

# FOREVER

West Philippine Sea: Brawner wants US missiles to stay in PH 'forever'

MANILA, Phl — For Armed (AFP) chief General Romeo Typhon midrange capability the country permanently. as the Army announced the Forces of the Philippines Brawner Jr., the United States' (MRC) missile should stay in Brawner made the remark **FOREVER** p15



**CASAROCA HERMANA DANCE THE KURACHA**  
Ogie Daguman Elmido and incoming Calbayog Samar Residence of Ontario (Casaroca) 2025 Hermana Rhea Aliman dance the Kuracha at the gala night.



**BEAUTIES LENDING THEIR PRESENCE**  
Shine Asuncion of Facebook Page Kain Tayo once said a singer adds glamour to a party. I think it also applies to beauty queens Alexa Grant, Melissa Ventocilla and Chiara Silo who graced Dolorosa Gala and Fiesta with their presence.

## GENEROSITY GENERATION



### GENEROSITY GENERATION IN THE COMMUNITY

These are just some of the people that are generous with their time, effort and financial support to different organizations in the community.  
1. Incoming and outgoing Calbayog Samar Residence of Ontario (Casaroca) Hermanas are introduced at the Gala Night. From left to right, (proxy Jelyn Alvarez) Rosemary St Juana, 2025; Ruth Morilao, 2025; Wilyn Sagadal Jumantoc, 2025; Anacleta Daguman Tarranco, 2024; Raymunda Daguman Elmido, 2024; Rhea Yu Aliman, 2025; 2. Dolorosa President Philip Beloso who, along with family and volunteer members, has been tirelessly running Dolorosa; 3. Johannah Alilio, representing her family that owns the balikbayan box company UMAC Forwarders Express, sponsors Dolorosa annually; 4. Realtor Joy D'acoust is a new Dolorosa hermana this year. With her is Mitzi Faigal of Mitzville and Mitzify bags, a philanthropist who donates to various causes in the community and fellow realtor Jenifer Camacho, who is a singer; 5. Action Honda's Rafael Nebres with wife Sylvia has been the pillar of Bicol Canada for years.

## Canada tightens visa rules for students

OTTAWA - Beginning September 26, Canadian companies will have a harder time using non-Canadians to fill jobs. In late August, Ottawa tightened the eligibility criteria for its Temporary Foreign Workers Program in response to mounting criticism over the program's dramatic expansion in recent years. On Sept. 26, three key program changes take effect. Critics contend the program does not serve the interests of workers and was only expanded due to pressure from corporate interests. Lobbyists say **CANADA** page 9



*It's beginning to feel like Christmas, o di ba!*



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# Maria Ozawa has mixed feelings over her mother role in 'Pulang Araw'

Maria Ozawa is part of the cast of 'Pulang Araw' as Haruka Tanaka, the mother of Hiroshi Tanaka played by David Licaucou. When she first read the script, the Japanese actress had mixed feelings, thinking, 'Would I be able to act out as a good Japanese mother?' she shares. 'I didn't want to disrespect anybody or the role itself, so I studied some of the history back then and how everything was like back in the day.'



the weather is nice in the Philippines.

Maria was 19 years old when she started acting in adult videos (AV) in Japan. She was working in bars and lounges as a part-owner at that time.

She shared, "The people I met, especially the girls who worked there, were already in the business. They were talking about it and saying, 'Do you know that you could go to foreign countries for a magazine shoot when you get famous? You could go on TV.' I was like, 'Maybe it's a good idea to get famous 'cause I wanted to go abroad. I wanted to go to different countries. I wanted to get out of Japan.'" Maria wanted to explore and experience different things from places she hadn't visited yet.

She had the impression that the adult movie industry was a dark and dangerous business. It eventually changed when she discovered that the people working there were very nice. It also depends on the girls and why they choose to work in that industry. "But it's not because they all wanted money or they had no dreams. People really had a dream and they were using that industry for their step up. They had their own mind and they knew what they were doing. So, it was like something very new and different but in a good way," she explained.

Maria already stopped doing adult videos. "I wanted to quit the industry while people still know about me or when they're still talking about me. 'Cause how am I supposed to prove anything if I'm not famous anymore?"

Some of her friends turned their backs on her when she was acting in AV but the

Japanese actress Maria Ozawa is part of the cast of "Pulang Araw," which airs weeknights on GMA and is also streaming on Netflix. She plays Haruka Tanaka, the mother of Hiroshi Tanaka played by David Licaucou.

The war drama revolves around the love story of the main characters during World War II when the Japanese occupied the Philippines.

"Pulang Araw" also stars Alden Richards, Dennis Trillo, Barbie Forteza, and Sanya Lopez.

Maria admitted having mixed feelings when she first read the script and "I was thinking, 'Would I be able to act out as a good Japanese mother?' I didn't want to disrespect anybody or the role itself, so I studied some of the history back then and how everything was like back in the day," she said during her interview on "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda."

It is already her 10th year in the Philippines. Maria came to the country when her Filipino friends visited Japan, and encouraged her to travel here. She said the hospitality is great, the food is good, and



**Josie De Leon,**  
JDL SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS FOUNDER

Congratulations to all of our JDL recital performers. You all did a phenomenal job and made me and your parents very proud. Special thanks to our mentors , Margaret & Uly ( and me .. ) Special thanks as well to Scott & Mark Rivera and to all the parent volunteers. Thank you Kuya Peyton for sharing your time with us and for the inspirational support and encouragement to all our students!

ones who remained have supported her and they have been together for a long time now. Maria's relationship with her family also got strained. "I understand where they were coming from. They're parents, I'm a girl. Of course, they would go against it." Maria left the house after telling them she would come back bigger and better. But she never returned. Their relationship is doing better now. She invited them to visit the Philippines a couple of times and hopefully, they would come one day.

There was a time when she doubted love because of the nature of her job as an AV actress. She became cynical about men's real intentions for her. Some men backed off when they discovered that Maria was doing AV. "They would say that I would never be able to be in a real relationship. You won't be able to trust people because you're in the industry. Who would think about you in a serious way?"

But true love will find its way to Maria at the perfect time. I loved how she smiled at me when I asked her during our conversation if she was in love right now. Her smile said it all.

'Aldub pa rin' trends after Alden Richards, Kathryn Bernardo release 'Hello Love Again' new teaser

The word "Aldub" trended again on social media after the release of a new teaser of Alden Richards and Kathryn Bernardo's upcoming movie "Hello Love Again."

In the new teaser, Kathryn (Joy) and Alden (Ethan) are seen talking via video call.

Fans of Alden and Maine Mendoza, known as Aldub, posted on X that they are still supporting the once popular tandem, and are asking for a solo project for the two.

"Ang tanong ko bakit napakaHard Sell ng movie na HLA... bakit todo promote kung saan saan kailangan pumunta magmakaawa ng support? IYAM had very minimal promotions. It was d FANDOM who promoted d movie. Walang hirap sa ALDUB!! Just asking ALDUB PARIN," one Aldub fan wrote.

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# Filipinos emerge as major group in Canada's diverse labour force

Filipinos have a high employment rate in Canada. Image by Janno Nivergall from Pixabay.

September 16, 2024 — Labour is a key input in a nation's economic progress.

TORONTO - To fuel growth, a country needs to grow its labour force, increase capital goods, develop human capital, and boost technology.

In advance of the celebration of Labour Day on September 2, 2024, Statistics Canada released a snapshot of the country's workforce.

The profile shows that the labour force has grown to under 21.3 million workers in 2023. To be included in the workforce, one has to be 15 years old and older.

One of the things that stood out from the August 29, 2024 report is the diversity of Canada's labour force.

Statistics Canada noted that in 2023, 29.6 percent of Canadians in the labour force were part of a racialized group.

This percentage represents a total of 6.3 million people.

In this substantial workforce - employed or looking for work - Filipinos comprise one of the biggest groups with around 718,600.

Filipinos come fourth behind South Asians, 1.7 million; Chinese, 1.07 million; and Blacks, 961,700.

Fifth are Latin Americans, 439,100; and Arabs, 363,300.

Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem stressed in a June 24, 2024 speech before the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce the importance of growing the country's labour force.

"If we look at the labour market with a longer-term lens, we see that Canada's growing, inclusive and well-educated la-



bour force has been a key advantage for our economy," Macklem stated.

The central bank governor continued, "It's been our primary source of economic growth for the past 25 years, and sustaining this advantage is critical to achieving strong non-inflationary growth going forward."

"To sustain this advantage, we need to keep investing in an inclusive labour market, smart immigration, and a strong and accessible education system."

Although Filipinos rank fourth in size of the total labour force comprised by visible minority groups, they hold the top spot in terms of employment rate.

[Statistics Canada defines employment rate as the number of persons employed expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over.]

In 2023, Filipinos had an employment rate of 74.2 percent, which is higher than South Asians (68.7 percent), Chinese (58.7 percent), and Blacks (66.8 percent).

Coming second and third to Filipinos in terms of employment rate are Latin Americans (69.5 percent) and Southeast Asians (69.2 percent).

Moreover, in Statistics Canada's August 29, 2024 report, the country's labour force is also highly educated.

"Canada continued to rank first in the G7 countries for the share of working-age people (aged 25 to 64) with a college or

university credential (57.5%) in 2021," the statistics agency noted.

"A key factor in this is our strong college sector. Nearly one in four working-age Canadians (24.6%) had a college certificate or diploma or similar credential in 2021, more than in any other G7 country," Statistics Canada explained.

As well, an increasing share of working-age Canadians has

completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

Over 6.4 million people, or about one-third of the working-age population, reported having a bachelor's degree or higher in 2021, which is up 4.3 percent from 2016.

"This increase was driven both by highly educated recent immigrants and by rising educational attainment among young adults," the agency noted.



## 'Mas sikat pa rin kay R'

Lolit Solis reacts to Paolo Contis as allegedly 'laos'

Veteran showbiz columnist Lolit Solis reacted over allegations that her talent Paolo Contis is now "laos."

In a report by Salve Asis for Pilipino Star Ngayon, Lolit said that Paolo is still popular.

"Hoy! Kahit anong sabihin n'yo, kung kay R (actor's name) lang, mas sikat pa rin si Paolo Contis," Lolit said.

"Oo. Bakit kung kay R lang, mas mahusay na artista si Paolo Contis ah."

Lolit said that she's wondering why GMA has not given Paolo a new teleserye project yet.

"Ang nagtataka ako sana kung si Paolo Contis walang talent, 'yung alam mong walang talent, alam mong unprofessional. Papayag naman ako, I mean i-overlook siya, ganyan. Pero, alam naman natin, talented si Paolo. Very professional naman. Wala akong naririnig na nagko-complain sa kanya," she said.

"Pero bakit parang lahat ng lumalabas na mga bagong serye, wala si Paolo? Doon



lang ako nagtataka. E compared naman sa ibang artistang nilalabas na bida sa mga seryeng 'yun, ilalaban ko naman si Paolo anytime. Pero mahal ko ang GMA ha," she added.

Sharlene San Pedro teaches financial literacy in 'Estudyantipid'

From her beginnings in ABS-CBN's 2004 talent search "Star Circle Quest: Kids Edition" to becoming a familiar face on the iconic sketch comedy show "Goin' Bulilit" and various TV dramas, Filipino audiences have watched Sharlene San Pedro grow up on screen, evolving into the talented and graceful woman she is today.

Though she hasn't been as active in recent years, San Pedro is now making her TV comeback, this time stepping into a new role on an educational show.

The 25-year-old will be part of Knowl-



edge Channel's long-running financial literacy series "Estudyantipid," aimed at teaching students the importance of smart money management.

In collaboration with the BPI Foundation, Knowledge Channel has launched the latest installment of show, featuring three new episodes. The episodes aim to equip high school students with financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and basic economic concepts through the relatable day-to-day experiences.

Playing Marla in the series, San Pedro invited students interested in learning more about financial literacy to watch Estudyantipid.

"If you're a student looking for money-saving tips and want to learn about finances, this is for you. Watch Estudyantipid here on Knowledge Channel," said San Pedro.

Spotted in Singapore, Liza Soberano, Jeffrey Oh fuel new romance rumors

Romance rumors between Liza Soberano and James Reid's ex-business partner Jeffrey Oh sparked anew after they were

seen together in Singapore recently.

Indonesian actress Raline Shah posted on her Instagram story her brief encounter with Liza.

"It was nice meeting you, most beautiful girl in the Philippines and the world for sure," Raline told Liza.

At the end of the video, Jeffrey was seen at the back. The video trended online as social media users speculated

that Liza and Jeffrey are in a relationship.

James Reid said that they terminated Oh because Oh was arrested and detained by Bureau of Immigration because he had no legal documents to work in the country.

"There were many grounds, but the most basic, the most urgent was that, Jeff is a foreigner. At the time of the audit that we did, he did not have complete papers to be able to work in the Philippines. This was the reason why the immigration filed a complaint against him," James' legal counsel Rodel De Guzman said.



# What The Fact by Joey Baking

## Mayroo nagre-request ng Forever

### Philippines Want it Forever

Hindi po love affair ito. We're talking about missiles at ang mga launchers na ilalagay sa Pilipinas. Nialgay ito temporarily ng mga American during the joint exercises. Gusto ng Armed Forces Chief chief General Romeo Brawner Jr na mag stay na sa Pilipinas ang mga launchers ng forever? China is having tantrums about it. Sagot naman ng Brawner, "Did we object when they put missile defenses in their islands? So, they should not interfere with ours, because it's all for our interests; we're building our defenses."

I agree naman.

Bakit nga naman nagmumukmok ang China?

Kung ano ano sinasabi nila. It is bad for peace daw sa Southeast Asia. E bakit sila may missiles? Sa territory pa natin nilagay. Ang kakapal ng muks ng mga singkit na iyan.

Pero, mahirap yata ang forever.

Una kong narinig iyang "forever" na ginamit ay dahil doon sa love team ni James Reid and Nadine Lustre. Tawag sa kanila noon ay Jadine. Well, we know what happened. Nag-banana split na sila. There is no forever. Now, a bit of background. Ang BFF noon ni Nadine ay si Yassi Pressman. Nowadays, ang girlfriend ni James ay si Issa Pressman, younger sister ni Yassi. James insist hindi si Issa ang reason ng spit nila. Jadine split in 2019. James confirmed his relationship with Issa in 2023. Baka nga 2023 lang sila naging couple or they are the best kept secret since 2019. It's showbiz. Nobody can keep a secret relationship that long. Anyhoo, recent marites is Nadine unfriended James, Yassi and Issa sa instagram. Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya.

Now, right now, we are friends ng United States. Baka kapag nakipag-break sa atin ang US of A, kumabit naman siya sa China. Paano na tayo? Screwed yata ang tawag. Pero,

bakit ba tayo ginugulo. In the words of a retired Philippine admiral, "we have the curse of geography." Nasa gitna kasi tayo ng Southeast Asia. Militarily, kung sino naka-station sa atin can respond anywhere ng mabilis. Lyon ang isang hindi magbabago, geography. Hindi naman tayo puwedeng ilipat. Kaya, kahit paano, interested parin ang American to protect us. kasi, kapag tuluyan tayong bumagsak sa China, wala nang strategic stopover of USA. Paano pa sila maggo-project ng world power?

As to the forever missiles, ewan ko lang. We can only wish.

### Mariah Carey gives link to her Merry Christmas song

I read the article on September 9.

But Mariah is still late. Last year, he played catch-up. Next year, she should make an announcement for her Filipino fans

on August 31. That way, she can really be with Filipinos. Last year, her song trended upward on the first day of September. She says that it's not time to sing her song yet but that she gave an exception to her Filipino "Lambs,"

her term for her Filipino fans. It's not like there's anything seh can do about it. We just love Christmas.



# Is COVID here to stay?

(NC) We may have moved out of the COVID-19 pandemic, but COVID-19 hasn't gone away.

With pandemic-era guidelines and restrictions widely removed across Canada, COVID-19 is still circulating and evolving. It's important to remember that preventative measures, like vaccination, are highly recommended.

Even if you've received your initial COVID-19 vaccine in the past, protection wanes over time. Follow-up doses of the vaccine are designed to bolster that protection against continually evolving virus strains and help protect against serious illness.

"Vaccination against COVID-19 remains a crucial component in preventing severe illness, long COVID and even death," says infectious diseases physician Dr. Zain Chagla. "Vaccines are a safe and effective way to stay healthy, especially during cold and flu season." It is recommended that those who are at-risk, including adults 65 years old and over, residents of long-term care homes and other group living settings for seniors, as well as individuals aged 6 months or older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised, continue to receive their COVID-19 vaccines.

Help protect yourself and others this fall – speak with a qualified health-care professional or visit your local pharmacy about getting an updated COVID-19 vaccine.

Joshua Garcia in Filipino dub of 'Inside Out 2,' a first on Disney+ Actor Joshua Garcia will lend his voice for the Filipino dub of

"Inside Out 2" when the latest Pixar film hits streaming platform Disney+ later this month.

The sequel to 2015's "Inside Out" will be the first movie on Disney's streaming platform to have a Filipino dub.

Joshua will voice minor character Lance Slashblade, the dramatic anime hero some of the core emotions bump into in the memory vault of Riley's mind, originally voiced by YouTuber and voice actor Yong Yea.

In a media event held in Shangri-La at the Fort in Taguig yesterday, a week ahead of "Inside Out 2" dropping on Disney+, Joshua shared he accepted the voice acting job since he's a fan of Disney-Pixar animation and anime.

He did admit some difficulties during the hour-long dubbing session like his mouth drying, but halfway through, he got used to the process, comparing himself to a machine that just needed to go through the mill.

"Yung character ko rito makata, ang lalim ng Tagalog, parang nasa play! Laki ng emotion, doon ako na-challenge," the actor added.

Asked about the importance of being able to do voice acting, his first for animation, Joshua said it was still acting and it's where one can really let their talents shine.

"Ibang experience talaga siya from ikaw ang mag-a-act," Joshua continued, showering his praises for voice actors. "Mas lumawak 'yung knowledge ko sa art and acting ko dahil ginawa ko 'to."

If given the chance to voice any other character in the film, Joshua said he'd give Anger a try not because he's always angry but given the depth of his voice.

Joshua also said he was open to more voice dubbing opportunities, teasing Disney Philippines representatives in the area about any openings.

In the Philippines, "Inside Out 2" is the fourth-highest-grossing film and the second-highest-grossing animated movie of all time.

Globally, it still holds the biggest box office haul of 2024 and already overtook "Frozen 2" as the highest-grossing animated film ever.



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1461888 Filipino Federation Centre 410 Dundas St. West Toronto (every Thursday 10:00 am - 4 pm)	+1 416-560-8336 (Florida Pardinaz)	Lentils
Wahine Centre Toronto 4384 Sheppard Ave E. Scarborough, ON M1S 1T5 (Monday - Friday 10am-4pm)	+1 416-590-3806 (Florida Pardinaz)	Pasta Sauce
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# DonBelle brings 'kilig' fever in ABS-CBN and VIU's 'How to Spot a Red Flag'

Donny Pangilinan and Belle Mariano are back with an overload of 'kilig' feels as they showcase their remarkable chemistry in the Viu original series "How to Spot a Red Flag," a partnership project between ABS-CBN and Viu that Dreamscape Entertainment will produce.

After initially teasing the project that sparked trending topics online, DonBelle

officially revealed the title and logo of their highly anticipated series during a story conference and script reading event.

Joining the cast of the light romantic drama that will bring good vibes to viewers



are Jameson Blake, Angel Aquino, Christian Vasquez, Benjie Paras, Mylene Dizon, Esnyr, and Kira Balinger. The series will be helmed by seasoned director Dwein Baltazar.

"How to Spot a Red Flag" is about a spunky barista (Belle) that is torn between two gorgeous looking men - a confident bad boy (Jameson) and a charming good boy (Donny) who are both involved in catfishing her. Despite noticing the red flags in the two men, is it still possible for her to find real love?

# Kira Balinger denies similarity between 'Hello, Love, Again' and 'Maple Leaf Dreams'

Kira Balinger denies similarity between 'Hello, Love, Again' and 'Maple Leaf Dreams'

After starring in the romantic drama Chances Are, You and I earlier this year, actress Kira Balinger followed it up with director Benedict Mique's latest film Maple Leaf Dreams where she plays the role of Molly.

"Si Molly kaya umalis at gusto pumunta Canada kasi gusto niya iahon pamilya niya dahil naging sunod sunuran sila sa kamag-anak nila. Bale they're living dun sa garage ng family member nila. So I think she won the battle of being the one na inaapi lagi. She managed to bring her family out of that position. Pero the battles that she lost, hindi ko puwede sabihin kasi spoiler kasi (laughs). Abangan niyo talaga kasi malaki yung loss. She loses something very, very special. Yun lang din masasabi ko. Wish I could tell you more," she said.

During the Maple Leaf Dreams press-

con, Kira was asked about the similarity of her project with another Pinoy film recently shot in Canada, Hello, Love, Again.

"Gaya ng sabi ni direkt Bene (Mique), every OFW story deserves to be told. So yes, same location pero maaaring different story, different struggles, different plot twist. Pinakamalaking difference is yung milieu which is Canada. Kasi even though may similar experiences yung mga pumupunta sa iba't ibang bansa, may specific din na struggles yung nandun sa Canada.

"For example yung weather, since tropical country tayo ang hirap ng adjustment sa weather sa Canada. And yung kind ng community na meron dun kung paano mag-a-adjust yung Filipinos from close-knit families sa Canada medyo isolated. Mas ma-fi-feel mo yung lamig ng holidays.

"We also try to incorporate yung spirit ng Gen Z kasi involved din yung element sa movie yung vlogging. Madami din kas-

ing OFW na nag-va-vlogging from Canada so we also tried to incorporate that and how they were willing to risk it all for their dreams. Between being practical or being a believer, parang where do you stand and how much are you willing to risk for your dreams? We wanted to encapsulate that Canadian experience and at the same time, yung spirit ng youth na we want to dream for ourselves and for our family," she shared.

In real life, Kira revealed that her own sister is an OFW residing in Hong Kong.

"Matagal na sila dun. Actually before pa ako pinanganak. Like ever since dun na talaga yung buhay



nila. Mahirap kasi maraming Christmases na dumaan na hindi kami magkakasama tapos yung huling beses na nakita ko yung kapatid ko at saka yung mga anak niya, mga maliliit pa sila, mga baby pa. Pero ngayon nakikita ko na sila through video call lang. They're in Hong Kong now. Ang

lapit lang pero hindi kasi sila basta basta nakakauwi kasi kailangan magtrabaho. So ang wish ko lang is sana mapanuod ng kapatid ko ito and it will touch her heart and itong movie na ito, it really is a love story para sa ating mga OFWs.



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## Maritime body open to leasing foreign ships for West Philippine Sea

MANILA, Phl — The National Maritime Council (NMC) is open to a proposal to lease ships from other countries to shore up the Philippines' presence in the West Philippine Sea as the country grapples with an increasingly aggressive China.

Sen. Francis Tolentino has urged the government to consider acquiring additional vessels by leasing foreign ships to increase its presence in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), the part of the South China Sea that is within the Philippines' 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf.

NMC spokesman Alexander Lopez described Tolentino's proposal as a "good" suggestion.

"The suggestion of Sen. Tolentino is a

good one. In fact, it was already considered before," he added.

Lopez, a retired Navy admiral, said the Philippines is capable of securing the West Philippine Sea and is thankful for the support of its allies.

When asked whether it is time for the Philippines to ask for help from other countries, Lopez replied: "The capability development (of agencies securing the West Philippine Sea) is continuous. Actually, when I was still in the service, it was ongoing."

"We are thankful for their (support) but it's not like we would ask them for help immediately every time we have a problem because, well, we have dignity as a nation. We can still handle it," he pointed out.

"Perhaps, when push comes to shove; when worse comes to worst, then that will now be an executive decision, whether we will accede to their request or we will ask for direction. So it's an executive decision," he added.

Tolentino floated the idea of leasing foreign ships days after Philippine Coast Guard vessel BRP Teresa Magbanua departed from Escoda Shoal.

The PCG vessel was repeatedly rammed by Chinese coast guard ships in the vicinity of the shoal, which is 75 nautical miles from the Philippine baselines. Teresa Magbanua sailed back to its homeport in Palawan after more than five months at sea, to undergo repairs and allow its crew to have furlough and attend to their medical concerns.

Lopez revealed that some Chinese vessels left Escoda Shoal because of bad weather.

"One thing good here is that nature is our ally. Ang bagyo ay kakampi natin," he said.

Earlier, Tolentino said leasing ships is more practical and less expensive than acquiring new ones.

"Even France is doing this from other countries. It would be cheaper and more efficient because we will not be maintaining and will have a flotilla of fleet for the Philippine Coast Guard or the Philippine Navy," Tolentino said.

He added that the amended procurement law allows such kind of procurement.

## 3 safety tips for Fire Prevention Month



By Allan Britnell, Editor-in-Chief, News Canada

(NC) Every year in October, we recognize Fire Prevention Month. It's well timed as this is when we start to use things like space heaters, fireplaces and candles, all of which come with a certain degree of risk. Here are four ways to keep your family, home and pets safe throughout the year.

### Keep your pets safe

Nothing creates ambiance or a festive feel like the flicker of candles. But they can become a fire risk if a wagging tail or batting paw accidentally knocks them over. Never leave lit candles unattended. Consider switching to flameless candles for a safer, yet still calming, ambiance.

Protect your family and pets with a two-in-one smoke and carbon monoxide alarm, such as the First Alert 10-Year Battery Combination Alarm.

### Monitor your home smartly

Many Canadian homes have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. But have you considered

upgrading to a smart home monitoring system? In addition to helping deter burglary, these systems can also alert you to water leaks, carbon monoxide or smoke. Some insurers, including TD, may offer their clients a discount on their home insurance premiums for installing these systems.

### Prepare for the holidays

Holiday decorations should be treated with care. Christmas trees are responsible for 200 fires every year in Canada and the risk increases as the tree dries out. Co-operators recommends you always turn the lights off when you leave the house or go to bed.

With outdoor lighting there is also a higher risk for electrical shocks. Only use cords that are intended for outdoor use. Keep them elevated, away from snow and water, and as dry as possible.

### Sarah Lahbati, Kylene Alcantara unfollow each other on Instagram

Are Sarah Lahbati and Kylene Alcantara having a falling out? Eagle-eyed netizens noticed that the two were no longer following each other on Instagram.

On Friday morning, Sept. 26, fans pointed out that the actresses were no longer listed on each other's following list on the platform.

Lahbati and Alcantara previously surprised the netizens with their friendship after hanging out together amid rumors hounding them about their respective relationship woes last year.

In December 2023, Alcantara posted a candid photo with Lahbati, showing their close bond as they enjoyed each other's company through laughter. "Celebrating the elegance of womanhood," the young actress wrote in her caption at the time.

Both ladies had also been spotted attending celebrity gatherings together and being enrolled in the same dance class.



them together, with the caption, "I love you forever, big sis. Thank you for always taking care of me. I got you for life."

The two actresses also made a trip to Siargao in March. Their most recent interaction was in August, when Lahbati commented about Alcantara's latest magazine cover, writing, "That's my sis."

As of writing, Alcantara and Lahbati have yet to address their rumored falling-out.

On the other hand, after being a center of public attention concerning her marriage in 2023, Lahbati confirmed her separation from her husband actor Richard Gutierrez in March this year and shared that they have yet to process their annulment and are currently co-parenting their two sons, Zion and Kai.

Gutierrez is now rumored to be dating actress Barbie Imperial.

Alcantara herself was also previously a center of public curiosity following breakup rumors with former on-screen partner Mavy Legaspi. The two young actors have not officially confirmed their relationship status, although they have shared hints about the real score between them.

In a recent interview, the young actress emphasized that while she treasures their moments, she wants to move on from that experience with Legaspi.

### Miss World PH org rallies behind embattled queen Krishnah Gravez

Reigning Miss World Philippines Krishnah Gravez has found valuable support amid her involvement in the controversial "Guess the Bill" challenge video, as her national pageant organization declared that it is standing by her.

"The video in question does not reflect Krishnah's true character or the values that she upholds. What transpired was a lighthearted moment among friends, meant to be shared in private. Unfortunately, it was uploaded without her consent, leading to misunderstandings about her intentions," the Miss World Philippines Organization (MWPH) said in a statement issued on social media on Thursday evening, Sept. 26.

"[W]e would like to affirm that Krishnah is a person of integrity, compassion, and dedication to her advocacy of 'Color the World with Kindness.' Throughout her journey, she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to charitable causes and the well-being of others. Her genuine heart for service is evident in the countless initiatives she has supported, and she continues to be an inspiring role model for many Filipinos," MWPH continued.

In a now-deleted video posted on Tiktok by content

creator Emmanuelle Atienza, she, Gravez, and several other women were playing a game where they are asked to guess the cost of their dinner, and whoever guessed closest to that amount will foot the bill. The beauty queen's answer was closest to the total bill worth P133,423.99, and she was filmed handing out her credit card.

Atienza took to social media after her post earned the ire of netizens, and explained that the challenge was "just a joke," and that none of them had to pay for anything because the dinner was shouldered by a sponsor.

Coming to her defense, the MWPH said it recognizes the incident "as an important reminder to always be cautious and mindful of one's actions, especially in the realm of social media where content can easily be misinterpreted without the proper context. Krishnah remains committed to learning from this experience and moving forward with greater awareness and responsibility."

The organization continued: "As an organization, we stand by [Gravez] and her continued efforts to represent the country with grace, dignity, and purpose. We ask for understanding and trust that she will continue to exemplify the values of Miss World Philippines in all her endeavors."

### Taking full responsibility

Gravez, who in July was crowned as the Philippines' representative in the 72nd Miss World pageant, also addressed the issue on social media, saying she's taking full responsibility for her actions.

The beauty queen further reiterated her earlier claims that she was a mere invited guest and had no involvement in the choice of venue or the handling of the bill. Nevertheless, she said that she fully understood the "impact the video may have had and the assumptions it has generated."

"Please allow me to clarify that I did not pay the said amount and in no way was my participation on the video meant to promote or glorify an extravagant lifestyle. I genuinely empathize with the struggles that many Filipinos face on a daily basis, and I would never want to come across as insensitive or unaware of these harsh realities," she said.

"I take full responsibility for my actions and deeply regret any offense or negative impression this incident may have caused. As Miss World Philippines 2024, I am fully aware of my role and the responsibilities that come with it, especially in aligning with the organization's advocacy for charity and compassion," she added.

During her pageant journey, since joining the 2023 Miss Universe pageant, to earning the Miss Charm Philippines title, and then winning the Miss World Philippines crown, Gravez has been proudly sharing how she took different jobs, even as a young girl, to be able to help with her family's financial struggles. "This experience has been a humbling reminder of the importance of being mindful of my actions, both in public and in private," she said in her statement.



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# How to help older Canadians become cyber safe



(NC) Today's seniors are increasingly spending more time in the digital world. They are also the frequent targets of scammers hoping to capitalize on their lack of experience with newer technology. If the seniors in your family are unsure about how to navigate online life, here are three ways you can help them become cyber safe.

Help them learn about common scams

There are many scams that specifically target seniors. One is even known as the "Grandparent scam." In this case, cyber criminals contact seniors by text, email or phone, posing as a grandchild in distress asking to send money urgently, often through gift cards. To prepare for this, many families have selected personal passwords (like a code word) that only their loved ones know. This way everyone can verify that the person contacting them is really who they say they are.

In another common scam, cyber criminals will contact seniors pretending to be a bank representative, government employee or police officer

with a convincing story. The goal is to steal their personal and sensitive information. Banks, the government and the police would never use regular civilians in an official operation or ask you to verify sensitive information over a quick message, email or phone call.

### Share password smarts

It's tempting to reuse passwords so that you can remember them. But if your login information is hacked on one site, all of your other accounts with the same login information could also be at risk.

Create passwords with a combination of at least 12 characters with a mix of

uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols. If seniors are worried about remembering these complex combinations, another option is to use a passphrase. This is a mix of four or more random words strung together, and at least 15 characters long, that you can remember but would be very hard for someone else to guess.

Also, remind seniors that if they forget their passwords, they'll always have the option to reset them. Another option is to set them up with a password manager to remember all their passwords.

### Encourage them to be tech-savvy

To protect banking and other sensitive information stored on our devices, each device should be secured with a unique password. Help them set up multi-factor authentication (MFA) on devices and accounts, which can be a biometric tool, like a fingerprint or

facial recognition, or a verification pin sent to another source. MFA offers an extra layer of security to protect their sensitive information as well as another login method in case one is compromised or forgotten.

Everyone should understand the importance of regularly installing software updates. These are often security related and are intended to close loopholes that scammers can use to access personal information. To avoid missing important updates and patches, set each device up to automatically update, when available.

Finally, remind them to turn off features on applications that they don't necessarily need like cameras, microphones, Bluetooth and location tracking.

Find more cyber safety tips at [getcybersafe.ca](http://getcybersafe.ca).

# Leyna Bloom clarifies she's the first Filipina to walk Paris runway before Pia Wurtzbach

Filipino-American transgender model Leyna Bloom looked back on the time that she made history as the first Filipina to walk the L'Oréal Paris runway, after Miss Universe 2015 Pia Wurtzbach made headlines that claimed she was the first Filipina to grace the same stage this year.

Bloom took to Instagram on Friday, Sept. 27, to reflect on her journey when she first walked the Paris runway, expressing her pride to have brought honor to the Philippines and the Blaan tribe, one of the indigenous peoples of Southern Mindanao.

"I'm incredibly grateful to [L'Oréal Paris] for inviting me to be part of such a powerful and inspiring show. Reflecting on this journey, it feels surreal that nearly three years have passed since I made history as the first #Filipino [Philippine flag emoji] and #BlaanTribe woman to walk the prestigious L'Oréal Paris runway, right in front of the iconic Eiffel Tower. That moment, shared with [Kat Graham], is etched in my heart as a powerful reminder of how far we've come. We absolutely owned that runway!" she captioned her post.

The model-activist remarked that it was a "significant" year for her as she also brought honor to the transgender

community in a society that needs diversity, inclusion and empowerment.

"That year holds even deeper significance because I had the honor of standing alongside [Ines Rau] as we became the first trans women to ever walk that legendary stage. It wasn't just about representation—it was about breaking boundaries, changing perceptions, and showing the world that beauty transcends the limits placed on us by society," she stated.

Bloom then congratulated Wurtzbach for being the "second Filipina" to bring the same honor to the Philippines.

"Congratulations to [@piawurtzbach] for being the second Filipino woman to ever walk the show. You looked incredible on the runway this year," she wrote.

However, Bloom edited her caption after a netizen commented that another Filipino blood, Stephanie Valentine, has also walked the runway alongside Wurtzbach.

"I didn't know. That's incredible. I tagged her in the caption. Thank you," replied the model.

"Huge congratulations to my Filipino



sisters [@glamzilla] & [@piawurtzbach], for walking the runway this year—you both looked absolutely stunning and represented us beautifully," concluded the edited post.

After a netizen tagged her, Bloom also commented on Wurtzbach's post about being the first Filipina to walk the international runway.

"No, she's not. Leyla Bloom walked twice already," said the netizen.

"Thank you. [I] love representing General Santos [crown emoji] #Blaan tribe [Philippine flag emoji]," she replied.

On Sept. 24, Wurtzbach posted on her Instagram that she was "excited to make history as the first Filipina walking the L'Oréal catwalk for Le Défilé," after the luxury brand also announced her historic appearance.

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## Defense chief urges Congress to amend espionage law to cover peacetime

MANILA, Philippines — Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro called on lawmakers to amend the espionage law to cover peacetime, not just wartime.

Teodoro made the statement in an ambush interview with reporters on Monday, September 30, following allegations of espionage against dismissed Bamban, Tarlac Mayor Alice Guo.

“What’s important now is that we penalize espionage during times of peace be-

cause the espionage law in the Philippines is only effective during times of war. This is also a call to action for our lawmakers to urgently amend the espionage law so that the government can properly respond and address this issue,” Teodoro said in a mix of Filipino and English.

When asked about the allegations of Guo being a spy, Teodoro said that while it is not confirmed if Guo is involved in espionage, her role in a large-scale illegal

enterprise within the Philippines is undeniable.

“She falsified documents to pretend that she is a Filipino... She was an active co-conspirator in a massive illegal criminal enterprise, which was the source of all illegal activities. And being a Chinese national engaged in such activities in this country still harms the nation, whether or not it is espionage,” Teodoro said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Allegations about Guo’s ties to espionage were made in an Al Jazeera documentary about She Zhijiang, a Chinese tycoon and suspected spy currently detained in Thailand.

In the documentary, She Zhijiang claimed he was an operative for China’s Ministry of State Security and was recruited in 2016 by someone he met in the Philippines.

## ‘My hero’: Ricardo Cepeda Benipayo supported him



## shares how Marina during detention

Ricardo Cepeda lovingly described Marina Benipayo as “my hero” for holding the family together and keeping the faith during his 11-month detention.

He shared that Marina regularly visited him at the Cagayan Provincial Jail in Tuguegarao, where he had been held following a syndicated estafa complaint filed against him and 11 others in October 2023. Only Ricardo and one other individual were reportedly arrested.

He has maintained his innocence, asserting in interviews that he had no connection to the company involved and was merely an endorser of its products. After 11 months in a jail facility (first two months in Quezon City, then the rest in Cagayan), he was released on bail on Sept. 20. According to a GMA report, a hearing for the continuation of his case has yet to be scheduled.

“Hero ko din siya,” Marina also said of the veteran actor, adding that what helped them get through the ordeal was the “constant communication and constant na pag-punta ko dun.”

Ricardo shared, “My kids wanted to go but I said, sayang ang pera. We can talk naman pa ‘pag may FaceTime, but I’ll be thinking of yung gastos niyo kasi bugbog dun sa travel (expenses).”

“But my concern was, what’s happening with my family? Even though my kids are grown, we still help them from time to time, financially. Then emotionally, there are people commenting like, ‘If he wasn’t guilty, he wouldn’t have been arrested.’ My kids have to deal with that. I said, ‘I don’t want them to go into depression.’

“She’s the one who kept the family together. Sabi pala niya sa kanila, we will help each other. Last Saturday (Sept. 21), first time ko makita sila lahat – the kids – umiyak ako (I cried). Because they told me how they held (each other) together.”

He recalled that in jail, he managed to communicate with his kids through its call center. Despite limited privacy with the guard around, they were allowed to use a tablet for video-calling.

“Sabi ng mga anak ko, ‘Dad, it’s because of your strength. Nakita namin

parang kayang kaya mo, so kami rin dapat eh.’ But I said, I saw your strength and what made me strong was that... I know my family is not suffering. I know it’s hard but they look like they’re doing well.

“Ayun pala pareho kami one on the other. (Marina had) told them, ‘Do not despair, do not give in to sadness because your father will come out and alam natin wala siyang kasalanan. He will come out, it will just gonna take time.’

“That’s what was keeping me (strong) inside.”

Asked about their plans after what they experienced as a family, “Magka-baby!” Marina joked.

Turning more serious though, she said, “After this, (yung plan niya is) makapag-work agad siya... Maybe vacation because we never had a vacation in the 11 years (that we’ve been together). Never. We’re celebrating 12 years in November but never kami nag-vacation na kaming dalawa lang because we’re both workaholics,” she said.

“To make the most of the time (that’s the plan),” added Ricardo. “If we have the chance to go on vacation, gawin natin.”

For sure, it will be an extra meaningful celebration for 12 years of togetherness in November.

When Ricardo was finally released from jail, Marina was the one who brought him home.

“I’m very thankful for friends and people who know me, who have stood up for me, and even strangers who just know me by reputation, social media, or from watching my career. Just yesterday, so many people stopped me, saying, ‘Congratulations, we were praying for you,’ and I had never met them. That’s my source of strength and gratitude,” said

Ricardo, who did a sweet, little celebratory dance with Marina, which they happily shared on social media. “We’re just thankful to be out, and (I said) let’s show it.”

## More Canadians are now eligible for the Canadian Dental Care Plan

(NC) Last year, the federal government began rolling out the Canadian Dental Care Plan. This plan helps reduce the cost of a wide range of oral health services, such as teeth cleaning, examinations, X-rays, fillings, dentures, root canals and oral surgeries, for eligible Canadians.

It’s designed for Canadian residents with an annual family income under \$90,000 who do not have access to dental

insurance. It’s important to note that you must have filed your taxes in the previous year to qualify.

The application process began in stages, starting with seniors. As of June 27, 2024, two more groups can sign up for the plan: children under the age of 18 and adults with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate.

All remaining eligible Canadian res-

idents will be able to apply starting in 2025. Once fully rolled out, the plan aims to help reduce the cost of dental care for up to 9 million Canadians.

The Canadian Dental Care Plan may not cover the full cost of eligible services. You may have to pay a portion of the cost, even if you do not have a co-payment, as the plan’s established fees may be lower than what your provider normally

charges. You may also agree to receive treatment that is not covered under the plan. Some services may only be available as of November 2024 and will require prior approval on the recommendation of an oral health provider.

Learn more about the plan at [canada.ca/dental](https://canada.ca/dental).

## BICOL CANADA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION PEÑAFRANCIA FLUVIAL PARADE



Yachts that participated in the Bicol Canada fluvial parade make their way back.



## CANADA TIGHTENS VISA RULES FOR STUDENTS, TEMPORARY WORKERS

CANADA from page 1

temporary foreign workers remain essential to addressing critical labour shortages and the tighter rules make it harder for beleaguered companies to operate.

"[T]his government is committed to evidence-based policymaking," said Duff Conacher, co-founder of Democracy Watch, a non-profit that advocates for government accountability.

"But they made these changes [to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program] without consulting with all stakeholders ... And if they had done that, they likely would not have made the changes that they made. Instead, they made a secret deal with big business lobbyists."

### Dramatic expansion

To use the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, employers must complete a Labour Market Impact Assessment that demonstrates they have been unsuccessful in trying to hire "qualified Canadians" to fill specific roles.

The program has been in place since 1973. But in 2022, the government changed some of the eligibility criteria, resulting in a dramatic expansion of the number of people admitted under the program. In 2023, Ottawa approved nearly 240,000 temporary foreign workers, up from about 133,000 approvals in 2021 and 90,000 in 2016.

In a statement to Canadian Affairs, the



International students attend a food handling certificate course held at The Filipino Centre, Toronto.

government explained the rationale for changing the program as follows:

"In the immediate wake of the pandemic, the Government responded to low unemployment rates of below 5% and historically high job vacancies of over 1 million by temporarily adjusting a number of policies to enable employers to have access to the workers they needed in a recovering economy," said Maja Stefanovska, a spokesperson for Employment and Social Development Canada.

However, Mikal Skuterud, an economics professor at the University of Waterloo, says labour shortages are generally not a good justification for bringing in foreign workers.

"When there's more supply than de-

mand for labour, then there's a scarcity — not of workers, but of jobs. In that situation, we say to workers that they have to do what they can to compete for those jobs — to get out there with their résumés. That's a very healthy part of the economy," he said.

"But for some reason when there's more demand for labour, we don't tell businesses that they need to compete. We don't say, 'Well if you can't compete, then you're just going to fail,' which is also a healthy part of the economy. That's capitalism."

Frances Woolley, an economics professor at Carleton University, agrees.

"If you hear somebody say, 'I'm facing a labour shortage,' there's a second part of that sentence which is often unstated,

which is, 'I'm facing a labour shortage at the wage I'm offering.'

"So there's always two parts to that. There's the part about the workers who are available, but it's also about the wages that are being offered and the other expectations of the employer," she said.

In Conacher's view, powerful industry groups — combined with lax lobbying laws — are what enable corporations to persuade Ottawa to respond to labour shortages.

The changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program were "facilitated by Liberals who used to be cabinet ministers or playing other senior roles in the party," he said. "[T]he lobbying laws and ethics rules allow for these kinds of decision-making processes that really are corrupting and not democratic or ethical."

### 'Ain't no such thing'

Going forward, Ottawa will no longer process Labour Market Impact Assessments for low-wage jobs in metropolitan areas where the unemployment rate is six per cent or higher. (The rules include some carve outs for industries such as construction and health care.)

Employers will be prohibited from hiring more than 10 per cent of their workforces through the program in low-wage jobs — down from a current cap of 20 per cent. And employees hired through the low-wage stream will be permitted to

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## Maricel Soriano, happy 'walang sampalan scenes': 'Kaya gusto ko ito eh!'

With an illustrious acting career spanning more than five decades in showbiz, Maricel Soriano is a definite stand out among actresses not just in her generation. Her distinct and intimidating acting style even earned her the nickname "Taray Queen" in the industry.

But in her latest show *Lavender Fields*, Maricel admitted she was drawn to her character's relaxed nature



which will not have the usual "sampalan" scenes unlike in her previous projects.

"Dito hindi ganun. Iba naman. Kaya gusto ko ito eh. Kasi iba. Happing happy ako kasi kasama ko si Jodi (Sta. Maria) at talagang napakagaling niya dito. Sobra talaga siyang galing dito kaya kailangan niyo panuorin," she shared.

In the latest series, Maricel plays the role of Aster Fields, who is both mentor and mother figure to Lavender, played by Jodi. "Ang difference ng character ko dito

at ni Jodi is yung anak ko nawawala. Si Jodi naghahanap ng nawawala din niyang anak. Kaya nakita ko rin sa kanya si Marigold (who plays her daughter).

"Siyempre ni-ne-nerbiyos kami pero nung nakita namin reaction ng mga fans and friends, natuwa kami kasi yung pinaghirapan namin hindi nabalewala. Lalo na yung role ni Jodi dito dahil may mga action scenes ang anak ko dito, ang galing galing niya! Kaya ang sarap din niya talaga panuorin," she added.

Known for her no nonsense personality off-camera, the *Lavender Fields* actress shared how she deals with people who are not genuine to her.

"Nakakasama ng loob pag alam mong patuloy ka niyang kinakausap na kaplastikan naman lahat di ba? Parang gusto mo siyang tadyakan. Gusto ko (laughs). Pero walang ganun na nangyari. Relax lang ako (laughs). Pagka ganun kasi, ang hirap. Kahit siguro kayo ang nasa sitwasyon na ito pinupuri kayo ng pinupuri pero hindi naman pala siya totoo, na pagdating sa ibang tao kung anu-ano sinasabi against you and all of that. Hindi kasi dapat ganun. Dapat kapag nakikipag kapwa tao ka, nakikipagkapwa tao ka sa tao. Hindi ba? Pero kung pina-plastic ka, eh sana umalis na lang sa harap mo," she explained.

## Did Nadine Lustre unfollow James Reid, sisters Issa and Yassi Pressman?

Nadine Lustre sent netizens abuzz after she appeared to have removed James Reid, Issa Pressman and Yassi Pressman from her Instagram following list.

Reid — Lustre's ex-boyfriend — alongside sisters Issa and Yassi — who was Lustre's close friend — can be seen on the "Deleter" star's Instagram following list as of Saturday, Sept. 28.

While couple Reid and Issa are still following Lustre on the platform, Yassi seemingly returned the favor and removed Lustre as well from her following list.

Lustre and Reid broke up in 2019, but only confirmed it to the public in January 2020. Reid revealed his relationship with Issa in 2023.

Just recently, Reid dispelled hopes of an onscreen reunion with Lustre. He further noted that he was not inclined to be part of another love team out of respect for Issa.

"I don't think that's happening," Reid said of reuniting with Lustre. "There's still that undying support that I'm always grateful for even as I transition to music, nandoon pa rin sila [fans], [to] promote my music and support. But out of respect for my girlfriend, Issa, I don't

think I'll ever do another love team," he added.

Meanwhile, Yassi asserted in 2023 that she and Lustre were "okay" amid Issa's relationship with Reid.

"Kami po ni Nadine, OK po kami. OK din po 'yung buong pamilya namin," Yassi said, days after Reid and Issa's relationship confirmation. "At syempre po, bago po na-public ang lahat, lahat po ay naasikaso in private."

### Mariah Carey greets Filipinos ahead of Christmas

International pop superstar Mariah Carey joined Filipinos in celebrating the Christmas season early, starting this September.

In her Facebook account, Mariah posted a link of her Christmas hit song "All I Want For Christmas Is You."

"Philippines, it's time (only for you!!)," Mariah wrote, dated September 9, 2024.

"I hope you're all safe and well. Let's celebrate together," she added. Last year, Mariah reposted a fan page tweet saying that her song "All I Want For Christmas Is You" was streamed 75% higher in the Philippines than in any other country.

She said it was too early to say Christmas was coming, but she made an exception for Filipino fans.

"Not yet!!!! I'll allow it for my Filipino lambs though! (I don't make the rules!)," Mariah wrote.

Mariah is a Christmas icon in the Philippines alongside another Christmas carol royalty, Jose Mari Chan.



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# Joey Baking The Socialist

**H**ow lovely it would be if summer stays with us the whole year round. Or maybe not. We did enjoy the unseasonably warm weather of September.

Umac Toronto had their 20th anniversary celebration last September 6. It was attended by Umac Philippines boss Nette Baguisa and everyone here at the Toronto office. I still remember Umac when it started. As far as I can remember, the birth of Umac Toronto is the birth of Umac worldwide.

We used to send boxes regularly to my brother when my parents were still alive. Like clockwork, my brother knew the exact day that it will be delivered. If I call him and say "the box was picked up today," it will be 45 days until it he receives it. It never failed to deliver. Even when Manila implemented the trucking time, or hte port implemented whatever loading, pick-up hours, logistical hoolabaloo, Umac always delivered.

Congratulations to Umac. May you keep going, keep delivering.

Asialicious 2024 is still going strong. This year, I went on Sunday only and caught the MH Productions talents of Marky

Hugh entertain the crowd near the closing hour. They were fantastic, even Angelo, who played the piano haltingly, like trying to find the next key to hit.

"Ok lang iyan. Parang nagpa-practice lang," said Marky afterwards.

JDL performers closed the show that day.

On the same weekend as Asialicious, there was a Filipino foodfest called Ube Wonderland happening at 500 Progress Avenue, celebrating everything, well, ube. While the Friday was marred by rain, Saturday and Sunday were a success as the crowds flocked and tried everything that can be made with ube.

What a delicious weekend.

In September, the Church celebrates three Marian feasts in one week: the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8th September), the Holy Name of Mary (12th September) and Our Lady of Sorrows (15th September). Mary's birth and her divine motherhood are connected in prayer.

However, we also celebrate the other representations of Mother Mary.

Filipinos have a love for the Blessed Mother that has brought them through the joys and un-

## September is the Month of Mother Mary



Mother Mary in different representations: Bicol Canada Association's Our Lady of Penafrancia, Casaroca's Our Lady of Nativity, and Dolorosa's Our Lady of Sorrows,

Philippines were under Spanish rule from 1565 to 1868.

Kuratsa is a dance of flirtation and courtship, designed to be danced with a partner. Its movements mimic the

certainties in life. The following representations of the Blessed Mother are a few legendary apparitions in the Philippines that have saved the people by a variety of miracles, from disastrous fates from foreign invaders to the ensuring of a safe voyage. The following organizations honor Mother Mary in their different representation.

Dolorosa had their annual fiesta the next day at September 7. It was attended by hermanas and hermanos, the beauty queens and everyone who wants to join the festive atmosphere. It was followed the next day with a picnic at the shrine at Midland, Ontario. It was apparently a very fun day as hermanas Joy D'auost left late to still attend Jennifer Camacho's birthday celebration.

Calbayog Samar Residence of Ontario (Casaroca) had their gala night at Qssis. Their dress code for the night was Barong or Filipino dress. I did not know that. Thankfully, I dressed in dress pants pants, dress shirt and a blazer. Whew. They had a dance called the Kuracha. At weddings and fiestas, the Curacha serves as the traditional money dance. Kuratsa (pronounced koo-rah-cha) is a dance inspired by the Mexican La Cucaracha folk dance. The dance also features Flamenco-like movements, reflecting the fact that the

mating ritual of a rooster and hen. Alcedo said that different versions of the dance could be found in north and central Philippines. We learned four basic parts: walking toward each other with a waving motion of the hand; a sideways swaying motion ending with a kick; a faster, more flirtatious step-together section; and finally, the courtship phase with more hip action and shimmying.

Traditionally, men play the macho rooster and women play the flirtatious hen.

While the couple dance, people around were throwing US \$1 dollar bills. It looks more pleasing than throwing loonies. It's also less expensive because our smallest paper bill is the Canadian \$5 dollar bill.

Bicol Canada Community Association had their Penafrancia fluvial parade. There were more boats this year. Thankfully, the forecast of rain did not happen until the festivities were over.

"You haven't been in one of the boats yet ever since you started covering penafrancia," asked Bicol President Earl Dacara. I said no.

"Do you want to ride," he asked. I said no. "After the yacht party of Oceana D'auost, I am not keen to be on anything smaller than a ferry."

And I meant it. It wasn't fun for me. 😊

## Showtime contestant 'di kilala ang 1st Filipina president ng bansa, viral

Showtime contestant 'di kilala ang 1st Filipina president ng bansa, viral

LAMAN ngayon ng usap-usapan sa social media ang lalaking guro na naging contestant sa segment ng "It's Showtime".

Marami kasi sa mga netizens ang disappointed dahil hindi man lang nito kilala kung sino ang unang babaeng presidente ng Pilipinas gayung isa siyang guro.

Sa segment kasi ng "Throwbox!" kung saan ito kasali, ang bungad na tanong sa contestant ay sino ang kauna-unahang presidente ng Pilipinas ngunit mali ang naging sagot ni Tony, ang gurong contestant.

"Gloria Macapagal Arroyo," may bahid ng kasiguraduhan sa kanyang boses.

Baka Bet Mo: Ama ni Cianne nanggigil sa basher na pinapaalis ang anak sa 'It's Showtime'

Mapapansin rin ang pagtahimik ng madlang pipol dahil alam ng mga ito na mali ang sagot ng guro.

Matapos nga na maanunsyong mali ang sagot ni Tony at ang tamang sagot ay ang yumaong si Corazon Awuini.

Present naman that time sa "It's Showtime" si Divine Tetay, ang isa sa mga kilalang impersonator na bunsong anak ng mga Aquino na si Kris Aquino.

"Na-surprise ako kasi alam kong alam mo 'yun. You've been to Korea, nag-master's ka and all, and you forgot that important thing na, my goodness, my mom, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino. Nakakaloka ka don," hirit ni Tetay na in character as Kris.

"Di ba? Dapat alam nating lahat 'yun," pabirong sabi naman ni T'yang Amy.

"Itanong mo sa bata, they will give you that answer. Bakit ka nagkamali? Parang nagulat ako, I was super confident. Sabi ko 'this guy will definitely answer correctly.'

Nong sinabi 'yung ibang pangalan nalungkot ako. Bakit?' pagpapatuloy ni Tetay as Kris.



Nabangit kasi ni Tony na nag-college siya sa Saint Pedro Poveda College at naging representative rin siya sa isang research conference sa Seoul National University noong nakaraang taon. Siya lamang daw ang nag-iisang Pinoy na nakasali doon. Bukod rito ay nag-masteral rin siya at nagtuturo ng Literature at English.

Inamin naman ng "It's Showtime" contestant na kinakabahan raw talaga siya lalo na at may time limit ang pag-sagot.

Agad nga ring nag-trending sa social media ang naturang "It's Showtime" contestant sa X.

"Jusko, basic na first female president GLORIA ARROYO LIKE? SIR?????" saad ng isang netizen.

Comment naman ng isa, "Nagyabang pa yung player na sya lang yung only Filipino chu chu sa Korea pero hindi kilala kung sino first woman president ng Pilipinas."

"KALOKA KA TONY! Confident pa sya sa Gloria Arroyo HAHA," hirit pa ng isa.

Winterra D'aoust wins Miss Pre Teen Glamour International Canada 2024 at the Mahistrado Fashion show. Below, she is joined by sisters Oceana and Skyea. Photos by Willy Santiago.



Casaroca Hermana 2024 Raymunda Daguman Elmido dances the kuracha with Rosendo Baladray



Congratulations to Toronto's Arianna Pantaleon for winning Mutya ng Pilipinas MISS ENVIRONMENTAL INTERNATIONAL 2024

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Late post: A celebration of friendship - some victories, interesting projects (the film caravan), also trying to plan a get-away this November (together!), plus a recall of a few gleeful episodes but on top of it all - the main target was to welcome a very nice pretty lady - Consul Katrina Isabelle Borja-Martin. You will see a lot of her these days and you will agree with us - she's truly winsome.



Location was perfect: Stock Bar downtown, home of the finest steaks, the greatest burger, the handcrafted pizza and pasta dishes, add to that a dessert that serves

Escalona and Tey Samonte, Rosary and I are grateful, and our new Pinoy turned Canadian consul concludes it's a happily-ended food trip.

as fitting/tantalizing finale of a great meal... Yummy but only second to the fun we had. Thanks to Consul General Angelica

Incoming and outgoing Calbayog Samar Residence of Ontario (Casaroca) Hermanas are introduced at the Gala Night. From left to right, (proxy) Jelyn Alvarez; Rosemary St Juana, 2025; Ruth Morilao, 2025; Wilyn Sagadal Jumantoc, 2025; Anaclea Daguman Tarranco, 2024; Raymunda Daguman Elmido, 2024; Rhea Yu Aliman, 2025





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# Action Honda's Rafael Nebres supports Bicol Fluvial Parade



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- 1. Bicol Canada Fluvial parade attendees
- 2. Rafael Nebres' Action Honda's shuttle service
- 3. Rafael Nebres, Deputy Congen Kerwin Tate, President Earl Dacara pose with Father Gerry Laguartilla.
- 4. Action Honda's Rafael Nebres, wife Sylvia with Deputy Congen Kerwin Tate
- 5. Father Gerry Laguartilla blesses the Imahen of the devotees.
- 6. President Earl Dacara with other devotees and volunteers
- 7. Free coffee for breakfast
- 8. Free Bicol and Tagalog lugaw for breakfast
- 9. Father Gerry Laguartilla and Bicol President Earl Dacara
- 10. Father Gerry Laguartilla and devotee
- 11. Devotees start the fluvial parade



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# Filipino Talents shine at Asialicious 2024

The dynamic duo of Ms. Vicel Yarra & Marky Hugh hosted an unforgettable two-hour showcase of MH Talents at the vibrant Asialicious Festival at the Woodside Square. It was an electrifying experience of music, dance, and entertainment!

Marky Hugh Productions has been going on for six strong years at Asialicious!

"Being a part of the Asialicious Toronto for the past six years has been an incredible journey for us, and it's more than just about performing. This festival truly uplifts the Asian community, giving us a platform to celebrate our diverse cultures, talents, and traditions. A huge thank you to Asialicious for giving us a two-hour segment to showcase our MH Talents. The kids had so much fun, and the energy was absolutely electric! This festival continues to be an amazing opportunity for the next generation of Asian talent to shine. We can't wait to return next year and continue sharing the magic of our heritage through music, dance, and passion. See you again in 2025! heart." Another talent incubator in the Filipino community is the

our diverse cultures, talents, and traditions. A huge thank you to Asialicious for giving us a two-hour segment to showcase our MH Talents. The kids had so much fun, and the energy was absolutely electric! This festival continues to be an amazing opportunity for the next generation of Asian talent to shine. We can't wait to return next year and continue sharing the magic of our heritage through music, dance, and passion. See you again in 2025! heart." Another talent incubator in the Filipino community is the

JDL School for Performing Arts. They impressed the crowd with their performances.

RIGHT, JDL Singers



ABOVE, Hailey Yarra



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1. Frank Cruzet wins Balangay award and is joined by wife Theresa Lumanlan.  
2. Happy Birthday Kuya Wally Yerro.  
3. Happy birthday Lilian Arenas.  
4. Bing, Ryan Orlanda of Pinoy Vibes, Rosary Escaño and BK Jimenez enjoy a Sine institute viewing.  
5. Marky Hugh talents perform with Philippine artist Roselle Nava.



Toronto Lions Kapuso holds an induction for a new batch of members. "People applied when we held our garage sale," says Lion Lilian Arenas.

**Michelle Dee dismayed on car theft by acquaintance**

Michelle Dee expressed dismay after an acquaintance, who she described as a "regular creative," and his girlfriend, allegedly stole her car, among others.

On Instagram, the actress-beauty queen did not identify the person who committed the deed and his alleged cohort as the matter is being handled internally at this time, but warned that she will be forced to do so if they failed to return her car as well as other properties in their possession. "My car was stolen and recently retrieved in the Philippines. Unfortunately a regular creative and his girlfriend that worked and lived in one of my apartments in Manila has admitted responsibility for it," she said.

The Miss Universe Philippines 2023 titleholder said the recent incident was a disappointing experience for her. "It's honestly so unfortunate when



you trust, forgive, and build people up only for them to go behind you and prioritize their own personal agendas. My supporters from day one would probably decipher who this is but let's stay calm and hope he delivers," said Dee.

Dee reiterated that "professionalism and proper communication" are important for her, as she reminds her fans to be careful with the people they trust.

"Professionalism and proper communication is all we asked for. As always – love, respect, and kindness. Feel free to share this so that it doesn't happen to anyone else! Be careful who you trust and give access to," she said.

Dee, who's currently in France for Paris Fashion Week, earlier made headlines after revealing that she received her Miss Universe 2023 "Voice for Change" award after almost a year of waiting.

Despite the delay, she took the incident in stride as she shared her \$12,000 (or roughly P664,000 in current exchange) prize with the Autism Society Philippines.

**Casaroca Gala Night**



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1. Prayer before meals  
2. Casaroca President Miss Louie Balenzaga gives the welcome remarks.  
3. 2024 Hermanas Anacleta Daguman Tarranco and Raymunda Daguman Elmido gives a speech to the guests.  
4. Valerie Elmido Toy dances the kuracha  
5. Emcee Christine Balong  
6. Ianneza Greeley's "mader" dance the night away.  
7. The Greeley family of Ianneza, Richard and Rianneh  
8. Casaroca performs a song  
9. Casaroca officers are given bottles of wine as appreciation for their hard work.

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## Canadians are increasingly unhappy, new data show

The number of Canadians reporting high levels of life satisfaction has dropped by six per cent in the last three years

Canadians are increasingly unhappy, recent data from Statistics Canada says.

Last month, Statistics Canada released the latest numbers from its survey of Canadians' quality of life. The agency asked Canadians about how satisfied they are with their lives, their financial well-being and outlook for the future.

The results are bleak.

Fewer than half of Canadians — 49 per cent — said they were satisfied with their lives during the first three months of 2024. In the summer of 2021, when Statistics Canada first conducted this survey, 54 per cent of Canadians reported a high level of life satisfaction.

Social psychologists say personal happiness impacts society.

"Happiness isn't just an outcome of positive life circumstances and events, it's also a predictor of them," said Lara Akin, a social psychology professor at Simon Fraser University.

"Countries that have citizens that are happier and better off are also the countries that have more civically engaged citizens, that have healthier citizens, that have stronger social fabrics," she said.

Canadians are also less hopeful for the future. Sixty per cent reported being hopeful for the future, down from 65 per cent in the summer of 2021.

The Statistics Canada report says older Canadians are more satisfied with their lives than younger Canadians, and that financially secure Canadians are more likely to have a positive outlook on life. Social psychologists say these results are not surprising, but the relationship between financial security and well-being is not as simple

as the data suggests.

Just because someone has more money, does not necessarily mean they are happier, says Frederick Grouzet, a psychology professor at the University of Victoria.

Older adults — those 65 and older — have had stable life satisfaction since the study began, with more than 60 per cent reporting high life satisfaction in both periods.

Nearly 60 per cent of people who said they could meet their basic needs — like housing, food, clothing and transportation — said they were highly satisfied with their life. But only 29 per cent of people who had difficulty meeting their needs reported being satisfied.

If people have enough to meet their needs, they do not necessarily see an increase in happiness with more income. "Money won't buy your well-being beyond meeting your basic psychological needs," Grouzet said. "There is a relationship, but it's not absolute."

"At the low end, more money buys a lot more happiness," said Ankin. "After a certain point, it starts to flatten."

Young people

Since 2021, life satisfaction among Canadians aged 25 to 34 has dropped steadily. In the first months of 2024, 37 per cent of these Canadians said they were highly satisfied with their lives, down from 47 per cent in the summer of 2021.

Canada is not the only country where young people report lower levels of happiness than older people, says Ankin, who is also editor of the World Happiness Report, an annual report that ranks countries' happiness levels. This pattern also exists in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

Young people today are less happy than young people were even 10 or 15 years ago, she says. A key rea-

son may be that they are less satisfied with their social connections — even though they have similar numbers of friends as their contemporaries had a decade ago.

Young people have "a lot of pressure on them," said Grouzet.

Social connections are key to well-being. The report says that people who report experiencing discrimination are less likely to report high life satisfaction or hope for the future. Racialized Canadians, Canadians with disabilities and LGBTQ Canadians were more likely to report lower levels of life satisfaction.

One way to increase personal happiness is to help others, says Grouzet.

"When we do care about others, we also benefit," he said. "[A] good way to have higher well-being, is when we ensure that everyone has a high well-being."

### Mental wellness an ongoing journey for Louise delos Reyes

There was a point in Louise delos Reyes' life when people thought she had it all together: She was surrounded by friends, jobs came in regularly. In front of fans, she gave nothing less than a smile.

But behind the cameras, she was hurting, so much so that she ended up harboring suicidal thoughts.

"I had this inner struggle that I was never enough and never would be. All I could think of then was, 'How can I end this?' I was in so much pain. It became stagnant ... I couldn't feel happiness or fulfillment in whatever I did," she told reporters at a press conference for Viva Films' upcoming thriller "Pasahero," which opens on Oct. 9.

Fortunately, with professional help, faith, fortitude and support from her loved ones, Louise now finds herself in a "better head-space."

"I'm very thankful that despite those thoughts, I still saw a glimmer of light at

the end of the tunnel, as if reminding me that there are still people who genuinely love me," said the 32-year-old actress, who also credited her boyfriend, Jino, for being her anchor. "I'm an empath. He balances my sensitivities."

"The person facing you right now is like a new version," she added. "I want to hug my old self because she didn't have love for herself."

Louise knows very well that the journey towards healing or mental wellness isn't a linear process. Bad days are inevitable. But the good thing, she said, is that she now feels better equipped to handle those.

Not alone

"It's a long battle ... I used to get very emotional. Now, I'm more critical [in how I handle things]. I let myself be during days I feel off. I still get panic attacks. It's something I will never truly understand. But I acknowledge it ... I pray," she said.

September is Suicide Prevention Month. If she were to give a message to people with similar experiences, Louise hopes to remind them that "you're not alone."

"We all have our inner demons... We have to be brave. But if you feel like you're not brave enough, try to convince yourself—as I have—that you're strong, not only for yourself, but for the people you love," she said.

Directed by Roman Perez Jr., "Pasahero" explores the so-called bystander effect, a social psychological theory that suggests that people are less likely to help victims or intervene in crisis situations in the presence of others.

Louise plays Michelle, a fresh graduate seeking work in Manila. But on a late night train commute, she gets assaulted by a masked man. Not one of the seven witnesses steps forward.

"Sadness, tears come from hurt. But fear can come from so many things, so I find it more challenging," she said. "There are a lot of twists and turns you can take in the scenes."



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FOREVER from page 1

extended stay of the ground-based missile system, which is capable of firing Tomahawk and SM-6 missiles, amid mounting tensions in the West Philippine Sea.

"If I were given a choice, I would like to have the Typhons here in the Philippines forever," Brawner said.

Brawner noted that he already expressed this sentiment "informally" during the meeting of Manila and Washington's Mutual Defense Board-Security En-

gagement Board (MDB-SEB).

The MDB-SEB forms the framework that directs and enables defense and security cooperation between the two countries' militaries under their Mutual Defense Treaty.

"We mentioned our intention that, if possible, Typhons remain here in the Philippines," Brawner said. He reiterated his hopes that the country would soon have its own MRC to complement the AFP's BrahMos, a medium-range supersonic cruise

missile that has a range of 290 to 400



kilometers that could travel at Mach 2.8. The MRC arrived in the country from the United States on April 11 and was first used during its bilateral war games with the country.

The Philippine Army said the

MRC was also used for the bilateral Army drills between Manila and Washington, which was already finished on Sept. 22.

However, Army spokesperson Col. Louie Dema-ala said the MRC will stay in the country until further notice as both countries evaluate if it will be used in future drills.

Recently, China's Defense Minister Qu Qian said Manila and Washington "brought huge risks of war into the region" with the deployment of the missile launcher in the country.

However, Brawner shrugged off China's objection, saying the AFP only had the Philippines' interests in mind.

"We are building our defenses, whether it is Typhoon, whether it is BrahMos, whether it is other missile systems that we need for our defenses," Brawner said, partly in Filipino.

"Did we object when they put missile defenses in their islands? So, they should not interfere with ours, because it's all for our interests; we're building our defenses," he said.

# Kyline Alcantara on staying busy and sticking to her ‘non-negotiables’

Kyline Alcantara is currently busy playing contrabida Joanna dela Costa in ‘Shining Inheritance,’ an adaptation from a Korean TV series. ‘We gave our heart, soul, and sweat. You can see it in every scene,’ she says.



Sparkle artist Kyline Alcantara is ready for the next chapter. She is currently busy with “Shining

Inheritance,” where she plays contrabida Joanna dela Costa.

Kyline approaches each role she is given by combining the background on the character provided by the writers with her own personal experiences. That way, she is able to flesh it out and make the character more well-rounded.

When asked about her split with Mavy Legaspi, Kyline said she was grateful for it because it made her who she is today. “In every relationship I have or had — whether it’s a friendly or romantic one — I always try to learn something from it, from both the good and bad experiences. Right now, I think we should move on from that experience,” she shared.

She recently told me what she looks for in a potential partner. “I guess he would be someone who will try to understand and accept me for who I am — together with my flaws. The one who will cheer during my ups, and who will say, ‘It’s okay, you’ve still got it’ during my lows. Lastly, he would be someone who will understand my

relationship with God. He doesn’t need to have the same beliefs as mine, but he should be someone who will respect and value my beliefs and relationship with God,” Kyline said.

Kyline (who is rumored to be dating Kobe Paras) tells me what she looks for in a potential partner: ‘He would be someone who will understand my relationship with God. He doesn’t need to have the same beliefs as mine, but he should be someone who will respect and value my beliefs.

Mutual respect is non-negotiable for this Kapuso actress. She enumerated four specific points: respect for her family and relationship with God; respect for her work and the time she needs to devote to it; respect for her space and her words, especially when she says no; and respect for her ideals and values.

Kyline is also a softie who appreciates thoughtful gestures, like when “someone” dropped by while she was in the middle of a

shoot. “Someone watched me during my taping and stayed until my performance. I truly appreciate it when people spend time with me despite their busy schedules,” she shared.

## How Katrina Velarde remains relevant in dynamic music landscape

In a pop music scene dominated by Gen Z stars, Katrina Velarde, recognized for her powerful and enviable vocals, is taking steps to distinguish herself. As new artists emerge and trends shift, the “Suklay Diva” aims to maintain her relevance while showcasing her talent. The singer emphasized that she remains authentic and stays true to her core as a vocalist. That’s how she keeps herself afloat in a very dynamic music landscape.

“Back in the day, whether through online platforms or live performances, it was tough to compete, but you don’t always have to keep up with the trends,” Katrina said.

“For someone like me, we have our own established sound, and if we change our singing style to fit trends, it doesn’t feel right. We just stick to what we know, just as Regine Velasquez always says: as long as people



are listening to us, we will continue to grow in the way we know how,” she added.

As part of her effort to stay relevant, Katrina is staging a concert her third major solo show.

This concert will offer something new compared to her previous performances, as she will be singing songs

originally performed by male artists.

“Now, I’m very, very excited because this is going to be so different from what I did before. I’m going to be singing men’s songs that have been ‘diva-fied,’” she revealed. “We thought about it because we needed to find songs that have not been sung by Filipino singers here.”



## Filipinos in Canada prove why Philippines ranks 3rd among countries with most beautiful people, based on pageant results - study

TORONTO- Almost Every Filipino-Canadian organization has muse, a pageant, or just a beauty queen even appointed one. It’s our obsession. The Philippines has ranked third among countries with the most beautiful people, based on performance in international beauty pageants.

Wethrift, an online coupon platform, calculated a beauty score for countries based on their results in the Miss Universe, Miss World, Miss International, Miss Grand International, and Miss Earth pageants.

In their methodology, titleholders are worth three points, first runner-ups two points, and second runner-



ner-ups three points.

The Philippines, which has 16 titleholders, 12 first runner-ups, and seven second runner-ups, had a beauty score of 79. Venezuela (127) and the United States (125) took the top two spots.

Other countries in the top 10 were United Kingdom (62), India (58), Colombia (54), Australia (52), Brazil (50), Puerto Rico (47), and South Africa (41).

“International beauty pageants offer fascinating insights into how different countries approach and celebrate beauty. Venezuela, the USA, and



the Philippines’ consistent success in producing titleholders reflects their strong cultural emphasis on these competitions,” said Nick Drewe, beauty and lifestyle trend expert and CEO at Wethrift.

“Over the years, we’ve observed shifts in which countries dominate these pageants, mirroring changing global dynamics and evolving beauty standards worldwide,” he added.

The Philippines has four Miss Universe titleholders: Gloria Diaz, Margie Moran, Pia Wurtzbach, and Catriona Gray. It also has six Miss International, four Miss Earth, one Miss World, and one Miss Grand International titleholders.

Even a Toronto fashion show like Mahistrado bestows titles just as Winterra here jsut won.

## Muskoka Retirement Residence holds a Vintage Car Show

The Alexander Muskoka Residence had the privilege of holding a Vintage Car Show at our location, 520 Isaac

St. It was a wonderful experience for our residents, staff and guests to intermingle with the vehicle owners and,

of course, to reminisce and enjoy the memories that these cars and bikes inspire. Thank you to all who made this event a success and we look forward to hosting it again.

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## Gabby Concepcion content with 'amicable' relationship with Sharon Cuneta

Reuniting for a joint concert to reflect on their memories has improved the relationship of ex-partners Gabby Concepcion and Sharon Cuneta, according to the actor.

In a TV Patrol report broadcast on Wednesday, Sept. 18, the actor knows that he and Cuneta would not be as close as before, but being on amicable terms with his ex-wife is already enough for him.

"Hindi ko inasahan na of course, magiging tulad ng dati, but at least, nag-uusap kami about certain things na hindi namin napag-uusapan before (I don't expect that of course, our bond will be the

same as before. But at least, we're able to talk about certain things that we couldn't discuss before)," he said.

The actor's brief statement comes after it was announced that Concepcion and Cuneta are taking their "Dear Heart" concert to cities in the US and Canada in October and November.

The areas included are California, Las Vegas in Nevada, and Honolulu in Hawaii in the US; and Winnipeg in Manitoba, Oakville in Ontario, and Surrey in British Columbia in Canada.

With this in mind, Concepcion told ABS-CBN News that he's hopeful his

daughter KC Concepcion will be part of the tour, although it would be the production's call.

"Kung may tinanim ka, tinanim namin ay 'Dear Heart.' Ang bunga si KC. Masarap sana makasama natin (If you plant something, which in our case is 'Dear Heart,' our fruit is KC. It would be nice to have her join us)," he was quoted as saying.

Concepcion and Cuneta's US and Canada tour was confirmed earlier this month. The reunion concert is based on their 1981 film "Dear Heart." They previously staged a show in Cebu and Pasay City last year.

The ex-couple, who was previously known as the ShaGab love team, wed in 1984 and welcomed KC in 1985. After a controversial split, their marriage was annulled three years later.

See their concert on November 2 at The Meeting Place in Oakville.

## 'Back off!' Journey drummer Deen Castronovo defends Arnel Pineda from bashers

American rock band Journey's drummer Deen Castronovo came to the rescue of Filipino singer Arnel Pineda after Pineda got bashed for his alleged lackluster performance at the Rock in Rio Festival in Brazil.

In his official Facebook page, Deen said he's not active on social media, but this time, he posted to defend Arnel.

"Arnel has RISEN to the challenge of Journey's catalog, NIGHT after NIGHT, YEAR after tiring YEAR! He gives to YOU ALL and Journey, the best that he can give you. Out of maybe a handful of shows in 17 years, Arnel has faced the facts. The voice is a BIOLOG-

I C A L INSTRUMENT, subject to weather, fatigue, virus, bacteria, jet lag etc. Sometimes it DOES NOT, CANNOT or WILL NOT cooperate when needed. So, what's the point of hammering a human being over something they have no control over??" he said.

"To the trolls, you are the blessed many. The ones who can armchair sing and trash the few that do what he does every night. They DO NOT have that luxury; they must



BRING IT EACH and EVERY NIGHT or FACE YOU and your OVERINFLATED OPINIONS! If YOU can DO BETTER – then, DO IT!!" he said.

Deen said that Arnel is his family and so he asked the trolls to stop messing with his family member.

"I know very few who can pull off what Arnel does without ego and with passion and grace. BACK OFF TROLLS! You are MESSING with MY FAMILY NOW and I am A RABID PROTECTOR OF MY OWN!!!" he said.

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everyone and anyone can voice their opinion. Consider this though when you do. Is it KIND? Is it TRUTH? Is it NECESSARY? We've all seen that meme, and it rings true here as it does anywhere it's posted.

"To the people who GET IT, THANK YOU, we appreciate you! To the INEPT... PROVE IT and WALK IT or SHUT IT!"

Arnel first apologized for his performance in the show and offered to quit the legendary band.

Arnel shared a video uploaded by Behind the Songs with the cap-

tion, "Arnel Pineda showed severe vocal flaws in Journey's presentation at Rock in Rio Brazil last Sunday, September 15."

"I am very aware of this," he said. "No one more than me in this world feels so devastated about this."

"It's really amazing how one thousand right things you have done will be forgotten just 'cause of this and of all the places, it's in Rock In Rio," he said, adding that he already suffered "mentally and emotionally" and is still suffering.

## Filipino Cuisine Takes Center Stage at COOKSCAMP 2024's Cultural Dinner

PEMBERTON, British Columbia - The rich and diverse flavors of Filipino cuisine were the highlight of Cooks Camp 2024 Cultural Dinner held on 10 September 2024 at the North Arm Farm in Pemberton, British Columbia.

Organized by the Chef's Table Society of British Columbia, the Cooks Camp event was designed to modernize the Canadian culinary industry. Attended by more than 200 culinary industry professionals from across Canada, the two-day event served as a platform for establishing a Culinary Arts Centre, showcasing cut-



ting-edge tools and talents, and fostering educational opportunities.

The Filipino Cultural Dinner featured a grand Kamayan or Filipino Boodle Fight pre-

pared by talented Filipino-Canadian chefs, namely, TJ Conwi, Antonio Martin, Mark Singson, Derrick Sibayan, Carl Sanchez, Janice Quinto, Andrew Alojado, and Lloyd Taganahan. The Boodle Fight offered attendees a unique and immersive dining experience that emphasized community gathering.

Philippine Consul General Arlene T. Magno, in her opening remarks, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to spotlight Filipino culinary traditions on such an important platform. She said that the event is a proud representation of Filipino heritage as well as a reflection of the dynamic and evolving

nature of Filipino culinary traditions. She commended the participating Filipino chefs who have brought their skills, passion, and creativity to the table and for making their mark in the Canadian culinary landscape.

The event was a resounding success, not only in its goal of showcasing Filipino cuisine but also in building bridges between cultures through the universal language of food. This year's focus on Filipino cuisine is a significant step forward in the growing recognition of Filipino food on the global stage.

## 4 eco-friendly tips for games night

TORONTO (NC) - Cooler weather means bringing the party indoors. No matter the size of your guest list or entertaining space, here are some budget-friendly tips that are also good for the planet.

1. Inspire creativity with DIY activities

Instead of buying new games, inspire eco-friendly fun by creating your

own sustainability-themed activities. From homemade charades and DIY escape rooms to setting up recycled crafts stations, guests will have a fun-filled evening while helping the environment.

2. Ditch disposable containers  
Limit landfill waste by having guests bring their own takeaway containers for leftovers. It's a simple way to be

more sustainable and reduce after-party clean-up.

3. Prioritize products and plan ahead  
When planning the games night menu (because what's a games night without snacks?), consider reducing your environmental footprint by shopping for local, seasonal produce and supporting companies that champion sustainability and support the

environment, like Maple Leaf Foods.

4. Coordinate a carpool  
Reduce your environmental footprint by coordinating a carpool for guests. Carpooling is a great way to limit carbon emissions, ensure everyone arrives on time and bring friends together for an evening of fun.

# How Allen Dizon recovers from very dark roles



'Guardia De Honor' stars (from left) Laurice Guillen, Allen Dizon, Teri Malvar and Sunshine Cruz.

Allen Dizon is no stranger to playing very dark roles.

In filmmaker Jay Altarejos' 'Guardia de Honor,' the award-winning actor portrays Eddie Boy, an abusive, trigger-happy policeman who faces a reckoning from those who are "dearest" to him.

Despite the unsettling nature of some of the characters he has played, Allen doesn't need to agree with their actions to play the role effectively. However, he acknowledges that Eddie Boy might be his darkest and most twisted character yet.

"Gumaganap lang kami bilang artista; nasa director na rin kung ano ang gusto niya ipalabas sa film," he explained.

When asked how he detaches himself from such intense roles, Allen said he takes a no-frills approach. "Wala akong ritwal, wala akong ginagawa. Pag-pack up, parang yun na ang magic word na, 'O, kailangan normal na ulit,'" he said.

He added that if the role still weighs on him after filming, he'll unwind with a shower or a drink. He also turns to sports and socializing in his hometown. "I destress through playing basketball, tennis, spending time with friends in Pampanga. Ayaw ko mag-stay sa bahay

(nadala dala yung bigat)," he shared.

Nevertheless, Allen agreed that there are times when the intensity of the scenes lingers even after filming wraps. "Minsan kahit nasa kotse ka o nasa bahay ka, naaalala mo pa din iyong ginagawa mo," he shared.

"Kailangan mag-move on ka. Ihiwalay mo yung character mo dun sa totoong ikaw."

Thankfully, having been in the industry for years now, Allen has learned how to set boundaries between his on-screen roles and who he is in real life.

"Maybe that's our talent as actors — we're able to set aside our real lives when we play a character," he said.

Meanwhile, veteran actress-director Laurice Guillen, who portrays Allen's mother Mamang Anita in the film, found the story of the family in "Guardia de Honor" as "real and peculiar."

"It's the family in a situation that's dark because it involves crime and guilt," she said.

According to Laurice, her character's journey was all about protecting the family's honor. "For the family to preserve its honor, it has to hide the dishonorable things," she noted.

"It's probably more a Greek tragedy... that she puts an end to the cycle of evil. She was the one that paid for the whole thing.

"I don't judge the roles I play but as I watched this, I would learn, as a lesson, that it is not the way to do it," she stressed.

"Guardia de Honor" is loosely based on real events, particularly the viral news in late 2020 about a shooting incident in Tarlac, where a policeman killed a mother and son following a dispute.

Direk Jay said that the movie's black-and-white treatment was intended to help the audience focus on the story and performances. "In the absence of colors, mas nakaka-focus sa kwento and perfor-

mance, no matter how subtle it is. Yun ang gusto natin iparating sa treatment na yun," he said.

He further admitted that given its dark and heavy themes, "Guardia de Honor" was a difficult film to make.

"When I write, I write with urgency," Jay said. "Meaning, I was able to make it within 10 to 15 days, but I already knew the story."

## Maymay Entrata drops 'Amakabogera' English version at Paris Fashion Week

Kapamilya actress Maymay Entrata made her debut at Paris Fashion Week.

In her Instagram account, Maymay shared clips of her slaying the runway for designer Leo Almodal and Vietnamese designer Phan Huy.

"This is my 1st look by @phanhuy.official @stevendoanstyle. And my first runway in Paris Fashion Week, I will for sure treasure this talaga,

Thank you so much for having me po," Maymay wrote.

Star Magic also posted a video of Maymay as she sings the English version of her hit song "Amakabogera."

"Make way for #Maymay 'cause she is oozing with golden charisma on the Paris Fashion Week ramp, strutting to her hit song 'Amakabogera' while clad in Leo Almodal!" Star Magic wrote.

"Your Star Magic family couldn't be any more proud of you, Maymay," it added.

Maymay made her international catwalk debut in Dubai for Filipino designer Furne One in 2018.



## Paulo Avelino congratulates Kim Chiu for Seoul International Drama Award

Kapamilya actress Kim Chiu turned emotional after she received the Outstanding Asian Star honor at the 2024 Seoul International Drama Awards.

In her Instagram account, Kim said that she's honored to represent the country in the award-giving body.

"Beyond grateful to be recognized as the Most Outstanding Asian Star at the Seoul International Drama Awards 2024," she wrote.

"Honored to represent the Philippines on this incredible stage! Thank you ABS-CBN, @starmagicphils, @dreamscapeph #Linlang family and to all my supporters," she added.

Kim's onscreen partner and rumored lover Paulo Avelino commented on her post.

"Congratulations," Paulo commented. "Tenk yew," Kim replied.

Speaking to ABS-CBN News after the show, Kim said that she's dedicating the award to her fans.

"Sobrang hindi ako makapaniwala. 'Di ba, naiyak pa ko?! Una pa lang, start pa lang, na-starstruck na ko sa lahat ng nakita ko. Kasi lahat ng mga nanalo, 'yung 'Moving' yung 'Mask Girl', ang daming palabas," she said.

"Napanood ko siya habang nasa bahay ako tapos ngayon nakita ko 'yung directors, producers, actors tapos kasali ako sa event. So naoverwhelmed ako, so nu'ng nagpasalamat na ko, naiyak na ko," she added.

# Using AI to deliver faster mortgage and life insurance pre-approvals

(NC) Some Canadian banks are exploring how emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning can streamline their customers' experiences.

For example, TD is using both technologies to provide pre-approvals on mortgages, home equity lines of credit and some term life insurance applications in seconds.

"The field of AI and machine learning is evolving, and we continue to leverage the technology to help deliver faster digital banking experiences to our customers," says Luke Gee, senior vice president, chief analytics and artificial intelligence officer at TD. "These solutions can help drive value for our customers by making their experiences faster and easier to navigate."

Since last year, the bank's AI model has granted thousands of mortgage pre-approvals. The machine learning model for term life insurance, meanwhile, is being used to review and approve nearly half of the applications received.

The AI and machine learning models provide faster decisions by working alongside underwriters to assess appli-

cations and grant approvals. The applications that are not approved by the models are reviewed by underwriters, who now have more capacity to focus on more complex files.

With the assistance of AI and machine learning, customers are now experiencing shorter wait times when it really matters.

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## ‘Zoomer’ star Harvey Bautista describes his generation

Rather than being labeled as hard-headed, young actor Harvey Bautista believed that a more accurate term to describe today's generation—Gen Z—would be strong-headed.

During a sideline interview of Star Magic's "Spotlight Presscon", the Zoomer star shared his thoughts when asked about the Gen Z stereotype of being hard-headed and difficult to work with.

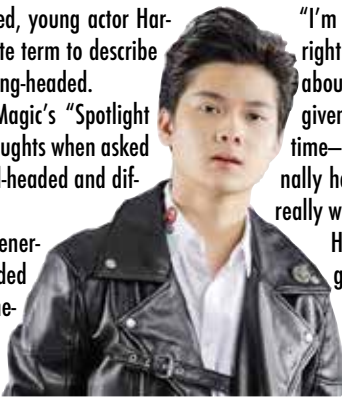
"I feel like that's the thing with our generation, in general. We're very strong-headed especially when we're faced with something opposing us," Harvey told Manila Standard Entertainment. "I guess we're just really strong and really stand the ground. I guess, in a general sense, I think my generation is very strong-headed."

He then emphasized that Gen Z is simply strong-willed and knows what they want, which could be seen as a positive attribute. Harvey Bautista has also played characters in 'High Street' and 'Pamilya Sagrado'

"We sort of plant ourselves like a tree in our beliefs and we sort of stay there. Maybe that's why they see us as hard-headed. I think it's a good thing that we're like that. It's a good thing," the actor added.

"We know what we want. We know what is right and wrong. And we will call out those who are doing wrong, which I believe is a positive aspect of our generation. I think that's what's been lacking in the previous generations. It was there. It was there before, but it hasn't been as prominent as it is now, which is good," explained Harvey.

He also highlighted that being strong-willed can be beneficial in one's career, as it allows individuals to pursue their passions and stand up for what they believe in, citing that he himself is a strong-headed person when it comes to his career and where he wanted it to go.



"I'm stubborn when it comes to what I believe is right and what isn't. Secondly, I'm also stubborn about my career and where I want it to go. I think, given where I am right now—and I say this all the time—I've been waiting for this for so long. I'm finally here. I'm in the busiest year of my life, and I really want to protect that," added Harvey.

Harvey Bautista believes that the Gen Z are a generation of strong-headed people

Reflecting on his personal experiences, Harvey revealed the challenges he faces with social media and its potential negative impact on his mental health, especially now that more projects had been coming his way ever since he returned to the entertainment industry.

"I deal with it every day. I deal with that weight every day because honestly, for me it's very overwhelming because there's so many people who are watching. There's so many people who know your name," he said.

"And sometimes, those people have good things to say. But most of the time, they have bad things to say. And sometimes, there are people online who you think you can sort of rely on. As your fan, it's the same. They have like these very passive-aggressive comments online," admitted Harvey.

To cope, the actor revealed that sometimes, he would deactivate his social media accounts and limit his usage to protect his peace of mind. He said that he believed that social media can be overwhelming and toxic, and it's important to prioritize one's well-being over online engagement.

"But I think at this point, honestly, I just want to do my job. I want to work on my craft. I love acting. I want to be a good actor. And I want to protect my mental health at the same time. So if that means having to deactivate my Twitter or logging out of my Instagram," he added.

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### Angel Locsin not pregnant; why on showbiz hiatus — source

Kapamilya actress Dimples Romana gave an update on the life of Angel Locsin, which is in showbiz hiatus for years now.

In a report by Pilipino Star Ngayon, Dimples said Angel is enjoying her time away from showbiz.

“Parang nag-e-enjoy pa po siya sa kanyang life at home. Iba rin kasi, naintindihan ko po kasi ako rin bilang pamilyado ako parang kung ako rin, alam mo kung kasing yaman ako ni Angel, nasa bahay na rin talaga ako,” Dimples said.

The actress said that her friend has also not been into social media for a long time now.



“I think hindi siya nagso-social media. I think it is a wonderful choice because ngayon din ‘di ba, a lot of the news is also — ako nga sometimes when I watch a news, I feel anxious, I feel worried for the future, so it’s nice that she’s taking this time all for herself. Beautiful choice,” Dimples said.

A very reliable source close to the Arce family confirmed to Philstar.com Dimples’ claim that Angel is just at home, relaxing and enjoying her time away from showbiz.

The source denied that Angel is already pregnant, but asserted that Angel and her husband Neil are happy and are also occasionally traveling together.



### Government targets 772 free WiFi sites by 2028

MANILA, Philippines — The government will build 772 free WiFi sites in country, mostly in Mindanao, under the newly approved P16.1-billion Philippine Digital Infrastructure Project to boost broadband connectivity nationwide, particularly in remote areas.

At a Palace briefing yesterday, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Undersecretary Jeffrey Ian Dy said the wider digital infrastructure project seeks to complete the national fiber backbone program of the Marcos administration.

Dy said most of the 772 free WiFi sites would be put up in Mindanao, particularly in Regions 11 and 13. This is said to be a development project for these regions as it can potentially increase the country’s gross domestic product.

The project aims to build these WiFi sites by 2028 through a \$288-million loan from World Bank, according to Dy.

He said the entire project would be implemented for a period of 10 years from 2025 to 2035.

### Is your vision loss just aging, or something else?

TORONTO - (NC) We’ve all heard the saying “it’s all downhill” after a certain age, whether we believe it or not. While many seniors still enjoy active lifestyles, most of us accept that our bodies just won’t be as good at certain things as time goes on.

But that acceptance can sometimes keep us from noticing when something is going wrong that isn’t “just one of those things.” One example is geographic atrophy (GA), an eye disease where the centre of the retina, called the macula, dies off over time.



GA affects an estimated five million people worldwide, most of them

seniors. Vision loss occurs slowly, starting with blind spots in the middle of a person’s field of vision, then worsening until household tasks, driving and even facial recognition become very difficult.

That’s why it’s so important to listen to our bodies and note any changes in vision. Although some symptoms could be nothing to wor-

ry about, they could also be signs of a serious condition that will only get worse if left unexamined.

Make sure to reach out to your eye-care professional if you notice it’s getting harder to read or track objects in your central vision. They can tell you whether you simply need a new prescription for your glasses, or whether it’s time to run more tests. There are scans available that can detect GA, but like with many conditions, early diagnosis is essential.

Learn more at livingwithga.ca.

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# Five Gen Z CEOs in showbiz

Running a business is no easy feat. It often demands complete attention, wit, sheer dedication, luck, and impeccable time management skills. Even with their busy schedules as people within the spotlight, there are a few celebrities who are adamant in pursuing their passions for owning a business at a young age.

Here are five Gen Z celebrities who manage to efficiently balance both the worlds of business and stardom.

**Andrea Brillantes**  
Despite being the youngest on the list, 21-year-old actress Andrea Brillantes has achieved impressive feats



as the CEO of her own cosmetics brand Lucky Beauty. With the brand's recent venture into releasing a perfume line alongside its wide variety of high quality makeup products, Brillantes is well on her way to cementing her name as a renowned entrepreneur.

**Gabbi Garcia**

Aside from her blossoming career, actress Gabbi Garcia has been trying her hand at entrepreneurship, being a proud owner of several businesses together with her boyfriend and fellow actor Khalil Ramos. While she shares ownership of food business Meat Up! with him, Garcia is a co-founder of beauty brand Five Beauty and the owner of accessory brand Sandy & Shine.



**Ysabel Ortega**  
Actress Ysabel Ortega has been known for her entrepreneurial pursuits ranging from her family's poultry farm to a nail salon launched together with her fellow actors Elle Villanueva and Sophia Señoron. Last year, the 25-year-old started a bakery business with her mother called Maria Ysabel's Cakes and Pastries.



**Nash Aguas**

While being in the limelight for the majority of his life, former child star Nash Aguas has reached notability not only for his filmography but also from his work as a businessman. Aside from having a number of investments in real es-



tate, Aguas is also a co-owner of Japanese restaurant Muramen and chicken inasal establishment Grillest.

**Sofia Andres**  
Apart from being a fashion icon, actress Sofia Andres is also an entrepreneur who first began her entrepreneurial journey in 2021 with the launch of her alcospray & body-wash brand Zoe Essentials, which was named after her daughter, Zoe. Last August, she teased her newest business venture which was an upcoming makeup line consisting of products that are still under development.



## Bianca Umali, Ruru Madrid in no rush to get married

Showbiz couple Bianca Umali and Ruru Madrid have discussed the possibility of marriage, the actress confirmed in a recent interview. "We've talked about it," she said, though emphasizing they are not rushing into anything.

The couple, both well-known Kapuso stars, plan to focus on their careers for now.

"We want to maximize our individualities. Our promise to each other remains, but we will see what happens in the next chapter of our



lives," Umali stated.

Umali also addressed occasional feelings of jealousy in their relationship, noting it is something they handle openly.

"Sometimes I feel jealous, but we talk about it. Honesty and transparency are important to us," she explained.

Regarding on-screen work, Umali mentioned that neither seeks permission from the other when it comes to kissing scenes. "We just let each other know. We understand it's part of the job, and we share the same level of dedication and passion for our craft."

Umali is currently busy filming for the upcoming GMA primetime series *Encantadia Chronicles*:

*Sang'gre*, where she stars alongside Kelvin Miranda, Faith Da Silva, and Angel Guardian.

The actress acknowledged the pressure of following the success of previous *Encantadia* installments but expressed confidence in delivering a quality show.

## Gabby thanks GMA7

Actor Gabby Concepcion has expressed gratitude to GMA for allowing him to postpone the taping of his upcoming television series to accommodate his Dear Heart concert tour with ex-wife Sharon Cuneta in the US and Canada.



"I'd like to thank the Kapuso management for understanding my schedule for the concert," Concepcion said. "I have a new series with them, but due to the concert, I requested a leave of absence. They understood, and I will start taping when I return in January."

The 59-year-old actor also mentioned that adjustments have been made for the US leg of the concert.

"Our songs will be shortened, and the show won't last two hours. We're mindful of the audience's time, especially considering their drive home. There's also a strict timetable in the US, and going over time incurs charges, so we aim to finish on time," he stated.

## CANADA from page 9

work at most one year for a firm, down from a previous two.

"The [labour market] conditions have shifted, and the number of job seekers in key sectors now often exceeds available positions," government spokesperson Stefanovska told Canadian Affairs.

Some of Canada's largest corporate advocacy organizations, which lobbied for Ottawa to expand the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, oppose the recent changes.

"In remote, rural and touristic areas where there [are] chronic labour shortages, the 10% cap and the 1 year maximum employment means that legitimate use of the program will cost twice as much (since the process will need to be done every year)," said Maximilien Roy, vice-president at industry advocacy group Restaurants Canada, in an emailed statement to Canadian Affairs.

"It is making the life of restaurant operators harder, in an already challenging context."

Darrel Reid, vice-president of public affairs at the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada, told Canadian Affairs in an emailed statement that the program changes will not affect the construction industry, due to it being high-wage work in an exempt industry.

"[T]here ain't no such thing [as low-wage work] in the construction sector — or at least with our members," he said, referring to the 140 contractors that the association represents.

"TFWs are paid the same rate as local workers. So labourers might start at \$29-30/hour — or more, depending upon the job and location. Also, it is my understanding that the construction sector has been exempted from these

changes."

Both Roy and Reid say their organizations have been lobbying Ottawa to make other reforms to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

"We've been lobbying federal government for at least 10 years," Reid said. "Our major concerns have been the shortage of skilled workers in a number of fields ... [This shortage] is be-



coming a limiting factor in the work our members are able to take on."

"We have been urging easier access to people within the skilled trades categories, more allowable workers within the overall program, more flexibility for provinces to bring in the candidates needed for construction in their jurisdiction, a smoother path to citizenship, more streamlined application processing, and some sort of mitigation for the \$1000 application fee," he said.

Roy says the government should be placing a greater emphasis on helping newcomers and workers who are already in Canada to acquire the language and skills training they need to join the workforce.

"[T]here's over a million open work permits right now in Canada — people with open work permits that are not working," said Roy.

"We're really trying to ask the government, let's find a way to get these people to work and join our industry."



# Jericho Rosales recalls 'first date' with Janine Gutierrez

Jericho Rosales admitted that he already "felt something" the first time he went out with Janine Gutierrez, saying he was amazed that he could talk with her for long hours.

In a recent interview with Karen Davila, Rosales shared that he initially asked Gutierrez to do a script reading in preparation for their roles as husband and wife in the revenge drama "Lavender Fields."

"One day I asked her, 'Would you like to do a script reading with me?' I'm sure she has her own version of the story but why would I ask for a script reading [because] she's the only person I haven't worked with," shared the actor.

The "Pangako Sa'Yo" actor then detailed what transpired the first time they went out.

"I brought my iPad and then we saw each other at a cafe, she started laughing. She was, 'Like Holy God, you have an iPad,' I said, 'Yes, this is a work meeting,' so to cut the long story short, six hours later, we never got to open the iPad. It

ended up with Japanese food at 3 p.m. and then she went to her Lola, Pilita Corales, and then that's it. I was like, 'Wow, I can spend 6 hours talking to this girl.' That's when I felt something," he said, adding that he's drawn to Gutierrez's good energy.

Rosales, 44, also shared that he initially thought Gutierrez, 34, was too young for him to date.

"I thought she was 24. EJ said, My make-up artist, she's 24. 'What? Okay. Bye' Alam mo 'yon, bye; I'm not dating a 24-year-old girl. [I googled], 'Oh, pwede pala,'" he said, emphasizing that the actress has a kind of purity in her.

The "Legal Wife" actor then expressed his admiration for Gutierrez's personality.

"She talks calmly, a sweet person who's like, almost never upset about anything. [She] handles herself really well, with such humility. She's this type of person that, okay, a 'no' is a 'no' and a 'yes' is a 'yes' and she knows her decisions and she does it in a very smooth and soft, tender kind of way," he expressed.

Last month, Rosales revealed that he and Gutierrez are dating after they were spotted in public places on different occasions.

Rosales was previously married to mod-

el Kim Jones, while Gutierrez was in a relationship with actor-dancer Rayver Cruz.

**Alexa Ilacad on women not wanting to have children: No judgment**

For Alexa Ilacad, many adults decide not to have children because they want to focus on their own plans, saying it's a thought she fully understands and resonates with at this stage of her life.

Ilacad is the lead star of the upcoming film "Mujigae," which tells the story of a five-year-old half-Korean, half-Filipino child Mujigae (Ryrie Sophia) finding herself in the care of her Aunt Sunny (Ilacad). They eventually develop a strong mother-and-daughter relationship, which will be put to the test upon the return of the child's biological father.

While the film talks about the complicated relationship between a child and her mother figure, the actress-singer told reporters that adults — particularly women — are free to live their lives as they wish.

"I get it! I totally get it! And that's okay! I think now, we're more open to living our lives the way we want to live without fear of judgment from other people," she said on the sidelines of the film's media con when asked about adults not wanting to have children.

"I don't think that makes you less of a woman if you choose to not have a family. If you choose to live your life differently, that's totally fine. If you choose to take care of a kid or you want to be a mother figure, it's up to you. As long as you choose to love every day," she

further added.

Ilacad reiterated that adults have the right to take charge of their own journeys, with or without children. "You don't have to pressure yourself to do a certain thing because it's what society wants from you. It's you who will suffer in the end."

"I see a lot of people my age — although I think 24 is young — who decided to not have a family because, for example, they want to travel and pursue different interests. It would be hard for them to do so if they have a family," she continued. "And I understand. To each is their own. If I say go, live your life the way you want."

Also joining Ilacad and Sophia in the Randolph Longjas-helmed film are Kim Ji-soo and Richard Quan. The film will be released in theaters on October 9.

Article continues after this advertisement

**'No pressure' with KD**

The actress then laughed when asked if she and KD Estrada, whom she's dating exclusively, thought of starting a family of their own someday. "He's only 22 and he's starting college. But we have the same mindset."

"If we're both financially stable and if he's capable of taking care of me and my family," she further added. "What I like about KD is he wants to treat me like a princess and I really appreciate that."

## Lovi is loving local

Lovi Poe elaborated on how her latest film trains the spotlight on Filipino fashion. She said, her outfits are a collection of traditional garments with modern interpretations of classic designs.

Poe made a striking entrance, dressed in flowy white trousers paired with a woven tube top embellished with a large flower as the centerpiece. Her outfit's intricate, handcrafted details mirrored the aesthetic sensibilities featured in the movie, where contemporary fashion is woven with Filipino cultural elements.

"I just bought it from a store at Rockwell, and I thought it would complement the fashion we have in the film," Poe said. "This top reminded me of our banig (woven mat)."

Lovi credits the film's director, Connie Macatuno, for being meticulous in selecting the wardrobe for

the cast. Macatuno, who also has her own fashion line called Lokal, ensured that every outfit aligned with the movie's theme of celebrating Filipino artistry.

"You know, I really like how our director was so particular about the fashion in the movie, from my dresses to those worn by my co-actors, JM de Guzman and Jameson Blake," Poe added. "Her collection, Lokal, is featured prominently in the film."

Guilty Pleasure centers on three ambitious lawyers who face the challenges of love, betrayal, and professional ambition.

Poe plays Alexis Miranda, a skilled attorney who takes on her former colleagues in a high-profile rape case. The film's fashion choices are closely tied to the characters' arcs, particularly Alexis, who is portrayed as a strong and empowered woman.

"It's my first time playing a lawyer, and the character is very empowered,"

Poe said of her role. "The fashion really helps in showing her strength, especially when she's in court."

**Supporting local brands**

Poe has long been a supporter of Filipino designers. During the interview, she emphasized the importance of promoting local fashion and expressed her admiration for the modern takes on traditional clothing seen in the local market. "I always go to Katutubo, the pop-up market by Bench that features local designs," Poe said. "I'm especially drawn to the modern Filipiniana they sell. I think we should push harder because we have great products—the ternos, the barongs—especially when we give them a little twist to make them look modern."

Katutubo, which showcases the work of Filipino artisans and designers, is a frequent stop for Poe. Her passion for local fashion aligns with the overall theme of Guilty Pleasure, where traditional pieces are reinterpreted in a contemporary setting.

"You'll see more of the kinds of fashion similar to what I'm wearing right now in the film, from the outfits to the accessories like bags and earrings," she shared. "In the film, I play a lawyer, and our director made sure that every time my character goes to a court hearing,

I'm dressed well, and we're able to showcase Filipino fashion."

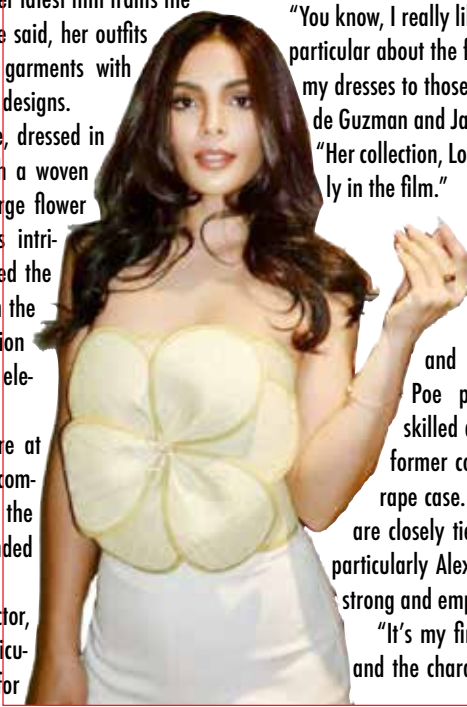
**Behind the scenes of Guilty Pleasure**

The social romantic drama, written by Noreen Capili and Trisha Mae Delez, delves into the complex dynamics between three lawyers as they face personal and professional dilemmas.

Poe's character, Alexis Miranda, owns Miranda and Associates, a law firm, and takes on Zach Lopez, a man accused of rape. This puts her in direct conflict with the country's largest law firm, Atticus, and her former colleagues, who represent the victim, Madison Valencia. As the case progresses, Alexis is forced to confront her own past trauma while dealing with two other significant figures in her life—Adam Lucero, the man who betrayed her, and Matthew Caliente, a young lawyer she once mentored.

The film is directed by Connie Macatuno, known for her previous work in Filipino cinema, and was executive produced by Roselle Y. Monteverde, Keith Monteverde, and the late Mother Lily Y. Monteverde.

Joining Poe, De Guzman, and Blake are Sarah Edwards, Dustin Yu, and Angelica Lao.



## Canadian consumers seek sustainability

TORONTO - (NC) As more Canadians are interested in sustainably grown food, various agricultural industries and farmers are embracing sustainable practices to meet the demands of conscientious shoppers. California strawberry growers, for example, focus on responsible farming practices that prioritize sustainability.

There is a high demand for strawberries in Canada — far more than domestic production can supply. Almost 90 per cent of strawberries imported into Canada come from California, which allows Canadians to enjoy their favourite berry year-round.

Many of these strawberries are grown

on multi-generation farms using sustainable techniques to minimize environmental impact. For instance, farmers use mechanical bug vacuums that effectively remove harmful insects, thereby reducing reliance on pesticides, release beneficial insects like ladybugs as a defence against pests and use other various organic practices known as integrated pest management.

The strawberry industry also invests millions of dollars into crop research, leading the world in environmental research dedicated to reducing pesticide use. Find more information on sustainable strawberry production at californiastrawberries.com.

## Candid CAMERA



Angelo, atalent of Marky Hugh of of MH Production perform a piano at the Asialicious 2024 festival at Woodside mall.

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and Hamilton who made tireless efforts to drive their daughters every rehearsal and our gratitude to our volunteers, sponsors/partners: GMA Pinoy TV, OMNI TV Filipino, Filipinosinthe6ix, All Things Filipino and Atin Ito. Congratulations to the 12

To our contestants, know that you are already winners in our eyes. Each of you has already achieved something truly remarkable by joining this Pageant with a Cause knowing that you have already supported people in need.



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charming and talented candidates of the Little Miss Philippines Canada 2024 pageant! Each participant

PCCF President Rosemer Enverga (2ND FROM RIGHT) with guests.



brought their unique sparkle and grace to the stage, making the event truly special.

The pageant proudly names Brianna as the new Little Miss Philippines Canada 2024. This pageant not only highlights the

achievements of these remarkable young girls but also supports vital causes in the Philippines. Every candidate is a winner, making a meaningful impact through their dedication and participation. A big congrat-

ulations to everyone - Brianna, Cassandra, Xeanna, Gabrielle, Louise, Arianna, Ziva, Nathalie, Caithlyn, Chanel, Hannah and Fraulein.

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fa Matundan, Noemi Laguer, Manny Nitoral, Veny Montierro kuya Ador Beloso at sa lahat ng members. Naway sapitin pa natin ang marami pang taon na laging sama sama at nagkakaisa. Mabuhay ang DOLOROSA

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## 'Kung healthy siya': Boy Abunda reacts to Kris Aquino entering politics after returning home



Veteran TV host Boy Abunda answered rumors if his close friend Kris Aquino came home to run for politics.

In a report by Bandera, Boy said he is not seeing Kris running for an elected position.

"I doubt. She needs to be healthy muna bago siya kumandidato," Boy said.

Boy said that Kris' youngest son Bimby might enter politics in the coming years.

"Do I see you in politics Bimb?" Ito 'yung tanong na, it didn't shock the Boy. Parang sa pagkakatanda ko, his answer was, 'Why not' or something. This is Aquino and Cojuangco name.

"Kris naman, kung healthy siya, I wouldn't discount the possibility. I wouldn't. She's familiar with that world, she's conversant, she's a bright girl. Dasal ko lang sana gumaling.

"Politics kasi, is physically toxic. 'Yun lang 'yun... with her condition now, but if you ask me what is the condition now, I really don't know yet until I see her."

Boy said that if only Kris is healthy, he will encourage her to run for office.

"Kaya ang latag ko, kung malusog lang 'yan, kung healthy lang 'yan... but as friend, would I encourage her, that would be interesting," he said.

Boy Abunda on EJ Obiena, Carlos Yulo and ties that bind sons and moms

Olympic pole vaulter EJ Obiena has opened up about his mother, Jeanette, and how they healed from that sports controversy that "strained" their relationship.

This is one of the topics that the King of Talk discussed with the world-class Pinoy athlete in his monthly TV special.

"Napakaganda kausap, he's a wonderful human being," shared Boy.

"We talked about his relationship with his mother and he's so fascinatingly honest," he further said of how EJ would shed light on how the Philippine Athletics Track and Field Association (PATAFA) issue in 2021 was resolved, and what it took for him and Jeanette — also a former track and field athlete — to reach a point of "wonderful love" between son and mom.

"It was very complicated because huge organizations were involved, government money was involved, parents were involved but what I heard from him was, in the end, magulang ko pa rin, in the end, nanay ko pa rin ito," recalled Boy. "It was a huge sports problem... Pero naayos rin."

Boy mentioned that EJ also talked about the immediate aftermath of him losing his chance at a podium finish in the 2024 Olympics. "He was very hurt. One of the worst places in the Olympics is No. 4... Being that close... ang sakit nuon," the host remarked, sharing Jeanette's simple but empowering advice to her son: "Pick up the pieces, anak, learn from them and then move on."

Boy also probed EJ's future plans "because there's this collective feeling of a lot of Filipinos here and abroad na sumubok ka sa 2028 Olympics, kaya mo pa... He's not definitive about it, maybe he's just managing his expectations."

EJ is the fifth personality that Boy featured in "My Mother, My Story," wherein interviewees get to reflect on the question, "Sino ka nang dahil sa iyong ina?" It was particularly conceptualized by the "Fast Talk" host as a love letter to his late mother, Nanay Lesing.

Meanwhile, Boy was asked if two-time Olympic gold medalist Carlos Yulo, whose currently fraught relation-



ship with his mom has been showbiz fodder, is going to be featured on the show.

He explained, "Like everyone else, I wanna know the truth. It's so hard to judge because the (information) is limited. The details that I know are not enough to issue a judgment.

"People would say Boy is not interested because maka-Nanay, that's not fair. Maka-Nanay naman ako, but napaka-personal yun and I will say it now, walang pwedeng gawin ang Nanay ko na 'di ko mapapatawad. But that's me and I will not impose that on anyone.

"I can only pray... I mean, totoo talaga na sana ngayon na maganda-ganda ang buhay, mag-usap. I don't know, maybe, kailangan tumahimik muna and that's one of the reasons (I told my staff) na hangga't maari 'wag muna tayong dumagdag sa ngayon."

He, nevertheless, weighed in on why Filipinos are personally interested and invested in Carlos' family issue.

"Emotional tayo, especially because this is a Golden Boy, this is a winner of two Gold medals, and this is (stuff) we see in teleseryes. This is the story of our life... our relationship with our mothers, the meaning of mother and child to us, the value of family, so the ingredients are all present in the story of Carlos and his mom. It's not just their story, it's the story of this country. That story is not copyrighted by Carlos and his mom," Boy said.

He doesn't also believe that the public is to be blamed that the family issue got "magnified." "Because you offered it to the public. I always take the side of the public in discussions like this because kung hindi mo in-offer,

paano naman natin malalaman?" he said, referring to how it started with public social media posts.

"I'd love to be able to interview with all of them, maybe when tempers are down. I would be pretentious to say I'm not interested in doing an interview with them. I would love to do it separately with Carlos, the mother and even Chloe (Carlos' girlfriend)."

Besides sports personalities and showbiz celebrities, Boy was also queried about the possibility of having Bimby, the second son of his dear friend Kris Aquino, guest in "My Mother, My Story."

"I am in touch, as we are as usual. I have not asked Bimb. I was with Bimb when he came home (last time)... Mag-usap kami ni Kris one of these days in person. Pero maganda siguro," he said.

"But I don't want to impose my relationship with Bimb, there's a thin line that separates between doing a show and having this relationship with the boy because I am literally his guardian."

The interview they're working on next is with Kapuso star Alden Richards. "It's a different story because he lost his mother when he was 14 or 15. That's interesting! How that impacted his attitude towards parents and the relationship with his father and what he has become. With EJ, it's not the question what you have become because of your mother. We rephrase the question to, 'How much of you is your mother?'"

Of course, for Boy, "Bimb would be lovely, but I'm very respectful of Kris' situation. To me, priority is health."

The former presidential daughter and sister announced in a recent Instagram post that she was returning to the Philippines for a second round of treatment for her autoimmune conditions.

When asked about his thoughts on speculations that Kris might enter the political ring now that she's back in the country, Boy said, "Assuming that Kris is healthy... Kris is an Aquino, kung malusog lang yan, she may. If she's healthy, I wouldn't discount the possibility. She's familiar with that world, she's conversant, she's a bright girl, my only prayer is gumaling."

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Showbiz Roundup: Arnel Pineda; Emman Atienza, Krishnah Gravidez's viral P130,000 dinner



(From left) Arnel Pineda, Emman Atienza and Krishnah Gravidez. Images: FILE PHOTOS

Arnel Pineda asked his fans and that of the American rock band, Journey, to help him decide whether to leave or stay in the band after his poor performance at the Rock in Rio music festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil went viral on social media.

Meanwhile, Kim Atienza's daughter Emmanuelle "Emman" Atienza is on the brunt of backlash after a now-deleted video of herself, friends and Miss World Philippines 2024 Krishnah Gravidez went viral, which featured them in a "guess the bill" clip of their P133,000-worth dinner

Arnel Pineda offers to quit Journey  
 Arnel Pineda 'devastated' after Brazil performance, offers to quit Journey. Image: Facebook/Arnel Pineda

Arnel Pineda, lead vocalist of Journey, said sorry after his poor performance at the Rock in Rio music festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



He also asked his fans to decide whether or not they wanted him to stay or leave the band for good.

Pineda caught the attention of music fans after

Behind the Songs shared a clip of Pineda struggling to reach the high notes of the band's hit song "Don't Stop Believin'" on Facebook on Sept. 21.

He apologized to his fans for the incident in a Facebook statement on Sept. 22, noting that more than anyone, he is devastated about how his performance turned out.

Then, Pineda asked fans to decide whether or not he should stay or leave the band for good by responding to his post with either stay or go. "Mentally and emotionally, I've suffered al-

ready and I'm still [suffering]. But I'll be okay. So here's the deal here now."

"I am offering you a chance now (especially those [who've] hated me and never liked me from the very beginning) to simply text GO or STAY right here," he continued. "And if 'Go' reaches 1 million, I'm stepping out for good... God bless all of you and thank you once again to all of the fans and friends who believed in

me since Day 1."

Pineda replaced Steve Perry as vocalist of Journey in 2008 after answering an email from band guitarist Neal Schön inviting him to join.

In accepting the offer, keyboardist Jonathan Cain described Pineda as "the future for our franchise."

In 2023, Pineda was accused by Schön and his wife of ditching the idea of bringing back the rock band's founding member and vocalist Greg Rolie for their celebratory tour.

The feud started in November 2022 after Schön was involved in a legal dispute with Cain, which led to Pineda making cryptic posts three months later, hinting that he was unhappy with the treatment within the band.

Emman Atienza cries foul after P133,000 meal  
 Emmanuelle "Emman" Atienza, daughter of TV personality Kim Atienza, addressed the criticisms over the "guess the bill" video of her P133,000-worth dinner with friends, saying it was meant as a "joke."

Atienza, in a now-deleted TikTok video, was seen dining at a restaurant with her friends, including reigning Miss World Philippines Krishnah Gravidez.

The clip shows each of them guessing their bill, saying whoever has the closest estimate would pay for it.

Gravidez had the closest guess, which was revealed to be P133,423.99.

She was then seen giving her card to apparently pay for the group's meal.

This drew flak from netizens who criticized the group for flaunting how they splurge, which came across to some as an "insensitive" move.

Atienza then spoke up on the matter through a TikTok video on Sept 24, saying the dinner was a birthday treat of her friend and was shouldered by the latter's agency.

"I find it so stupid that I even have to address this but it has gotten to a point where I feel like I need to," she complained.

"One, the video was a joke," she said. "I thought it was obvious because we were laughing and the bill was outrageously high number. But apparently, it's believable that I can pay that much for dinner..."



"Even if I had paid that much, even if we did have that much money, it is our choice and our freedom to do what we want with money that we earned," she went on to say.

Atienza also spoke about a media platform that wrote about the flak on her video and then included the reminder "check your privilege."

The post further stated that Atienza and her friends should "redistribute their wealth to those most in need of it."

She also pointed out that it was "ironic" that the same page "praised" actress Nadine Lustre for attending an event for a luxury brand.

"If you're gonna hate on me 'for being rich,' you need to do the same to everyone. Because guess what? Your favorite celebrities — not just in the Philippines but worldwide — make more, have more and spend more than I ever have," she said.

"And on top of that, I doubt any of them are redistributing their wealth," she further mentioned.

She then noted, "I, a singular teenage girl, am not responsible for the wealth disparity in the Philippines — contrary to current popular belief. I find it so stupid that people are picking and choosing what to be activists for."

Emman Atienza's 'mental health struggles'  
 Amid the criticism over her viral "guess the bill" video, Emman Atienza declared that "she feels herself again" and is proud of her journey amid battle with mental health.

Emman shared a video on Instagram featuring photos and clips from her younger years to the present, supposedly including her joyful as well as "breakdown" moments, and hospital visits.

"[TikTok] kept taking this video down so I'm moving it to reels. I'm really proud of myself and this video so I really wanted to share it," she wrote in her caption, adding the hashtags mental health awareness and mental illness. "I'm

me again; it feels like it's been years."

The video showcased clips of Emman crying and talking to herself whenever she experienced "breakdowns."

"Come on. You're crazy. You're weird. You're egocentric, and you think everything is about you. You're awkward. You're annoying. You think everyone hates you but they don't.



They just don't care about you enough to acknowledge or respect you," she said to the camera.

The video also showed the fun times of the 18-year-old social media influencer as she bonded with her friends and did some voluntary activities with children.

Carlos Yulo on rift with family  
 Carlos Yulo admits mistake, 'karma' amid rift with family



(From left) Chloe San Jose and Carlos Yulo. Image: Screenshot from YouTube/Toni Gonzaga Studio

Carlos Yulo continued to stay mum about his rift with his family, but, this time, admitted to having committed "mistakes," that have caused him to suffer from karma.

Yulo and his girlfriend Chloe San Jose were guests of Toni Gonzaga in her vlog, which was broadcast on her YouTube channel on Sept. 22.

In the interview, Gonzaga noted that Yulo's family has been vocal about their misunderstanding, shooting posts and comments here and there on social media, while the gymnast mostly kept to himself, with San Jose acting as his defender.

SHOWBIZ continued on page 28

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## Filipino influencers, troll farms tapped for pro-China narratives — study

MANILA, Philippines — The Chinese government is recruiting Filipino social media influencers and troll farms to push polished narratives that favor Beijing, according to a recently published study, with as many as 10,000 fake accounts found to be spreading pro-China narratives.

But besides the flood of pro-Chinese content on social media, the Chinese government is also relying on a more covert form of propaganda: local news reports that minimize Beijing's role in flawed infrastructure projects while shifting blame onto local leaders.

These were the findings of a September 6 report by research group AidData, which examined Beijing's direct and indirect messaging efforts to cast itself as an attractive economic partner for investments in the Philippines.

For years, China has remained as the Philippines' top trading partner, but public opinion has turned solidly against the powerful nation amid more frequent maritime clashes between the two countries in the South China Sea. More than three out of every four Filipinos identify China as the greatest threat to the country, according to an OCTA survey conducted in March and released in June.

"China is not engaging in all these media cooperation and development finance [projects] in a vacuum. It's happening alongside very visible disputes in the South China Sea," Samantha Custer, director at AidData, said.

Two-pronged strategy. China's social media messaging aim to deflect criticism of its actions in the region by portraying such criticism as mere propaganda by the United States, according to the 51-page AidData study.

Amid its efforts to expand its presence on social media platforms, the Chinese government is also trying to promote the narrative that "discussing, let alone debating, the South China Sea could lead to conflict with the [People's Republic of China], implying that the Philippines is powerless," according to the study.

"PRC state-run or state-influenced media outlets have accounts on most social media channels to amplify their digital content," the AidData study said.



A member of Dumagat community catches fish in Agos River.

"Less direct is the proliferation of online troll farms and other fake accounts that the PRC can use to spread mis- or disinformation to foreign publics, along with partnerships with social media influencers," it added.

However, the researchers found that Filipinos aren't buying into these pro-China messages.

While Beijing has paid local influencers to tour China and share positive stories, their impact has been minimal.

YouTube videos promoting China's image have reached no more than 20,000 views, far less than similar content from India, Europe and the US, according to the study.

Another failed media effort was the Chinese Embassy's release of a video entitled "Iisang Dagat" ("One Sea") at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020. While the video sought to highlight positive relations between China and the Philippines, it was seen as a "cynical attempt" to distract from Beijing's maritime aggression.

By April 27, 2020, the video had drawn significant backlash from Filipinos and incurred over 100,000 dislikes.

Beijing has, to a "limited degree," relied on influencers to spread pro-China messages in the Philippines, Custer said. While their efforts so far have yielded mixed results, it is still "something to keep an eye on."

"China has the capacity to learn and to learn quickly. And if it continues to make forays in this area that could be one to watch," she said.

Why do messages from pro-China influencers and troll farms fall flat? Researchers explained that attempting to sway public sentiment is "complicated in practice" no matter the social media strategy or level of investment involved.

Philippine experts interviewed for the report believe that the pro-China accounts' information campaigns "[suffer] from an inability to connect to local audiences [due to] a lack of understanding of Philippine society."

Additionally, posts supportive of China are "undercut" by the Philippine media outlets' coverage of maritime incidents in the contested waters, the study found.

"As a case in point, Philippine outlets regularly post videos of aggressive maneuvers by the PRC's People's Liberation Army Navy to assert Beijing's claims in the South China Sea that garner hundreds of thousands of social media views," the study said.

The Marcos administration launched in 2023 its assertive transparency initiative, which involves the regular documentation and publication of China's aggressive actions within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

Maritime experts and observers have deemed the initiative a success while keeping a close eye on how it will impact the country's economic relations with China.

Local media a blind spot

However, China has also taken even more subtle approaches to plant positive media coverage of its infrastructure projects in the Philippines, a large number of which were launched under former President Rodrigo Duterte, according to the study.

While Chinese firms are heavily involved in Beijing-backed development projects in the Philippines, the Chinese government's prefers to paint these investments as locally-led initiatives.

Infrastructure projects like the Kaliwa Dam and Chico River Pump Irrigation Project — which drew backlash from environmental and indigenous groups — "were

presented as responsive to the Duterte administration's national development agenda, even as they were heavily funded and implemented by Chinese firms under the [Belt and Road Initiative]."

This allows Beijing to obscure its "footprint" on its infrastructure projects in the Philippines and shift any blame for issues like delays or cost overruns onto Filipinos, the study said.

"Interviewees particularly pointed to this pattern as most prominent in the framing of PRC-backed infrastructure projects during the Duterte administration," the study read.

Meanwhile, local Filipino media outlets struggling to turn a profit may have contributed to this framing.

Based on interviews, the researchers said the prospect of higher wages and professional development opportunities offered by China-funded media outlets may appeal strongly to cash-strapped journalists.

"Economic hardships can render local outlets more vulnerable to external influences, including those from PRC-backed entities, subtly favoring Chinese firms by minimizing their involvement in problematic aspects of the projects," the study said.

As a result, news stories favorable to Chinese projects "flooded" the news landscape, and "disagreeable voices are drowned out," it added.

But more direct attempts to feed content to Philippine media outlets do not always guarantee success as public sentiment remains firmly against China in the Philippines.

Researchers noted that even as Chinese state media signed 12 content-sharing partnerships with Philippine media outlets from 2000 to 2023, these have not translated to positive coverage.

## SHOWBIZ from page 26

"Personal po kasi masyado eh. Hindi na rin po para malaman ng tao, ng buong sambayanan, kung ano 'yung nangyari. Basta ako, alam ko po sa sarili ko, sa puso ko na napatawad ko sila and inamin ko sa sarili ko na nagkamali ako," he said.

"Kinarma na ako, kasi mali nga naman na sagutin mo sila nang ganu'n. Syempre, emosyonal ka na po eh. Gusto mo ipaglaban 'yung sarili mo and relationship nyo," continued Yulo without delving too deep into the details.

Despite this, Yulo said he would rather choose to stay faithful to God, noting that it was because of his faith that led him to achieve milestones as a gymnast and to people who truly love him.

He also did not explain what mistake he was referring to and what kind of "karma" he dealt with.

However, it would be recalled that following his historic win at the Paris Olympic, he suffered public backlash after he and San

Jose spoke up against his mother, Angelica.

Angelica, too, had her fair share of criticism, for her lack of support for Yulo at the height of his Olympics campaign and verbal attack on Yulo and his girlfriend, who was with him in Paris.

According to Yulo, his mother used to handle his financial affairs, until he found out about her alleged

undisclosed withdrawals and mishandling of his savings.

He made the public know about this through a social media post, with San Jose beside him.

San Jose was then asked by Gonzaga if Yulo's family problems were painful to her as well. She shared that it was, as it reminded her of her own problems with her family.

"Siyempre, nasasaktan po ako kasi it happened to me. I know how it feels like na your own blood is putting you down, hindi naniniwala sa'yo," she said. "Yeah, fam-



ily first. Pero your family should be the first one na sinusupportahan ka, pinoprotektahan ka. So why is it the opposite?"

Without disclosing any names, San Jose said the thought of a family putting someone down "doesn't make sense" for her, knowing that they should love unconditionally.

"Sila 'yung nauunang mag-down sa'yo. Sila 'yung una na hindi naniwala sa'yo. Why is that? Parang sa'kin po, [it] doesn't make sense, or hindi po nagtutugma 'yung family first dapat. Family should be the first ones to love you and support you unconditionally," she said.

Sofronio Vasquez wows 'The Voice' US coaches

Filipino singer wows 'The Voice' US coaches, gets four-chair turn

Filipino singer Sofronio Vasquez. Image: screengrab from YouTube/The Voice

Filipino singer Sofronio Vasquez, a "Tawag ng Tanghalan" alum, was able to get a four-chair turn during the blind auditions of the American reality competition "The Voice."

Vasquez earned praises from show coaches Snoop Dogg, Michael Bubl , Reba McEntire and Gwen Stefani who all turned their chairs just seconds into the singer's performance of Mary J. Blige's "I'm Goin' Down."

The four coaches even gave the singer a standing ovation after his performance.

"I could not hit my button fast enough," McEntire told Vasquez. "Your voice is like butter. It is so easy on the ears, but your soulfulness touches my heart. You got the whole package."

Stefani then followed and described Vasquez's audition piece as a "Grammy performance."

"It felt like somebody that knows God gave him the gift, and they're just trying to get on this stage to show everybody," she added.

Bubl , for his part, was teary-eyed as he thanked Vasquez using the Filipino language. "I want to start by saying 'salamat' because the relationship I've had with the Philippines for so many years makes me love you even more."

Vasquez was then urged by Snoop Dogg to join his team, with the latter flaunting his achievements from signing with a record label to owning the said label.

Vasquez chose Buble as his coach.

Former actress Aya Medel bares past battle with brain aneurysm.



Aya Medel, a former actress best known as the "Papaya Queen" in the 1990s, revealed that she's a survivor of brain aneurysm, while thanking God for "another chance to live."

The actress-turned-chef recalled her bout with brain aneurysm on Facebook on Sept. 21.

Her post contained photos of herself being confined at the Cardinal Santos Hospital in San Juan, and enjoying a visit at a high-end restaurant in Pasay.

"I am back... Many people are wondering what happened to me, why suddenly I stopped posting, and talking to people, and I was gone for months. Yes! I had a brain aneurysm, but I survived," she wrote.

Medel considered herself as one of the "lucky few" who survived the condition while acknowledging God for her "second chance" at life.

"I know that I am one of the lucky few, and the day-to-day isn't always so easy. But I planned to live my life to the very fullest. My heart is filled with gratitude. Thank you to all of you. Thank you, Lord, for giving me another chance to live. And yes, I am back," she said.

A brain aneurysm is caused by a bulged-out artery in the brain which puts pressure on the nerves and brain tissue, per the US' National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

This leads to hemorrhagic stroke, coma, and death.

Medel started her entertainment career as a model before starring in sexy films.



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