



DECEMBER 2025

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CANADA-PHL VFA SIGNED

China cautions Philippines and Canada over new defense deal

The Philippines and Canada signed a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA)

on Sunday, with the defense ministers of both countries committing to deter instabil-

ity and uphold order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Defense Secretary Gilber-

to Teodoro Jr. and Canadian Minister of National Defense David McGuinty signed the

agreement following their bi-lateral meeting.

CANADA-PHILIPPINES page 20



Floresita Ygrubay listens to Rianneh Greeley 's greeting as she celebrates her 60th birthday.

U of T grad from the Philippines aims to reframe medicine as a social movement

Sam Soriano's interest in public health and community engagement was sparked by a dengue fever crisis in the Philippines

Born and raised in the Philippines, Sam Soriano's path to the University of Toronto began with a national health crisis in his home country.

In 2017, a national immunization campaign against dengue fever was suspended after the vaccine was blamed for the deaths

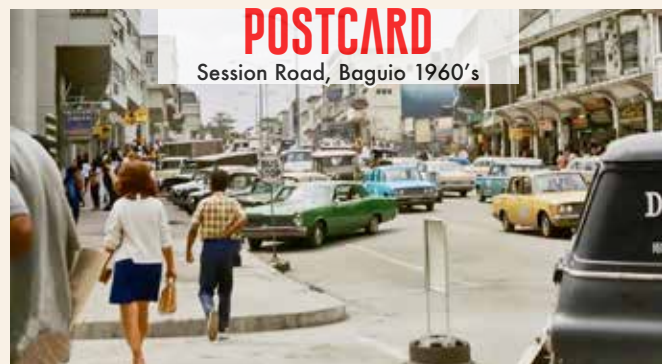
of several children.

The controversy was followed by a rise in dengue infection rates – with the Philippines declaring a national epidemic – and cited as a factor in eroding public trust in immunization programs.

“It made me sad and scared to think that the deaths were caused by miscommunication, the misrepresentation of data and the politicization of vaccines and healthcare,” Soriano says.

The episode sparked an interest in public health

SAM SORIANO page 6



Canadian denied entry into U.S. 'Felt like a bit of abuse of power'

TORONTO - A 20-year-old Canadian booked to fly south to visit her grandparents was recently refused entry into the United States by American customs officers at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

With a look of bewilderment on her face, Julia, who has asked us not to share her last name, told CTV National News that customs officers thought that she was

“illegally immigrating to the U.S.”

“It felt like a bit of abuse of power, honestly,” said her mother Kate, who was shocked to receive a phone

CANADA-PHL page 8

Filipino Centre Toronto Conducts Free Seniors Wellness Services

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

TORONTO - The Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT), a prominent community hub, was the focal point of a remarkable community gathering for seniors and adults on Sunday, November 2, 2025. Over 100 Filipino-

Canadians from different walks of life took the opportunity of enjoying a full day of free health wellness offerings.

In a milestone partnership with the Mt. Zion

WELLNESS Page 3

Why Amanda Page quit showbiz

Popular '90s actress Amanda Page revealed why she left showbiz despite her popularity in a talk with Boy Abunda.

What was the most painful and most intense intrigue that she experienced in showbiz.

Amanda said that she was involved in a sex video scandal that made her quit showbiz in 2001.

"Allegedly, I was in a sex video. I think that one was the most painful because I think because it almost as if like, schadenfreude people want to believe the worst about someone," she said.

"And so, I felt like I wasn't even given an opportunity really because it's always like whatever's negative out there is what people will always believe," she added.

She also said that she never saw herself getting old in the showbiz industry.

"Feeling ko when I was in showbiz, that was never going to be my endgame. I always had a different endgame. The endgame was that I was not going to grow old in showbiz," she said.

Amanda also thanked three individuals who she believes gave her her big break.



"First, obviously, Boss Vic (del Rosario) of Viva Films because he gave me my first break. Second, I would have to say Maribeth Bichara because she's been my mentor for so long, and I got to do

what I love because of her — and actually have fun doing it," she said.

"Third, I would have to say maybe Fernando Poe Jr. I think I really enjoyed the time I had working with him, and the break I got from... you know, just being able to work with him," she added.

Honey Shot

Hailey, 12, goes to St. Andrew Catholic school. Her favourite sports is volleyball. She enjoys playing video games. Unlike most teens, she prefers staying home than going to the mall. She does like spending time with her friends. As a student of Marky Hugh Productions, she loves singing, acting and dancing. As to what she wants to be in the future, she wants to be a chef, or a teacher or a police officer. Whatever she wants to be, we wish her all the luck in her future.



Hailey Yarra

Remitly, GCash and Filipino Centre Toronto Sponsor Community Christmas Event

Two notable money transfer service companies in Canada, Remitly and GCash, in cooperation and collaboration with the

Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT), a prominent Filipino Canadian community hub in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), On-

tario, remarkably offered and proudly presented the "Paskuhan sa Komunidad 2025" (Christmas in the Community) on

November 23, 2025 (Sunday), from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm., at the FCT Main Hall, **REMITLY CHRISTMAS page 9**



FROM LEFT, Rose To, MP Vince Gasparro, FV Foods Mel Galeon, MP Assistant Manny Gutierrez; FCT's Nitz Rejdik, Mary Ann San Juan; Emcee Dong Sabanal and Remitly's Mario Marasigan; FCT Ukulele ensemble; Dong Sabanal's student singer Cheska Lungayan

FCT Honours 5 Fil-Can Outstanding Student Graduates

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

The Filipino Centre Toronto-FCT, a prominent 25-year-old community-based, service-focused & volunteer-run hub in the GTA, has aptly recognised and honoured 5 top student graduates during its 20th “Annual Rosalinda C. Javier Outstanding Students Awards Day” (RCJOSA) on November 30, 2025(Sunday), 2-4 PM, at the FCT Social Hall, Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario. Celebrated yearly, the competition aims to encourage and challenge students to achieve academic excellence and to recognise exemplary school performance.

The honourees completed their respective elementary, high school and post-secondary studies with distinctions during the school year of 2024-2025. Given awards weRe Grade 8 graduates Khryzian Escosio of St. Anne Catholic Academy-TCDSB, and Micaela Wong of Somerset Academy-Markham; Grade 12 graduate Nicolas Manlapaz of St. Brother Andre Catholic High



School-YCDSB; and under the Post-Secondary category Mark Dennis Guevarra, With Honours, Advertising and Graphic Design at Humber Polytechnic and Kiana Crystal Craig, Summa Cum Laude, BA in Economics at McMaster University who was adjudged the “Most Outstanding Post-Secondary Honouree”.

All the 5 top graduates each received a Plaque of Recognition from the Filipino Centre Toronto, cash prizes from generous donors., and Congratulatory Certificates from 5 Members of Parliament and five Members of

Provincial Parliament. Among the individual donors were Ah-sanul Hafiz, Alvine Marasigan Flor, Dr. Nennete De Villa and Theresa Lumanlan. The corporate sponsors include Remitly, Domino's Pizza, Kapisanan for Arts & Culture and The Danielle Moore Resilience Award.

The popular awards program, which started in 2005, has already presented a total of 161 recipients under the 3 categories in the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. Selected by a panel of judges, the proud awardees have been extraordinarily qualified and satisfied the

4 main criteria: Average Grades -50%; Extracurricular Activities-15%; Community Involvement - 15%; and Interview Performance -20%.

The FCT-RCJOSA Committee is composed of Chairman Tony A. San Juan-founding chair of the Filipino Heritage Council of Canada); Co-Chair Mary Ann S. San Juan- President & CEO of Filipino Centre Toronto, and Members Fermer Santos -Vice-Principal of Sir William Osler High School,TDSB and Juanita Rejdik, Proprietor of Sandbanks Cottage Campsite and Rentals-Ontario.

The Event's Guest of Honour & Keynote Speaker was Mr. Karlo Cabrera, Centrally Assigned Principal-TDSB. Philippine Deputy Consul General in Toronto, Hon. Kerwin Tate gave his greetings and the Philippine Consul General in Toronto K.L. R. Salle, as well. Toronto educator and entrepreneur, Ms. Mary Ann Gaytano-Santos delivered her inspirational speech.

FCT president & CEO Mary Ann S. San Juan, FCT Treasurer Wendy Arena, FCT Directors Frank Cruzet, and Philip Beloso made the Welcome Address,

STUDENTS page 21

What Mika Salamanca, Brent Manalo learned from Vice Ganda, Nadine Lustre

Mika Salamanca and Brent Manalo confirmed that they have done filming the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2025 entry “Call Me Mother,” adding that working with Vice Ganda and Nadine Lustre was an unforgettable experience.

The “Pinoy Big Brother: Celebrity Collab Edition” alums are part of the cast of “Call Me Mother,” a comedy-drama film that tells the story of Twinkle (Vice) and Mara (Lustre) in a clash over who has the right to be the mother to Angel.

“Sobrang saya, parang naglalaro na lang kami sa set. Nakakalimutan ko minsan na part pala ako ng ekse-na kasi kapag kasama ko sina Meme (It was so fun, it's like we're playing on the set. We sometimes forgot that we were doing our scenes when I was with Vice),” Manalo told reporters on the sidelines of a Jollibee Christmas event in Pasig.

Salamanca echoed her co-duo's remarks, saying, “Sobrang gaan nila katrabaho. Inalalayan po nila kami (They were so easy to work with. They helped us around),” she said.

When asked what they learned from Vice and Lustre, the pair shared that the film's lead stars taught them the importance of working hard and savoring each moment at the same time.

“Kaya naman pala maging sobrang gaan na set. Most of the time kasi, puro pagod and umaabot na ang init ng ulo pero sa experience namin sa set, wala talaga (You can work hard on set, and still have an easy time. Most of the time, people would often get tired and allow their frustration to get the best of them. But on the set, we never felt that),” he said.

Salamanca added that even though some scenes took four hours to shoot, it felt like no time passed.

“Kada sequence, umaabot kami ng apat na oras pero hindi namin nararamdaman ‘yun. Magugulat kami, gabi na. Pumapasok kami sa set ng



(From left) Mika Salamanca, Brent Manalo, Vice Ganda and Nadine Lustre are part of the 2025 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry “Call Me Mother.”

But we never felt it,” she said.

The MMFF 2025 film is one of the many blessings that Salamanca and Manalo have been enjoying since their successful stint on “Pinoy Big Brother.” A lot of work has been laid on their plates, including new projects, endorsements and other pursuits, but they are grateful for every opportunity.

“Nagpapasalamat po kami sa napakaraming blessings. Ngayon, tinatry namin na i-balance lahat but we're so

grateful. Lagi pa rin akong nao-overwhelm sa saya, binabalik ko sa mga tao ang suporta at pagmamahal nila,” she said.

Meanwhile, Manalo added that he is taking things one day at a time.

“We think about taking things one day at a time kasi ayokong ma-stress. But I'm very grateful for all the blessings. I always taught myself to be grateful and huwag pumunta sa ulo [ang

success],” he said. “Super daming nagbago. Siguro bibilangin ko na lang sa kamay ko ‘yung days na nakikita ko pamilya ko, pero importante sa'min na [mag-communicate] kahit malayo kami sa isa't isa.”

The film also stars “Pinoy Big Brother” alums Esnyr, Klarisse De Guzman, Shuvee Etrata and Lucas Andalio.

Filipino Centre Toronto Conducts Free Seniors Wellness Services

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

WELLNESS from page 1

Filipino Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Filipino Achievers Club(FAC), the notable community centre collaboratively conducted the successful maiden program, “Free Seniors Wellness Day-2025” from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. at the FCT Main Hall, at 4395 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough, Toronto.

Under the admirable leadership of FCT's Mary Ann San Juan, Nitz Abalos-Rejdik, Thess Lumanlan, and Frank Cruzet, and their Mt. Zion 7th Day Adventist Church's counterparts, the participants enthusiastically joined and savoured the “ex-gratia” wellness services proficiently delivered by the officers, members, and volunteers of the Mt. Zion Filipino Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Filipino Achievers Club.

Among the personal services rendered were Facial, Foot Spa, Hair Styling, Hair Cutting, Manicure, Massage for Male and Massage for Female and pre-health basic screening. Other noteworthy activities included the distribution of faith- based literature and

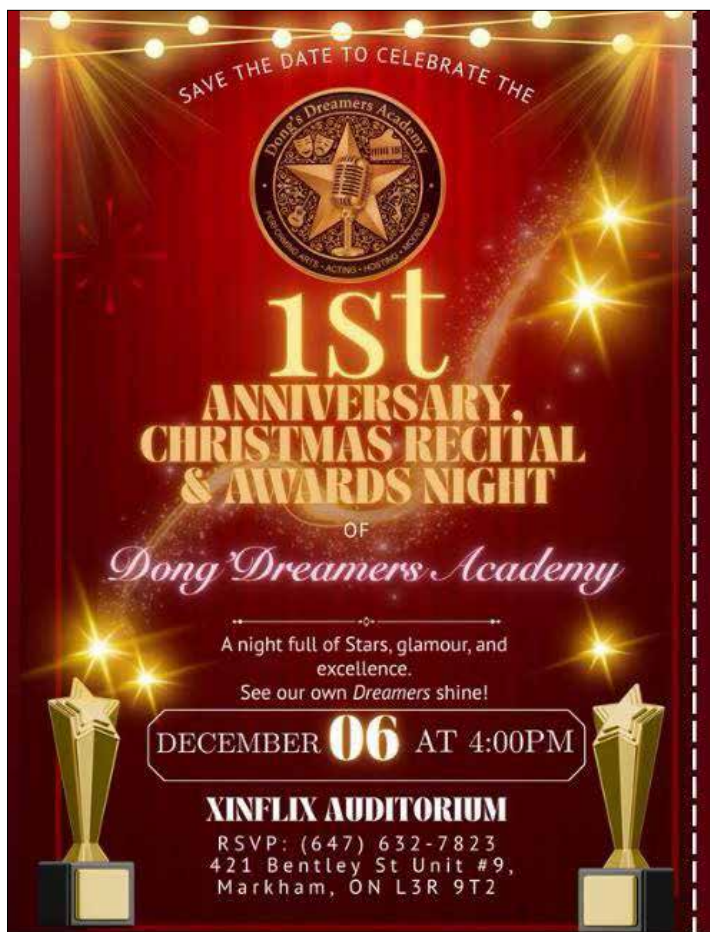
invitations to become “FCT lifetime members” of the 25-year old community hub. For lunch, the attendees were generously treated with pancit, chicken afritada, arroz caldo, ensaymada, mixed fruits, sweets, suman, coffee, and drinks.

The wonderful service providers and facilitators were Maria Lani Aguinaldo, Alona Alba, Daizy



Aure, Jezreel Aure, Salome Becera, Evelyn Boldoken, Don Bughao, Estelle Bughao, Jose Egca, Nennice Guibert, Amy Herbito, Elsa

WELLNESS page 11





🤪 Ford to ban Property taxes & Hydro Bills? 🤪

Ford to ban Property taxes and Hydro Bills

"They're cash grabs, pure and simple." The cities and towns that want to keep the cameras are "greedy," Premier Doug Ford said, because if they actually wanted to deter speeders they would put in speed bumps and roundabouts on problematic roads. "We know speed cameras do not work," he said.

People disagreed with him banning speed cameras but his other planned bans is getting a resounding approval. Property taxes and hydro bills are becoming a cash grab. Ford, known for giving taxpayers a break is going to table a legislation eliminating property taxes and hydro bills. Just like speed cameras "The only thing proven is that they take money out of taxpayers' pockets," the premier claimed, he believes in giving relief to taxpayers.

He also plans to scrap Ontario taxation. So, when you file your income taxes next year, it will be smaller because the part where you calculate your Ontario tax will not be there anymore. No more Ontario share of the taxes.

Don't you just love our premier? 🤪

Where are you Christmas?

Why can't I find you? In the Philippines, our country of endless, non-stop marathon of government corruption, typhoons, floods, earthquake, grinding poverty, non-existent government medical care, soaring crime, painful injustice where the rich get away and only the poor get punished, uncaring politicians, tragedy after tragedy is where you'll find Christmas. If may not be the ultimate in irony, but it will definitely be near the top. The moment September 1 hits, radio stations start playing Christmas carols. In fact, the un-official beautiful pop star, singer, and Christmas season dictator Mariah Carey declares that Filipinos can sing Christmas carols starting September. The rest of the world will have to wait until November. She made an exemption for Filipinos because she noticed her Christmas song trends upwards in the Philippines on spotify starting September. However, the company running a military village in

Florida ordered houses to remove Christmas decors outside their houses before November 25. Apparently, you can only put them up outside the house 30 days from the date of the holiday which would make it allowable to put decors outside starting November 25.

There was no mention if some of the houses in the village were owned by Filipinos. 🤪

We've lost that Christmas feeling

It's so hard to be Christmas-y in Canada when the very thought of Christmas seems to put Canadians ill at ease. It's as if they are anticipating war instead of a season of happiness that we Filipinos associate it with. We don't greet each other Merry Christmas until it's really Christmas. In fact, the very first person who greeted me Merry Christmas was Kim Escano last November 7 at the birthday of Agnes Miranda. It's easy to remember because he's the only one who's greeted me Merry Christmas so far.

Anyway, Merry Christmas everybody. 🤪

It's Christmastime, what's the headline?

I may be the only one with a dilemma with what headline to use for a December issue. Beside the newspaper name, I put the Christmas greetings. Below that, I put the headline. It's one of those dilemmas I have where I worry about putting a gruesome headline after greeting reader merry Christmas. It is not easy. The reason it's called news is because it is

something that happens out of the ordinary, therefore, it is different. Ordinary is waking up, eating, dressing up, going to work, going home, eating, watching TV, going to seep and doing it again. It's almost groundhog day where nothing changes. It's routine. News is if an airplane crash-lands on your house, or a break and enter, murder, assault in your neighbourhood, your country or the world or anything tragic or anything that makes the world worry.

So, I have to settle for something that is worrying but not tragic or gruesome. No news of murders or assault in the headline for the issue of December. 🤪

Being good looking, a blessing & a curse 🤪

So says GMA7reporter Atom Araullo. I sympathize with you bro. I know the feeling. It's not easy being good looking. People think that we just get by on looks alone. It's not true. We have to maintain this physique to go with our looks. How many hours do you spend exercising? We have to exercise because you can't just let your body get fat. If you don't exercise, you get fat, and your face gets bloated too. You also have to eat healthy. Meat companies lose money because good-looking people avoid meat. You should avoid smoking and don't drink too much. Otherwise, your face will age quickly. Thankfully there's not a lot of us good-looking people or meat, tobacco, and alcohol-related companies will go bankrupt. Ehe, ano baiton pinagsasabi ko. Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya. 🤪🤪🤪

The Vocal Groove Collective joins Music & Memories Concert by Rodney Ronquillo

TORONTO - As the Vocal Groove Collective, we had the incredible honour to have been invited to perform at this historic celebration of Original Pilipino Music, sharing the stage with the legendary members of Hotdog – Mon Torralba, Ella Del Rosario, Lorrie Ilustre (founder of OPM and Manila Sound), and Jess Garcia. Seeing these icons reunited after five decades of taking different paths was an unforgettable moment in OPM history.

The concert was a celebration of Ninong Mon's career and journey as a Musician, Songwriter/Composer, Producer, Visionary and Music Director (and much more)

The evening also celebrated Tito Mon Torralba's birthday, adding an extra layer of meaning and joy to this already memorable event.

The concert featured an outstanding lineup of performers, including Rhett Dela Cruz, Alyssa Grace, Maria



Theresa Panaligan, and Pitch Perfect, each bringing their own artistry and presence to this milestone night.

In addition, Vocal Groove Collective had another incredible honour of accompanying Chris Newman, lead

frontman of the Keep the Faith Bon Jovi Tribute Band, by providing backing vocals during his performance. This was another highlight for the VGC and an unforgettable moment.

On stage, Vocal Groove Collective was proudly represented by Pabs, Bevs, Chy, and Rod, who performed on behalf of the group.

Behind the scenes, JR and Ryan Orlanda supported production logistics, while Rodney Ronquillo contributed extensive visual creative work, including multimedia, VFX, animation, and graphic design, helping bring the show's visuals and atmosphere to life. We are deeply proud of how our team came together both onstage and offstage.

MUSIC page 14

Angel Locsin has an appeal as stepson joins new season of 'PBB Celebrity Collab Edition'

Actress Angel Locsin appealed to the public to be more understanding of her stepson Joaquin Arce following his appearance in the latest edition of "Pinoy Big Brother: Celebrity Collab Edition 2.0."

The actress, who is in showbiz hiatus, took to the X (formerly Twitter) platform to raise awareness about his condition, saying that he is "completely deaf in his right ear."

Angel reposted a post by the account of the television series that featured Joaquin in the right picture.

She then said how "proud" she is of her stepson, who became a Star Magic talent last July.

"I don't usually comment, but seeing Joaquin grow from a little boy into someone who helps, listens, and keeps the peace at home makes me proud," the actress said with a heart emoji.

"If he ever talks a bit loud or doesn't respond, please forgive him — our son is completely deaf in his right ear," she added.

Her post has earned 19,000 likes, 1,000 reposts, and 92 replies from Filipinos, with some noting that she has been occasionally active on social media due to her stepson.

"Si Joaquin Arce pala ang susi sa pagiging active ni Angel sa social media," someone wrote with emojis of heart-eyed and starry-eyed faces.

"Ms. Angel always speaking up for others," another user commented.

"Thank you for this Darna, now we understand," commented a different Pinoy, referencing one of Angel's most iconic roles in her career. In 2005, she starred on GMA's television series featuring the Pinoy superheroine.

Joaquin recently joined "PBB" for its new season.

He is the son of Angel's husband, film producer Neil Arce, in his previous relationship.

Star Magic described Joaquin as "an actor and host in the making."

Angelica Panganiban returns to acting with 'UnMarry'

Angelica Panganiban makes her major comeback in the MMFF entry 'UnMarry' opposite Zanjoe Marudo after overcoming a three-year break and a serious health challenge

What drew her back to the screen?

"Well, my life really changed," Angelica shared. "It became more real. I've been experiencing a lot of changes these past years due to my being a homemaker. So, when I decided to come back to acting, I had to get back to past emotions, which I would need to deliver in the role assigned to me. I can say that it's still a different high. It still feels good to do something you're very passionate about. At the end of the day, you feel tired but fulfilled."

Despite marrying Gregg Homan a few years ago, Angelica said leaving acting never crossed her mind. "First, I got pregnant with my daughter, Amila Sabine, and I just wanted to focus on motherhood. Imagine I've been working since I was six years old. When I was given the precious opportunity to become a mother, I devoted my time to it. But retiring from acting? Never."

Her planned return last year was stalled by a serious health challenge. Angelica was diagnosed with Avascular Necrosis. "Gradually, my health deteriorated, and that's why my comeback was delayed," she explained.

Looking back, she admits she missed the craft. "I felt envious of other stars doing projects. There was always that longing. When I recovered and started receiving offers again, I waited for the right project. I wanted to give my hundred percent and not regret it later. UnMarry proved to

be that project."

Angelica credits her husband for his unwavering

support. "Gregg is very understanding. I couldn't ask for more."

Join us!

MOVIE NIGHT

Pajama Party!

31

January 2026
7:00pm

Forget Me Not Screening
1320 Ellesmere Road, Unit 8
Scarborough, On

647-403-8887

Kids can bring sleeping bags, pillows & blankets

\$30/person

PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Glimpses On Significant Developments In The Philippines



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Changing Filipino Relationship Commitments.

In a recent report by the Philippine Commission on Population and Development (CPD), it pointed out that there is “a quiet yet sweeping transformation in how Filipinos define commitment, family, and stability.” Key trends from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) civil registration vital statistics data showed that “more Filipinos are skipping the altar, and it’s not a passing trend. The trend reflects deep social changes: “more couples are living together without marrying, more children are being born outside of wedlock, and more young Filipinos say marriage can wait or may not happen at all.” CPD Executive Director Undersecretary Lisa Grace S. Bersales said, “Economic realities contribute heavily to this trend, particularly among young and low-income Filipinos. Factors such as the high cost of weddings, lack of familial support, or the absence of legal options, particularly for marginalised groups, frequently lead couples to delay or forego marriage altogether. The CPD also noted that more personal and social factors increasingly shape the choice to cohabit. These include “romantic motivations, such as the desire to test compatibility before committing; premarital pregnancy, which often hastens union without formal marriage; and childhood or past trauma, which can make individuals wary of formal marital structures.” The report further cited logistical barriers, like living far from parents or religious institutions; influences from social media, which normalise non-traditional relationships; and contradictions in religious teachings, where spiritual beliefs sometimes



Manila’s Street Vending Culture

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno’s street clean-up policy, some 4 months ago, cleared the city’s main roads to make way for pedestrians and cars. The drive was part of a broader wave of clearing operations sweeping through Manila, “to reclaim pavements has pushed vendors into side streets and stirred debate over their place in the urban landscape.”

Critics argue that the directive is car-centric and economically damaging, and has pushed vendors to low-traffic side streets, where their sales have collapsed. While other Southeast Asian capitals have turned street vendors into tourist draws and pillars of local food culture, the Philippines has never built the infrastructure, policies or public attitudes needed for such a system to thrive in most urban centres.

Instead, vendors here remain in a constant cycle of displacement and return, tolerated but rarely integrated. The deeper reason for the Philippines’ absence of a hawker tradition lies in cultural perception.

“Filipinos have this perception

that street food is dirty”, and “street food cooking is associated with poverty and poor sanitation.”

One idea floated in Manila’s long-running debate is to designate a single street as a permanent food bazaar, where hawkers can operate legally under a unified system of regulation, sanitation and order. The one-street solution looks promising, but Manila’s scale makes it difficult to implement.

The capital has some 50,000 registered vendors – a number that does not include the “snipers”, or unlicensed sellers who set up briefly to avoid arrest. Concentrating them into one area, it is argued, would be unmanageable without constant enforcement, adequate space and sustained political will.

“Talagang naiinggit tayo sa gina-wa nila sa Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, at Hong Kong, kung saan may maayos silang food bazaars. Bakit hindi natin magawa ang pareho sa Maynila? Sana balang araw magawa rin natin iyan sa Pilipinas, ano! Sana nga, pero” (TONY SAN JUAN)

clash with lived realities. “Bagama’t ang pag-aasawa ay patuloy na may

kahalagahan sa kultura sa Pilipinas, ito ay lalong tinitingnan, lalo na ng mga nakababatang henerasyon, bilang isang personal na desisyon sa halip na isang inaasahang milestone sa buhay. Tama o mali ba?”

Underground Electric Power Lines.

Meralco, the country’s electric utility giant, is reportedly taking its electric power lines underground in Metro Manila. Froilan Savet, Meralco Networks Head, as reported in the Philippine Star, said: “Meralco plans to remove unsightly power lines across that have long marred tourist spots. He said, “These power lines may soon vanish as Meralco intends to install 1,500 circuit kilometres of underground systems within its franchise area to enhance network resiliency and eliminate tangled overhead power and telecommunications lines.” The company has identified sites for underground cabling, particularly the financial district, commercial centres, heritage sites, tourist spots, and, importantly for resiliency, locations frequently hit by typhoons.” Asked about the timeline, Savet stated that the initiative is slated for rollout by 2030, subject to obtaining right-of-way clearances from local government units and other relevant agencies. In terms of investment, the Meralco official said the company is projected to spend 10 times more on implementing underground cabling compared to overhead power lines. “Kahit ang mga gawaing sibil ay nagdudulot ng mga hamon sa mga lugar na madaling bahain, ang underground na paglalagay ng kable ay nag-aalok ng mga pangmatagalang benepisyo para sa mga mamimili dahil ito ay hindi gaanong madaling maapektuhan ng mga pagkagambala mula sa malakas na hangin, bagyo at mga aksidenteng gawa ng tao kumpara sa mga overhead na linya. Sana ay magkatotoo ito.”

Darren Espanto comments on content creator who ambushed Ariana Grande at ‘Wicked: For Good’ premiere

Singer-actor Darren Espanto reacted to an Australian content creator who posted a video breaching security and ambushing “Wicked” star Ariana Grande at a yellow carpet premiere.

The Pinoy celebrity was among those who met the “Wicked” stars in person in Singapore during the Asia premiere of the sequel, “Wicked: For Good,” on November 13.

He also had the opportunity to watch an advanced screening of the fantasy musical.

But the Asia premiere was not without an incident. The content creator, Johnson Wen, was spotted breaching security by jumping over a barricade, running toward Ariana, and putting an arm around her while jumping.

Cynthia Erivo, Ariana’s co-star, quickly stepped in to defend the “eternal sunshine” singer by prying the individual away from her.

Johnson, who calls himself “Pyjama Man” online, later posted a video of the incident and thanked Ariana despite having ambushed her.

“Dear Ariana Grande, thank you for letting me jump on the yellow carpet with you,” he wrote in an Instagram Reel with a heart emoji.

The content creator also tagged Ariana’s account.

The post has so far garnered over 5,500 likes and 19,700 comments, including one from Darren.



Darren Espanto with Ariana Grande in “Wicked: For Good’s” Asia premiere in Singapore in this photo posted on his Instagram on Nov. 15, 2025 (darrenespanto via Instagram)

“You’re the reason why we get less appearances in Asia,” he commented on November 14.

Darren was referring to red carpet premieres on the continent.

His comment was liked by over 9,800 users, who agreed with him in the replies section. “Agreee, tapos proud siya, wtf. Dapat diyan bina-ban na sa ganyang events and concerts,” another online user wrote.

“THANK YOU FOR SAYING, I’M SO SO UPSET,” a different Instagram user commented.

Reports said Johnson was sentenced to 9 days in jail on November 17 in Singapore for public nuisance.

Before the event, he posted an Instagram Story of himself saying, “That’s my best friend, Ariana Grande,”

and that he had dreamed of meeting her.

Johnson was reported to have a history of disrupting high-profile events, including concerts by Katy Perry, The Chainsmokers and The Weeknd. He also reportedly ran on the field during the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup and attempted to invade a track event during the 2024 Summer Olympics.

Meanwhile, “Wicked: For Good” is the second part of the “Wicked” movie adaptations. “Wicked” is the big-screen adaptation of the hit musical of the same name.

The musical is loosely adapted from Gregory Maguire’s 1995 novel “Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West,” which in itself is based on L. Frank Baum’s 1900 novel, “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,” and its 1939 film adaptation.

SexBomb Aira, Aifha react to comparison with BINI as ‘Nation’s Girl Group’

SexBomb dancers Aira Bermudez and Aifha Medina earned praises when they shared their honest thoughts on who deserves the “Nation’s Girl Group” title between them and P-pop group BINI.

The two members of the popular 2000s sing-and-dance group sat with Boy Abunda, where they were asked the nagging question by fans of Filipino girl groups.



“Madalas ikinu-compara kayo sa BINI. May netizen na nagsabi, mas deserve niyo raw ang titulong ‘Nation’s Girl Group.’ You are the pillars of P-pop. Reaksyon?” Boy read a question from a popular online forum.

Aira said that they deserve to be tagged with the title at their peak, but BINI is currently having their time as the most popular girl group.

“Siguro noong time namin, deserve namin. Pero time ng BINI ngayon, we have to respect that,” Aira said.

“Parang lahat tayo may timing sa buhay. Saka nire-represent nila ‘yung country natin so we have to be proud,” she added.

Aifha agreed, “Ibigay na natin sa kanila ‘yon. Hindi po kami nakikipag-compete.”

The SexBomb Girls are set to reunite for their two-night concert “Get Get Aw! The Sexbomb Concert” on December 4 in Araneta Coliseum and December 9 in Mall of Asia Arena

Kris Aquino calls herself 'probinsyana' as she relocates with sons



Showbiz personality Kris Aquino shared that she is now a “probinsyana” after previously hinting at relocating to a new place.

The “Queen of All Media” shared a photo, November 5, of herself eating a meal with her children, Joshua and Bimby, at a table beside her bed.

She said that they are “learning to be a nuclear family” despite being surrounded by assistants and nurses due to her health condition.

“We set a rule — when it’s dinner time, the [three] of us will eat together and bond like a family... Bawal muna ang gadgets, except to listen to new releases and me asking my [two] favorite nurses, Elle and Kate, to please get me my note pad because there were particular lines in a song I wanted to write to

make sure I remember,” Kris wrote on Instagram.

“Until Bimb asks, ‘Mama, what are you doing?’ I explain. Then he shows me where all lyrics can be found and how I can underline the ones I like to create lyric cards using my favorite overall template. A sad reminder of aging, but a beautiful acceptance that we should always be eager to learn,” she added.

Kris then shared that they will live in the house of her late mother, the former President

Cory Aquino.

“Probinsyana na si KCA and it’s #lovelovelove,” she wrote, referring to her initials, Kris Cojuangco Aquino. The former actress also geotagged her post in Microtel Tarlac.

Tarlac is the home province of the Aquino family.

Meanwhile, Kris’ post has garnered over 25,000 likes and various comments from supporters, who shared heart emojis and encouraging messages, including prayers for her health.

Earlier this month, Kris shared her benchmark of what makes a place prosperous, noting that it

depends on the number of thriving businesses and services readily available to locals.

She then shared that she will be relocating to a new place this month after staying in Metro Manila for most of her life.

Kris also said that she sleeps in the room of her late brother, former president Noynoy Aquino, because it “gets the least amount of light” in the house, making it suitable for her current health condition.

The former actress has been out of the spotlight to prioritize her delicate health as she battles 11 autoimmune conditions.

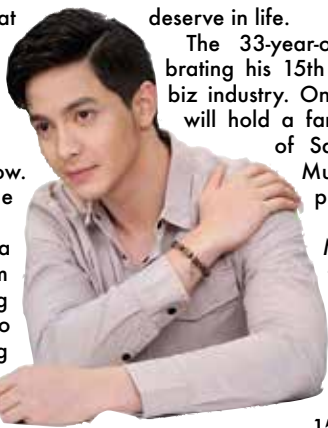
Alden Richards tells his greatest fear in life

The Sparkle actor sat down with Nelson Canlas for the GMA Integrated News interviews and said that he realized his fear just then.

“Siguro my fear is... wow. I might grow old alone,” he said.

“Minsan kasi wala na talaga akong pakialam sa sarili ko eh, mas ‘yung mga importante muna. So ngayon lang siya dumating sa akin. Just now. And I said it. ‘That’s my fear. I might grow old alone and I don’t want that to happen.’”

Alden said he is feeling the pressure that comes with age, but he believes that everyone gets what they



deserve in life.

The 33-year-old actor is celebrating his 15th year in the showbiz industry. On December 13, he will hold a fan meet at the City of Santa Rosa Laguna Multi-Purpose Complex.

Titled “ARXV: Moving ForwARd,” the event will express Alden’s gratitude and appreciation for everyone who has been a part of his 15 years as an actor.

Alden recently hosted the reality dance competition “Stars on the Floor.” He also made his directorial debut this year with the film “Out of Order.”

Kim Chiu explains decision to file qualified theft case vs sister Lakambini Chiu

Kim Chiu said that filing a case against her sister, Lakambini Chiu, is one of the “most painful steps” she has taken in her life.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the actress gave more details on the case she filed at the Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma Hall in the Department of Justice Building in Quezon City.

“After careful consideration and months of internal review, I have made the difficult decision to file a legal case for qualified theft against my sister, Lakambini Chiu, in relation to serious financial discrepancies discovered within my business operations,” Kim said.

“Unfortunately, substantial amounts connected to my business assets were found missing. These discoveries forced me to take formal action to protect not just my compa-



am choosing transparency, responsibility, and accountability—not only for myself, but also for the brand and community that has supported me from the beginning,” she said.

“Despite this painful situation, I remain committed to my work, my supporters, and the continued growth of my business ventures. I also continue to pray for healing and resolution for everyone involved.”

GMA News Online has reached out to Lakambini for a statement and will update this story as soon as we receive it.

ny, but also the livelihoods of the people who work with me and the integrity of everything I have built,” she added.

Kim asked for understanding and respect as her family navigates this “difficult chapter.”

“This is a private family matter that has now become a legal process. I

U of T grad from the Philippines aims to reframe medicine as a social movement

SAM SORIANO from page 1

and medicine and led Soriano to U of T, where he is now graduating with an honours bachelor of science in immunology and health and disease from the Faculty of Arts & Science – a key step toward his ambition of becoming a clinician-scientist.

He says it’s “surreal” to be graduating from U of T given he was on the verge of enrolling in an accelerated medical program in the Philippines. “But when I looked into U of T, I felt as if coming here was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up – the scholarships and the opportunity to gain interdisciplinary training in the scientific and social dimensions of medicine,” says Soriano, a New College member.

The transition wasn’t easy, with Soriano finding it challenging to

juggle academics, extracurriculars and work. “But with lots of support from my mother and younger brother, and with invaluable



Sam Soriano is graduating with a double major in immunology and health and disease from U of T’s Faculty of Arts & Science – a key step toward his ambition of becoming a clinician-scientist (supplied image)

guidance from professors Jasty Singh and Leanne de Souza-Kennedy, it was definitely a stars-aligning kind of experience – and now it feels like it was meant to be,” he says.

Soriano says his upbringing in

the Philippines shaped his understanding of health as a deeply social issue. “Histori-



Sam Soriano is graduating with a double major in immunology and health and disease from U of T’s Faculty of Arts & Science – a key step toward his ambition of becoming a clinician-scientist (supplied image)

cally, the Philippines has had its share of difficulties: civil wars and unrest, social inequality, the vaccine disaster,” he says. “With the latter, I saw how many Filipinos – including myself – were traumatized and became vaccine-hesitant, and easily fell for conspiracies and misinformation.

“Because of that, I’ve come to see how important it is for medicine and science to be more of a social movement rather than an individualistic effort.”

That belief drove Soriano’s determination to blend biology, public health and social elements of health and disease throughout his undergraduate work.

One of his most mean-

ingful experiences came in his fourth year, through the course “Health In Community” taught by Franco Taverna, a professor, teaching stream in the human biology program. Soriano helped develop and pilot a vaccine and health literacy curriculum for Indigenous youth in Thunder Bay, Ont., and taught elementary school students about how microbes spread. “Seeing how receptive the kids were to what we did was very heartwarming,” he says.

The experience drove home the importance of collaborating not only with experts but people in the community. “I’m grateful to [Taverna] because he allowed me to pursue my ideas about what’s missing in healthcare and community.”

Soriano also found ways to connect his academic work with his Filipino heritage. This included contributing to Our Kids Health, a platform that provides evidence-based health information to diverse cultural communities and is co-led by Ripudaman Minhas, director of pediatric research at St. Michael’s Hospital (Unity Health Toronto) and assistant professor of pae-

diatrics in U of T’s Temerty Faculty of Medicine.

“I’ve been working with them to create culturally relevant information materials, to translate this for the Filipino community [and] make the information more accessible for them and create other educational programs,” Soriano says.

“It’s all about decolonizing and decentralizing how health information is shared with different diaspora communities.”

Soriano is now focusing on his role as a research assistant in the lab of Sam Saibil, a staff oncologist at Princess Margaret Cancer Care

I’ve come to see how important it is for medicine and science to be more of a social movement rather than an individualistic effort.”

Centre and assistant professor of immunology at Temerty Medicine, where he’s working on immunometabolism and cell therapeutics.

Reflecting on his undergraduate journey, Soriano says the most important lessons he’s learned are to avoid comparisons with others, trust in your own abilities and follow your own path.

“As an international student coming from the Philippines to U of T, with its reputation, I felt overwhelmed and felt like I was surrounded by so many smart, amazing people doing things I couldn’t even begin to fathom,” he says. “But eventually, after a lot of introspection, persistence and eagerness to learn and grow, I ended up finding and doing what I love.”

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Julie Anne San Jose recalls missed ‘Miss Saigon’ West End callback: ‘Nagkasakit ako!’

Despite being in the music industry for a while now, Julie Anne San Jose admitted that she hasn’t done theater even though many people have been asking her to do it, and the very one time she got close to doing one, the odds were not in her favor.

San Jose shared with the members of the press during the official launch of her latest single “Simula” on Friday, Nov. 28, that there was a time she got a callback to audition for “Miss Saigon” in the West End, but she got too sick to do it.

“I got a callback that time from Miss Saigon. I think it was the same time ‘yon nung ginawa ni ate Rachele Ann [Go] ‘yung Miss Saigon, pero during the audition, nagkasakit ako. So sick. I was bedridden the whole week. Pero sabi ko, baka hindi talaga meant to be ‘to,” she recalled.

The “I’ll Be There” singer said that if the same opportunity comes knocking at her door again, she would love to finally try it.

In 2014, Rachele Ann Go landed her breakthrough role as Gigi Van Tranh in the West End revival of “Miss Saigon.” She later reprised her role on Broadway in 2017.

Meanwhile, despite having her theater dream on hold for now, San Jose has stepped into a new role as producer for her new single “Simula.” She wrote



the song two years ago but only had the courage to release it now.

“Maybe the right timing is really important. I didn’t have the strength at that time. I wrote this because we’re in a transition where the pandemic is the new normal. Of course, we’ve been through a lot before. We have a lot of reflections and thoughts in our lives. At that time, I wasn’t ready to put it out there. And I was really finding the right... In a way, I was still looking for the right ingredients,” she explained when asked why it took her that long to release the music.

San Jose is one of the judges of the seventh season of “The Voice Kids” alongside Billy Crawford, Zack Tabudlo, and Paolo Benjamin and Miguel Benjamin of Ben&Ben.

The “Right Where You Belong” singer also serves as one of the hosts of the reality talent competition show “The Clash,” a role she shares with real-life boyfriend Rayver Cruz.

Sexbomb Girls’ Aifha Medina clarifies no past romance with Derek Ramsay

Sexbomb Girls member Aifha Medina recalled being romantically linked to actor Derek Ramsay some years back, but stressed that there is no truth to this rumor. Medina spoke about this during her “Fast Talk with Boy

Abunda” interview along with fellow Sexbomb Girls member Aira Bermudez on Nov. 27.

The topic was brought up after show host Abunda asked who of them has the most number of exes who are also showbiz personalities. Bermudez pointed at Medina who then said, “Hindi naman po madami, meron lang po.”

Medina did not immediately disclose any names, noting that she is no longer friends with them.

Moving on to a similar topic, Abunda then asked Medina to name those whom she was rumored to be dating but was not true.

“Na-link sa akin? Parang si Derek — ayun ‘yung hindi totoo. ‘Yun po talaga big no-no,” she answered. *(Those who were linked to me? The rumors with Derek, they are not true. That is a big no-no.)*



It can be recalled that Medina and Ramsay were hounded by romance rumors in 2011 after their alleged sighting in Tondo. Both of them denied this at the time. “Hindi po talaga totoo. As in never pa kaming nagkita until now, nang harapan, personal,” she clarified. *(It is really not true. We have never even met in person.)*

Medina and Bermudez are set to reunite with their fellow Sexbomb Girls for a concert in December at the Araneta Coliseum. Ramsay, meanwhile, has been making headlines after his estranged wife Ellen Adarna accused him of infidelity and of gaslighting her. The actress earlier shared she has already moved out of the actor’s home.

Promoting Philippine Arts in Canada

BY PATRICK ALCEDO

November 8 was inspiringly beautiful. Along with Filipino community leaders in the Greater Toronto Area, I had the honour of meeting the new Ambassador of the Philippines to Canada, Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga, for a consultation event. It’s thrilling to know that one of the top priorities of the Philippine Embassy and the Consulate General of the Philippines in Toronto is the promotion of culture and the arts, specifically Philippine dance, in the Canadian diaspora.



From left to right are: Glen Reyes of Breaking Canada, Faye Roncevalles of Folklorico Filipino, Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga, me, and Chelsea Carpio (a fellow Aklanon) of Folklorico as well. Exciting times ahead!



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Book by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty Music by Stephen Flaherty		

Industry leader says tariff pressures are hitting Canadian manufacturing

While U.S. President Donald Trump has lowered tariffs on some grocery items in the United States, relief has yet to reach Canada.

Whether it’s the rising cost of groceries or sweeping job cuts expected in many sectors, tariffs are impacting many aspects of Canadian’s lives. And while things shift slightly South of the border, Canadians are grappling with how to forge forward.

Trump lowers tariffs on beef, coffee, other foods as inflation concerns mount

A member of Mark Carney’s Council on Canada-U.S. relations said that Americans are waking up to the fact that tariffs on imports are consumption taxes, which will put increasing pressure on Trump to deliver.

“When his treasury secretary is spending the week saying we’re going to give everybody \$2,000 back, then they kind of lose the argument that tariffs don’t raise prices,” said Flavio Volpe, who is also the president of the Automotive Parts Manu-

facturer’s Association.

Volpe said it’s not clear whether that will lead to any movement in Canada, particularly when it comes to steel, aluminum and automotive industries.

He explained that 85 per cent of Canadian-made cars are sold to the U.S., which now has to either pay 25 per cent more, or stop buying them.

“That means they’ve bought 25 or 30 per cent less product from us this year and a lot of people’s jobs hang in the balance,” Volpe said, adding that Canada buys \$100 billion worth of cars and parts from the U.S. every year.

“We are putting the same kind of pain on our counterparts in the U.S. mid-west and the U.S. southeast,” he said. “It means everybody is suffering a bit, including the steel mills we buy our steel from and aluminum smelters we buy aluminum from.”

Manufacturing is not the only business Trump is attempt to bring back to

the United States. He is also targeting the service industry, specifically, those called Bsuiness Outsource Processing (BPO) which involves customer support, Human Resources, or accounting. These ususalys involved call centres.

US reshoring measures may raise PHL office vacancies, analysts say

PROPOSED LAWS in the United States aimed at deterring the offshoring of American call center jobs could lift office vacancies in the Philippines, according to property consultants.

“While it is still too early to assess the exact impact on real estate take-up, efforts by the US government to discourage offshoring to the Philippines may lead to higher office vacancies and will require landlords and developers to rethink their leasing strategies,” Edward Gador, associate director for commercial leasing at Leechiu Property Consultants, told Busi-

nessWorld in an e-mail.

The proposed Halting International Relocation of Employment (HIRE) Act and the Keep Call Centers in America Act do not impose an outright ban on offshoring, but their passage may slow down demand in the country’s office market, said CBRE Philippines Country Head Jie C. Espinosa.

“Our projection for overall vacancy in the market to go down to single-digit levels again — similar to how things were pre-pandemic — is contingent on the continuing growth of the information technology-business process management (IT-BPM) sector,” he said in an e-mail.

The Philippine IT-BPM industry, one of the world’s top outsourcing destinations, has long been a major demand driver in the country’s office market.

In the third quarter alone, IT-BPM firms accounted for 42% of net take-up in Metro Manila, according to CBRE data.

'Fake post': Star Magic denies Kathryn Bernardo making comments about helping

ABS-CBN talent management arm Star Magic denied claims that their artist, Kathryn Bernardo, made comments about helping and being seen with a camera.

The talent agency on Thursday, November 11, said that the actress did not make the following comment: "Hindi kailangan ng camera para tumulong."

A Facebook page, "ShowBuzz", claimed that Kathryn said the phrase.

It also alleged that the actress gave a reminder about being sincere in giving aid.

"Nagbigay ng paalala si Kathryn Bernardo na ang tunay na pagtutulong ay hindi kailangang ipakita sa kamera o social media. Giit niya, ang kabutihang galing sa puso ay hindi dapat gawing content o pagkakakitaan," the page said.

Star Magic denied that Kathryn made such comments and appealed for the public to verify the information they see online.

"Star Magic would like to inform the public that our artist Kathryn Bernardo did not make the remark that is circulating on social media," the talent agency said on Instagram.

"We ask everyone not to share the fake post and verify information before sharing," it added.

Star Magic also included a screenshot of the Facebook post, which it said was a "fake post".

A look at the Facebook page reveals that the post has been edited to indicate that a "netizen" said the particular phrase and not Kathryn.

The post has garnered 3,200 likes and reactions, 4,200



such comments.

She also shared Star Magic's post on her Instagram Stories.

A screengrab of Kathryn Bernardo's Instagram Story posted on Nov. 11, 2025 (bernardokath via Instagram)

The country recently experienced two tropical cyclones, Typhoon Tino and formerly-Super Typhoon Uwan (now a severe tropical storm), early last month.

"Tino" was so far the deadliest tropical cyclone in the Philippines this year, claiming at least 232 lives. Among the hardest hit was Cebu Province, which experienced severe widespread flooding and infrastructure damage.

"Uwan", meanwhile, toppled trees and damaged infrastructure in Baler, a tourist destination. It also caused widespread power outages with its life-threatening storm surges and typhoon-force winds.

ments, and 121 shares so far. Meanwhile, there are no reports or indications that Kathryn made



Trump's Tariffs and Policies are Killing Jobs in Canada and the Philippines

CANADA-PHL page 8

call from her daughter when she was stranded at the airport.

Julia arrived at Pearson Airport with her bag packed and a valid Canadian passport in hand on Nov. 3.

She said she had purchased round-trip airfare to Orlando with Porter Airlines and was looking forward to a six-week trip to Florida to reset and spend some quality time with her grandparents.

The 20-year-old, who is on a break from school until the spring, like many young Canadians, couldn't find a job. So, she decided to take advantage of the time off and head south, but her plans were quickly grounded by customs officers.

Julia said she waited for an hour and a half in line before it was finally her turn to approach a U.S. customs officer at Pearson Airport's pre-clearance counter and answer a couple of standard questions.

However, she quickly learned that officers found her suspicious. "They decided to flag me and bring me to a different room," Julia said.

She said she began to worry that she'd miss her flight.

"I was starting to hyperventilate a bit, because I was nervous that something was going to happen. Then I'm told I'm denied entrance into America," Julia said.

When asked by CTV News if she had any plans of trying to immigrate to the U.S., the Toronto native didn't hesitate to share her feelings.

"I have no interest of ever living in America," she said.

Immigration lawyer Heather Segal told CTV News that Canadians being stopped by U.S. customs officers is happening with more frequency.

"U.S. immigration takes their orders from the top and when there's a more anti-immigration sentiment in the country, they have all the tools to use (at) their discretion in a negative manner," Segal said.



A U.S. Homeland Security checklist was sent home with Julia. On the sheet, a customs officer noted that Julia didn't provide proof of a return ticket home, although she showed CTV News her itinerary, along with a return flight home with Porter Airlines. Julia said she had provided the customs officers with a return date.

Customs also requested proof of her employment and schooling in Canada, she said, adding that she was unable to do that, because she is currently unemployed and on a break from school.

Segal said that in recent months she's heard from multiple Canadians who say they're facing "more questioning about purpose of visit and more requests for documentation."

"Some people are also being kept in secondary (inspection area) for longer when they're being questioned," Segal said.

The jarring experience has left her shak-

en, Julia said.

Even though she visited her grandparents without any issues in February, she's now concerned that she may be unable to cross the border to see her family.

Filipino Detained at LAX: A Story I Need to Share

On October 25, 2025, I landed in Los Angeles on Philippine Airlines flight PR 112. After four years of long-distance, I was finally going to spend real time with my boyfriend, my Partner. I had so many plans: training together, sharing everyday life, enjoying mornings and nights, and finally just being near him. I felt excited, nervous, and full of hope all at the same time.

At immigration, something felt off immediately. Two officers were at the counter one questioning me while the other watched. They asked why my stay was five months long. I explained that I had enough support from my business in the Philippines and that I wasn't planning to work in the U.S. They didn't believe me, and I could feel suspicion and tension in the room.

Then I was taken to a secondary room for further questioning. The questions were repetitive and invasive: "Where are you working? Are you coaching? What are you doing for money?" I told them truthfully that I wasn't working. But one officer leaned in and said sharply, "Don't lie to me. You're a liar. You're wasting my time, so I will waste yours." His words cut deep. I felt scared, frustrated, and completely powerless, but I tried to hold myself together.

For 14 hours, I was detained alone. I wasn't offered proper meals, despite asking. I was only allowed one monitored message to my Partner: "I am currently being detained. I will message you once I am able to." My phone was taken, and I had no way of contacting my family or anyone I trusted. Each hour felt longer

than the last. I felt trapped, anxious, and helpless but I refused to lie. I held onto the truth because it was the only thing I could control.

Eventually, they presented a statement and pressured me to sign it. I felt cornered. I had no food, no freedom, and no choice signing it felt like the only way out.

I was escorted to my deportation flight, PR 103, with my passport confiscated and my visa stamped "REVOKED" in bold red letters. Sitting on the plane, surrounded by strangers, with no WiFi, I felt despair. I couldn't contact my Partner. I couldn't tell anyone what was happening. I felt isolated, humiliated, and powerless.

Then, by pure luck, four of my friends who worked for the Airline were on duty that day. I saw a close friend at the door, and the moment I recognized her, my strength collapsed. I cried in her arms the first time I could allow myself to break. My friends took care of me: they placed me in a safer seat, gave me food, talked to me, and reminded me that I wasn't alone.

One of them lent me her phone so I could video call my Partner. I couldn't speak at first. We just looked at each other through the screen, knowing what was happening. Then he said, "We will fight this, my love. I will do everything I can to see you." His words filled me with strength and love, and in that moment, I realized something important: despite everything, we were not broken. We were stronger, and we would get through this together.

This experience was traumatic and unjust, but it also reminded me that even in the darkest moments, support, love, and unexpected kindness can appear. Sometimes, the universe breaks you to protect you or redirect you and in my case, it did both. I came out of

Remitly, GCash and Filipino Centre Toronto Sponsor Community Christmas Event



Tony A. San Juan,
OCT.

REMITLY CHRISTMAS from page 2

Scarborough, Toronto.

Remitly is a USA-based online remittance service that offer global money transfers to over 170 countries while GCash, Remitly's long-time partner, is Philippine based and is recognized in over 200 countries. In Canada, Filipinos and Filipino Canadians can use Remitly to send money to their families and loved ones to the Philippines. Remitly, is registered with the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), in compliance with Canadian financial regulations and anti-money laundering law. In the recent Philippine calamities, Remitly donated, through the Philippine Red Cross, US\$25,000. The Filipino Centre Toronto is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run and community-based organization purposefully operating, among other goals, to promote and promulgate



the vibrant Filipino culture and traditions in the province.

With over 200 guests and participants coming in and out throughout the day and dressed in the season's colours, the whole-day event afforded a festive atmosphere of an early Christmas celebration in town. Commencing the 7-hour program emceed by singer-host Dong Sabanal, after the opening prayers, Remitly's Marketing Manager-Community, Mary Grace Gauto, gave the opening remarks, and FCT President & CEO, Mary Ann San Juan, delivered her welcome address.

Community builder, Mario Marasigan, together with Dong Sabanal, conveniently

introduced Remitly and GCash's programs and procedures, including how to send money through Remitly, with "No Hidden Fees, Putting Money Back in Your Pocket. Get Fast Deposits, Multi-Layer Security, & Delivery Update Texts, Direct Bank Deposit, Cash Pickup, Mobile Money, and Home Delivery" services.

Guests and attendees from all over the town were treated to FV Foods distinctive Filipino delicacies such as lechon (roast pork), caldereta (beef stew), pinakbet (sauteed vegetables), lumpia (egg roll), buttered fish, ensaymadas, lugaw (rice porridge), kakanin (native desserts) and beverages. Jacqui's Cakes & Desserts generously offered

on-site taro-mixed waffles and ube-flavored hot chocolate drinks.

Remitly prizes galore were raffled and distributed to winning participants, like bags of rice, Remitly's gift bags, and mini bags. Several entertainment numbers were skillfully performed by a Dong Sabanal talents Cheska Lungayan and Ron Angeles, Glamm dancers, AIR's Dance Squad, Quartet dancers, FCT Ukulele Ensemble, a party clown, and other community volunteer-performers.

Among the Remitly staff and customer reps who helped supervise the festivities were Mary Grace Gauto, Mario Marasigan, Jojo Cafe, Mary Ann Cala-or, Hazel Tugano, Manuel Yuri Gavina and Rose Ami. The FCT Executive Board, led by Mary Ann San Juan, includes Nitz, Rejdi, Tess Lumanlan, Frank Cruzet, Philip Beloso, and Wendy Arena extended event execution tasks and logistics support.

Noticeably, several event participants happily went home, gratefully enjoyed the merry community gathering, and were fully informed and encouraged by Remitly's tagline, "Send money home with peace of mind."

Maligayang Pasko sa inyong lahat!!!

Andres Muhlach, excited sa learning process ng pagkanta habang in preparation sa "Bagets The Musical"

Mas nakilala ng publiko si Andres Muhlach bilang aktor nang sumikat ang Viva One series na Ang Mulya ng Section E, kung saan bida siya kasama sina Ashtine Olviga at Rabin Angeles.

Sa January naman, mas makikita ang pagiging total performer ni Andres dahil bahagi siya sa cast ng Bagets The Musical, ang stage adaptation ng iconic 1984 youth-oriented film na prinoduce ng Viva Films.

Bibida si Andres bilang si Adie, ang role na originally played by his father Aga Muhlach in the original film.

"Adie kasi in the original film is very charming, boy-next-door, and, as much as possible, I want to try and replicate that

image," sabi niya sa isang eksklusibong panayam with pikapika.ph. "I just want to be able to portray the aura that Adie gave in Bagets the film and I want to translate that to the live performance."

Nang tanungin naman siya kung saan siya nakarelata sa persona ni Adie while preparing for the musical, aminado si Andres na hindi niya nakikita ang sarili niya sa karakter na ito pero hopeful siya na ma-emulate niya 'yon onstage..

"I don't want to say naman na charming ako or charismatic. I would like to hope that I am talaga, [but] I like to say I can relate to that the most," sabi niya.

Bilang kilala si Andres as an actor, may

naramadaman ba siyang onting pressure or kaba ngayong magpapakita siya ng singing at dancing talents onstage?

"It's a thrill talaga, it's a moment of adrenaline din," sabi niya.

Matatandaang pinakita ni Andres ang onting paslip sa kanyang singing and dancing skills sa released cover niya ng Hotdog classic na "Ikaw Ang Miss Universe Ng Buhay Ko" nitong Marso, sa Section E Nation concert nitong Mayo, at sa VIVARKADA concert nitong Agosto.

"The feeling of performing and doing a



good job is like there's no other rush and no other feeling better than that. What more even better if you're doing a good job at it? That's what I want to accomplish with all of this," sabi niya.

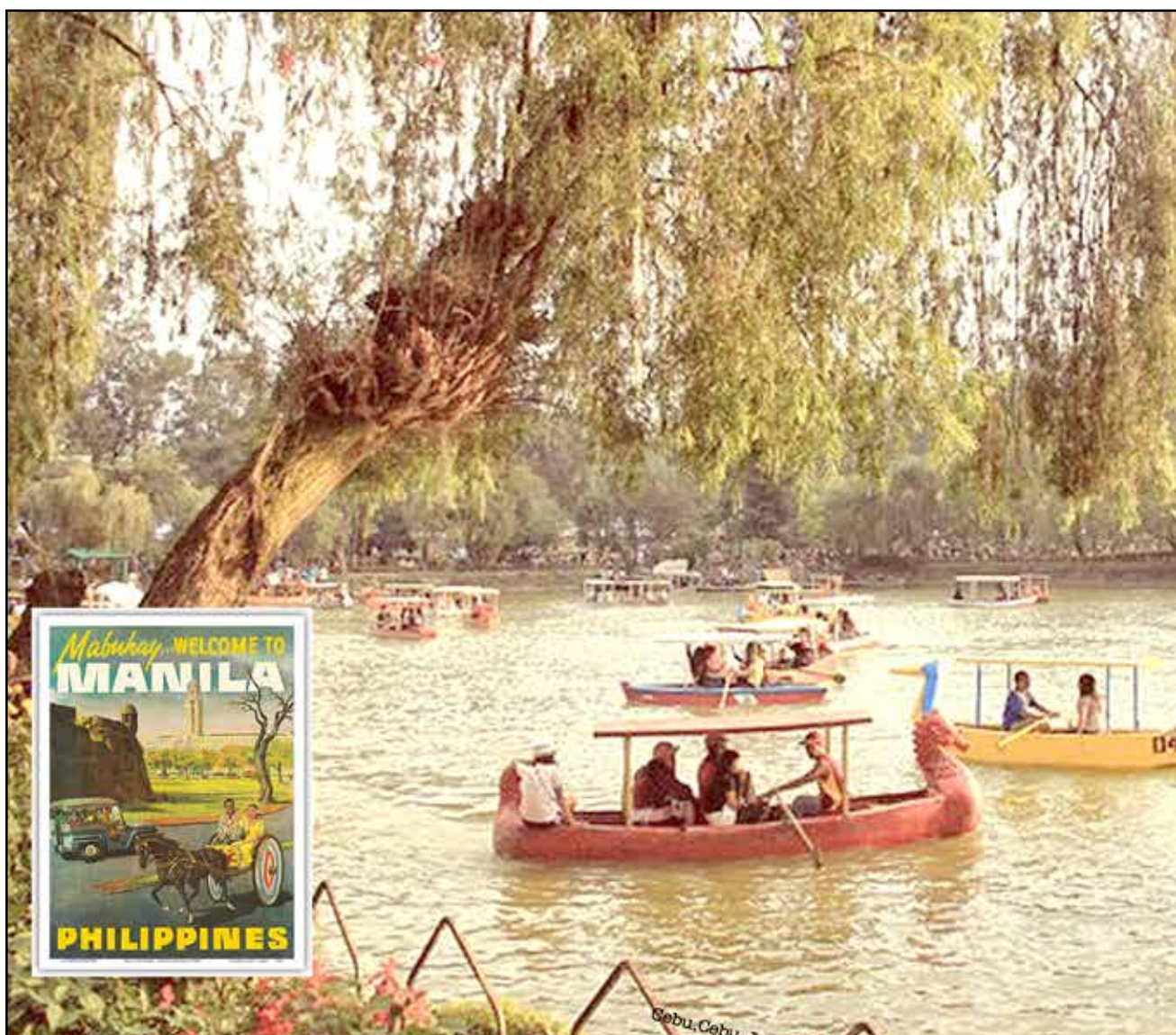
At bilang sasayaw at kakanta siya sa Bagets The Musical, ano nga ba ang mas prefer ni Andres sa dalawa?

"Alam mo, sinasabi ko talaga na dancing. Pero ngayon kasi, naninibago pa rin ako sa boses ko at sa singing and everything, parang I've been enjoying the learning process of singing talaga and even when we're doing our workshops and rehearsals in the past,

when we sing as a group, talagang nafeel ko na lahat ng boses namin, I would feel it in my skin din. It's a great feeling na I get to sing not even alone but with everyone talaga," sabi niya.

Going back to his portrayal of Adie, gusto ni Andres na makita ng audience ang prose-so ng growing up through the musical.

"The message talaga of Bagets is the concept of growing up talaga and what does that mean. Sana, I hope for the audience, when they view the musical, I hope that they get a better understanding of what it means to grow up and accepting what comes with life," sabi niya.



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Joey Baking The Socialist

“A classic is something everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.”
MARK TWAIN



Dynamic Motion Dancers celebrate their one-year anniversary.

It's that cold Month of Endless Parties



Toronto Kapuso Lions Club holds a fundraising zumba and line dancing class.

They are the handful of people that makes concerts and other productions possible. They help finance the cost of productions. They are usually called platinum or gold sponsor, implying that they gave the biggest amount to make the production possible. In short, the can be called by one word, philanthropists.

The Oxford dictionary defines a philanthropist as a “*person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.*”

In the Toronto Filipino community, there are only a handful (one hand only) of them that comes to mind.

One such philanthropist is Agnes Miranda, co-founder of World Financial Group WFG in Canada.

Last November 7, she celebrated her 80th birthday with family and a lot of friends and even more grateful recipients of her charity in the community.

This is one night where everyone in the Filipino community is showing their love and gratitude to the

woman who was always there for them when they needed help.

From singers, dancers, other performers, producers, promoters, they came to show their appreciation.

And you better greet her if you are there because she will remember.

Mitch Fernandez, who runs Genesis Immigration Consulting recalls one party.

“I was there but I wasn’t able to greet her. The next time she saw me, she said I did not come,” she happily recalls.

The others concur.

“Oh yeah, she’ll remember.”

With a mind still sharp, it’s not wonder she is still up and running her WFG empire.

Happy birthday Agnes Miranda. May you have more wonderful years of happiness and prosperity. The Filipino community loves you and is grateful for all the help you always give.

Gotta Dance.

It seems most Filipinos live to dance. That seems to be the reason behind the numerous dance groups in the Toronto community. It’s in the nature of Filipinos to either dance or sing.

Dynamic Motion Dancers is a dance group. These footloose group of dancers can be seen in many dinner parties and even being featured as front acts to concerts.

They just celebrated their one year anniversary last November 8 and everyone had a blast.

Congratulations to Dynamic Motion Dancers. May you continue to dance your way to the hearts of the Filipino community in Toronto.



“Forget Me Not,” the local movie shot in Toronto had an appreciation dinner at the cozy and very welcoming Dean & Ruby’s Cafe owned by singer DK Tijam and his partner Ruby.

The night was a presentation of certificate of Appreciation to everyone who were involved in the labor of love movie written

by Mika Sy and her producing mother Jennifer Sy.

There is going to be a second showing on January 31 at 7pm at Stage Magna at 1320 Ellesmere Road.

As Western nations, led by the United States with Canada and other European nations following suit slashed their foreign aid budgets, the roles of non-governmental agencies (NGO) have become more indispensable than ever. One such NGO is the Lions International with its chapters worldwide.

Recently, Toronto Kapuso Lions Club held a fundraising initiative “Dance It All Out,” a zumbathon and line dance at Agincourt Community Centre. This is their second zumba fundraising initiative and is more packed than their first one. The money raised will be used to support their global humanitarian projects.

Good luck to Toronto Kapuso Lions Club and the other chapters. May your organizations continue to grow and prosper.



“Nandito ka pala sa show ng tanders (*old people*),” greeted Maricel of Aki’s Bayong to me as I arrived at the Music & Memories concert, Mon Torralba’s jo-

runey as a member of the Hotdog band at the Toronto Pavilion. The other event that same evening was the Philippine Christmas & Induction dinner of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Besides Mon, the show featured 3 living former Hotdog bandmates Jess Garcia, Ella del Rosario and Lorie Ilustre.

Like watching old movies, it is comforting watching old bands performing again. In fact I enjoyed it.

“I enjoyed it because I know the songs,” I said.

With the best of local talents joining them onstage, the songs of Hotdog came to life.

It was a wonderful trip down memory lane to hear those old songs I grew up in.

MH Productions talents Rockin Siblings brother sister duo Niño and Celeste Villarosa rocked the Wam studios on a cold december night and provided much needed heat. The mini-concert also witnessed other MH talents that made going there worthwhile. Other talents who performed were Brianne Galuno, Francesca Perrone, Erline Belardo, Anne Park, Hailey Yarra, Jer Flow, and Da Fire.

Family and friends filled the space to watch the siblings per-

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Filipino Centre Toronto Conducts Free Seniors Wellness Services

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

WELLNESS from page 3

Nepomuceno, Will Nepomuceno, Evangeline Lagazo, Jerome Peralta, Neri Tatoy,

Pinky Tatoy, Geri Villamor, Will Villamor, and FCT Volunteers.

Certainly, the event was carried to the

great satisfaction of the “gratis propiccion-al servicio” recipients. They are hoping for a repeat of the same community project

next year, and hopefully, with generous and goodwill expectations. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).



FCT President Mary Ann San Juan cleans up a spill. Who wants this glamorous job?



Tony A. San Juan (FAR RIGHT) with Masseurs Jezreel Aureel, Jose Egca, and Neri Tatoy



‘Inggiterang frogs’: Niña Jose responds to comments on weight gain, skin tone

Bayambang, Pangasinan Mayor Niña Jose-Quimbao addressed comments on her weight gain and skin tone.

“Haha, I GAINED weight because I just gave birth [five] months ago, that’s what happened. Because a lot of comments are saying, what happened? I just gave birth,” Quimbao wrote. “Next, why is my face so white? I don’t know, I don’t wear makeup, I wear sunblock and my skincare,” the former actress added.

She also said she had a “stye,” or a red bump on the edge of one’s eyelid.

“Sobrang baduy na wala na bang bago?

People can really be cruel and when something happens to the people they bully, they say, ‘sorry,’ be kind, blah blah blah, ha, hypocritical of you,” Quimbao continued.

“But anyway, most of those com-



menting have hidden accounts or ghost accounts, haha. I have no idea where these people get their energy to be able to waste time typing comments as if they are perfect, haha. Fix your life first before you judge others. Inggiterang frogs,” she said. In the comments, a Facebook user shared additional details about the personal events in the mayor’s life.

“She had [two] miscarriages, [one] stillborn child. Her mother died, countless injections, way too much trip to the hospital because of her very dangerous pregnancy, had an appendectomy while pregnant, got food poisoning while pregnant! Give this mom a break,” a Facebook user wrote. Quimbao acknowledged the comment by responding directly.

“Thank you, this is appreciated,” she replied.

Quimbao left showbiz in 2015 and entered public service after marrying former Bayambang,

Pangasinan Mayor Cezar Quimbao.

Thea Tolentino shares sweet details of surprise engagement proposal abroad

Thea Tolentino details how her surprise engagement proposal with fiancé Martin Joshua took place.

Actress Thea Tolentino delighted fans as she revealed how her pilot fiancé popped the question during their vacation overseas.

In a series of Instagram Stories posted on November 30, Thea recalled the moment she thought they were simply doing a typical travel photoshoot. “It was also supposed to be just a normal vacation photoshoot. Thank you for the beautiful proposal. [I’m] keeping them forever,” she wrote, expressing her joy over the unforgettable moment.



She later shared another clip featuring her engagement ring, adding, “Lutang kami after sa pagod. Tapos di rin makapaniwala na

nangyari ‘yon,” describing how surreal the proposal felt for both of them.

Thea also reposted several congratulatory greetings from friends and supporters. Among them was actress Mikee Quintos, who shared a screenshot from their video call and wrote, “Congraaaaats [crying face emoji]” to celebrate the newly engaged couple.

The announcement has since sparked a wave of well-wishes from fans who have followed Thea’s journey from her early showbiz years to this new chapter in her personal life.



Scenes in the City

1. Thank you to birthday celebrant Jackie Cristini for bringing a lechon at the Filipino Centre Toronto and celebrating it with us; 2. Me, celebrating the birthday with jackie also; 3. Jackie Cristini poses with Philippine star Carmi Martin at the showing of the movie Mudrasta; 4. Jennifer Sy (2ND FROM RIGHT) wins an air fryer at the Toronto Kapuso Lions Club fundraising zumbathon; 5. The Toronto Kapuso Lions Club and the zumba instructors celebrate after a successful fundraising zumbathon. 6. Theresa Lumanlan joins the Toronto Kapuso Lons Club fundraising initiative; 7. Seniors in Action (SIA) receive the Outstanding Canadians Award.



‘Tapos na tayo sa teeny-teeny’: Kim Chiu takes on mature role in ‘The Alibi’

Actress Kim Chiu has no alibi for passing up a daring new role in a new Filipino drama series.

For Kim, portraying Stella Marie Morales in “The Alibi” is proof of her versatility as an actress.

The series follows Vincent, heir to a news outlet, and Stella, who team up to navigate their challenges. After being accused of murder, Vincent, played by Paulo Avelino, hires Stella, an escort working hard to support her family, to serve as his alibi.

“Gusto ko lang magpakita ng bago. Sa

mga nagsasabing hindi ako marunong sa ganitong klaseng role, ito na. Ito na ‘yun,” Kim said during the media conference in “The Alibi’s” Blue Carpet Premiere on November 4.

“So, I want to prove all of them wrong, and I can do more than what they know,” the actress emphasized.

While she enjoys playing “teeny” characters, Kim explained that she wanted to take on a more mature role.

“Siguro naman as a 35-year-old woman, tapos na tayo sa 16-years old-role na teeny,

teeny. Pero favorite ko talaga mag-teeny-teeny, mag-pakatawa,” she said.

“Pero, parang ‘pag tinatrack ko ‘yung journey ko dito sa industriyang ito, parang nahati ko naman na siya sa teens, twenties. Sabi ko, anong napakita ko sa aking thirties? It’s my skin,” she added.

In a scene from the first episode, Kim removed her top while dancing on stage under bright, flickering lights, exposing her back to Paulo and the camera.

However, she stressed that it was “more than the skin,” adding that she wanted to show “what’s inside me and what I want to show to all my supporters.”

Paulo echoed the same sentiment, saying that the focus was not on the skin, but

on the maturity and depth of the character she needed to portray.

“Minsan talaga may mga character at may mga storya na gustong ikuwento at sa mga

ganitong paraan kailangan,” the actor said.

“Dahil kung nagbenta naman talaga ng aliw ‘yung character, ang hirap naman kung hindi mo nakikita or napapanood [ito] at hindi naipapakita sa audience na hindi niya ginagawa ‘yun,” he added.

The KimPau love team has previously starred in projects such as “Linlang,” the Filipino adaptation of “What’s Wrong with Secretary Kim,” and “My Love Will Make You Disappear.”

Director Jojo Saguin revealed that, despite Kim not undergoing a workshop, she was enthusiastic and open to taking on the role.

“Makikita mo yung maturity...She did it very well. Ang galing-galing ta-



“Forget Me Not” movie held an Appreciation dinner for cast, crew, sponsors, and supporters at Vibe Manila.



Rafael Nebres, MP Vince Gasparro and PCCT President Von Canton pose at the Philippine Chamber of Commerce Toronto Christmas and Induction gala.

laga niya,” Saguin said.

Other cast members include Sam Milby, John Arcilla, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Sofia Andres, Rafael Rosell, Robbie Jaworski and Angelina Cruz.

The series premiered on November 7 on Prime Video, with two episodes releasing every Friday.

Outstanding Students Awards Chairman Tony San Juan poses with MPP Doly Begum at the Awards Ceremony at Filipino Centre Toronto.



Leone Manzanares celebrates her birthday at La Castille with husband Joe and Doctor Vicky Santiago.



The Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) had an unforgettable time celebrating culture, cuisine, and community at the vibrant Canadian Multicultural Council (CMC) Asian Food and Multicultural Festival!

Adding even more sparkle to the celebration, the PCCF beauties—Arlene Pacana, Mrs. Philippines Canada 2025; Charisma Toupin, Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2025; Hannah Lopes, Miss Teen Philippines Canada Runner-Up; and Greatchen Griffiths, Mrs. Philippines Canada 2024—graced

the runway in a dazzling multicultural fashion show alongside representatives from many other nations.

PCCF President Rosemer Enverga, together with PCCF Officers Lita & Tony Leaño, Merle & Alex Dooc, Noemi Milanes, Jose Banduyang, and Chris Jones, proudly joined the festivities in support of this wonderful community event.

Congratulations to Dr. Tulsi Dharel and the entire CMC team for organizing a spectacular festival that beautifully showcased the richness, diversity, and traditions of Asia!

Pitch Perfect: Recital 2K25 The Voice Within

Pitch Perfect Musical director Alyssa Grace says, "Recital 2K25 The Voice Within, is a showcase that advocates for mental health."

Sisters Chloe & Catherine Tiongson

Alyssa Grace (RIGHT) with students

ABOVE, Rosemary Alcayde, Arielle Perez, Pearly Elarde; RIGHT, Rianneh Greeley

MAMA LOI & OGIE DIAZ IN TORONTO

Mama Loi & Ogie Diaz with Joy D'aoust family

Mama Loi & Ogie Diaz with Producer Marky Hugh

Mama Loi & Ogie Diaz with Ryan Orlanda, Darles Nota & Cesar Marquez

Mama Loi & Ogie Diaz with photographer Marvs Fuentes

Dawn Chang's greatest miracle in life is finding her father

Dawn Chang's search for her biological father could make a compelling plot for a screenplay or a book.

Sometime in 2011, while she was in Australia, she began searching for her father's name on Google.

"I was directed to LinkedIn Australia. I was 21 or 22 at that time. So, pinili ko yung 40-plus (age) pataas. Three of them replied to my query," she recalled in an interview for TV5's dating show, "Love On The Clock," where she is one of the hosts. "But the others stopped responding when I said I was looking for my father, except for one."

Dawn mentioned her name and her mother's in an e-mail to him and said, "If these names are familiar, let me know."

The man replied, "Neither your name nor your mother's is familiar. But we have the same surname. So, maybe we have a connection along the way. Who's your father?"

"How do I tell him that I am really looking for my father? I didn't want also to drag anyone into my business. I just don't want to hassle anyone. So, I told him, if you don't know anything about my story, I apologize. Just ignore my message," Dawn recalled.

But he e-mailed back and asked if they could meet up. They meet. They realized that the events in their lives didn't align. They decided to a DNA test. "The results stated that the man tested blah blah cannot be excluded as the biological father of the child tested with the pathological percentage of 99.9. 'Oh my gosh!'" Dawn burst into tears at what she described as a "very surreal moment." "That's why, when you asked me about the greatest miracle in my life, this is it."

She eventually became an Australian citizen



through her dad, Vincent. "Now, I have two passports," she said.

The former "Pinoy Big Brother" housemate has maintained a good relationship with her father as well as her half-siblings. "The eldest, in fact, who's one year younger than me, became my best friend."

When asked about the reaction of her mother, she said, "My mom is a lesbian. She doesn't want to talk about it. Every time I asked her, 'How did you get pregnant?' Because she's been a lesbian ever since. 'Ay naku,' gaganyan lang siya akin."

Moreover, outside showbiz, Dawn is an entrepreneur who just opened her DC Delights café in

Quezon City, which serves cookies and coffee.

The first Filipino reality dating series filmed entirely in Hong Kong, "Love on The Clock," meanwhile, aired on tvN Asia and TV5. The show is also streaming on TV5's YouTube channel.

Aside from Dawn, Juancho Trivino also served as the host.

The daters in the show include Pupa Dadivas, Victoria Fabella, Dani Buenvenida, Jomari Angeles, Ron Angeles and Polo Laurel.

The show's "game changers," JC Alcantara and Alexa San Agustin, recently joined them.

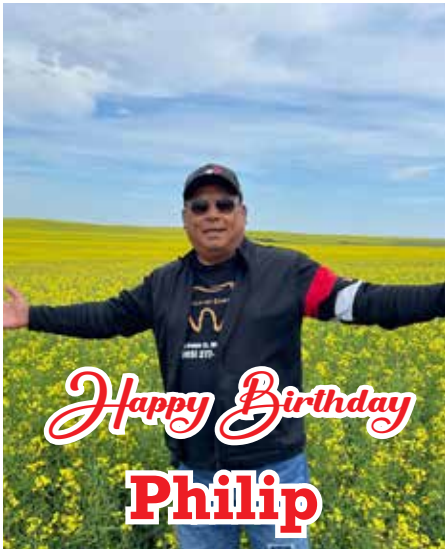
"Love on The Clock" was produced in partnership with Hong Kong Tourism Board and tvN Asia.



Vocal Groove Collective (Ryan Orlanda, Kuya Pabs, Bevs Saraza, Chyrell Ronquillo and Rodney Ronquillo) with one of the hottest pop singers - Rhett Dela Cruz, the legendary Smoky Mountain drummer Vin Velarde and the Legendary and Original Hotdog Band (Mon Torralba, Lorrie Ilustre, Mon Torralba, Ella De Rosario). Standing and posing with giants in the music business. A huge honour!



Happy Birthday Junita



Happy Birthday Philip

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Agnes Miranda's 80th Birthday



Filipino businesswoman, community leader, and philanthropist Agnes Miranda celebrated her 80th birthday with family, friends and colleagues. The well-dressed guests enjoyed delicious food by FV Foods and entertainment like songs by DK Tijam, Danny Orbillo, Ramon Estaris, Ryan Orlanda, Lilac Caña, JMRTN of Retrospect and Chyrell and Rodney Ronquillo.

Dynamic Motion Dancers 1st Year Anniversary

Dynamic Motion Dancers had their 1st Year Anniversary dinner and it was attended by friends in the community. Every guest "feels the music in them" so it was a night of dancing, singing, and fun.



Music & Memories Concert

The concert was a celebration of Ninong Mon's career and journey as a Musician, Songwriter/Composer, Producer, Visionary and Music Director (and much more).



MUSIC from page 4

We extend our deepest gratitude to Tito

Mon and Tita Teresa for inviting us and entrusting VGC with a role in this once-in-a-life-time moment in OPM history. Their support

and leadership made this experience truly meaningful. This concert was the result of immense

dedication from the entire production team, and hearing the audience cheer, sing along, and celebrate made every rehearsal, every

late night, and every detail completely worth it. We are humbled to have contributed to such a legendary night for OPM.



Rockin Siblings Nino & Celeste Impresses crowd in a Cozy Concert at Wam Studios

ROCKIN SIBLINGS page 10
form and also hear their original

composition "blue." It was a wonderful night for ev-

eryone. Congratulations to MH Produc-

tions and to Rockin Sib-

lings.

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Disyembre Sa Pilipinas: Christmas Celebrations And Festivals

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT

“Pasko” or Christmas is religiously and merrily celebrated throughout the Philippines and in many parts of the world where Filipinos are living and working. “Sa Pilipinas”, being known as a largely Catholic and Christian nation in Asia, as early as when the “ber” months ushered in, Filipinos are famously known for making early plans and preparations, and in jolly moods of welcoming the traditional spirit of the yuletide season.

During the last 4 months of the year, “lalo na sa buwan ng “Diciembre”, Filipinos go all-out in the festivities, lining up month-long celebrations that are mostly centred on the happiest event of the year, “Ang Kapaskuhan”. Almost everywhere, cities, towns, barrios, and barangays bloom with sparkling lights, colourful twinkling “parols” or lanterns and fully decorated Christmas trees are traditionally displayed. Mega shopping malls and department stores with beautiful display windows hold sales to attract more Christmas shoppers and bargain hunters for gifts “para pamasko”

Events and parties are held everywhere: in homes, schools, company offices, town halls, hotels, restaurants, resorts, and barangay-opened courts. The young and adults alike are hoping and wishing for a

nice “regalo” from their “ninongs, ninangs at mga kamag-anak”. The merry spirit of the Filipino, such as attending the “simbang gabi at “misa de gallo”, savouring “salabat, bibingka, suman, puto bumbong, feasting keso de bola at hamon” and kids singing “kami po ay namamasko”, shine throughout December, making this month one of the best times and, unarguably, the “longest Christmas celebration in the Christian world”.

Nationwide though, more exciting events and festivals related to Christmas are happening in December in the Philippines, especially in some provinces, cities and towns. Here is a list of those specific and local celebrations.

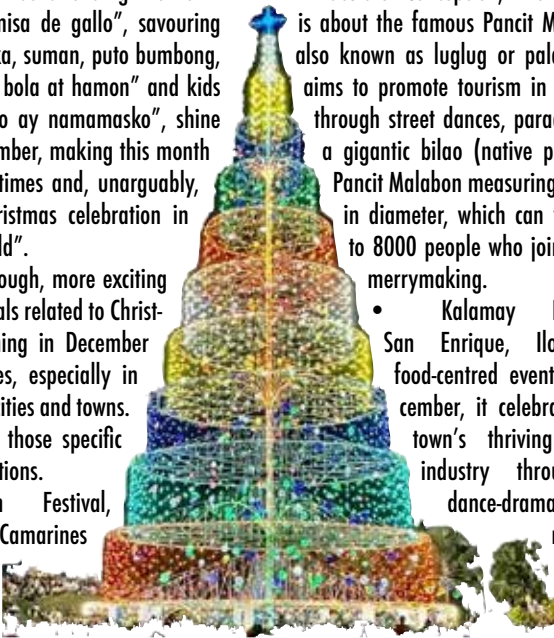
- Kamundagan Festival, Naga City, Camarines Sur. The city celebrates their charter anniversary along with Christmas in this month-long festival. Among the highlights are cultural shows, pageants, parades and trade fairs, the traditional “Pastores and Kiri-kiri” performances and also sampling the famous spicy cuisine the province of Bicol is known for.
- Sinukwan Festival, San Fernando, Pampanga. A week-long celebration highlighted by a grand street parade in remembrance of the ancient god Aring Sinukwan. The Festival is a showcase of the cultural diversity of the Kapampangans and includes food and trade fairs, pageants, photo competitions and cultural shows.
- Pancit Malabon-Luglugan Festival,

Malabon City. In commemoration of the city’s patron, the Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the festival is about the famous Pancit Malabon, also known as luglug or palabok. It aims to promote tourism in the city through street dances, parades and a gigantic bilao (native plate) of Pancit Malabon measuring 15 feet in diameter, which can feed up to 8000 people who join in the merrymaking.

- Kalamay Festival, San Enrique, Iloilo. A food-centred event in December, it celebrates the town’s thriving sugar industry through a dance-drama. “Kalamay” is a sug-

ar-based delicacy, thicker in consistency, that is popular in different parts of the Philippines. The “kalamay”, San Enrique’s main product, is the local word for sugar.

- Feast of the Immaculada Concepcion, Cotabato City and Puerto Princesa City. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, is considered a very important religious event of the year. Devotees all over the country celebrate in their own homes and church groups through retreats, fiestas and gatherings. In Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, the merry Palawenos celebrate through cultural presentations and a grand fluvial parade.



- Coffee Festival, Lipa City, Batangas. Synonymous to “Kapeng Barako”, Lipa, Batangas, is regarded as the Coffee Granary of the Philippines and the Coffee Festival is a celebration of the city’s aromatic coffee. Made from locally grown liberica coffee, “Barako coffee” has a distinct bitter taste that is usually referred to as the coffee for real men or a tough male.
- Kasadyaan Festival (Mardi Gras), Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental. “Kasadyaan”, spearheaded by the Foundation University for the past 50 years, is a school-based event with pageants, exhibits and extravagant parties participated in by students. The word ‘sadya’ means merriment and the festival culminates with a very colorful version of the famous Mardi Gras.
- Giant Lantern Festival, San Fernando, Pampanga. San Fernando is considered the “Christmas Capital of the Philippines” mainly because of the presence of the giant lanterns that illuminate the entire city. The Festival showcases a competition for the best and biggest Christmas lanterns which the city is known for. Lantern-making is San Fernando’s major industry.
- Simbang Gabi, Nationwide-December 16-24. “Simbang gabi” or night mass is an age-old Christmas tradition influenced by the Spanish colonizers. For nine early mornings before Christmas Day, Catholics flock to churches before 4 o’clock in the morning to hear mass. The last mass on Christmas Eve is known as “Misa de Gallo”. Most Filipinos believe that their wishes will come true if they complete all nine mornings.
- Christmas Food Street Festival, Cebu City. Food in Cebu City is arguably some of the best in the country and people partake in the offerings indulging in the favorite “Cebu lechon” at Food Street Festival. This event features food stalls, lantern competitions, concerts and a midnight market sponsored by the Cebu Hotel, Resort and Restaurant Association.
- Maytinis Festival, Kawit, Cavite. The Festival is much like the Latin American “Posadas” which is a reenactment of Mary and Joseph’s quest for sanctuary in Bethlehem. The Maytinis festival, also called ‘panunuluyan’ is a loving retelling of the famous biblical episode which ends in a merry parade.
- Rizal’s Death Commemoration, Nationwide. Celebrated also in Dapitan City on December 30, in remembrance of the execution of Dr. Jose Rixal, the national hero, after he ignited the Philippine revolution through his literary works “Noli Me Tangere” and “El Filibusterismo”. December 30 is declared a National Holiday in commemoration of the hero’s death. The city of Dapitan, Zamboanga, where Rizal was exiled for four years, remembers the man through lectures and celebrations.

(Tony A. San Juan, OCT).

Kami po sa Little Manila Confidential at ng aming Publisher Jose Joey Baking ay bumabati ng isang Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa Inyong Lahat!!!

Atom Araullo sa pagiging guwapo: ‘It’s both a gift and a curse’

Hindi madali para kay Atom Araullo ang pagiging guwapo lalo na at nasa larangan siya ng news.

Isa si Atom Araullo sa broadcast journalists na bukod sa biniyayaan ng magandang boses at galing sa pagbabalita, ay nabigyan din ng guwapong mukha. Ngunit ayon sa batikang documentarist, isang gift at curse ang kanyang kaguwapuhan.

Sa Fast Talk with Boy Abunda nitong Biyernes, November 28, ipinaliwanag ni Atom kung bakit isang blessing at curse ang kanyang itsura.

“The fact that I’ve been, kumbaga, I’ve been on TV for such a long time, lumaki ako sa telebisyon, maraming mga pinto na nagbukas dahil doon. Kahit na ‘yung itsura, hindi ko naman itinatanggi ‘yun. But at the same

time, you have to work extra hard to prove to people that you’re serious,” sabi ni Atom.

Ikinuwento rin ni Atom ang mga pagkakataon na may pumupuna sa kanyang good looks habang seryoso siyang nagbabalita.



“Magtataka ka rin e, minsan may nako-cover ako, mga kababayan natin binaha ‘yung kababayan nila, I mean malungkot, malungkot ‘yung sitwasyon, pero parang ewan ko kung ano ‘yun, nasa karakter ng mga Pilipino, meron

silang dahilan lagi para ngumiti at minsan you just lean into it kasi parang they see somebody on TV, nandu’n ka, why not?” sabi ni Atom.

Meron din umanong mga pagkakataon kung saan may nagpapa-selfie sa kanya bago siya sumalang sa pagbabalita. Hindi man maddali, pilit ina-accommodate ni Atom ang mga nagre-request ng photos kasama siya.

CELL-MASTER

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What Kiray Celis said about her viral Japan vending machine prenop photo



Stephen Estopia and Kiray Celis in Osaka, Japan in this photo credited to Metrophoto and posted on her Instagram on Nov. 9, 2025 (kiraycelis via Instagram)

Comedienne Kiray Celis addressed criticisms about her viral prenop photo in Japan, where she was spotted sitting on top of a vending machine.

On November 5, the showbiz personality posted photos from her prenop shoot with her fiancé, Stephen Estopia, which included shots of them conquering Tokyo. The photos

were taken by Metrophoto.

One photo, now deleted, showed her sitting on a street vending machine.

Japan is known for its ubiquitous vending machines, which offer a wide range of items from drinks and meals to collectibles.

Several online users were not amused by Kiray sitting on top of the vending machine, claiming it was a sign of disrespect toward Japanese culture.

"Di porke artista ka, mayaman ka, may karapatan ka na bastusin ang lugar na pu-



puntahan mo, nakikitapak ka lang, respeto sa kultura at sa mga Japanese ang pinaka no. 1 dito," a Filipino working in Japan commented. "Kaya maraming mga Japanese ngayon ang mainit ang mata sa mga Gaijin, kaya kami na nananahimik at nagta-trabaho ng maayos dito sa Japan, nadadamay sa mga ganyang pag-uugali, dinala mo pa talaga 'yan dito sa Japan, nakakahiya ka," the online user added.

Another Filipino who has "lived and worked in Japan for years" also said that

"many of the issues about anti-foreigner sentiment could have been avoided if only everyone showed respect for Japan's rules, culture, and values."

"When we show discipline, humility, and gratitude, we don't just earn respect — we inspire admiration. So let's strive to be respectful guests, good neighbors, and honorable representatives of our country," the Facebook user said.

Meanwhile, Kiray addressed the comments and said that they had obtained "permission" from the authorities.

"Sa mga na-offend, nagalit na mga Pilipino, or 'yung mga OFW [Overseas Filipino Worker], pasensya na po," she said in a video posted on TikTok.

Kiray also said that the incident taught her to be more "sensitive."

"Parang, kahit may permission, kahit pwede, intindihin mo kung ano 'yung mararamdaman ng mga makakasama mo or makakakita ang... 'yun 'yung lesson na naisip ko," she said.

Kiray is set to marry her fiancé this December.

Jillian Ward welcomes Eman Pacquiao to showbiz

Kapuso star Jillian Ward recently shared her thoughts on young boxer Eman Bacosa Pacquiao, who publicly expressed admiration for her. "First, I appreciate what he said about me. He followed me on social media, and I followed him back. I get to watch his TikTok posts and find him very Godly and super nice."



Eman recently signed with Sparkle, GMA's talent management arm, where Jillian is also a contract artist. "I just want to welcome him to the Kapuso! Hope he enjoys it. I pray he stays true to himself. May God bless him always."

When asked about meeting Eman in person, Jillian smiled: "I do hope our paths cross one of these days."

Raymond Lauchengco recalls when Maricel Soriano screamed at him

Binalikan ni Raymond Lauchengco, 59, ang isang hindi malilimutang karanasan niya sa showbiz.

Ito ay ang paninigaw at pagwu-walk out sa kanya ng Diamond Star na si Maricel Soriano sa unang araw ng kanilang pagkikita sa shooting ng pinagsamahan nilang pelikula.

Si Raymond ay nagsimula sa showbiz bilang isang singer at matinee idol noong '80s.

Ilan sa mga katang pinasikat niya ay ang "Farewell," "I Need You Back," at "Just Got Lucky."

Taong 1983 ay ginawa ni Raymond ang drama movie na Saan Darating Ang Umaga, na siya rin ang kumanta ng theme song na ganoon din ang pamagat.

Sa pelikula ay love interest niya si Maricel. Kuwento ni Raymond, unang beses silang magkikita ni Maricel sa kanyang first shooting day. Nabuo raw sa isip ni Raymond na magiging maganda ang unang pagkikita nila ni Maricel dahil nga magkarelasyon sila sa pelikula.



"So, sabi ko, 'Wow, ang laki ng pressure on that first shooting day. Kailangan maganda yung meeting namin to build chemistry from there. We never met," lahad ni Raymond sa YouTube video ni Snooky Serna noong November 21, 2025.

Pero kabaliktaran ang nangyari.

Sinigawan siya ni Maricel, nag-walk out, at pinagbagsakan pa ng pinto si Raymond.

"The first superstar who screamed at me. I will never forget that," pagbabahagi ni Raymond.

THE INCIDENT

Lahad ni Raymond, noong araw na iyon ay nakatanggap siya ng dalawang call slips—ang first shooting day niya para sa Saan Darating Ang Umaga at performance sa Ali Mall sa Cubao, Quezon City.

Ang unang call slip ay galing sa movie company na Viva Films, at ang pangalawang call slip ay mula sa music label na

Vicor Records.

"Sabi ni Vicor, 'Two o'clock nasa Ali Mall ka para kumanta.'

"Sabi ni Viva, 'Two o'clock nasa UP ka to shoot with Maricel.'"

Hindi raw alam noon ni Raymond kung ano ang uunahin.

Ang Vicor daw ang nagbigay ng abiso kay Raymond.

"Sabi ni Vicor, 'Mauna ka sa live, sumunod ka sa filming. Tatal isang oras lang naman yung kanta, e, promo lang.' So, I listened to them."

Ito raw ang naging mitsa ng hindi magandang pagkikita nila ni Maricel sa kanyang first shooting day para sa Saan Darating Ang Umaga.

"So, pagdating ko sa set, lahat sila galit. I was like two hours late. Lahat sila galit, walang kumakausap sa akin," sabi ni Raymond.

Wala raw may alam sa tunay na rason kung bakit na-late si Raymond, pero nagpaliwanag siya sa direktor ng pelikula na si Maryo J. de los Reyes.

Lahad niya: "Until finally, I went to Maryo

J. de los Reyes, and I explained. Si Maryo naman mabait din iyan.

"So he goes, 'O, sig, sig, just don't do it again. But you better talk to Marya because she's really upset with you.'"

Nagtungo raw si Raymond sa dressing room ni Maricel para magpaliwanag.

"Pagpunta ko sa dressing room niya, kumatok ako. Nakita ko si Maricel naka-turn away, looking at the mirror.

"So I approached. I started to explain, 'Maricel, ganito yung nangyari...'

"Before I could say anything, she turned around, she goes, 'Bakit ka nag-i-Ingles?!'

"Freak out ako! I continue to say 'I'm sorry,'" pagpapatuloy ni Raymond.

Subalit hindi raw nagpatinag si Maricel.

"She stood up and she faced me and she goes, 'E, ano pa nga ba?!'

"She walked out of the room and banged the door! 'Ganun siya kagalit because she's super disciplined, she is never late.

"I'm never late also, nagkataon lang that I got those two call slips."



Ma hindi raw inasahan ni Raymond ang sumunod na nangyari.

"So there I was, didn't know whether to cry or to run away or to go home."

May kumatok daw sa pinto.

"Somebody came inside, 'Sir, we need pictures for publicity.'

"Ha? You want to take pictures now? She hates me!" reaksiyon daw ni Raymond, na sinundan niya ng tawa.

Sumunod naman daw si Raymond.

"Pero wala, wala kang choice, so luma-bas ako."

During the pictorial, inuutusan daw si Raymond na akbayan si Maricel.

"Put your arm around her!' I put my arm around her. 'Smile!'

At ngiti naman daw si Raymond.

"But after that, we became... She forgave me. We became friends."

Andres Muhlach forges showbiz path

Ang Mutya ng Section E is gearing up for its second season on Viva One, and while fans are buzzing about the story's darker direction, Andres Muhlach is dealing with a different kind of attention—the never-ending "showbiz royalty" label.

At the presscon, the young actor didn't dodge the topic. He knows the surname comes with expectations, but he made it clear he doesn't want people assuming things will be handed to him.

"I wouldn't say it's an advantage or a disadvantage," he said. "At the end of the day, the effort and the work that we put in is not something our parents do. Our parents aren't the ones showing up on set. That's us. And the effort that

we give is what we receive."

Andres Muhlach steps back into the role of Keifer in a more intense and emotionally layered second season of the hit Wattpad adaptation

Andres returns as Keifer in Book 2, but the story takes a different direction for him. Instead of the usual back-and-forth romance, Keifer now has to face problems rooted in his childhood and family.

"I think the biggest revelations for Keifer are really about his problems with his family—what he went through during his childhood and how that affects who he is now," he explained. "I think that's really the essence of his dark side."

To tackle that shift, Andres says he leaned on



past experiences from other projects.

"Every time I get the chance to work on a new project, I really learn a lot," he said.

"With those learnings, I get to apply them to the next project and the next one. I honestly feel—and I hope—that I'm getting better. It's really about learning slowly what can be improved and what I can do better."

He also knows there's pressure—and he's not pretending there isn't. "Whatever work you do, there really has to be some pressure," he said. "Because without pressure, you won't be as inclined to give it your all."

Online noise and fan wars don't seem to bother him much either. He prefers to keep his focus on the job and the people he works with.

"At the end of the day, we're all friends when we come to work. Fans are just being fans, being supporters," he said. "We just really have to enjoy each other's company and the whole process."

As the show heads into a more intense season, Andres isn't overthinking the expectations or the heritage tied to his last name. He's keeping it simple by showing up, working hard, and letting the performance do the talking.

"We just want to make a show that everyone can enjoy," he said. "If we're enjoying the process and giving our best, everything will follow."

Ang Mutya ng Section E: The Dark Side will be released in two parts. The first nine episodes drop on Dec. 4, while the next nine episodes follow on June 11.

Trump's Tariffs & Policies Killing Jobs in Canada and the Philippines

CANADA-PHL from page 8

it humbled, stronger, and more certain that truth, love, and resilience matter more than fear.

If you read this, please know that this is happening not only to me but to other Filipinos as well. I am sharing my story to spread awareness. I don't wish

this happening to anyone but as heartbreaking as it is, there are many others who had similar experiences.

US-Canada Politics Play out at the Border

Meanwhile, upon learning of Julia's story, Porter Airlines reached out to the family and provided

them with a full refund.

Kate believes her daughter's story is one that Canadians need to hear.

"I hope that other people aren't going to face this. It was a gross inconvenience," she said.

"It can have financial repercussions, as well as emotional. If our

story helps any family avoid it, that would be great. I think a lot of people are boycotting travel to the U.S., and after this experience, I'm all for it."

Immigration lawyers who spoke to CTV News say that Canadians should be prepared for the unexpected when trying to cross into the U.S.

If you're attending a wedding or event stateside, have your in-

itation or tickets on hand, the lawyers advise. Make sure you have proof of a return flight as well as hotel reservation details.

"Some of the politics between Canada and the U.S. play out at the border," Segal said.

"These factors contributed to this young woman's issue getting into the U.S. Even though she's not doing anything wrong, suspicions are higher at the border."

Rhen Escaño advises victims of cheating partners:

“Girl, you don’t deserve that! Mas mahalín mo ang sarili mo.”

Rhen Escaño shared heartfelt advice for victims of cheating partners, emphasizing the importance of loving oneself before giving love to someone else.

The topic emerged during the press conference for Akin Ka Lang, an upcoming vertical microdrama on Viva’s newest streaming platform, Viva Movie Box. The actress stars in the project alongside Albie Casiño and Nathalie Hart.

The series follows Clea (Nathalie) and Alfred (Albie), a couple who hope to start a family but face heartbreak after Clea suffers a miscarriage. Alfred’s mother Martha (Shirley Fuentes), desperate for an heir to secure the inheritance from Alfred’s late father, pressures him to consider his ex-girlfriend Kendra (Rhen) as a surrogate.

While discussing the show, Rhen was asked whether she would ever forgive a cheating partner.

“Honestly, napagdaanan ko po before na kahit harap-harapan kang niloloko ng isang tao, nandoon ka pa rin sa part na ‘Baka magbago, bigyan natin ng chance.’ pero na-realize ko during that time na ‘di pala dapat ganon,” she said.

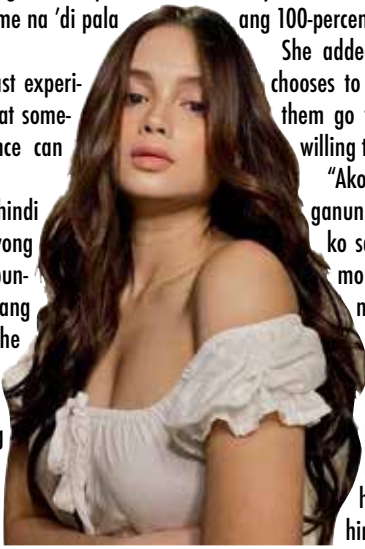
Drawing from her past experiences, Rhen reflected that someone who hurts you once can easily do it again.

“In the first place, hindi niya nakita talaga ‘yong worth mo kaya siya napunta sa part na kinaya niyang gawin sa’yo ‘yon,” she said. “Nandoon ako sa part na kung lolokohin ka ng isang tao, ibig sabihin hindi ka niya ganun kamahal so paano ko siya bibigyan

ng second chance? Para mas maparamdam niya sa’yo na hindi ka talaga kamahal-mahal? Na kaya niyang maghanap ng iba kahit andiyan ka na binibigay mo lang naman ang 100-percent mo?”

She added that when a partner chooses to cheat, it’s better to let them go than fight for someone willing to hurt you.

“Ako, sa personal, hindi ganun ‘yong worth na nakita ko sa sarili ko. Kung mahal mo ko, dapat ako lang. So, no, hindi ko bibigyan ng chance ‘yong taong kayang magloko, kayang manakit, na kaya kang ipagpalit. For me, ‘pag mahal mo, mahal mo dapat siya. Kung hindi, then let go and I



know my worth,” she said.

When asked what advice she would give to anyone who has been cheated on, Rhen reiterated the importance of self-worth, saying that once you truly value yourself, the right person will follow.

“Girl, you don’t deserve that. Hindi

“I really believe na kung ano ‘yong ina-allow mo sa self mo na mangyari sa’yo, ‘yun din ‘yong mga na-attract mo.”

mo deserve ‘yan. Walang may deserve ‘yan. Mas mahalín mo ang sarili mo, mas alagaan mo ‘yong sarili mo, at darating ang tamang tao para sa’yo at hindi [niya] paparamdam sa’yo na ke-kwestchunin mo ‘yong worth mo, ‘yong pagkatao mo,” she said. “Darating ‘yong araw na makikita mo din kung bakit nangyari sa’yo ‘yon, siguro may

kailangan mo lang matutunan along the way.”

Rhen also highlighted the power of self-love in attracting the right people.

“I really believe na kung ano ‘yong ina-allow mo sa self mo na mangyari sa’yo, ‘yun din ‘yong mga na-attract mo. So, you have to level up, you have to really love yourself and focus yourself para mas high value men ‘yong ma-attract mo din and hindi ka na mapupunta sa sitwasyon na kailangan masaktan ka pa para may matutunan ka,” she said.

“Ikaw dapat ‘yong maging lesson sa mga tao na ‘yon na ‘This is my worth!’ so hindi dapat tayo nagpapaloko at kung ayaw mong lokohin ka, you really have to love and know your worth,” she added.

Directed by Christian Paolo Lat, Akin Ka Lang is currently available for streaming at Viva Movie Box. It is one of the three launching titles of the streaming platform alongside Elisa Batang Kabit starring Abby Bautista and Maid for Revenge starring Rose Van Ginkel.

Tariff pressures are hitting Canadian manufacturing

TARIFFS from page 7

“If we suffer a setback in this sector, vacancy will remain in the double-digit levels,” Mr. Espinosa added.

The proposed Keep Call Centers in America Act seeks to limit federal benefits granted to companies that outsource call center jobs overseas.

Meanwhile, US Senate Bill 2976, or the HIRE Act, proposes a 25% excise tax on American firms’ payments to foreign service providers for work consumed in the US.

Both measures are aimed at protecting US-based call center jobs threatened by the rise of offshoring and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered bots.

If passed in their current form, the measures could push up Metro Manila’s office vacancy by 150-300 basis points, affecting business process outsourcing (BPO)-heavy submarkets such as the Bay Area, Ortigas, and the Bonifacio Global City fringes, according to Savills Philippines Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Joe Curran.

“If both bills pass in their current form, we could see a 30% to 50% slowdown in new leasing activity from US-based customer-experience or voice-BPO tenants over the next 12 months,” he said in an e-mail to BusinessWorld.

Vacancy rates in provincial hubs such as Cebu, Clark, Bacolod, and Iloilo could also rise by 200-400 basis points, mainly in single-tenant voice centers, Mr. Curran said.

However, modern business parks hosting diversified global capability centers (GCCs) or in-house shared-service hubs that serve global markets are expected to remain resilient against the impacts of US protectionist bills, he added.

“Should these two proposed US legislations be enacted, we may see a slowdown in outsourcing decisions and, consequently, a tempered demand for office space,” said Kevin Jara, director and head of tenant representation at Colliers Philippines.

The IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP) has been monitoring the impact of the two bills, noting that these are not affect-



If the proposed Keep Call Centers in America Act measures are passed, there will be a 30% to 50% slowdown in new leasing activity from US-based customer-experience or voice-BPO tenants over the next 12 months.

ing current IT-BPM operations in the country.

“If passed in their current form, the measures would increase the cost of offshored services and introduce additional compliance requirements for US companies operating overseas,” IBPAP President and CEO Jonathan Jack R. Madrid said in an e-mail.

“For now, it is viewed as a low-likelihood but high-visibility development, and organizations are following closely — assessing potential risks, preparing phased response plans, and monitoring the bill’s progress,” he added.

While US protectionist legislation may dampen take-up, the Philippines’ office market is still likely to attract global IT-BPM tenants, supported by its network of high-quality office parks and skilled workforce, Mr. Curran said.

“Protectionist measures may slow short-term activity, but the Philippines’ depth of talent and adaptability will keep it among the world’s top ser-

TARIFFS page 18

Dear JDL Parents and Amazing JDL kids ,

Get ready to enter the whimsical world of Dr. Seuss!

Our talented young performers have been working hard, and we’re thrilled to announce that our Seussical KIDS show will take the stage on SUNDAY , FEBRUARY 8th at PALMERSTON THEATRE 560 Palmerston Avenue, Toronto with two shows

Matinee @ 1 pm

Evening show @5 pm

But just like Horton, we can’t do it alone!

To make our Seussical spectacular — with bright sets, fun costumes, and magical moments — we’re looking for a few extra hands (and a few extra dol-

lars!) to help us finish strong.

Here’s how you can help:

Join or support our weekly fundraisers with friends and family.


Tickets will go on sale in November — mark your calendars and get ready for a Seuss-tastic show full of laughter, music, and heart.

As the Cat in the Hat says:


“It’s fun to have fun, but you have to know how!”

And we sure know how to have fun when our whole JDL FAMILY comes together.

PS: you can share the poster on your social media to start inviting friends.



Presents



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KIDS

Saturday January 31, 2026	Sunday February 8, 2026	Sunday February 15, 2026
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Book by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty
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Yassi Pressman calls Luigi Villafuerte her “best relationship”

Hindi raw nagmamadali sa kanilang relasyon si Yassi Pressman at boyfriend na si Camarines Sur Second District Representative Luigi Villafuerte.

Itinanggi ni Yassi ang balitang nagpapakasal na sila.

“No, no, no. We’re not just taking everything in a rush situation,” sabi ni Yassi sa isang panayam na nailathala sa ABS-CBN News Online kahapon, November 24, 2025.

Masaya raw si Yassi sa two-year relationship nila ni Luigi. Paglalarawan pa niya: “Best relationship I ever had in my life.”

Ayon kay Yassi, mahal na mahal niya ang boyfriend pero ramdam niyang mas mahal siya ni Luigi.

Saad niya: “Mahal na mahal ko si Luigi,

tapos pinakagrabe yung nararamdaman kong love niya for me.

“This is the most I’ve been loved ever.

“It’s a beautiful thing na ina-admire niya ako bilang tao—everything, flaws and all.”

Isa sa pinakakontrobersiyal na pinag-usapan tungkol sa relasyon nila ay noong May 23, 2024, kung saan pinupog ng halik ni Luigi si Yassi sa entablado sa week-long Kaogma festival celebration ng kanilang lalawigan.

Nabatikos naman si Luigi noong October 24, 2024, matapos akusahan ng netizens na nagbabakasyon ito sa Siargao habang nananalasa ang bagyong Kristine sa bansa.

Naaapektuhan pa ba sila sa mga batikos na ito?

NOOD KA MUNA!

Sagot ni Yassi, “No, hindi, e.

“About us, I don’t really give it the time and the energy.

“Kasi sobrang dami ring nagbibigay sa amin ng energy and love.

“Ako, I admire him sa trabaho niya as public servant. He’s there, he’s present.

“Alam niya yung ginagawa niya. He memorizes everything and it seems noble.”

Read: Netizens react to Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson’s beso moment

YASSI NOT PUBLICLY POSTING ABOUT THEM SINCE SEPTEMBER 2024

Matapos ang selebrasyon nina Yassi at Luigi ng kanilang first anniversary noong

September 2024, hindi na madalas nagpu-post ang aktres tungkol sa kanilang dalawa.

Pero sa kanyang anniversary post, ibinahagi ni Yassi ang ilang videos ng pamamasyal nila sa bansang Bhutan.

Ayon sa aktres, napakasuwerte niya at nakahanap siya ng boyfriend na katulad ni Luigi na hindi lamang maaruga sa kanya kundi pati na rin sa nasasakupan nito.

Mensahe ni Yassi (published as is), “you



& me.

“How did I get so lucky? I found someone so driven and dedicate to his work for the people ~ who went out of his way to make this memorable trip happen for the following reasons; to slowdown and appreciate how beautiful this world is, most especially, to help us realize how blessed we are to be living in it and we shouldn’t be wasting our time not spending every moment with people that we love and care about.

“you don’t get to meet people with this kind of vision everyday and oftentimes life in the city gets so soooooo busy that we forget to actually....just....live :)”

47 YEARS STRONG: CPUAAGTA INDUCTS NEW OFFICERS FOR 2026-2028

Toronto, Ontario — The Central Philippine University Alumni Association Greater Toronto Area Chapter (CPUAAGTA) proudly announces the induction of its Officers and Board of Directors (BOD) for the 2026-2028 term. The ceremony took place on October 26, 2025, during the Chapter’s Annual Thanksgiving and Christmas Celebration. Deputy Mayor of Mississauga, Councillor John Kovac, served as the inducting officer and guest speaker, honoring the Chapter’s incoming leaders and recognizing their enduring commitment to service and community-building.

This year’s induction marks another meaningful milestone for CPU alumni across the Greater Toronto Area and the Province of Ontario. It reaffirms CPUAAGTA’s unwavering dedication to strengthening unity, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting both their alma mater and their local communities. — CPUAAGTA Officers & Board of Directors (2026-2028) Present in photo (as displayed):

- Gerry Falco — BOD
- Joe Vincent Quanico — BOD
- Jun Faldas —BOD
- Rose Celiz — BOD
- Kellah Dayao — Auditor
- Remy Dime — BOD
- Deputy Mayor John Kovac — Inducting Officer
- Rick Falco — BOA
- Nimfa M. Lim



— PRO • Jolly Alocilja — Treasurer • Kaye Maude — Secretary • Rodney Gicana — Vice President • Norma Van Dusen — President

Not in the picture (from official listing):

- Beethoven Crasco — Assistant PRO
- Rose Jabat — Business Manager
- Rinand Escuban — BOD —

Incoming President: Norma Van Dusen

Norma Van Dusen, the newly inducted President, is a respected community leader, retired Registered Nurse, and long-time pillar of CPUAAGTA. Born and raised in the Philippines, she immigrated to Canada in 1973, beginning her nursing career at the Royal Victoria Hospital before permanently settling in Ontario in 1975. Norma built a distinguished professional career,



managing more than 120 ICU nurses and later excelling as a Territory Manager specializing in clinical wound care—earning multiple Sales Achievement Awards. A committed volunteer, she has been active with CPUAAGTA since 2001, previously serving as Secretary and completing two full terms as President over six years. She played a crucial role in the success of the CPU Global Reunion in July 2025 and continues to serve as an inspiring figure in the alumni community. Her decision to accept a third

term as President reflects her deep belief that “success is a collective journey.” She emphasizes teamwork, transparency, and accountability—values she describes as part of the enduring “Central Spirit” that unites CPU alumni and motivates them to serve. “By the end of Norma’s term, she will be the first-ever CPUAAGTA President to serve for nine years—an extraordinary legacy of dedication to the Chapter and our alma mater,” said Rick Falco, founding President. —

About CPUAAGTA: The Central Philippine University Alumni Association of Greater Toronto Area began with humble beginnings 47 years ago. In the summer of 1978, Dr. Ravelo Argamaso, a CPU professor, visited Toronto to meet with Centralians and encourage the formation of a local alumni chapter. Inspired by his vision, Rick Falco and Rev. Godfrey Catanus began holding meetings at the basement of the former Salvation Army Citadel—now the First Filipino Baptist Church. With fewer than 20 founding officers and members, Rick Falco became the Chapter’s first President. From that modest start, CPUAAGTA has grown into a vibrant organization with hundreds of members across the Greater Toronto Area and the Province of Ontario. For nearly 25 years, CPUAAGTA has sustained an endowment fund providing financial support to deserving students at Central Philippine University. Its officers and members are active volunteers not only within the alumni association but also in their respective local communities, professional organizations, and churches. The Chapter also extends assistance during calamities affecting Iloilo City and Iloilo Province. Guided continually by the “Central Spirit,” CPUAAGTA remains steadfast in its mission to serve, uplift, and make a meaningful impact—To God be the glory.

‘Milkin’ over ‘Birkin’: Lovi Poe makes breast milk pumping fashionable

Actress Lovi Poe is making breast milk pumping fashionable as she shared a video of herself preparing to pump milk for her newborn.

The celebrity mom posted the clip on Instagram, set to Madonna’s “Vogue.” In the video, she wore a white, loose-fitting dress paired with dark pants while carrying her breast pump equipment.

“Time to pump but it make it fashyown,” she wrote as a text within the video.

“I mean, who needs a Birkin when you got a Milkin. Choss,” the actress joked, referencing the iconic handbag by French luxury brand Hermès.

The video was reposted by a showbiz blog on Monday, November 10, while screengrabs of the clip also circulated on Facebook.

Breast milk pumping refers to the process of using a device to extract milk from the breasts when direct breastfeeding is not possible. It allows mothers to main-

tain their milk supply even when they are away from their babies.

Meanwhile, Lovi previously welcomed her first child with British film producer Monty Blencowe.

Last October, she shared a video of her carrying her newborn with the caption, “The moment I met you, instinct took over. Welcome to the world, my love.”

The actress and Monty married in England in 2023 and publicly revealed their relationship in 2019.



Industry leader says tariff pressures are hitting Canadian manufacturing

TARIFFS from page 17

vice-delivery destinations,” he noted.

Mr. Gador also noted that the two proposals do not address cost and staffing challenges in the US, casting doubt on large-scale reshoring.

“A typical US-based call center agent earns around \$18/hour (excluding benefits, training, insurance, etc.), bringing total costs to \$30-\$40/hour. In comparison, a Philippine-based agent earns \$12-\$15/hour,

all-inclusive. This gap alone discourages reshoring, even when factoring in possible penalties from government,” he said.

However, the threat of US offshoring should push office developers to offer competitive rates and high-quality spaces to sustain take-up, property consultants said.

Landlords must diversify their office portfolios to attract non-US global capability centers; offer ready-for-occupancy suites; and invest in dual power feeds,

connectivity, and AI-ready infrastructure, Mr. Curran said.

Developers should also take a more “pragmatic approach” in renewal negotiations, Mr. Espinosa said.

“A lot of these companies engage their landlords way ahead of lease expirations and would generally ask for flexibility heading into their renewal terms,” he said.

Ontario losing Industrial Edge

The impact is being specially felt

in Ontario.

In October, Stellantis announced plans to move production of its Jeep Compass to Illinois, after previously pausing production at the Brampton, Ont., plant in February as a result of Trump’s tariffs. A week later, General Motors announced an end to production of its electric delivery van at the Ingersoll, Ont. plant.

Volpe said that every time a car plant closes, it impacts up to 10,000 jobs between the auto-

maker and the suppliers.

With trade talks halted between the U.S. and Canada, Volpe said there’s currently nothing to compel the U.S. to come back to the table, and until that changes, Canada will have to increase its focus on what it can do for itself.

He said while that won’t replace the majority of our export market, “in the interim we’ve got to focus on what you can control.”

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Canada-Philippines VFA Signed

CANADA-PHILIPPINES from page 1

The SOVFA with the Philippines is Canada’s first in the Indo-Pacific.

The agreement provides a legal framework for joint military activities, allowing the armed forces of both countries to enhance cooperation. It governs the presence of foreign troops in the Philippines during exercises, training, or other activities.

The SOVFA requires ratification by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and approval by two-thirds of the Senate before it takes effect. With this, Canada becomes the fifth country with which the Philippines has a VFA.

The Philippines also has SOVFAs with Australia, New Zealand, and Japan—the latter known as the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)—as well as a longstanding VFA with the United States. Negotiations are ongoing for a similar security deal with France.

When asked how the SOVFA with Canada differs from agreements with other allies, Teodoro said it reflects the “specific specializations and distinct experiences each country’s military brings.”

“We have much to learn and much to converge on with Canada, distinct from Australia and the other countries we have agreements with, but we will converge in upholding the rules-based international order,” he added.

During a joint press briefing, Teodoro said the SOVFA would



Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and Canadian Minister of National Defense David McGuinty signed the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement in Makati City following their bilateral meeting on Nov. 2, 2025.

strengthen internal resilience through military exchanges and information-sharing while providing protection to both Manila and Ottawa from external threats.

“[It] provides a legal shield against forces that may seek to disrupt our way of life, peace, stability, and security,” he said, without naming any country.

“More importantly, [it provides] a framework to predict, prevent, or respond to future threats that may emerge,” he added.

McGuinty said Ottawa strengthened its security cooperation with Manila due to their shared “common perspective on the world.”

“Peace is built on rules, not recklessness, and stability grows from cooperation, not confrontation. The Philippines has shown true leadership in upholding international law and

seeking peaceful dispute resolution,” he said.

“For that, you have Canada’s

Philippines imported just \$8.17 from the US while \$32 billion came from China

greatest respect,” he added. “We are proud to deepen our partnership with a country that acts courageously on these values, not just in words, but through dedicated work toward regional peace and security.”

China cautions Philippines and Canada over new defense deal

Key Points

- Beijing says defense cooper-

ation should not harm third parties or undermine regional peace.

- Manila and Ottawa signed a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement to expand joint military drills.

China cautioned that defense cooperation between nations should not be directed against any third party, after the Philippines and Canada signed a new military pact aimed at deepening joint operations in the Asia-Pacific.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters that Beijing has “always held the view that defense and security cooperation between countries should not target any third party or harm the interests of third parties.” She added that “showing off military strength and provoking confrontation are not conducive to regional peace and stability.”

Her remarks followed the announcement of a new defense agreement between Manila and Ottawa, signed Sunday by Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and Canadian Defense Minister David McGuinty. The pact, known as the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA), provides the legal framework for each nation’s troops to participate in joint training and military exercises on the other’s territory.

According to the Philippine Department of Defense, the SOVFA will also enhance coordination during humanitarian and disaster response operations.

In a joint statement, both defense leaders emphasized the shared goal of promoting stability and maintaining a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Teodoro, who has frequently criticized Beijing’s actions in the South China Sea, described the agreement as “vital” for maintaining international law and freedom of navigation. “Who is hegemonic? Who wants to expand their territory in the world? China,” he told reporters after the signing ceremony.

McGuinty said the partnership would deepen interoperability and strengthen regional cooperation, particularly in responding to natural disasters—a common threat to many countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

The deal closely mirrors other agreements Manila has reached with the United States, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, signaling a broadening network of Western-aligned defense partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. The Philippines has hosted a growing number of foreign troops for joint drills and maritime patrols, many of which have taken place near the contested South China Sea.

For Manila and its allies, the agreement with Canada adds another layer of deterrence and cooperation amid rising tensions with China. For Beijing, it represents yet another sign of what it views as Western encirclement and interference in regional affairs.

CANADA-PHILIPPINES page 22

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MACKY'S LECHON

Fil-Can Commerce Chamber Conducts Officers Induction And Christmas Gala

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

A memorable evening of goodness, glee, and glamour descended upon a beautifully decorated and brightly lit ballroom in Southwest Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario, on November 22, 2025. Significantly, it was the occasion of a prominent association having celebrated an event worthy of notable mention, unabashed pride and praise among the hosts, sponsors and guests who came in formal outfits.

Truly, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce-Toronto (PCCT) recently held its “Christmas Gala and Induction Night” at QSI Banquet Hall, Scarborough. With the theme “Honouring Business Excellence and Commitment”, the executive officers, board directors, and members of the premier business organisation in Ontario’s Filipino Canadian community successfully delivered an enjoyable evening programme of social engagement, wonderful entertainment, business networking and fellowship.

Admirably and ably hosted



by Kristiane Pascual and Gizele Mirasol, the 6-hour affair opened with the singing of the national anthems, the reading of Land acknowledgement by Aldrin Nikko Aguilar and the public introduction of the PCCT Executive Officers led by President Nestor Von Canton and proudly followed by the members of the Board of Directors.

Formally inducted to a 2-year term by PCG K.L.R. Salle were Von Canton-President, Philip Beloso-VP Government & Trade Relations, Gizele Mirasol-VP Public Relations, Lilac Cana-VP Membership, Mark Gabriel-Secretary, Aldrin Nikko Aguilar-Treasurer, and Rainier San Pascual-Auditor and the Board of Directors composed of Luis Brosas, Prescilla Can-

tos, Beethoven Crasco, Rommel Lumbao, JB Ramos, Valentina Salas, Lloyd Serrano and Erlene Sylvester.

In his address, the PCCT head honcho stressed that, “we will build a stronger, more vibrant Filipino Canadian business landscape—one rooted in unity, culture and shared purpose”. Meanwhile, the Honourable Kristine Leilani R. Salle, the Philippine Consul General in Toronto and the event’s Guest of Honour and Speaker, after congratulating the newly inducted officers, stated that: “We look forward to working more closely with the PCCT in taking concrete steps towards further strengthening the trade investments between the Philippines and Canada”.

The Member of Parliament

for Scarborough Centre & Don Valley East, Salma Zahid, gave her greetings in person, and also, the MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Vince Gasparro, the MPP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Michelle Cooper and the Philippine Trade Commissioner in Toronto, Mario Tani. Among those who provided written messages were Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Philippine Ambassador to Canada Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga, Philippine Consul General in Toronto Kristine Leilani R. Salle, Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville and Minister Rechie Valdez and MPP Andrea Hazell.

The 21 new PCCT members are Aileen Acosta, Julie Banas, Ben Corpuz, Tomas De Guia, Gary Cesar De Guzman, Poy De

Lara, Irene Dominguez, Joseph Franco, Bona Gallano, Maria Guinto, Chris Jovellanos, Jason Jovellanos, Jonathan Macala, Wilson Ngo, Vina Raymundo, Aileen Rendoque, Emilio Reyes, Mayla Reyes, Carmen Shoukrala, Jacqueline Tayag, and Bryan June Valle.

Five Fil-Can community pillars and leaders, namely, Erlinda Insigne, Rafael Nebres, Agnes P. Miranda, Tony A. Luis San Juan and Monina Lim-Serrano, were honoured with “Lifetime Achievement Awards”. Guests were treated earlier to a wine and cheese cocktail reception, and a chicken and beef dinner and wine was served. Cultural and musical entertainment was provided by Fil-Can soprano Lilac Cana, singer Joseph Arevalo and the Hawaiian Pacific Magic Dancers. An on-the-spot participatory Hawaiian moves by the audience game guests was carried out to the crowd’s delight. There were lots of selfies, photo ops, bantering, side talks and table-hopping catch-ups.

One of the main highlights of **CHAMBER page 22**

FCT Honours 5 Fil-Can Outstanding Student Graduates

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

STUDENTS from page 3

Invocation, Land Acknowledgement, and Closing remarks, respectively. FCT Board Chair Efren De Villa, and TDSB Vice Principal Fermer Santos introduced the Mr. K. Cabrera and

Ms. M. A. G. Santos, while FCT Vice President Theresa Lumanlan ably hosted the afternoon event.

Among the distinguished guests were 5 Federal Members of Parliament such as Minister Rechie Valdez of Mississau-

ga Streetsville, Salma Zahid of Scarborough Centre & Don Valley East, Jean Yip of Scarborough-Agincourt, and Vince Gasparro of Eglinton-Lawrence. The Members of Provincial Parliament present were Assoc. Minister Vijay Thanigasalam of Scar-

borough-Rouge, Aris Babikian of Scarborough-Agincourt, and Doly Begum of Scarborough Southwest. MP for Scarborough North Shaun Chen, MPP for Scarborough North Raymond Cho, and MPP for Don Valley North Jonathan Tsao present-

ed their Congratulatory Scrolls through their representatives.

Wonderful songs were rendered by Danny Almodal Orbillo and Nicolas Manlapaz, while the Outstanding Post-Secondary Honouree, Kiana Crystal Craig **STUDENTS page 23**

GOD'S LITTLE PARADISE

Another gem of the Visayas, Bohol's Historical significance extends way back to the blood compact between boholano chieftain sikatuna and the Spanish Conquistador, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, in 1565.

Scenic Bohol Casts an enigmatic charm drawn from the many archaic mementos spread throughout the oval-shaped island: from the chocolate hills and the tarsier to the 16th century watchtowers and Jesuit baroque mission churches. The Chocolate Hills that abound in Central Bohol, two have been developed into top class resorts.

Sunset @ Sta. Fe Beach

Chocolate Hills

Balicasag Resort & Diving Spot

A tropical havel of beauty, the coastline of province is skimmed by gentle coves and white sand beaches. You can fins some of the country's great dive sights here. Balicasag in Bohol is one of the most popular dives in visayas.

One of the Rare Faunas found in the Philippine archipelago, the Tarsier is the smallest primate in the world. It is a nocturnal primate measuring from four to five inches, with a tail that is longer than body.

Those Interested in tarsier watching are always welcomed by the Boholanos to see the famous primate in its natural adobe up the hills in the town of Corella

A black coral forest is among its main attractions but virtually anywhere you drop in is sure to be rewarding. another major attraction, Cabilao is renowned for the hammerhead sharks that shoal around the clear waters. Large pelagics are very common here. And if you are really luck, you can find yourself swimming with a passing school of dolphins.

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Regine Velasquez wins hearts after reaching out to struggling pastry business owner



“Asia’s Songbird” Regine Velasquez touched the hearts of many Filipinos after expressing her intent to order from a pastry business owner who had shared her disappointment over not reaching the “break-even” point at a bazaar.

The term break-even refers to the stage where a business’ costs and income are equal, resulting in neither profit nor loss.

An online user on X (formerly Twitter) shared a screenshot of Regine’s comment to Toni Morales of Sweet Tones by Toni, a business that sells chocolates and pastries.

“The way Ate @reginevalcasid uplifts others, even small business owners. KAYA MAHAL

NA MAHAL KITA EH,” the X user commented with emojis of a sparkling heart, crying face, and a pleading face.

The post has so far garnered over 7,300 likes, 437 reposts, and more than a dozen comments on X.

The TikTok video referenced in the post showed Toni initially expressing her disappointment over not meeting her sales goals at the bazaar. Toward the end of the clip, she became emotional and was seen in tears.

“First bazaar na ‘di ako naka-break even. Iniisip ko na agad paano ‘yung extra stocks ng cakes and chocolates, overhead, pasahod and etc,” the text on video reads.

“Reality naman ng business, it’s not always UP, may mga down din talaga. First time ko rin na-experience, kaya na-overwhelm ako,” she added.

“Pero babawi ako! Kaya ‘to! Will be selling extra stocks online later and tomorrow,” Toni continued.

“Hangga’t may pasahod lang, okay na,” Toni captioned the post.



Regine then expressed intent to order from Toni’s business.

“Hello, I’m wondering if you take orders for Christmas?” the singer commented.

Her comment received over 45,000 likes from TikTok users, with many Filipinos expressing admiration for her kindness and support toward the small business owner.

“OMG, Ate Reggg, kaya mahal na mahal ka namin. [You’re]



so very kind,” a TikTok user wrote.

“Omg, Ms. Regine,” another commented.

“Omg, napaka-supoortive talaga ni ate,” a different Pinoy said.

The comment also caught Toni’s attention and she replied, “OMG, yes po,” accompanied by a heart emoji.

Sweet Tones by Toni is a business that offers pastries, chocolates, and crack cakes.

Fil-Can Commerce Chamber Conducts Officers Induction And Christmas Gala

CHAMBER page 21

the celebration was the” Chamber’s Connect Series”, a Q&A panel interview and business experience sharing participated by Kendall Marin, a business company president, Aleah Lon-

gaphie, a senior corporate executive, and Rommel Lumbao, a principal architect & entrepreneur. PCCT VP-Public Relations Gizele Mirasol moderated the highly informative session. Philip Beloso, PCCT VP-Gov-

ernment and Trade Relations, who celebrated his Nth birthday, gave the closing address.

Marking its 35th year, PCCT is a “vibrant and dynamic organisation with a vision to be the voice of the Fil-Can communi-

ty and a mission to encourage and promote bilateral economic ties between Canada and the Philippines”. Presently, it is observed to be on the sustainable threshold of true transformation guided and supported by a

forward-thinking, unified and resolute team of youthful leadership, business-focused, and governance-experienced members---purposefully challenged and encouraged to progressively deliver their noble mandate.

Canada-Philippines VFA Signed

CANADA-PHL from page 20

Canada & Philippines both want Regional Stability

The SOVFA comes as the Philippines expands its network of security alliances in response to growing provocations by Beijing in the West Philippine Sea, part

of the South China Sea within the country’s 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone.

According to Teodoro, the agreement reflects the “trust and confidence” between nations that can work together bilaterally and with like-minded partners “to preserve and enforce peace and stability and deter instabil-

ity.”

The DND chief also responded to a Chinese military spokesperson’s recent remark calling the Philippines a “troublemaker in the South China Sea” for conducting maritime drills with the US, New Zealand, and Australia on Oct. 30–31.

Teodoro said the statement

highlights China’s disregard for international law and reinforces the need for such activities.

“So are they saying they own the area or have exclusive jurisdiction and sovereignty over the high seas and airspace? If China feels it is an intrusion, we refute that,” he said.

McGuinty added that Canada

looks forward to participating with the Philippines and other partners in exercises in the West Philippine Sea to improve regional stability.

“Canada remains resolute in support of Filipino sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is something we fully recognize,” he said.

‘Nakakaloka’: Kim Chiu shatters KimErald reunion call

Kim Chiu shut down the fantasy of KimErald fans for a comeback project between her and former on- and off-screen partner Gerald Anderson.

A video of Kim and Gerald at the Star Magical Christmas 2025 went viral, where they were awarded with Loyalty Awards.

Gerald greeted Kim and they hugged each other.

KimErald, the name of their fans, were glad to see Kim and Gerald interact with each other.



stress for being vocal about her true feelings.

“Kim is in her outspoken era. Alam na n’ya ang worth n’ya at ‘di kailangan always silent and be a nice girl. Naaabuso ang ganyang image ng mga users sa showbiz,” an X user commented.

“Maganda ngayon career ni Kim. Mukhang hindi na siya mapipilit ng management or even fans to save Gerald’s image / career,” another commented.

Kim and Gerald were part of the first edition of “Pinoy Big Brother: Teen Edition” in 2006, where Kim eventually won.

Kim, however, opted to downplay this interaction.

“Nakakaloka ‘yung feed ko ah. Kung makapag-relapse akala mo talaga eh di tayo niloko 15 years ago!!! hahahahaha char not char!!!!” Kim wrote on X.

Fans of Kim commended the ac-

Candid CAMERA



Guests enjoyed the lunch, merienda, dinner, snacks by FV Foods and Jackie’s Cakes at the Community Christmas party sponsored by Remitly, GCash, & Filipino Centre Toronto.

Lifetime Achievement Award



Ex-Filipino Bulletin Editor Ricky Caluen poses with PCCT Lifetime Achievement Awardee Tony A. San Juan.



A heartfelt and resounding congratulations to the two exceptional PIDC advisors and pillars of our Filipino-Canadian community – Fil-Can educator and community leader Tony A. San Juan and the esteemed Agnes Miranda, a financial educator, philanthropist— for being honored with the prestigious “2025 Lifetime Achievement Award,” conferred by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce–Toronto (PCCT) on November 22, 2025, at QSSIS Banquet Hall, Scarborough.

This recognition is more than an award – it is a celebration of decades of unwavering service, leadership, and dedication to

uplifting Filipino excellence in Canada. Their tireless advocacy, integrity, and remarkable contributions have inspired countless individuals, strengthened our community, and paved the way for future generations of Filipino-Canadian leaders.

Today, we applaud not only their accomplishments, but the heart, compassion, and purpose behind every milestone they have achieved. Their legacy is a reminder that true leadership is measured not by titles, but by the lives touched and the positive change.

Congratulations! Well-deserved award!

Hunk Shot

Manuel, 30 is an optical laboratory technician. He practices Muay Thai, a Thai martial art and full-contact combat sport that uses stand-up striking, sweeps, and various clinching techniques. His favourite food is steak.

Manuel Gavina

Belle Mariano on her big-screen success

Belle Mariano is riding a wave of momentum as the family drama “Meet, Greet & Bye,” starring Maricel Soriano, Piolo Pascual, Joshua Garcia, Mariano, and Juan Karlos Labajo, continues its strong box-office run.

Mariano was still reeling from the box-office figures she kept receiving – how the film earned P33 million just three days after its Nov. 12 opening, and how, five days later, its worldwide gross had already climbed to P120 million.

Mariano was still absorbing the news when asked about the film’s early performance.



“I can’t believe it!” she said, adding that the story is beautiful after all. “You can feel its heart, and the love that went into making it,” she said in an interview with The Manila Times and other members of the press.

“I hope there will be more support for ‘Meet,

Greet, and Bye.’ Because the message we’re sharing is so beautiful – just keep spreading love.”

According to her, she has been receiving positive reviews of the movie and even seeing videos of the audience crying after watching.

“It’s really important for us artists to know that the audience likes the product or the effort we put in,” Mariano added.

Away from the screen, Mariano has been open about the small routines that

keep her centered, especially during long workdays. Lately, she shared, she has been prioritizing rest.

“I try to sleep as much as I can. I even nap in the car. That’s my form of self-care and when I do that, I feel like I have more energy,” she said.

“Don’t forget to take care of yourself too and always practice good hygiene. I feel like when you look after yourself, you’re better able to take care of others,” she added.

STUDENTS from page 21

responded via video as she was in

the Philippines having recently won the Miss Glamour Look International beauty title. On her

behalf , Alliance of the Ladies of Knights President Trinidad Calaguio received Craig’s award.

Also in attendance were the other FCT directors & officers, the awardees’ parents & friends,

community & media leaders and volunteers. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).



Happy 60th birthday Floresita Ygrubay!!!

Floresita Ygrubay celebrated her 60th birthday with family and friends at Rembrandt. While it was pouring rain outside, there was only warmth brought by love of family and friends, music to dance the night away and delicious food by Rembrandt and its Foods to last the happy evening of celebration.



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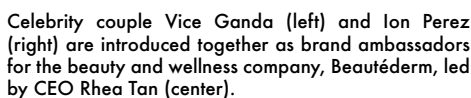
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An advertisement for LM Confidential (LMC) online content. The background is a collage of newspaper clippings. At the top, the text "LM confidential • INDEOSPERAMUS • LM confidential • LM confidential" is repeated in a red banner. Below this, the "LM confidential" logo is shown in a red circle, with "Little Manila" written above it. The main headline reads "LM confidential • LMc" in large, bold, red letters. Below the headline, it says "You can also read LM Confidential (LMC) online!" in black text. The website "LMconfidential.com" is displayed in large, bold, red letters. To the right, the email address "EMAIL: pleasurelife@email.com" is shown in bold black text. In the foreground, three devices are shown displaying the LM Confidential website: a laptop, a smartphone, and a tablet. The laptop screen shows the date "NOVEMBER 2020", the "LM confidential" logo, and the headline "L is for Rabbit". Below the headline, it says "DepEd Online modules with questions like 'How do Airplanes Sound' confuses mom and baffles Broadway actress and singer Lea Salonga". The smartphone and tablet also display the same website content. The bottom of the advertisement features the text "LM confidential • INDEOSPERAMUS • LM confidential • LM confidential" in a red banner.

‘Kawawa ang sining’: OPM community sounds alarm as ‘AI artist’ hits Spotify PH chart



Digital art portrait of a person listening to music on headphones (Image from freepik)

OPM artists expressed alarm over reports that an “AI artist” had reached Spotify Philippines’ Daily Top Artists chart.

The social media account @allchartsPH, which posts music charts related to Original Pilipino Music (OPM), said on Sunday, November 16, that an “AI artist that covers Filipino songs” made its debut on a Spotify chart.

The post has received 600 likes, 966 reposts, and 124 replies on X (formerly Twitter), including reactions from some OPM artists themselves.

“Ubos brain cells, lahat ng pagpupuyat, at wala ng page sa notebook na sinusulat na ng kanta, para lang matalo ng isang robot na iniiba lang ang genre ng mismong kanta. Patawa kayo guys,” singer Mrld, or Meriel de Jesus, wrote.

Singer-songwriter TJ Monterde also reposted the report, adding a face-with-stream emoji.

Singer-songwriter Janine Teñoso also reacted to the development with a series of question marks and exclamation points.

Singer Eliza Maturan likewise reacted with a single question mark.

“Grabe naman, kawawa ang sining,” singer-songwriter Adie commented.

“Sad,” actress-singer Angela Ken also wrote.

Singer-songwriter Maki also expressed strong sentiments about the entry of an “AI artist” into the local Spotify chart.

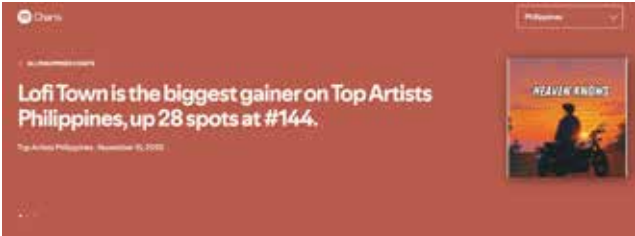
“I already told [you],” he wrote with a crying emoticon.

“But [you] keep on using OPM AI-generated songs on the clock app,” the “KOLORCOASTER” singer added.

“Clock app” is another term for the TikTok app.

“Don’t get me wrong, I think it’s cool and handy. AI is actually a great tool for assistance and learning, BUT it should not replace humans,” he said.

The singer also urged Filipinos to “respect” the original artist of the song,



Screengrab from Spotify Philippines’ Daily Top Artists Chart as of November 15 (Screengrab by Interaksyon from charts.spotify.com)

which was being used to generate a version through AI.

“Also, respeto na lang din sa mga artist na nagsulat, nag-record, at nag-promote sa mga kanta na ‘yan from SCRATCH,” Maki said with a crying emoticon.

The “AI artist” in question refers to Lofi Town, which appeared on Spotify Philip-

pires’ Daily Top Artists chart.

As of November 15, Lofi Town ranked number 144. The streaming platform reported that the artist has been on the chart for two days, debuting on November 14 at number 172.

Lofi Town is currently charting higher than other artists such as Apo Hiking Society, Calein, and bands Dilaw and Nobita, among others.

“Lofi Town is the biggest gainer on Top Artists Philippines, up 28 spots at #144,” Spotify said in its Charts report.

Some Filipinos speculated that Lofi Town reached the chart because TikTok users were sharing the artist’s songs, particularly a “rock version” of Rick Price’s 1992 hit, “Heaven Knows.”

The songs are reportedly generated through AI.

“Ito na ata ‘yung Heaven Knows rock version na gal-ing sa TikTok, t*ng*na,” an online user commented.

“Nag-name drop sana. Lofi Town, eww,” said another user.

“Heaven Knows rock version, trending on TikTok, probably,” another X user wrote.

A look at Lofi Town’s Spotify account shows that it has over 247,000 monthly listeners and 5,311 followers, but no artist description.

The account credits “Renegade Ac Collins” as the composer and lyricist of the rock version of “Heaven Knows.” The original song, however, was performed by Australian singer-songwriter Rick Price,

and he has no rock version of it.

The song’s original composers are Rick and Heather Field.

Meanwhile, other X users pointed out another Spotify artist, “Skate Avenue PH,” which also posts rock covers of songs. Its artist description reads: “Turning your favorite hits into punk rock energy.”

“Si Skate Ave PH ‘to, no? Andun sa Spotify e. ‘Di din ata nag-process ng Cover License,” an X user asked.

Others criticized the music streaming platform, urging it to be more discerning.

“Music is ART. AI-generated songs [or] covers are NOT ART.

@Spotify, do better and ban that piece of crap! We are paying to compensate REAL artists, not AI,” a user wrote.

Interaksyon has reached out to Spotify Philippines for comment.

Meanwhile, online services exist that allow users to generate music using AI.

Last July, CNBC reported on AI-generated bands “going viral on streaming platforms,” noting that it has “sparked concerns across the music industry over copyright issues and human replacement.”

“Aside from calling for better copyright protections for artists when it comes to the training of AI, music organizations are asking that AI-generated songs be labeled as such,” the report said.

The report added that CNBC reached out to Spotify “regarding its generative AI detection and labeling policies,” but the platform “did not respond.”

Film director Albert Langitan on CinePop!: We’re not a porn site

Director Albert Langitan, the creative force steering CinePop!, emphasized that the entertaining platform is far from a destination for adult content.

Director Albert Langitan and Apples Angeles, star of the vertical series ‘Mansanas ni Eba,’ now streaming on CinePop!

Director Albert Langitan and Apples Angeles, star of the vertical series ‘Mansanas ni Eba,’ now streaming on CinePop!

Albert clarified that CinePop! is dedicated to providing a diverse range of engaging films and shows for vertical viewing that reflect artistic storytelling rather than anything explicit.

“We’re not porn. Ours is not a porn site, and our stars do not show their gen-

itals. But our concept revolves around the theme of eroticism,” said the director during a press conference at their head office in Quezon City recently.

Albert emphasized the profound significance of intimacy in our lives, asserting that sex is an essential facet of the human experience. He articulated that a vibrant and fulfilling sex life acts as a cornerstone for sustaining a relationship, nurturing deeper connections, and enduring passion between partners. “Sex sells. Part yan ng pagiging tao. (That’s part of being human.) It’s essential to have a healthy sex life. If not, your relationship might be destroyed.”

The director also makes a point of en-

suring there is no exploitation of their stars during the shoot for CinePop!

“When it comes to exploitation, we avoid that. Before we shoot, we ask our stars about their limitations and parameters — walang sapilitan (We don’t force them.) Kapag lumampas doon hindi na namin gagawin. May mga instances na biglang nagbabago ang isip nila. Sabi ko, ‘Okay lang yun. No worries. Walang sapilitan. (If it goes beyond that, we won’t do it. There are instances where they suddenly change their minds. I said, ‘That’s okay. No worries.



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Erwan Heussaff weighs in on Michelin as ‘validation’ for Filipinos

James Beard awardee and food content creator Erwan Heussaff highlighted what the prestigious, world-renowned Michelin recognition has accomplished so far amid online discussions about its relevance.

As inspectors from Michelin, a respected global authority on dining and travel recommendations, made their debut in the Philippines to evaluate restaurants and food businesses for the Michelin Guide, conversations about its impact began to emerge online.

The Michelin Guide recognizes restaurants that are a cut above the rest worldwide, aiming to “settle in mature gastronomic destinations, to guide international travelers and local foodies to the best restaurants, to highlight world culinary scenes, and to promote travel culture.”

Receiving Michelin stars, along with other awards and recognitions, is widely regarded as a mark of culinary excellence.

On October 30, the first edition of the Michelin Guide in the Philippines was unveiled at the Marriott Manila Hotel.

A total of 108 local establishments were featured, with nine earning Michelin stars, while others received special awards.

The recognition sparked online discussions among

some Filipinos online, with critics suggesting that the buzz reflects a perceived need for “validation” from foreign entities.

Some also criticized the Michelin Guide as being “elitist.”

Erwan, a food content creator and James Beard Foundation awardee, often considered the “Oscars” of the culinary world, joined the conversation on the topic.

“The Michelin Guide is a hot topic right now. Some say that we don’t need Western validation to know our food is good. I agree, we don’t need that validation. But that’s not really the point,” he said on the Threads platform on Monday, November 3.

“I see it as another platform. One that helps promote the Philippines as a dining destination, it reinforces Filipino food on the international map, but it also reminds us of what we have,” Erwan added.

“Look at Morning Sun Eatery. It was already loved, featured by local media, JP Anglo’s vlog, by us, over at FEATR. We probably helped some people hear about it. But no massive lines, we didn’t sell it out. Then Michelin gave them a Bib. Renewed excitement. Filipinos are lining up. Locals wanting to try something new, recommended and celebrated,” he said.

Erwan was referring to the Morning Sun Eatery in

Project 4, Quezon City, which earned the Michelin Bib Gourmand Award, a distinction that recognizes establishments serving high-quality food at moderate prices.

The eatery reported that its Ilocano specialties were sold out by lunchtime the day after it was included in the Michelin Guide on October 30.

“That’s what it does: It amplifies. It drives curiosity, whether it’s to casual or fine dining eateries. Personally, I hope we see more carinderias getting their flowers, which in turn will motivate them to [keep] quality high, food hot and fresh,” Erwan said in his post.

“The restaurant industry is tough. Any bit of visibility helps. Recognition, whether local or international, gives hardworking teams and owners support and enthusiasm. I think we can focus on supporting the community. Discovering more places, eating more adventurously, and being endlessly curious about our own food,” he added.



Nothing’s forced),” he said.

In hiring stars for CinePop!, Albert said the company is not particular about body type as long as they look good on camera.

“Of course lahat sila may kanya-kanyang dahilan bakit sila naghuhubad on screen. What’s important is that we respect their decisions. Wala kaming judgment kahit sa body type. We accept all sizes as long as you look good in front of the camera, at magaling umarte. Welcome silang lahat sa CinePop! When selecting talent for CinePop!, Albert emphasizes that the company prioritizes charisma and presence over body type. As long as they shine on screen and captivate

the audience, anyone can become a star in their eyes,” he also said.

Apples Angeles, one of the stars of CinePop!, is known for her role in the series “Mansanas ni Eba,” which is currently streaming on the platform. She mentioned that she now feels comfortable performing daring scenes with CinePop!, which she described as professional.

“Before we start filming, we practice. What I like about it is that the series is done professionally,” she said. “The director asked me questions to make me comfortable during the shoot.”

Apples opened up about her personal life before joining CinePop!. She had been

in a relationship with a Filipino-Chinese businessman for 10 years before he passed away. Now, she runs a blog where she shares playful content and performs sexy dances, stating, “It’s all about sensuality.” She used to depend on her partner while he was alive, but after his passing, she learned to be independent and stronger.

On what she learned from doing daring scenes, Apples shared, “Kaya ko pala na mag-isa lang ako. I became liberated. Kaya ko pala na mailabas ang sarili ko at naintindihan din nila. Sa series nag-input ako ng mga experiences ko sa past relationships ko. Madugo ang love life ko. (I can handle being alone. I became liber-

ated. I can express myself, and they understand me. In the series, I draw on my experiences from past relationships. My love life is bloody.)”

Erwan also encouraged Filipinos to “speak out” if they think certain eateries or carinderias need public attention, sharing that what they do on FEATR, his food-oriented digital video channel, is look at recommendations before they try them out for themselves.

“If you think certain eateries or carinderias need to be featured or should have been listed, now is the time to speak out! Flood social media, get those names in circulation and people will pay attention. When we decide on who to feature on FEATR, we look at forums, [social media] and we talk to locals,” he said.

“It’s all recommendation-based before we can go ourselves to try it. We can be proud of who we are and still welcome global platforms that help tell our story. Both can be true,” Erwan concluded.

Erwan has long been creating food-related content on social media and YouTube through his digital video production company, The Fat Kid Inside, which he founded in 2013.

Under the same company, FEATR produces content that highlights Filipino cuisine, culture and travel.

Meanwhile, the Michelin Guide is renowned worldwide for its distinctions in gastronomy. Originally created in 1900 by the Michelin tire company to support the growth of automobile mobility, it has since become a trusted resource for international travelers and food enthusiasts alike.

Why Richard Gomez decided to step back into acting

Richard Gomez returns to his acting turf via Lino Cayetano's action thriller 'Salvageland,' which opens in theaters nationwide on Nov. 26.

Richard Gomez couldn't help but turn emotional when he saw the showbiz press at the grand mediacon for his acting comeback, "Salvageland," an action thriller helmed by Lino S. Cayetano.

"I really missed you all. I got teary-eyed. I've been an actor for such a long time," Richard told the press.

It was a warm feeling for the veteran actor-turned-politician to return to his "home turf," as he put it.

"I've worked with you guys for a long time. And seeing you guys again, it's wonderful."

What led him to say yes to "Salvageland" was the impressive script material. "Even before, when I was

very active in movies, the movies I did were very script-based. When this script came, I said, 'This is really good.' I checked my schedule, tamang-tama ang gulo-gulo sa (the timing was right as it was so chaotic in) Congress. So I said, 'Out muna ako diyan (I'll stay out of that) and work on this first.'"

It was also a new experience for Richard to work with direk Lino, as well as with the rest of the cast, including Elijah Canlas who plays his son in "Salvageland."

"It's a good opportunity for me to work with a new set of actors, crew and director."

Accepting "Salvageland" is a "wonderful time to be



back in my own turf as an actor," Richard reiterated, adding that he sorely missed acting. "In fact, during my first two days (of taping), I told my manager Pia (Campos) that I needed to warm up because I hadn't acted in a long time. It's our job to memorize pages and pages of lines. I haven't done that in a long time so the first two days, it was difficult for me to memorize the lines until I got back into the routine."

Richard plays a retiring policeman whose son, portrayed by Elijah, is following in his footsteps.

"I really have to go through the whole script. And then re-read, re-read, re-read and then I was acting



Richard, direk Lino and Elijah with other cast members of the upcoming movie — Mon Confiado, Cindy Miranda and Angela Morena — during a grand mediacon.

alone. I was doing my lines and it went OK."

The last movie that Richard did was the 2018 family romantic comedy-drama "Three Words to Forever" with Sharon Cuneta. He was the mayor in Ormoc at that time.

Showing in cinemas nationwide on Nov. 26, "Salvageland" follows the story of Richard's character who's a policeman about to retire and his son who's a budding policeman, played by Elijah.

According to the media release, the film is set in a desolate town. Along a dead highway stands a rundown sub-police station occupied by the characters of Richard and Elijah. It's looking like a regular night for them until a wounded woman comes crying for help. She has just escaped from her abusive boyfriend, who's also the leader of a crime syndicate — and he's deadset to hunt her down.

Naturally, this sets the father and son duo into defensive mode, not just for the sake of the woman, but of their town. As the nearly-retired cop and his rookie son find themselves thrust into a brutal battle like never before, they realize that it's not just their survival skills, but their principles and their bond that are being put to a test.



The '90s matinee idol (right) is seen with director Lino (center) and co-star Elijah Canlas on the set of the film.

Described as a neo-Western kind of film, "Salvageland" also marked the return of direk Lino into feature filmmaking after focusing primarily on television directing for 15 years. The screenplay is co-written by Shugo Praico and JC Pacala.

Joining Richard and Elijah are Mon Confiado, Cindy Miranda, McCoy De Leon and Angela Morena.

The film is a collaboration between Rein Entertainment and Viva Films.

The central themes addressed in "Salvageland" remain relevant today, particularly its depiction of the clash between old and new societal systems, direk Lino maintained.

"Our film is about a cop who wants to retire and wants to live a peaceful life," direk Lino told The STAR.

"But his son, whom he raised well, is now fighting against him because he doesn't want the status quo. He wants change. So for me, in every field — in our work, in the industry, in politics, in the family, in business — the old and the new are always clashing. And it's so interesting to watch that clash."

"Salvageland" likewise highlights a woman's courage to stand up, as shown through Cindy's character as a whistleblower, direk Lino said.

He added that they were inspired by the success of the sports drama "Sunshine" and the historical drama "Quezon," and hoped to follow in their footsteps.

"You sit (in the cinemas), you get entertained, and these are very uniquely Filipino stories but the themes are universal. I think we wanna continue to ride that wave of these kinds of films."

As for Richard, the movie is "mirroring life and basically society."

"There's social relevance," he stressed.

"In the midst of all that is happening now, corruption, blaming people, in the movie, pinakita rin yung corruption nung trabaho namin (in the local government unit). Hindi lang siya on a larger scale but on the scale na saan kami at the present time," he further explained.

"It's about how we deal with problems like that. It makes you think and ask, 'What are we going to do?' That's where Elijah's character comes in — showing that we need to change our system."

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