

AN ACT OF WAR. NEARLY

It's nearly an act of war if a Filipino dies in West Philippine Sea

SINGAPORE – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said the death of a Filipino, not just a member of the military, in the West Philippine Sea, due to China Coast Guard's water cannon attack, would be very close to "act of war." "If there's an incident that ended up killing a Filipino serviceman, be they a coast guard or in the military, part of the navy, that would certainly increase the level of re-
ACT OF WAR P16

DonBelle *loveteam's* Donnie Pangilinan & Belle Mariano

shares biggest impact of 'Can't Buy Me Love' on their loveteam



"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
Winston Churchill

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one," wrote playwright George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill.
"CANNOT POSSIBLY ATTEND THE FIRST NIGHT, WILL ATTEND THE SECOND.... IF THERE IS ONE," RESPONDED CHURCHILL.

AMAZON PRIME REMOVES FILIPINO MOVIE IN UK page10

Caregivers to be given permanent resident status on arrival under new pilot programs

CANADA - Canada has announced new, enhanced caregiver pilot programs as the expiry date for Canada's existing Home Child Care Provider Pilot and the Home Support Worker Pilot approaches. The existing pilot programs are set to expire on June 17. In their place, the new pilot programs will grant home care workers with permanent resident status when they arrive in Canada, rather than re-
CAREGIVER page 17

Postcard Ermita 1975



DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Cristy Fermin reacts to Kiko-Sharon Cyber Libel charges

MANILA, Phl — Cristy Fermin said that Libel cases come as part of her job. The controversial veteran showbiz columnist and now online show host reacted to the Cyber Libel cases filed against her by the husband-and-wife Sharon Cuneta and former senator Francis "Kiko" Pangalinan. She likened her present situation to other professions that come with their own set of risks. Policemen, she said, can be shot
LIBEL page 15

CHINATOWN

Over 1k Chinese student visa holders not enrolled in Cagayan

BUREAU of Immigration (BI) Commissioner Norman Tansingco has called for an urgent inter-agency meeting to discuss security issues amid concerns on the
STUDENTS page 21

Japanese housekeeping companies turn to Philippines for staff ONLINE P27

"I'm still in the journey of being my best self" Kathryn Bernardo

Kathryn Bernardo looked sizzling hot in a red ensemble as she made her debut walk as Century Tuna Superbods' newest ambassador at the official launch of its "Best You Ever" campaign.



Kathryn Bernardo shows her fit and fab form as she leads the Century Tuna Superbods 2024 'Best You Ever' launch.

Kathryn, who started working out at 16, shared that she takes pleasure in doing physical exercises and considered it as her "me time."

"I really enjoy working out so maybe throughout the years, it just evolved kung ano yung workout na gagawin ko. I've tried different workouts, and for this in particular, they hired a coach for me, his name is Mauro Lumba, the winner for 2014 Superbods."

"And I really enjoy this. So like the lesson in all of these, is just to be open with any workout and then whatever works for you, you continue doing it. So as for me, I really enjoy doing it so nagtuloy-tuloy ako kay Mau even though our shoot has already ended."

The Kapamilya actress maintained that she felt empowered to be part of the the "Best You Ever" campaign, an advocacy that promotes self-love and self-improvement. It celebrates the journeys, personal growth, and overall wellness of every Filipino as they become the best versions of themselves.

"Like what I

said in my (Instagram) post, it has always been my dream to be part of this family. No joke. That's why when they reached out to my team in January, this year, I got really, really, excited. And tonight I'm just really, really thankful. Thank you very much to o Century Tuna family for making this dream come true," she said.

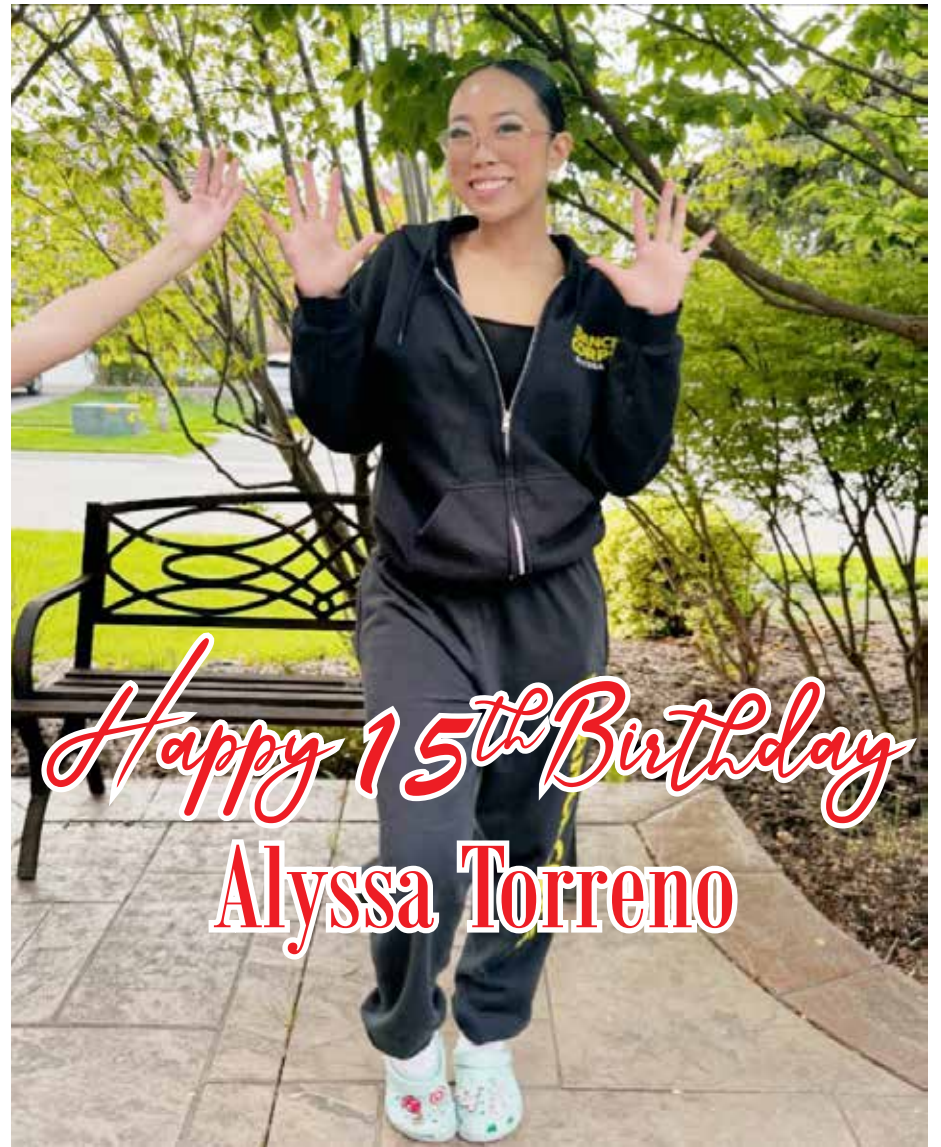
"And of course, I admire the brand because of their commitment in promoting healthy habits such as having a healthy lifestyle and having the right diet. So ever since talaga, when I see their campaigns, it's just so inspiring. And now it feels so surreal that I'm now part of that campaign."

For Kathryn, "finding the best version of yourself comes with transformation."

She explained, "So every day, we try to be better. We try to be our best. And I think that is just aligned with what Century Tuna represents, you know, to be brave enough to challenge yourselves and to chase for our goals, including our body goals."

So when the endorsement was offered to her, despite the limited time to prepare, she accepted it right away.

"I knew that I was committed. I gave my 100 percent even though I only had limited time to prepare. And I'm just glad that they are very supportive of me and (they) gave me that extra motivation that I needed, especially with the limited time. I'm like, 'No, I have to make this proud and I want to inspire more women, especially once they



Happy 15th Birthday Alyssa Torreno

see this campaign.' So that became my motivation."

Alden Richards, Bea Alonzo, Pia Wurtzbach, and many others, are among the previous brand endorsers.

Meanwhile, Kathryn was "super grateful" for her Best Actress nomination at the 72nd Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS) and the 47th Gawad Urian awards for her performance in the dark comedy "A Very Good Girl."

"Actually, when I saw the nomination, it didn't sink in to me until the PR director messaged me, our producer and then dun lang siya slowly nag-sink in sa akin," recalled Kathryn.

"And oh my god, I think that's the first for me. So I'm not expecting anything. Actually, I didn't expect the nomination so I'm just really grateful. And win or lose, the other nominees also deserved it."

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Let's hope for the best Alden Richards on 'Hello, Love, Goodbye' sequel

Alden Richards is unsure if a sequel to "Hello, Love, Goodbye" — which also stars Kathryn Bernardo — is in the works, although he's hopeful that it will happen soon.

Richards briefly addressed the rumors of a possible sequel to the 2019 hit film during a chance interview with reporters on the sidelines of the Box Office Entertainment Awards in Quezon City last May 12.

"Yan ang hindi pa tayo sure (That I'm not sure) but let's hope for the best," he



said.

Richards was said to be courting Bernardo, per a source of entertainment insider Ogie Diaz, who disclosed the matter

back in April. However, the actor merely laughed off the rumors when asked.

The actor and Bernardo have been making headlines for their interactions since the latter's El Nido birthday party last March, where the actor and Kakai Bautista performed "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang." Days later, Richards was then spotted at Bernardo's surprise party where he gifted her with a bouquet of flowers and a Bacarat gift bag. He was also seen at the actress' housewarming party in April.

When Richards is asked about the real

score of his relationship with Bernardo, he would instead assert that he wanted to "keep things personal" between them.

Both actors, however, remained mum on whether romance is brewing between the two of them.

The 2019 film, which also stars Bautista, Joross Gamboa, Lito Pimentel, and Maymay Entrata, is the second highest-grossing film in the Philippines, topped only in the box office by "Rewind," starring Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes earlier this year.

Max Collins reacts to always dying in TV shows

Max Collins is currently having a blast as Venus on the Marian Rivera comeback fantasy family drama "My Guardian Alien," and Marian just showed how fun they are on the set of their show when she posted a photo of her and Max goofing on set while taking a break from taping.

On Marian's Facebook post last Tuesday, the box-office star posted their photo lying on a sidewalk with traces of blood on their faces.

"Max ano to? Exsena o Pictorial? Hahahaha. Always fun working with you," Marian wrote on the caption.

Max as one of the celebrity guests who graced the Loewe store summer 2024 collection of Paula's Ibiza presentation.

"Nag-bonding kami ni Marian sa sahig, sa floor. Sa dirt actually. During our scenes naman, we tape so far away. Ang init so all we can do is that we just make fun of the situation. So, like sa picture na pinost niya, duguan pero nagpa-cute pa rin kami. That's just part of our taping, that's what's fun in our taping..."

We always find ways to be happy and to spread

good vibes," said Max.

She and Marian are no strangers to each other as they have already worked with each other on past GMA-7 dramas. They played sisters in the 2016 fantasy show "Encantadia."

"I love working with Marian. It's so easy. She's so fun. Light lang kasi 'yung show namin e. So, parang we don't really have mabigat na scenes. All of our scenes have an element of comedy to them because kids watch our show. It's a family drama. So that's been the best part about it. Magaan lang 'yung taping namin," she shared.

With news that "Encantadia" will have its story continued in the upcoming show titled "Encantadia Chronicles: Sang'gre," there are questions if Max will reprise her role, Amihan.

"To be honest, I have no idea kasi I died, 'di ba? First episode pa lang," she quipped.

She played Amihan I in the 2016 show. She was mistakenly killed by her sister Minea, played by Marian, after being tricked by black magic.

Max's recent guest roles saw her characters die.

Like her "Encantadia" stint, her appearance

as Rozalia in GMA-7's 2023 adaptation of the beloved 1970s anime "Voltes V: Legacy" also resulted in her character getting killed.

"Yes, palagi nga akong namamatay. I don't know. So baka naman, I'll be able to guest [in Encantadia] and I'd probably die again, too. So I really don't know," she said.

Since the show is a fantasy one with many characters thought to have been killed are ending up being revived one way or another, Max's character or any other character can be alive in the upcoming fantasy show.

Niño Muhlach sells 'priceless' Famas trophy to Boss Toyo

Entrepreneur and child actor Niño Muhlach gave Boss Toyo one of his prized awards from the Filipino Academy

of Movie Arts and Sciences (Famas) in exchange for P500,000, but Boss Toyo reiterated that Muhlach's award is "priceless" and will become part of his future museum.

In an episode of "Pinoy Pawnstars," Boss Toyo haggled with Muhlach, who personally visited the content creator's shop in Quezon City to personally give one of his five Famas awards and make it part of his collection.



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"Take care of that, restore it," Muhlach told Boss Toyo in the vernacular.

Niño Muhlach's Famas award is one of Boss Toyo's dream items.

Boss Toyo said that he wants to restore the award to its former glory and showcase it in his planned museum alongside the award that Jiro Manio sold to Boss Toyo a few months ago.

Muhlach said that it was Toyo who personally inquired about the award and decided to sell to the content creator one of the five Best Child Performer awards that he received in his career.

"I decided to give it to him, but it was a big deal because he needs to take care of it seriously, restore it and

put it in his museum because I never take care of it. That's [part of] our deal," Muhlach said.

Boss Toyo said that Muhlach's Famas award is one of his dream items as he wants to note how Muhlach changed Filipino entertainment through his movies with noted Filipino actors such as the King of Filipino movies and legends such as Fernando Poe Jr. and Dolphy.

"You are the barometer of a 'child actor' because we have to remember nobody does it better than you," Toyo said.

Besides the award, Muhlach gave to Boss Toyo some of the theater lobby cards from the movies he starred and produced in.

Beyond show business, Muhlach also dabbled in several businesses, including the El Niño Apartments and Muhlach Ensaymada.

"I'd probably die again, too."

Janine Gutierrez producing Pilita Corrales documentary

Actress Janine Gutierrez is set to produce a documentary about her grandmother, legendary singer Pilita Corrales.

Janine confirmed on her social media accounts she is working with “Sunday Beauty Queen” director Baby Ruth Villarama on a documentary about her Mamita.

“I’ve always felt a deep responsibility to help preserve Mamita’s amazing legacy and I hope this project becomes another way for younger generations to learn about her story — not just as a legendary performer, but as a woman who defied expectations and truly paved the way,” Janine said.

The actress shared the “Pilita” documentary is currently in the early development stage but is already being introduced at Producer’s Network and Spotlight Asia this week at the ongoing Cannes



Film Festival.

Joining Janine as producers are Raymond Ang and Chuck Gutierrez, the latter also working with Baby Ruth

on “Sunday Beauty Queen,” which won Best Picture at the 2016 Metro Manila Film Festival.

Pilita, referred to as “Asia’s Queen of Songs,” has released over a hundred albums and songs over a decorated career spanning seven decades.

Considered to be one of the country’s greatest singers, many Filipinos are clamoring for Pilita to be put into consideration for National Artist.

Sparkle’s Pokwang and Boobay share their wish lists of projects

Pokwang and Boobay form part of the Kapuso comedy department. They will continue to regale audiences with their own brand of antics, humor and wit as part of the Sparkle GMA Artist Center. In the latter’s event, “Signed for Stardom,” the comedienne and the comedian were smiling from ear to ear, knowing that their talent and hard work had been recognized.

They also expressed their appreciation to the people behind Sparkle that will chart and plan their career paths.

Looking back on his professional career, Boobay has come a long way. From starring in the sitcom “Ismol Family” to lending his voice to the dog character Fulgoso in the GMA remake of “Marimar,” he has done a variety of shows, including the comedy talk program “The Boobay and Tekla Show (TBATS).”

“Six years na po ang ‘TBATS’ and counting (the show has been airing for the past six years and counting),” said he, who is grateful to the creatives behind it, especially to the writers who continue to create segments.

“I’m just thankful and I promise that I won’t get tired of doing the purpose that the Lord has been given me,” shared Boobay.

Pokwang, for her part, also acknowledged the gift of comedy from above, saying, “Maraming salamat po, nakaluwag, luwag ang pamilya ko sa buhay dahil sa talento na hindi ko inaaka-



la na meron pala ako (many thanks to God, because through the talent I never thought I had, I’m able to give my family a better life).”

The comedienne, who has also proven her mettle in drama roles, recalled that during the pandemic, many people lost their jobs and workers in the enter-

tainment industry were also not spared from it. She was thankful that GMA did open a door of opportunity for her. Viewers can watch Pokwang in “TiktoClock” weekdays and

Boobay in his show with another comedian Super Tekla every Sunday. However, these talents have their own wish list of projects to pursue in the future.

“Of course, what I want to do or I foresee myself doing is to have a travel show,” said Boobay, who also graced the successful first-ever Sparkle world tour in Canada. “Gusto ko ring maging part ng teleserye, mga ganyan para ma-hone din siguro yung craft ko sa acting (I also want to be part of a TV series, so I can also hone my craft in acting).”

Pokwang, on the other hand, wants to have a project with fellow established comedienne Ai-Ai delas Alas, Eugene Domingo and Rufa Mae Quinto. “It’s one of the things that I look forward to and (to have) more, more projects including a movie,” said she, who wishes to collaborate with other Sparkle artists.

Fake quote of Yen Santos apologizing to LJ Reyes goes viral

Did actress Yen Santos post an apology for actress LJ Reyes?

A Facebook user on Wednesday reposted a photo of what appeared to be a post of the actress from the X (formerly Twitter) platform on May 27 with the username @ysantos. The post reads:

“Totoo pala talaga ‘yung kasabihan na kung ano ‘yung ginawa niya sa asawa niya dati, kayang-kaya din niyang gawin sa’yo. I thought nagbago na siya. Hindi pa pala. I know it’s too late, pero just wanted to say sorry kay LJ. Ngayon lang ako natauhan.”

There is no account on the X platform with the username @ysantos, although it is the username of Yen’s verified Instagram account with the profile name YS.

However, the actress has no post on her Instagram which contains such a text.

Meanwhile, the Facebook post sharing the manipulated photo using the X platform’s design has reached 13,000 likes and reactions, 1,600 comments and 3,200 shares so far.

It was accompanied by a photo of Yen with actor Paolo Contis. Many Filipinos in the comments section believed the fake post about her relationship, with some saying Yen “deserved” what she was supposedly feeling and that “karma is real.”

There were others, however, who doubted the post’s authenticity.



“Walang Twitter account si Yen Santos na @ysantos ang username. Fake News ‘to,” a Facebook user commented.

“Wala namang pinost si Yen na ganyan. Fake news masyado ‘tong page,” another user wrote.

“San naman [niya] pinost ‘yan? Hahahaha gawa-gawa na naman, chi-chismis na lang,” commented a different Pinoy.

In 2021, Paolo and Yen trended after being spotted together.

That time, LJ, Paolo’s then-longtime girlfriend, said that they had a difficult breakup.

Paolo also admitted to cheating on her, although he denied at that time that Yen was the rumored third party.

In January 2023, the actor confirmed his relationship with Yen.

Earlier this month, the actress fueled breakup speculations when she unfollowed Paolo and removed posts involving him.

On May 14, the actor remained mum when he was asked about the split rumors.

“Isang magandang no comment,” Paolo said before.

“As I always say, masyado na kayong may alam sa buhay ko, so I’d like to keep it personal, my personal life,” he added.

Yen and Paolo both starred in the 2021 romance movie “A Faraway Land.”

New Philippine Chamber of Commerce in Canada Launched

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

After being on hold for 7 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other reasons, the Philippine Canadian Chamber of Commerce -PCCC was officially launched on May 16, 2024, at the Philippine Consulate General office at 160 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario.

The milestone event covered the oath-taking of the new Filipino Canadian Chamber’s officers, directors, and organizing committee, officiated by the Philippine Consul General in Toronto, the Honourable Angelica C. Escalona. ConGen Escalona warmly welcomed the organization and expressed her “high hopes for PCCC to organize activities to promote Philippines-Canada relations”.

Those inducted to office were Chairperson Cora Dela Cruz; President Steve Pagao; Vice-Presidents Mariel Buenaventura, Earl Zar Encarnacion & Julian Baricuatro; Secretary Gama Seva; Treasurer Albert Frias and Asst. Treasurer Nita Rejdik. The PCCC Directors are Mark Jan Bangoy, Rob Clarete, Courie Coutts, Elizabeth Javier, Jocelyn Reyes Midghall, Judy Montenegro, Christian Nero Porlas, Jenny Racca, Emil Sylvester Ramos, and Kim Villafuerte.

With over 60 people in attendance, the 2-hour event started with networking and pleasantries, followed by the welcome address of Cora Dela Cruz who gave a brief overview of “who we are”. She said PCCC intends to become “the

alliance of Filipino Canadian business councils, chambers and organizations nationwide”. Elizabeth Javier who ably acted as emcee, enthusiastically read the congratulatory messages of the Philippine Ambassador to Canada Andrelita Austria and the Federal Minister of Small Business and MPP for Mississauga Streetsville Rechie Valdez. Prexy Steve Pagao delivered the closing remarks thanking those who helped organize the program and the various guests and sponsors. He also announced the initial projects and the forthcoming activities of the newly minted business organization.

Philippine Consuls Mary Grace Villamayor & Rodney Jonas Sumague, and Cultural Officer Tey Samonte were present and attended to the guests. The attendees include Monina Serrano, Michele Serrano, Al Tupe, Veronica Javier, Janet Lim, Michelle Ramos, Romy Marquez, Raymond Santos, Tony San Juan and other community leaders.

After the “kodakans”, fresh snacks and refreshments were served to the delight of the attendees. Lots of gifts and prizes donated by business sponsors were also raffled off. It was certainly a good gathering that augurs a wonderful beginning for the “bagong samahang mga ma-ngangalakal na Filipino sa Canada” More power! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

‘Mr. and Mrs. Gil?’: Congratulations flood fictional ‘LizQuen’ wedding pic



you... I hope it’s real,” commented a different user with emojis of clapping hands, kissing faces and heart-eyed faces.

A reverse image search of the picture reveals that the still is a scene from their 2016 ABS-CBN teleserye “Dolce Amore,” where Liza played the rich Serena Marchesa while Enrique played Tenten Ibarra, a boy who does unconventional jobs to get by.

The teleserye had the rich-girl-meets-poor-boy trope, with their characters eventually marrying each other in the final episode.

Liza wore a wedding dress designed by celebrity fashion designer Francis Libiran, while Enrique wore a classic Barong Tagalog.

“Dolce Amore” was the second teleserye project of their love team called “LizQuen.”

Last February, Enrique dispelled breakup rumors with Liza following constant speculations about their relationship status since last year.

The rumors were amplified by the confirmed breakups of other celebrity couples earlier this year such as Jericho Rosales and Kim Jones, as well as Bea Alonzo and Dominic Roque.

KathNiel, LizQuen’s contemporary, also ended their 11-year relationship in November 2023.

Last March, Enrique’s absence from a block screening of his movie held by the actress was noticed by online users.

Liza and Enrique have been in a relationship for the past eight years, although they only confirmed it in 2019.

Did Liza Soberano and Enrique Gil, also known as “LizQuen,” tie the knot?

This was what Facebook page “Lizquen Diaries,” which has 20,000 followers, implied in a post on Thursday.

“Congratulations, Mr. [and] Mrs. Gil,” it said with emojis of a bride and groom.

Its post has amassed 27,000 likes and love reactions, 1,600 comments and over 100 shares so far.

The comments section was flooded with congratulatory messages.

“Wow, congratulations,” a Facebook user wrote.

“Wow, so happy for you both,” another user commented.

“Congratulations... happy for you... and praying for your new journey as [a] new couple... God bless po,” wrote another Pinoy.

“Congratulations to both of

Why Dingdong Dantes finds it hard to give advice to aspiring actors



Dingdong Dantes was honest enough to admit that he found it hard to dispense advice to aspiring actors despite being more than qualified to do so.

The STAR asked GMA Network's top male star, who has dedicated more than half of his life to the Philippine entertainment industry, about what advice could he give to budding and emerging artists, actors, entertainers, especially at this time when the media landscape, platforms and audience's preferences have changed.

"You know, okay, it's difficult to answer that because I don't think I'm in a position to really give specific advice to aspiring actors and maybe also to the younger generation when it comes to this. I do not have control over how they will interpret (things) because the circumstances might be different if they do it tomorrow versus how I did it in the past and how I'm doing it now," the 43-year-old actor said in an interview after his contract renewal with long-time home network GMA.

Present at the D-Day are senior vice president for Entertainment Group Lilybeth Rasonable; president and chief executive officer Gilberto Duavit Jr.; Dingdong; GMA Network chairman Felipe Gozon; executive vice president and chief financial officer Felipe Yalong; and Dingdong's manager, PPL Entertainment president and CEO Perry Lansigan.

"Pero ang pwede ko lang sabihin ay kung ano yung nako-control ko ngayon at yun ay syempre maganda na meron kang appreciation sa mga nagbibigay sayo ng opportunity. In my case, I'm always grateful that GMA has opened its doors to me. GMA has given me a platform to showcase whatever I have. And in my case, it's the ability to act, with television as the platform, para po maka-pag-(portray) ako ng mga roles. So, yun lang naman ang kaya kong ma-control — to be the best performer that I can be.

"On the personal side, what I can control is to become the best dad, the best actor, or the best husband that I can be, right? That's all I can do but how they interpret it, that's up to them because, again, their circumstances will be different. But I hope whatever it is, I know and I'm sure that you will be way better than whatever

you're saying right now — hindi lang sa akin kundi sa mga contemporaries ko."

Dingdong has been with GMA for 28 years now, counting the years since he first set foot on stage as a dancer, not yet an actor, via the late German Moreno's "That's Entertainment" show.

"Mas nag-remisce ako dun dahil yun yung first opportunity that was given to me to really perform and I had a feeling at that time, at 16 years old, na baka maaaring hindi pa tayo sure sa gusto nating gawin but because I was having this feeling of excitement of performing on stage, ito talaga yung gusto ko gawin forever. And true enough, I was able to prove that this is really my dream job. So, I'm happy to be here, stepping on the same stage again."

The actor never thought he'd last long in this business. "No, not really... But because now I'm looking at opportunities like this, things like this (contract renewal, etc.), chapters," he said.

"So clearly when I was starting — that story about me dancing — it was a very important chapter in my life and so many other chapters followed after that. There's the entry into television, films, and hosting. Even my personal life, a lot of it is connected to GMA." So, according to him, the "cycle" has restarted with a new chapter in his professional life and relationship with the network.

Through the years, Dingdong said he never came to a point of being tempted or entertaining the idea of shifting networks.

"I don't even remember na umabot din sa ganun but ang ganda kasi ng working relationship namin ng GMA. Our relationship is very clear — me as a collaborator, I'm here as a talent and at the same time, this is what I appreciate about GMA because they are genuinely concerned and interested in the personal and career growth of every talent.

"Like with me, meaning, kung saan ako pwede pang mag-grow sa ibang larangan. For example, they permitted me to make a film with other producers, other networks," he said.

One example is him co-producing and co-starring with his wife Marian Rivera in the ABS-CBN Star Cinema film "Rewind," which

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went on to become the highest-grossing Filipino movie of all time.

"They allow that because they see the value in it, you know, it's really for the benefit of that person, that talent. That's something I'm really grateful for. So, kaya minsan hindi naman kinakailangan na yung dapat dito, dapat dyan, because

they are very lenient and that's really what they want, for each talent to grow. I am grateful."

Dingdong teased new projects following his grand contract renewal dubbed as D-Day or Dingdong Day, including hosting "The Voice Kids Philippines" and a movie with GMA Pictures.



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House-approved divorce bill delays in transmittal to Senate

MANILA, Phl — The House of Representatives has yet to submit the bill it passed on absolute divorce to the Senate after the Office of the Secretary General deferred the measure's transmittal to the upper chamber.

In a letter written by Albay First District Rep. Edcel Lagman, the lawmaker said that the office of House Secretary General Reginald Velasco "deferred the transmittal to the Senate of House Bill No. 9349 or "An Act Reinstating Absolute Divorce as an Alternative Mode for the Dissolution of Marriage." The lower chamber approved the measure on the third and final reading last May 22.

"The purported reason for the delay is that there is a need to report for the

Plenary's action the corrected affirmative votes from 126 to 131," Lagman said.

"I beg to disagree. There is no need to wait. The irreversible fact is that the affirmative votes got the majority," he asserted.

He likewise pointed out that a "non-member of the House has officially protested challenging the result."

"The correction can be made when the House opens its Third Regular Session on 22 July 2024, without prejudice to the mandate of the House for the Secretary General to transmit immediately to the Senate the engrossed copy of the approved absolute divorce bill," Lagman said.

Among the grounds for absolute di-

voice include: physical violence or grossly abusive conduct directed against the petitioner, a common child, or a child of the petitioner; physical violence or moral pressure to compel the petitioner to change religious or political affiliation; and attempt of respondent to corrupt or induce the petitioner, a common child, or a child of the petitioner, to engage in prostitution, or connivance in such corruption or inducement.

Below are the other grounds mentioned in the measure:

- Final judgment sentencing the respondent to imprisonment of more than six (6) years, even if pardoned
- Drug addiction or habitual alcoholism or chronic gambling of the respondent

- Homosexuality of the respondent
- Contracting by the respondent of a subsequent bigamous marriage, whether in the Philippines or abroad
- Marital infidelity or perversion or having a child with another person other than one's spouse during the marriage, except when upon the mutual agreement of the spouses, a child is born to them through in vitro fertilization or a similar procedure or when the wife bears a child after being a victim of rape
- Attempt by the respondent against the life of the petitioner, a common child or a child of the petitioner
- Abandonment of petitioner by respondent without justifiable cause for more than one (1) year
- When the spouses are legally separated by judicial decree for more than two (2) years, either spouse can petition the proper Family Court for an absolute divorce based on said judicial decree of legal separation

Heart Evangelista begins work as Senate Spouses Foundation head

MANILA -- Actress, model and fashionista Heart Evangelista met with the spouses of other senators as she began her work as the new head of the Senate Spouses Foundation.

"Our very first meeting and as they say, coming together is just the beginning. Excited to get down to work! Thank you for the warm welcome fellow senate spouses. Ready to honor the challenge of working together and find ways to make our communities better and stronger," Evangelista said in the caption of her Instagram post which showed her leading a meeting of the Senate spouses.

Shown in the video were Kat Pimentel, wife of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel III; and Mariel Padilla, wife of Senator Robin Padilla.

Evangelista now helms the group of spouses of the members of the Upper Chamber of Congress as wife of Senate President Francis Escudero, who was



elected to replace Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri.

The wife of the Senate President heads the group which is known for pursuing civic work alongside the legislative work of Senators.

In a separate Instagram post on the Senate Spouses Foundation account, Evangelista paid tribute to her predecessor Audrey Tan Zubiri.

"The new leadership of SSFI headed by Ms. Love Marie Escudero @ iamhearte pays tribute to Ms. Audrey

Tan Zubiri who helmed and served the foundation in many other ways through her community and voluntary works. Her dedication and hard work has nurtured and strengthened promotion of humanitarian welfare, which is at the core of the foundation," the SSF said in the post.

"Thank you @audreytanzubiri for your inspiration and dedication. We will continue the works you and the ladies before you have started. We will work harder to raise the foundation to even greater heights to improve the lives of our people and communities," the SSF added.

stage, we aim to inspire and empower the next generation of Filipino Canadian tech leaders. This initiative also strengthens our community's presence and influence within the broader Canadian and global business landscapes.



"Philippine Canadian Chamber of Commerce (PCCC) To Showcase Innovators at Collision Conference 2024."

The Philippine Canadian Chamber of Commerce (PCCC) is proud to announce its participation as a partner in the upcoming Collision Conference, scheduled from June 17-20, 2024, at the Erencare Centre in Toronto. This event marks the first time Filipino Canadian innovators will be showcased alongside leading global technologies and Fortune

500 companies at a prestigious tech industry conference.

This participation is a significant achievement for the FilCan community, highlighting our contributions to the global tech industry and fostering a sense of pride and recognition for Filipino Canadian entrepreneurs. In showcasing our innovators on the international

The PCCC booth at Collision Conference will feature four ALPHA STARTUP companies, each pioneering advancements in their respective fields, and partner companies supporting the growth and success of Filipino Canadian businesses. Additionally, this collaboration with the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), IT & Business Process Association Philippines (IBPAP), and the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines underscores the growing synergy between our nations in fostering innovation and technological leadership.

OPM is more than alive and kicking

Believe it or not, the music legend that is David Foster is about to mount his fifth performance in Manila when he brings anew his celebrated "Hitman: David Foster and Friends Asia Tour 2024" on June 18.

Why does the show keep returning to Manila?

"There is no place I love more than playing in the Philippines," Foster declared. "It's just an incredible place. The more the audience loves the music, the more it reaches the better. It's just really great."

But of course, whenever Foster performs on these shores, Filipino performers are in his lineup of "Friends," given his tremendous admiration for the Filipino artist.

Lucky and deserving youngsters JV Decena of 2015's "The Voice Kids Philippines" and Joaquin Garcia of 2018's "The Clash" have been chosen.

Who among his Filipino friends are his favorites?

"Martin [Nievera] is very fabulous. I love him like a brother — this jacket he gave me.

"There's also Jake, formerly known as Charice, who's amazing. I still get people [telling] me every day, 'Thank you for Jake.'

"And then, of course, there's Morissette, who I think is a global superstar. I've worked with her before, and she's amazing," Foster said, naming his Top 3 Filipino musical buddies.

He needn't say more, though, that the Filipino audience holds a special place in his heart, and yet the legendary David Foster ended the Zoom exchange expressing, "We received so much love from Filipinos in last year's concert, and we're so grateful for that. It was a worthwhile moment performing here in Manila with such amazing artists. This year, we can't wait to meet our Filipino fans again and give them a truly enchanting night of memorable performances."

With David Foster's overwhelming confidence in Philippine musicians, OPM is thriving and sure to endure.

My Instagram post regarding OPM icon and our own prolific singer-songwriting genius Ogie Alcasid says it all.

"Huge congratulations [go out to] to the A-mazing, Ogie Alcasid, Original Pilipino Music's iconic singer-songwriter and AI Advocate, on the highly triumphant trade launch of the Alcasid Total Entertainment and Artist Management, Inc., [better known as] The A-Team.

As everyone knows, Ogie — who has long headed the Organasayon ng Pilipinong Mang-Aawit — already has an overflowing plate of commitments.

So, going back to my IG post, "We had to ask this of Ogie, 'Do you really have time for all of this, still?'"

"His awesome answer? 'It's for OPM. Kailangang alagaan [we need to take care of it].'"

What else is there to say but good on you, Ogie. Salt of the earth, you are an ace guy indeed, and truly worthy of support from this column beyond.



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Jose "Joey" Baking

Dina Bonnevie recalls how she managed to forgive Vic Sotto, Coney Reyes

Dina Bonnevie shared that her daughter Danica Sotto played a part in the process of forgiving not only ex-husband Vic Sotto and Coney Reyes, who was the actor-host's next wife after her, but also herself.

Moreover, Danica made her realize that she had long been bitter about the situation.

"It took a lot of time, until the point where Danica was telling me, 'Alam mo Mommy, you're so bitter. I wish you would really let go, because you are so bitter,'" she said. "Through time, sabi ko, walang pupuntahan ito, unless I really let go and just accept that it's like this."

Bonnevie also shared that Reyes invited her to go to their church, which made her see the bigger picture of the situation.

"Nakita ko na, she changed in leaps and bounds, like bringing people to God, bringing people to Jesus, and telling people about the good news of salvation. So I asked myself, 'Is this a person I would like to hate? I can't hate this person. I can't,'" she expounded.

After their visit to the church, the "Katorse" actress remarked that it dawned



on her that it was time to forgive her ex-husband and Reyes, as it was also a way of forgiving herself in the process and starting a new beginning.

"I let it go. I gave her a bunch of white roses, and I said, 'I forgive you,'" she recalled. "I forgave her; I forgave Vic; I also sent him flowers; and I said, 'I forgive you.' But most of all, I forgave me."

"I went to the beach one time with the kids, and I imagined myself

throwing all my tears into the sea, all my sama ng loob, draining it out. 'I'm letting you go. I want a fresh start, a new me,'" the award-winning actress continued.

Bonnevie and Sotto tied the knot in 1982 and got separated four years later. Their marriage was annulled in 1992. They share two kids together, Danica and Oyo Boy Sotto.

Meanwhile, Vic and Reyes were together sometime in 1989. They had one son, Vico Sotto.

Vic is now married to "Eat Bulaga" co-host Pauleen Luna, with whom he shares two daughters.

Angel Aquino react to Hilda Koronel comeback talks

There are rumors that actress Hilda Koronel is coming back to the Philippines to receive an Urian Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Wow! " actress Angel Aquino expressed her delight at a recent exclusive interview with Philstar.com.

"And you're an Urian winner yourself!" this author said.

"Yayyy!" she and her daughter Iana Bernardez giggled.

"How's it like, you know, receiving your first [Urian] award?" this author asked.

"Um, what was my first award? It was very, of course, overwhelming," Angel said as she tries to remember her first accolade from the premier film critics' group.

It was for "Huling Cha-Cha ni Anita," a coming-of-age film by writer-director Sigrid A. P. Bernardo from 2013. It's about a 12-year-old tomboy (Teri Malvar) who gets a hopeless crush on a stunning woman named Pilar (Angel Aquino) who returns to her rural village.

For her supporting role, Angel won awards not only at the Urian but also at Gawad Tanglaw, Golden Screen and Star Awards for Movies.

It was also the Manunuris who first noticed her acting prowess, when they nominated her supporting turn in 1999's "Sana Pag-ibig Na," directed by Angel's mentor and discoverer, Jeffrey Jeturian; followed by 2001's "Laro sa Baga," and 2007's "Kaleldo."

In a rare feat, Angel was nominated for best supporting actress at the 2014 Urian Awards for both "Ang Huling Chah-Cha ni

Anita" and Adolfo Alix Jr.'s "Porno." Her first best supporting award, however, was given by the Star Awards for Movies in 2001 for Chito S. Roño's "Laro sa Baga."

Angel's first best actress award was given at the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival in 2006 for "Donsol," written and directed by Alix.

"It's overwhelming. I never thought I'd achieve that in my career as an actor.

Because when you act, you don't do it for the awards. You know, because you owe it to the role, you owe it to yourself, and you owe it to the people who will be paying, or who will be losing some of their personal time just to watch your material.

"Ako, I always, as when I do my job, it's 'yun 'yung guiding principle in acting. So, sobrang bonus na lang when you get recognized, when your work gets recognized," Angel explained.

'I made it': Alex Diaz on working with 'Mulan' star Ming-Na Wen

Filipino-Canadian actor Alex Diaz could not help but gush over the thought that he got the chance to work with Disney legend Ming-Na Wen, best known for originating the titular character in "Mulan."

Alex stars in the queer musical film "Glitter and Doom," which uses songs by Grammy winners the Indigo Girls, opposite Alan Cammish. Ming-Na portrays Ivy, the mother of Alex's Glitter.

In an exclusive interview with Philstar.com, Alex shared his experience working



with Ming-Na on set. "Whatever you feel when you watch the movie, whatever your sexuality is, nobody can not tell me I didn't share screentime with Ming-Na Wen!" Alex exclaimed.

Alex said Ming-Na would give advice during shoots and kisses on the cheek, adding that some scenes had to change direction because the two actors of Asian descent were too chummy with one another.

"I think they cast well, we look like we could be related!" Alex quipped, noting that Ming-Na worked hand-in-hand with Lea Salonga (the singing voice for Mulan). "[It's] like I made it and I cannot stop now."

The actor also recalled one shoot in a circus where he had to do a stunt from 20 feet up in the air despite being nauseous from all the kerosene he was exposed to while juggling fire as part of his characterization.

"I get down with no harness and Ming-Na is like, 'Everybody did you see that? Come on!' and just starts clapping. The whole production then gives me a standing ovation. To have Ming-Na Wen initiate that is so..." Alex trailed off with a smile.

Apart from "Mulan," Ming-Na is also known for her roles in "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.," "ER," "Street Fighter," "The Joy Luck Club," and the "Star Wars" franchise as Fennec Shand.

Yassi Pressman, Luigi Villafuerte 'hard launch' relationship with festival PDA

Actress Yassi Pressman publicly showed her love to Camarines Sur Governor Luigi Villafuerte by torridly kissing him at a recent event in the province, Kaogma Festival.

As seen in the province's Facebook page, Yassi was dancing onstage to Sia's hit song "Unstoppable" when Luigi serenaded her with Enrique Iglesias' "Hero."

The audience went to "kilig" frenzy as the couple held hands, hugged and passionately kissed each other.

"I love you, Baba," Luigi told Yassi after the kiss.

Though they haven't confirmed their relationship yet, the public display of affection between the two was the "hard launch" of their relationship.

Last New Year, they spent the holidays in Vietnam.

"Last year was such a rollercoaster, but the ride, be it scary sometimes, will always be fun," Yassi captioned the post on Instagram.



In August last year, Luigi planted a kiss on Yassi's cheeks during the actress' hosting duties at the 74th Foundation Event of Bombon, Camarines Sur.

The viral video shows Yassi and Luigi playfully teasing each other with the prospect of a kiss.

"Ako na lang ha [ang ki-kiss]," Yassi said.

The crowd, however, wanted the governor to initiate the kiss.

Former 'Pinoy Big Brother' housemate Elisse Joson shares advice to aspiring housemates

Showbiz's most famous house is set to open again for aspiring housemates, and one of its former residents, Elisse Joson, shared a tip to those who want to become one of its upcoming residents.

"Ang advice ko lang is to really enjoy the moment kasi hindi mo nga malalaman kung ano ang mangyayari sa susunod na araw," the actress said.

Elisse spoke with reporters at her recent launch as the new face of New Moon, a new player in the glutathione market in the country.

Elisse was among the celebrity housemates, along with McCoy de Leon, in the 2016 edition of the reality TV show.

"So ako, I enjoyed the whole experience and 'yun lang talaga ang maa-advice ko and just live by the moment habang nandoon sila sa loob ng bahay. It's exciting," she added.

She did not win the edition, but won the hearts of fans as part of McClisse, the love team between her and McCoy.

They eventually got together, split in 2018 and got back together in 2021. They have a three-year-old daughter named Felize.



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As Pride 2024 opens, LGBT community promises ‘show of force’ to pass SOGIESC Equality Bill

MANILA — As Pride 2024 opens, the LGBT community in the Philippines promised a “show of force” for passage of a bill against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics — legislation that opponents of the bill say is unnecessary and could encroach on freedom of religion.

The Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality filed a consolidated SOGIESC



Equality Bill in 2022 after committee hearings. Versions at the House have been transmitted to its Committee on Appropriations. “We’re happy to see more and more Filipino families stand up for their

LGBTQIA+ children, relatives, and loved ones. Amidst the many faces of discrimination and violence against the LGBTIQ+ community, we remain hopeful that more allies and rainbow families will show up and share their love and support at the Pride March and for the SOGIE Equality Bill,” PANTAY national convener Vince Liban said.

Liban said the celebration of Pride Month, when the community and its al-

lies celebrate LGBTQIA+ people as well as their contributions to the nation,” will be one voice calling for a national legislation that will protect LGBTIQ+ Filipinos in schools, workplaces, and in the streets.”

Pride Month closes with the Pride March — set for June 30 this year — and will be a “show of force” as well as a “love letter” to Congress to urge lawmakers to “embrace equality and pass the SOGIE Equality Bill,” Liban also said.

FAMAS apologizes for snubbing Eva Darren; family accepts apology; singer responds

The family of Eva Darren has accepted the apology of Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences Awards (FAMAS).

In a lengthy post on Facebook, Eva’s son Fernando de la Pena first thanked the social media users who supported his mother.

“My Dear Facebook Family... we truly appreciate the overwhelming display of love and support. Once again the people have spoken and proved that the keyboard is mightier than the sword,” he said.

“Salamat my kinakapatid Reb Belleza and Miss Maila Gumila for spreading the word. My mom is one tough cookie, she is a battle-tested survivor of life’s arena. Ms. Eva Darren has found some comfort in the midst of a loving family which includes you all,” he added.

Fernando also narrated how his mom’s FAMAS trophy is being taken cared of in their home.

“I remember one of my designated house chores as a child was to make sure mom’s FAMAS trophy from 1969 stays constantly dust-less and polished. One of the very few treasured possessions we have. We revered FAMAS and everything it stands for. This is why what happened to my mother, in the eyes of our family, was incomprehensible, unexpected, unimaginable,” he said.

He also answered FAMAS’ statement that the production team cannot locate Eva.

“My mom was seated in a table front and center adjacent to the stage, rubbing elbows with my second mom, Ninang Divina Valencia and my awesome Tita Marissa Delgado,” he said.

At the end of his statement, Fernando said they accept FAMAS’ apology.

“For the reasons I stated above and on behalf of my mother, Ms. Eva Darren, our family accepts the olive branch that FAMAS has extended and only hope that future events would prove to be contrasting,” he said.

The singer they are referring to, Sheena Palad, explained she was initially just supposed to perform two songs but while she was on standby, a staff approached her. “Sheena, can we ask a big favor? Can you present the awards?” “Sabi ko, Okay, sigé. No problem.”

She continued, “That’s it, hindi ko po alam na si Ms. Eva ‘yung magpe-present po. Hindi po kasi ako nanonood nang awards night because I was in the holding area. Hindi ko po alam kung paano mag-present. Sobrang kaba ko...I was not prepared. Hindi ko po nabasa ‘yung script.”

Sheena Palad further explained her side through her video caption, revealing she has been receiving “offensive



accusations.” “Hi, Everybody! I am Sheena Palad, the ‘young singer’ who was mentioned alongside Mr Tirso Cruz III. And we (bf Johann Enriquez and I) would like to give our statement regarding the situation. I am being harassed, maligned, called names and thrown offensive accusations today online and ALL I CAN SAY IS... Buti

na lang may Lord Jesus Christ ako sa buhay ko. Honestly, Hindi ko kaya to! It’s also a lesson for everybody to not QUICKLY judge a person. And makes me think too that what I’m going through doesn’t even come close to what my Savior had to go through when He suffered and died on the cross for me. Thank you po!”

Why Kira Balinger didn’t talk to Kelvin Miranda for two years

Actress Kira Balinger said that, in the two years since she shot the romantic drama “Chances Are, You and I” with Kelvin Miranda, the two of them “did not talk at all.”

“It was best that we didn’t at the time, that we healed first. We just chose to let time pass and not react to what people were saying about us because they weren’t true, anyway. That’s why we can show up better now, because we took that time away from each other,” Kira tsaid.

Shortly after filming, Kelvin’s girlfriend at the time, social media influencer Roselle Vytico, accused him of cheating on her with Kira, even posting screenshots of what she claimed were proof of the two actors’ romantic involvement.

Kelvin denied this during the recent media gathering to promote the theatrical release of “Chances Are, You and I.” The two began working on the film in November 2021 in Manila, then in February 2022 in South Korea.



“We’re OK. As colleagues, we both show up for work. I can say that we’re both professional when it comes to handling our jobs. This is a beautiful film. Direk Catherine (Camarillo) and her team gave their all for this movie. It’s only right that we show up for them as well,” declared Kira. “Kelvin and I are friends now. I don’t think we could do this together if we weren’t, if we still have issues with each other—that would be hard.”

When asked to recall the first time she spoke with Kelvin again, Kira said: “When we saw each other again to discuss the promo, there was tension. I didn’t know how he would react. I also didn’t know how I would react. Was I really over it? Am I healed or am I just distracted? Now, I can really say that it’s done already. I chose to forgive and move on because that’s the right thing for me to do.”

Andrea Brillantes: Life is so much more than just social media

Andrea reprises her role as Sky in ‘High Street,’ the sequel to ABS-CBN teen drama series ‘Senior High.’

Andrea Brillantes is grounded in reality and doesn’t get easily affected by bashing on social media.

“Hindi po ako nagpapaka-in sa social media. I’m very grounded in the real world,” declared the Kapamilya actress when asked about how she handles online bashing in an interview.

“Honestly, I know it’s easier said than done but with social media, you can easily turn off your phone. Just read a book, meet your friends, (do other things) like reconnecting with nature, going out of the house, meeting up with your friends (in person), not only through calls. There are so many ways to appreciate



the beauty of the world that was given to us.”

“I think if you only learn how to appreciate life itself, that life is so much more than just social media, your phone and the comments, and people you don’t know who make comments about your life, kailangan lang hindi yung into it masyado. I know it’s hurtful and it’s easier said than done, pero kailangan mo lang talagang ‘wag magpaapekto and let’s appreciate life,” the actress added.

The perils of social media are one of the issues being tackled in “High Street,” the sequel to ABS-CBN series “Senior High,” which airs at 9:30 p.m. on Kapamilya Channel, A2Z, TV5, iWantTFC, and Kapamilya Online Live on ABS-CBN Entertainment’s YouTube channel and Facebook page.

At 31, James Reid admits changes in priorities, ready to settle down

The adulting stage is real.

At 31, James Reid, who celebrated his birthday last May 11, admitted that his priorities in life are changing.

"I feel it. I definitely feel it. Priorities are changing," Reid said. "It's really trying to see my music through, trying to see my career through, really just doing things the right way. And maybe settling down soon."

Shocked as I was with his candid answer, Reid said, "I should've not said that. Never mind!"

Asked if he is emotionally and mentally ready to take his relationship with girlfriend Issa Pressman to the next level, he said, "I think so. I think I learned a lot from my 20s and hopefully we all do."

While that life-changing decision is still waiting in the wings, Reid is laser-focused on some projects that he's lined up to do.

First, his new single "Hurt Me Too" just came out a few days ago, together with an emo-vibed music video. Reid said this is his first time to write an emotional ballad about his personal past experience.

When he was in Los Angeles, it was DJ Virman of Far East Movement who convinced him to collaborate with different producers and just explore different kinds of

music. He then sat down with a songwriter who shepherded him through the process of writing the song.

"It was like therapy," described Reid.

The Careless Music CEO didn't say if "Hurt Me Too" was an ode to a particular person in his past, but said that the song "was inspired by a lot of different, not even just breakups, but people who have left me in my life.

It was like a therapy session almost. Just talking about people of my breakups and people like, you know, who have come and gone in your life and what it came down to is, sometimes, you really do your best and give it your all and sometimes that's just not enough and maybe it has to be that way."

"It's sad but you know at the end of the day things do end.

And I think what is important and what I want to say to all those people in my life is that, I really tried my best and I hope you guys know that. And it is what it is," he added.

Aside from music, Reid will also make a comeback into acting.

"That is my plan. There is actually a project that I'm working on right now. Very early stages of the concept but my plan is to be able to produce and star in a film," he said.

The yet-untitled film is set for local release soon.



Did Kobe Paras confirm romance with Kylene Alcantara?

Kobe Paras shared on his Instagram page a photo of Kylene Alcantara along with a white heart emoji, seemingly confirming the dating rumors hounding them.

Paras, through his Instagram Stories on Thursday, May

30, reshared Alcantara's Instagram post in which she can be seen covering almost half of her face with her hand while laughing.

In the actress' same post, the basketball player left a

heart-eyes emoji via the comments section, which left fans surprised and gushing.

Alcantara, however, did not immediately respond to what appears to be Paras' expression of admiration. Both of them have yet to confirm outright their rumored dating status as well, as of this writing.

Such romance speculations recently arose after eagle-eyed netizens noticed that the pair respective-



ly shared photos taken at a Makati restaurant on the same day.

Alcantara was previously linked to actor-TV host Mavy Legaspi, whom she unfollowed on Instagram around the same time she shared similar photos with Paras.

Meanwhile, Paras, the son of actor-comedian Benjie Paras and actress Jacki Forster, was previously in a relationship with Erika, the eldest daughter of actress Ina Raymundo.

PIDC begins Filipino History Month with a Picnic Salo-Salo and Wreath-laying Rites

by: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Hello June! Hello, "mga kababayan, kapamilya, at kaibigan!" June is a special month for Filipinos in Canada as they proudly celebrate Filipino heritage and culture. The Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), a prominent umbrella Filipino Canadian association, is one of several community-based organizations in Ontario that organizes and offers traditional and culture-centred commemorative activities during the month.

On June 1, 2024, as a starting point, PIDC held its first series of events to welcome June with the "Philippines Flag Raising" and the "Salo-Salu Picnic", ably co-chaired and hosted by PIDC Vice President Ben Corpuz and PIDC Director Melinda Manlapaz, at Earl Bales Park, North York, Toronto. The occasion was an apt celebration of Filipino Heritage Month and the 75th Anniversary of Canada - Philippines Bilateral Relations.

The PIDC Executive Directors led by President Tom Tan presided over the gathering to usher in "Filipino Heritage



Month" with a solemn wreath-laying rite commemorating the 163rd birth anniversary of Dr. Jose Rizal, the Philippines' national hero.

The ceremonies started with singing the national anthems of the Philippines and Canada with trumpet accompaniment by Solomon De Vera, a professional engineer. PIDC head honcho Tom Tan then delivered his welcome address. Officiated jointly by Ben Corpuz and Melinda Manlapaz, the program includes special messages by the Member of Parliament and

Minister of Small Business, Hon. Rechie Valdez, the Ontario Solicitor General, Hon. Michael Kerzner, and the Philippine Consul in Toronto Mary Grace Villamayor. After which a ceremonial cutting of the Philippine flag-decorated cake was undertaken.

PIDC beauty pageant candidates were introduced by PIDC Treasurer Rory Elefano and her committee while Sir Lapulapu "Popoy" Cana rendered a stirring "Bayan Ko" vocal rendition. Ben Corpuz paid tribute to the late Paulina Corpuz

who spearheaded the proclamation of Filipino Heritage Month in Toronto. He also paid tribute to PIDC officers who passed away. KOR's Sir Frank Crawford stressed the significance of the occasion and extolled the heroism of Dr. Jose Rizal. Filipino Consul Mary Grace Villamayor presented the Philippine Consul General "Certificate of Appreciation" to PIDC, and to event co-chairs Ben Corpuz and Melinda Manlapaz.

With over 75 guests, community leaders, PIDC officers & directors as well as Knights of Rizal-Canada Region officers, the attendees gathered for a brunch of champurrado, "sinangag", fried "tuyo & danggit", tapas, scrambled eggs, "pandesal", pastries, cake, and coffee. The park gathering was a successful and meaningful event, indeed. (By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

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FCT Ushers Filipino Heritage Month with a Pistahan sa Toronto

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

June is the month in which Filipinos in Canada generally celebrate their Filipino heritage, history, and culture. In Scarborough, Toronto, the Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT), true to its tradition, held its annual "Pistahan sa Toronto" event on June 2, 2024, (Sunday) at their community hall and front yard. The festive atmosphere was conducted with over a hundred people in attendance.

The 6-hour festive gathering was carried out in cooperation with the Member of Parliament for Scarborough North Shaun Chen whose constituency and riding include the present site of the 35-year volunteer-run community centre. As early as 9:00 am, guests and community members began celebrating with party games and contests, group singing, and special dance

performances punctuated by a simple "salo-salo" of Filipino food, kakanin, and beverages.

FCT President & CEO Mary Ann San Juan warmly welcomed the attendees to the "Pistahan Festival". She said that today's event "is not just a celebration but a testament to the strength and spirit of our community". She cited the community "as the heart of everything we do in the Centre" and thanked the FCT Team and the Board of Directors "for their hard work and commitment".

MP S. Chen congratulated the officers and members of the FCT for the tremendous success of the Heritage Month celebration, and expressed that "it is an honour to come together to commemorate the rich heritage and contributions of the Filipino community in Scarborough North". He said "This month, let us learn more about Filipino history, culture, and experienc-

es."

Tomas "Tom" Tan, President of the Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), a non-profit umbrella organization of several social, cultural, professional and community organizations in Ontario was the keynote speaker of the day. Tan thanked the FCT, its executive directorate as well as those in attendance. After reciting a bit of Filipino history, he wished that PIDC and FCT would have continued collaboration and cooperation on matters impacting the Fil-Can community.

Among the community groups who presented delightful presentations were the Ukelele Ensemble and Chorale of the Seniors In Action organization, the dance-to-the-music troupe led by Reilly Pardinias, and some talented musical artists and singers. It was certainly a day full of fun, food, fellowship, and sharing. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Lovi Poe on motherhood, dealing with negative comments

Of all the roles she could play, actress Lovi Poe considers being a mother the most difficult.

Lovi feels lucky to have people to look up to. "My mom is one of them," she said of former commercial model and actress Rowena Moran. Lovi has to "shorten the distance" between her and her US-based husband, Monty Blencowe, she said.

At 35, Lovi said she is aware that her work as an actress is not something permanent. This is why, especially now that she is about to build her own family, she has put up her own film outfit called C'est Lovi Productions and is working on her first full-length feature.



home here in the Philippines.

In her early years as an actress, Lovi received a lot of discouraging comments on her weight and her skin color. "I was told that I'll never make it because I was dark, because I'm flat-chested. I was 15 when I was told that I was never going to make it because I'm chubby. Of course, I felt affected, but I promised myself I would do my best as an actress, and that things would come through eventually."

things would come through eventually."

Happy place

"That's one reason I ventured into producing, so that I could still be part of the industry even though I'm no longer acting," she pointed out. "Here's the truth, I love acting so much. When I'm on the set, I could probably say that I'm at my happiest when I'm acting. This is why creating projects for other people is one of the things that I would really want to do. So, of course, when I see talented and hardworking people, I would definitely love to put them in movies that I will be doing with my husband."

Achieving a work-life balance is the hardest thing for Lovi, she admitted. "I love my job. My husband knows this. I've been working since I was 15. It's something that he said he can no longer change about me. I'm very grateful that he is supportive."

Supportive spouse

"I'm just grateful that he is very understanding and is supportive of my goals. I'm happy being

Not always confident

To young girls, who may be struggling with insecurities, Lovi has this advice: "Don't let yourself feel down. Stay positive and just work to become your best."

I was never going to make it because I'm chubby.

She continued:

"It's not everyday that I feel confident. Sometimes, you really have to pick yourself up and keep yourself motivated. It's important to surround yourself with good people and always have a positive outlook in life."

"You won't always feel beautiful, but you have control over what you do to yourself. You feed yourself with positive words in your mind and nourish yourself with positivity. Just remember that everyone is beautiful in his or her own way. What makes you different is what's going to make you shine."

UK Amazon Prime removes Filipino movie over baby scene

UK - Just one viewer made the complaint, but the film was pulled down from the site

Amazon was forced to remove a film from Prime Video following just a singular complaint over a scene with a baby.

According to Deadline, the viewer reportedly tried to contact the company with the complaint but didn't hear anything satisfactory back, and so went to Ofcom.

Added to Prime Video earlier this year, the controversial film in question is 2022's Pamasaha, rated 18+ on the streaming site.

The Filipino movie is about a penniless mum who travels to find her husband in Manila but has no choice but to 'use her body to get to her destination'.

Ofcom received a complaint about it from a viewer who said they were 'concerned



about the inclusion of a baby in scenes depicting sexual activity between adults'.

The media regulator said it then sought advice from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and it was found that the sequence in Pamasaha 'contains a frame that would contravene the Protection of Children Act 1977' - this is on the basis that the film shows 'a child in the same frame as sexual activity'.

Amazon was then contacted by BBFC and they removed the film from the streaming site in the UK, Deadline reports.

The company say that it considered its measures detecting prohibited material to be 'robust, complete and effective', and that this was evidenced by 'over a decade of content distribution



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“
I am writing this to show my support and empathy for all of the Filipinos who feel trapped in toxic marriages and can't find a way out - especially the ones who are experiencing abuse on a daily basis. Being forced to stay in a relationship that diminishes your self-worth will make you think less and less of yourself until you don't know yourself anymore. We deserve divorce.
”

MAXENE MAGALONA
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KAMI

under the supervision of Ofcom without any prior formal investigations from Ofcom'.

But Amazon did add that 'these sorts of content policies are nuanced and we regularly evaluate where we can make improvements'.

Directed by Roman Perez Jr. Pamasaha only scored a three star rating on Prime Video before it was taken down, from just five reviews. And on

IMDB, it has just 5.3 stars out of 10 from over 1,000 reviews.

And this film getting taken down could be a sign of things to come as the UK's new Media Bill passed not long before parliament was dissolved for the upcoming general election.

The legislation gives Ofcom the power to bring streamers into line with the regulation of broadcasters in areas including harmful content.

'Let's rethink': Why Dua Lipa's Manila leg of 'Radical Optimism' tour is earning buzz



Unamused reactions to English-Albanian pop singer Dua Lipa's date and venue for the Philippine leg of her "Radical Optimism" tour were posted online following the announcement of her tour's Asian dates.

Dua posted some snaps of her in Asia, as well as her tour dates and venues for the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea. She will be in the Philip-

pinos on Nov. 13, 2024, with the venue listed as the Philippine Arena in Bulacan, north of Manila.

Dua's Philippine leg earned mixed reactions from some Pinoy fans. Others were excited about the pop singer's return to the country after five years, when she performed in the SM Mall of Asia Arena in 2018.

However, there were some who were hesitant with her latest concert's date and venue choice.

"GIRL, NOT PH ARENA," an online user wrote in response to the announcement of Dua's Asia tour dates.

"Honestly, concert promoters need to stop using the PH Arena while the transpo [transportation] infrastructure isn't there yet. Will never watch a concert there hangga't wala pang reliable and fast public transportation to and from the venue. JEEZ," he commented.

Last year, complaints about travel experiences to and from the Philippine Arena for American singer Bruno Mars' concert trended on social media.

Among those who were late for his concert was host Maine Mendoza, who wondered how past concerts in the venue had fared.

"Happy pa din kasi umabot sa last two songs.

Napaka-hassle lang talaga ng entry and exit! Has it always been like this? Kumusta ang previous concerts dito?" she wrote before.

A concert reviewer of ABS-CBN also described the traffic toward the venue before as "brutal," adding that the northbound lanes of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) had become a "massive parking lot."

It is located in Bocaue, Bulacan. The province is commonly accessed via NLEX by those coming from Metro Manila and other areas to its south.

Claudine Barretto on divorce: 'Gives you second chance to right your wrongs'

Claudine Barretto gave her two cents on the much talked about topic of divorce, saying she believes it gives an individual the chance to "right [their] wrongs."

The actress, whose annulment process with estranged husband Raymart Santiago is still ongoing, shared photo quotes on the matter through her Insta-



gram page on Sunday, June 2.

One of the quotes reads, "Divorce: Having the courage to choose how you're going to spend the rest of your life," while the other describes divorce as "the end of an error."

Barreto further said in the caption, "Annulment is very long, painful [and] very expensive. Divorce gives you a second chance to right your wrongs."

The actress concluded her post by emphasizing that she's just stating her opinion.

At present, the Philippines and the city-state of Vatican are the only governments that have not legalized divorce.

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Marc Pingris, Kim Rodriguez deny rumored affair

Marc Pingris and Kim Rodriguez both broke their silence after rumors surfaced on social media about their alleged affair. This comes after netizens spotted the similarities of the backgrounds of their photos uploaded on their respective social media accounts.

On his social media accounts, the former PBA player firmly denied his involvement with the Kapuso artist. He maintained that he only encountered the actress once in his life and it was purely for business.

"Walang katotohanan ang mga lumalabas na balita tungkol sa amin ni Ms. Kim Rodriguez. Walang namamagitan sa aming dalawa gaya ng sinasabi ng ibang tao. Nakasama ko po si Ms. Kim sa isang basketball event at sa isa pang event noong naging muse siya ng team namin. Salamat din sa nag pa abot ng con-

cern," he wrote.

Marc added that he is on good terms with his wife, Danica Sotto-Pingris, despite several allegations of their misunderstanding.

"Ok kami ng pamilya ko. Wag na po tayo magpakalat ng mga balita na hindi totoo. Humihingi po kami ng respeto para hindi madamay ang mga anak namin ni Danica. Salamat po at God bless po," he closed.

Meanwhile, Kim denied the rumors through her manager, Ogie Diaz, who addressed the issue in his YouTube account. Kim maintained that

the photos uploaded by fans on social media only tells one side of the story.

"Hindi po kami magkasama niyan. Kahit i t a - n o n g n i y o p o s a g i r l n a y a n k u n g m a g - k a s a m a k a m i n i M a r c P i n - g r i s k u n g p a r e h o n i y a k a m i n g n a k i t a n a s a m e

time, I'm sure alam niya ang totoo," Kim said as quoted by Ogie.

The veteran talent manager added that Kim shared that she was with her friends during her Australia trip and not with Marc as some netizens suggested otherwise.

"Ang sabi naman sa akin ni Kim, meron siyang dalawang kaibigan na kasama nung nagbakasyon sila sa Australia. Sabi sa akin ni Kim, anong pakialam ko kung may picture doon si Marc Pingris sa Opera House, ako din may picture, lahat naman ng nagpupunta ng Sydney dapat may picture ka daw sa Opera House kaya may picture ako," he shared.

Marc has been with Danica since 2007 and shares two kids, Jean Michael and Aniella Micaela. The couple celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary last month.

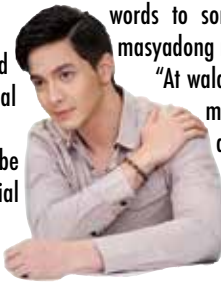


'Mag-fact check muna': Alden Richards warns public vs his 'fake' quotes about Daniel Padilla, Kathryn Bernardo

Kapuso star Alden Richards warned the public about fake news on social media.

Alden said the public should be careful on what to believe in social media.

He pointed out fake quote cards



about him commenting on ex-couple Kathryn Bernardo and Daniel Padilla.

"Kahit kailan po hindi po ako mag-ko-comment ng kahit anong defamatory words to someone na hindi ko naman masyadong nakakasama," Alden said.

"At wala naman akong karapatan na manghugsa sa taong tinutukoy d'un sa mga fake tweets na kumakalat... Ingat lang po tayo sa fake news dahil ang social media po eh, pugad ng fake news," he added.

Alden advised the public to fact-check first before believing anything they've seen on social media.

"So not until 'yung mga official accounts po ng mga artista ang nag-post nu'ng mga tweets na kumakalat diumano, eh huwag po nating agad paniwalaan," he said.

"At mag-fact check po muna tayo bagu tayo mag-call out ng judgement."

Kathryn and Alden were recently named as the Box Office Queen and King at the 2024 Box Office Entertainment Awards presented by the Guillermo Mendoza Memorial

Scholarship Foundation (GMMSF), Inc.

Kathryn won the award for her film "A Very Good Girl" with Dolly de Leon, while Alden won it because of his film "Five Breakups and A Romance" with Kathryn's friend Julia Montes.

Loisa Andanio apologizes for solo travelers remark

Kapamilya actress Loisa Andanio apologized for her controversial statement regarding solo travelers.

Loisa clarified her statement.

"Medyo bitin talaga 'yung interview na 'yun. Ang opinyon ko du'n parang for me, kung ako mag-so-solo travel grabe siguro 'yung pinagdadaan ko para umabot ako sa mag-solo na lang kasi ako 'yung personality ko gusto ko kasama si Ronnie (Alonte) or 'yung friends or 'yung family," she said.



"Hindi ko nilalahat, sa akin lang 'yun. Kung na misinterpret ng iba, sorry, opinion ko 'yun."



THE FILIPINO CENTRE, TORONTO
18th VICTORIA INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The 18th FCT-Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament (VIBT) was founded in 2007 in commemoration of Dr. Vicky Santiago's passion for improving the health and well-being of the Filipino-Canadian community.

"We started with 24 teams and now, we have around 76 teams playing in this tournament," says organizer Philip Beloso.

"We also like to thank Dr. Vicky Santiago for her continued support, she continues to be involved with the tournament," he added.

On May 17 to 19, 2024 (Victoria Day weekend), the 18th VIBT took place. Around 76 teams participated and numerous families and friends of team players attended to watch the games. A number of special guests also joined the fun-filled weekend, among them were: MP Rechie Valdez (Mississauga), MP Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre), Deputy Mayor Jennifer Mckelvie (Scarborough Rouge Park), Councillor Jamal Myers, Consul General Angelica Escalona, Minister of International Development Ahmed Hussen, and MPP Andrea Hazel. Victoria Basketball Tournament's biggest

DR. VICTORIA SANTIAGO

supporter, the late Wally Landicho was honored and receiving that award was his family.

As of 2024, VIBT is the longest running tournament (formerly Mabuhay) and one of the most organized leagues with an assigned nurse and police security.

Former Mayor John Tory has never missed a VIBT Opening Ceremony since 2014 and he did not, even this year.

Just like last year when he resigned, he watched the opening ceremony from the stands. But still popular with Filipinos, they still want their pictures with him.

hearing.

The Philippine Senate regularly posts their hearing schedule on its website.

Chie Filomeno keeps things 'low-key' with Jake Cuenca

It was last year that Chie Filomeno confirmed that she is dating fellow actor Jake Cuenca, and so far, she said they are happy.

The actress was recently launched as

the first-ever ambassador for beauty brand SkeeCare, which recently celebrated its fourth year anniversary. As part of its fourth-year milestone, the brand also introduced its new SkeeCare Rejuvenating and Maintenance sets.

"We're really happy. We're really happy and, ano, keeping things low-key," said the actress to reporters who covered the company's grand event in Grand Hyatt in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.



The actress shared what she feels about her relatively new relationship with the actor and how she appreciates him for respecting her wishes and her goals as an actress herself.

"Siyempre, we know naman na he's already Jake Cuenca, but to think na parang nire-respeto niya 'yung gusto kong mang-yari, 'yung time.

"Siyempre, I just don't want to be Jake Cuenca's someone or significant other so...

He's very respectful sa aspect na 'yun so I'm very happy," she added.

She said it was a decision to keep their relationship private, away from the limelight that they are living in as public figures in a time when most are very open about their relationships on social media.

"It's not a secret e. I'm just keeping it private. Para hindi na maraming tao ang magme-meddle din," the actress said.

May opinion din sila nirespeto ko rin," she added.

Loisa received criticism after she said that solo travelers are so lonely.

"Minsan kasi, ang ano lang, hindi ko maintindihan 'yung mga tao na nagso-solo travel. Parang ang lungkot, kasi, sino 'yung kabatuhan mo na 'ang ganda ng view?," she said.

"Grabe 'yung pinagdadaanan talaga siguro nila para gusto nilang magiging solo na lang," she added.

Looking for a new series to watch? Pinoy suggest Senate hearings

The Senate inquiry into Bamban, Tarlac Mayor Alice Guo's ties to Philippine Off-shore Gaming Operators and her identity has taken twists and turns akin to a television drama.

Some Filipinos, both appalled and entertained, have tuned in to the perceived drama that kept unravelling.

In jest, some Pinoy recommend Senate hearings for those who are looking for a

new series to watch.

The post garnered over 8,400 likes.

A Facebook meme page has also the same sentiment.

The post earned over 39,000 reactions and 59,000 shares.

"Netflix and Chill? Tulfo and Chill? Nah, I do hearings and chill," the Facebook poster wrote in the comments.

"The best series in PH so far," another online user commented.

Meanwhile, a Korean drama page lik-



ened the Senate hearings involving Alice to the plot of "Queen of Tears" where a "simple" female protagonist who has a memory problem owns a chopper.

The post currently has 50,000 likes and 4,400 shares.

"Baka k-drama fan din yan si Mayor Alice," one user commented.

On TikTok, Senate hearing edits also rake in numbers.

Sen. Loren Legarda's clip amassed over 4.9 million views and 382,000 likes.

On the other hand, Sen. Risa Hontiveros' TikTok playlist on the hearings also went viral, with the most viewed video having 30.9 million views.

Her latest upload on the 20-part series currently has 1.3 million views.

The Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality is set to look further into Guo's unexplained assets and alleged ties to POGOs.

The panel plans to have an executive session where senators will privately discuss the matter followed by another public



THE FILIPINO CENTRE, TORONTO 18th VICTORIA INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT



DR. VICTORIA SANTIAGO

The Filipino Centre Toronto 18th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament 2024 opening and closing games were held at the Toronto Pan Am Centre. Other locations were at Global Kingdom and at the St. John Paul Catholic school across Pan Am.

Just like before, the long weekend tournament is still well-attended. The Pan Am Centre was more packed this year because the Olympic Swimming Trials was held at the same time.

As for the action, this year's tournament is no exception. All the games were still exciting.

On day one, I saw a game won by a single free throw that made it to break the tie. The time left was 1.6 seconds after that free throw. Unfortunately, this was not one of those viral videos where a player inbounded and the receiving player threw it from half court away to make the basket.

Unlike in 2022 where a coach left the court, this year's tournament was

devoid of drama.

Missing from last year was the \$500 prize for one parent from each team who can shoot from the centre of the court.

See you all next year.



KC Concepcion, BF Mike Wuethrich unfollow each other amid breakup rumors

Amid breakup rumors, actress KC Concepcion and her boyfriend, Filipino-Swiss businessman Mike Wuethrich, appeared to have recently unfollowed each other on Instagram, as noticed by some eagle-eyed netizens.

As of June 1, the two were missing from each other's following list, and Wuethrich

seemingly deleted his picture with the actress which he posted in September 2023. Meanwhile, Concepcion has retained her Instagram reels with the businessman. Concepcion and Wuethrich began to be hounded by separation rumors in April after netizens pointed out that the two seldom saw and posted each other. The businessman also was not pres-



ent during the 39th birthday celebration of the actress.

However, Concepcion posted a bouquet given by her boyfriend, writing, "Special thanks to Swizzy, who is in Switzerland, for sending me my first beautiful birthday blooms that lit up the mood and the whole room."

On April 23, Concepcion greeted Wuethrich for his birthday, saying that despite the distance, there's a reason they are in

each other's lives. "Happy birthday, Swizzy. Thank you for being player one to my player two. I enjoy every adventure you take me on, and I'm proud to see you overcome every challenge life throws at you," she wrote in the caption of their picture together.

"I so enjoy your smile when I see it, so keep smiling! Despite the distance, there's a reason God made our paths cross. It's exciting to see the good things he has in store for us and for you! Enjoy today. HAPPY BIRTHDAY! Let's celebrate you!!!" added

the actress.

Despite not officially confirming their relationship, the two began to be seen around each other in January 2023. When Concepcion was asked about her love life in August 2023, she remarked that she wanted to keep it low-key.

"Okay naman ang love life. It's not really something na gusto kong ilabas nang todo-todo, kasi ever since 'yung first relationship ko, parang masyadong open book lahat," she said at the time.



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3

1. Rianneh Greeley poses with mom Ianneza as her team St. Clare Elementary School Girls Relay Team wins 3rd place at the City Championship Track and Field Tournament!
2. Rianneh Greeley of St. Clare Catholic Elementary School wins 1st place with her team for the Girls Int. Divisional Soccer Tournament!
3. Congratulations to BK Jimenez for winning the Angelo Eloy Padua Memorial Award for Journalism at the 72nd Famas. BK is with Alden Richards and Kathryn Bernardo.

Ivana Alawi, vlogger, actress & entrepreneur

Ivana Alawi is getting praises her onscreen performances, including her recent role as Coco Martin's love interest in "FPJ's Batang Quiapo." She also maintains a vibrant online presence as one of the most subscribed YouTube vloggers in the country, boasting over 17.8 million subscribers. Despite her busy schedule, the 27-year-old remains deeply committed to her entrepreneurial ventures.



Transitioning from a traditional website to TikTok Shop, Alawi shared that doing live selling has been a game-changer.

Apart from being the newest face of TikTok Shop, Alawi will also lead the platform's upcoming 6.6 campaign where she promises exciting giveaways and engaging interactions

She teased, "We will have an 'It's Showtime' segment in the afternoon and then after that, I'll livestream at 5 p.m. on TikTok. I have a lot of surprises for the live, I always give back, give away all sorts of things, and I'll make sure a lot of phones will be given away on that day."

Chie Filomeno 'proud ate' of P-pop group BINI



Chie Filomeno is one "proud ate" to popular P-pop girl group BINI.

The "Can't Buy Me Love" star admires the rising popular girl group at her recent launch as the first-ever ambassador for beauty brand SkeeCare held in Grand Hyatt Hotel in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

"Nakakatuwa kasi I've seen them grow, I've seen the hardship na pinaghirapan talaga nila ito," she said.

As someone who was also once part of a dancing girl group called Girl-Trends, Chie can relate to the journey of the young girl group.

She is also happy that P-pop, through groups like BINI, is now slowly making its presence felt in the international stage.

"Ako'yung parang proud ate for them. Kasi finally may platform na ang P-pop. And nashe-

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share 'yung kultura natin sa ibang bansa and nakikita natin kung gaano kasikat 'yung BINI ngayon," the actress added. Last month, P-pop groups BINI and G22

guested on the Chinese idol survival series "Show It All," where they showcased their singing and dancing skills to a live audience.

FILIPINO CENTRE, TORONTO PISTAHAN 2024



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8

1. Ukulele ensemble pose with PIDC President Tom Tan & MP Shaun Chen.
2. Mel Galeon of FV Foods, Theresa Lumanlan, Aida and Jun Viilaruz enjoy the delicious food by FV Foods.
3. Felina Javier (MIDDLE) asks MP Salma Zahid when she'll give Philip Beloso an appointed position.
4. Ehren de Villa, MP Salma Zahid and Theresa Lumanlan
5. Vendors sell barong and food stuff.
6. PIDC President Tan, FCT President Mary Ann San Juan, MP Shaun Chen,
7. Joy D'Aoust (RIGHT) buys a sungka for daughter Skyea.
8. Guests pose with MP Salma Zahid.

Arci Muñoz explains the reason behind her evolving looks

Call her Filipina Aegyo Queen! Aegyo means cute in Korean and long before South Korean series and music became the mainstream norm in the Philippines, Arci Muñoz has already been deep into the fandoms and scenes of Korean culture and entertainment.

Just recently, we caught up with the actress at the opening of KLife, a Korean merchandise store selling fandom toys and cosmetics in BGC in Taguig.

Arci was dressed to the nines in her off-shoulder denim and white mini skirt as she sported a “Hime” or the Japanese princess hairdo with big doll-eyed contact lenses and bright pink lipstick.

Since childhood, Arci told us, that she has been very experimental and playful when it



comes to preferences and interests but she had to scale back because of her strict parents.

“These are childhood aspirations na hindi ko nagawa kasi my parents are very strict. Yung bawal kami mag-cutex na black, mga ganon. Daddy ko nakabantay talaga,” she shared.

Also, her showbiz leading lady bookings were also one of the factors why she had to look as what she calls, “normal na tao.” It was not until she joined her rock band Philia wherein she slowly incorporated how she would love to express herself.

And she is totally owning it now, saying, “Ngayon lang talaga ako nagka-chance na i-explore iyong mga paborito ko na bagay nung bata ako like anime, like yung pagkulay ng buhok.”

Arci, who has been a favorite leading lady

Aegyo means cute in Korean and long before South Korean series and music became the mainstream norm in the Philippines, Arci has already been deep into the fandoms and scenes of Korean culture and entertainment.

with titles like “Pasion de Amor,” “Magpahanggang Wakas,” “Mga Nagbabagang Bulaklak” under her belt, shared that she is not afraid to change her look now even if mainstream entertainment shows are looking for the long black hair and fair skin prototype.

“Never because it really makes me happy. I’m just expressing myself and for me, kung nakaka-inspire ako sa mga kagaya ko na OK lang to be yourself then bakit ako mahihiya? Bakit ako matatakot? Masaya lang ako,” she explained.

Also, she can always switch back to that leading lady default look. She said, “Kapag may mga show, kailangan maging normal na tao.”

Arci has been the subject of online amazement with fans constantly on their toes on how she would look next. And being the creative that she is — in music, her craft and as a person in general — she encouraged her fans to step out of the box and not be afraid to be themselves: “Gawin mo lang kung anong nagpapasaya sa iyo at gusto mo.”

Looking back with gratitude as he blazes ahead

Darren Espanto, who now goes by the mononym Darren, capped off his decade in the entertainment industry with an anniversary concert on Saturday, June 1, at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

During the concert, Darren shared that it was a dream come true for him to perform inside the Big Dome.

“Alam niyo po, I’ve performed a lot of times in iconic and historic venue. Pero first time kong mag-solo concert dito. And perfect timing po talaga because I’m celebrating my 10th anniversary as well at showbiz,” said Darren.

“At saka, surreal po talaga yung pakiramdam eh talagang andito na ako. Like, the younger Darren would have never known that he would be performing in this Coliseum for his 10th year at showbiz. So, thank you so much. Maraming salamat,” he added.

He then expressed his gratitude towards his fans who had continued to support him since he first took the stage of “The Voice Kids Philippines”.

“And I’m just so glad that I got to build that confidence in myself and I never backed down. Kaya naman, I’m here celebrating my 10 wonderful years in showbiz with all of you. You’ve seen me grow up and you still believe in me and in what I can do. Kaya naging posible po itong D-10,” the singer-actor continued.

The concert showcased Darren’s growth as a performer, from his early days in “The Voice Kids” to becoming “the best male performer” of his generation.

Looking ahead, Darren said his next big dream is to release music internationally.

Alex Diaz reflects on his 2019 controversy: ‘I really thought I would retire’

Actor Alex Diaz starred in an international queer summer romance musical film Glitter and Doom that is set to have a special screening in June, in time for Pride Month.

Meanwhile, Alex opened up about the past issue that he got

involved in five years ago.

“I really thought I would retire. That was the time I came out. God really does have other plans because I was in Canada and I thought I should apply to (work at) Domino’s Pizza, and then I received a call from ABS-CBN offering me a role,” Alex shared.

As the actor felt like he had a second chance in his career, he expressed gratitude for the healing power of time and the support of his faith. “Time heals everything, and you just have to trust in God’s plan and keep on working, which is what I’ve been doing,” he told ABS-CBN News. In October 2019, Alex was hounded with comments about his sexuality after a fitness coach leaked a private conversation between them. In the said exchange of messages, Alex appeared to be the one offering a n

indecent proposal to the coach. Days after, the actor finally spoke for the first time about the issue and made a brave move by opening up about his sexuality for the first time. “I ask forgiveness from my management, the brands, supporters, friends, my family and everyone else I let down by what I did and/or who I am. I’m sorry, I was wrong in my actions and failed to uphold the values I so strongly try to convey online. It

was not my intention to hurt anyone or elude the truth of who I am for all these years but rather showbiz decisions based on the state of our nation in regards to acceptance and representation of who I am,” he wrote in a released statement on Instagram.

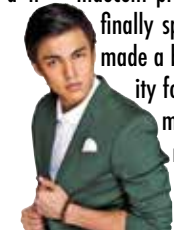
He added: “I see now that my actions are not caused by but rather the effect of the unhealthy and toxic suppression of all of who I am as a human being. I’m in a better place now.”

Alex then hoped that he would still be able to continue his love for people on the path that he had recently chosen to take on at that time.

He wrote: “My passion is performing, making people happy & making people smile. My only hope is that I can continue to use this platform to do such in whatever new path this universe-given experience has opened up for me. For now, I will rest, reevaluate and come back stronger and better than ever. I love you all, I have learned and I am growing. Thank you,”

Jodi Sta. Maria shares lessons learned from fantartic expedition

Apart from being an acclaimed actress and a dating mother, Jodi



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Sta. Maria is also a big fan of traveling, often going on trips to various places around the world.

During her recent journey to Antarctica, Sta. Maria shared a few thoughts about her experience on her Instagram account.

The actress posted a photo of two penguins she encountered during her travels and discussed how frequently she encountered those adorable animals throughout her trip.

“Spent 10 days in Antarctica, and I would see penguins in almost every expedition. I observed them, watched them closely, and asked questions about them. Then I realized, our flightless friends have it

all figured out,” said Sta. Maria.

She shared lessons she learned from watching animals. She talked about enjoying simple things like snow days and being loyal and supportive like penguins. She said it’s important to show love, make friends, and keep trying even when things are tough, just like penguins do.

She also underscored the beauty of being fair and patient, without holding grudges, and how her trip to Chile made her even more adventurous. Sta. Maria wants to encourage others to learn from the world around them and become better people.



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Ina Alegre manages to make films again

Since she made her big-screen debut in director Joseph Villamor's 1995 film "Uubusin Ko ang Tapang Mo," with action star Jess Lapid Jr. in the lead, actress-turned-politician Ina Alegre (Jennifer Cruz in real life) thought she would pursue making films for a long time.

However, the opportunity to become a public servant came into Ina's life even if she didn't have any political background. She successfully ventured into politics starting in 2016.

Born and raised in Pola, Oriental Mindoro, Ina initially served as vice mayor of Pola in 2016 and finished one term. She was elected mayor in 2019 and subsequently got re-elected in 2022.

Ina's showbiz work gave her an edge over other politicians. "Kahit na hindi naman ako gano'n kasikat or kakilala tulad ng ibang artista, pero may napakisamahan ako na writers who saw my work as a mayor and showbiz star."

Pola is now not just a favorite tourist destination, but also a locale for films. Pola is now the shooting capital of Oriental Mindoro.

"Once a film company shoots in Pola, we are give an incentive to them," said Ina. "We



are not charging for anything, but I want them to help the residents."

"I don't require them to secure a permit first. We don't make it a hard time for them. We even help them with what they need. The company can get the residents as extra. That means a lot to them if they earn P200, P300 or even P1,000. Malaking bagay sa mga tao sa Pola 'yun na naghihirap," added she.

In 2021, Coco Martin and Julia Montes filmed Brillante Mendoza's "Pula," a barangay in Pola. Ina was given a role in the said film. "Other stars filmed there, too."

"Si Coco, sobrang bait niya. Coco bought a beach-front property there in Pola."

Recently, Ina started making films again.

Ina also took on being an owner and team manager of Mindoro Tamaraws and Pola Pilipinas. One is for local competitions, while the latter competes abroad. Managing the teams is a job she recently accepted. She also makes it a point to watch the games to support the teams.

"Trabaho talaga," said Ina. "Time-consuming lahat ng work, but you should know how to divide and prioritize the important things to do," Ina said. "Sometimes, my daughter was asking me, what is quality time for them."

"Days before Mother's Day, we had lunch and they already had flowers for me. Eldest Jamima, 24; Patricia, 22; Miguel, 16 is a shooter and does firing; Samantha is the youngest turning 15."

Ina acknowledged actor EJ Falcon, who was elected vice governor of Oriental Mindoro and extends his help to Pola in whatever way he can. "Kaibigan ko si vice gov. Ejay is from Pola. We're okay. We help each other."

Ina refuses to acknowledge she makes it a "package deal" to get a role in every film shot in Pola. "If

"If there's a role that I can do, that's the only time I act, walang package deal."

there's a role that I can do, that's the only time I act," Ina admitted. "Walang package deal."

She did not deny, however, that she missed acting terribly. In the film of direkt Brillante's, "Pula," she plays a meaty role and got to do scenes with Coco.

"Pola was ideal for 'Pula,'" said Ina. "I want people to see how beautiful Pola is and gaano kabait ang mga Poleños. They are peaceful, loving and very religious. Zero crime rate kami."

After films started shooting in Pola, tourism increased 100%. Before, we get 20,000 tourists year. Today, we get as many as a hundred thousand and it's still increasing."

"Kung gusto mo ng dagat, ilog, lawa, bundok, meron kami sa Pola," said Ina. "Anything na meron ka sa mind mo, dadalhin kita doon."

"They have yet to see hotels built in Pola, but we have resorts for tourists. In almost five years, marami na kaming nakitang improvement sa Pola. Malayo na ang narating ng Pola," concluded she.

'Nakakalungkot': Ogie Diaz laments supposed lack of cinemagoers

Showbiz columnist and entertainment vlogger Ogie Diaz expressed disappointment over the supposed lack of cinemagoers in the country.

In a Facebook post, the columnist shared a picture of a movie ticket counter in a shopping mall with no queues of moviegoers and posted his observations on Facebook.

He also sought suggestions how to get people to the movie theaters.

"Paano kaya itutulak ang mga tao para manood ng sine sa ordinaryong araw bukod sa Metro Manila [Film Fest]?" he added, referring to the annual local film festival organized by the Metro Manila Development Authority.

Ogie shared possible factors that affect movie-watching habits.

"Dapat bang ibaba ang presyo ng ticket? Dapat bang ibaba ang entertainment tax para may pambili ng popcorn man lang ang mga manonood?" Ogie asked.

"O sadyang tumaas na talaga ang pamantayan ng mga tao sa kalidad ng pelikulang [papanoorin] pagkatapos makapanood ng magagandang foreign films sa streaming platform like Netflix, Viu, Amazon Prime?" he added.

"Lumalabas na mas marami pang kumakain sa Pares Overload ni Diwata at ni Hiwaga kesa nanonood ng sine, gano'n ba? Ano ba maisa-suggest mo, friend?" the columnist concluded.

Ogie's post was shared on Sunday, when Tropical Cyclone Aghon (international name: Ewiniar) was battering parts of Luzon, including Metro Manila, with rains and winds.

"Aghon" made landfall nine times when it traversed the Philip-

ppines over the weekend. Reports said a large part of the



National Capital Region experienced continuous rains on Sunday, causing most people to stay home instead of going to malls and other places.

Despite the factor of "Aghon," however, Filipinos claimed in Ogie's post that movie ticket prices have gone up compared to the past years.

"Ibaba ang PRESYO... apaka mahal na talaga ng mga sine ngayon. 400 pesos [yung] dito malapit sa amin..." a Facebook user wrote.

Others pointed out the popularity of streaming platforms that offer movies that people can watch from the comfort of their homes instead of going to cinemas.

Others commented that the "quality" of local films could also influence Pinoys' movie-watching habits.

"The quality of the film natin talaga. We need to step up. Napag-iwanan na tayo. Napako tayo sa Rom-Com, Comedy at Drama. Lahat naka-CGI at green screen na, tayo prosthetics at props pa rin."

In 2019, director Erik Matti criticized the local film industry for supposedly rehashing story concepts instead of coming up with fresh ones.

The director ended his post by saying that Filipinos, particularly filmmakers, have to "find a way to move" and "change the course of cinema in this country."

Death of a Filipino nearly an act of war

ACT OF WAR from P1

sponse," the President said.

"If by a willful act, a Filipino, not only serviceman or any a Filipino citizen, if a Filipino citizen is killed by a willful act, that is I think a very very close to what we define us act of war," he added.

Marcos issued the response after he was asked by an audience if a "red line" would be crossed if a China Coast Guard's water cannon would kill a Filipino sailor.

"We already have suffered injury, but thank God, we have not yet gotten to the point where any of our participants, civilian or otherwise, have been killed," he said.

"But once we get to that point, that is certainly we would have crossed the Rubicon and certainly crossed the Rubicon. Is that a red line? Almost certainly it's going to be a red line," he added.

On April 30, China Coast Guard (CCG) vessels on Tuesday morning

again fired water cannons against two Philippine vessels on a resupply mission to Panatag or Scarborough Shoal.

The CCG ships used a "very fatal" water cannon pressure against the Philippine Coast Guard vessel, which resulted in damage to the railing and canopy of the Philippine ship.

In March this year, seven Navy personnel were wounded in two separate water cannon attacks by CCG ships against Philippine supply boats on their way to bring supplies to the troops manning the BRP Sierra Madre at Ayungin.

Philippine resupply boats bound for Ayungin came under similar attacks from the Chinese ships on Dec. 10 and Nov. 10 last year.

Marcos said in April that that the Philippines would invoke the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if a Filipino sailor or a member of its military is killed due to China's aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea.

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TRUE N BIRTH CHIROPRACTIC

How campus journalism paved way for Rhen Escaño's showbiz career

While doing campus journalistic work in high school, Rhen Escaño was discovered by a talent scout, paving the way for her showbiz career.

"I was a school writer in high school," recalled Rhen. "We were given a task before, with my groupmates, to interview radio DJs in different TV stations. We didn't have any idea (at that time) that we needed to have a waiver, permit (to do that).

"So we went to a TV station, but they didn't let us through because they said that we need to have a permit. So we went to another TV station, kasi walking distance lang sila. We also tried there but they didn't let us in.

"So we went back to the (first) TV station (that we visited) and nagpumilit kaming pumasok. A talent scout discovered me while we were walking in that TV station (although) they didn't let us in.

And that's how Rhen's journey in the

entertainment business started. She became a talent first before appearing in shows and films.

Rhen continued, "I was in a Montessori school and we seldom do activities outside school. But (when we'd go out and do field work), that's what I enjoyed most. I got to meet other people, go to other places to write. Tsaka ewan ko parang malikot yung utak ko when it comes to those things," she said.

"So, I was able to practice it and I really enjoyed it. And it's also a good feeling to see your name on your school paper. Yun yung nakakakilig po na part."

During the pandemic, Rhen binged-



watched Kara David's documentaries involving children, yung mga tinutulongan nila sa mga mahihirap na places in the Philippines, I was really touched... So, I watched all of her episodes."

Moreover, Rhen was thrilled doing campus journalism in high school but didn't pursue it in college because she juggled doing her studies, working as an actor and joining pageants as well.

Although she wasn't able to embark on journalism as a career path, she at least gets to essay the role of a journalist in TV5's "Lumuhod Ka Sa Lupa" series as Jane Rosario.

The series, a remake of Carlo J. Capar-

as' action masterpiece of the same title, is a classic tale of love and revenge starring Kiko Estrada as Norman Dela Cruz and Sarah Lahbati as Mercy Balmores in the lead roles.

It also stars Gardo Versoza, Sid Lucero, Andrew Muhlach, Andre Yllana, Ashley Diaz, Annika Co, Rose Van Ginkel, Jeffrey Hidalgo, Jeric Raval, among others.

"Lumuhod Ka Sa Lupa" is helmed by Albert Langitan and Roderick Lindayag, in cooperation with Studio Viva and Sari-Sari. It airs weekdays at 2:30 p.m. on TV5's Hapon Champion block, with same-day catch-ups on the Sari-Sari Channel at 8 p.m.

Rhen teased that there's a lot to watch out for in her character as the story continuously unfolds. "To be honest, papunta pa lang talaga sa exciting part. We are just starting.

SINE page 23

Stripped of his National Artist award, Carlo Caparas leaves an enduring legacy

Writer-turned-film director and producer Carlo J. Caparas was best remembered for his graphic, comic book characters and super heroes that got ingrained in the minds of Filipinos. He passed on last May 25 at the age of 80.

Carlo's enviable contribution to the country's pop culture was undeniable, especially during the heyday of comics from the '60s to the late '80s, having written over 800 novels and short stories.

Some of the memorable characters even had adaptations for film and television. Who can forget iconic characters like the popular Panday, the amulet-wielding Elias Paniki, the decorated and tattooed Joaquin Bordado.

Carlo also created the fairy-tale life of "Bakekang," the strong and brave "Totoy Bato," the fantasy-comedy story of "Tasya Fantasya," the

adventurous "Gagambino" and the mother's undying love for her criminal son in "Pieta."

Carlo's name will be synonymous with "Panday," arguably one of his most renowned creations. The story traces the adventures of Flavio, a blacksmith who crafts a mystical sword from a meteorite and wields it against sinister forces.

In 1994, Dawn played the real-life role of actress Maggie de la Riva who was raped and that was dramatized in "The Maggie dela Riva Story: God... Why Me?," with Ricky Davao, Michael de Mesa and the late Miguel Rodriguez.



It was also in 1994 when Carlo worked with Star for All Seasons Vilma Santos in "Lipa 'Arandia' Massacre: Lord Deliver Us from Evil," which co-starred Joel Torre.

Dawn also played the title character in "The Cecilia Masagca Story: Antipolo Massacre (God Saved Us)."

The year 2009 saw Carlo figuring into a nationwide controversy after he was questioned of his award, National Artist for Visual Arts and Film, a new category proclaimed that year by former Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

His proclamation was by virtue of "presidential prerogative" since there were committees nominating the names for National Artist of the Philippines - the NCCA (National Commission for Culture and the Arts) and the CCP (Cultural Center of the Philip-

pines) supposedly.

Carlo's name did not go through the said committees. It was not screened nor recommended by the committees. Complaints, protests and petitions were lodged against his National Artist proclamation.

In July 2013, the Supreme Court nullified Carlo's proclamation on the ground of "preferential treatment."

In 2011, Carlo closed a partnership deal with Boss Vic del Rosario of Viva Films, who will cover 50 titles of the former's 800 komiks novels. That added to the enduring legacy that Carlo left behind.

The year 2017 saw Carlo as a widower when his wife, Donna, succumbed to cancer. Her remains were brought to Cebu, where she hailed from. The couple has two children

Caregivers are badly needed

CAREGIVER from page 1

quiring a certain amount of work experience in the country.

They will also be permitted to work for "organizations that provide temporary or part-time care for people who are semi-independent or recovering from an injury or illness."

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This criteria marks a change from the previous pilot programs that required a CLB of 5 and a year of Canadian post-secondary education (or a foreign equivalent). The programs also included a work experience requirement of at least six months. IRCC has yet to make it clear what the work experience requirement will be under the new pilot programs and says more details will be announced closer to the full launch.

In an IRCC news release, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said, "Caregivers play a critical role in supporting Canadian families, and our programs need to reflect their invaluable contributions. As we work to implement

a permanent caregivers program, these two new pilots will not only improve support for caregivers, but also provide families with the quality care they deserve."

Caregivers in Canada

According to the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan, Canada expects to welcome more than 15,000 new permanent residents through caregiver programs and as of April 30, 2024, approximately 5,700 caregivers and their family members have become permanent residents since the launch of the Home Child Care Provider Pilot and the Home Support Worker Pilot in 2019.

The demand for caregivers in Canada is rising as the population ages. It is expected that in the next six years, over nine million Canadians will retire. This means that over the coming years, more individuals will need additional care in their homes or institutions.

Further, the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence recently published a report that highlights pressing needs for caregivers in Canada. Among them, it notes that, "Many caregivers are 65+ and may also need care. Nearly one in five caregivers are over the age of 65. Senior caregivers are least likely to access any services or supports to help with their responsibilities."

Finally, families in Canada require a childcare provider as more women, who traditionally take on more of the caretaking duties for young children, seek to enter the workforce. Statistics Canada data from 2023 found that

"On an annual basis, the labour force participation rate for women aged 15 years and older and all education levels grew from 58.5% in 1990 (the beginning of the current data series) to 61.5% in 2022. The rate for men declined from 76.1% to 69.5% over the same period."

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Tonton Gutierrez and Glydel Mercado recall start of romance

Whoever says that lifelong romance is not possible should take a closer look at celebrity couple Tonton Gutierrez and Glydel Mercado whose love for each other is bound to last a lifetime.

Six years as boyfriend-girlfriend and 20 years as husband and wife, no one would ever think that no sparks flew between them when they first met. Neither of them even showed interest in getting to know the other more after that initial encounter. But not until they worked together in the GMA drama series "Del Tiero" which ran for two years.

"Na-develop (feelings) na lang doon sa 'Del Tiero,' kasama ko na siya sa tapping," said Tonton. "I found her different. Hindi siya 'yung regular na nakikilala ko. She's quiet, so I told myself, 'interesting,'" he added with an enigmatic smile.

"Ako kasi may boyfriend ako who was not from showbiz, at that time. So, wala lang, he (Tonton) was just my partner," said Glydel. After her breakup with her non-showbiz boyfriend, the actress noticed that the production staff of "Del Tiero" kept on teasing her and Tonton.

"There were also instances when Tonton couldn't say his dialogue in our scene together. Nakaka-10 takes pa. Konti lang 'yung dialogue hindi pa niya maalala. So, in order for us to finish the scene, the director would ask me to turn my back to him, papatalikurin na lang ako para matapos lang yung eksena," Glydel amusingly recalled.

The two eventually became real-life lovers. However, no relationship is immune to crisis. Tonton and Glydel had a rough patch that led to their separation. She cried buckets when Tonton asked his driver to return to her the things she left at his place. "But we got back together after we talked," added Tonton. After six years, Tonton realized it's time to seal their love in marriage. So, I told her, 'Let's get married,' at sabi naman niya, 'Okay.'"

While planning for the wedding, Glydel learned that she was already five months pregnant with their first child. They married in 2004.

Fast forward to the present, Tonton and Glydel are blessed with two beautiful daughters — Aneza and Aneeka. The eldest, Aneza, is now 19 years old and studying abroad.

"She will be in Australia in September," declared Tonton who was initially half-hearted about allowing Aneza to continue her studies outside of the country. Aneza graduated from high school at Miriam College in 2022.



Tonton Gutierrez and Glydel Mercado are blessed with two beautiful daughters — Aneza and Aneeka. The eldest, Aneza, is now 19 years old and studying abroad.

"Kaya mo ba 'yan kasi you're going to be alone," recounted Tonton of his heart-to-heart talk with Aneza. "Until she said, 'Dad, I got a scholarship of 90 percent.' Doon na, how would I say no, 'di ba?'"

It was difficult at first but the actor also wanted his daughter to explore and become independent. "Mas mahirap para sa Nanay," mused Tonton.

"Every time na umaalis, nagkaka-anxiety ako. Umiiyak talaga ko," said Glydel.

I asked the couple how they are able to sustain the strength and lasting nature of their bond, Glydel stressed the importance of communication.

"If for example, there is a problem, even if it's a minor one, we don't allow it to become a major one. We talk about it right away," said Glydel, who also added that accountability (read: taking responsibility to one's mistake) equally plays a pivotal role in a relationship.

"Kasi 'pag inipon mo yung samang loob mo, magiging malaki pa kaya sasabihin ko agad sa kanya o sasabihin niya sa akin 'yung mali ko para hindi ko na gagawin ulit.'"

Enduring love can mean expressing one's love through words. It was nothing but sweet to hear them complete the sentence, Mahal kita kasi...

Tonton to Glydel: "Mahal kita kasi sa 'yo tumibok ang puso ko.'"

Glydel to Tonton: "Mahal kita kasi ikaw ang forever ko."

PH still top rice importer



Imported rice from Vietnam being unloaded in Surigao City port.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) expects the Philippines to keep its title as the world's leading importer of rice, with shipments this year expected to increase to 4.1 million metric tons, 5.1 percent more than the 3.9 million brought in last year.

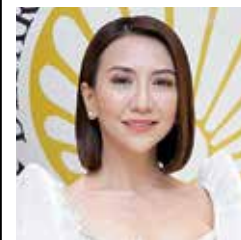
The USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service said in a report that the volume of imports would reach this record high on the back of the anticipated "growth in population and increased tourism," with shipments mainly coming from Vietnam.

On the other hand, India is projected to remain the world's leading rice exporter despite trade restrictions, with exports pegged to hit 18 million MT, equivalent to about a third of the total global export volume.

"Exports are expected to increase, driven by a larger crop and ample stocks. Despite trade-restrictive measures for a portion of rice exports, volumes are set to remain robust," the USDA said. Rebounding exports from India will partially offset declines from other major exporters Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan and Myanmar.

PH is an emerging nation in Halal tourism

The Philippines was named as an Emerging Muslim-friendly non-Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index, the Department of Tourism (DOT) said on Saturday.



According to Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco, the Philippines will build upon its Halal tourism to encourage more Muslims to visit the country.

"As a country known for its warm hospitality, rich cultural heritage,

and breathtaking natural attractions, catering to the needs of Muslim travelers through the development of Halal Tourism is crucial in ensuring that we raise our competitiveness in the global tourism market," Frasco said at the Halal in Travel Global Summit in Singapore on Thursday.

"Halal Tourism presents a rapidly growing market segment. By prioritizing this, we not only demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity and cultural sensitivity but also open up opportunities to attract more Muslim travelers from around the world, while expanding markets for our tourism stakeholders and creating more livelihood and employment for our fellow Filipinos," she added.

SWS: 50% OKs divorce for 'irreconcilably separated' couples

Fifty percent of Filipino adults nationwide think that divorce should be an option for couples who are "irreconcilably separated," the March 2024 Social Weather Stations (SWS) poll showed.

The same data indicated that 31 percent of Filipino adults surveyed were not in favor of divorce while 17 percent were undecided about the issue.

The SWS said agreement with legalizing divorce was down from 55 percent in June 2023 and 65 percent in March 2023.

The survey results likewise had a net agreement score of +19, which is considered "moderately strong" although a decrease from the +27 net agreement score that the SWS obtained from its June 2023 audit on the legalization of divorce in the country.

According to SWS, the net agreement score on divorce was very strong for people with live-in partners compared to other demographics such as those who were unmarried, widowed and separated individuals, and married people.

It was highest in Metro Manila, followed by Balance Luzon or Luzon outside Metro Manila, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The SWS March 2024 survey on divorce involved 1,500 adults.

Movie producer apologizes to Bea Alonzo for 'bad calls' made on set

Months after the manager of Bea Alonzo went public to air their side on the mishap while shooting the historical drama "1521: The Quest for Love and Freedom," it is now the turn of the film's producer to publicly apologize.

Inspire Studios head Francis B. Lara Ho already reached out to Bea and her manager Shirley Kuan prior to speaking with the media last week but has yet to receive a response.

"I hope she hears this: I apologize," Francis said.

Set in the pre-Spanish era, "1521" is the story of a beautiful native princess named Diwata (Bea), who falls in love with Enrique, a Spanish soldier (Hector David Jr.). They fight for their forbidden romance as they are pulled apart by their loyalties to their own people.

Setting the record straight

Francis added that the mission of "1521" is to finally



set the record straight about what really happened between Lapu-Lapu, the king of Mactan,

and Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan. "If you have access to Prime Video, you will see a series titled 'Boundless,' which shows the perspective of a European producer and filmmaker," he began, adding that one episode shows a version of the Battle of Mactan where Lapu-Lapu is depicted as "a savage, fear-mongering rapist and pirate."

Francis continued: "Lapu-Lapu is our hero. My mission now is for the world to know who we really are,

that we are not savages, and that Magellan did not discover the Philippines. When he arrived, we already had our own writing system, our own language, and an effective justice system."

Historical accuracy

In terms of historical accuracy, Francis had to first clarify that "1521" is not a documentary, but a dramatic piece, "with action and romance." "1521" is also about women empowerment, claimed Francis. "Based on our research, ours used to be an egalitarian society. This means that women were of equal footing to men. When the Spaniards came, everything changed. The women came only second to men," he added. "This is not the Filipino version of 'Pocahontas.' Diwata fought for her community. This is more like a Romeo and Juliet story in the context of the Battle of Mactan in the 16th century."

Cristy Fermin said libel cases come as part of her job

LIBEL from page 1

and face danger when in duty; boatmen can drown, and in her case as a reporter, Libel cases can also come.

"Kapag ikaw ay nasa ganyang mga linya na tulad namin na mga mamamahayag, naku, territorial po ang mga ganitong kaso — 'yung Libel case, Cyber Libel. Territorial po 'yan.

"It comes with the territory, sabi nga natin. 'Yun lamang po 'yon," she said during the livestream of her showbiz talk show hours after the couple went to the Makati Prosecutor's Office.

She noted about the personalities that have filed cases against her. Earlier this month, actress Bea Alonzo filed a Cyber Libel case against her.

"Pero ang ano, ha, pataas nang pataas ang level. Tumataas ang level ng mga de-



Composite images of showbiz columnist Cristy Fermin (left) and husband-and-wife Sharon Cuneta and former senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan (right) at the Makati Prosecutor's Office on May 10, 2024.

mandahan — from Sarah Lahbati to Bea Alonzo, Sharon Cuneta na ang kasunod.

"Sino po kaya ang susunod, si Julia Roberts na?" Fermin said.

After noting this, the veteran columnist said that she understands where Sharon and Kiko are coming from.

She stressed that what's more worrisome if she gets cases for more heinous

crimes, such as human trafficking or robbery.

"Wala pa po akong masasabi, wala pa kaming impormasyon na tinatangap. Basta naiintindihan natin ito. 'Yan po ay kasama sa ating trabaho bilang mamamahayag. 'Sabi ko nga sa mga anak ko, 'Mahiya kayo kapag ako ay idinemandada sa pagnanakaw. Mahiya kayo kapag ako'y idinemandat kinasuhan tungkol sa human trafficking. Kapag ako ay nagbugaw at kung anu-ano pa. 'Yun ang dapat nating ikahiya.

"Pero 'yung ganito, Cyber Libel, Libel cases, kasama po ito sa teritoryo ng pagiging mamamahayag natin," she added.

She reiterated that she understands the couple, but also said that they should understand her line of work.

"'Yun lang po 'yon, you don't shoot the messenger," Fermin said.



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Richard Gutierrez, Barbie Imperial ‘exclusively dating’



Actors Richard Gutierrez and Barbie Imperial are exclusively dating, according to the source of talent manager and showbiz reporter Ogie Diaz.

Relationship rumors between the two were recently fueled after photos, perceived to be them, surfaced while in South Korea.

In a recent video on his Ogie Diaz Showbiz Update YouTube channel, Ogie confirmed via a “very reliable source” that Richard and Barbie are indeed exclusively dating.

The source also said that there was no overlap in Richard’s relationship as he had already separated from his ex Sarah Lahbati before seeing Barbie.

Ogie said that Richard and Sarah broke up last year and they are co-parenting their two sons, Kai and Zion.

The talent manger’s source added that they feel bad for Barbie because people are claiming she is a homewrecker and the reason for Richard and Sarah’s split.

“Barbie had nothing to do with the hiwalayan issue,” Ogie quoted his source, also mentioning Richard is still friends with all his exes, including Anne Curtis and Georgina Wilson (both of whom are already married).

The latter point was to prove that Richard does not hit women, a rumor being thrown around since news of his breakup with Sarah went public.

“Si Richard, ‘pag may mahal, hindi na nagmamahal ng iba. Alam ‘yan ng mga ex-girlfriend niya,” Ogie’s source told him. “Kaya nu’ng time nila ni Sarah, may nabalitaan ka bang may No. 2 si Richard? Wala! Hindi porket ‘di nagsasalita si Richard ay siya ang may kasalanan sa hiwalayan.”

The source added Richard was not speaking out against Sarah because it is not in his nature to fight with women, especially the mother of his children.

Ogie then asked his source if Richard and Barbie would go public about their relationship, and the source said “in due time.”

Earlier this year, the two actors were seen having some drinks in an Alabang bar, and it sparked the romance rumors.

At that time, Ogie reported there was nothing romantic between Richard and Barbie, an information he also obtained from a reliable source.

Meanwhile, in an event last month, Sarah did not seem to care if the rumors between Richard and Barbie were true.

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Meet the Win Girls, Willie Revillame's co-hosts in new TV5 show

The newly introduced Win Girls, composed of Inday Fatima, Queenay, and Ana Ramsey, were thrilled to be joining Willie Revillame as his co-hosts in the forthcoming show on TV5.

"When I met Kuya Will, to be honest, he was very kind," described Queenay of the comebacking TV host.

As for Ana, being tapped as co-host felt like coming full circle, having previously encountered Willie on his previous show at another network. "I never imagined that the time would come when I would be his co-host," she maintained.

"I'm very much thankful."

Fatima, for her part, shared that Willie is her idol and she is also grateful that she will be co-hosting soon with him.

Radio DJ Ana is the grandchild of Philippines' Queen of Rock and Roll Elizabeth Ramsey and niece of Queen of Soul Jaya.

"Actually, you cannot erase the pressure because napak-aganda po talaga yung legacy (that) Lola Elizabeth and Tita Jaya (built in the industry). I looked up to them as an inspiration to follow in their footsteps in the industry," stated Ana.

Fatima, meanwhile, is a beauty queen and Bisaya influencer. She is a registered medical technologist advocating for the health of persons with disabilities in her home province of Malungon,



Sarangani.

"I've been joining pageants for more than 13 years," recalled Fatima. "And I always thought that if I join pageants, it will be a way for me to get discovered to be an actress. But that was like almost a decade ago."

"But when I did content (creation),

The Win Girls, composed of Inday Fatima, Queenay and Ana, are set to join Willie Revillame's upcoming game show on TV5.

"I looked up to them as an inspiration to follow in their footsteps in the industry"

vlogging, that's when people recognized me as Inday Fatima. I showed them who I am — someone who came from the province, yung nago-open ng buko, nagaakyat ng mga puno. I showed them what it was like having a simple life in the province. I got discovered, just by being me, my natural self."

So when the opportunity opened

up for Fatima to be part of Win Girls and be on TV, she considered it as a huge milestone and described it as a "leap of faith."

"I've done hosting in pageants but this is my first time to be onscreen, on TV kaya I'm sure sina mama naiiyak na din talaga."

Likewise, TikTok content creator Queenay couldn't be more grateful for the people who supported her content on social media platforms, especially her fellow Batangueños.

"I will use my platforms, create more videos behind-the-scenes kung paano kami nagsho-shoot (to connect and entertain more viewers)," said Queenay on how she will use her platforms to introduce her newly formed group.

"At least (in that way) they will get to know us more, not only me, but also the Win Girls and the program.

They will see kung gaano kasaya yung bonding na nabubuo namin sa show."

In terms of preparations, Queenay said that she will think of content that the audience will surely like. "Aside from a day in my life (content), I will also feature videos where they can see us dancing, with the Win Girls and ma-lay natin, kasama na si Tito Will."



Marcos signs 'Eddie Garcia' law to protect movie, TV workers

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed into law a measure aimed at safeguarding the rights and welfare of entertainment industry workers by compelling their employers to meet the minimum labor rights standards in the country.

Republic Act 1196, signed into law on May 24, is named after the late actor Eddie Garcia, who died after tripping over loose wires while filming a series in 2019.

The law requires employers to provide workers or independent contractors with a copy of a contract that specifies the number of work hours, job position and description, period of employment, details of compensation and other conditions that will affect the person's work.

Under the law, entertainment industry workers must also be provided wage-related benefits, social security and government-mandated benefits and insurance. They are also entitled to overtime pay.

RA 1196 also acknowledges that the entertainment industry workers' exposure to occupational hazards and re-

quires employers to comply with the occupational safety and health stan-

dards laid out in the Labor Code of the Philippines and Republic Act 11058 or the "Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards and Providing Penalties for Violations."

In a statement issued upon Congress' passage of the bill in March, Olivia Lagman Romero, Garcia's long-time partner, said that the measure achieves what the late actor had long sought for during his lifetime: to uplift the lives of all those working in the television and movie industry.

Romero called the bill Garcia's "best gift and lasting contribution" to the local entertainment industry.

The House and Senate versions of the bill were unanimously passed in February 2023 and March 2024, respectively.

Garcia's "best gift and lasting contribution" to the local entertainment industry.

Rosanna Roces wants dear friend Ai Ai back

Their common showbiz friends — for certain — can't wait to see erstwhile bosom buddies Ai Ai delas Alas and Rosanna Roces back in each other's oasis.

This is especially true soon after Rosanna — in a recent vlog interview by Aiko Melendez — expressed her desire to rebuild her friendship with the comedienne that had remained strained for 20 years.

To be honest, I found her peace offering to be very "un-Rosanna" — certainly not the typical Osang (her pet name) I've known her to be. For Rosanna to have allowed 20 long years to slip by makes me think she wouldn't mind it all even if she and Ai Ai remain hostile to each other thy kingdom come.

Why wait that long when she could have offered an olive branch, say, five or 10 years after their falling out? That would have been a more sincere gesture.

In the same vein, why did it have to take a vlog by a colleague-friend when Rosanna could have resorted to non-social media means like mainstream outlets way ahead of its advent?

But whatever Rosanna's reason for it is no longer as weighty as seeing her shattered friendship with Ai Ai restored to how it was two decades ago.

Asked to label what their sisterly closeness looked like, Rosanna told the Quezon City councilor, "Yung sa amin kasi ni Ai Ai, sobrang totoo. Masarap siyang kasama (Ours was genuine friendship. Ai Ai was so



much fun to be with)."

Could Rosanna take us back during those happy times together? What made them — or either — fall out when as far as I could remember, neither was there any trade of negative issues between them?

Rosanna recalled their enmity reared its ugly head sometime in 2004.

"We were like picking apples that time because we were in demand in provincial gigs. Ai Ai was supposed to have a show in Dagupan. Prior to that, she had a show there with Ara Mina but it was a flop. Still, the show producer went right ahead promoting ours, but the producer took Ai Ai's picture down off the poster. Maybe Ai Ai thought I had a hand in it but I was totally clueless. She took it against me. But it was a case of misunderstanding," Rosanna recounted.

Unlike many other showbiz alliances gone awry Rosanna said theirs was different as not even once did they badmouth each other.

Rosanna misses that particular bond she shared with Ai Ai, and she longs to rekindle that connection.

For sure, as this writer's Tuesday opinion piece comes out — Rosanna and Ai Ai must have already met up to thresh things out.

"I don't mind meeting up with her wherever she may be, that is, if she's also willing to patch things up," Rosanna said.

If I may serve as Ai Ai's mouthpiece, the comedienne is in fact welcoming of their reconciliation more so if she feels there's sincerity in Rosanna's "bati-natayo" gesture.

It's the strange kind of reconciliation where there abounds more "halakhakan" than "sumbatan," more smiling than frowning faces, more touching moments of rekindled sisterly love than intense, blood-shedding confrontations.

Rosanna who projects a brash, cocky image humbling herself? Why not?

Remember that she has already made amends with "Batang Quiapo" co-star Lorna Tolentino last year over a forgotten past.

After LT and Ai Ai, we can only keep guessing who else does Rosanna have a bone to pick with.

Could it possibly be either her former manager Lolit Solis or then-close ally Cristy Fermin — or both?

We never can tell' can we? Take it from Julia Barretto on her 2021 issue with Bea Alonzo: "The world is healing."

Karla Estrada on son Daniel Padilla's 'businessman era,' daughter's showbiz debut

Karla Estrada is proud of her eldest Daniel Padilla's "businessman era."

TV5's "Face to Face" host confirmed her son's recent business ventures, co-owning JCas-tles Theme Park in Batangas, as well as a restaurant in Dubai.

"Partners niya yan, nasa ano siya ngayon — businessman era," she told this paper in an exclusive chat.

Karla admitted though that she's not the one who advised Daniel into these businesses.

"On that note (no)... because I'm not really business-minded," she said.

"Daniel is into business. This is the time when he talks to a lot of people, in his sports, with his current status in life... maganda naman. I like it! Whatever they want as long as the important

thing is that you save for the rainy days."

Karla also observed that Daniel has become more independent and hands-on with his endeavors, citing his recent 29th birthday celebration as an example. She was surprised by how well he took charge and handled everything. She fully supports his freedom to express himself and do things his own way.

"Kala ko hindi ako invited as a mother (laughs)," she quipped.

"Parang siempre nakakalimutan mo, tumatanda yung mga anak natin. Kasi nagkakaroon



Karla is pictured with eldest child Daniel Padilla. She says Daniel already 'allowed' his youngest sister to join showbiz.

silang kanya-kayang set of friends. So I let him be and I was so surprised, ang galing niya at saka ito yung birthday niya na siya talaga ito."

Asked about her birthday wish for Daniel, Karla said, "I only have one wish, and that is for everything he wants to do to come true, whether big or small.

"And what I really want to tell my son is to always choose your peace, wherever you're happy, as long as you're not stepping on anyone, you're okay there. Hindi bawal magkamali kasi walang taong hindi nagkakamali. Ang importante lagi tayong natututo sa bawat pagkakamali sa akin."

Meanwhile, Karla shared that her youngest child, Carmella, is following in the footsteps of her brother and preparing for her showbiz debut as well. "Anytime



The actress-TV host with her daughters Carmella (right) and Magui.

soon. We're just sorting things out but (the launch will happen) in three to four months. Inallow na ni Daniel (to enter showbiz)," she said.

"My second child (Jose Carlito) is a musician naman and Magui, my third, is at Melbourne University, pag-aaral naman ang gusto niya so sige, (let's) support. Sabi ko bilisan mo na diyan, nauubos na pera ko sa sayo (laughs).

"But support natin. With Carmella, this is what she wants, so okay. Marunong din, magaling siya," said Karla, adding that like Daniel, her bunso showed interest in showbiz early on as a child. She didn't see it in her other children.

"So, I hope she'll be the next action star who is female so we can have one. She does firing, she does martial arts. She's doing workshops on the side. Ako, even with my nephews and nieces in showbiz, like Analain Salvador, Ashton Salvador, si Carmella, I always tell them that while waiting for a project or whatever, be prepared. Attend workshops, practice dancing, singing or martial arts. Just be prepared because once opportunity knocks on the door, you know where to place yourself."

'Hindi siya totoo': Dingdong Dantes denies having child with Lindsay de Vera

Dingdong Dantes said that he and wife Marian Rivera laughed off the rumors that he had fathered a child with his co-star Lindsay de Vera, but on "Fast Talk With Boy Abunda," the box-office actor said that he had to clear the issue once and for all.

"Wala po," Dingdong denied the issue several times.

Boy noted how the rumor persisted even after four years since it started. Dingdong and Lindsay were co-stars in two shows, namely, "Pari 'Koy" (2015) and "Alyas Robin Hood" (2016).

"Sa totoo lang nagdadalawang isip talaga ako kagabi kung may sasabihin ba ako about the topic and the issue kasi alam kong baka tanungin ninyo e...



"Pero para po sa akin kasi, may mga tumatawag na rin po kasi na mga kaibigan, mga kamag-anak, 'yung mga nagmamalasakit po sa akin, and because I have a responsibility dito sa aking mga mahal sa buhay, sa aking mga kaibigan e, responsibilidad ko na klaruhin ang isyung ito dahil mahalagang-mahalaga po ang aspetong ito para sa akin."

"I have a responsibility sa aking pamilya to clear things like this because I love my wife, I love my family very much, my kids, that's why I'm saying that it is not true," Dingdong said.

He added that he and Marian used to laugh the speculations off but he saw the need to address it.

Lindsay also denied the rumors in her 2021 interview with columnist Jobert Su-

caldito.

"Never akong nabuntis ni Kuya Dong and never kaming nagka-relationship. I respect Kuya Dong very much as a person, as a husband and as an actor," the actress said.

Regine is still relevant,

Ogie Alcasid discussed his wife Regine Velasquez's acknowledgment in a previous interview that she no longer sees herself as the top songstress.

"Yes, we discuss it regularly," he remarked. "Every day, we come to new understandings."

Ogie, a singer-songwriter-comedian, shared that his wife is humble and accepting of reality.

"Once, I found her watching her old videos from when she was younger. She'd

reminisce about her incredibly high vocal range back then and how splendid she was. I'd reassure her that she's still excellent now, just with a different style. She sings with more heart, especially since I've been in her life," he said.

Ogie also mentioned that Regine acknowledges the presence of numerous new and younger singers in the industry now, understanding that older artists like them may eventually fade into the background.

"When she expresses this concern, I reassure her that we're still relevant. Just because there are new singers doesn't mean we won't be noticed anymore. What matters



is that we know our place in the industry," he pointed out.

The talented entertainer takes pride in the fact that young singers admire them. "Exactly! Fresh talent is abundant out there now, but what's gratifying is that we have their support. Regine

feels both proud and humbled whenever these aspiring artists reach out to us."

"That's why, if you've noticed, she makes it a point to appear on their shows whenever possible. She wants to be involved in the lives and careers of these newcomers. She remembers how, when she was starting, established singers like Ms. Pilita Corrales, Ms. Kuh Ledesma, and Ms. Pops Fernandez also extended their support to her," Ogie concluded.

Nadine Lustre launches new business: 'it's purpose-driven'

Actress and entrepreneur Nadine Lustre has launched a plant-based milk brand called Dehusk with her boyfriend Christophe Bariou.

Nadine shared what encouraged them to launch a plant-based product.

She explained: "For us really the first reason why we switched to more plant-based is really for the animals. We realized that these animals are actually individuals who

are like us who deserve love and compassion and who deserve to exist in this world as well. And so knowing that we kind of realize that, you know me, I love eating meat, I love all of my cheese and all of that but then you know understanding how animal agriculture really works, that's really a key component for us switching."

Nadine admitted that venturing into this new business was challenging but it has been an incredible journey as it is purpose-driven.

"Very challenging just because I entered a world that I've never explored before. So there's so many things that I'm learning... But it's been an amazing thing so far also because the products that I've been involved with, they are all tied up to my values and my advocacies as well. So it's all purpose-driven," she remarked.

The actress went on: "I mean disrupting the dairy industry for Dehusk, that's one of the things that we really want to champion. To change people's mind when it comes to

dairy and for people to try out new things as well and I guess to push forward a more plant-based lifestyle."

The actress attested how consuming plant-based food has brought positive impacts on her health.

"Honestly it's been the best. A lot of people ask me how being plant-

based is like and I love it. We get to explore new ingredients, new food.

There's so many veggies and fruits out there that are available and it's really interesting because when we cook now we get to explore, we get to experiment and create new dishes. And for energy as well, I have so much energy," she relayed.



They're not enrolled

STUDENTS from page 1

reported influx of Chinese students in the Philippines.

Tansingco said he has requested the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), who chairs the Inter-Agency Committee on Foreign Students (IACFS) to call for a high-level meeting for members to clarify the role of each agency in permitting foreigners to study in the country.

"We have requested the

high-level meeting to reiterate our previous requests for immediate joint inspections, and for it to become a regular conduct by the IACFS given new developments in national security concerns," Tansingco (PHOTO) said. "We also believe that it is high time that the inter-agency be active in matters of national security by including security assessment as



a regular agenda in meetings," he added.

Tansingco's request stemmed from the high number of Chinese studying in Tuguegarao, resulting in a call for a probe by both houses of Congress.

Citing its records, the BI said that it found that 1,516 Chinese have been granted student visas in Cagayan, all endorsed by a major Philippine university.

However, reports showed that as of April, only 485 were enrolled with only 96 onsite

with student visas.

"The Philippine government has been promoting the country as a regional and global education hub. In fact, there are national campaigns that greatly helped boost the number of foreign students in the country," said Tansingco.

In 2023, the BI issued 16,190 were to Chinese, majority in the National Capital Region.

The BI said that the governing law on foreign students is Executive Order 285, s. 2000, which

created the IACFS chaired by CHED.

Schools that accept foreign nationals as students are required to submit regular reports of their students to all IACFS agencies.

The data is used by the BI who shall monitor their visa compliance, CHED that will ensure compliance with education-related policies, and NBI and NICA who shall conduct investigations on suspicious activities.

DonBelle shares biggest impact of 'Can't Buy Me Love' on their loveteam

With "Can't Buy Me Love" concluding, Donny Pangilinan and Belle Mariano can undoubtedly say that the experiences they had in this ABS-CBN Star Creatives-produced drama were unlike anything they had done before.

The loveteam affectionately called by fans as DonBelle, shared what they learned the most from playing the lead characters Bingo and Caroline, whose slowburn love story finally gets its happy ending.

Donny and Belle also spoke about the deeply personal impact working on this series, which also streamed on Netflix, has made on their love team.

"One thing I've learned from being in this serye, through my character, is don't be afraid to ask for help. I think starting this teleserye, I always had this hunger na parang I can prove this, I can do this, kaya ko 'to, kaya ko 'to mag-isa," began Belle.

"But along the journey, I realized that no, I can't do this alone. I need direk, I need Donny, I need every-



one there 'cause my character wouldn't be Caroline if it weren't for them. And it simply goes to show, it's the same with my life, my personal life, I wouldn't be who I am without the people around me in my entire life."

For Donny, they truly matured through this series, their debut primetime show, which many of their fans initially assumed would primarily be romantic-comedy. "Can't Buy Me Love" turned out to be a hybrid series — a gripping family drama-cum-thriller with rom-com elements — that tested if not showcased their skills and versatility as actors.

He said, "Totoo yun nag-mature talaga kami kasi syempre we also thought naman na medyo magiging focus sa rom-com 'di naman natin alam na dito rin papunta yung se-

ries. But for us, in terms of our craft, nagawa na namin yung rom-com and I think it's nice that we got to experience a completely different flavor (here)."

Noting the acting challenges they encountered on set, Donny said, "We've learned so much in terms of how we'd prepare for scenes na so-brang bigat and not just one but multiple times, multiple shots, in one day. And that's not something that's easy to do, especially if hindi ka kumakalas agad like me and her.

"Like sometimes, it's hard for us to go back to uy, okay na, okay na kasi tapos na. So yun yung parang natuto kami kung paano mag-let go din from time to time and kung kailan kailangan i-embod-

"So, that was really big for us because the stuff that we went through here, never namin naranasan sa ibang projects namin.

"Now, I know like, wow, kaya niya (Belle) yung mga ganitong eksena or ganito pala yung atake niya dito kasi never kong nakita yung ganong eksena. So, there's a lot of first times. There's always gonna be that for new projects. But this one, since we've been together for nine months in the series, every day, that's different to a show that has 12 episodes only, right?"

Or compared to a movie with shooting days that are less than 20 or 30. So, it's different living and breathing my character."

Belle can attest to how invested Donny was in his character, saying: "Even behind the scenes, even not in front of the cameras, I call him Bingo, ganun siya kahusay. Totoo! Even when we talk... minsan yung punto niya rin, 'pag nagsasalita, totoo yung nasabi niya na he really embodied Bingo."

How was their journey as onscreen partners so far.

"I always say this to him: I love working with you," said Belle. I want to be one of those witnesses in his life na you know, one day, I would see you nalang holding your Oscar," she told Donny.

"Ikaw muna," Donny was quick to respond before adding, "I'm just

so happy that I get to go through even this industry with someone I really do trust and someone I know who also wants to be that supportive.

"So seeing her even more and more mature into a fine woman, it's super nice to be a part of that because I know how dedicated she is in her craft and I know how badly she wants to grow and to really take things seriously in terms of her projects. As for me, no matter what she wants to do, I'm just here to support her and to be cheering for her."

"We've learned so much in terms of how we'd prepare for scenes"

Kiko Estrada pays homage to late grandfather Paquito Diaz

As Kiko Estrada plays his biggest role yet in the ongoing TV5-Viva drama "Lumuhod Ka Sa Lupa," he couldn't help but acknowledge the influence of his late grandfather, the famous kontrabida Paquito Diaz, on his acting journey.

Paquito died in 2011 at the age of 73. Once hailed as the Philippine movie industry's "King of Kontrabidas," he helped shape the acting path of his grandson.

"Everybody is saying he was a villain, yeah he was a villain (onscreen) but in my life, he's the lead, he's the bida (hero) of my life."

'He's the hero of my life': 'Lumuhod Ka Sa Lupa' star Kiko Estrada recalls his



favorite memories with late grandfather Paquito Diaz.

"The only thing I can remember with Lolo Paquito was, he was so different from what you see onscreen. He was a sweet guy.

He continued, "He hated it if you'd do any activity and you were wearing slippers. So he'd make you wear shoes.

Asked if there was any memorable character or movie of his Lolo Paquito, he cited, "Asiong Salonga" where he played the villain, he played 'Nardong Toothpick. But if I'm gonna make it, I think I will be Asiong hahaha!"

"Lolo Paquito had this one thing that he told my mother and then she told me: Acting is about bringing the audience along for the ride. You have to reach a climactic point in a scene. So it's not a monotone thing. Before you scream or get mad in tone, you have to be light ... then it goes up and up and up.

"Of course, there are scenes that the director wants (things to be steady). But yeah, that's the acting thing that I learned

— bringing the audiences to the journey and making them feel something. If I cry right now and there's tears already, I'm not gonna bring you there. But if I don't and then eventually my eyes bawl, (they can say) I felt that. So, it's about being in the moment. Not really memorizing your lines but being open."

Just because of his acting pedigree, it doesn't mean Kiko had it "easier" pursuing a showbiz career.

"People think na just because... that's why I was saying I hate entitled people and I might be accused of that when I was a kid. But I believe I worked for what I have right now. It was not easy, it was not given."

Elijah Canlas on relationship status with Miles Ocampo: 'We're taking it easy'

Actor Elijah Canlas has given an update regarding the status of his relationship with his ex-girlfriend Miles Ocampo.

This after Canlas was present during the 27th birthday of Ocampo.

In a chance interview with reporters on Tuesday, the actor said they are taking things slow.

"We're doing good. We're very happy. Of course, of course. We're taking it easy," he said.

In an interview with ABS-CBN News' Ganiel Krishnan, Canlas shared that the birthday was planned with their friends.

"All our friends were there. Kami ang nag-organize sa salubong party niya. In-enjoy lang namin. Well, right now we're just enjoying what we have. We're taking things easy lang para walang pressure," he

said.

Canlas said that he maintained a "strong" friendship with Ocampo.

"We're just taking our time. Doon lang kami sa focusing on our work. S'yempre, marami rin siyang work, marami rin akong work. Of course, the love and care for each other will always be there," he said.

In an interview with ABS-CBN News last March, Canlas hinted that rumors of him and Ocampo reconciling could actually be true, while Ocampo earlier said that she and Canlas, whom she described as her "true love," are on speaking terms again, but just as friends.

Canlas confirmed that he and Ocampo have broken up in November 2023, after over two years of being in a relationship.

They first confirmed their relationship in May 2022.



Candid CAMERA



Efrén de Villa and Felino Javier arrange the books at the Filipino Centre, Toronto.

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Happy 22nd Birthday

Shanaia Gomez

You too can have a sexy body by eating Ihalo Krunch Ice Cream, according to Joy D'Aoust, realtor (Page 19) and Ihalo Krunch ice Cream store owner.



David Chua clarifies romance rumors with 'Showtime' host Jackie Gonzaga

Actor and director David Chua clarified the romantic rumors between him and "It's Showtime" host Jackie Gonzaga.

Eagle-eyed social media users noticed that David and Jackie were having sweet exchanges on Instagram.

Jackie reposted David's photo showing both of them sharing a sweet moment, which was taken during a break from their taping for their Net25 sitcom "Good Will."

Despite being teased by their respective fans, David makes it clear that he and Jackie are not exactly dating

at the moment.

"I think most people know that she's recovering from a breakup - an eight-year relationship at that - and I just want to help her move on," David said in a statement sent to Philstar.com.

"She's easy to hang out with, walang arte sa kawatan, and being the people person that she is, she's always willing to meet new people and discover new things. With a mindset like that, I'm sure it's only a matter of time before she fully recovers from her heart-break.

"Basta, no matter what happens, I'm always there for Jackie Gurl. I'll always be by her side."

David and Jackie first met on the set of "Good Will," when she joined the cast during the show's fourth season during the last quarter of 2023.

"Bibo siya, e. Kung kaya mong makipag-sagutan sa isang Vice Ganda, then you must really be smart and gutsy. And that's what Jackie is! Mabilis kausap and hindi siya plastic," he said.

"Of course, she's very stunning! And because she's a



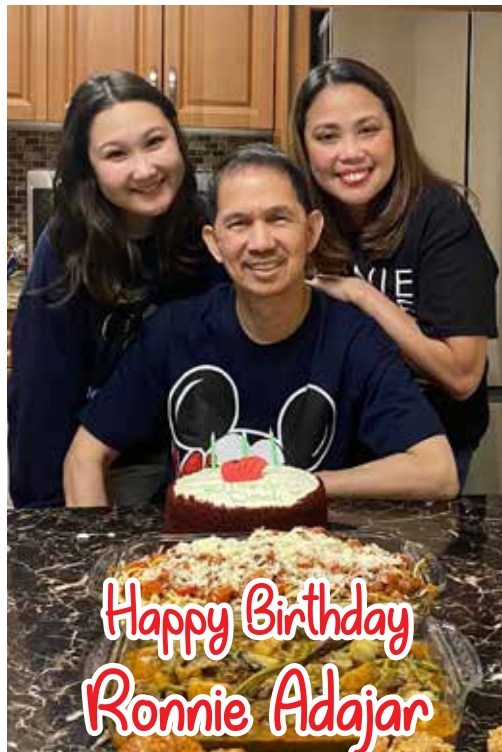
dancer, she's also very much into fitness, just like me," he added.



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Chelsea Manalo overcomes challenges, aims for Miss Universe title

Newly-crowned Miss Universe Philippines 2024 Chelsea Manalo emerged as a dark horse in the fiercely competitive pageant, winning over 52 other delegates. Despite having a smaller following compared to well-known, veteran candidates, Manalo's perseverance and charm led her to victory.

In a media conference two days after the coronation night, Manalo reflected on her experiences and the challenges she faced during the journey, including almost quitting pageantry because of financial issues.

"I think most of the girls have that problem as well. I joined here as an independent woman. Everything that I had to go through, I laid it out on myself. I told my mom and my dad that I want to join this season of Miss Universe Philippines. So they did support me but because of this, I also had to risk quitting my job," the 24-year-old, who worked as a hotel staff, shared.

"My income was limited to a couple of amounts, which caused some issues with my team. I almost quit but thank God, there are people who pushed me to continue further," she revealed, adding that the local government of Bulacan eventually supported her financially.

"Four months [of competition] is a really long battle for us. We don't know where our resources would come from, everyone would have to risk something. But because of the support that I've been getting, it made me continue and now I'm here," she furthered.

It has been Manalo's dream to do pageants. She first entered the scene at 17, competing in Miss World Philippines 2017.



"I was a dreamer of beauty pageants, I love joining beauty pageants and I love seeing beauty queens as well. I always uphold the values that my parents have told me and I want to be that woman of representation as well," Manalo said.

A Filipino-American, she is noted as the first Black woman to have been selected to represent the country in Miss Universe. She aims to be a role model for women of color and aspiring beauty queens, encouraging them to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams despite societal standards.

"To every woman of color — any woman whose here to support me, I just want to say believe in yourself. If you really love pageantry, if you have a dream, go for it, take risks. It's not too late for you to try it out. Miss Universe Philippines actually opened up a lot of standards for every woman — there are married women here, there are mothers, there are also under the age of 18 because they have dreams,

and anyone can get to it. I started young, I have a dream for it, and now I'm Miss Universe Philippines. I hope I can be that inspiration for them."

Despite the pressure that comes with the title, Manalo remains optimistic and excited about the opportunities ahead.

"I would say [it scares me] a little bit, but that's not in a negative way. I'm mostly excited. I've been saying this to my parents and to my team: I'm scared because I'm excited to always go out there, to talk and meet people. I now hold the crown and the sash and there's so much opportunity that will come my way and I'm so ready for it."

Looking ahead to the Miss Universe pageant in Mexico later this year, Manalo is bringing with her the lessons she learned from her journey.

"I learned from each woman from the competition, all 52 of them. No gender, no color, no status will ever hinder us from facing our dreams — be it to get a crown, be a leader or be a transformational woman. So when I get into that stage, I will always be reminded that you can be an empowered woman no matter who you are."

When asked why she should be crowned the fifth Miss Universe from the Philippines, Manalo responded with humility and determination saying, "I should be the next Miss Universe because I am not just a woman who wears a crown and a sash — it's more than that."

"[The] sash is really close to my heart because it reminds me of who I am, of the Philippines, of who we are. And this will only inspire me to be more radiant as I represent who we are as Filipinos," Manalo ended.

Piolo Pascual admits being drunk while accepting FAMAS Best Actor award

Kapamilya star Piolo Pascual admitted that he was drunk upon receiving the Best Actor trophy at the recently concluded Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences Awards (FAMAS) last weekend.

In his acceptance speech, Piolo thanked the award-giving body for recognizing his performance in the blockbuster movie "Mallari."

"Unang-una kong pasalamatang ang Panginoong Diyos po sa karangalang ito because kung wala po ang Panginoong Diyos, wala po ako dito," Piolo said.



He also thanked his award presenters Vilma Santos and Christopher de Leon, saying they were his parents in the award-winning movie "Dekada 70."

"And of course my parents, Mommy Vi, Dad Bo, they are my parents, they reared me in this business," he said.

Piolo then admitted that he drank a lot during the event.

"Marami po akong pasalamatang, pero marami na rin po ako nainom tonight. So, gusto ko lang pong magpasalamat sa Mentorque Productions, kay Bryan Diamante," he said.

Vilma then joked, "Lasing ka na anak, lasing ka na anak. Go ahead, anak, go."

"Puwede ba ako mag-shades, Mommy?" Piolo replied.

"Gusto kong magpasalamat sa bumubuo ng 'Mallari,' sa direktor ko, si Direk Derick [Cabrido], sa PD ko, sa camera... lahat po ng bumubuo ng 'Mallari,' pinaghirapan po namin 'yung pelikulang ito at lahat po ng artista, pinaghirapan po nila 'yung trabaho nila."

"So, maraming-maraming salamat po. Hindi ko po ipagkakait sa sarili ko kasi para sa pelikulang Pilipino ito. Maraming salamat. God bless you," he added.

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Sophie Albert reposts blind item about “annulment”

Is Sophie Alberts and Vin Abrenica’s relationship on the rocks?

Usap-usapan ngayon online ang pag-repost ng Kapuso actress na si Sophie Albert sa isang blind item tungkol sa isang celebrity/endorser na diumano’y nakatakdang mag-file ng annulment.

Noong May 12, 2024, isang TikTok page ang nag-post ng video patungkol sa nakalap nilang impormasyon sa maghihiwalay na celebrity couple.

Base sa blind item, may pagtataksil na nangyari kaya’t nasira ang dating masaya at payapang pagsasama at pagmamahalan ng mag-asawa.

Mababasa sa nasabing blind item (published as is): “SIKAT NA SIKAT NA CELEBRITY/ENDORSER MAGPA-FILE NG ANNULMENT SA DYOWA

“May tsika kaming nasagap. Kesyo ang celebrity couple raw na ito ay nanganganib ang pagsasama.

“Hindi kasi matigil-tigil ang isyu sa kanila na ang asawang maraming karakteran ay napatotohanang namumugad sa ibang pugad.

“Una raw ay hindi naniniwala ang endorser ding partner, pero nang muling lumabas ang item na mayroon nang karagdagan dito na raw unti-unting nawawasak ang kanilang masayang pagsasama.

“May sitsit pang magpa-file na umano ng annulment ang celebrity/endorser at maging ang kanilang conjugal properties ay pinag-uusapan na rin.

“Gaano kaya katotoo ang tsikang ito na aming nakalap. Sana naman ay walang katotohanan ang teikang nakarating sa

amin dahil may mga taong masasaktan.”

Mabilis na napansin ng netizens ang pag-repost ni Sophie sa nasabing blind item.

Ito ang dahilan para pag-isipang sila ng asawa niyang si Vin Abrenica ang tinutukoy na celebrity couple na kasalukuyang humaharap sa matinding pagsubok.

Kung bibisitahin ang TikTok ngayon ni Sophie ay burado na ito, ngunit bago ito nangyari ay marami nang netizens ang naka-pag-screenshot nito.

Komento ng isang netizen sa blind-item video (published as is), “Ni-repost ni Sophie Albert. Confirm na ata [sad emoji].”

Sabi pa ng isa, “Hoy Sophie Albert reposted [crying in tears emoji] why??? grabe naman ang Abrenica brothers, di na nakuntento sa asawa nila if ever na totoo man ito.”

Ang tinutukoy ng netizen na kapatid ni Vin ay ang aktor ding si Aljur Abrenica.

Si Aljur ay kasal sa Kapuso actress na si Kylie Padilla. Sila ay may dalawang anak, sina Alas at Axl.

July 2021 nang makumpirmang nagwakas na nga ang relasyon nina Aljur at Kylie dahil sa rebelasyon ng ama ng aktres na si Robin Padilla, kunaan sinabi nitong third party ang dahilan ng breakup ng dalawa.

Dito nasangkot ang pangalan ng Viva-max actress na si AJ Raval na noo’y itinuturong third party sa hiwalayang Aljur at Kylie.

Makailang beses itong pinabulaanan nina Aljur at AJ hanggang sa noong February 14, 2023, tuluyan nang isinapubliko ng dalawa ang kanilang relasyon.

NETIZENS DEFEND SOPHIE AND VIN

Kung may naghinalang sina Sophie at Vin ang celebrity couple na nakatakdang mag-annul, mayroon din namang hindi kumbinsido sa ginawang pag-repost ng aktres.

Ayon sa ilang netizens, hindi maaaring maging basehan ang pag-repost ni Sophie sa blind item sa kasalukuyang relasyon nila ngayon ni Vin.

Saad ng isang netizen, “Impossible na si Vin to. Patay na patay kay Sophie yun.”

Sabi ng isa, “Pumunta ako sa IG [Instagram] ni Sophie Albert pero mukhang okay naman sila.”

“Baka ni-repost niya lang kasi alam niya kung sino [laughing in tears emoji],” depensa pa ng isa.

Dagdag ng isa, “Hoy kaka-celebrate lang nila Sophie ng Mother’s Day tigilan niyo.”

VIN GREETS SOPHIE ON MOTHER’S DAY

Kung bibisitahin ang Instagram page ni Vin ay makikita ang post niya noong May 12 na naka-tag si Sophie.

Laman ng post ang video nila ni Sophie habang sila ay nakikipagkulitan sa kanilang anak, kalakip ang pagbati niya ng Happy Mother’s Day sa kanyang misis.

Mababasa sa caption ni Vin (published as is), “Sa aking minamahal na asawa, ikaw talaga ang ilaw ng ating tahanan. Happy Mother’s day! Mahal na mahal ka

namin.”

VIN AND SOPHIE RELATIONSHIP Mahigit sampung taon ang itinagal ng relasyon nina Vin at Sophie bilang magkasintahan bago sila magdesisyong magpakasal.

Dalawang beses ikinasal ang dalawa: una sa isang church wedding sa National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians sa Parañaque City noong January 27, 2023; at pangalawa sa isang intimate garden ceremony sa Tagaytay noong January 28.

Sa panayam ni Vin noong February 23, 2023, sinabi nitong si Sophie ang itinuturing niyang best friend.

Sabi ni Vin tungkol sa asawa, “I love the life Sophie and I share and the family we’re growing together.

“I married my best friend and I love coming home to her and our little princess.”

VIN AND SOPHIE’S FAMILY LIFE

First-time dad si Vin sa panganay nila ni Sophie na si Avianna Celeste Abrenica.

Kuwento ng aktor, masaya at ine-enjoy niya ang pagiging ama sa anak at asawa kay Sophie.

Aniya: “I love being a dad to my little princess. Fatherhood has really changed me positively.

“It’s given me a deeper appreciation for life, it gave my life direction and it’s teaching me a lot about patience for sure.

“Providing for my family and taking care of them is what keeps me fulfilled. It’s definitely an exciting adventure that I never want to miss out on.”

Samantala, habang isinusulat ang artikulong ito ay wala pang direktang pahayag sina Sophie at Vin tungkol sa isyung nauugnay sa kanila.



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Japanese housekeeping companies turn to Philippines and beyond for staff

Move comes amid surging demand for services such as cleaning and laundry

TOKYO – Companies in Japan that offer housekeeping services such as cleaning, laundry and ironing are increasingly turning to the Philippines and other places overseas as they rush to meet surging demand from time-strapped customers.

With working from home fading in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the number of dual-income households rising, more people in the country are willing to pay for help handling chores.

Pushing to keep pace with this growing appetite for their services, housekeeping firms are accelerating their recruitment abroad – especially as relaxed immigration rules for the sector boost the appeal of hiring beyond Japan's borders.

Indeed, Tokyo-based housekeeping service provider Bears plans to hire an extra 150 foreign workers in 2024 to bolster the 300 it already employs, with each person offered 400 hours of training.

The overseas recruitment drive comes as crushing labor shortages threaten a range of industries in Asia's No. 3 economy and one of the world's fastest-aging societies.

"Let's make sure we clean windows and mirrors evenly by wiping in one direction," an instructor said to 33-year-old Mundacruz Lizyldeci, who came to Japan from the Philippines this year, during a training session in a living room-like space at Bear's head office. Listening to the instructions in early May with a serious look on her face, Lizyldeci said, "I will provide the high-quality services demanded by Japanese consumers."

Bears says it plans to hire work-ready foreign housekeepers such as those licensed by the Philippine government.

Filipino workers hired through Bears' subsidiary in the Philippines are given Japanese language and other lessons for two



Spick and span: An instructor oversees a worker from the Philippines as she goes through a training session at the Tokyo head office of housekeeping company Bears. (Photo by Ryosuke Matsui)

months before coming to Japan. They go through a two-week training program in Japan, which includes checks on their housekeeping skills. They are paid and assessed on the same basis as Japanese workers, with help available in Tagalog.

Housekeeping services by foreign nationals without permanent residence status began in areas designated as special economic zones in 2017. The government in 2020 extended the time such people are permitted to stay in the country to five years from three, while offering an additional three-year extension in 2023 for those who meet certain conditions.

In Japan, dual-income households began to outnumber those with stay-at-home housewives in 1992. The amount of two-paycheck families had increased to nearly 13 million by 2023, a roughly 40% rise over three decades, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Japan's market for housekeeping services had grown to a value of 80.7 billion

yen (\$516 million) by fiscal 2021, more than doubling from five years earlier, according to the latest survey by Teikoku

Databank. But in the research company's 2023 consumer survey, only 1.8% of some 2,200 respondents in their 20s to 40s said they used housekeeping services. "I know of such services but have never used them" was the reply chosen by nearly

76%.

Nevertheless, potential demand for housekeeping services appears strong as roughly half of households in the survey considered home chores a burden. To convert potential demand into actual demand, fair prices for the services, as well as their quality and safety, need to be ensured.

Another driver for the rising demand is a shift from the days of the COVID pandemic, when many people worked online from home. More employers are now telling their staff to come into the office.

A 35-year-old woman who has a job at a major financial institution in Tokyo often worked from home during the pandemic. But after restarting commuting to the office, she began using major housekeeping service provider CaSy's so-called matching service from last November.

"I use ironing and laundry services once every two weeks," she said. "I didn't have much time to spare due to lots of overtime work. I can now go out on weekends."

CaSy has some 170,000 registered customers and 15,000 housekeepers. The matching service introduces housekeepers to customers depending on the chores they need handling. But given frequent



Bears, Japan's leading housekeeping service provider, is hiring more foreign workers, many from the Philippines. (Bears)

mismatches between customers and housekeepers over dates and places of work, CaSy created a program in February to complement orders, when necessary, with other housekeeping service providers. It has so far tied up with 15 companies for the program and hopes to increase the number to 100 in three years.

Before the registration of housekeepers, CaSy screens applicants' records, including for any criminal convictions, through identity verification company Trustdock. While providing a sense of reassurance to customers, CaSy has set clear criteria for housekeepers about when and how to exit from customers' homes to protect housekeepers from possible harassment by clients. "We must settle security-related problems while nurturing professional housekeepers," said Yuki Shirasaka, a CaSy director.

The financial burden on customers is a major barrier to an increase in the use of housekeeping services. In France and

Germany where over 10% of people use such services, financial support such as tax breaks are available to customers. Japan's government will begin an experiment, possibly later in May, to provide subsidies to cover some costs when small and mid-size companies offer home services as a benefit for their employees.

Minimaid Service, which started housekeeping services for wealthy households back in 1983, is expanding its customer base by holding fees in check. A swift, inexpensive service introduced by Minimaid has helped stoke a threefold increase in the number of times its services have been used over the past five years. The company plans to increase its employee numbers by around 50% in two to three years.

Housekeeping services are roughly divided into three business models: the employment of housekeepers as staff, which prioritizes the quality of services through education; matching between customers and housekeepers commissioned by service providers; and websites for matching between customers and housekeepers on a person-to-person basis. Fees vary greatly.

"Housekeeping services can become infrastructure to protect foundations of the economy such as active work by women and parenting support," said Yuki Takahashi, head of the National Housekeeping Services Association.

To ensure the quality of housekeeping services and improve the status of housekeepers, the association will hold talks with the government to create a national certification program, Takahashi added.

With quickly growing fanbase, Rob Deniel hopes to ‘push’ himself to the next level

Just three years ago, Rob Deniel was writing songs in his bedroom, recording and producing them using only his phone.

Now, his music has hundreds of millions of streams. The best thing about it? He gets to perform and bring them to life in front of his devoted and fast-growing fanbase.

“I’m very grateful where I am now because I started from scratch. The idea that I have reached a point where I have a following—though not comparable to those of bigger stars—makes me happy. It makes me more inspired. It fuels me to continue improving the quality of my music,” he said in an interview backstage at one of his recent gigs.

The 20-year-old recording artist is quite the old soul,

drawing inspiration from artists from the 1950s to 1980s: Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Apo Hiking Society, Hotdog, Rey Valera and Rico J. Puno. And his music reflects those influences.

Rob started out creating dreamy, confessional bedroom pop. Over time, his style developed into a beguiling blend of retro music and contemporary pop. Laced with rock, jazz and a dash of romance, the music ends up sounding fresh and nostalgic all at once—a modern take on harana, if you will.

While the idea of a then teenager exploring genres typically associated with more experienced musicians seemed odd to some, Rob’s music quickly found its niche among

similarly wired young fans. On Spotify alone, he has nine songs with seven-digit streams, including “RomCom” (50 million); “Ang Pag-Ibig” (52.6 million) and his breakout hit, “Ulap” (56.6 million).

There’s pressure to come up with equally successful songs, Rob admitted. But it’s something he has learned to embrace. What’s important, he said, is that he doesn’t let it prevent him from enjoying the creative process.

Live music

“I just try to enjoy the process—recording, performing.



I enjoy myself even if it’s just a small show I’m doing. I enjoy writing even if I feel like what I’m working on doesn’t have hit potential. When there’s enjoyment, the pressure eventually wears off,” he pointed out. “I just keep doing what I’m doing and hopefully, I find my audience and be recognized for that.”

And find his audience he did. There they were at the

Viva Cafe one May evening, giddily singing along and slow-dancing on the floor. On-stage, Rob sounded confident and worked the stage with ease. While still relatively new on the live scene, he surprisingly never really felt awkward about being in front of people.

“I’m a huge fan of live music. I love watching full concerts and sets on YouTube, from Elvis’ to The 1975’s. I love seeing them on a live stage. I take note of the good things they do and what to include in the sets,” he said. “I love watching Elvis. It’s like he had his own world... [he was] in the zone. I want to channel that kind of energy. I know what I want to express, and I hope it comes across.”

Backstage, Rob usually finds himself pacing back and forth. It’s his way of keeping himself warmed up. “I don’t like sitting down for too long because I feel it makes the tension pile up in my body. Paikot-ikot lang ako while the band goes for a sound check,” he said.

Rob has never been busier, playing shows or events every week. More than performing itself, he also cherishes all the lovely little interactions with his fans, and all the little trinkets they give him. “This was given to me by a fan,” he said, showing the bead bracelets with titles of his songs.

“There was even one who gave me her school ID. I still have it at home. She might want to get it back,” he said, laughing. “I’m super thankful for all the gigs. I try to make the most out of them. Even the trips and commutes, I try to enjoy them.”

Different vibes

While he has already played at the Big Dome, it was for a multiartist show with fellow Viva Records talents. Is Rob ready to take the next step and hold a solo concert at a big venue? “Soon, I hope. Konting push pa. I’m always trying to push limits anyway,” he said.

First, he needs to beef up his catalog further. After all, Rob stressed, the songs serve as his portfolio or calling cards of sorts for future shows. In fact, he has a new one coming up with Janine Teñoso in June. “It’s called ‘Distansya.’ She’s one of my idols. And I get to work with her in shows, but this is our first time doing a song together,” he said.

While he’s now known for retro-pop music, Rob doesn’t want to be boxed in a single category and hopes to keep experimenting with other styles. “I want to come up with songs that have different vibes... The sound I have now was something I manifested years ago. And now people love them,” he said.

“That’s why I’m eager to gain more knowledge by working with different producers,” added Rob, who strikes a balance between making the kind of music he likes and what he thinks the fans will like. “But it always has to be something that resonates with them.”

Rob acknowledged he still has a long way to go. Still, it’s heartening to know that, at this point in his career, he’s already able to inspire people through his music. He said he finds it flattering and humbling whenever people tell him that he’s one of the artists to watch out for.

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