



EXPOSING TOKHANG

Canada learns about “tokhang” as former PNP officer’s Residency Application is denied

OTTAWA - A former Philippine National Police (PNP) officer has been denied per-

manent residency in Canada due to his past role in the controversial anti-drug campaign

known as ‘Oplan Tokhang.’ This decision highlights the growing international scruti-

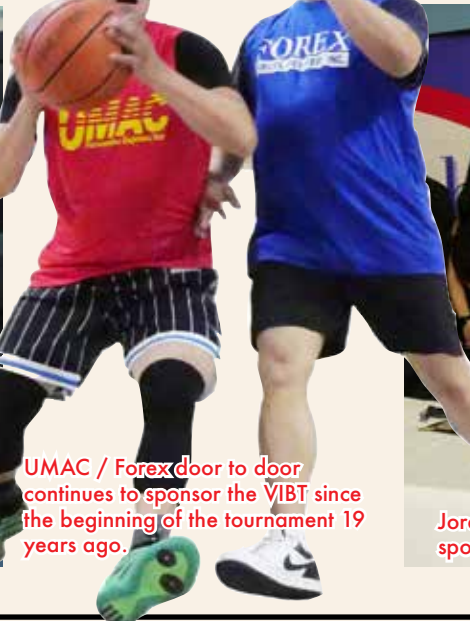
ny over law enforcement officials involved in operations linked to human rights con-

cerns. It also sets a precedent for immigration policies that
TARIFF page 16

19TH VICTORIA INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT LOOKING FORWARD TO 20TH YEAR



Durham’s #8 Ethan Bernabe receives the medal from Dr. Muneeb Ali at the conclusion of the 19th Victoria Invitational basketball Tournament.



UMAC / Forex door to door continues to sponsor the VIBT since the beginning of the tournament 19 years ago.



Jordan Pastor reads the oath of sportsmanship.

OFW in Canada gifted with million-dollar house by employer

by Roy Berlin

TORONTO - For many overseas Filipino workers, owning a house is the ultimate dream. For Rebecca Cruz, a nanny in Canada, that dream became a reality—thanks to the gener-

osity of her employer.

Rebecca Cruz, an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) and nanny in Canada, received a life-changing gift from her employer—a million-Can-

dian dollar (PHP 40 million) house. Rebecca has cared for the Griffiths family’s children for six years, earning their deep trust and affection.

OFW MILLION page 8



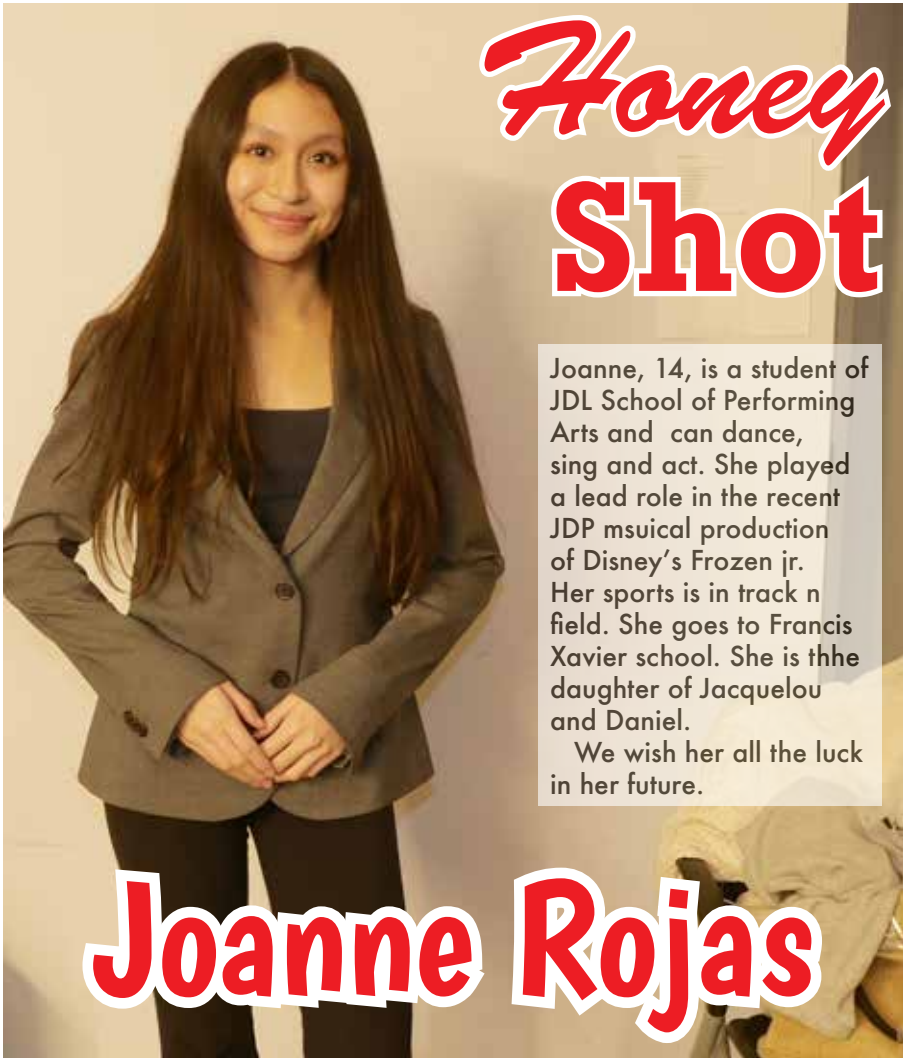
Divine Elegance

Rianneh Greeley models for God’s Strength Ministries’ Fashion Show for a Cause. Proceeds go to GSM community pantry and ministry needs.

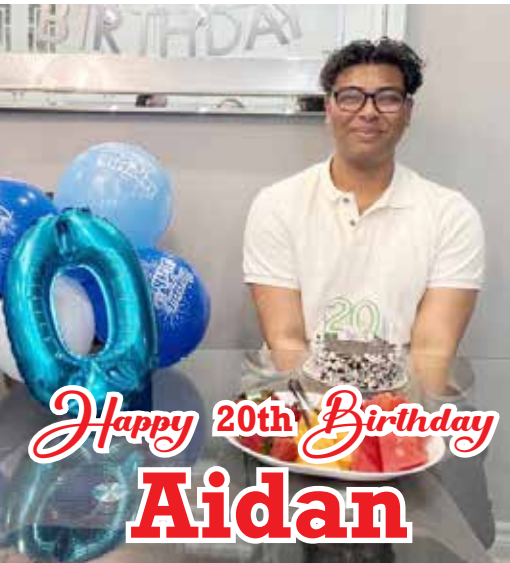
POSTCARD

Guadalupe, EDSA.1960s





Joanne, 14, is a student of JDL School of Performing Arts and can dance, sing and act. She played a lead role in the recent JDP msuical production of Disney's Frozen jr. Her sports is in track n field. She goes to Francis Xavier school. She is thhe daughter of Jacquelou and Daniel. We wish her all the luck in her future.



1. UMAC team sponsor the 19th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament; 2. UMAC and Forex team has been a sponsor of the VIBT since the beginning; 3. VIBT organizer Philip Beloso poses with Teo, Ted of UMAC and Forex.

Bicol Canada wlecome His Excellency, Papal Nuncio Adolfo Tito Yllana to Toronto

by Francis Therese Baduria

What a blessing to have met His Excellency, Papal Nuncio Adolfo Tito Yllana at a surprise gathering to-night hosted by the owners of Kapitbahay Restaurant, Egay Acuna and Bing Arias. This was organized by the President of the Bicol

Canada Association, Earl Francis Oriño Dacara and attended by its officers and close friends of Papal Nuncio, especially Msgr Ed Pan. He came to Toronto to celebrate the 50th Ordination Anniversation of Msgr Pan on Saturday May 10, 2025 at St Rose of Lima.

After dinner, each one of us received our special blessing and prayer-over by His Excellency. We pray for your continued good health as you humbly serve the Catholic community at large. God bless you po... And safe travels Your Excellen-



PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Glimpses On Significant Developments In The Philippines



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

FILIPINO FUNCTIONAL LITERACY RATE.

The Philippine Statistics Authority(PSA) in April 2025, reported the state of literacy in the country that “ While over 90% of Filipinos can read and write, just 70% can comprehend what they read”. PSA released the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) data that shows “3 in 10 Filipinos struggle to comprehend what they read”.The disparity of “lower-than-average functional literacy rate is found in “most severe levels in regions hit hardest by poverty.” Studies on social development in the Philippines generally draw a relationship between poverty and education: “economic hardship often curtails access to quality education, while poor educational outcomes make it harder for families to break the cycle of poverty.” The FLEMMS is a nationwide household survey conducted the PSA to gather data on the state of literacy in the country. It has “updated its definitions for basic and functional literacy”. Basic literacy measures a person’s ability to “read and write a simple message in any language or dialect with understanding, and to compute or perform basic mathematical operations.” Functional literacy takes basic literacy a step higher by adding a crucial element:



comprehension. In addition to the basic literacy skills, functional literacy includes higher levels of comprehension skills, such as integrating two or more pieces of information and making inferences based on the given information.” Among Filipinos aged 10 to 64, at least 93.1 % have basic literacy, but only 70.8 % achieve functional literacy. The 22.3 percentage point gap represents millions who can recognise words but struggle to extract their meaning. The PSA survey revealed how much of the country’s population can read but may not understand what they read. “Ang pinakabagong survey ng PSA ay nagpapakita na higit pa ang kailangang gawin upang isara ang agwat sa pagitan ng basic at functional literacy sa buong bansa, Ang kamakailang data ng FLEMMS ay nagtatampok ng isyu na ang 30% ng ating populasyon ay maaaring kulang sa mahahalagang kasanayan sa pagbasa at pagsulat. Ang pagsusuring ito ay higit na nagpapatunay na ang literacy ay nananatiling isang kritikal na pag-aalala na nangangailangan ng agarang

aksyon ng mga kina-uukulan.”

NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE EDUCATION PATHWAY

On March 3, 2025, President F. Marcos signed Republic Act No. 12124, or the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP). As access to higher education remains a privilege in the Philippines, the new law “offers less fortunate Filipinos a more inclusive pathway toward a college degree through non-traditional means or alternative route”. Thus, the law “allows Filipinos to earn academic credits based on their learned skills, acknowledging that knowledge is acquired not only within the four walls of a classroom but the world at large, “opens doors for skilled workers who have limited opportunities or are unable to afford traditional schooling.” Under the law, the ETEEAP will evaluate a person’s past learning and work experience—whether from school, training, or real-life jobs to determine whether these can be credited toward a college degree or special graduate

program The law requires that applicants be Filipino citizens, whether residing in the Philippines or abroad, to qualify; must also be at least 23 years old and have completed a secondary school program to be able to apply for equivalency and accreditation. To implement the program, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), shall be responsible for authorizing colleges and universities to offer degrees under the program; setting the standards for evaluating a person’s skills, knowledge, and experience; deciding whether to approve or cancel a school’s permission; and conducting “rigorous evaluations” to assess the applicants’ professional knowledge and skills, ensuring they meet the academic standards required for degree equivalency. “Sa ganitong paraan, ang mga taon ng pagsusumikap, hands-on na pagsasanay, at buhay na karanasan ay maaaring maging kasing halaga ng pagbabasa ng mga aklat-aralin o pakikinig sa mga lektura. Matagal na dapat ginawa ito ng gobyerno. Ganun pa man, malaking oportunidad at tulong ito para sa mahihirap nating kababayan na walang maraming pera pambayad sa naglalakihang matrikula sa kolehiyo para magkaroon ng mataas na edukasyon.”

POTATO AS AN ALTERNATIVE FILIPINO STAPLE.

Rice, as widely known, is the staple food among Filipino households “since time immemorial”. Rice or “bigas”, is an essential

part of Filipino cuisine and daily life, and the very foundation of almost every meal. “Kahit walang ulam, basta’t may kanin ay ayos na”, is a common saying. It is traditionally accepted that the “Filipino obsession with rice is deeply rooted in cultural and historical traditions.” However, due to poor harvest, scarcity, hoarding, importation, or increasing prices, buying and eating rice is becoming a big problem, non-stop. Is there an alternative to rice? The Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) cited the “potential of potatoes, a root vegetable, as an alternative to rice”. Potatoes are considered a staple food similar to rice due to their versatility, affordability, and nutritional value. Among the most important food crops in the world, potatoes are suitable for a wide range of dishes such as table potatoes, chips and French fries, which cater to diverse tastes and preferences while remaining a budget-friendly option for everyday cooking and eating. In 2019, the DA introduced the Sustainable Potato Program (SPP) to boost the profitability of potato farmers. The long shelf life and ability to grow in diverse climates further contribute to their status as a staple food in many cultures. “May mga katanungan na kailangang isa-alang-alang ng lahat: Ma-aari o tatanggapin kaya ng mga Filipino na maging alternatibo ang patatas sa bigas? Mas malasa, masarap at magiging mura kaya sa hinaharap ang produktong ito kaysa sa kanin? Subukan kaya natin, ano?” (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Be kind

Ahtisa Manalo reminds people ‘to be kind’ when making comments

Miss Universe Philippines 2025 Ahtisa Manalo gave a gentle reminder to pageant fans when making comments about the candidates they support. The beauty queen gave this piece of advice in a 29-second video shared by news reporter MJ Marfori on her TikTok account earlier this week. There have been several comments made on social media about Ahtisa’s performance in the recently concluded Miss Universe Philippines competition. While some had mixed reactions, most of the netizens were impressed with her stint and felt it right that she won the highly coveted crown. The Philippines’ representative to the Miss Universe competition this year shared that



she is already used to those comments as she is a public figure. “You’re a public figure, you always get unsolicited advice or opinion and I’m used to it... It’s nothing new,” she shared. Ahtisa added that despite this, she hopes that people would remain kind to the comments they put out no matter who they support in the pageantry. “I just hope that when people give these pieces of advice, that they remember to be kind,” she added. She admitted that while she doesn’t read comments, she still is like any other person with emotions. “At the end of the day, even if we don’t read most of it-- I don’t read it naman kahit anong sabihin niyo I don’t read your comments. But sometimes

when something gets true, let’s remember that we’re still people and we still feel things,” she ended. Fans of Ahtisa praised her in the comment section for being eloquent and maintaining her position. Other netizens expressed how excited they are for the Miss Universe Philippines 2025 winner to represent the country later this year. The beauty queen hopes to bring home the country’s fifth crown. The Miss Universe crown has been won by Catriona Gray, Pia Wurtzbach-Jauncy, Margie Moran, and Gloria Diaz. “I want to bring the fifth crown to the Philippines. Five is my lucky number — my birth month is May, there were five signs before I joined, and [five seats left] on my flight to Laoag for contract signing. I believe in that,” she earlier stated.



Clarissa Dela Cruz Cacanindin with Victor Barrera, and Milette Navarro.

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🙄🙄 No Nudity at the Red Carpet 😊🙄

No Nudity in Cannes Red Carpet and No Voluminous Gowns with Long Trains

What is going on in the world of showbizness? At the Cannes Film Festival in Monaco, they now have a dress code. No nudity na raw at no more iyong malolobong gowns na may mahabang buntot. Pero despite the dress code, the attendees managed to be glamorous pa rin. Kasi naman, those who go nude are not trying to be glamorous. They are trying to be remembered. Whether for good or bad reasons is irrelevant to them. Sa kanila, the saying that “there is no such thing as bad publicity” still applies.

Ironical nga, kasi bare skin is banned on the carpet, yet once inside, it’s right there on the screen. Almost always female, of course,” wrote Boring Not Com. For some, the ban dealing with volume makes more sense than the nudity. In recent years the carpet has

been overwhelmed with influencers intentionally wearing the “craziest, most insane, biggest thing they can find, they take up the most space on the red carpet and,” with thousands of people needing to get into the cinemas, it slows down a lot. Cannes has banned other outfits and practices. It turned women away for wearing flats in 2015. All while still rolling out the red carpet for Roman Polanski [who in 1978 fled the US ahead of sentencing for the rape of a minor].” In the 2016 burkini ban, it said Muslim women wearing burkinis could be a threat to public order. In 2018, it banned the selfie because it causes disorder and it slows down the traffic on the red carpet. Will it really enforce the nudity ban? Well, just like anywhere, it will not apply to the big stars. More likely is that a few influencers, wearing dresses the size of trucks will be shown the red carpet off-ramp. Dito kaya sa Filipino community sa Toronto, wala namang ban sa nudity on the red carpet, who is going to be daring to wear a “nude” dress? Ilan lang ang naiisip ko na may red carpet. Iyon Pinoy Ontario Vendors, Sine Festival, at kapag may premiere si Marky Hugh. Pero please lang, only wear “nude” if

may “K” kayo.” Sus Guinoo naman ni Roxanne, maawa naman kayo sa mga titingin at sa mga photographers. Ehe sus maryosep, ano ba itong nasabi ko? 😊

Adult Players dont’s stay

I have covered the Victoria Invitational



Basketball tournament every year and I have noticed one practice among the adult division. The runner-up in the adult division cannot be bothered to stay for the picture-taking. There was a final a few years ago and the players for the runner-up just walks away. They cannot be bothered with formalities. This year was no different. The runner-up players cannot be bothered with the ceremonies, no matter how rushed it is being conducted already. It’s not like we’re walking on red the carpet. In fact, we have to hurry because the games are finishing almost at the same time from different divisions with different teams. Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne. 😊

It’s Getting Confusing to Cover Events

After the pandemic, all the media people covering closed-door events have

disappeared. Kahit ako, hindi ko na alam kung alin ang may access ako. I know Yana Alavaro of Tala Productions told me that all media will always be welcome sa mga shows niya. I thank her for that. Iyon nga lang, nangawala na lahat ng media. Isa pa, when they invite me, hindi ko alam if they are selling me a ticket to attend or as a media to cover it. Nakakahiya naman magtanong. Binebentahan ba niya ako ng ticket? Hmmm...🙄

Clout-chasing is a double sided sword

Clout chasing is the act of trying to increase one’s own fame or influence, often by associating with or engaging in conflicts with others who are more popular. recently, actor Jake Ejercito went public that he is considering legal avenues after his 13-year old daughter, Ellie Eigenmann, was filmed “without her consent” during a recent public outing. Crist Briand has deleted the video. Ellie’s mother, Andi Eigenmann, also criticized the vlogger. Ang tanong, are they that famous that the blogger is going to increase his fame or influence by filming their daughter? By making a big issue, aren’t they trying to get publicity? Either you sue or not. But if you haven’t made up your mind, and you are still “considering,” why bother make an announcement at all, di ba? If people see the video, will people know who she is or her “famous” parents?

Rey PJ Abellana cries foul after Carla Abellana, ex-wife’s interview about cheating

Veteran actor Rey PJ Abellana cried foul after his ex-wife Rea Reyes and daughter Carla Abellana had an interview with Julius Babao. In the interview, Rea said that she and Rey got separated because of the actor’s alleged cheating. In a report by Pilipino Star Ngayon, Rey said that it was supposedly a private matter. “Medyo naging personal ang dating sa akin na may binitawan sila na against me, you know. Especially ‘yung mother ni Carla, ex-wife ko. “Unexpected na supposedly private matters na ito. Na on my side, supposedly all this time I’ve been quiet, you know... after the separation with a mother, I’ve been really quiet until napanood ko ‘yung interview nila with Julius Babao. “Ahh brutal, you know. May mga statements na binitawan na talagang against me na talagang, the way I feel sa mga binitawan statements,



‘yun bang kailangang masagot ko siya. ‘Yung point na kasiraan ko na e ang mga binitawan.” Rey said that he’s also willing to be interviewed for his side of the story. “Yun bang parang husgado na supposedly the best is marinig both sides, hindi lang ‘yung isang panig na makikilingan o maririnig,” he said.

“Eto ‘yung level na dapat parehong panig ‘yung maririnig, ‘yun,” he added. Rey said that he got hurt when he heard that he allegedly cheated at his first and second wives. “Sa child support, sa being a cheater. It was even emphasized na I cheated with my first wife, cheat pa rin ako sa second wife ko, you know, ‘di ba?” he said. “Ano ang alam nila sa second wife ko, e wala na sila sa picture, ‘di ba? All the while wala akong inilalabas against them,” he added.

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FILIPINO-CANADIAN ENTREPRENEUR AND AUTHOR RECEIVES CITY CIVIC AWARD

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

A remarkable and respected Filipino-Canadian entrepreneur, author and recently received a prestigious honour from the City of Pickering in Ontario, Canada. Julian Baricuatro, current Vice President for Membership and Innovation of the Philippine Canadian Chamber of Commerce (PCCC) was aptly recognised with "Cultural Diversity Award" for the "2024 Civic Awards Recognition" by the City of Pickering on May 12, 2025.

Witnessed by his proud wife Sheila and 2 children, Baricuatro was presented with a medallion and a certificate by Pickering Mayor Kevin Ashe in an appropriate ceremony held at the City of Pickering civic auditorium. The award criteria emphasize "significant and sustained commitment to cultural harmony, which resonates deeply with how the community naturally operates."

Mayor Ashe, before presenting the award described Julian Baricuatro's numerous contributions and accomplishments. The popular city magistrate said: "Julian Baricuatro is a remarkable individual who has made significant contributions to cultural diversity and harmony in Pickering and beyond. His ac-



complishments and initiatives demonstrate a deep commitment to promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. Julian and his daughter, in January 2024, achieved international recognition by winning the Literary Silver Book Award in Los Angeles for their book "Yuletide Harmony: Christmas Your Way." This work celebrates the diverse cultural experiences of Christmas in Canada, showcasing Julian's ability to bridge cultures through literature."

Citing Julian's civic participation, Mayor Ashe recognized Baricuatro's appointment to the Cultural Advisory Committee on October 30, 2024, "further solidifies his role as a proponent of cultural diversity, inclusion, and harmony in Pick-

ering. In this capacity, he actively promotes the city's rich heritage as a melting pot of cultures, contributing to its unique identity." As a member of the Public Art Jury, Julian "plays a crucial role in shaping the artistic landscape of Pickering, ensuring that public art reflects and celebrates the city's diverse cultural tapestry."

As a professional, Julian is a highly sought-after resource speaker on agriculture and biotechnology, with his innovative ideas being implemented in West Africa. His work addresses critical issues such as food security, circular economy adoption, and sustainable livelihood creation in sub-Saharan regions, demonstrating his commitment to global development and cross-cultural collaboration. Moreover, Julian volunteers his expertise as a Catalyste+ Advisor. Catalyste+ is a Canadian economic development organization that provides mentorship and advisory services to strengthen local skills and organizational capacities in emerging countries and Indigenous communities worldwide. Through this role,



Julian contributes to empowering marginalized communities and fostering economic growth in diverse cultural contexts."

Summing up, the Pickering Mayor concluded that "Julian Baricuatro's multifaceted contributions to cultural diversity - from literature and public service to international development and volunteer work - make him an outstanding honoree for the Cultural Diversity Award. His efforts have not only enriched the Pickering community but

have also fostered international collaborations that benefit diverse global communities, embodying the spirit of cultural harmony and inclusivity."

In his acceptance speech, Baricuatro said "this recognition, while bearing my name, truly belongs to our vibrant Filipino-Canadian community and the values we collectively embody." As Filipino Canadians, "our ability to adapt while preserving cultural identity creates unique opportunities for inclusive growth - whether in Pickering's thriving community or international development projects." He added that "This honor reinforces that our cultural DNA-rooted in warmth, resilience, and communal support-is not just an asset but a necessity in today's interconnected world. Let's continue showcasing how Filipino-Canadian leadership can shape more equitable communities locally and globally."

Maligayang bati, Julian, sa iyong natatanging parangal at natamang tagumpay! The Filipino Canadian community is surely proud of you. God bless always. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Sue Ramirez, JM De Guzman make emotions real in new film

MANILA, Philippines — In 2024, young director Fifth Solomon megged a romantic-comedy flick, "My Sassy Girl," loosely inspired by the 2001 South Korean film of the same title, with Toni Gonzaga and Pepe Herrera in the lead.

This time, Fifth crafts "Lasting Moments," a gut-punch of a melodrama that dares to stare directly into the slow unraveling of a once picture-perfect romantic story.

The quiet, piercing film is anchored by the ideal onscreen chemistry of Sue Ramirez and JM De Guzman, who deliver what may be their most soul-baring performances to date.

Sue essays Pia, a rising corporate star, ambitious yet tender, grounded in the simple pleasures of shared meals and handwritten dreams taped on the wall of a rented home.

JM plays Aki, a gentle and artistic soul, a history teacher with a past that quietly haunts him.

Together, they embody the kind of love that feels real: joyful, flawed and achingly familiar. The story is a tender masterpiece of love, loss and life's unforgiving turns.

From the first frame of this romance-drama, the intimacy of Pia and Aki hums with authenticity. Whether they are slurping chicken mami tinola or playing the piano in the dim glow of their small home, their bond feels lived-in, not forced.

The brilliance of "Lasting Moments" lies

in its disarming honesty. The screenplay is direct, even plainspoken, but never simplistic.

When Pia chooses to take a call from her boss on her birthday — on a weekend no less — it is not just about duty, but the invisible lines drawn between ambition and affection.

Aki's downward spiral thereafter, triggered by a simple kiss on the cheek and the ghost of a father who once left, is as tragic as it is believable.

Fifth's direction is masterful in its restraint. He resists melodramatic flourishes, opting instead for the slow burn: bills unpaid, moments forgotten, promises broken. The unraveling of Aki is painful because it is so incremental.

However, the film never condemns either of them. Instead, it poses a difficult question: What do we owe the people who love us when we no longer love ourselves?

When Pia finally leaves for Singapore with her boss Carlo (played by a stone-faced Victor Silayan), "Lasting Moments" pivots into a second act that resists the temptation of romanticized reunions.

Instead, it tells the brutal truth: that time does not always heal, and not all love stories are granted a second chance.

Even as Pia finds the success she dreamed

of — material comfort, professional validation — she begins to feel the stifling sterility of a life stripped of spontaneity, music and im-

perfection. Carlo is all work, all polish, no soul.

Sue shines in these later sequences. Her silences speak vol-

umes. A single glance at an unsent "Kamusta?" message tells us all we need to know. She is a woman haunted not by regret, but by a past that refuses to fade.

Aki's absence looms large and when she returns to the Philippines and fate intervenes, the film delivers a twist so devastating, so earned, that it will leave you shattered long after the credits roll.

The decision to cast Sue and JM was nothing short of inspired. The film lives and dies on their chemistry, and Solomon was right to insist on this pairing despite multiple rejections from studios who deemed the script "too quiet," "too sad" or "too real."

But it is in that realism that "Lasting Moments" finds its strength. This is a film not of grand gestures, but of slow aches. It is the kind of cinema that believes in the power of restraint and in doing so, delivers an emotional impact more profound than words could express.



Sue is obviously on a roll lately. After coming out in the 2024 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry, "The Kingdom," last December, she was paired again with Diego Loyzaga in director Gino Santos' "In Between," shown early May.

Then comes her first film with JM with "Lasting Moments," to start its regular run on June 4. Sue will be seen next in the comedy, "Flower Girl," megged by Fatrik Tabada.

The classic OPM (Original Pilipino Music) ballad, How Did You Know, written by Cecil Azarcon and first popularized by Chiqui Pineda, brings the quiet power of its music for "Lasting Moments," with Keiko Necesario's reimagined version.

The film's emotional core ingrained in Filipino romantic sensibilities, becomes more than a soundtrack. It becomes the pulse of Pia and Aki's love, maintaining the original's wistfulness while infusing it with a delicate, modern ache.

The song's plain piano instrumental used during the film's most painful, breath-stealing scene, that solidifies the song's place in the marrow of this story. Like the film itself, the music doesn't beg for tears, it earns them.

As the last notes of How Did You Know fade into silence, you're left not just with tears, but with the ache of remembering something or someone you once called home.

A three-hankie weepie undoubtedly, "Lasting Moments," bring tissues. And perhaps, someone you once loved.

Carla Abellana calls out 'fake news' about her, ex Tom Rodriguez

Actress Carla Abellana called out an online site that claimed it has a source who talked about the possible reconciliation between her and ex-husband Tom Rodriguez.

In her Instagram Story, Carla posted the screenshot of the article, strongly denying it.

"Eh, kung kasuhan ko na lang kayo at 'yang 'source' ninyo ng libel?" Carla captioned her Instagram story.

The source alleged that Carla & Tom have been "talking again." The source mentioned Rey "PJ" Abellana, Carla's father.

"According to insiders close to the Abellana family, PJ's heart softened after seeing how much Carla still cared for Tom, even after everything," part of the article read. The source alleged that Tom has reached out to Carla. Tom is back in the Philippines and has appeared in several GMA-7 shows.

Last year, Carla said that she and Tom are already divorced.

"We are divorced. Recognized na po 'yan ng court, local court po natin dito," she said.



Kim Rodriguez unfazed by dating rumors with Gov. Daniel Fernando

Actress Kim Rodriguez appeared unbothered by online buzz linking her to reelected Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando as she responded to netizens' comments with a mix of humor and subtle shade.

Rodriguez's TikTok page was flooded with comments speculating about her relationship with Fernando after their photo posing in front of a luxury car, with the former holding a bouquet of flowers, went viral online. The rumors began a few days before elections in some circles, but the actor-politician and the "Nag-aapoy Na Damdamin" actress have not commented on them.

In one of her videos, the 30-year-old actress filmed herself lip-syncing to Leona Lewis' "Bleeding Love," with the lyrics, "I don't care what they say, I'm in love with you; they try to pull me away, but they don't know

the truth."

In the comments section, a netizen wrote, "Dedma sa basher basta may Daniel Fernando (Don't mind the bashers as long as you have Daniel Fernando)." Rodriguez responded with a comment, simply writing, "Pikit (close your eyes)," and added a laughing emoji.

In a separate video, the "Strawberry Lane" actress lip-synced the Filipino lines, "Nakatapos ako ng pag-aaral, pero dahil sa pagmamahal ko sayo, naging tanga ako sa lahat, kahit Tagalog ng I don't know, hindi ko alam." (I finished my studies, but because of my love for you, I became stupid at everything, I don't even know the Tagalog for "I don't know.")

Rodriguez replied, "Taray ng username mo @alwaysbekind-toothers (You have a great username @always be kind to others)." Meanwhile, there were others who defended Rodriguez, pointing out that there is nothing wrong if they are in a relationship since the 63-year-old Fernando is single.

Another netizen said in the comments, "Fresh naman. Iba talaga alagang Gov Daniel (You look so fresh. It's different when you have a governor to take care of you)."

Rodriguez replied, "Taray ng username mo @alwaysbekind-toothers (You have a great username @always be kind to others)." Meanwhile, there were others who defended Rodriguez, pointing out that there is nothing wrong if they are in a relationship since the 63-year-old Fernando is single.

A check at Fernando's profile does not show that he has been married. He has been governor of the province since 2019.



Gerald Anderson, Julia Barretto split rumors after Julia deletes Gerald's photos is fake news

Fake news daw ang separation rumors between Gerald Anderson and Julia Barretto na nag spark after social media users noticed that they do not post each other on their social media accounts like they used to do.

Julia posted travel photos in different places without Gerald, while the actor posted motorcycle ride photos and his resort in Zambales.

Social media users also noticed that Julia deleted some recent posts with Gerald in her Instagram.

Her last post with Gerald was from 63 weeks ago, celebrating Gerald's birthday.

Meanwhile, Gerald's last post with Julia was 10 weeks ago.

In Marjorie Barretto's birthday celebration last week, Gerald was also not seen in the photos.

He, however, commented on Marjorie's post, saying: "Happy birthday, Tita."

Marjorie then thanked Gerald.



Kung sinuyod mabuti ng nagpakalat ng isyu ang Instagram account ni Julia, makikita nitong hindi burado ang mga litrato nila ni Gerald na magkasama.

At hanggang ngayon, sinusubaybayan pa rin ng dalawa ang social media accounts ng isa't isa.

Kapamilya actor Gerald Anderson revealed that he is now contemplating to become a father.

Gerald said that his father wanted him to be a father now.

"Kailangan ko na ng anak kasi gusto na ng dad ko," Gerald said.

"Tsaka gustong-gusto ng dad ko si Julia na parang anak na niya," he added.

Fraudulent crowdfunding after Lapu Lapu tragedy highlights the need for vigilance and oversight

by Jeremy Snyder Valorie A. Crooks

VANCOUVER - Around 100,000 members of Vancouver's Filipino community and other residents recently gathered to take part in the Lapu Lapu street festival to celebrate Filipino culture. This vibrant community celebration ended in tragedy when a vehicle was driven at high speed through the festival.

Eleven people were killed in the April 26 attack, and dozens injured in what acting police chief Steve Rai called the "darkest day in the city's history."

There has been an outpouring of community support for the victims, their friends and families, and the Filipino community in Vancouver. This support has taken the form of flowers and messages left at the attack site, vigils and gatherings and religious events.

And, as is now common following high-profile tragedies, the Lapu Lapu festival attack has been accompanied by a number of crowdfunding campaigns by and for its victims.

Helping after disaster

Many of these crowdfunding campaigns are hosted by GoFundMe, which has set up a dedicated hub for these fundraisers. A week after the attack, the 16 campaigns on this hub had raised more than \$2.3 million.

Dozens of other fundraisers on GoFundMe have raised additional money for various causes and groups associated with the tragedy and Vancouver's Filipino community. Other crowdfunding platforms have also hosted related crowdfunding campaigns.

Crowdfunding is a way for the public to help those in need in concrete ways while also expressing their shock and sadness over tragic events. People from across the world have taken advantage of crowdfunding's accessibility to learn about victims and join the outpouring of support.

This support can be large and consequential. A campaign for Andy Le, a teenager who lost his family at the festival attack, has received more than \$500,000 in



donations. As a result of this support, Le has in turn pledged to donate half that money to other victims.

This viral, international support has meant these campaigns are likely able to raise vastly more money than would be possible through traditional, purely local and offline activities.

Teenager Andy Le, who lost his family in the Lapu Lapu attack, redistributes the funds raised in an online campaign.

Fraud and fundraising

But while the online nature of crowdfunding allows for a global response to high-profile tragedies, the relatively impersonal nature of crowdfunding has its downsides. Our research has demonstrated that crowdfunding sometimes attracts fraudulent campaigns.

High-profile events that spur numerous campaigns and massive financial support are particularly attractive to fraudsters. Unfortunately, this has been the case with the Lapu Lapu festival tragedy. In one case, a GoFundMe campaign fraudulent-

ly raised more than \$57,000, ostensibly to return the body of "Reyna Dela Peñato" to the Philippines after her death at the festival and to support her sons.

grieving to investigate these campaigns. These policing activities inject a level of distrust into fundraising that is less present when giving takes place between people with pre-existing connections.

Growing challenges

While the problem of fraud in crowdfunding isn't new, changes to the practice of crowdfunding may make it harder to detect. The advent of large language models or artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT have made it easier for crowdfunding campaigners to edit their campaign narratives to appeal to a wider pool of potential donors.

Crowdfunding platforms like GoFundMe are also pushing AI features directly into their platforms to "enhance" these campaigns and help campaigners "connect with more donors." These features may be especially appealing to people whose first language is not English, as may be the case with some victims of the Lapu Lapu festival attack.

While the AI-ification of crowdfunding creates a more level playing field for campaigners, it may also make fraud easier to commit and harder to detect. This will be true if generating fake campaigns is easier using chatbots and if legitimate campaigns use AI and take on a less authentic voice.

Online crowdfunding isn't going anywhere, and for many victims of the Lapu Lapu festival attack, it has enabled them to ease some of the burden from that terrible day. However, we should be aware that crowdfunding isn't a purely beneficial tool for people in need. Without proper oversight, it may develop in ways that are even more problematic.

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Dennis Trillo & Jennylyn Mercado are partners in comeback series

For Dennis Trillo and Jennylyn Mercado, “Sanggang Dikit FR” marks a milestone — their first teleserye together as a married couple. Contrary to expectations perhaps of a romance or drama like their last GMA project a decade ago, this time they dive into action, drawing on their real-life teamwork to portray police partners who, despite constantly clashing, ultimately rely on each other.

Dennis got to share his excitement over “Sanggang Dikit FR,” premiering on prime-time come June 23.

“Nag-enjoy, of course. First time to be together again in a teleserye. And it’s not just any teleserye,” he began. “Kundi isang napaka-exclusive na action-packed presentation. We’re together in fight scenes — there’s a lot of fight scenes — and dangerous stunts. So, it’s exciting.”

It’s been 10 years since he last starred with his wife on GMA through the soap “My Faithful Husband.”

All in all, they’ve lost track of the number of times they were paired on screen. But they could say that “Sanggang Dikit” is a whole new acting experience because of the genre and the storyline (where their characters don’t see eye to eye — or at least, in the first two weeks of the series).

“Kakaiba ‘tong series na ‘to. It’s my

first time to do action. Napa-yes ako lalo na nung nalaman kong kasama ko yung asawa ko. Kaya excited talaga ako na mapanood ito,” Jennylyn shared.

The couple also praised the production and their director, L.A. Madridejos, who is responsible for some of the highest-rated Kapuso programs, including “Abot-Kamay na Panarap,” “First Yaya,” “My Special Tatay,” among others. “Na-discover namin kung gaano siya kagaling, kung paano niya kami inaalagaan, yung kwento at may malasakit siya sa lahat ng characters sa kabuuan ng story,” said Dennis.

Both Jennylyn and Dennis took their action roles seriously, even doing their own stunts in fight scenes.

The rom-com queen said, “I pushed myself to do all the stunts and keep up. Of course, it looks better if we’re the ones actually doing the scenes.”



Dennis added, “In this series, we really worked on getting in condition so we could do those kinds of scenes.”

“It’s really physical so we have to be strong, we need to be fit,” admitted Jennylyn.

The action show balances drama and comedy well. Dennis explained, “There’s drama but a lot can relate because the direction of direk L.A., he’d make sure that kahit ganito yung tema, may puso pa rin (even with this theme, it has heart). He’s able to show different kinds of people (characters).” Jennylyn added, “And there’s a good balance of comedy.”

Talking about their personal takeaways from “Sanggang Dikit FR” — by the way, FR means “for real,” not the pain reliever to treat sore muscles due to all the action, as direk LA quipped at the presscon — Dennis said the show is all about team work whether at home or in the line of duty.

“You’ll see here that with teamwork, you can solve any problem,” Dennis said.

“You help each other, work together — not just as police partners, but also in relationships, as husband and wife or as friends. This really shows how important teamwork is,” he added.

Star Magic zero tolerance for death threat on JM Ibarra

Nangangamba ang fans ni JM Ibarra dahil sa death threats na natanggap ni JM mula sa ilang tagahanga nina Fyang Smith at Jarren Garcia.

Si JM ang kasalukuyang love team ni Fyang, ngunit mayroon ding netizens nagsisipagpapagaling kina Fyang at Jarren dahil sa pagiging malapit nila noon sa loob ng Bahay Ni Kuya.



PBB: Gen 11 Big Winner Fyang Smith (center) says she prefers JM Ibarra (left) to be her loveteam partner than Jarren Garcia.

STAR MAGIC SHOWS ONLINE DEATH THREAT VS JM IBARRA

Dahil sa magkaibang fandom, may ilang tagahanga si Jarren na pinagbantaan si JM. Ang umano’y banta sa buhay ni JM ay makikita sa social-media post ng Star Magic noong Miyerkules, May 28, 2025.

Ang Star Magic ang talent management arm ng ABS-CBN Studios, na humahawak sa showbiz career nina Fyang, JM, at Jarren. Ini-screenshoot ng Star Magic ang post ng Facebook page na JMFYANG ANGELS, na may 104,000 followers.

Narito ang kabuuang post (published as is): “Kung hindi mapupunta si fyang kay Jarren di rin siya mapupunta kay JM kasi sa June last show niya yun. May gagawin kaming fandom para mawala si

JM nag hire kami ng hitman para mawala ang tinik saming mga JarFyang si Tito Mak Mak niyo.” Naalarma ang Star Magic sa post na ito. Sa isang official statement, nagbabala ang Star Magic laban sa namamahala ng naturang Facebook page.

Sabi rito (published as is), “Star Magic does not tolerate threats, derogatory remarks, and other personal attacks made online against our artists.

“These acts have serious and damaging consequences and we will take legal action, if necessary.”

Habang isinusulat ang artikulong ito ay naka-private na ang fan page na naglathala ng sinasabing banta laban kay JM.

Wala pang inilalabas na pahayag o reaksiyon sina JM, Fyang, at Jarren ukol dito.

Marian Rivera approves of Dingdong Dantes, Charo Santos-Concio’s team-up



Marian Rivera is happy for her husband Dingdong Dantes’ team-up with former ABS-CBN president Charo Santos-Concio in the upcoming film “Only We Know,” according to Dantes.

Dantes revealed that Rivera saw the final cut of the upcoming film, and that the latter was “very, very happy” with how the actor’s

onscreen pairing with Santos-Concio worked out.

“Isa siya sa pinakaunang nakapanood ng final cut. Noong ipinanood ko sa kanya [yung final cut], sobrang nagustuhan niya [yung pelikula,” he told reporters during the film’s media launch. “Nag-resonate sa kanya. Wish nga niya ay sana mas maraming nakapanood. [Sana] sa cinema talaga siya [mapanood] para iba [yung magiging viewing experience.”

Dantes added that Rivera ex-

pressed her appreciation for the film to director-writer Irene Villamor through a text message.

“Tinext niya si Direk Irene [Villamor] at sinabi niya she loves the film... [parang] nakarelate raw siya as a woman. Ganu’n kalakas [yung naging portrayal ng character ni Bet-

ty,” he said, referring to Santos-Concio’s character.

According to Villamor, “Only We Know” was seven years in the making and was pitched to Dantes and Santos-Concio during the pandemic. Certain revisions and “scaling down” were made in the initial script until the final

draft was greenlit for filming. It is set to premiere on June 11.

“After the pandemic, a lot of things happened in their lives and their schedules. The filming was finished last year... It’s a story about love. I always love love stories, but this shows a different kind of love. It is about breaking boundaries,” Villamor said of the film.

Princess Punzalan grateful for privilege of being a nurse in the US

Princess Punzalan opened up about her experiences of being a nurse in the US, which allowed her to grow not only as a working professional but also as a person.

Punzalan took to her Instagram account on Saturday, May 24, to share how being a nurse is a responsibility that “demands compassion, resilience, and an unwavering dedication,” but gave her a “deep sense of fulfillment.”

“Nursing is a calling that demands compassion, resilience, and an unwavering dedication to the well-being of others. Each day presents unique challenges and opportunities to make a meaningful difference in the lives of patients and their families,” she wrote.

The actress shared that a nurse has “vast and varied” responsibilities, such as assisting in medication, monitoring vital signs, and helping in terms of giving emotional support.

“We often find ourselves in the midst of critical moments, offering a steady hand and a kind word. It is in these moments that the true essence of nursing shines through, reminding us of the impact we have on the lives we touch,” she wrote.

Despite the tedious job, Punzalan said she is “incredibly grateful” to be a nurse as it allowed her to learn, “advocate for patients,” and work with fellow medical professionals.



“It is a role that has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally, fostering a deep sense of fulfillment and purpose. The ability to advocate for patients, collaborate with a team of dedicated healthcare professionals, and continuously learn and adapt is something I cherish every day,” she said.

The actress’ post earned the support of her followers in the comments section, including Jewel Mische and Arlene Muhlach.

Punzalan is currently based in the US after tying the knot with her non-showbiz husband and marketing professional, Jason Field. She was previously married to Willie Revillame.

The actress is best known for her notable appearances in “Mula Sa Puso,” “Lovingly Yours, Helen,” and “Kung Mawawala Ka,” to name a few.

A Film by Marky Hugh

Silent Battles

SCARBOROUGH

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OFW in Canada gifted with million-dollar house by employer

OFW MILLION from page 1

Rebecca, who has spent the last six years caring for the children of entrepreneur Joanna Griffiths, was gifted a three-bedroom house in Toronto worth CAD 1 million (approximately PHP 40 million). The surprise gesture came from Joanna Griffiths, founder of the Canadian intimate and activewear brand Knix, as a heartfelt thank-you for Rebecca's unwavering care and loyalty.

Rebecca began her journey in Canada as a caregiver before she joined the Griffiths household, caring for Joanna's three young children—including a son and twin girls—since birth. "They trusted me completely," she shared in an interview with OMNI Filipino News. Her deep bond with the children earned her the nickname "Becka," and she became an indispensable part of their lives, often sleeping beside the twins until they drifted off.

Joanna, who built Knix while raising her children and steering her company through the pandemic, credits much of her suc-



Dream come true. Overseas Filipino worker Rebecca Cruz (inset) recounts how she got the surprise of her life when her employer, a businesswoman, bought her a house in Canada. The house (in brown and white paint) is a three-bedroom abode with a basement.

cess to Rebecca's support. "I'm a female business owner with three young kids, building a company and navigating COVID... and the truth is that I could not have done it without Rebecca's support," she said.

A decade later, the womenswear brand has expanded into a variety of categories, including bras, activewear, shapewear, swim, loungewear, and more. Joanna has built Knix into one of the fastest-growing intimate apparel brands globally. In 2022, Joanna decided to sell 80% of her business for \$320 million,

making it one of the largest exits by a female founder in Canada and one of the most significant sales of a brand by a female founder in US history.

How did she decide to give her nanny a house?

"I had the best nanny in the entire world since the day my son was born and she's been incredible with our whole family," said Joanna.

She talks about the investors who contributed to the growth of Knix.

"I know there's lots on my team making lots of money, they

have stock options, they have other things, these other key contributors to Knix are making money from this exit," she said.

She talks about the non-financial contributor to her family.

"But this person who's been with me every step of the way, who I literally couldn't have done it without her, doesn't get anything," she thought.

"Dave, my partner and I agreed, Like, our CFO, CEO, could have swap them with other people and the outcome wouldn't have been different but if we didn't have that support person at home, specially having 3 kids in two years to really prioritize our family, our lives, we never would have been able to do what we did," she said.

"If I'm asking Rebecca to spend so much time with me and my family, and we have so much, how can you not share that?" Joanna remarked.

So, one day, Joanna asked Rebecca about her biggest wish. Rebecca replied that it was to own a home. Without hesita-

tion, Joanna made it happen.

"Let's do it," she told her. The two looked at several properties, with Joanna even driving Rebecca and her husband around to view homes. Eventually, they found a house near the Griffiths' residence. It came mortgage-free.

For Rebecca, the gift meant more than words could express.

"But this person who's been with me every step of the way, who I literally couldn't have done it without her"

"I can now think about retiring without worrying if I'll have a roof over my head," she said. "Most OFWs go abroad just to be able to have a home."

She remains steadfast in her commitment to the family who changed her life. "I will stay loyal to them and love their kids for as long as they'll have me," she said.

Albee Benitez denies 'illicit relationship' with Ivana Alawi

MANILA, Philippines – Brightlight Productions owner and newly-elected Bacolod City Congressman Alberto "Albee" Benitez reacted to the affidavit of his estranged wife Dominique "Nikki" Benitez, calling her allegations "baseless and retaliatory."

In a statement issued by Benitez's legal counsel Peter Sanchez, Albee denied Nikki's accusations, including his alleged "illicit relationship" with sexy actress Ivana Alawi.

"Mayor Alfredo Abelardo 'Albee' Benitez firmly denies the baseless and retaliatory allegations made against him by his estranged spouse under Republic Act No. 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women

and Their Children Act (VAWC), for alleged economic and psychological abuse," part of the politician's statement read.

"It is equally unsettling that a third party has been unnecessarily dragged into this private matter. The mention of individuals unrelated to the merits of the case only serves to divert attention and inflame public sentiment in the complainant's favor. Section 44 of R.A. 9262 explicitly mandates the confidentiality of all proceedings and parties involved. The unwarranted disclosure of identities and unverified claims constitutes a clear violation of this provision."

According to the statement, "This case



was filed shortly after Mayor Benitez initiated annulment proceedings in 2024, raising serious doubts about the complainant's motives."

"Every property acquired during the marriage – including the multi-million peso residences in Forbes Park and Dasmarias

Village – was fully paid for by Mayor Benitez using his own resources, but titled in the name of the complainant, Dominique Lopez-Benitez," the statement added.

"This also includes high-value assets such as condominium units, luxury vehicles, and a substantial amount of publicly listed shares, all of which were funded by Mayor Benitez but registered under her name."

Besides properties, Benitez claimed to have also provided for his estranged wife's luxurious lifestyle.

"Despite a judicial dissolution of their property regime in 2004, Mayor Benitez continued to provide not just ordinary support but a high standard of living, shouldering personal, household, and even extended family expenses for more than two

decades."

According to the statement, the public servant has evidences to prove his innocence.

"Mayor Benitez remains fully cooperative with all legal processes and is confident that the evidence – financial records, property documents, and testimonies will disprove these false and vindictive claims."

The statement came after parts of Nikki's affidavit filing VAWC against her estranged husband went viral online yesterday.

The complaint alleged that Albee admitted to have illegitimate children and that he is now in a relationship with Alawi, which resulted in Nikki suffering from "mental or emotional anguish."



FILIPINO CENTRE TORONTO TO HONOUR 8 FILIPINO-CANADIAN SENIORS

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Eight outstanding Filipino-Canadian seniors in Ontario will be honoured by the Filipino Centre Toronto(FCT), a notable community hub in the Greater Toronto Area(GTA), Ontario. The recognition event, a bi-annual

initiative, is being held on June 21, 2025(Saturday) at 5:00 PM at the FCT Social Hall, 4395 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough, Toronto. Initiated in 2019 by the FCT, the awards project is to celebrate and pay tribute to deserving retired and still active members of the Filipino-Canadian community.

Deservedly, the recipients are Filipino-Canadian seniors who have made outstanding service

and valuable contributions to the life and well-being of the community by helping build a better community through their personal and professional endeavours. These seniors serve or have served as role models and inspirations to students, youth & young adults and their fellow senior citizens.

The awardees have been selected by the FCT Outstanding Filipino Canadian Seniors Awards Committee (OFCSA) based

on established selection criteria. The Selection Committee comprised Carol Banez, Agnes Miranda, Mogi Mogado, Steve Pagao, Nitz Rejdik, Mary Ann San Juan(Vice-chairman), Tony San Juan(Chairman), Garry Tanuan, and Antonio Villarin.

The Filipino Centre Toronto, formed in 1999, is a registered not-for-profit and volunteer-run organisation in the province. Its mission and mandate are to orga-

nise and offer a sustainable vehicle to pursue its goal of providing reasonable opportunities and valuable activities for students, youth, adults, and seniors to engage in well-being, social development, community building, and heritage & cultural understanding. Invited dignitaries, politicians, special guests, honourees' family & friends, the media, and FCT officers, directors, staff and volunteers are expected to attend. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Is Vilma hurt over son Luis' loss?

DID Batangas Governor-elect Vilma Santos-Recto slip into a social media break after the mid-term elections?

With due respect to the Star for All Seasons, the writer couldn't help but raise this troubling question — especially after her son Luis Manzano's failed vice gubernatorial bid. Luis' resounding defeat must have been too heavy a blow for Vilma who — in the entire history of her 27-year political career — had thrice emerged victorious over her formidable opponents. Surprisingly, Vilma was no-show at the proclamation rally. But her other son, 6th District Representative Ryan Christian was around in what expectedly was a celebratory atmosphere.

Local media members turned to Ryan on his mom's behalf,



curiously asking her conspicuous absence.

According to Ryan, his mom had decided to attend to her granddaughter baby Rosie/Peanut, making it up for her while heavily immersed into the campaign trail. Meanwhile, Manila-based close reporter-friends had also been trying to reach Vilma through Messenger but to no avail. But what got this writer in deep thoughts is — hope he's mistaken — Vilma having blocked a few of them on social media. Woe is me, myself included. This much I know — practically all celebrities don't personally manage their social media platforms. They hire admin personnel — about half a dozen of them — whose job is to closely monitor posts, entries

or messages. Depending on the luxury of time, only then will the celebrity respond. Totally with no social media savvy, I am not at all privy to how account names are unable to receive messages, or unseen by senders even if received. Whatever, I'd like to convince, if badger myself to think that Ate Vi — just like most celebrities — needed to distance herself from the rampant social media toxicity.

Maybe, just maybe, the returning public servant is exhausting every means in her power to dodge public opinion that may only put salt on open wounds.

Let's face it, it's always the mom whose heart gets bruised the most for her child's setback.

Lorna Tolentino belies claims she's engaged to Lito Lapid

Lorna Tolentino dismissed the

engagement rumors involving her and fellow actor Lito Lapid, clarifying that the romantic clips of them circulating on social media are from a music video.

The veteran actress addressed this through a conversation with writer Dindo Bala-res, which the latter shared on his Facebook page last Saturday, May 24.

Balares reached out to Tolentino, whom he called his "ninang" (godmother), after someone sent him a video that apparently showed the actress and Lapid being engaged.

The thumbnail of the clip showed Tolentino sitting on Lapid's lap while he was holding a box with a diamond ring.

Tolentino responded to Balares, "That is a video from Star Music, produced by Jamie Ri-

vera. The singer is Fana and the song title is 'Love Story Ko.' It's on YouTube."

The music video Toletino was referring to was released on YouTube in February 2024.

Tolentino and Lapid, who recently worked together in the ABS-CBN TV series "FPJ's Batang Quiapo," had been romantically linked since 2024, although the latter, who is married to his non-showbiz wife, denied these rumors last December.

Nonetheless, the actor-turned-politician was spotted at the June 2024 wedding of Tolentino's son, Renz Fernandez.

Tolentino was previously married to the late actor Rudy Fernandez, who died in 2008 due to periampullary cancer. Aside from Renz, the couple has another son named Rap.





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DOLLY PARTON



Movie Mogul in the Making

Marky Hugh of MH Productions invited me to the showing of his movie *Silent Battles* at Yorkdale Cinema. He also showed his two shorts “59.59” and “Frenemies.” Last year, Marky Hugh also produced “The Last Promise” set in Kuwait. *Silent Battles* are the daily struggles everyone goes through that we all keep to ourselves. The movie is a very dramatic and tension-filled story of a family whose personal demons come out when their mother unintentionally undergoes a medical procedure when she was found to have brain cancer. It is a story that every Filipino can relate to. It was worth it. You can feel the emotions from all the actors, most of whom are not really professionals. I was just wondering why some of the actors did not have any lines at all when they could have said one or two. It turns out, that it ended up on the cutting room floor, as they say in the movie business. I told Marky that there were scenes were too much close-up was used. Usually, extreme

close-ups are used to convey tension or to portray the person as the villain. Anyway, this is a big feather in the cap of Marky Hugh, producer. As of this writing he is shooting or have finished his next production called “The Basement.”
Good luck Marky. May you have more productions to come.

The Josie de Leon School of Performing Arts held a mother’s day recital with a sit-down delicious dinner featuring their students at Magna Event Centre. I thought there was only one batch of students. The first schedule I had was from 6 pm. Then, I saw another posting that started at 4 pm. I thought they moved it up because people had other plans and want to leave early. It turns out that the first batch at 4pm was the Central group and the 6pm was from the Scarborough students. Anyway, it was an entertaining event as the students belted out two songs each and the parents got to get together and also make chika-chika.

Movie producer Marky Hugh (6TH FROM LEFT) poses with the cast at the premiere of his movie *Silent Battles* at Yorkdale Cinema. He also shot two shorts “59:59” and “Frenemies” which were shown before the movie.

starting a tournament with just 24 teams, the VIBT is still going strong. Thanks to the dedicated team of people from The Filipino Centre Toronto, led by organizer Philip Beloso and the continuing support of Dr. Vicky Santiago, the tournament is the longest continuing Filipino basketball league in Ontario. This year sees the emergence of a new sponsor and philanthropist, Dr. Muneeb Ali of City Centre Dental of Mississauga. He sponsored the championship trophy, offered \$500 prizes for free-throw contests and Raptors jerseys to MVP players.

Welcome to the league, Dr. Ali.

The Kapuso Lions chapter held a fundraising zumba class for their Coral Reef Restoration Project initiative in Cebu City Philippines, where all funds will be donated. The well-attended class was held at Agincourt Community Centre.

Good luck Kapuso Lions. May God bless you with more resources to continue doing good work.

Dean and Ruby’s Cafe had their grand opening ceremonies last May 25. Owned by singer and vocal teacher DK Tijam and his friend Ruby, and in their facebook page, they say “we serve Italian Espresso, French Pastries and Filipino Treats w/ love!” And as I have tried their baked goods before, I can definitely say, that “love” ingredient makes it above the others I’ve tasted so far. Their chicken empanada has a more savory taste and the texture is not so mushy. The tuna empanada is likewise delicious. I tried their croissant before and there was a bit of earthy, or toasty taste to it that I find pleasantly delicious. I tried their black iced tea before that I found refreshing without being sweet. The opening was filled with performances from friends, and talents, including his own students in the community. Back in Toronto temporarily is Jasmine Flores (photo) who got Kathryn Bernardo’s golden buzzer at Pilipinas Got Talent to advance to the semi-finals on June 14. I was wondering if she is going to do her dance routine in such a tiny space. I was pleasantly surprised that she can also sing and that she sang a Tagalog song. They also have a unique trademark of a hummingbird that makes it stand out in the community. It’s not the familiar adaptation of a triangle with the sun, and star to remind you that the business or owners are Filipinos.

Good luck to Dean and Ruby’s. May you continue to prosper and last long.



JDL Mother’s Day Recital Students

Kylie Verzosa calls out MGI head Nawat Itsaragrisil for revealing her number



Kylie Verzosa urged Miss Grand International (MGI) president Nawat Itsaragrisil to take down a post containing her personal number, saying the latter might have “accidentally” posted it on a public platform.

Verzosa called out Itsaragrisil on her Instagram Story on Thursday, May 29, stating that she had reached out to the MGI head and his team through a personal message.

“Hi @nawat.tv, I sent you and your

team a message. You accidentally posted the wrong number that happens to be mine. I don’t know how it ended up there or why you have it, but I am getting bothered by calls at the minute. Please take it down,” she said. Itsaragrisil apologized to the Miss International titleholder on his Instagram Story hours later.

“Hi, I deleted it already. Someone sent to ask me and I just saw the name and reply to my [Instagram] story. I

do apologize again.”

While it remains unknown where the MGI president had posted Verzosa’s number, he previously uploaded a supposed copy of now-dethroned MGI titleholder Rachel Gupta’s passport information that contained a contact number with the Philippines’ area code. Pinalitan ng Pinay beauty queen-actress ang personal mobile phone number na matagal na niyang ginagamit.

Itsaragrisil has made headlines following the recent abdication of Gupta, who cited alleged mistreatment and lack of support for titleholders as among her reasons. The Thai businessman, however, claimed that the latter had been “unprofessional” throughout her reign.

Gupta’s termination gives way to the coronation of the Philippines’ own CJ Opiaza, who will assume the title on June 3.

Dr. Muneeb Ali joins the VIBT family as a sponsor



Dr. Muneeb Ali sponsored the FCT Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament championship trophy. In photo with him is Theresa Sevilla with The Filipino Centre, Toronto (FCT).



1



2



3

THERESA LUMANLAN CELEBRATES HER BIRTHDAY AT THE FILIPINO CENTRE TORONTO: 1. Friends and senior painters celebrate with Theresa; 2. Theresa Lumanlan celebrates her birthday; 3. Theresa dances with her husband, Maestro Frank Cruzet



1



2

CMC ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH GALA HONORS ASIAN ACHIEVEMENT 1. Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation officers (PCCF) 2. PCCF President Rosemer Enverga (IN GREEN) receives the Outstanding Asian Canadian Community Award!

Alden Richards hits rock bottom—and kept going

Apparently, as he continued hosting, acting, he was also going through the most difficult period of his life.

Apparently, as he continued hosting, acting, and appearing in front of cameras, he was also going through what he now describes as one of the most difficult period of his life.

"I think last year, that was my lowest year," Richards revealed. According to the actor, his struggles weren't caused by any single event, but by a pattern of giving too much of himself to others and not enough to his own wellbeing. "Just to validate everything that's happening in my life right

now — that was the reason," he explained.

Richards talked candidly about the psychological weight of that time, describing a mental fog where even the support of loved ones wasn't enough to bring him clarity.

"Yung times kasi na you're clouded with a lot of negative thoughts, andyan yung mga taong nagmamahal sa 'yo pero hindi mo ma-proseso nang tama 'yung pag-iisip mo. It's very hard to be present... yung nandito ka pero wala ka dito."

The situation worsened in January with the death of his grandfather—a personal loss that deepened his sense of isolation and pushed him further into what he now

identifies as a depressive episode.

"It took me six months to process what he had been through and to get over that," he said. "Hindi man siya clinically diagnosed, pero that was denial, at its finest. That was depression. Ang galing nga, hindi lang halata."

The admission is one of the few times Richards has publicly addressed his mental health. For a long time it was something he wasn't willing to talk about.

"Before kasi, hindi ko siya kayang pag-usapan. Hirap ako, ayokong magpakita ng weakness."

By March, he had taken up running. A month later, cycling followed. He shared some of this on social media, but the moti-

vation was more personal than promotional.

Physical activity, he said, became a way to get back a sense of control.

His shift wasn't about reinvention. It was rooted in a basic form of self-care.

He also spoke about pulling back from the need for external approval—a common pressure in his industry.

"The industry will take as much as you give it," Richards implied, and for years, he gave it everything. Now, he seems more focused on balance.

Questions about his love life still come up frequently, but Richards no longer feels the need to answer them in a way that satisfies expectations.

"I don't understand. Hindi ko gets kung bakit ganoon ang mindset natin na ang basis ng kasiyahan ng isang tao," he said, obviously pushing back on the idea that fulfillment should be measured by one's relationship status.

"It's my story. It's how I want my story to be told... not based on the presumption of some people. I'm so done with that. I've been there long enough. I've done so much for the industry, and I'd like to do more for the industry right now."

Is this a personal rebranding? A course correction?

It seems that Richards is out to redefine himself — choosing what to share, what to prioritize, and what to leave behind.

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FILIPINO CENTRE TORONTO HOLDS THE 19th VICTORIA INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

VICTORIA CUP from page 12 tournament,” he added.

Consul General Angelica Escalona stresses the importance of sports in out lives.

“We all want to live a full, happy, healthy lives. Let’s continue playing sports, it not

only brings people together, teaches values like hard work and teamwork, and best of

all builds confidence in our young people, VICTORIA CUP page 18



1. LEFT TO RIGHT, FCT’s Frank Cruzet, MP Salma Zahid, MP Juanita Nathan, Alma, Rowena, MPP Andrea Hazell, Championship trophy sponsor Dr. Muneeb Ali, Councillor Jamal Myers, MP Michael Coteau, FCT-VIBT Organizer Philip Beloso, Theresa Sevilla and husband, MP Rechie Valdez; 2. FCT-VIBT Organizer Philip Beloso starts paying out the timekeepers at the conclusion of the tournament.



Ashley Ortega admits being hurt by “starlet” tag

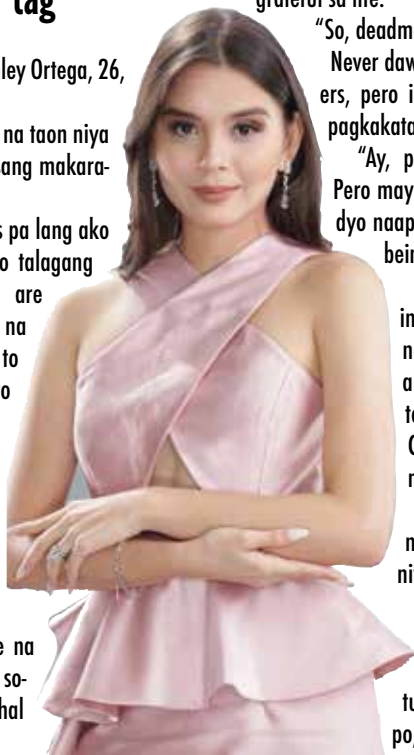
Hindi nagpapatinig si Ashley Ortega, 26, sa bashers.

Sa loob ng labing-apat na taon niya sa showbiz, hindi maiwasang makaranas siya ng bashing.

“Kahit nung five years pa lang ako sa showbiz, meron na po talagang mga, you know, there are people talaga sa mundo na has something negative to say. It’s up to you how to handle it.

“Pero ako naman po talaga, super-deadma lang po talaga ako.

“Kasi magpo-focus na lang po talaga ako sa mga blessings ko in life, sa lahat ng mga positive na nangyayari sa life ko, at sobrang daming nagmamahal sa akin ngayon.



“So, parang natatabunan na yung mga bashers. So, parang, ‘Bahala na kayo diyan, ako, grateful sa life.’

“So, deadma lang po talaga.”

Never daw siyang pumatol sa bashers, pero inamin niyang may mga pagkakataong naapektuhan siya.

“Ay, parang hindi naman po. Pero may mga bash before na medyo naapektuhan ako as a human being also.

“I think there was a time in-open up ko pala sa PBB, na medyo naapektuhan ako sa mga sinasabi nila towards me,” sabi ng PBB Celebrity Collab ex-housemate.

Ano ang pinakamasakit na bashing na natamo niya?

“Yung, parang, ang tagal sa industriya tapos wala pa masyadong napapagtutunan. O sabihin ko na po, ‘starlet,’ ayon.

“Ayun, yung masabihan nang ganun before,” pag-amin ni Ashley.

Dadgag niya: “So I would always prove myself na I’m more than that. So, iyon yung parang pinaka-bash na siguro na medyo na-hurt ako.

“Pero aside from that, wala. Parang pagmamahal na lang, so I’m just really grateful.” Mas tumibay raw ang loob niya dahil sa mga batikos sa kanya.

Saad ng Kapuso actress: “And actually, sa bash, sometimes yung mga negative criticism na sinasabi ng mga tao, I would use it as a motivation to become a better actor, to become a better person.

“So, mas win-win situation.

“Ako naman, hindi naman po ako yung nagho-hold ng grudge sa isang tao, kasi parang hindi ko kayang magalit nang matagal.

“So, nili-let go ko na lang yung mga negative energy.”

Bumida si Ashley sa mga Kapuso prime-time series na Widows’ Web (2022) at Hearts on Ice (2023).

Ipinamalas din niya ang kakayanang gumagana bilang kontrabida sa Legal Wives (2021) at bilang comfort woman sa Pulang Araw (2024).



Happy Birthday Alyssa



Happy Birthday Ronnie

Dean & Ruby’s Cafe Grand Opening



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Pormal nang nagsampa ng reklamo ang aktres na si Nadine Lustre kaugnay sa patuloy na pangha-harass at pambabastos sa kanya sa social media.

Nitong May 21, 2025, nag-file si Nadine ng paglabag sa Safe Spaces Act laban sa ilang indibidwal at grupong umaatake sa kanya.

Ang Safe Spaces Act o Republic Act No. 11313, na kilala rin bilang Bawal Bastos Law, ay batas na naglalayong protektahan ang bawat indibidwal laban sa gender-based sexual harassment sa iba't ibang lugar—kabilang ang mga pam-publikong espasyo, paaralan, lugar ng trabaho, at online platforms—mula sa



Nadine Lustre takes legal action vs malicious attacks against her

anumang uri ng pang-aabuso o pambabastos.

Suportado ni incoming Mamamayang Liberal (ML) Partylist representative Leila de Lima ang ginawang hakbang na ito ni Nadine.

LEILA DE LIMA VOICES SUPPORT FOR NADINE LUSTRE

Noong May 22, ibinahagi ni De Lima sa kanyang official Facebook account ang litrato ni Nadine habang nanunumpa sa harap ng piskal.

Kalakip nito ang pahayag

niya at ng ML Partylist kaugnay sa buong-buong pag-suporta nila sa aktres.

Mababasa sa pahayag ni De Lima: "We at ML Partylist express full support for Nadine Lustre as she files a complaint for violation of the Safe Spaces Act in response to the relentless and malicious attacks she has endured.

"This is a necessary step in a time when social media is being used to silence voices that speak for justice and reform. Ginagamit ang mga plataporma para buwagin ang makabuluhang diskurso at palitan ito ng galit at paninira. "We believe in freedom of expression. Pero ang kalayaang ito ay hindi dapat gamitin laban sa kato-

tohanan, dignidad, at demokrasya. Expression becomes dangerous when it is driven by disinformation and personal malice.

"Marami sa mga lumalabas sa social media ngayon ay hindi maituturing na opinyon. These are part of deliberate effort to harass, discredit, and instill fear. May masamang intensyon. May malinaw na layunin na patahimikin ang mga tumitindig."

"Maraming salamat, Nadine, sa tapang at paninindigan.

"Sa bawat hakbang mo, mas lumalakas ang laban para sa isang makatao, makatarungan, at demokratikong lipunan."



Akly Orteza is one of the Reynas at the Santacruzian at the Fiesta de Mayo Festival at 500 progress Avenue.



1. Congratulations to Ben Corpuz and Michael Herrera who were both honoured as outstanding Asian - Canadians at the 25 Canadian Multicultural Council (CMC) Asian Heritage Month Gala. They were nominated by The Philippines Independence Day Council (PIDC). Shown with Consul General Angelica Escalona and PIDC founder Agnes Miranda; 2. Fil-Can educators during TCDSB Proudly Pinoy Education Confab on May 27, 2025; 3. MH Production's Jerome performs with Gigi, Rosemary and nathalie at Fiesta de Mayo; 4. JDL student Bella Magbag with Pink Ribbons' Mika Sy & Shaine Jaramillo sings at Fiesta de Mayo; 5. JDL's Harmony performs at Fiesta de Mayo.

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Publication ban lifted for 3 siblings killed in crash with alleged drunk driver in Toronto



A publication ban covering the identities of the three siblings who died in a crash involving a suspected impaired, speeding driver has been lifted at the request of Crown prosecutors.

Last May 29 an Ontario court removed the ban which had previously forbidden the naming of 15-year-old Ramone, 13-year-old Jace and six-year-old Mya Laviña-Galve.

The family of the children has indicated the funeral service is planned for June 13 and 14.

The three siblings died in the early hours of Sunday, May 18, after their family car was struck while waiting at a red light by an allegedly drunk driver coming off Highway 401 in Etobicoke.

At the time, Toronto police said a Chrysler Pacifica was sitting at a red light on Renforth Drive when a speeding Dodge Caravan, leaving Highway 401, lost control and collided with the minivan.

Two of the siblings were killed in the crash, and a third died in hospital. The only surviving child and their mother were both taken to hospital and expected to make a recovery.



Ramone, 15, and Jace, 13 were killed instantly in the crash. Shortly after, 6-year-old Maya died at a local hospital. Their mother and 10-year-old brother, Avery, survived, along with the male driver.

Cousins told how the family was returning from watching a long-weekend fireworks display in Milton and visiting grandparents

when the tragic crash happened around 12:30 a.m.

"They went to watch fireworks in Milton, it was a day event, there was activity with horses, they were there with other cousins, just a family fireworks day for the long weekend," a cousin said in an interview after the crash.

They said the mother, Jade, remembered the details of the crash clearly.

"She remembers everything pretty vividly, she remembers the car coming so fast towards them," they said. Another cousin said, "She thought it was a dream, she can't imagine this car going this fast, this can't be real."

The family requested the publication ban be lifted, court heard.

A GoFundMe set up for the family has surpassed \$230,000 in contributions.

"The Laviña-Galve Family, a family that

is so core to our community, now needs our support during this incredibly difficult time," the GoFundMe read.

We humbly request your assistance to help them navigate this dark period be it through donation or spreading awareness for them. Additionally, we ask for your prayers, that the grieving family may find strength, hope, and the courage to overcome this heart-wrenching tragedy."

The 19-year-old accused of causing the crash and driving impaired appeared briefly in court on Thursday.

Ethan Lehouillier, from Georgetown, was arrested at the scene of the crash.

He was charged with three counts of both impaired driving causing death and of dangerous driving causing death. In total, Lehouillier faces 12 charges. His lawyer said he would not seek bail.

Lehouillier returns to court on June 17.

Jake Ejercito mulls legal action over unauthorized video of daughter Ellie

Jake Ejercito is considering taking legal action after his daughter, Ellie Eigenmann, was filmed "without her consent" during a recent public outing.

Ejercito took to social media May 30, to criticize the vlogger responsible for filming his daughter as he asked the public to report the video.

"This 'influencer' filmed Ellie without her

consent. She did not want to be in his video—let alone be posted by him. Clout-chasing should never come at the cost of someone's privacy, especially a minor's. Please report this reel," he wrote on Facebook.

"Crist Briand has deleted the video. Please continue reporting the page of this irresponsible clout chaser who ambushed a 13-year-old girl for views. I'm now in the

process of exploring legal options," he said.

Ellie's mother, Andi Eigenmann, also criticized the vlogger, describing the video as "disrespectful" and "exploitative," especially toward a minor.

"Using minors [for] your content is disrespectful and exploitative. My daughter made it clear that we will not be okay with you doing this. She clearly is uncomfortable.

Build your platform on integrity. Don't use our daughter for clout," she wrote in the comments section of the now-deleted video.

On her Instagram Story, Andi also reposted a netizen's comment stating that posting a video of a 13-year-old on social media opens the door for "harassment."

After their on-and-off relationship in the past, Ejercito and Andi are currently co-par-



entling Ellie. Andi is now engaged to professional surfer Philmar Alipayo, with whom she shares two children, Lilo and Koa.

CMC Asian Heritage Month Gala honors Asian Achievement

by Rosemer Enverga

It was an evening of delicious cuisine and rich cultural celebration at the Canadian Multicultural Council (CMC) Asian Heritage Month Gala on May 24, 2025. The event welcomed dignitaries and government officials, including Consul General Angelica Escalona, Senator Victor Oh, Senator Asha Seth, MP Michael Ma, MPP Aris Babikian, MPP Stan Cho, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, and Regional Councillor Mario Racco. They joined hundreds of attendees in honoring and celebrating the vibrant contributions of Asian heritage.

As a member of the CMC, PCCF took part in the celebration. The PCCF group led by President Rosemer Enverga, PCCF Officers Lita & Tony Leano, Gloria & Philip Rafanan, Laila Elcano, Nancy Caladucan, Noemi Mil-

anese, Marianne Daclan and Greatchen Griffiths-Mrs Philippines Canada 2025 were in attendance.

Congratulations to Rosemer Enverga, recipient of the Outstanding Asian Canadian Award "Honouring the Pioneers" 2025! Well done to all the recipients! Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) also took part in Cultural dance and a Fashion Show.

Hats off to the President Tulsi Dharel and the Canadian Multicultural Council for a job well done! For more info, e-mail PhilippineCanadianFoundation@gmail.com, visit:



www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com

Outstanding Asian-Canadian Community Award 2025

May is the Asian Heritage Month in Canada.

The Government of Canada commemorates Asian Heritage to honour the many achievements and contributions of people of Asian origin.

The Canadian Multicultural Council (CMC) Asians in Ontario organizes the an-

nual Gala honouring individuals of Asian origin for their outstanding contributions to the society. Thank you, CMC!

Grateful to be the recipient of the Outstanding Asian Canadian Community Award!

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Avoid Kissing & Hugging To Avoid Mpox Spread

DOH says no need to implement lockdowns in Manila over mpox

MANILA – The Department of Health says there is no need to implement lockdowns in Metro Manila amid concerns over mpox cases in the Philippines.

Health Assistant Secretary Albert Domingo said the overall cases of the disease in Metro Manila and nationwide are actually declining monthly. According to the World Health Organization, mpox is a viral illness that can cause a painful rash, enlarged lymph nodes, fever, headache, muscle ache, back pain and low energy. “Wala po tayong natatanging probinsya na binabantayan. Kung tatanungin nyo ako kung saan ang pinakamaraming kaso, nasa Metro Manila. Kailangan bang kabahan tayo? Kailangan bang mag-ECQ, mag-GCQ? Hindi po,” Domingo said, referring to the quarantines implemented at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Dahil ang Metro Manila ang pinaka-

malaking rehiyon sa Pilipinas, sampung milyon tayong nandito. Natural po kahit anong sakit ang ating tanungin, mas marami tayong makikita. Pero hindi nangangahulugan na nagkakaroon ng hawaan. Ibig sabihin po, tukoy natin kung nasaan sila, sila po ay naka-isolate, or baka gumaling na eh,” he continued. “Kaya ang sinasabi ko lagi, lalo na sa mga kaibigan natin sa media, hindi po yung total ang binabantayan. Kasi ang total, parang score yan, pataas nang pataas yan. Ang tinitignan natin is yung bilang ng bagong kaso kada buwan. At sa nakikita natin, pababa pa ho sya, maski sa Metro Manila pababa rin po.” He also cautioned the public against fake information circulating online, which he says have only contributed to undue alarm of the public.

“Hindi ho sya bago, hindi ho sya lab leak, hindi rin sya side effect ng bakuna yan. Eh kelan ba tayo huling nabakunahan? Nakailang taon na rin po, one or two years na rin po. Lahat po ng ganyang ha-

ka-haka, hindi ho totoo yan,” he said.

“Mas nababahala kami sa DOH hindi sa virus ng mpox, ngunit sa virus ng fake news. Ang bilis ho kasi magleak eh lalo na kapag nakita ang litrato ng mga mpox patients,” Domingo added. He noted that many of the pictures of people infected with mpox are actually from other countries. “Magkaroon lang ba ng content, at saka magkaroon ng clickbait. So wag lang click ng click. Tigilan natin ang virus ng fake news kasi yan ang nakakasira sa atin.”

The DOH denied that lockdowns have been imposed due to mpox, citing those reports as false information. “Walang lockdown kahit saanman sa Pilipinas. Fake news iyan,” said the health department on a Facebook post. The department also noted that mpox is not airborne, so a lockdown is not necessary.

They have since advised that while face masks are ineffective against mpox, avoiding kissing and hugging will prevent infection.

Zaijian Jaranilla shares ‘mukbang’ experience with Jane Oineza

Kapamilya actor Zaijian Jaranilla is proud of his role in the Puregold digital series “Si Sol at Si Luna” with Jane Oineza.

In the series, Zaijian and Jane shed their child-star images for roles steeped in emotional complexity and adult vulnerability, a distinct first for both actors.

It’s a career-defining turn for Zaijian, compelling him to deliver his most mature performance yet in his first intimate scene—a bold moment not just for him but for Philippine entertainment.

“Sobrang halo ‘yung emosyon ko nu’ng mapanood ko. Sobrang proud at masaya na may kaba,” Zaijian said.

“Masaya kasi first time ko nga siyang ipapakita sa mga tao na kaya ko ring gumawa ng gan’un. Sobrang malaking step ‘yun para sa akin,” he added.

For her part, Jane said that her role is her dream project.



“Anong reaksiyon? Halo-halo kasi sobrang isa ito sa mga mina-manifest ko na project,” she said.

“And feeling ko, nag-align ang stars ng universe, ang araw, at ang buwan, kaya nagawa ang project na ito. Kaya masaya ako na naging parte nito,” she added.

“Si Sol at si Luna” dropped its very first episode on the Puregold Channel on YouTube on May 31, with a new episode set to be released every Saturday thereafter.

Permanent Residency denial reveals Tokhang

TARIFF from page 1

assess applicants based on their professional history and ethical conduct.

Most Canadians likely haven’t heard of the word “tokhang”.

An expression associated with the bloody drug war waged by Rodrigo Duterte during his time as president of the Philippines, it’s a combination of two words spoken in the country’s Visayas region: “toktok” (knock) and “hangyo” (plead).

Tokhang involves law enforcers going to the homes of alleged drug pushers and addicts, a visit that is often followed by extrajudicial killings.

Canadian lawyers, law students, and others interested about Duterte’s drug war are now familiar with tokhang.

The case involved former Philippine policeman Joshue Lim-mong Ahuday, who took part in tokhang operations. Tokhang was first described in a January 15, 2024 decision by the Immigration Division (ID) of the Immigration and Refugee Board.

In that decision, the ID found Ahuday inadmissible to Canada

under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) for acts outside Canada that constitute offences under Canada’s

Officer’s Role and Residency Application

The former police officer, who had served in the Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU), applied for permanent residency in Canada in pursuit of new opportunities. Despite a brief tenure, his involvement in anti-drug operations was cited as a reason for his inadmissibility. Immigration authorities evaluated his record and determined that participation in such activities conflicted with Canada’s commitment to human rights standards.

Crimes Against Humanity & War Crimes Act.

The word tokhang was again mentioned in a January 7, 2025 judgment and reasons rendered by Judge Angus G. Grant, who upheld the ID’s decision ordering the deportation of Ahuday.

In the ruling, Grant recalled that Duterte served as president of the Philippines from June 2016 to June 2022.

“Throughout that time, he im-

plemented a war on drugs, which the PNP executed through a strategy known as ‘Operation Double Barrel’. Both drug dealers and drug users were targeted by the PNP in arbitrary and unlawful killings, as part of the government-directed campaign.



According to multiple reports, this campaign of extra-judicial executions in largely impoverished areas of Manila and other urban areas already stood at 7,000 casualties by late January 2017.

Grant continued, “Integral to Operation Double Barrel were ‘Tokhang Operations’ which aimed to create ‘watch lists’ of known drug users and drug dealers, who would be visited by police and local authorities and urged to ‘surrender’. If a

suspect did not surrender, the police would attempt to ‘verify’ their drug use, by interrogating friends and neighbours. These visits were often used to confirm the identities and whereabouts of a targeted drug suspect, and frequently ended with the violent death of the drug user.

“Related to these Tokhang Operations were ‘buy-bust’ operations. After a drug suspect surrendered or was ‘verified’ by a drug unit and put on a watch list, a faked ‘buy-bust’ encounter would occur, in which a drug enforcement team, would raid the suspect’s house. It usually ends in extrajudicial killing of the buy-bust target,” Grant related.

The judge noted that Ahuday moved to Canada in June 2021 on a spousal open work permit.

The former Philippine police officer was included on his wife’s application for permanent residence as a dependent spouse.

However, in May 2023, Ahuday was notified by the Canadian Border Services Agency that he had been reported as inadmissible to Canada on grounds of violating human or international rights pursuant to IRPA.

In his ruling, judge Grant quoted from the ID’s decision, which stated that there are “rea-

sonable grounds to believe that Mr. Ahuday participated in the Tokhang operations significantly and knowingly, as a police officer on a team in the drug enforcement unit of the PNP”.

“As is demonstrated by the objective evidence, these activities directly contributed to targeted killings of drug users and dealers by the PNP, at the behest of President Duterte,” the ID decision read.

Grant dismissed Ahuday’s application for a judicial review of the ID’s decision, saying the division did “not commit any fatal errors in concluding that there were reasonable grounds to believe the Applicant had made a voluntary, knowing, and significant contribution to the crimes committed by the Philippine police over the course of then President Rodrigo Duterte’s ‘war on drugs’.”

“The ID drew a clear and direct link between the Applicant’s police duties and the crimes against humanity committed by Philippine authorities; in short, its conclusions were adequately justified in light of the facts and applicable legal principles,” Grant wrote.

Duterte is now unergoing trial at The Hague.

Kapuso Lions holds a Zumba fundraiser Coral Reef Restoration Project in Cebu, Philippines

Thank You from the Bottom of Our Hearts!

Toronto Kapuso Lions Club would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made our Mother’s Day Zumba & Line Dance Fundraising Event a huge success!

To the TKLC officers and members — thank you for your incredible support and dedication. Your service truly made a difference.

To our generous donors and sponsors Raquel Walse of Unique Creations and Steve Welker and Company, Chanz Ganancial of Modelo Cosmetic Clinic, BanBan Chicken, April Gonzales of Travel Connect



Immigration, thank you for your unwavering support and thoughtful contributions that helped bring joy and excitement to the event.

To our amazing Lines dance

instructors, Raluca Mihaileanu, Idancewithgrace Modern Line Dance and Zumba Instructors Nes Mercado, Michelle De Leon and Kel Ici

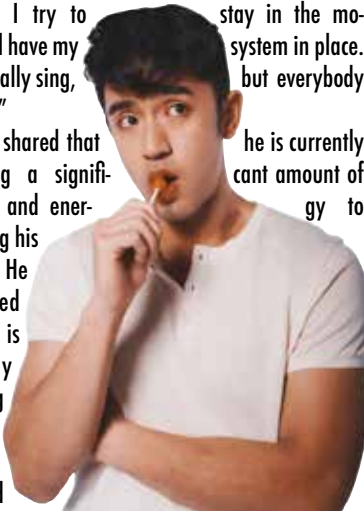
your energy and passion lit

up the room — thank you for leading us with so much fun and flair!

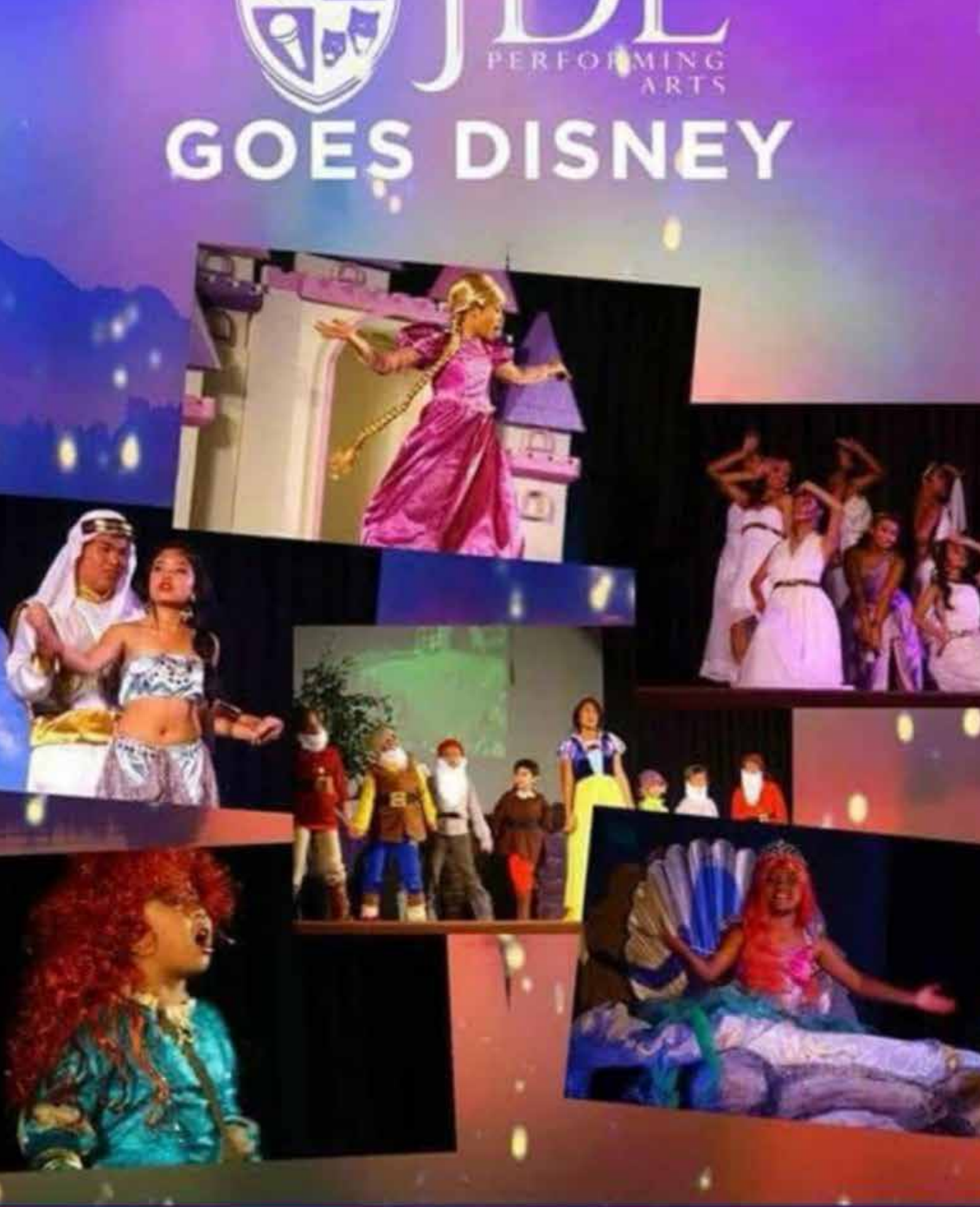
To our community partners Get Together Dance Fitness, Saviour’s Foundation Inter-

national Inc. and Infini Club, thank you for your incredible support and collaboration.

And to all our participants, thank you for showing up, danc-



Aside from music and movies, Inigo also shared his business ventures. “I’m starting a business this year. I’m going to be making more rug designs. And I’m also going to come up with a new brand that’s coming out very soon. Mga hygiene stuff.”



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PERFORMING ARTS
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How Donald Trump’s tariffs threaten Canadians’ access to prescription drugs

by Joel Lexchin

If the United States imposes 25 per cent tariffs on exports from Canada, a recession is inevitable. Estimates are between 600,000 to 2.4 million jobs are at risk.

Based on previous recessions, the unemployment rate could rise to 10 per cent and stay stuck at that level for some time.

Adding insult to injury, about 55 per cent of Canadians are covered by employer-sponsored drug plans, which means that when these workers get laid off, they also lose their health benefits, including prescription drug insurance tied to their jobs.

Affordability of prescription drugs

During the COVID-19 pan-

demic, according to Statistics Canada, about one-fifth of the population reported not having insurance to cover prescription medications. The problem of not having insurance for prescription medications was especially acute among immigrants and racialized people. These are the same groups of people that will be at the highest risk of any recession-linked job losses.

When Canadians must choose between buying prescription drugs and paying for food and rent, patients will skip their medications and suffer. The result is additional physician visits, more visits to already overcrowded emergency departments and more admissions to hospitals.

Tariffs and drug prices

Added to the threat of losing prescription drug coverage with job loss is the very real possibility that drug prices will increase. Thirty-two per cent of the active pharmaceutical ingredients that go into the medicines that North Americans take originate in China. U.S. President Donald Trump has now threatened to slap U.S. tariffs on Chinese drugs and drug ingredients that were previously exempt.

Canada already imports \$8.76 billion annually in prescription drugs from the U.S. To the extent that tariffed drugs go from China to the U.S. to Canada, the cost of both publicly and privately funded drug plans will

increase.

We can hope that any tariffs — on Canada or China — will be only temporary and we can avoid the ongoing effects on both access to prescription drugs and their price. But given Trump’s volatility and unpredictability, we can’t rely on that outcome.

With the passage in October 2024 of Canada’s new Pharmacare Act, the government of Canada committed to “making sure that you can get the medications you need, no matter where you live or your ability to pay.” We need to expand Canada’s federal pharmacare plan to cover all Canadians for all medically necessary drugs. Indeed, the need has never been as acute.

So far, only three provinces (British Columbia, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island) and one territory (Yukon) have signed agreements with the federal government to cover contraceptives and diabetes drugs and devices — the only products currently covered under Bill C-64. The remaining provinces and territories urgently need to sign on. Prime Minister Mark Carney and the Liberals must decisively commit to expanding the range of drugs that is covered by pharmacare.

All the provincial, territorial and federal leaders have pledged to protect Canadians from U.S. tariffs. Expanding pharmacare is part of that protection.

Julie Anne says no sleepover with Rayver

Sagrado para kina Julie Anne San Jose at Rayver Cruz ang mga bagay na ginagawa lamang ng totoong mag-asawa.

At dahil magkasintahan pa lamang sila, tinitiyak ng dalawa na huwag gawin ang mga bagay na hindi pa dapat.

Saad ni Julie Anne: “Parang ano po kasi, very... ako po, personally po talaga, kasi yung family ko, very traditional talaga.

“Tsaka, very conservative.

“And ako po, parang ako, tanggap ko naman po yun na, siguro in time, magagawa naman namin yung mga bagay na yun.

“Like, mag-travel, ganyan.

“Siguro ano, ako, wala naman po kaso din sa akin, di ba?

“And for me, yung bagay kasi na yun, talagang nirerespeto po ni Ray.

“Sobrang wala po ako masyadong masabi, talagang sobrang laki po ng respeto niya sa akin and sa family.”

Kahit sleepover?

Natatawa niyang sagot, “Wala po. Wala po!”



“May mga petty stuff, but it’s wala, e, wala talaga.

“Parang walang something heavy, wala.

“Kasi, everything is just so easy with him.

“Parang, kunyari misunderstanding lang, nare-resolve namin siya agad ng minuto lang.

“Hindi na namin pinapatagal ng araw or days, di ba?

“So talagang, I think, pareho naman na kami... hindi naman na kami mga bata.

“Hindi na kami teenagers, di ba?”

NO. 1 DEFENDER OF RAYVER CRUZ

Si Julie Anne din ang No. 1 na tagapagtanggol ng boyfriend kapag may bashers ito.

Aniya: “Ako, lagi ko kasing sinasabi sa kanya na, ‘Hindi mo dapat pinapakinggan yung mga ganito.’ “Pero minsan kapag sobrang, like, under, below the belt na, talagang, like...”

“Di kasi talaga ako pumapatol talaga, di talaga ako nagsasalita. “Pero if I have to, sobrang, as in, sasabihin ko in a nice way pa rin naman. “Kasi ano naman yun, e, at the end of the day, you always have to be the bigger person. “Intindihin mo na lang because baka mamaya may pinagdadaanan din sila or something, di ba?

“So I always reply. I always say in a nice way pa rin.

“Kahit paano, kahit masakit yung mga sinasabi nila, I always, you know, I always reply to them nicely.”

NO MAJOR MISUNDERSTANDING

Halatang nag-uwapang ang kaligayahan sa puso ni Julie Anne tuwing mapag-uusapan ang masayang relasyon nila ng boyfriend.

Katunayan, sinabi ni Julie Anne na never pa silang nagkaroon ng matinding away ni Rayver.

Kung nagkaroon man daw, ito ay maliliit na tampuhan lamang.

Pagbabahagi ng singer-actress: “May mga ano, may mga petty.

A Film by Marky Hugh

Silent Battles

SCARBOROUGH

“Every family has its battles but some challenges can change them forever”

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SCARBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE

FILIPINO CENTRE TORONTO HOLDS THE 19th VICTORIA INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

VICTORIA CUP from page 13

and gives them the opportunity to dream big,” she said.

New politicians joining VIBT opening ceremony this year are MP for Scarborough-Woburn Michael Coteau, and Juanita Nathan, MP for Pickering Brooklin.

MP Michael Coteau reminded everyone why the Pan-Am Sports Centre was built.

“This venue was built for the next generation. So, this building is for you. Play well today and good luck,” he said.

MP Andrea Hazel gives a shout-out to the parents.

“To the parents, I was a basketball mom for 27 years, give it up for the parents,” she said to loud cheers from the crowd.

On May 16 to 18, 2025 (Victoria Day weekend), the 19th VIBT took place. Around 78 teams participated and numerous families and friends of team players attended to watch the games. A number of special guests also joined the fun-filled weekend, among them were: MP Rechie Valdez (Mississauga), MP Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre), Councillor Jamal Myers, Consul General Angelica Escalona, and MPP Andrea Hazel.



As of 2025, VIBT is the longest running tournament and one of the most organized leagues with an assigned nurse and police security.

For the first time since it started, former

Mayor John Tory missed this year’s VIBT Opening ceremony.

Regrettably, a no-show was Mayor Olivia Chow who actually confirmed her attendance since winning the election.

The Filipino Centre Toronto 19th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament 2024 opening and closing games were held at the Toronto Pan Am Centre. Other locations were at Global Kingdom and at the St. John Paul Catholic school across Pan Am.

Just like before, the long weekend tournament is still well-attended. As for the action, this year’s tournament is no exception. All the games were still exciting.

On day one, I saw a game that tied. it

went into overtime by 2 minutes.

Unlike in 2022 where a coach left the court, this year’s tournament was devoid of drama.

Returning this year from was the \$500 prize for one parent who can shoot from the centre of the court. The prize was offered by Dr. Muneeb Ali of City Centre Dentistry in Mississauga. Then, another try from the 3-point line and finally at the free throw line. Two mothers joined but neither one was able to shoot the ball.

Aside from this free throw cash prize, he also offered 2 Raptors jerseys to two MVP players.

Dr. Ali also sponsored this year’s Championship trophy.

See you all next year.



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FILIPINO REVOLTS AND RESISTANCE: THE LONG ROAD TO PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE

FROM THE EDUCATOR’S DESK:
By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

On June 12, 2025, Filipinos worldwide will celebrate the 127th anniversary of our kasarinlan(independence) from the yoke of the Spanish conquistadors and colonisers. Reaching the historic proclamation ng ating pambansang kalayaan in Kawit, Cavite was “not an easy task, not an easy walk”, kasabihan nga. Historically, gaining our freedom as Filipinos was a long path of numerous revolts, uprisings, struggles, and sacrifices pursued by our mga ninuno!

Many historians, academic researchers, and scholars believe that our forefathers “began to fight the Spaniards the moment the foreign invaders arrived in 1521 and settled permanently in 1565.” The Filipinos, then called “indios” by foreigners, continued resisting to end Spanish domination, though intermittently and sporadically, for over 377 years. We achieved full independence only when the Filipino revolutionaries and patriots, headed by Katipunan Supremo Andres Bonifacio and his Katipuneros, started the revolution in Pugad Lawin and culminated when General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the First Republic in Asia on June 12, 1898.

Eminent historian Teodoro A. Agoncillo wrote that Mactan chieftain Lapulapu in 1521 and Dagami of Cebu in 1567 were among the first Filipinos “to refuse to bow under Spanish encroachment.”, and centuries later resulted in what is described as the “unang sigaw ng mga anak ng bayan laban sa manlulupig.” The early revolts, many Filipino history writers characterised the patterns of resistance, usually with one leader motivated by religious or economic causes. Professor T. Agoncillo categorised Filipino uprisings into: 1) personal, i.e. led by political leaders such as “datus, maharlikas,

maginoo” and religious leaders, like the “babaylans or katalonans”, 2) resistance to oppressive Spanish-introduced economic or religious institutions, and 3) unjust and fraudulent land appropriation problems.

Here is the Timeline of the Filipino Revolts from the 16th century to the 19th century as proved by Philippine historians and official records:

- 1521- The Battle of Mactan. Datu Lapulapu fought Portuguese explorer Fernando Magallanes and his invading troops. Magellan was killed in the battle.
- 1567- Dagami Revolt. A revolt led by Filipino rebel Dagami, against the Spanish colonial rule in Cebu
- 1574- Manila Revolt. An uprising led by Rajah Lakadula and Rajah Sulayman in Manila
- 1585- Pampangos Revolt. By native Kapampangan leaders against Spanish landowners(encomenderos) who had deprived tribal chiefs of their historical land inheritances
- 1587- Conspiracy of the Maharlikas or Tondo Conspiracy. A plot by the kin-related noblemen(datus) of Manila led by Agustin de Legazpi and his first cousin, Martin Pangan.
- 1589- Revolts Against the Tribute. It occurred in Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, and Ilocos Sur over alleged abuses and unjust taxes by tax collectors.
- 1596- Magalat Revolt. Led by Magalat from Cagayan, who committed atrocities against fellow natives for refusing to rise

against the Spaniards.

- 1601- Igorot Revolt, Gov. General Francisco de Guzman sent an expedition to the Cordillera region to convert the Igorots to Christianity. Missionary Fr. Esteban Marin was killed.
- 1602. Chinese Revolt. The Chinese of Manila set fire to Quiapo and Tondo and threatened to capture Intramuros.
- 1621-Tamblot Uprising. A religious uprising against the Jesuits in Bohol occurred when the Jesuits converted the natives to the catholic faith.
- 1621-1622- Bancao Revolt. A religious uprising against Spanish colonial rule led by Bancao, Datu of Kan Gara(Garigara) in Leyte
- 1625-1627-The Isneg or Mandaya Revolt. Led by Miguel Lanab and Alababan, two Christianized Filipinos from the tribes of Capinatan, in northwestern Cagayan
- 1639. Cagayan Revolt. The people of Ilagan proclaimed their independence on February 2, 1763, defying Spain and the tribute collectors.
- 1643- Ladia Revolt. Ladia was a Bornean and a descendant of Lakandula, who came to Malolos and staged the uprising due to Spanish oppression.
- 1649-1650-Sumuroy Revolt. Juan Ponce Sumuroy, a Waray, and his followers rose in arms over the polo system(forced labour) being undertaken in Palapag, Northern Samar,
- 1650- Maniago Revolt. Led by Don Francisco Maniago, the natives protested against the polo and bandala and later became a struggle to free the natives from Spanish rule.
- 1660-1661- Malong Revolt. Andres Malong led some natives in Pangasinan to take up arms against the Spanish government and proclaimed himself King of Pangasinan.

- 1661- Almazan Revolt or the Ilocos Revolt. Led by Don Pedro Almazan of San Nicolas, Laoag, Ilocos Norte, urged to rise in arms against the Spaniards but failed.
- 1663- Panay Revolt. A religious uprising that involved Tamar, a native of the island of Panay, who wanted to establish a religious cult in the town of Oton.
- 1681-1683- Sambal Revolt. In Pangasinan, the Spanish moved to exterminate the roots of the rebellion.
- 1719- Caragay Revolt. Dagupan-born Caragay led an uprising against the provincial governor who had him flogged for a false accusation of smuggling.
- 1744-1829- Dagohoy Revolt. The only Philippine Revolt completely related to matters of religious customs was undertaken by Francisco Dagohoy and his followers in Bohol.
- 1745. Peasant Unrest. It started in the hacienda town of Silang, Cavite, “spreading blood” over disputed fraudulent land surveys and usurpation of communal lands.
- 1762-1765- Palaris Revolt.Pangasinense leader named Juan de la Cruz Palaris rebelled against the Spanish imposition of the tribute.
- 1762- Silang Revolt. Diego Silang opposed the exaction of annual tribute, drafting of polistas and unscrupulous practices of the alcalde mayor in Ilocos, Abra, and Cagayan.
- 1787-Lagutao Revolt. The ban on tobacco cultivation gave Christians in the Difun and Paniqui missions reason for returning to the highlands and their ancient religion.
- 1807- Ambaristo or the Basi Revolt. It was led by Pedro Mateo in Piddig, Ilocos Norte, when the Spanish colonial government expropriated the manufacture and sale of basi.
- 1822-Peasant Revolt. Headed by Luis de

los Santos and Juan Silvestre, the revolt broke out in the hacienda towns of Cavite for forced labour and the exaction of tribute.

- 1865- Camerino revolt. An Imus farmer, Casimiro Camerino, led a peasant uprising against the land abuses of the friars.
- 1872-Cavite Mutiny.200 Filipino soldiers led by Sgt. La Madrid mutinied, galvanised by discontent against the Spaniards. Three Filipino priests, Fr. Mariano Gomez, Fr. Jose Burgos, and Fr. Jacinto Zamora, were unjustly accused as agitators and executed by the garrote vil.

According to T. Agoncillo, “ All the earlier resistance which occurred almost in a cyclical pattern were failures.” The reasons for these are 1) The insular makeup of the Philippines, that is, the early Filipinos were conditioned to live and feel apart from each other for almost 333 years,2) There was a wide communication gap between the Filipinos in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, particularly those living in inaccessible areas, and 3) There were a multitude of major and minor ethnolinguistic groups but no lingua franca, much less a national language to communicate and bind one another. Other historians said: “Most of these revolts failed because the vast majority of the native population sided with the Spanish colonial government and even fought together with the Spanish soldiers against the perpetrators to put down the revolts. Nonetheless, we Filipinos of the present and future generations should always remember, respect, honour, and celebrate the history of our hard-fought fights for freedom at ng mga nag-buwis ng kanilang buhay. Sources: History of the Filipino People-T. Agoncillo; Philippines, A Unique Nation-S. M. Zaide; Readings in Philippine History- Fr. H. de la Costa; Wikipedia (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Jennica Garcia gives ‘proof of life’ after art card went viral

Jennica Garcia felt the need to give a “proof of life” amid the internet reaction to the promotional art card that announced her participation in a “Flores de Mayo” event after it unintentionally resembled a memorial tribute. The art card, created for the celebration at the Our Lady Mary Mediatrix of All Grace Chapel in Bocaue, Bulacan, features Garcia’s portrait with floral borders

and religious imagery—a combination that many netizens joked gave off “memorial card vibes” or a eulogy announcement.

Garcia herself took the mix-up in stride, posting on her social media to assure her followers that the photo was indeed for the Flores de Mayo event. “Sabi naman po sa inyo, Sagala eh [white



dove emoji] (I told you so, it’s for Flores de Mayo) #ProofOfLife,” she captioned the post featuring her Santacruzan look.

The “Saving Grace” actress previously addressed the comments about the art card, laughing along with the rest of the internet.

“Akala nila sumalangit na ako (They thought I already went to heaven),” she said laughingly in the reac-

tion video she posted on Instagram May 29.

The reaction video also features comments from her celebrity friends, including Janine Gutierrez, Melai Cantiveros, and Lovely Abella, among others, who expressed their brief fear after the first glance at the art card.

Despite the poorly designed art card, Garcia told her followers to be kind to the artist who made it.

“Don’t blame the editor,” she said in Tagalog. “The editor is just doing his job. Stop blaming other people.”

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Fil-Canadian Highschooler Named Jr. Artist of the Year

By : Tony A. San Juan, OCT

A Grade 9 exemplary student of a catholic secondary school in the York Catholic District School Board(YCDSB) was recently awarded “Jr. Artist of the Year” for the school year 2024-2025.. Bianca Manlapaz, a soon-to-be Grade 10 student next school year at St. Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham, Ontario, received the honour “for special contribution to the St. Brother Andre Arts Program in the area of visual arts”.

Moreover, Bianca is credited with painting the image of San Lorenzo Ruiz, a Filipino saint, for the community gallery of St. Brother Andre Catholic High School.

Just 2 months ago, Bianca designed and developed 3 official posters for two leading community organizations in Ontario such as the “International Women’s Day Accelerateaction” and the “Asian Heritage Month Awards Gala” for the Canadian Multicultural Council - Asians in Ontario(CMC-AO) and



the “Salo Salo sa Earl Bales Park & Asian Heritage Month” for the Philippine Independence Day Council(PIDC).

Academically, Bianca is currently a Grade 9 Advanced Placement(AP) program student, after having completed with honours her elementary grades at San Lorenzo Ruiz Catholic School in 2024. Her grade school academic achievements and co-curricular accomplishments include awards in Visual Arts, Oral Communication, Track & Field, Yearbook Club, and Achievement in Music. She also received numerous certificates of

recognition from various community organizations and government officials. Among her citations are “Women Award”, “Filipino Heritage Month Participant”, “500 Philippine Quincentennial Commemorations”, “Many Faces of Markham”, “International Women’s Day” and “Little Miss Philippines-PIDC”.

Last year, Bianca was honoured as “Outstanding Elementary School Graduate” by the OFCSA- Outstanding Filipino Canadian

BIANCA page 23

Darryl Yap pleads not guilty to cyberlibel case filed by Vic Sotto

Naghain ng “not guilty” plea ang direktor na si Darryl Yap sa kasong two counts of cyberlibel na isinampa laban sa kanya ng TV host-comedian na si Vic Sotto.

Kaugnay ito sa kontrobersiyal na teaser ng pelikulang The Rapists of Pepsi Paloma na inilabas ng direktor sa social media noong January 1, 2025.

Kasama nitong humarap sa korte ang legal counsel niyang si Atty. Raymond Fortun.

“During pre-trial, we try to agree on certain facts then there will be disclosure of yung mga evidences that are going to be presented.”

Nakatakdang maganap ang unang pagdinig sa kaso sa August 19.

Bago ito, magkakaroon muna ng mandatory mediation conference alinsunod sa proseso ng hukuman.

Bukas bang makipag-areglo si Yap sa kampo ni Vic?

Sagot ni Fortun: “There’s always room for settlement.

Sa panig naman ng complainant na si Vic Sotto, nagbigay ng reaksiyon ang kanyang abogado na si Atty. Enrique dela Cruz kaugnay sa “not guilty” plea ni Yap.

Patungkol sa posibilidad ng areglo, ibinahagi ni Dela Cruz ang direktiba ni Vic sa kanya.



Saad niya: “Bago mag-umpisa yung trial, ‘Lalaban tayo,’ yun ang instruction niya sa amin.

Hindi man pumayag si Vic na makipag-areglo kay Yap, kumpiyansa raw ang kampo ng Eat Bulaga! host na mananalo sila sa kaso dahil sa hawak nilang mga ebidensiya.

Saad ni Dela Cruz: “Matibay naman yung aming ebidensiya. In fact, dumaan ito sa preliminary investigation at sinabi naman ng fiscal na sapat yung aming ebidensiya para ito ay mag-proceed sa trial.”

Samantala, inaasahang personal na dadalo si Vic sa susunod na pagdinig.

VIC SOTTO-DARRYL YAP COURT BATTLE

Nagsampa si Vic Sotto ng 19 counts of cyberlibel laban kay Darryl Yap noong January 9, 2025.

Nag-ugat ito sa teaser ng pelikulang The Rapists of Pepsi Paloma ni Yap, kunsaan tampok ang mga artistang sina Gina Alajar at Rhed Bustamante.

Sa eksena, tinanong ni Charito Solis (Gina) si Pepsi (Rhed) kung totoo bang “ni-rape” siya ni “Vic Sotto.”

Pasigaw at mangiyak-ngiyak na sagot ni Pepsi (Rhed), “Oo!”

Keempee de Leon finally free from shackles of pride

Keempee de Leon has smoked the peace-pipe with his dad, TV host-comedian Joey de Leon.



PCJ marks Keempee’s long overdue return on TV, this after he got booted out of “Eat Bulaga” (EB) in 2016 for reasons he didn’t know – and wasn’t made aware of. EB had been Keempee’s home for 14 years.

Never been told the reason behind his removal, Keempee’s life admittedly got upended.

Keempee avoided his dad for about five years.

It was all about Keempee’s not being able to embrace the “Eat Bulaga fate” that turned his life upside down.

But thanks to his renewed faith as a born-again Christian, Keempee – once consumed by pride – has allowed humility to take over, the very virtue that led him to reconcile with Joey.

The junior comedian looks back on June 15, 2024, a Saturday. It coincided with the Father’s Day celebration in advance on Eat Bulaga.

Finally coming face to face with his dad, Keempee casually struck a light chat: “I just stopped by to greet you ‘Happy Father’s Day, ‘Dy!’ Daddy had no reaction, but when it finally sank in that I was there, he said: ‘Are you here to promote?’ ‘No, I just came to greet you!’ Next thing was, daddy toured me around TV5.”

It was because Keempee had to purposely wait until his Tita Eileen Macapagal (Joey’s partner) celebrated her birthday in September.

Came that day, again Keempee was admittedly on pins and needles – it was his chance again to set foot on his dad’s Green Meadows residence in ages.

Keempee then shyly ap-

proached Eileen to greet her. Everyone else was welcoming of him.

Joey then showed Keempee a room upstairs – that was the latter’s cue to finally mouth the words “I’m sorry, ‘Dy...”

“Dy, please forgive me... I’m sorry for everything I’ve done,” were Keempee’s repeated lines as his sniffles turned to wails.

Before he knew it, Joey was also in tears: “I’ve been asking where you are now, where you live, what you’ve been eating...”

In his heart of hearts, Keempee felt his dad had missed him just as much.

Heading back home hours later made Keempee suffused with joy beyond words.

And which child with issues with his parents wouldn’t be?

At long last, Keempee has freed himself from the shackles of foolish pride.

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PINOY FIESTA AND TRADE SHOW 2025

We are excited to announce that Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show Toronto (PFTS) is scheduled for June 7/8, 2025 in celebration of its 15th Year Anniversary as well as the Philippine Independence Day and Filipino Heritage Month at Albert Campbell Square (ACS), 150 Borough Drive, Scarborough. ACS is located behind Scarborough Town Centre Mall, parking is free around the Mall/ nominal price at Civic Centre or the street.

- June 7, Saturday, 11:00 am Mass - 9:00 pm (all-day & all-evening entertainment) plus a surprise GUEST ARTIST
 - June 7, Sunday, 11:00 am - 8:00 pm (all-day & all-evening entertainment)
- PCCF is a not-for-profit organization and managed

by volunteers who share the same passion to help the poorest of the poor and at the same time would like to have 'FUN while HELPING OTHERS'. PCCF Team has recently accomplished its annual charity mission, please click the links below.

You/organization is invited to participate in the UN-FURLING of the BIG PHILIPPINE FLAG on June 7, Saturday, 12:30 pm after the Mass. Please join us in your Filipino attire.

PFTS has so many surprises in store to showcase and amongst which is the first ever, DANCE COMPETITION with a Filipino flavour and the SINGING COMPETITION.

PCCF would like to present the first ever, 'KULTURA FILIPINO DANCE SHOWDOWN' June 8, Sunday, 1:00 pm.

We would like to invite groups to participate and have a chance to win \$1,000 and other special awards.

PCCF will also have the 'BOSES NG FIESTA' June 8, Sunday, 4:00 pm Singing Competition and have a chance to win \$500.

For more information, please do not hesitate to email us back or to Register (free) on or before May 16, 2025.

We look forward to your participation and creating another memorable experiences together.

Thank you once again for your invaluable support!

For more info. visit: www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com



www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com fb.com/pinoyfiestatoronto instagram.com/pinoyfiestatoronto pinoyfiesta.ca

Thank you/Salamat,
PFTS Organizing Committee
Pinoy Fiesta & Tradeshow sa Toronto Organizing Committee

See you all on June 7 & 8, 2025 at the Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show sa Toronto at Albert Campbell Square, 150 Borough Dr! Tara na!

Celebrating 15 years of Having fun, while helping others!

Advocate for Charity, advocate for Community!

For the latest updates, please visit:
www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com

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

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 lucky, you can find yourself swimming with a passing school of dolphins.

Clown Fish, Flowers & Loboc River

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Does cancelling a trip to the U.S. really send a political message, or is it just hurting local tourism?

Frédéric Dimanche & Kelley A. McClinchey

As the weather warms, many Canadians are turning their attention to travel plans.

However, temperatures are not the only thing heating up — political tensions between Canada and the United States continue to escalate amid United States President Donald Trump's on-again, off-again tariffs.

Trade wars impact the price of goods on both sides of the border and threaten employment and investor confidence. Beyond this, the political situation is also affecting travel intentions and behaviours.

Tariffs are hurting tourism businesses

Although travel is not directly affected by the American tariffs — such as visa or ESTA fees for Canadians visiting the U.S. — Canadians are reacting strongly to the tariffs and Trump's threats to make the country the 51st U.S. state.

Statistics Canada indicates that visits to the U.S. began to decline as early as January. All this suggests that Canadians are cancelling trips to the U.S. A new American policy could also affect Canadian travel to the U.S.: as of March 9, some Canadians staying in the U.S. for more than 30 days are now required to register with American authorities.

Since Canada is the top source of international visitors to the United States, Americans are starting to worry about the impacts of the tariffs on travel. In 2024, 20 million visits from Canada generated \$20.5 billion in spending and supported 140,000 American jobs. There

are more flights at Toronto Pearson going to and coming from the U.S. than there are domestic flights to and from Canadian destinations. Many Canadian tourism businesses are also feeling uncertainty, anxiety and stress about how the tariffs will impact them.

Since tariffs are taxes on imported goods, many businesses will need to adjust by acquiring materials and products from alternate sources.

Business confidence, U.S. travel are down

It's not just leisure travellers who are rethinking trips to the U.S. — Canadian businesses are also losing confidence in cross-border travel and trade.

A recent survey by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce found 60 per cent of Ontario business lacked confidence in the province's economic outlook. Eighty per cent said the tariffs had a negative impact on their confidence, with 40 per cent claimed a significantly negative impact.

A long-term travel boycott would have significant impacts on the American states that are favourite destinations for Canadians, like Florida, New York, California, Washington and Nevada. Meanwhile, other destinations like Mexico and the Caribbean might benefit from redirected tourism spending.

Canadians are also affected by a poor exchange rate between the Canadian and U.S. dollar. It makes travel to the U.S. much more expensive for Canadians, and Canada a bargain for Americans. With more Canadians staying at home and increased spending by Americans



in Canada, the trade war could be an opportunity for the Canadian tourism sector.

Are travel boycotts actually effective?

When people are outraged about an issue, boycotting is often a common emotional response. Canadians avoid American-made products. Europeans are also increasingly calling for boycotts in response to political tensions with the U.S.

People are using the one tool for them, as consumers, to buy or not buy from certain brands or countries. Travel boycotts are an increasingly popular tool for businesses and individuals to voice protest and claim social justice against foreign governments or firms.

However, history suggests travel boycotts don't tend to be very effective at changing policies. They can have an impact on the tourism trade sector, and hurt travel companies on both sides of a conflict, but they have little effect on the overall economy of a country.

For example, in 2022, many countries imposed eco-

nomie sanctions and travel restrictions against Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine. This slowed the Russian economy, of course, but the bans did not succeed in altering Russia's foreign policy.

Should Canadians keep travelling?

Consumer anger and aspirations for social justice and change will likely continue to generate calls for travel boycotts. However, research has shown travel boycotts often end up harming local tourism businesses more than the politicians or policies they are meant to target.

Rather than expecting to bring about actual political outcomes, many consumers participate in travel boycotts as a way to express their political views and feel good about their convictions. For Canadians, U.S. tariffs may create a negative perception of travelling south of the border, just as some Americans may find destinations abroad less welcoming. These tensions could ultimately work in Canada's favour by making it a more attractive alternative for international travellers who might otherwise visit the U.S. While there are no direct tariffs on the travel and tourism industry, their broader economic impact will likely raise prices of the cost of goods and services across the sector, making travel more expensive in the long run.

The best response may not be to stop travelling altogether, but rather to shift travel choices, whether that means Canadians travelling domestically or Europeans choosing to travel in Canada instead of the U.S.

Ivana Alawi on love life, dating, and bashers

You may have overlooked it, but during a vibrant gathering with the showbiz press, actress Ivana Alawi candidly shared insights into the myriad challenges and experiences that have shaped her personal life and career.

On love life: “Wala nga akong time sa sarili ko eh. Kahit sa family ko hindi na kami minsan nag kakasabay kumain. Pero may pasulyap-sulyap na date ganun.”

On falling in love: “Siguro in two years. Kapag mga 30 na ako, I think it’s time for me to start focusing on love and raising a family.”

On bashers: “Wala naman akong magagawang perfect para sa kanila so

deadma lang. Ang iniisip ko yung mga nagmamahal sa akin at ano yung mas makaka-tulong ako. Yun ang nasa utak ko. Yung mga basher wala rin naman akong pakialam sa kanila eh.”

On wealth: “Mayaman ako in different aspects. Mas mayaman ako sa pagmamahal,m sa pamilya, dahil andyan kayo. Yung pera naman mawawala rin yan. Basta saktong yaman ‘yung ang importante. Contented ako kung anong meron ako.

On a dream vacation: “Sana Amerika uli. Sana may work din sa abroad. Sana Iceland kung papayagan ako.”

On producing content: “On the

spot namin naiisip yun. Yung mga prank at mag nangyayari sa streets, hindi ko talaga pina-plano yun. Kung ano lang ang mangyari. Mahirap maging content creator because you keep thinking of your next content. Wala akong team na nag-iisip para sa akin. Ako lang lahat. Pag burn-out na ako, pahinga lang ako.”

Advice for newbie content creators: “Good luck sa kanila at sana mag-paka-totoo sila. Sana maka-

pag-inspire din sila. Importante na makapag-inspire rin sila sa audience. Please be careful with what you post. Hindi ako perfect. Sinasabi ko lang sa mga content producers to be careful and be aware (sa mga posts) because maraming bata ang nanonood.”

Career collaboration: “Taasan ko na ang pangarap ko. Si Anne Curtis-Smith. Gusto ko rin si Mr. Beast. Mapagbigay kasi siya at natutuwa ako sa mga content niya.”



Geneva Cruz declares: ‘I’m in love but I won’t be a fool’

OPM icon Geneva Cruz revealed that she was inspired by her boyfriend, national athlete and gold medalist Dean Roxas, to be the best version of herself as she prepares for her major concert entitled “Gen Evolution.”

Geneva said she’s happier and thrilled to celebrate her 35th year in showbiz. “I’m happier now than I’ve ever been. I’m grateful, and I’m more inspired. My boyfriend is pushing me to be the best version of myself. Sabi nga nila, you attract who you are and what you are. I don’t know if it’s true,” said Geneva when asked about her inspiration.

Geneva says being with an athlete is hard.

“Being with a national athlete is not easy. Laman ng gym talaga siya. I see his dedication. Talagang workout pa rin. I see the hard work and passion. Hindi mo talaga pwedeng dayain yung lakas at sigla. Pagdating ng competition or concert, ako rin ang hinihinal sa dami kong dance number n a gagawin. You must be with someone who inspires and improves you as a person or artist. Kung hindi ganun, then what’s the use?” she said.

Geneva encouraged everyone to cherish life and to embrace love. “Life is short. But that’s life. I pray na humaba pa ang buhay ko dahil gusto ko pang makita ang mga apo ko. Pero hindi natin alam what’s in store for us. Mag papaka-totoo ako, in love ako pero hindi naman ako magpapaka-tanga. Hindi na tayo mga bata. So enjoy life and enjoy love,” she added.

Geneva, 49, expressed gratitude for her continued energy on stage. “Sabi nila may mga bagay na hindi na natin kaya. Lahat yan nasa utak na lang natin. I’m grateful na binigyan ako ng ganitong

lakas despite my age. Health is wealth. Sa concert, gusto kong ipakita na age is just a number.”

“With proper growth, kaya pa rin natin maki-pagsabayan sa mga kabataan. If they can do some things, we can do it. Kahit na ano ang age natin, kaya pa rin natin mag-evolve,” she said.

Geneva’s concert coincides with the 35th anniversary of the singing group Smokey Mountain. “We were launched by Maestro Ryan Cayabyab noong November 1990. Pero 1989, nag-training na kami under him.”

The Smokey Mountain reunion is unlikely, but fans can enjoy her performing the group’s hits. “Since there will be no Smokey Mountain reunion this year, I decided it’s time to celebrate after talking to my manager, Arnold Vegafria. Isa yan sa mga dahilan bakit kinuha ko rin ang aking ‘kapatid’ na si Jeffrey Hidalgo to direct this concert. (That’s one of the reasons why I also hired my ‘brother’ Jeffrey Hidalgo to direct this concert.)

“Yung mga kasabayan ko na luma-ki, gusto ko lang naramdaman nila yun sa mga song na kakantahin ko through the years. Gusto kong kiligin kayo because music takes us back whether good or bad, broken hearts or a memory of being in love. Gusto ko lang ibalik kayo sa inyong mga kabataan kapag pina-practice ko na yung mga kanta. (My contemporaries who grew up, I want them to feel that in the songs I’ll sing through the years. I want you to be thrilled because music takes us back, whether good or bad, broken hearts, or a memory of being in love. I want to take you back to your youth),” she said.

Maestro Ryan and James Colonel, also a member of Smokey Mountain, own the songs of Smokey Mountain. Her favorite Smokey Mountain songs are “Paraiso” and “Hideaway.”



Why Kitchie Nadal dreams of teaching music to kids

Raising a family is a handful as it is. But if time ever allows, Kitchie Nadal would love to try her hand at teaching children—a dream that has long taken a back seat to music.

“I have always wanted to teach kids, perhaps music, because that was my background when I was in school,” Nadal, who holds a double degree in early childhood education and psychology from the De La Salle University, told Lifestyle.

But she never got around to practicing what she studied.

In 1999, Nadal joined the alternative rock band Mojofly and began making a name for herself in the local music scene. By 2004, she had launched her solo career with the release of her chart-topping self-titled debut album, which spawned a slew of hits, including “Same Ground,” “Bulong,” and “Huwag na Huwag Mong Sasabi-

hin.” She never looked back. “I was making music in college and kept at it after graduation—dire-diretso na. I haven’t stopped writing and playing since,” she said. “But I do believe that teaching would be a great thing for me to do one day.”

The only kids Nadal has had experience teaching so far are her own—Keon, 7, and Iago, 1—with her husband, Spanish journalist Carlos Lopez. And they’re the reasons her creative juices continue to flow, even though she and her family have been living in Madrid for almost 10 years now, away from the bustle of the music industry.

“I’m happy. I’ve always wanted to have a family. So even if I don’t get to perform as often as I used to, I’m grateful to my children for keeping that artistic side alive,” said the 44-year-old singer, who hopes to gently encourage and nurture her older son’s interest in music.



Candid CAMERA



Lexie has left the group. My mom will be taking her place.

Shaine Jaramillo, Mika Sy of Pink Ribbon perform at Filipino Centre Toronto Pistahan festival. Mika’s mom, Jennifer is on the right looking for the next song they will perform.



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Ara Mina opens up about ina Cristine Reyes at Marco Gumabao split

Nagsalita na ang aktres at singer na si Ara Mina sa napapabalitang hiwalayan umano ng kaniyang kapatid na si Cristine Reyes at longtime boyfriend nitong si Marco Gumabao.

Nilinaw ni Ara ang isyu sa Fast Talk with Boy Abunda. “Ngayon, napabalita na naghiwalay sina Cristine at Marco Gumabao...” tanong ni King of Talk Boy Abunda. “Unang-una, what do you know and what can you share with us? Pangalawa, sa mga pagkakataong ganito, paano mo sinusupportahan ang iyong kapatid?”

Diretsang sagot ni Ara. “Kung ano alam ko, it stays with me, and I am not the right person [to tell] the real score. Si Cristine, she’s mature enough. Basta, ang masasabi ko lang sa kaniya, nandito lang kaming family.”

Ayon pa kay Ara ay hindi rin daw ito nagkulang sa pagbibigay ng opinyon sa kapatid, ngunit pinapalala nito na sa huli ay si



Fil-Canadian Highschooler Named Jr. Artist of the Year

By : Tony A. San Juan, OCT

BIANCA from page 20

Student Awards Committee of the Filipino Centre Toronto(FCT), a prominent non-profit community-based organization. Bianca presently serves as a volunteer Altar Server at St Patrick’s Parish and a teacher assistant at San Lorenzo Ruiz Catholic School.

Bianca is the daughter of Allan and Melinda Manlapaz. Her proud mom, Melinda Manlapaz, is a community leader and the General Secretary of the Canadian Multicultural Council of Asians in Ontario(CMC-AO) and Auditor of the Philippine Independence Day Council(PIDC). Her older and only brother, Nicholas, is also a multi-award student. De-



termined to complete her high school education, Bianca has a 2-fold ambition, that is, to be a successful nurse and visual artist at the same time. Good luck! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Cristine pa rin ang may hawak ng kaniyang mga desisyon sa buhay. “I think she knows what she’s doing and nag-co-confide din naman siya sa akin, and sinasabi ko kung ano ‘yung opinyon ko, pero ang sinasabi ko sa kaniya, ‘Ikaw pa rin ang mag-de-decide kung ano ang nasa puso mo, and basta, kung saan ka masaya, nakasuporta kami ng family mo,’” kuwento ni Ara kay Tito Boy.

Saad pa nito sa bukod na statement, “Basta naniniwala ako, kung kayo [ang] para sa isa’t isa, kayo. At the end of the day, magiging magkaibigan pa rin kayo, ‘di ba, if hindi man maging kayo. And si Cristine, matanda na siya. She knows what she’s doing na.”

Saparehonginterviewaybina- likan din ni Ara ang heartwarming na tagpo nilang magkapatid mataposangeleksyonnoongMayo. “You know what I appreciate kay Cristine after election? She just texted me and [asked] ‘ate, anong gagawin mo bukas? Dinner mga sim- ganoon, m e , ple things na maybe to comfort and she knows naman na nandito rin ako for her.”

Nang tanungin naman ni Tito Boy ang kalagayan ni Cristine, maikling sagot ni Ara Mina: “She’s okay. She’s doing fine.”

Hunk Shot

Marco, 17, is a student of JDL School of Performing Arts and is also taking voice lessons from DK Tijam. He is taking up a course in Child and Youth Care.

We wish him all the luck in his future.



Marco Landicho



1. Mel Galeon and Gemma Pascual at Fiesta de Mayo; 2. Gemma Pascual, Mitch fernandez, and Ace Persaud attend Mitch’s Genesis Immigration Anniversary Celebration and the launching her PMStar Studio.

Family & friends attend Marky Hugh’s sold-out “Silent Battles” Film Premiere



Kapuso Lions holds a Zumba fundraiser Coral Reef Restoration Project in Cebu, Philippines

ZUMBA from page 16

ing with joy, and making this celebration so meaningful. You brought the spirit and love that made the day unforgettable!

Together, we celebrated motherhood, community, and wellness — and we couldn’t have done it without you all. We will surely update everyone on the

results of the Cor- Reef Restoration Project initiative in Cebu City Philip-

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Maja Salvador & Rambo Nunez not ready to show daughter’s face on social media

Nearly a year after her birth on May 31, celebrity couple Maja Salvador and Rambo Nunez believe that their young daughter, Maria, is not yet ready to endorse any products.

“Kahit na sabihin nilang name your price, hindi po talaga. (Even if they say name your price, I will not accept it),” said Maja during the launch of her body care brand, Majeskin, held at Incanta in Quezon City recently.

Rambo said he hopes fans will understand their decision to keep Maria out of the public eye for the time being. “I hope they respect our decision not to post photos of Maria on social media,” he said.

“Meron talagang ibang fans na kumukuha ng pictures pero ang sa amin lang huwag lang nilang i-post or ikalat. Hindi pa kasi niya alam ang nangyayari sa paligid niya. (Some fans take pictures but don’t post or share them. She still doesn’t understand what’s happening around her.)

“Like halimbawa naglalaro siya sa park or sa mall tapos biglang may lumapit sa kanya. Hindi pa develop yung personality ng bata baka iba ang effect sa kanila. (For example, she might be playing in the park or at



the mall when suddenly someone approaches her. The child’s personality has not yet fully developed, which may result in varied reactions.)

“Pero kung may malay na siya at gusto na niyang magpa-picture decision na na niya yun. Aware na siya sa mga implication. It comes with security na rin. I hope everyone understands na rin. Iba na ang panahon natin

ngayon eh. Noon kasi yung picture naka-print lang pero ngayon pwede mo ng ikalat. I guess that’s being responsible as parents. (But if she’s conscious and wants to take a picture, she’s already made that decision. She’s already aware of the implications. It also comes with security. I hope everyone understands. Our times are different now. Back then, the picture was just printed, but now you can spread it. That’s being responsible as parents.)’

“Ayaw naming balikan kami ni Maria in the future na wala na siyang buhay. That’s what we want to do. Mahirap pero part yung ng responsible parenthood as individuals na nasa public eye. (We don’t want Maria to blame us in the future. That’s what we want to do. It’s challenging, but it’s part of being responsible parents in the public eye),” said

Rambo.

‘Maja and her husband said they would let their daughter decide whether to be exposed to social media.’ ‘Kapag sir or seven na siya ang sinabi niya, ‘Mama I want to have my own TikTok (account) or Instagram.’ She will decide. Then kunwari sinabi niya, “Mama, I

want to dance with you. (When she’s six or seven and she says, ‘Mama, I want to have my own TikTok (account) or Instagram.’ She will decide. Then she will also say, “Mama, I want to dance with you),” she said.

Maja raves about the looks of her daughter. “Yung eye lashes niya para siyang naka eyelash extensions. (Her eyelashes look like she’s wearing eyelash extensions.) Rambo said her daughter can walk. “Yung milestone na siya like maaga siyang nakapaglakad. Very advanced siya. Yung mga sound ng animals alam na niya. Yung blowing of candles alam na niya. Half-day lang namin siya tinuruan at marunong na siya. (She’s already hit milestones like being able to walk early. She’s very advanced. He already knows the sounds of animals. She already knows the blowing of candles. We only taught her for half a day, and she already knows.)

Among those who congratulated Maja on her new business venture was Beaufeder President and CEO Rei Anicoche Tan. “Maja and I have desired to work together. She is authentic, determined, passionate, and creative.”

In March, Maja initially expressed her wish to keep her daughter out of the public eye, allowing her to fully enjoy the moments with her first child.

After more than a decade in the entertainment industry, Gabbi Garcia is far from slowing down, as she recently renewed her contract with GMA Network.

Garcia, who emphasizes that she is proud to be a homegrown Kapuso, reflected on the rejections she faced throughout the years.

“When I was younger, I often got rejected in auditions and VTRs. But GMA was one of the few ones who embraced me [...] They took a risk with me without even knowing what I have to offer. That was eleven years ago [...] I’ve done so much, but I have yet to do so much



Gabbi Garcia looks forward to do ‘more’ after contract renewal with GMA

more,” she said.

Garcia, who began her showbiz career in 2014 in the Carla Abellana and Tom Rodriguez-starrer “My Destiny,” said that she is now in a place where she wants to explore other genres, specifically a girls’ love (GL) project.

“It’s something that I haven’t done that’s why. Of course, I want to explore other genres.

Partner? I’m open to anyone as long as the script is good,” she shared.

Garcia rose to fame after landing the role of Sang’gre Alena in the reboot fantasy series “Encantadia.” In addition to acting, the 26-year-old actress has also recently begun to pursue hosting.

She has hosted “Sunday All Stars,” “Sunday PinaSaya,” “Studio 7,” “All-Out Sundays,” and now she serves as one of the hosts of “Pinoy Big Brother: Celebrity Colab Edition.” Garcia also hosted the Miss Universe Philippines 2024 and the 2025 edition of the beauty pageant.

Amid the promising prospects of her hosting career, the “Let the Love Begin” actress believes she can provide much more in this field.

“I’ve been hosting for more than a year but I’m not

yet ripe. Many more learnings and many more things to do. I have yet so much to unleash in my hosting career,” she said.

Meanwhile, when asked about her relationship with long-term boyfriend actor Khalil Ramos, Garcia admitted that they are already on the stage talking about marriage.

“Of course we talk about that. We are 8 years into the relationship. We are in our late twenties. Khalil is turning 30, I’m turning 27 [...] A lot of our friends are getting married, but we are not pressured. We are a chill couple. We are very secure with what we have so we are not easily affected by other noise,” she explained.

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Viva's Boss Vic believes Jayda will be 'a big multimedia star'

Vic del Rosario, chairman and chief executive officer of Viva Communications, strongly believes that Jayda — the daughter of Dingdong Avanzado and Jessa Zaragoza — “will be a big multimedia star,” as she recently joined the roster of talents at Viva Artists Agency (VAA).

The actress-singer inked a contract deal with Viva Records in collaboration with Universal Music Group (UMG) Philippines and is co-managed by VAA.

Boss Vic, along with his children, Vincent and Veronique, as well as his grand-



Jayda is open to work with ‘Ang Mutya ng Section E’ star and son of Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales, Andres.

magaling na singer, lalo na pag babae, magaan ang pakiramdam ko na tulungan. I feel that we could do a lot more,” Boss Vic said and cited the likes of Sharon Cuneta, Donna Cruz, Regine Velasquez-Alcasid and Sarah Geronimo, who were first discovered and managed by Viva.

“I think Jayda will be a big star. The interest of Viva in Jayda is beyond her voice. I feel and I say it, she probably will be a big multimedia star that’s why we’re here. We have plans of using Jayda as a singer, actress, as a host, lahat-lahat na. And probably we will get her a lot of endorsements... The reason I’m here is because I believe in Jayda.”

In response, Jayda expressed how thankful she is to be part of Viva. “I’m grateful kung paano niya ako naisip in that manner and to be in the same sentences with Tita Sharon, Tita Regine and all of the greats.”

She promised to make her Viva family and everybody proud. “All I can say is rest assured, I will do my best and give my full commitment in this industry and in everything that I do.”

Jayda decided to join Viva because of their “expertise in both music and acting.” As she elaborated, “I feel like I think I’m at the point in my career where I’ve been so privileged to work with so many people and for this to finally come together here in Viva, I’m really excited to learn more, especially with Boss Vic and



Jayda with chairman and CEO of Viva Communications Vic Del Rosario at the former’s presscon.

the rest of my Viva family. What made it certain for me is that I really saw the vision aligned for me when it came to my career, especially at this particular point. It’s a star-aligning moment for me with this partnership.”

Although she didn’t divulge the details of her upcoming projects yet, Jayda is looking forward to appearing in Viva’s series adaptations.

Asked if she is also keen on doing teen romantic comedy genres, such as “Ang Mutya ng Section E,” Jayda said, “Complete props to the whole cast of that show and also to Viva. I’m a fan of Wattpad adaptations so I think that’s one of my favorite types of projects, which Viva does. So I’m very excited po na hopefully, I could also portray those types of roles.”

She is also open to work with “Ang Mutya ng Section E” star and son of Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales, Andres.

“Especially kung yan po nakikita ni Boss Vic, that would be in his hands. But like I said, I’m just keeping an open mind with whoever I can work with. At the end of the day, kung sino po yung mga mabuti sa project po.

“I’m really excited to work with different people as well and really expand and learn more from different people as an actress.”

The young artist likewise admitted that she experienced online bashing in the past but she maintained an optimistic mindset and strong support system to deal with it.

“It’s part of it (showbiz career),” she stated. “My parents told me when I decided to enter showbiz, ‘Are you ready sa walang katapusang pagpapatunay ng sarili mo and are you open sa kahit anong magiging tanggap sayo ng publiko?’”

Jayda was ready for it, she said. “To an extent. But I’m also human, there are certain things that I also get hurt. But I didn’t get easily discouraged because I have a good support system. And my father taught me that there’s no substitute for hard work.

“As long as wala naman po akong in-aapakan na tao through what I do, all I can say is I keep on going. And I keep a positive mindset in this industry because there are people who also put their trust in me and mas mabigat po yung opinion nila than online bashers.”

Jayda jumpstarted her showbiz and music career in 2017 and launched her debut EP *In My Room* in 2018. She became a regular on “ASAP” and mounted her first major digital solo concert titled “Jayda in Concert.” Her acting debut was the TV series “Teen Clash” where she wrote and performed the official soundtrack *No Way But Up*.

She also co-wrote the single *Right Lover*, *Wrong Time* with her father. Two years ago, she signed with Republic Records Philippines, a subsidiary of UMG Philippines.

She earned Best Female Recording Artist award at the 32nd Awit Awards in 2019 and Female Pop Artist of the Year at the 13th PMPC Star Awards for Music in 2022 for the track *Sana Tayo Na*.



The actress-singer inks a contract deal with Viva Records in collaboration with UMG Philippines and is co-managed by Viva Artists Agency.

child Verb, attended the press event for Jayda and officially welcomed her into the Viva family. He said that it’s a privilege to partner with a major music label, such as the UMG, for Jayda’s career.

He also shared that Viva has been interested in managing Jayda since she was nine years old after he saw her singing skills. “I told her parents that ‘pag nagdalaga na, makuha namin. I’ve waited 12 years for this to happen, so we are all excited.

“Twelve years in the making itong dream kong mahawakan (Jayda’s career) before I retire. Alam mo naman ‘pag

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From Disney set to GMA Star: Michael Sager's faith-fueled journey in showbiz



Last month was his anniversary in the show business industry in the country. Now three years into his career, Michael Sager has already built a respectable portfolio — from romantic comedies to musical-variety shows. But it's not enough for him. 'I want to keep improving,' he says. So far, each role and program that Michael has worked on has been part of his journey to becoming a better artist.

From dancing in the background of a Disney production to landing lead roles in GMA's teleseryes, Michael Sager's rise in the Philippine entertainment scene is nothing short of a treasure chest of blessings. But behind the glitz is a story of perseverance, sacrifice and unshakable faith.

With roots in Marinduque but growing up in Vancouver, Canada, Michael enjoyed a typical Filipino immigrant upbringing

— school, family time and the occasional dabble in entertainment. His first taste of acting came unexpectedly through a school casting call for a Disney project.

"I did it lang for fun," Michael recalls. "Gusto ko ma-experience yung nasa set, kung ano feeling 'pag nasa movie ka. So masabi ko yun talaga ang first acting experience ko. The Disney

set was so cool and ang laki nung production!"

Though he explored a few acting projects later on, it wasn't until 2021, with the encouragement of his father Eleazar, that Michael took a chance at his father's earlier personal goal and auditioned online for "Pinoy Big Brother."

The process was promising but ultimately didn't pan out. Still, it sparked something deeper. Livestreaming to a Filipino audience made him realize — this was what he wanted to do. He adds, "Oh! Ito pala yun! I'm not even an artista yet, but this is what it feels like to be part of the entertainment industry. OK, let's try it out!"

Initially on track to study

architecture, Michael pivoted. With his parents' blessing, he flew to Manila for a "one-year trial" to pursue showbiz. Auditions followed — "Pinoy Big Brother" Teens, Sparkle and then finally, a life-changing opportunity with Sparkada, GMA Network's youth talent group under the wing of the legendary Mr. M.

Adjusting wasn't easy. "I really left my life in Canada. I didn't grow up here. I still miss my friends, the independence," Michael shares.

But what he lost in familiarity, he gained in purpose. "My whole life, I've always wanted to try to study here, to play basketball here. So, there was something about the Philippines that was always attracting me to come back."

Last April 17 was his anniversary in the show business industry in the country. Now three years into his career, Michael has already built a respectable portfolio — from romantic comedies to musical-variety shows.

But it's not enough for him. "I want to keep improving," he

says. His dream roles? Action and hosting. "Even small action scenes! James Bond or Vincenzo-style. That's the dream."

So far, each role and program that Michael has worked on has been part of his growth journey to become a better artist. Lessons from his experiences in "Shining Inheritance" and "My Ilonggo Girl" keep him focused and wanting to work more on his craft.

Of all his experiences, "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Collab Edition" remains the most impactful and memorable. Michael shares, "It was emotional. I really prayed for it because I tried so many times to be a housemate. Yung experience ko kasi sa loob, though it was challenging, I learned so much from the PBB house."

Michael doesn't see acting as just a job, but a mission. "It's public service. It's a craft. It's art. I need to love this to keep going." And when it gets overwhelming, he grounds himself with faith



— and plans for a vacation back to Vancouver to recharge with family and old friends, when his schedule permits. We learned that a new project is being finalized for Michael and this may just be another wish granted for the young actor.

But before then, an exciting dream has been fulfilled yet again for the Sager family. A new and beautiful home here in the Philippines is Michael's new pride — one they can truly call their own, through hard work and perseverance. Even if his parents still reside abroad, Michael's mom, Joy is here now to keep him company. His newly-married sister also has a room waiting for her and her husband anytime they feel like coming over. "It's another blessing," he says with deep gratitude.

With all these blessings being showered one after the other, Michael's faith has more than ever been stronger. Through the highs and lows, rejections and opportunities, he held on to God and left everything to Him. "Lord, if this is for me, just guide me. Kayo na po bahala. Until now, I say the same prayer and He has not let go of me. Dinala man Niya ako sa mahirap na sitwasyon, it was the reason why I learned to be a better man, to be a better son of God."

Beauty queen Roberta Tamondong values education, prepares for her return to pageantry

Beauty queen Roberta Tamondong has been embracing life with a relaxed attitude, savoring each moment and navigating her busy days with a calm determination.

Taking everything at a leisurely pace, she finds joy in the small pleasures of everyday life, reminding herself to appreciate the journey one day at a time.

Three years after representing the Philippines at the 2022 Miss Grand International beauty pageant in Indonesia, Roberta has now focused on her studies. Additionally, she attends events and gigs on the side.

“I’m currently enrolled at Treston International College and studying tourism management. I attend school and take on-line classes. I also participate in extracurricular activities, such as attending events,” she said.

Roberta was pursuing journalism until she decided to switch to another major. She dropped her journalism course after the

school where she was enrolled “couldn’t find a balance” between school and her work. She is expected to finish her new course in three years.

Three years after she joined a pageant, Roberta said she will compete in another national beauty pageant soon.

“I’m not closing any doors yet. However, at this time, I am trying to find my purpose. I’m still young, at 22. I have several years to prepare for the next pageant. I’m joining very soon, and I hope the Filipinos will support me,” she said.

Happy for CJ Opiaza

Roberta congratulated Filipino beauty queen Christine Julianne “CJ” Opiaza, who will be crowned Miss Grand International 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand, on June 3.

“CJ was also my batchmate in Binibining Pilipinas 2022. I was so happy when she was crowned Miss Grand Interna-

tional Philippines last year.

“I’m so proud to have witnessed her journey. I’m eager to witness the formal handover of the Miss Grand International 2024 title,” Roberta said.

Roberta offered her unsolicited advice to girls who want to join the Miss Grand International Philip-



Roberta Tamondong, Miss Grand International 2022, is seen in a light pink strapless dress. She is smiling and posing for the camera.

Roberta Tamondong, Miss Grand International 2022, is seen in a light pink strapless dress. She is smiling and posing for the camera.

Flores de Mayo is a Christian devotion celebrated every summer in May and is widely popular in the provinces. The idea of a month dedicated specifically to Mary can be traced back to the Baroque times.

On the other hand, Santacruzan is a colorful, religious, historical procession held nationwide in various cities, towns, and small villages in May.

It recalls Queen Helena’s search for the Holy Cross. Tess reminded the public that Santacruzan is neither a beauty pageant nor a fashion show. “Remember that it has religious roots.”

TPHS was formed in 2021 after Sherwin Sozon, Nathan De Leon, and Tess Castro shared a vision to initiate a fundraising campaign to support opera artists.

The group conceived a ball and a fashion show featuring the country’s finest designers. It also received two trophies for the Aliw Awards for Excellence in Live Events.

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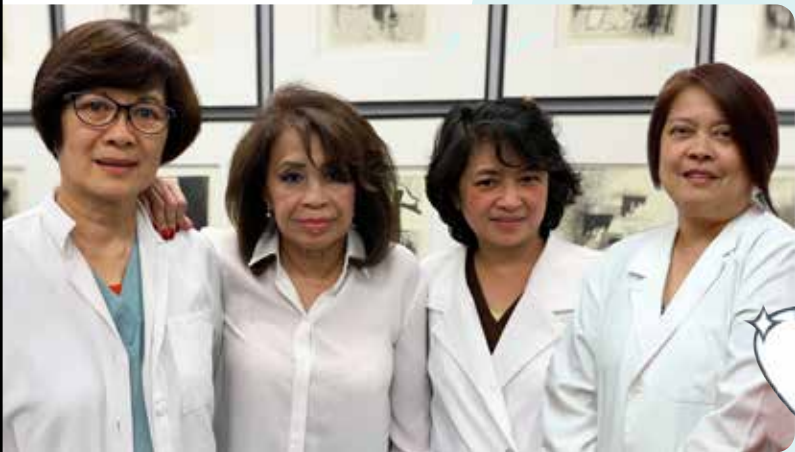
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