Aster Amoyo, host of TiTalk with Aster Amoyo, her thoughts on being a grandparent. “I think it’s because as grandparents you’re only there to enjoy your grandchildren. You don’t have to discipline them, pagka, let’s say, malikot or sobrang ano, sabihin ko ‘masakit na likod ko, kunin niyo na. Rest muna ako, mamaya niyo na ibalik.” When you’re a parent kase you have to oversee everything, di ba. And I guess the fact na ‘pag nakikita mo yung apo mo, anak ito ng anak mo, I’m always in awe. Para bang “oh my gosh” diba, offspring mo na ito, diba.”

Having three children with Ricky, namely Arabella, Rikki Mae and Kenneth, daughter Arabella Davao is the only one who followed in their footsteps in showbiz. “Mini me” as Jackie calls her – having softer, physical features but still “very JLB (Jackie Lou Blanco)” as Arabella wittingly expresses. At a crossroad when Jackie and Ricky’s second-born daughter, Rikki Mae came out as a lesbian, Jackie emphasized “I had a feeling already”. Sharing details of how Rikki Mae asked to have “merienda” in Krispy Kreme, Robinsons Galleria with her after school. “Umiyak ako, not because I did not accept her but because I did not have to wonder anymore.”

Jackie stressed that she appreciated Rikki Mae for mustering the courage to finally tell her, imagining how difficult it must have been for Rikki Mae. “Meron sila sarili nilang buhay and they have their own journey to take and, um, it’s something I needed to accept and be okay with because at the end of the day if we as parents cannot accept and withdraw, how do you expect other people to accept them?” Jackie’s heartfelt reflection on Rikki Mae coming out.

She later shared how she and Ricky made their relationship still work despite their mutual separation as co-parents – “a couple that get separated, you have to do things to lessen the blow.” A decision they both made was to live just two streets away from each other so their kids can go back and forth without having a hard time. She later stressed, “pag okay kayo, okay din ang mga bata, mas happy sila.”

“It’s a work in progress” is how Jackie described her separation



with Ricky before their mutual acceptance. Jackie explained that having no controversies, speculations or reactions from both parties – “I think marami lang kase na hindi alam that we were separated already. I think people still thought that we were still together because we were still in the same house.” Separated yet friends, she reflected on how “age does that” – being happy and contented on where they (she and Ricky) stand as a separated but still legally married couple – “I just want to think of the good things in the relationship and just be grateful. Plus, the relationship will get to a better place and it will get to a better place.”

When asked about their three kids trying to get them back together, “I think deep inside they will always hope for that but will not say it.” Jackie reflected on how their children have always been supportive of their mutual understanding, living separately and how they serve as constant reminders for self- happiness – “kung saan ka happy”. On the chances of living under one roof as a married couple – “ako, whatever God’s will is, whether it is to bring Ricky and I together again, it’s not something that I will say “no” to, let’s just put it that way, if it is his will.” Jackie emphasized that such turn of events may or may not happen, whether they like it or not, in God’s perfect time – “mangyayari ng mangyayari”.

Jackie shared that she and Ricky usually celebrated Christmas divided. Christmas eve would mean early dinner with “mamita (Pilita Corrales)” and the kids at around 5-6PM followed by opening of the gifts. The kids would later go and celebrate Noche Buena with “dad Ricky” but Christmas day itself was always celebrated by everyone together.

Teary eyed, “my mom did such a great job pero there are some things kase that it’s just nice if your dad was there”, Jackie reflects on the lost moments she could have had with her dad, the late Gonzalo Blanco. Regardless, she thanks her mom every day for her love and who she is. “I want people to say that my mom raised a good daughter.” Jackie, having raised by Pilita as a single mom, praises her for enduring the hardships and for always coming from a place of love. Pilita celebrated her 85th birthday this year and Jackie recalls it as being special, Ricky having stayed the entire celebration and even sang to the birthday girl. Jackie stated that she profusely thanked Ricky as he made “mamita” so happy.

“Nasaan si Ricky sa puso mo ngayon?” was the question Aster Amoyo had to asked that made Jackie laughed hysterically. Having calmed down, she did answer that Ricky is still a part of her life. “Yes, I do. Not the way I used to but I will always have the love and respect for him. It’s a different level. It’s not a romantic love,” Jackie Lou on love with Ricky to this day.



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Roberta: On being cancelled

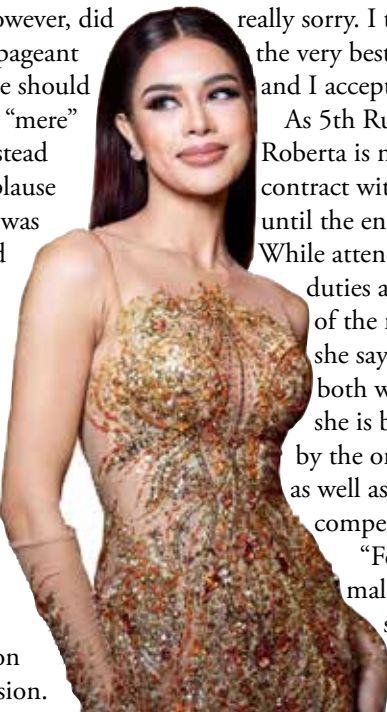
In the Philippine setting, beauty queens who come home as international winners, be it as top crown holders or runners up, are always accorded a hero's welcome. And why not? For pageant-crazed Filipinos, every competing pageant queen is given all out support such that when she eventually wins in her competition, the victory is considered collective and officially stamps, not just the delegate but the entire nation as among the world's best.

For recent pageant representative, Roberta Tamondong, however, the story of winning took a rather sharp turn from what has been tradition. Initially getting much love from her local pageant followers when she started her campaign in this

year's Miss Grand International Pageant held in Indonesia, she received the motivational boost she needed to perform really well in every stage of her competition. After she easily landed a spot in the first cut, she failed to advance further to the final winners' circle. While her exclusion enraged Filipino pageant fans, Roberta got an unexpected break from the MGI organization when she was offered to step up to the 5th Runner Up position of the Queen's Court. Thinking it will make her kababayans happy to see her wear a runner-up tiara, she accepted the offer.

"I really fought for our country and I really did the best that I could. My decision was made by me, I also talked to Binibini, my family and my Aces and Queens family, so I knew I'm in the right hands," said Roberta.

Such a decision, however, did not sit well with the pageant fans, who thought she should not have settled for a "mere" consolation prize. Instead of earning public applause for her move up, she was bashed, and cancelled by her own former fans and supporters. She lamented: "I felt hopeless. At one point I didn't know what to do because the Filipino people have shunned away from me and are not supporting me. But I hope in the future they will see the reason why I made this decision. I know it is a hard pill to swallow, yes, but I did this for my family, for my hardwork and for the Filipino people and I just want to make them proud. If accepting the fifth runner up made them less of a Filipino like I'm



really sorry. I thought I did the very best that I could and I accepted it."

As 5th Runner Up, Roberta is now under contract with MGI until the end of this year. While attending to her duties as a member of the royal court, she says she is happy both with the way she is being treated by the organization as well as with her compensation.

"Fortunately, malaki laki rin sya to pay for all of my bills, to pay my parents back, and for the hard work my parents put into this pageant.," she shared without declaring any numbers.

Despite all the benefits and perks she now enjoys as a run-

ner-up, she still hopes her fans will eventually understand and accept the choice she made of still being a part of MGI: "Hopefully in the future they will accept. Every single day I've been thinking about this. Every single day I ask myself how they are handling this, because what my decision is will reflect on my countrymen, and I don't know how to react if my countrymen are against me. I hope in the future they open their arms again for this pageant because I know this pageant has a lot of potential. It has a lot of controversies but I know it'll be one of those pageants that we should lookout for in the future."

From the looks of it, Roberta indeed has to win back her pageant fans. By her own admission, Miss Grand is not going to be her last stop in pageantry: "Maybe if the universe will agree with me in three year's time, I'll join another pageant that concerns the universe."

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What you didn't know about 'Himala'

At the sidelights of this year's Famas Awards, 'Himala' producer Imee Marcos, lead star Nora Aunor and line producer Charo Santos-Concio reminisced on their four decade-old project.

It's been 40 years since a Marian seer named Elsa cried, "Walang himala!" on the big screen.

Senator Imee Marcos, however, begs to disagree with Superstar Nora Aunor's iconic line from Ishmael Bernal's 1982 magnum opus, "Himala."

In fact, the daughter of the late former president Ferdinand Marcos Sr. and the now-nonagenarian former first lady Imelda has tangible proof that miracles can and do come true even from a cult movie like Bernal's, which is now regarded as the Best Asia-Pacific Film of All Time.

Premiering to critical acclaim at the 48th Metro Manila Film Festival, Himala marks its 40th anniversary this month, with so many behind-the-scenes stories still waiting to be told.

From the funny to the fascinating and inspiring and the unexpected to the baffling, Sen. Imee is the de facto authority on this Filipino classic. Its staunchest advocate, too, she thoroughly explains the reason why this is so while spilling precious pieces of trivia along the way.

Inviting three entertainment editors to the Marcos mansion in San Juan a few days before Christmas, Sen. Imee commemorated Himala's landmark anniversary in the best way possible. That is, via an engaging "Did you Know" Chika-fest that will surely reel you into streaming this long-time classic on Netflix.

Did you know...

... While the senator's mom had always been the prime mover of culture and the seven classical arts in the Philippines, her dad was really the film person in the family. Then-first daughter, Imee, lovingly recalled, however, how "unpleasant" it was to watch movies with her papa because "Hindi siya masayang katabi kasi sa sobrang talino, lagi niyang sasabihin, 'Alam ko na ang mangyayari dyan...' Nakakasap, di'ba?"

... As film continued to thrive worldwide at the turn of the '80s, there came a call for the government to be more involved in cinema like other countries. The senior Marcos eventually took the lead by establishing the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP), putting his First Daughter in charge. According to Imee, Marcos Sr. always believed in the power of movies as a great communicator and, in fact, credited in large part his victory as president to "Iginuhit ng Tadhana," his love story with the beautiful Rose of Tacloban, Imelda Romualdez. Dr. Perez of Sampaguita Pictures produced the movie in 1965, which starred Luis Gonzales and Gloria Romero in the title roles.

...The ECP's marching orders were to produce story-driven Filipino movies that reflect the nation's distinctive culture, which automatically did away with

existing studio materials and personality-driven stories.

...While the group behind ECP generally shared the quick, common yet expensive idea of producing a historical epic presenting the country's fight for freedom, Executive Director Imee had something less boring in mind. "I was a kid who liked to watch movies," she explained. I didn't want to watch movies with big battle scenes and with everyone in huge and clunky costumes that are heavy and dull."

To be sure they gathered the best of the best quintessentially Filipino stories, she called for a contest, adding commercial viability to the criteria.

... The ECP was overwhelmed because no less than 220 scripts were sent in, which Imee, while not a member of the board of judges, read voraciously.

Ending up with five to seven entries in the selection — among them now fellow classics "Oro, Plata, Mata," "Solter and "Mysterio sa Tuwa" — Imee nevertheless insisted on producing the Ricky Lee screenplay.

...Not knowing they were at the cusp of independent film production, Imee recalled the judges' problems over doing Himala. "Everyone was telling me, maganda siya oo, pero walang benta yan. They were worried

about the reaction of the Catholic church. And they thought it was so grim with the worst ending in the world. Patayin ba naman ang superstar!" she couldn't stop laughing.

"They said we can't inflict something this sad on Filipinos. Tapos wala daw siyang redeeming social value, wala lesson to be learned at wala namang uplift. Tayong Pilipino kasi gusto natin may himala. We're so upbeat sometimes to the point of bakit ba?"

...Imee being Imee — not even her parents could tell her what to do back in her happening youth — she insisted on filming Himala for the following reasons: "It resonates with Filipinos because we're all deeply religious and we're all obsessed with worship.

"Ako naman, I am a religion major obsessed with cultic activities and social movements. It's my thing," she paused for effect. "I read Himala and I loved it to death."

Moreover, Imee believed the movie actually teaches a very important lesson: "That in fact, there was hope because ang himala ay nasa sarili mo. What's more hopeful than that? Wag kang aasa sa kung ano anumang himala is a very valid and brave sort of lesson in the end."

...With the debates put to rest, shooting on Himala began, not only with Bernal at the helm but also showbiz power women Charo Santos and the late Bibsy Carballo and Armigda Sigeon Reyna who each headed a department at the ECP.

Imee recalled that Bernal was adamant for the lead to be Nora Aunor, then at the top of her career and also deep in personal mayhem.

"That was the height of Ate Guy's kaguluhan. If I remember correctly she signed a contract with Sampaguita and LVN at the same time tapos nag disappear na siya.

"But Ricky insisted there's no one but her so Armida's husband who was a very good lawyer went through their contract. Water tight yung contract pero pinalusot nalang na gobyerno naman ito at hindi naman sila mababawasan ng kita nito."

Imee understood, however, the charisma of one Nora Aunor, who can make people follow her to corners of the earth, so she closed her eyes and paid for the actress' penalties with the two studios.

...With the Superstar now onboard, Imee and her team needed to make sure she was present and on time at every shooting day, which by then was practically an impossibility.

But she agreed that Ate Guy would have nowhere to go after every shooting day, and true enough, the Superstar was done with breakfast by 8 am every day and fresh on the set, greeting everyone, "Ano po ang gagawin natin ngayon?"

...But wait, here's more, shooting schedules were once again delayed because, for some reason or another, the Superstar had a broken arm one day.

...There was also the "drama of directors" as Imeed put it. Bernal and his peers were, of course, vocal critics of the government and often in jail.

"Lahat naman sila may kaso nun pero si Joel pa rin ang naging crowd director namin kasi sabi ko hinihinga siya ni Ishma," the senator deadpanned.

...Himala was fast going out of budget that in that last massive crowd scene where Elsa says, "Walang himala" and dies, Imee was shouting from Manila to Bernal bidding him to do it in one take.

And so he did.

...Describing

Himala as the movie that seemed like it didn't want to be made, Imee now looks back at the challenging experience of producing it and admit she somehow regrets she didn't put her name in the credits.

"People ask me why I didn't do it, but I just felt I represented government and as a general rule, say if you're the head of BBC, you don't put your name there."

On its premiere, Himala won Best Film and Best Actress for Ate Guy. It then became the first Filipino film to be included Berlin International Film Festival's competition section.

In 2012, on its 30th anniversary, Himala became the first film to be restored as part of the ABS-CBN Film Restoration Project, with a premiered at the 69th Venice International Film Festival as part of the classics section.

...Now, on to the real-life miracle of Himala, which happened in Ilocos's desert sand dunes.

"Ang himala talaga yung sand dunes dahil sinusumpa namin yung lupa na yon hindi matamnan ang init init, etc. After Himala, it actually became the biggest sandbox for the income ng mga tiga-Ilocos. We strated film tourism there kasi ang daming taong naghahanap nasaan yung puno ni Ate Guy. Himala nga talaga ang nangyari!"

In the end, Himala didn't have to have a sad ending for Sen. Imee's beloved Ilokanos because their lives all changed in very real ways because of one challenging movie.

Vice Ganda: ‘Many people will eat you alive’

After three years, Vice Ganda said she is ready to meet her legions of fans once again with her latest offering from Star Cinema entitled “Partners In Crime,” an official entry to the 2022 Metro Manila Film Festival. Vice Ganda and social media darling Ivana Alawi star in the new new movie directed by Cathy Garcia Molina. She also said that she misses the warmth and excitement of her fans.

“Na-mi-miss ko na rin yung ginagawa ko na magtatago ako sa sinehan tapos bigla

akong magpapakita at magsasabing ‘what’s up madlang pipol?’ Ako lang gumagawa nun dati pero ngayon marami ng gumagawa,” said Vice Ganda during an interview with the entertainment press in Quezon City recently.

“Gustong-gusto ko na nararamdaman yung pagmamahal ng madlang pipol sa akin,” she said.

Vice Ganda, 46, also said she needed to do a movie this time in an effort to boost the local movie industry.

“Gusto ko ng mag-movie not because of MMFF but I really need to do another film. Hindi ako puwedeng sobrang tagal na hindi

ako mapapanood. So kailangan mag-movie na.

“This movie talks about the struggles of people on when to stop, when to pause. Feeling ko sinadya talaga nila ang movie na ito para sa akin,” she said.

While there were dramatic scenes in her latest film, Vice Ganda said that she’s not interested in doing a full-length drama project in the future. She just wants to do comedy all the way.

“I don’t think it’s my brand. If ever I will inject lang ng konting drama. People kasi want to see me funny, They want to see

me make them laugh. Kaya minsan kapag nalulungkot ako tinatago ko kasi sasabihin nila ay si Vice malungkot,” she also said.

Vice Ganda has nothing but praises for Direk Cathy who she describes as “badass.”

“She’s very confident to tell me ibigay mo sa akin ito. Hindi lahat ng trip niya gusto ko pero pinayagan ko. Ang galing eh!” she added.

Lessons in showbiz

More than 20 years in show business, Vice Ganda believed she has seen a lot. And she has learned some lessons, too!

“Your source of achievements can be both beneficial and disadvantageous to you. And you really have to be very brave and very



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smart in dealing with people. Palakasan ng apog.

“Ang daming magtatangkang kumain sa’yo ng buo. So you have to be brave and strong physically, mentally and spiritually.

“Natutuwa na lang ako kapag tinitignan ko minsan yung paligid. Yung mga iba sa paligid na nagta-try kumain ng palihim. Yung mga nangangalmot, nangangagat, namamapatid.

“You know, when you’re starting, everyone will support you. But the moment you make it, they won’t like it, especially if you make it bigger than them.

“Ano’ng nangyari magkaibigan tayo dati? Ano’ng nangyari sinusupportahan ako nito dati, akala ko like ako nito dati? Hindi ko naman maiiaalis yun sa kanila. These people try to eat me whole but now maybe they’re just saying, beware of that Vice Ganda, she survived everyone and everything,” said the Phenomenal Box Office Superstar.

A colorful year

Despite the challenges and imperfections, Vice Ganda said she came victorious last year.

“I wanna stay in this business longer, although hindi naman natin masasabi kung magtatagal talaga tayo ng mahabang panahon. Ang saya-saya ko siyang ginagawa eh. Ang dami kong sacrifice but it’s worth it. Kaya ko naman. Mahal ko na siya. Ayoko ng mawalay sa kanya.

Fame and fortune

With a tight schedule, Vice Ganda said that she misses her family so much. She rarely joins her family in simple activities at home like playing the bingo. That’s one of the prices that Vice Ganda needs to pay for being successful in show business.

“It’s very hard to balance. Kung pwede lang humiling sa Diyos na dagdagan ang oras or humiling ka sa kanya na dagdagan ang araw sa isang linggo, dagdagan ang linggo sa isang buwan at dagdagan ang buwan sa isang taon, kung pwede lang hilingin sa Diyos gagawin ko,” she added.

So how rich is Vice Ganda?

“I am very rich! But the term rich is very subjective. I am rich because I am loved by so many people. My family is healthy. That’s wealth. Okay pa naman ang mga trabaho ko. I am very rich. Minsan may nakikita akong numbers like richest men in ganito. Sabi ko, hindi naman, parang kulang. Minsan sobra naman. Kaya minsan nag-a-add din ako kasi minsan magkasama ang liquid at assets.

Vice Ganda said that she handles her finances well, adding that she also wants her close friends to save for the rainy days.

“Tutok ako sa finances and may tao akong pinagkakatiwalaan,” she said.

He or she?

Vice Ganda wrapped up the conversation by answering on how people should address her: is it he or she?

“I am actually okay with he or she. That’s very important that you ask because not everyone is comfortable with he or she. Personally, sa akin lang ito, I don’t mind. Natatawag ako ng sir or ma’m. He or she.”