



LM Confidential



FEBRUARY 2026

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Canada-Phi FTA talks Starts

Sectors expected to benefit from the agreement include agriculture, infrastructure and energy

Philippine and Canadian trade officials will meet this month to formally begin negotiations for a bilateral free trade agreement

(FTA), a deal that would be the Philippines' first with a North American country.

Trade Undersecretary Allan Gepty said that the first round of talks would be held this month, with

members of the Canadian delegation traveling to the Philippines for the negotiations.

This comes nearly two years after exploratory discussions on a possible FTA
FREE TRADE Page 22



Representatives of the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) joins the Sinulog sa Toronto 2026.



Hailey Yarra (Best in Look), Jewel Hing (Best in Aura), and Nathalie Bondoc (Model of the Night) are the winners of Argento Modelling segment at Marky Hugh 40th birthday celebration.



Cheska holds a concert

by Princess Joy Lungayan

TORONTO - I have been quite busy these past few days following the concert, but I truly believe it is better to express my heartfelt gratitude late than never. Heheh.

To everyone who supported and took the time to come to our Cheska's (Ma-

CHESKA page 2



What The Paper reveals about local news and journalism today

In the debut episode of the new sitcom The Paper, freshly appointed editor-in-chief Ned Samp-

son tries to rouse the spirits of his colleagues at The Truth Teller, a fictional newspaper.

NEWSPAPER Page 3

Cheska holds a concert

ria Francheska Lungayan) concert, thank you will never be enough. The night was truly unforgettable—filled with music, love, and overwhelming support. Despite the changes and

CHESKA page 13



Cheska Concert

Honey Shot

Kaitlyn, 12, is a former talent of Marky Hugh Productions. Under the tutelage of Marky Hugh and, she honed her talents in the performing arts. She sings, dances, and models. She is a member of the pop group Girltrenz. She is the daughter of Michelle and Christian.

Kaitlyn Panganiban



A talent of Dong Dreamers Academy, 11-year old Cheska Lungayan held her first very successful concert with support from family and friends. Here are some of the photos.

Sinulog sa Toronto 2026



1. Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow poses with the organizer; 2. MP Vince Gasparro presents organizer Dong Sabanal with a Certificate of Appreciation; 3. FV Foods owner Mel Galeon dances the Sinulog with MP Vince Gasparro; 4. Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow (MIDDLE) visits the booth of FV Foods and poses with Grace and owner Mel Galeon .

PCCF joins the UAAT At-Atihan Festival



FILIPINO BULLETIN NEWSPAPER CEASES PUBLICATION



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

“Half of the American people have never read the newspaper. Half never voted for President. One hopes it is the same half”

Gore Vidal

The Filipino Bulletin, a remarkable, well-read and well-admired monthly English newspaper in Ontario’s Filipino-Canadian community, publishes -30-! Publisher Carlos Unas announced on December 30, 2025, that Filipino Bulletin, after 30 long years as a reliable source of stories, news and information mostly from the Philippines and in and around Canada, “will cease publication at the end of 2025.”

In an email, Carlos Unas stated, “The business environment has changed significantly. Like many others in the industry, we have found that maintaining a newspaper is no longer

a viable proposition. As a result, the Filipino Bulletin has run its well-deserved course. We regret to inform you that we will cease publication at the end of this year.” Unas thanked the advertisers, writers, and readers for their unwavering support and encouragement over the past three decades.

Notably, the broadsheet joins other Filipino-owned or operated community newspapers, circulated in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), that have shuttered their operations. It will now be in the company of other well-known printed tabloids which, for one reason or another, have decided to stop publishing before, during and after the COVID pandemic. With due respect, historically, among the first-while Pinoy monthly or bi-weekly issued papers were Filipiniana, Likha, Manila Monitor, Pahayagan, Philippine Philippine Courier, Philippine Times, Pinoy News, Planet Philippines, The Philippine Reporter, and VisMin Herald. Oth-



Carlos Unas will now devote his time realxing by painting, teaching and playing the ukulele and joining health and wellness activities with fellow seniors. He had a good run publishing the Filipino Bulletin newspaper. Picture on the left shows Carlos joining the exercise break at painting class.

er Ontario-based newspapers that are still in current robust circulation are Atin Ito, Balita, Filipinos Making Waves, Little Manila Confidential, and Taliba.

Readers will surely miss the national news and celebrity reports from the Philippines, as well as the local columns and articles written by volunteer scribes such as Pastor Teck Uy (“Pathway to Success”), Norma Bernal (“New Immigrants and the Workplace”), and Tony A. San Juan (“From the Educator’s Desk” & “Perspective and Perception: Glimpses at Significant Developments in the Philippines”) and other guest writers.

Before the introduction of digital printing technology, the Filipino Bulletin commenced producing its copies using the traditional stencil-and-mimograph copying system back in July 1975. Carlos Unas, before entering the newspaper business, began learning the basics of computer applications after migrating to Canada in the early 1970s.

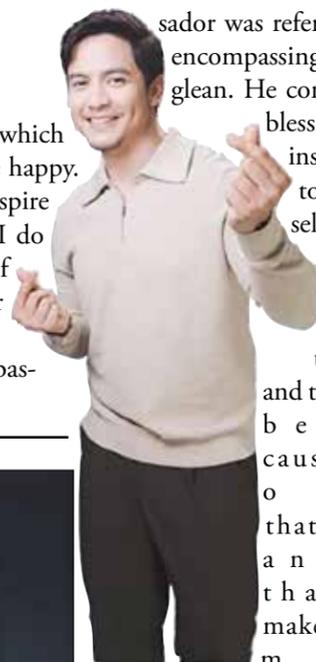
When asked, Carlos proudly said that “He will devote more of his free time to visual art painting, teaching and playing the ukulele, and joining health and wellness activities of his amigos at amigas and fellow seniors. BULLETIN page 13

Alden Richards reveals reasons that make him smile nowadays

Alden Richards is among the local tinseltown’s eligible bachelors and resident dreamboats. It doesn’t limit him in what roles to take on. He can disappear in and “deglamorize” himself for a portrayal. The Sparkle GMA Artist Center actor will be seen as a medical practitioner in the primetime TV series

“Code Gray.” What also complements his charming personality on- and off-screen, besides his kind heart, on the other hand, is that bedimpled smile. Asked what makes him smile, or should one say flash his signature smile, he answered, “Being able to do

the thing that I love to do, which is, you know, making people happy. Being able, you know, to inspire people with the things that I do every day. I think that’s one of my callings; that’s the higher calling of my career.” The Specialign brand ambas-



sador was referring to his entertainment work, encompassing acting and hosting, as one could glean. He considered them as “platforms and blessings.” Through the latter, he can inspire his audience and following to “be the better persons of themselves.” “Whenever I get the chance to meet people saying, ‘You know what, Alden, I’ve been looking up to you for the longest time, and these are the things that happened

because of that, and that makes me very happy and glad,” continued he. “You know, sinasabi ko na sa sarili ko na siguro (I’m telling myself perhaps) that’s one of the reasons why I’m still here in the industry because I still have a mission, and that’s more than enough reason for me to smile every day.”

What makes him smile these days is being part of Specialign, which provides clear and comfortable teeth aligners to one. They are hassle-free. After the first fitting, one doesn’t need to come back for re-fitting. It fits Alden’s always-on-the-go lifestyle and a busy year ahead. He is tapped to host “Stars on the Floor” and headline a streaming platform content and the Kapuso medical drama-action.

“I am just really blessed that I don’t get that feeling of stagnancy,” said he, who has recently cele-

“You just have to find those things by yourself and find the best ones because not all opportunities are the same,”

Casting Call - Short Film (Paid Gig)

Title: Empty Frames
Genre: Drama
Director: Marky Hugh
Producer: Marky Hugh Films
Executive Producer: Marky Hugh Productions
Shoot Dates: January 2026 / Toronto
Self-Tape Deadline: December 30, 2025
Union Status: Non-Union / Paid
Contact: markyhughfilms@gmail.com

ROLES:

Walter (Lead, Male, 30s-35s)
• A Filipino male preferred.
• A photographer struggling with trauma, grief, and loss.
• Must portray vulnerability, emotional depth, and subtle charisma.
• Comfortable with intimate and dramatic scenes.

Caleb (Supporting, Male, early 30s)
• Any Ethnicity, warm, empathetic, and approachable.
• Brings a quiet & grounding energy.
• Ability to convey emotional honesty without overacting.

Matthew (Supporting, Male 30-35s)
• Any Ethnicity
• Charming, casual, and emotionally unavailable.

AUCTION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Self-Tape Submission: Email your headshot, resume, and 1-2 minute monologue to markyhughfilms@gmail.com by December 30, 2025.

NOTE:

- This project contains adult themes, including intimate scenes. All auditions and filming will be conducted with professionalism and respect.

HIRING: CINEMATOGRAPHER & EDITOR

Marky Hugh Productions/Marky High Films is looking for a Cinematographer and an Editor with experience in film festival projects to collaborate on an upcoming short film shooting this January in Toronto.

Project Details:

- Short narrative film (festival-focused)
- Drama
- Toronto-based

Requirements:

- Proven experience with films that have screened at film festivals
- Strong visual storytelling and cinematic style
- Experience in narrative editing and emotional pacing
- Collaborative and reliable
- Own gear is a plus

Compensation:

- Paid (rates based on experience)
- Screen credit / IMDb Credit
- Film festival exposure

To apply:

Send your reel/portfolio, festival credits, and availability via DM or email at markyhughfilms@gmail.com

Let’s create a powerful short film together.

— Marky Hugh Films/Marky Hugh Productions



Global Warming Out, Climate Change In

Arctic Freeze is freezing us

Ano na nangyari sa tinatawag na Global Warming? Bakit napakalamig lately? At bakit itong winter natin ay parang totoong winter na sunod-sunod ang snow? Hindi na ako magkanda-ugaga sa kaka-shovel. Hindi pa ako nakaka-recover sa pagod, may parating na naman na kasunod. At napakalamig pa. Nasaan ang global warming. Hindi natin napansin na hindi na pala ginagamit ng mga "experts" ang term na global warming. Pinalitan na nila ng climate change. Uminit, lumamig, safe nga naman sila sa explanation. Kapag sinabi naman kasi nila na Global cooling, tapos uminit, mapapahiya na naman sila.

Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na giniginaw. 🌍

Even bears hibernate

Akala ko pa naman, kapag pasok ng January, pahinga muna mga tao sa mga parties at mga events. Obviously, some people did not get that memo to rest in January.

Sinulog sa Toronto came back the second year bigger, better, flashier. Last year was only one day. This year, they held it for two days. They had prizes for attendees, they had a singing contest for Sinulog Idol 2026, and they had a Sinulog Queen pageant.

As for the prizes, I actually won an electric wok. There were more people this year. They learned from last year and they now know how to bring in the people, despite the very chilly winter temperature.

Well, the location is very nice kasi. There are lots of free parking just outside the venue. Hindi malayo ang lakad from the parking lot to the front door kaya easy access to everyone, specially the seniors. No up and down.

Congratulations to Dong Sabanal and his team for a very successful Sinulog.

Follow that up with Marky Hugh's fancy birthday celebration. Then, the next week, Tala Entertainment held a very glamorous by-invite only Appreciation Night. Then, United Aklanon held a lively, raucous Ati-Atihan dinner. It's party overload. And this is supposed to be hibernation January.

How to handle a problem like PDT?

Well, I guess don't respond to every insult? Otherwise, maubos ang oras mo. Prime Minister Carney has wisely learned already not to respond to each insult. Not only insults from President Trump, but even from his minions who are piling it on.

There are those who says the Carney is not responding to the threat. It is not a threat. It is an

insult, designed to get a reaction to show that he's getting in your skin and waste your time answering the media's need for a war, a verbal war. Also there's Canadians and Fil-Can fans of Trump who complain about Carney not responding. By not responding, they claim Carney is weak or whatever they want to interpret it.

On another note, these must be good times for comedy writers. Trump is keeping them employed. During Obama's time, they cannot think of anything funny to write. He was so normal.

Trump is complaining about comedians making fun of him, specially those late night TV hosts. Oo nga naman, make fun of me instead para sumikat ako. Please naman. 😊

Robin Padilla, unappreciated kaya hindi na tatakbo sa 2028

We don't deserve him daw, sabi ng asawa. Totoo. We need someone na may ginagawa. Ehe, ano ba itong nasabi ko? Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya. 😊

What The Paper reveals about local news and journalism today

NEWSPAPER from page 1

tional local newspaper in Toledo, Ohio.

It's a community institution with a storied past but a precarious future — in recent years, the paper has relied almost exclusively on news wire articles and clickbait entertainment to meet its bottom line.

Ned makes a declaration while standing on a desk, as a documentary film crew records it all:

"If you have ever wanted to be the first person to know what's going on in the place where you live, or if you want to make sure the people who are running your city are telling the truth ... You are more than welcome, all of you, to volunteer your time at this newspaper."

It's meant to be an uplifting moment, with the earnest but inexperienced leader insisting that good journalism can make the paper profitable again. But, even as some colleagues respond with cautious optimism (if not skeptical curiosity), the episode ends by cutting back to an earlier gag — a nearby building has been on fire the entire time, unnoticed and unreported.

It's an apt, if unsettling, metaphor for the state of local news in North America, where so many outlets have vanished that residents often don't know what's happening in their own backyard.



Alarming rate of collapse

Local newspapers are collapsing at an alarming pace. In Canada, more than 500 outlets have closed since 2008, affecting more than 370 communities, according to the Local News Research Project.

In the United States, the number exceeds 2,800 closures since 2005, based on research by Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

The result is what scholars call "news deserts" — places where no professional local news source remains to cover councils,

courts or communities.

The causes of this decline are multifaceted. Reporters and editors need to be paid, news-

rooms need resources and investigative journalism is costly and time-consuming. Print ad-

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Bianca's take on expensive domestic travel sparks reactions

Maraming netizens ang sumang-ayon sa Kapamilya TV host na si Bianca Gonzalez matapos niyang mag-react sa mas mahal na pamasahe sa ilang tourist destinations sa loob ng Pilipinas kumpara sa ibang bansa.

Ayon sa Pinoy Big Brother host, mas mahal ang ginastos niya para rito kaysa sa pagpunta sa ibang bansa gaya ng Hong Kong, Thailand, at Vietnam.

Dagdag pa niya, "Mas mahirap suportahan ang lokal na turismo dahil ang mahal."

NETIZENS' MIXED REACTIONS TO BIANCA'S TAKE Agad na umani ng samu't saring reaksiyon

mula sa netizens na may parehas na karanasan kay Bianca ang natura niyang post.

Pagsang-ayon ng isang netizen (published as is): "Agree! We went to Sagada early January, and we spent P11K for three days, 'di pa kasama accommodation and airfare."

Saad ng isa (published as is): "Seryoso. Nagpunta ako sa Palawan na di pa peak season ah. Parehas ng star yung binook namin sa Thailand. 3 nights lang ako sa Palawan pero mas mahal pa yun kaysa sa Thailand



na 4 nights like howwww?!!!"

Mayroon ding netizens ang isinisisi ang mahal na travel cost ng Pilipinas sa gobyerno.

Pahayag ng isang netizen (published as is): "As someone who traveled to some places in the Philippines ang masasabi ko lang is it's kinda sad to know na a lot of people still haven't been to those places because it expensive. Like, they missed out a lot of beautiful spots. And im blaming the government." Kamakailan lamang nang mapab-

alita ang ikakasang Travel Tour Expo 2026 ng Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA), na layong mag-alok ng promos and discounts sa mga domestic flights sa Pilipinas para sa ikakayabong ng turismo ng bansa.

Ang pamasahe round trip mula Maynila patungong Siargao ay naglalaro sa PHP6,000 hanggang PHP11,000, habang sa Boracay naman ay PHP4,000 hanggang PHP7,000.

Para sa mga karatig-bansa, ang round-trip flights mula Maynila ay nasa PHP7,000 hanggang PHP11,000 patungong Hong Kong; PHP14,000 hanggang PHP20,000 naman patungong Hanoi, Vietnam; at PHP10,000 hanggang PHP15,000 patungong Bangkok, Thailand.

PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses of Significant Developments



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

FILIPINOS' EMERGENCY FUNDS.

Most Filipinos only have P50,000 in emergency funds, and just two out of 10 Filipinos have emergency funds that can last over three months, according to a recent study commissioned by insurance company EastWest Ageas. The "Purple Report" study, conducted by consumer intelligence NielsenIQ and released on November 4, 2025, in Taguig City, was about the spending capacities of 22 to 55-year-old Filipino adults in metropolitan cities in the Philippines. The report found that: "1) Nearly all respondents, nine in 10, are focused on protecting their life, specifically their loved ones as 52% prioritize their family's health and 24% their children's education; 2) Eight in 10 Filipinos see their wealth as an important matter, with 36% focused on income stability, 30% on inflation, and 22% on retirement preparedness; 3) Health is another significant matter by seven in 10 respondents: 24% for critical illness and 23% for large medical expenses; 4) In terms of driving budget choices, leading the allocation for monthly income were basic household expenses (30%), which means long-term financial planning takes a backseat; 5) Basic personal expenses (13%) and savings (13%) also topped the chart, whereas expenses for leisure and insurance both tied at 8%. The study found that, generally, Filipinos can spare P50,000 for a medical emergency but some can only access that amount a month." Ang pagpapabuti ng kaalaman sa pananalapi lalo na sa mga kabataan upang matuto pa tungkol sa pag-iimpok ay mahalagang payo. Gayundin, kapag isinasaalang-alang ang aplikasyon ng seguro, "mag-saliksik nang sarili." Sa kabilang banda, "dapat makinig ang mga kompanya ng seguro sa mga mamimili, dapat handa, at dapat umangkop



POVERTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Ang kahirapan sa Pilipinas, or poverty in the Philippines, is still a never-ending national problem. As established by the Philippine Statistics Authority(PSA), a Filipino family is classified as poor when it earns less than the "poverty line: or "threshold income". The PSA defined the poverty line or threshold income as P13,873 for a family of five in 2023. Given this, about one in 10 (10.9 per cent, or 3 million) Filipino families were poor in 2023. This description is based on the minimum food and nonfood family expenditures a family should incur. As determined by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute(FNRI), the "minimum food needs make up 70 per cent of the family budget, while the rest accounts for minimum requirements in clothing, housing, education, transport, and personal or medical care. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presents a multidimensional poverty measure that, in addition to income or lack of income, the index should consider education and health status as part of all its limitations. Also, the PSA reports that the income gap of the total number of poor and the poverty gap across all individuals or families measures the depth

or severity of poverty. Moreover, a Social Weather Station survey in 2024 estimated 16.3 million Filipino families considered themselves poor compared to 12.9 million in March 2024.

"Ang kahirapan ay nananatiling isa sa mga pinakamahahalagang isyu sa Pilipinas na tumutukoy sa kalagayan kung saan ang mga indibidwal o pamilya ay walang sapat na kita o yaman upang matugunan ang kanilang mga pangunahing pangangailangan. Ito ay sumasalamain sa kawalan ng access sa mga oportunidad na nagbibigay-daan sa mga tao na mapabuti ang kanilang pamumuhay. Sa simpleng salita, ang kahirapan sa Pilipinas ay nangangahulugang paghihirap upang maipambili ang mga pangunahing bagay na kailangan para sa isang disenteng at ligtas na buhay. Kabilang sa maraming sanhi ng kahirapan ang masamang pamamahala, katiwalian, sistemang pampulitika na pinangungunahan ng mga political dynasty, kakulangan ng mga trabaho, at kahinaan sa mga kalamidad sa kapaligiran. Ang mga matagal nang isyung ito at patuloy na mga alalahanin ay dapat tugunan, at isang tiyak na pagtugon ang nararapat."

sa inasahan ng mga mamimili." Dapat ding tingnan ng isang tao ang mga pamumuhunan ng segurong binibili at

ang yugto ng buhay ng isang tao, tulad ng kung may asawa o anak na. Bukod dito, ang bagay na ito ay mananatiling

isang emosyonal na desisyon kaya dapat "makinig sa puso."

FILIPINOS DIGITAL BANKING.

According to the October 2025 survey by the Digital Bank Association of the Philippines(DBA-PH), "More Filipinos are becoming financially savvy when using digital banks, showing growing confidence in saving, and making early financial decisions." The DBA-PH survey was conducted among customers of 6 Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas(BSP)- licensed digital banks such as GoTyme Bank, Maya Bank, Overseas Filipino Bank, Tonik Bank, UnionDigital Bank, and UNO Digital Bank. It measured 4 areas in financial proficiency, behaviour, security, and freedom and found that the Philippines' financial health increased to 62 in 2025 from 52 last year, moving from "low" to "good". The survey reported that: 1) More Filipinos indicated "having emergency savings, with 73 % saying they have money set aside", though most respondents said their savings would only last up to one month; 2) Filipinos with "higher financial health reported anxiety about their financial future"; 3) There is "rising confidence and optimism across income groups but Filipinos's readiness for major financial commitments remained limited"; and 4) Improved money habits encouraged by the product designs of digital banks include goal-based savings, tiered interest rates, personalized prompts, and financial literacy nudges". "Ang mahalaga ngayon ay kung paano pina-panatili ng mga digital na bangko ng Pilipinas ang momentum na ito tulad ng paggawa ng mga insight sa disenyo ng produkto, regulasyon, at ibinahaging responsibilidad. Ang mga pinagsamang inisyatiba na naglalayong palawakin ang digital banking sa buong industriya at ang kalusugan ng pananalapi ay dapat maging isang pangmatagalang pangako para sa parehong mga gumagawa ng mga patakaran sa industriya".

Hailee Steinfeld reflects on Filipino-Black heritage for 'Sinners' role

Oscar-nominated actress Hailee Steinfeld looked back at her Filipino-Black heritage as a pivotal part of her role in Ryan Coogler's "Sinners."

Hailee portrays Mary, the former flame of one of Michael B. Jordan's two characters. Mary is part-Black from her mother's side but passes as white, though she has personal ties to the Black community.

The line Mary threads in "Sinners" is touched upon especially as she is the first major character turned into a vampire, who in the film are portrayed by Irishman Remnick (Jack O'Connell) and a married Klansmen couple.

In an interview with the New York Times, Hailee discussed how the role of Mary made her think of her maternal grandfather Ricardo Domasin, a Filipino and African-American born in Panglao, Bohol. "I feel like I've been on the doorstep of this for a long time and this char-

acter is what pushed me to sort of truly live in myself," Hailee said.

Hailee shared to writer Brian Josephs that she has always been proud of her family history, but her character Mary gave her the opportunity to look into it deeper.

"One of the most difficult parts of this for me was not having my main connection to this character and her history, my grandfather, here and alive to call him up and ask him questions," she added.

The part-Filipino actress admitted that she has a long list of questions to ask her Filipino grandfather if she was given the chance to talk to him.

"I certainly would have asked him more about his person-



al experiences," she continued. "Just how he was able to maneuver, and how he was able to get to a place of feeling proud, knowing that probably wasn't something he felt, hard to say, maybe the majority of his life."

The actress also said there were people who for a long time, like Mary, "wake up every day and have to make this decision of where to live in this gray area and have to live unapologetically in that because they've chosen the life that they've chosen."

"Sinners" won Best Original Score and the Cinematic and Box Office Achievement award at the Golden Globes and is considered a front-runner in this year's Academy Awards in March.

PCCF Joins Ati-Atihan

ATI-ATIHAN from page 2

weekend. Members and officers of the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) took part in the traditional Sadsad dance in ornate head dresses. It was a fun-filled evening of celebration.

Special thanks to the United Aklanon Association of Toronto (UAAT) and its organizers for the invitation! Congratulations on a successful event! The PCCF group consisted of PCCF Officers Lita Leano, Tony Leano, Jose Banduyang Jr, Hannah Lopez-Miss Teen Philippines RU, Maddie Rivero-Mrs Philippines Canada 2023 and Rocel Enverga.

See you again next year!

For more info email PhilippineCanadianFoundation@gmail.com

Nadine Lustre, Alden Richards pair up in new series 'Love, Siargao'

Nadine Lustre and Alden Richards are joining forces in the new series "Love, Siargao," set to be released in the second quarter of the year.

Lustre and Richards' team-up was announced by Viu Philippines in a press statement, marking their first time to work together in a project. They will also be joined by Choi Bo-min, a South Korean actor and former member of the K-pop group Golden

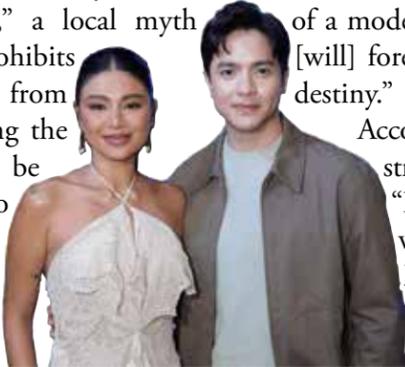
Child.

The 26-episode series tells the story of Jao (Richards) and Kara (Lustre) hit by the "Siargao curse," a local myth which prohibits visitors from ever leaving the island or be cursed to "lose their heart to love."

On Jao

and Kara, they are hit with "different versions" of the curse, eventually bringing them to the "highs and lows of a modern romance that [will] forever change their destiny."

According to the streaming service, "Love, Siargao" will also be a love letter to the tourist destination, which highlights



its "breathtaking beaches, vibrant food scene, unique Filipino experiences, and the warmth of Filipino culture."

Details on the series are yet to be announced.

The past year was an eventful one for Richards, as he juggled being an actor, filmmaker, and co-producer. One of his notable projects in 2025 was "Out of Order" which premiered at the Da Nang Film Festival in Vietnam.

The "Hello, Love, Again" star is also set to take on his first villain role in "Big Tiger," an international film which he also co-produced.

Meanwhile, Lustre was one of the lead stars in the 2025 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry "Call Me Mother," in which she received a Best Actress nomination. She was also one of the panelists in the TV show "Masked Singer Pilipinas" season three.

Seafood City Director Reveals How a Street Food Launch Turned Into a Viral Filipino Party

by Yona Harvey, MabuhayCanada.org

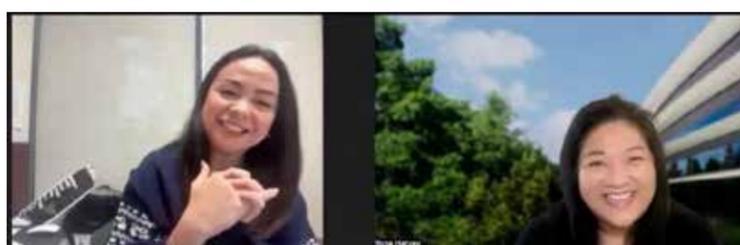
If you've been on TikTok or Instagram lately, you've probably seen it: a DJ in the middle of a grocery store, titas and kiddos line-dancing between the aisles, free pandesal sailing through the air, and entire Filipino communities turning Seafood City into a full-on fiesta.

To find out how this all started (and what's next), Mabuhay Canada hopped on a call with Patricia Francisco, Director of Digital Marketing and Events at Seafood City.

Francisco's marketing team is behind Late Night Madness, the viral dance parties popping up in Seafood City locations across North America.

Q: Beyond the fun, what did Late Night Madness do for Seafood City as a brand and business?

Patricia: "Before we go into



Screengrab of Mabuhay Canada's interview on Dec. 24, 2025 with Patricia Francisco, Seafood City Director of Digital Marketing & Events

the business side, the biggest thing we realized was how our brand was able to connect to the Filipino community through these events.

We've been able to promote the Filipino culture.

Seafood City has always been a home away from home.

We saw Filipinos redefining what it means to be Filipino-American or Filipino-Canadian and really embracing that identity.

Of course, we've also never had this much foot traffic during these events in our stores, so it's been so exciting to see all kinds of people come

into the stores and be able to celebrate in a way that hasn't really been done."

Q: Turning a supermarket into a dance floor isn't exactly... normal. How did the idea start?

Patricia: "It actually started very simply: we had just opened a new store in Daly City in Northern California and were tasked with launching a Filipino street food line.

When our team met, we asked, 'What if we introduce street food in an experiential way?'

In the Philippines, street



food isn't just food—it's loud music, karaoke, people hanging out by the sidewalk.

We wanted to recreate that energy, but in a more refined way for a grocery setting, so we brought in a DJ, curated a new street food-inspired menu, and extended store hours till midnight.

We really wanted to make the the experience as organic as possible.

The program was never pre-planned.

We went with the flow, of what the community wanted.

People started dancing, and we just amplified it with things like free chips and pandesal."

Q: You've done parties in both the U.S. and Canada. Any big differences between SEAFOOD page 16

Willie Revillame denies financial woes, officially returns to noontime TV

Willie Revillame denied rumors that he is facing financial woes after having allegedly sold luxury properties to fund his failed 2025 Senate bid.

Speaking at the recent press conference for "Wilyonaryo," his new game show that premiered over the weekend on wilyonaryo.com, the veteran

TV host said selling properties does not mean he is struggling financially.

"It's not true. Kasi alam mo minsan matatawa ka na nga lang sa mga kinukuwento ng iba. Hindi ko alam kung kino-content ka o kung galit sa iyo (Sometimes, you just end up laughing at the things

other people say. I don't know if they're just using you for content or if they're actually mad at you)," said Willie.

He explained that property sales are part of smart investing. "Alam mo, ganito lang ang buhay, kung may maganda kang property at may nagkagusto na kikita ka nang doble, hindi mo ba ibebenta? Ganun eh, so mag-i-invest ka ulit."

(You know, life is like this. If you have a good property and someone wants to buy it at double the price, wouldn't you sell it? That's just how it is. Then you just invest again.)

To address speculation, Willie detailed several of his assets, but was quick to add that he was not boasting. Among his properties are a \$10 million yacht, a 1.5-hectare private resort in Puerto Galera, and multiple high-end investments in Bonifacio Global City, including Grand Hyatt Manila penthouses that he previously said cost around P1 billion.

"I bought one entire floor, the 49th floor of the Grand Hyatt in BGC. So dalawang floors yung binili ko dun na buong floor ha!



Starting January 27, Willie Revillame is going head-to-head with other noontime shows as 'Wilyonaryo' takes the 12 noon slot on #WilTV via Signal and SatLite (Channel 10). This marks his official return to noontime TV after 'Wowowie' on ABS-CBN from 2005 to 2010 and 'Wowillie' on TV5 in 2013.

It's not just one unit."

According to Willie, he sold only one property in Tagaytay in 2025 and used the proceeds to purchase new investments in Metro Manila. He also said he owns three

helicopters, WilTower penthouses in Quezon City, and a new home in Tagaytay Midlands.

He said he decided to reveal these properties to counter claims that he was broke.

WILYONARYO page 16

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PIDC ELECTS NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

In a General Meeting at the Toronto City Hall on January 10, 2026, the membership of the Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC) elected its new set of Executive Officers and Board Directors for the 2026-2028 term. Registered long-serving officers and new members of the association attended the significant event.

Among those named to the PIDC Executive Board are President - Tom Tan, Executive Vice President - Karen Pascual Binaday, Vice President for External Affairs - Aurora Elefano, Vice President for Internal Affairs - Gene Elamparo, Vice President for Special Projects - Carlos Cabañeros, Secretary - Chyrell Ronquillo, Assistant Secretary - Malou Lamang, Treasurer - Meriel Lumbao, Assistant Treasurer - Mary Jean Senador, Auditor - Ben Corpuz, Press Relations Officers - Suzy Llanera and Danny Orbillo, Business Managers - Cynthia Miranda and Justin Bella, Community Liaison Of-



The 2026-2028 PIDC Executive Officers and Board Directors

ficers - Melinda Manlapaz and Bk Jimenez and Directors: Leonor Abad, Sonia Balinas, Helen Pico Lao, Jeff Mesina, and Ofelia Santiago.

Tom Tan will be serving his second term as head honcho of the prominent organisation. Immediate Past President Agnes P. Miranda was appointed PIDC Adviser. The designated members of the PIDC Coun-

cil of Leaders are Randy Bucao, Margie Doce, Aris Elefano, Jose Guiyab, Valentina (Amethyst) Ibanzo, Grant Karwacki, Maria Sherry Tan Lacson, Mrs Tan-Lacson, Rommel Lumbao, Edsel Mutia, Charmaine Ramirez, David Ramirez, Kathleen Mae Ranjo, Camilo Tayag, Jacqueline Tayag, Yana Teves, and Nanding Ticzon.

The general election was con-

ducted by the Committee of Election (Comelec), chaired by Tony A. San Juan, a retired Toronto educator, was assisted by Maria Antonio, Association of Filipino Canadian Accountants (AFCA) Vice President. Aleli Andrada Fahigal, AFCA President and AFCA senior officer Emma Villanueva served as official election tabulators.

PIDC is a registered non-prof-

it, community-based and volunteer-run organisation in Ontario for over 35 years. Its flagship program is the yearly-held Mabuhay Philippines Festival (MPF), proudly serving to promote and preserve Filipino heritage, history and culture in the province. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).

David Licauco back in action, but offers something new

David Licauco embarks on something familiar and new in the GMA Prime series, "Never Say Die," described by its publicity team as a "gritty action-drama."

The actor did action in "Maging Sino Ka Man" with Barbie Forteza as the leading lady. Their acting tandem was seen in the TV series "Heartful Café," "Maria Clara at Ibarra" and "Pulang Araw" and in the movie "That Kind of Love."

"Well, I've done this before in 'Maging Sino Ka Man,'" said David. "Actually, I feel like this is less of an action show as compared to 'Maging Sino Ka Man' kasi in (the latter, my previous series), I would really do a lot of action scenes, but for this one, saktong lang."

With that, he will still have his share of action sequences as he portrays his character Andrew Dizon, an investigative journalist.

"Nahirapan talaga ako dun sa pagsasalita ng mabilis (it was really tough since the role required me to speak fast) dahil siyempre (since, of course) I had to memorize. Ang haba ng mga linya (the lines were long)," shared he about the challenges of taking on the character, aside from immersing himself into the latter's emotions, as one may put it. "Yun yung pinaka-naging challenge ko, sa akin sa teleserye na ito (that's the most challenging in doing this TV series)."

Also, the GMA Prime series features David's first team-up with Jillian Ward, as Joey, the daughter of a cop.

"She's very nice," said he of the Kapuso young ac-



tress. "She's really smart." As fellow creatives, they also have the chance to talk about other endeavors that keep them busy. It's business in the case of David, who is an entrepreneur himself.

pagbibigay naman ng advice, hindi naman ako yung type

na nagsasabi lang ng out of nowhere (in terms of giving advice, I'm not the type of person who suddenly offers advice) kasi iba-iba naman yung pinagdadaanan ng mga tao, iba yung dreams, iba yung goals (since people go through different things. They have dreams and goals of their own)," shared he.

"Like there was this one time when we were on a plane," added David. "Tapos tinanong niya ako (then, she asked me) about business. She wanted to put up a business. Nagbigay lang ako ng insights (and I gave my insights), but I also learned a lot from Jillian kasi, as you know, masayahin talaga siyang tao (she's really a happy person)."

He also found her very kind and humble, given the accomplishments and success Jillian has achieved in her career.

Beyond his actor and businessman persona, David is also a 3x3 basketball player.

"Nandun pa rin naman yun. Siyempre, passion natin yun (I'm still in it. Of course, it's also my passion)," said he, who will put up a resort in Siargao.

Since some stars have tried their hands at producing a TV series or movies, does he also see himself taking the same path?

"Na-invite na akong mag-invest sa film (I was also invited to invest in a film in the past). Palagay ko kung gagawin ko yun baka hindi ko magampanan

yung trabaho ko bilang artista (I think if I go into it, I may not do my work as an actor)," said David, who knows the weight that comes with being a producer, financial- and logistics-responsibilities-wise. "How can I study my script if I'm juggling two roles? Siguro in the future, kung hindi ako yung actor, pwede (maybe, in the future, if I'm not the actor, I could consider it). And siyempre, feeling ko maganda din sa pakiramdam

DAVID page 12



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In it's second year, Sinulog has grown bigger.

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Anne Curtis clarifies “huwag ka manood” reply “not pataray”

Anne Curtis: “Honestly, that wasn’t meant to blow up how it did.”

Naging usap-usapan sa social media ang pag-sagot ni Anne Curtis sa isang netizen na hindi nagustuhan ang trailer ng pelikula nila ni Jericho Rosales na *The Loved One*.

Ipinost ni Anne sa kanyang X account ang trailer noong January 19, 2026. Sa comments section, pinuna ng isang netizen ang trailer: “kakairita, english english ang mga dialogue...” Hindi pinalampas ni Anne ang komento at sinagot niya ito ng “Di wag kang manood.” May mga netizen na pumuna rin sa anila’y “pagtataray” at “pagpatol” ni Anne sa netizen. Mukhang wala raw sa mood si Anne, at nanaig ang kanyang “intrusive thoughts.”

May mga nagtanggol din kay Anne at sinabing hindi naman daw below-the-belt ang komento ni Anne para gawing big deal.

ANNE CURTIS CLAIMS IT WASN’T MEANT AS “PATARAY” Sinagot ni Anne ang isyu sa mediacion ng *The Loved*

One noong January 24, Sabado, sa Main Atrium ng Robinson’s Place Manila.

May nagtanong kung maganda ang pelikula, at pabirong humirit si Jericho na maganda ang pelikula nila dahil nag-i-English sila roon.

Sabay hirit din ni Anne, “Oo, medyo Taglish siya dito, medyo English-English, kaya kung ayaw niyo, e, di huwag kayong manood!”

Nagsigawan ang mga tao na nasa venue na halatang aware sa isyu.

Saka nagbigay ng paliwanag si Anne.

Sabi niya: “Alam niyo, honestly, that wasn’t meant to blow up how it did.”

“Parang kunwari si Vice [Ganda], kunwari si Vice yung kausap ko at sinabi niya, ‘Ano ba yang movie niyo, puro English!’”

“Ganun ko din naman siya sasagutin, ‘Huwag kang manood!’”

“Ganun lang yun. It wasn’t meant to be, like, a pataray.”

“Parang ganun lang, ‘E, di huwag kang manood!’ Ganun lang yun.”



Will Barbie Forteza say yes to love again?

Kapuso actress Barbie Forteza is gearing up to celebrate Valentine’s Day solo once more, and she’s perfectly fine with her own company.

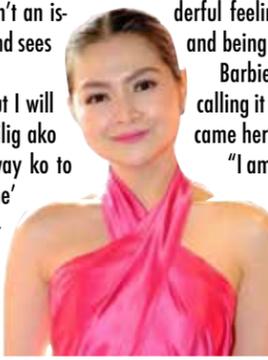
For Barbie, flying solo on Valentine’s isn’t an issue—she relishes her cherished ‘me’ time and sees it as a special way to mark the occasion.

“I do have plans for Valentine’s Day, but I will spend it by myself, as I did last year. Mahilig ako mag ‘me’ time. Parang yun na rin ang way ko to celebrate Valentine’s Day. (I like to have ‘me’ time. That’s my way of celebrating Valentine’s Day),” said Barbie during an interview at the 81st birthday bash of veteran star Boots Anson Roa-Rodrigo in Greenhills recently.

Asked if she’s ready for romance, Barbie revealed, “I’m definitely open to love again. My heart is full, and I’m always ready to give and receive love. It’s a wonderful feeling to know you’re capable of loving and being loved.”

Barbie, 28, expressed gratitude for 2026, calling it a continuation of the good things that came her way in 2025

“I am happy. Maganda naman ang umpisa ng taon ko. Ipapalabas na siya (Until She Remembers) on Feb. 25. (My year is off to a good start. ‘Until She Remembers’ will be released on Feb. 25.) We will have our Red Carpet premiere on Feb. 19 at SM



North EDSA The Block at 5 p.m.

“Parang naging continuance ng aking 2025 ang 2026 kasi itong *Until She Remembers*, I shot this last year. Thankfully, may mga movie pa na in the works.

May TV show rin. (2026 is like a continuation of my 2025 because of ‘*Until She Remembers*,’ I shot this last year. Thankfully, there are more movies in the works. There’s also a TV show),” she added.

The sounds that made us ‘Bagets’

The music of ‘*Bagets*’ was one of the early works of Ricky del Rosario. In aiming for the youth market, Ricky made sure he included some covers of current hits in the ‘*Bagets*’ soundtrack. Hence, the presence of Sheena Easton’s *Telephone* done by Chona Cruz. Then he sourced some originals by Filipino songwriters. Odette Quesada came up with two new songs: *Growing Up*, recorded by Gary Valenciano, and the graduation song *Farewell* by Raymond Lauchengco. Raymond, then a fast-rising singer and actor under Viva, also got a love ballad from Cecile Azarcon, *So It’s You*.

“*Bagets*,” the movie, initially seemed to be just another youth flick to come out of Viva Films. Nothing really special save for the idea that it will build up the careers of five young actors around whom there was a lot of interest.

Viva, after all, was known more for its sleek, aspirational melodramas like “*P.S. I Love You*” and “*Gaano Kadalas ang Minsan*.”

So, a coming-of-age film about high school boys was seen as something of an experiment.

So, when “*Bagets*” opened in Metro Manila theaters on Feb. 2, 1984, no one was prepared for the watershed reaction of fans from all over the country. Lead stars William Martinez, Herbert

Bautista, J.C. Bonnin, Raymond Lauchengco and Aga Muhlach, aged 14 to 19, turned into box-office kings overnight.

Not only that, the picture, directed by Maryo J. De los Reyes and written by Jake Tordesillas, became a cultural phenomenon that impacted the Filipino language.

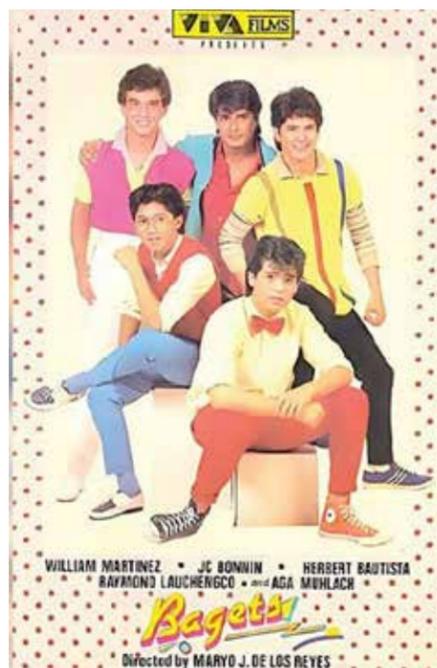
“*Bagets*” became the popular slang term for the young; fashion, bright yellow and pink casuals with white sneakers painted in neon colors; and most of all, on the then-current music trends, which, 40 years later, has not aged one bit.

The music of “*Bagets*” was one of the early works of Ricky del Rosario. He never studied music, but given the many years he had spent in the Philippine music industry, he certainly knew what would sell.

Ricky first worked as a disc jockey on radio. He later on managed the pressing plant of Vicor Music Corporation, the place where long-play albums and 45 RPM singles were pressed.

He later moved to heading Vicor International, where he dealt with foreign labels, and sometime later he was head of Viva Records.

Being a musical director was a side gig that Ricky did from time to time. Aside from “*Bagets*,”



he also scored “*Captain Barbel*,” “*Ninja Kids*,” “*Kalabog en Bosyo*,” “*Hindi Ako Ander Itanong Mo Kay Kumander*,” “*Neber 2 Geder*,” “*Ang Misis Kong Hoodlum*,” “*Sa Tootoo Lang*” and others.

“*Bagets*,” however, turned out to be not only his best, but also the most enduring.

In aiming for the youth market, Ricky made sure he included some covers of current hits in the

“*Bagets*” soundtrack. Hence, the presence of Sheena Easton’s *Telephone* done by Chona Cruz.

Then he sourced some originals by Filipino songwriters, and this is where he hit the jackpot.

Odette Quesada, the hot composer of the time, thanks to her two hits for Ric Segreto, *Don’t Know What to Do*, *Don’t Know What to Say* and *Give Me a Chance*, came up with two new songs. These were the theme titled *Growing Up*, which was recorded by Gary Valenciano, and the graduation song *Farewell* for Raymond Lauchengco.

Raymond, then a fast-rising singer and actor under Viva, also got a love ballad from Cecile Azarcon, *So It’s You*, which he sang to his leading lady, Eula Valdez.

The success of the movie “*Bagets*” sent the soundtrack album up the charts. In return, Ricky’s clever use of the music in the picture resulted in memorable scenes that greatly contributed to “*Bagets*”’ iconic status today.

And one more thing: let us not forget *Just Got Lucky*. The bouncy number by Jo Boxer was not in the “*Bagets*” soundtrack. But a tune was needed for the cast to dance to during their promo gigs. Ricky gave them *Just Got Lucky*.

To this day, everybody who hears *Just Got Lucky* cannot help but get into “*Bagets*” mode, stepping to the music with hands waving in circles just like the “*Bagets*” did long ago.

What The Paper reveals about local news and journalism today

NEWSPAPER from page 4

vertising, once the financial lifeblood of local papers, has been in steep decline for years as businesses moved their spending to platforms like Google and Facebook.

That collapse in revenue left papers more dependent on digital ads and subscriptions, neither of which has filled the gap. According to the Florida-based Poynter Institute for Media Studies, local news websites saw about a 20 per

cent drop in page views and unique visitors in 2022, undercutting the ad impressions needed to sustain online revenue.

Patchwork assistance

Canadian news organi-

zations have sought compensation for the ways tech platforms profit from news content. Google reached a deal with the Canadian government to provide \$100 million annually for five years to domestic publishers in ex-

change for an exemption from the Online News Act, which allows continued access to Canadian news links.

As Gretel Kahn with the Reuters Institute reports, some Canadian outlets — includ-

NEWSPAPER page 18

New Immigrants and the Workplace



**Norma
Bernal**

“New Year Good News for Ontario Jobseekers”

2026 is turning out to be a better year for the Ontarian unemployed & underemployed who are actively looking for work. As every jobseeker must know, Ontario has an Employment Standards Act (ESA) that spells out the province’s legal minimum standards for working conditions such as wages, work hours, etc. with the objectives of ensuring the fair treatment of employees and identifying employer workplace responsibilities.

The province enacted changes to the ESA that became effective on January 1 this year. The objective of the amendments, according to David Piccini, Ontario’s Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, is to build “a fairer, safer job market across the province by levelling the playing field for job seekers, cracking down on scams and bringing real transparency to hiring.”

Under the new rules, the following are now required:

Salary Transparency. Employers must disclose a salary (a single specific amount) or a range thereof (a minimum-to-maximum span of pay) with the range not exceeding \$50,000 per year or less (than a year). This rule is applicable to employers who publicly advertise job postings and who employ 25 or more employees on the day the job opening is advertised. This requirement informs interested candidates of compensation boundaries before ap-



plying and not job hunt blind. The work requirements and the type of company are not the only important considerations that candidates are interested in to decide whether a job opening is suitable or not for them. In fact, for majority of candidates, monetary compensation is their primary criterion so they can now compare companies in terms of pay structure. However, employers that pay an expected salary which is equivalent to or more than \$200,000 per year is exempted from such disclosure.

2) **Transparency in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).** How AI is used in the recruitment/ hiring process is also required for job openings that are advertised openly to the public. In my previous column published in the now shuttered Filipino Bulletin titled “How to Use AI for Job Search”, I did some soft research and identified the numerous ways by

which employers use artificial intelligence in the recruitment, selection & hiring/onboarding processes. So, with the widespread use of bots, applicants now question: will their resume be seen and evaluated by a human or just a machine or both? Should the resume, cover letter & other documents required show more personality & character or just aim to comply with the requirement of an algorithm? If the latter, some jobseekers may decide that applying is not even worth pursuing. For example, if I were to apply for a counsellor position and I discover that the hiring process is fully algorithmic, I would think that pleasing an algorithm is a flawed way of evaluating my resume and why should I even apply to an organization using a solely AI-driven system?

3) **ESA also now mandates that** “Employers will be prohibited from including in a publicly advertised job posting or any

associated application form any requirements related to Canadian experience.” Although this will not fully address the systemic barriers in the labour market, still it is a positive move in the right direction and may encourage newcomers to be less sceptical about fairness in hiring.

4) Another new ESA requirements is that “Employers will be required to disclose in a publicly advertised job posting if the posting is for an existing vacancy or not.” This will discourage unscrupulous practices of employers who do not really have genuine job openings for immediate hire but only have: a) ‘ghost’ or ambiguous job posts to build a future pool of candidates, and b) speculative job postings to determine what talents are available out there and/ or to gather labour market data.

5) Another stipulation in the new ruling is “If an employer interviews an applicant for a publicly advertised job posting, they will be required to provide information to that applicant (in person, in writing or using technology) about whether a hiring decision has been made for that posting.” This needs to be done within a certain time frame: “within 45 days after the date of the interview or, if the applicant is interviewed more than once, then within 45 days after the date of the last interview”. Without any word on the outcome of one’s interview (or series of interviews) jobseekers understandably become frustrated.

Though critics say that these changes are not ideal and that the province needs to do more, it is important that job hunters, especially newcomers, are aware and use them to their advantage when looking for work. Anyone interested in the details of these new measures can browse this website: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/recent-changes#section-2>

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Joey Baking The Socialist

"An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last."

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

"Appeasement" is the policy of feeding your friends to a crocodile, one at a time, in hopes that the crocodile will eat you last.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



Marky Hugh, owner of MH Productions celebrates his 40th birthday with an entertainment-filled party at La Liga.

Colder Nights Hotter Parties



Pinoy Ontario Vendors (POV) officers and members pose at the Tala Appreciation Night 2026. POV President & founder Paulo Bucud asked me to pose with them.

Last month, this column was titled "Hot Parties, Cold Nights." I thought the season of hot parties in these cold nights are going to take a break for the month of January. Apparently, nobody got the memo that this is the month of hibernation and recuperation. Sinulog came back bigger and livelier the second time around. Marky Hugh had his very lively 40th birthday celebration. Tala Entertainment had their 3rd annual Appreciation Night honoring deserving Filipinos in the community. And before the month is over, Marky Hugh held a King & Queen of All Trades: "Dream Big & Thrive", a Multi-Performance Spotlight featuring talented MH students. Oh, and in between these events, I had to shovel snow that keeps coming with regularity, along with bone-chilling temperature.

Global warming, my cold patootie.
Let me catch my breath.

Sinulog 2026 is now a 2-day event at 1250 Markham Avenue last January 17 and 18. Fresh from the suc-

cess of their one-day inaugural launch last year at Korean Cultural Centre, it has grown this year with more activities. It now has a Sinulog Queen & King, a

Sinulog Singing champion and prizes for attendees.

Another event which also celebrates sinulog has now changed location. Last year, it was at the Chinese Cultural Centre. This year, it is on the restaurant located at Oriental Centre. The raucous, lively event is held by the United Aklanon Association.

Marky Hugh of MH Productions celebrated his 40th birthday with family, friends and students and families of MH Productions. Like any of MH gatherings, it was a fun-filled evening of delicious food, music, dancing, and performances by everyone. In fact, there was a perfor-

mance by the "hunkable dads" that was one of the liveliest part of the party. It was a night of non-stop fun from beginning until the end. Everyone had a wonderful and enjoyable time.

Happy birthday Marky. May you live long with good health and prosper.

One of the Philippines' most celebrated festivals made its way to Toronto on Sunday, January 18, 2026, at Sinulog sa Toronto. The vibrant event was filled with lively entertainment, delicious food vendors, and moments of prayer, bringing the spirit of Sinulog to the local community.

This marked the first participation of the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) at the event—and it was a resounding success. The PCCF Pageant with a Cause candidates took center stage and truly shone during the Fashion Show, showcasing their talents, confidence, and beauty. Participants included Krystelle, Little Miss Philippines Canada 2025, along with Little Miss runners-up Athena, Victoria, Hannah, and Hannah; Miss Teen Philippines Canada runner-up Andrea; and Joyce, Miss Philippines Canada

runner-up accompanied by special representative Rocel.

Adding to the excitement, PCCF Ambassador of Goodwill Tracy Mai delivered a wonderful performance. The title of Sinulog Queen was awarded to Kris Joie, Mrs. Philippines Canada 2025 runner-up.

Congratulations to organizer Dong Sabanal and to all the participants for an outstanding showcase! PCCF officers Lita and Tony Leano, along with Jose Banduyang Jr. and Willy Santiago, were also present in support of this event. Stay tuned for more exciting events coming up this month!

For more info. Email PhilippineCanadianFoundation@gmail.com

The Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to have fun, while helping others.

For over a decade, PCCF has supported and spearheaded various charitable projects. Most notably, the building of the ANCOPTALA Village in Calocan, Philippines which is home to over 30 families impacted by Leprosy; relief efforts cause by natural disasters such as earthquakes and Typhoon Yolanda plus so

HOTTER PARTIES page 11

Sofia Pablo reflects on 'PBB' journey: 'I've fulfilled my purpose'

After spending 99 days inside the "Pinoy Big Brother" house, Sofia Pablo's time inside Bahay ni Kuya has come to an end.

The Sparkle artist took to social media to share an emotional message reflecting on her journey.

Sharing screenshots of herself inside the popular blue and yellow house, the Strong-Willed Sunshine ng Quezon City admitted entering the PBB house was not an easy decision.

"Nung una, natatakot akong pumasok sa PBB. Hindi ko alam kung mauunawaan ako ng tao," Sofia said. "Pero pinili kong harapin yung takot na 'yon at bigyan ang sarili ko ng

chance."

She added that she made a conscious promise to herself to stay true to who she is.

"At 'yun ang ginawa ko. Nagpakatotoo ako sa loob ng bahay ni Kuya," she said.

Sofia also credited her fellow housemates for helping her open up and grow, saying, "kayo 'yung naging dahilan kung bakit nailabas ko' yung totoong ako sa loob ng bahay ni Kuya."

Looking back



on her journey, Sofia expressed a sense of fulfillment, saying she accomplished what she set out to do.

"I can say that I've fulfilled my purpose: to show the world who I really am," she said.

Sofia got evicted from Bahay Ni Kuya alongside Eliza Borromeo.

Allen Ansay was among the first people to welcome her back into the outside world.

Congratulations



Congratulations to these Talented lovely talents of Franceska, Nathalie, Janicaka,, and Jewel of Marky Hugh Productions who received an award as best outstanding performance at King and Queen of all trades event.



Darles Nota with family and Linda Blair Paklarian



Jewel lights up a birthday candle.



All January birthday celebrants get their cake too.



Birthday celebrant Marky Hugh gets his cake.

HOTTER PARTIES from page 10 much more.

PCCF was founded by the late Hon

Tobias C. Enverga Jr., the first Canadian of Filipino descent to be elected in the City of Toronto and to be ap-

pointed the Senate of Canada.

The organization endeavors to celebrating Philippine Culture, heri-

tage and helping others! PCCF is the proud organizer of the Pinoy Fiesta & **HOTTER PARTIES** page 12

Kung good deal ang hinahanap ninyo, Harold Guarin ang tawagan n'yo...



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David Licauco back in action, but offers something new

DAVID from page 7

na makakagawa ka rin ng movie (of course, it's a good feeling to produce a movie)."

As for the main focus of "Never Say Die," on the other hand, the male lead star shared,

"I think secondary yung romance (the romance is

secondary). More than anything, tina-tackle namin dito yung mga nangyayari sa bansa (it tackles more what's happening in the country), na palagay ko talaga yun ang highlight ng teleseryeng ito (which I think is the highlight of the series). I-ni-expose natin ang kalokohan sa society, sa government (it exposes wrongdoings in

the society and government)."

So, the story, in a way, reflects real-life issues, and "Never Say Die" goes beyond the usual route to entertain and engage, but it lets viewers think of their present plight.

There's an "advocacy" aspect to it.

For David, all teleseryes have an advocacy. His shows, like "Maria Clara at Ibarra" and "Pulang Araw," advocate looking back on the past, thinking about Pinoy cul-

tural heritage and history.

"I think this one is more on the present time, and it's timely," said David about "Never Say Die." "Pinapakita dito yung mga kahirapan ng mga Pilipino dahil sa mga nangyayari (it shows poverty that Pinoy experience). Despite that, lumalaban pa rin (they keep fighting and live and have that attitude of) never say die. Yun naman ang importante (that's what matters)."



HOTTER PARTIES from page 11

Trade Show Toronto, the Pagants with a Cause and PCCF

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ippinecanadianfoundation.com Congratulations Bar Bie

Jacquiline Hidalgo. We proudly celebrate your HOTTER PARTIES page 13

HOTTER PARTIES from page 12
well-deserved win as Best in Social Media in the recent

Sinulog Sa Toronto Bazaar 2026! This recognition is a true testament to your creativity, consistency, and powerful digital presence. Garnering **HOTTER PARTIES** page 14

BINI's Jhoanna in short film honoring sari-sari stores

BINI member Jhoanna appears in a cameo role in *The Witness*, the latest short film from grocery chain Puregold's Sari-Sari Stories video series, which highlights Filipino sari-sari store owners.

The film centers on a coming-of-age love story that unfolds over several years, told from the perspective of a sari-sari store owner who observes the relationship as it grows and changes. Jhoanna's appearance is brief and serves as part of the film's portrayal of everyday community life.

Speaking about sari-sari stores, Jhoanna said they remain important in many communities because of their accessibility and



BINI Jhoanna (right) appears in a cameo for Puregold's 'The Witness,' a short film that pays tribute to sari-sari stores

familiarity. "Importante na hindi mawala ang sari-sari store," she said, noting that they continue to serve nearby residents.

"The Witness" follows two childhood sweethearts whose relationship develops over time, showing both challenges and milestones. The sari-sari store owner serves

as a constant presence throughout the story.

Puregold senior marketing manager Ivy Hayagan-Piedad said the series aims to highlight the role of sari-sari store owners in local communities by showing how they provide access to basic goods and serve as neighborhood fixtures.

The *Witness* is the latest installment in the Sari-Sari Stories series, which previously released short films including *Ways*, featuring SB19's Stell, and *The Sign*, which included a cameo by Skusta Clee. The series focuses on stories set around sari-sari stores and their place in everyday Filipino life.

Hunk Shot



MJ, 25, is currently undergoing recertification as a swimming instructor. He was formerly a life guard at the beaches. To keep fit, he goes on a walkathon with his group. He wants to be a policeman someday. We wish luck in his endeavour.

MJ Arenas

Cheska's Concert Other Performers



CHESKA from page 2
challenges along the way, everything came together beautifully, and it be-

came a night we will always cherish. Kuya Dong Sabanal you already **CHESKA** page 15

BULLETIN from page 3

Presently, he is an active member of the Filipino Centre Toronto's Seniors Art Painting (SAP) group and the USA-based Villamor High School Alumni International Association. Have a great and well-deserved retirement, Carlos! God bless always.

Jennifery Sy & Carlos practice the ukulele before the luncheon prayer at the FCT painting class.



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Willie Revillame denies financial woes, officially returns to noontime TV

WILYONARYO from page 6

"Ayaw ko na sanang sabihin yun. Para hindi niyo masabi na naghihirap... Eto na, kaya once and for all para malaman niyo na lahat."

Willie said he does not flaunt his lifestyle on social media. "Hindi ko pinagayabang iyan. Never niyo akong nakitang nag-Facebook, YouTube na nasa yate," he said, adding that his success came from decades of work in television.

He thanked the networks he worked with, including ABS-CBN, TV5, GMA, and ALL TV, as well as the audiences who supported his shows.

"Kung di sa mga taong iyan, lalung-lalo na yung mga kababayan nating mahihirap, yung masa, di ba?"

Asked about his current net worth, Willie said it was not about numbers.

"It's not about how much. It's about how you



work — the hard work."

He cited his tax records as proof, recalling that he paid P63.9 million in income tax in 2012 and later paid around P9 million monthly during his final years on GMA, excluding VAT.

"Ilang years na halos ganyan ang binabayaran ko," he said.

Meanwhile, it was announced yesterday that Willie is going head-to-head with other noon-

time shows as "Wilyonaryo" takes the 12 noon timeslot, starting today, on #WilTV via Signal and SatLite (Channel 10).

This marks his official return to noontime TV after "Wow wee" on ABS-CBN from 2005 to 2010 and "Wow Willie" on TV5 in 2013. This development also coincides with the 65th birthday of Willie, or Kuya Wil to his followers.



FIRST-EVER SINULOG FESTIVAL QUEEN 2026 - Krisss Joi Miranda



Jia Hannah Basalote - Darling of the Crowd Award



Riela Leonor - First-Ever Sinulog Idol 2026 Junior Division Champion



Bar Bie Jacqueline Hidalgo - Best in Social Media



Imelda Concepcion - Sinulog Ambassador 2026 Icon

SINULOG sa Toronto 2026



Ron Angeles



Sherry Lacson Tan for proudly earning the title of Best in Costume / Best in Filipiniana



Beauty titlists of Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF)

Andrea Penaverde - Miss Philippines Canada 2026 1st runner-up



Dong Sabanal holds the Sto. Niño with a friend.



Krystelle Rivas - Little Miss Philippines Canada 2026

HOTTER PARTIES from page 13 an incredible 30,000 shared posts, you didn't just join the

celebration — you amplified it, inspired others, and helped bring the spirit of Sinulog far

beyond the venue and into countless timelines and communities.

Your passion and dedication showed how social media can be a platform for culture,

devotion, and unity. Through every post, share, and story, HOTTER PARTIES page 16

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Cheska holds a Concert

CHESKA from page 13

know how incredibly proud I am of you. Pushing through in the shorter preparation and making this concert happen while the Sinulog sa Toronto Festival was happening at the same time was no easy task. It was extremely busy, stressful, and demanding in every possible way—but you still made it happen. Your dedication, perseverance, and passion truly inspire me, and I hope you know how much your efforts are appreciated.

Ate Chua Peggie Paulette, thank you so much for believing in Cheska and trusting that she could do this. Your faith in her meant more than words can express, and it gave her the strength and confidence to shine on that stage.

To Mami Em Em Vee Sawal, one of the most amazing hosts and emcees I know—thank you for your warmth, your energy, and your heart. Your presence added so much emotion and meaning to the night.

Ate V Icel Sabido Yarra our incredible backstage manager—your hard work, patience, and dedication behind the scenes did not go unnoticed.

Everything you did helped the show run smoothly, and your efforts are truly appreciated more than you know.

Kuya Glennmar Miculob and team G.M Collective, thank you for being Cheska's backing band.

Without your talent and support, her songs would not have come alive the way they did. You elevated every performance, and we are so grateful for you.

To the DJ and Tech Team of Kuya Jeff Tan especially Kuya Arnold Agbulos Adolfo, Kuya Jomer Nueva, and everyone else who worked tirelessly behind the scenes—thank you for making sure everything sounded and looked right.

To Dong's Dreamers Academy family who have shared the talent; Dreamers Diva(Kait, Krystelle Rivas and



Anne Viesca Kuya Ron Reyes Angeles, Reila, Zoe, Jaden, Gian Angelo Aquino Gregorio, Marinina, Ziana, Trohan and of course to Pink Ribbon Stars, Tita Jennifer Sy and other DDA family who have supported, your continuous support, encouragement, and presence mean so much more than words can express. Knowing that you stand with us for Cheska and believe in her gives her strength and motivation. We are truly grateful for each and every one of you.

To The Unstoppables - UDG dancers, especially Tita Evelyn Canimo and Ate Marinel Aguinaldo you are simply amazing dancers, your energy, dedication, and artistry added so much life and beauty to the performance.

To our lovely front acts and special guests—Raizzon and Sarah Idos from Kitchener, Erline Belardo, Anne Park, Hailey Yarra and Kaitlyn Mae Panganiban of MHP, Dominique Toledo of DK Talents, Lexie Alexa and Jer-

emiah and Gail of JDL, Charlotte Connolly, Jun Amal and the Dynamic Motion Dancers of Canada, and Bevs Saraza—thank you from the bottom of our hearts for gracing the stage with your incredible talent, passion, and dedication.

Each of you brought something truly special to the night. Your performances were not only powerful and inspiring, but also filled with heart and authenticity. You elevated the entire concert experience and helped create a night that was vibrant, meaningful, and unforgettable.

Your willingness to share your time, energy, and artistry meant so much to us. It was truly an honor for Cheska to share the stage with such talented individuals and groups who continuously strive for excellence. Your presence made the concert richer, more dynamic, and deeply memorable.

Thank you for believing in this "On My Own" Concert of our Cheska, for showing up with so much love and pro-

fessionalism, and for giving your very best. We are beyond grateful for each and every one of you, and we hope to share the stage with you again in the future.

Thank you so much. Your time, talent, and support added so much to the concert, and we are incredibly grateful for your presence.

My sincere gratitude as well to my Mom Len Len, Madam Lourielyn De Vera and Ate Moi Rajing for their time, and assistance in managing the entrance and accommodating everyone who came to secure tickets.

Ate Lou Contre-ras III the effort, love, and creativity of our amazing hair & makeup artist for our lovely Cheska, Thank you for making her shine. Follow on IG @glam_bylou and message her if you need someone to Make

you glow up hair/make you

Ate April of Tropang Ilonggo thank you so much for the food and for your kindness and generosity. It meant so much to everyone involved.

To Princess Vivian Leah Locky AV Locky Immigration Solutions, Inc. And Remitly

CHESKA page 19



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Republican Jewel Mische, 'almost deported' on Trump's first term

By: Jessica Ann Evangelista

Former actress Jewel Mische recalled her experience of almost being deported during Donald Trump's first administration amid the ongoing contentious issues of immigration in the United States.

Mische, who is now US-based, shared that her immigration case occurred at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when she was caring for a newborn and a toddler.

"During President Trump's first term, I personally went through the ICE process," she recently wrote on Instagram. "While my husband and children are U.S. citizens, I faced a very real possibility of deportation - and the devastating reality

that I could be separated from my children and my husband, leaving them behind."

The former actress expressed that the fear she felt at the time was "real and heavy," but she was grateful that she was treated fairly under the law and eventually granted citizenship.

"Because of that experience, I don't speak about immigration lightly. I grieve for families who are suffering right now. I grieve for innocent people who are affected. I deeply wish that pain was not part of the process. But holding compassion for those who suffer does not require me to attack the President," she explained.

Mische underscored that she could both

support the role of the President as a Republican and hold compassion for people affected by the immigration system.

"I can uphold the office in prayer while also grieving for those caught in the cost of enforcement. I am Republican. I support the role of the President. That does not mean I agree with every decision or approach, nor does it mean I lack compassion," she expressed.

"Two things can be true at once: I can care deeply for people who are hurting - and still believe in lawful order. I will continue to pray for leadership. And I will continue to pray for those who suffer," concluded the former actress.

Mische rose to fame after she was named the Ultimate Sweetheart on GMA Network's talent real-

ity search "StarStruck" in 2007. She stepped away from acting in 2015 after marrying her American husband, Alex Kurzer. They have three daughters and are based in Michigan.

Meanwhile, after Trump's return to the White House last year, he has pursued immigration enforcement and deportation policies that left many immigrants at risk of removal. These policy shifts include expedited deportation procedures, limitations on asylum pathways, and heightened ICE activity across the US.

Street protests have been held and lawsuits filed in response to what critics describe as "aggressive tactics," and immigrant-rights advocates continue to call for reforms to protect families and due-process rights.



Older Nights Hotter Parties

HOTTER PARTIES from page 14

you helped showcase the joy, color, and heart of Sinulog, making this year's festival even more memorable and impactful.

Thank you for using your voice and influence to uplift Filipino culture and for being an essential part of the success of Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026. We are so proud of you and can't wait to see what you continue to create and share with the world. Padayon and keep shining!

Thank you too Mitzify Canada and Mitzville Event Memories for generously sponsoring this special portion of Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026!

Your support helped elevate the celebration and made this moment even more meaningful for our performers and community.

A heartfelt thank you as well to Johanna Flowers for the beautiful bouquet! Your elegant floral touch added extra warmth and charm to the occasion.

Congratulations to the winner of the 55" TV at Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026!



We are honored and proud to be the official co-presenter of this amazing event alongside Dong Entertainment. It was a truly memorable celebration of Filipino culture, community, and fun!

A big shoutout to the lucky winner, Raj Fernandez from AV Locky Immigration Solutions, Inc.

Thank you to everyone who made this event a huge success!

Airz Dance Squad is happy celebrating culture through cultural and modern dance, while spreading good vibes, unity, and positivity wherever they perform.

Grateful for moments like these filled with music, smiles, and community love.

They performed at Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026.

Congratulations to Maria Sherry Lacson Tan for proudly earning the title of Best in Costume / Best in Filipiniana at Sinulog Sa Toronto Bazaar 2026.

Thank you Mitzify Canada and Mitzville Event Memories for generously sponsoring this special portion of Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026!

Your support helped elevate the celebration and made this moment even more meaningful for our performers and community.

A heartfelt thank you as well to Johanna Flowers for the beautiful bouquet! Your elegant floral touch added extra warmth and charm to the occasion.

Your stunning Filipiniana ensemble was more than just beautiful! It was a powerful celebration of Filipino her-

itage, artistry, and cultural pride. Every detail of your costume reflected grace, history, and deep respect for our traditions. As you walked the Sinulog stage, you truly embodied the elegance and strength of the Filipina, captivating the audience and judges alike.

This recognition is a testament to your creativity, confidence, and dedication to showcasing our rich culture on an international stage. You have inspired many by proving that our traditions continue to shine brightly, even miles away from home.



Once again, congratulations on this well-deserved achievement! You made the Filipino community proud and added more color, meaning, and heart to Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026. Viva Señor Santo Niño!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST-EVER SINULOG FESTIVAL QUEEN 2026 - Kriss Joi Miranda Kryz Joi

With hearts full of pride and joy, we proudly congratulate Kriss Joie Miranda, crowned as the First-Ever Overall Sinulog Festival Queen 2026 of Sinulog Sa Toronto Bazaar 2026!

Thank you Mitzify Canada and Mitzville Event Memories for generously sponsoring this special portion of Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026!

Your support helped elevate the celebration and made this moment even more meaningful for our performers and community.

A heartfelt thank you as well to Johanna Flowers for the beautiful bouquet! Your elegant floral touch added extra warmth and charm to the occasion.

This historic milestone is more than a crown! It is a celebration of culture, faith, grace, and the unwavering Filipino spirit that continues to thrive in our community here in Canada.

This year's competition showcased excellence across five major categories, highlighting not only beauty but talent, audience connection, and cultural pride: Best in Sinulog Dance, Best in Filipiniana/Gown, Best in Social Media, Crowd Favorite, Overall Winner "Sinulog Festival Queen 2026".

Through every performance, presentation, and interaction, Kriss Joie Miranda exemplified confidence, authenticity, and deep respect for Filipino heritage. Her poise on stage, powerful Sinulog dance, elegant Filipiniana, and genuine connection with the crowd truly set her apart and made her deserving of the very first Overall Festival Queen title.

As our inaugural Sinulog Festival Queen, Kriss Joie now becomes part of Sinulog Sa Toronto history, setting the standard for future queens and inspiring young Filipinas to embrace their roots while dreaming boldly. May your reign be filled with meaningful advocacies, continued



growth, and opportunities to represent our culture with pride and purpose.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the organizers, judges, co-presenters AV Locky Immigration Solutions, Inc. and Remitly Boogey Man, sponsors, partners, parents, volunteers, and the entire Sinulog Sa Toronto family for making this historic celebration possible. Your dedication has paved the way for a new tradition in our community.

Congratulations to Imelda Concepcion for winning the title Sinulog Ambassador 2026 Icon. Imelda Concepcion is a woman of grace, resilience, and purpose—someone who embodies the true spirit of Filipina strength and cultural pride. Rooted in strong family values and guided by her faith and determination, Imelda carries herself with quiet confidence and a deep respect for her heritage. She believes that beauty is not only seen in appearance, but felt through character, compassion, and service to others.

Growing up, Imelda learned the importance of perseverance, humility, and kindness—values that continue to shape who she is today. She has always been passionate about self-growth and uplifting those around her, believing that every woman has the power to inspire simply by

HOTTER PARTIES page 19

Eddie Gutierrez dismisses viral death hoax: 'I'm still alive and kicking'

Jessica Ann Evangelista

Veteran actor Eddie Gutierrez dismissed viral rumors that he has died, saying he is "alive and kicking" as he urged the public not to believe the fake news circulating online.

In a video message posted on his daughter Rufa's Facebook page on Monday, Feb. 2, Gutierrez addressed the hoax directly, stressing that reports about his supposed death are false.

"Meron kasing kumakalat na fake news. Alam niyo, usong-uso ang fake news ngayon. Na ako'y sumakabilang-buhay na. Hindi po totoo 'yan. Buhay na buhay po ako," he said.

(There is fake news spreading. You know, fake news is very common nowadays—that I have passed

away. That is not true. I am very much alive.)

Gutierrez reiterated that he remains in good health and said that he is about to celebrate his 84th birthday this month.

"I'm still alive and kicking. Hindi pa ako namamatay (I have not died yet). Binigyan pa ako ng Panginoon ng ilang taon (The Lord has given me more years). I'll be turning 84 on February 6," he said.

The screen legend also expressed gratitude to his wife, talent manager Annabelle Rama, and their children for their constant support.

"Ako'y nagpapasalamat na nandito ang aking asawa, si Annabelle Rama, na kung 'di dahil sa

kaniya, baka maging totoo 'yan, 'yung chismis na 'yan (I am thankful that my wife, Annabelle Rama, is here. If not for her, that rumor might have become true)," he expressed as the camera pans to his wife sitting beside him.

The patriarch went on to mention his children, Ruffa, Richard, Raymond, Elvis, Rocky, Paul, Monching, and Tonton, whom he said continue to bring joy to his life, along with his grandchildren.

Gutierrez urged the public, particularly his fellow senior citizens and longtime fans, not to worry or believe the false reports.

"Sa lahat ng mga nagdasal, sa lahat ng mga



tagahanga ko... Huwag po kayong mag-worry. Buhay na buhay po ako. At maraming salamat sa mga dasal niyo," he said.

Gutierrez recently flew to Singapore a few times since December last year for a series of medical procedures. The family hasn't disclosed the patriarch's condition as of writing.

Despite the health struggles, Eddie enjoyed the holidays with his family as he attended a block screening of the 2025 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) entry "Shake, Rattle & Roll Evil Origins," which stars his son, Richard.

Seafood City Director Reveals How a Street Food Launch Turned Into a Viral Filipino Party from vlogging

SEAFOOD from page 6

the two?

Patricia: "Our observation was very interesting because you would think that there would be differences, but we saw more similarities.

Sometimes when we look at the content, it's hard to tell which country it's from because the reaction is the same.

We wanted to be able to give the same experience and feeling towards as many of our custom-

ers as we possibly could."

Q: What are you hearing from people about how these nights make them feel?

Patricia: "One thing that really surprised me is how many people described it as healing.

We're living through a lot of uncertainty everywhere, and yet Filipinos still find something to celebrate—that keeps coming up as a theme.

People talk about the pride of coming from these roots and having that heritage be so

visible and loud.

In the U.S., some even said it felt like the loudest Filipino American History Month celebration they'd experienced in years.

It's helping people connect back to what it is to be Filipino: "Wow, this is Filipino. This is us."

Q: What do you think the Filipino community is craving—and what's next for Late Night Madness?

Patricia: "People can expect

more surprises.

We realized people are craving what we call a 'third space'—not home, not work, but a safe place where they can build connections and feel completely at home.

Late Night Madness has become that third space where Filipinos can be themselves, meet new people, and discover new food and experiences together.

There's also a big desire to be seen; each location wants to make its event memorable,

whether it's Scarborough, or Mississauga or Edmonton.

As for what's next, people can definitely expect more pop-up events.

We want to keep it as magical and spontaneous, but we want to make every event have a different spin to it.

The best way to find out when it's happening is to follow our Facebook and Instagram and download the SFC Plus app, where people can get their free tickets and we can safely manage the crowd."

AiAi delas Alas says Kris Aquino will always be a friend

by Jan Milo Severo



Comedian AiAi delas Alas said that Kris Aquino will always be her friend despite past issues.

"She'll always be my friendship," AiAi told

reporters at last week's press conference for her new movie "Batang Paco."

"Si Kris ay naging part ng buhay ko. She's my friendship. She'll [always] be my friendship kahit anong mangyari," she added.

According to the comedian, even if there were past troubles between them, their friendship would not be affected.

"Wala na 'yun. Let's all move on. Past na 'yun.' Sana okay siya," she said.

"Actually, nag-reach out ako sa kanya. Hindi ko alam kung nag-bago na siya ng phone number," she added.

"Batang Paco" is a family comedy that stars Emjoy Marquez.

Derek Ramsay admits hurt in split with Ellen Adarna

Actor Derek Ramsay remained silent but admitted that he was hurt by his separation from wife Ellen Adarna.

Derek was asked for his reaction to the public viewing him as the villain in the controversy.

"No comment ako diyan. Out of respect for everyone that is involved in that situation. Ang sagot ko sa iyo ay no comment na ako diyan. I said I'm at peace," he said.

When asked if he was hurt, Derek said: "Of course. I think everyone knows that and everyone sees that. That's why nagpapasalamat talaga ako na nakapunta kami ng UK kasama ang anak ko, kasama ang mommy at daddy ko, 'yung kapatid ko at mga anak niya."

"It was a very good time to reflect, take a breather, and start the new year right. Talagang nasaktan ako. Sobra," he added.

Derek said that his faith in God gives him strength.

"Syempre my support system has always been there. But really going back to your faith. I've always been a man of faith. May takot ako sa Diyos

but I think lahat naman tayo guilty na masarap ang buhay mo, everything is great, masaya ka minsan nakakalimutan mo magpasalamat. Pinalaki ako ng mommy ko na to have faith," he said.

"Siguro during the times na I was so focused with my family and everything is going well in my life nakalimutan ko Siya. Nakalimutan ko magpasalamat. So with my good friends and family ko they help me get back to my faith. Para siyang reminder, kumatok sa pinto si Lord 'uy nandito ako.' I just turn my focus to Him kahit anong ingay kahit anong problema ibinigay ko na lahat sa Kanya. 'Yun talaga ang nakatulong sa akin," added the actor, who admitted that he also made wrong decisions, including allowing his emotions to take over.

"Siguro kasi ngayon parang na-reset ko na 'yung sarili ko. Like I said ibinigay ko na sa Lord. Ayaw ko na balikan 'yung oras na pinagdaanan ko during that time. Talagang lubog ako noon. Parang wala akong gana sa buhay noong time na 'yon."

At the center of the story is Paco—a timid tattoo artist who never imagined himself as brave, until circumstances leave him no choice.

When his child is taken, Paco is pushed into a dangerous world far bigger than him. What follows isn't just a thrilling ride, but a deeply Filipino story

about fear, faith, and the lengths a parent will go for a child.

Set against the backdrop of Metro Manila—raw, colorful, chaotic—"Batang Paco" balances laugh-out-loud scenes with exciting thrills and quiet emotional beats.



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What The Paper reveals about local news and journalism today

NEWSPAPER from page 8

ing The Conversation Canada — have begun to benefit from these payments. The money is disbursed by the Canadian Journalism Collective, a federally incorporated nonprofit.

However, the effects are uneven: larger corporate chains such as Postmedia and Torstar are getting most of the support, while smaller independent and local publishers receive far less. This patchwork assistance offers temporary relief but does little to fix the deeper imbalance in how digital advertising profits are distributed.

Expectation of free news

Audiences have now grown accustomed to receiving news instantly and for free, often through social media feeds or aggregators rather than directly from a newspaper. Younger readers in particular encounter news on platforms like TikTok, Instagram or YouTube, where entertainment



and opinion often overwhelm verified reporting.

In this environment of declining ad dollars and fragmented attention, local outlets are trying harder than ever to convince audiences their work is worth supporting. This is the tension The Paper plays for laughs.

Throughout the series, the characters contend with all manner of challenges as they strive to keep their newspaper relevant and viable. They

get scooped on major stories by a teenage blogger. They struggle to decide whether to chase sensationalism that attracts eyeballs or invest in reporting that actually matters. They try to revive accountability coverage by investigating local businesses but must tread carefully not to alienate the few remaining advertisers willing to support them.

Reporters as underdogs?

On screen, journalists have often been depicted as crusaders for truth — from All the President's Men to Spotlight to The Newsroom. Even shows and films that explore the darker side of the industry, like The Wire, Bombshell or Tokyo Vice, frame journalism as a profession of serious consequence and high-stakes drama.

The Paper suggests something different: reporters not as larger-than-life figures, but as struggling underdogs do-

ing their best and often getting it wrong. On one hand, this risks trivializing the work of local journalists at a time when the survival of their industry is already in doubt.

For real reporters, it's no laughing matter. A 2022 Canadian study found many are experiencing high rates of burnout, anxiety and online harassment. In 2021, in the U.S., newsroom employment had fallen by more than a quarter since 2008, with those left behind facing heavier workloads as colleagues were laid off.

The loss of reporters has created gaps in coverage of councils, courts and communities that once formed the backbone of civic accountability.

Heartfelt missive

On the other hand, when it's at its best, The Paper is a heartfelt missive about why local journalism has always mattered: that despite its sometimes dysfunctional

newsroom, the reporters are people who truly understand and care about the community they cover because they live there too.

This kind of connection has long been a foundation for building public trust and encouraging dialogue. But it has been severely eroded as outlets close and news deserts spread.

Research shows that as local news declines, so does voter turnout, civic engagement and political accountability.

The Paper doesn't pretend to solve the seemingly insurmountable problems facing local news, but it does capture the messy reality of trying to do the job. In a moment when journalists are often idealized or demonized, showing them as flawed but dedicated may not be comforting — but it may be closer to the truth.

by Adrian Ma, Assistant Professor, Journalism, Toronto Metropolitan University

Older Nights Hotter Parties

HOTTER PARTIES from page 21

being authentic and courageous. Her journey has taught her that challenges are not setbacks, but opportunities to become stronger, wiser, and more empathetic.

Imelda takes pride in representing Filipino culture and traditions, especially through events that bring the community together like Sinulog. For her, Sinulog is more than

a celebration—it is a symbol of unity, faith, joy, and resilience. Participating in Sinulog Queen 2026 is a meaningful opportunity for her to honor her roots while serving as a positive role model to young women who dream of embracing their identity with confidence.

Beyond the stage, Imelda is known for her warm personality, strong work ethic, and



Mel Galeon poses with Air Danz Squad at Sinulog sa Toronto 2026.

genuine care for others. She values teamwork, respect, and

open-hearted connection, and she believes that true leadership comes from listening, understanding, and leading

with integrity. Whether in her personal life or within the community, she strives to leave a positive impact wherever she goes.

As a Sinulog Ambassador 2026, Imelda Concepcion hopes to use her platform to promote cultural appreciation, self-love, and community involvement. She dreams of inspiring others to be proud of who they are, to embrace their stories, and to shine with confidence—no matter where life takes them.

Love, Action, and More: GMA Pinoy TV Unveils Next Wave of Entertainment in February!

GMA Pinoy TV, the home of Global Pinoy, delivers an exciting and diverse program lineup that promises to entertain audiences in February. Viewers can look forward to a new season of a favorite program, a new action drama series, a collection of classic and contemporary love stories from Philippine cinema, and must-watch Kapuso shows.

"Never Say Die," the new series from GMA, kicks off the pulse-pounding action in February. Star of the Next Gen Jillian Ward and Pambansang Ginoo David Licauco come together for their first on-screen pairing in a world where truth is dangerous and justice comes at a price. Joining the action-packed drama is an elite ensemble featuring Richard Yap, Kim Ji Soo, Angelu de Leon, and Raymart Santiago. Also joining them are Winwyn Marquez, Anilyn Barro, Raheel Bhyria, seasoned artists Wendell Ramos, Ayen Munji-Laurel, and Gina Alajar. Find out how far the fight for justice will go beginning on February 2.

Dance fanatics have a new season of "Stars on the Floor" to look forward to, and a fresh lineup of COLLABanan! Asia's Multimedia Star and Box Office King Alden Richards returns as host, together with the show's dance authorities led by Kapuso Primetime Queen Marian Rivera, Dance Trend Master Coach Jay, and the latest addition, Kapuso Total Heartthrob Rayver Cruz! Get ready to groove on February 15.

Global Pinoy can also look forward to romantic movies as GMA Pinoy TV celebrates the month of love.

On "FPJ sa GMA," Fernando Poe, Jr. plays the romantic lead in "Batya't Palu-Palo" and "Mahal, Ginagabi Ka Na Naman."

"Batya't Palu-Palo," with Vilma Santos, is about the unlikely romance that blooms between a rich heiress who pretends

to be a washerwoman and a humble plumber. Is true love possible between two souls from vastly different worlds? Discover on February 1.

In "Mahal, Ginagabi Ka Na Naman," co-starring Susan Roces, laughter and action await audiences as a loving and obedient husband juggles raising a family while battling neighborhood bad guys. Get ready for fun and romance on February 8.

Meanwhile, GMA Pinoy Blockbuster unveils "Love Month," featuring tender yet powerful love stories "Ikaw Lang Ang Mahal" and "More Than Blue."

"Ikaw Lang Ang Mahal," with ZanJoe Marudo and Kylie Versoza, is a steamy romance set in picturesque Sagada. A filmmaker and a prize-winning novelist meet in the mountains and begin a sizzling affair. Find out if their passion for art and each

other will lead to more on February 15.

"More Than Blue," starring JC Santos and Yassi Pressman, is the Philippine remake of a popular Korean romantic drama. The film explores the lives of childhood best friends who grow up together. They begin to fall for each other, but a terrible secret prevents them from confessing their true feelings. Will their love survive? Get ready for an emotional journey on February 22.

Coming in February as well are GMA Pinoy TV's original programs and digital content, giving Global Pinoy more entertainment across various platforms.

Kapuso 101 gives viewers exclusive access to interviews, behind-the-scene insights, plus personal stories shared by Kapuso celebrities,

beginning with the cast of "House of Lies," led by Beauty Gonzalez, Kris Bernal, Mike Tan, Martin del Rosario, and Sparkle artists Kayla Davies, Angel Cadao, Geo Mhanna, and Kokoy de Santos.

More inspiring stories of Filipinos abroad are also coming soon with new episodes of "Global Pinoy of the Week," award-winning originals, "GMA Pinoy TV Podcast" and "Hanap ng Puso: A Global Pinoy Story."

Aside from its new offerings, Global Pinoy can keep enjoying beloved Kapuso programs on GMA Pinoy TV: "Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho," "Fast Talk With Boy Abunda," "Encantadia Chronicles: Sang'gre," "Tadhana," "Unang Hirit," "Bubble Gang," and many more.

Keep watching GMA Pinoy TV for the latest programs and movies showcasing favorite Kapuso stars!



How Charo Santos was convinced to do 'GL' film

Nathalie Tomada

Charo Santos-Concio continues to say yes to projects that take her somewhere new.

Her latest is "Until She Remembers," a girls' love (GL) film directed by Cannes-winning filmmaker Brillante Mendoza. In the movie, she stars opposite fellow screen veteran Boots Anson Roa-Rodrigo. The story follows two women who fell in love at a time when same-sex relationships were frowned upon — if not outright taboo — and who reconnect later in life.

For Charo, the project checked several boxes, foremost of which was acting alongside her personal idol, Boots.

Indeed, Charo has made it a point to take on unconventional roles, especially since returning to acting after retirement, including last year's "Only We Know," where she was paired with younger leading man Dingdong Dantes.

Still, his latest one caught many by surprise. "Na-surprise kayo? Ako din, na-surprise!" Charo quipped.

What surprised her even more was where the idea came from.

"You know — not for myself ha — na-surprise ako that Tita Boots even suggested it. She was the one! Sabi niya, 'Charo, let's do a film.' 'Of course, Tita Boots!' sabi ko. That's on my bucket list. I mean, to be able to finally do a film with your idol.

Explaining her reaction, she further said, "She is this pristine image, ganoon. And alam ko, saradong Katoliko siya,



Charo stars with fellow screen veteran Boots Anson Roa-Rodrigo in 'Until She Remembers,' which hits theaters beginning Feb. 25. The film also stars Barbie Forteza (not in photo).

ganyan. Not just discriminating, ha? But (it's) the image. The image, persona.

"But she said, 'No! I'm game!' Sabi ko, 'Have you spoken to your husband about it?' 'Yeah!' 'Are you sure? I mean, nasabi mo ba na ganito? Baka mamaya, may love scene tayo! Naku, alam mo na!'" Charo recalled joking.

But both actresses ultimately said yes.

In the film, they play senior women whose reunion decades later is intertwined with a granddaughter portrayed by Barbie Forteza. As seen in the trailer, Boots' character is battling an illness, while Charo's character cares for her. According to Charo, she found the material moving. "Naiyak ako. Masakit. But at the same time, you feel happy that in their lifetime, they were able to live their truth."

She noted that for people from older generations, acknowledging one's identity

publicly was far from easy.

"Mahirap Yun for people coming from the silent generation and boomer segment na lababas ang katotohanan... that you finally give yourself the opportunity to say, 'This is the person I love.'"

At its core, she believes the film transcends labels.

"Loving is a human experience. It doesn't matter who you are and what you stand for. Lahat tayo tumitibok ang puso natin. At 'pag nagmahal tayo, we don't look at labels," she said.

One of Charo's unforgettable scenes is an intimate caregiving moment in which her character bathes Boots' character, a sequence that obviously required a high level of trust between them.

"She was so relaxed. I was also so relaxed. We were both not anxious about doing the scene," she recalled.

"It was like the most natural thing to do between people who love each other, who care for each other... Na paglilingkuran mo at pagsisilbihan mo, lalo na may sakit siya... So caregiving was not a burden for me.

"So hanggang sa pagpapaligo, natural (it came naturally). Then, there's trust, right? I said, 'Tita Boots, dito kita aanuhan. Ito ang ira-rub ko.' You know, you talk about it because you choreograph the scene together."

That level of comfort stemmed from a

friendship that goes back decades.

Charo first met Boots when she was 17 and the latter was 10 years her senior.

"I've always held her in the highest regard. I've always had that respect. I've always looked up to her. She's my idol," the actress said of her co-star.

"She's truly a kind person and a very gentle person. You don't have to see each other every day, but every time you see her, she seems to know what's happening in your life. She has genuine interest in other people."

Charo recounted how their longstanding friendship started in her tribute message.

"I'm originally from Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro and when my family moved to Metro Manila, I was requested to join the pageant, Miss Green Race. This was the project of the former First Lady Imelda Marcos, it was called the Green Revolution," she said.

"On the night of the finals, all the finalists were asked to stand in line, to meet the judges. Tita Boots was there, she was with the late Fernando Poe Jr. And when I saw her, I felt like I saw an apparition of Mama Mary, wala pong biro, talagang nakangan-ga ako, because her aura was so radiant. She was so pretty and so elegant. That image is still here (in my mind). I'm very proud to say she was the one who crowned me Miss Green Race."

Cheska holds a Concert

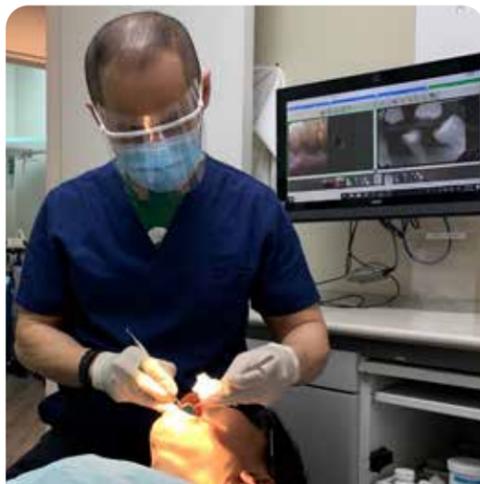
CHESKA from page 15

co-presented this event with Kuya Dong—thank you for your generous support. Words truly fall short in expressing our gratitude. May God bless you abundantly and guide you always.

Thank you to Kuya Willy Santiago GMA Pinoy TV, Jose Joey Baking Aidan Lefebvre who supported both Cheska's concert and SINULOG SA TORONTO 2026!

Once again, thank you to each and every one of you who became part of this journey. I'm truly sorry if I missed mentioning someone, but please know that your contributions were deeply valued.

This concert was not just a performance—it was a collective effort filled with love, sacrifice, and unity. May God bless you all, always!



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Colder Nights Hotter Parties

HOTTER PARTIES from page 16

With grace in her presence and purpose in her heart, Imelda stands ready to represent not only beauty, but the strength, warmth, and spirit of the Filipina.

From Dong's Dreamers Academy! Another Title or Trophy added to our roster of Champions!

What an unforgettable night! Congratulations to Maria Francheska Lungayan for being crowned the Grand Champion of the first-ever TGT — TALA's Got Talent by Tala Entertainment, held yesterday at The Kampo @12fifty!

From the moment Cheska stepped onto the stage, it was clear that something extraor-



Sisters Cheska and Princess Lungayan at the Tala Appreciation Night. Cheska was crowned the Grand Champion of the first-ever TGT (Tala's Got Talent).

dinary was about to happen. With raw talent, confidence, and a performance that truly moved the crowd, Cheska captured the attention of the judges and the hearts of everyone in the room. This win is a powerful testament to passion, dedication, and the courage to shine under the spotlight.

At Dong's Dreamers Academy, we believe in nurturing talent, building confidence, and creating safe, empower-

ing spaces where dreams can take flight. TGT was created to be a platform where voices are heard, skills are celebrated, and performers are given the chance to rise! And Cheska's historic waain as our first-ever TGT champion perfectly reflects that vision.

To all the talented contestants who bravely took the stage, you are all winners. Your courage and creativity made this event truly special.

HOTTER PARTIES page 21

PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses of Significant Developments



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF NATIONAL ISSUES

In a survey conducted by Pulse Asia from December 12 to 15, 2025, the results showed that “A large majority of Filipinos disapprove of the way the Marcos administration handles select national issues, including controlling inflation and addressing graft and corruption.” The government’s approval ratings in 17 out of 18 issues provided to the respondents were all below 50 percent. In 12 issues, including those identified as among the most urgent national concerns, more respondents said they disapproved of the government’s actions than those who gave their approval.

The 11 issues which had majority disapproval ratings were:

1. Controlling inflation has the highest disapproval rating at 69%, with only 14% saying they approved of the government’s actions to stop the increase in prices of basic goods.
2. Fighting graft and corruption -- 67% disapprove, 17% approve;
3. Fighting the widespread sale and use of illegal drugs-- 67% disapprove, 14% approve;
4. Reducing poverty -- 55% disapprove, 16% approve;
5. Addressing hunger--45% disapprove, 24% approve;
6. Reducing taxes--43% disapprove, 24% approve, fighting criminality--41% disapprove, 31% approve;
7. Increasing the pay of workers--39% disapprove, 37% approve;
8. Promoting peace--36% disapprove, 30% approve;
9. Stopping the destruction of the environment-- 35% disapprove, 28% approve;



10. Equal enforcement of the law --33% disapprove, 30% approve; and

11. Providing support to small businesses--31% disapprove, 27% approve;

The Marcos administration, however, only had higher approval ratings in five issues such as:

1. Protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (57% approve, 18% disapprove);
2. Responding to the needs of areas affected by calamities (46% approve, 30% disapprove),
3. Defending the integrity of Philippine territory (43% approve, 23% disapprove),
4. Preparing to face any kind of terrorism (38% approve, 25% disapprove) and
5. Providing assistance to farmers (38% approve, 35% disapprove).

In creating more jobs, the current government had similar approval and disapproval ratings of 37 percent. “Sa buod, ang survey ng Pulse Asia para sa ikaapat na kwarter ng 2025 na may 1,200 respondents at margin of error na plus/minus 2.8 porsyento, malinaw na nagpakita na mas maraming Pilipino ang hindi sumasang-ayon kaysa sumasang-ayon sa paghawak ni Pangulong Marcos sa mga isyung pambansa, kung saan 48 porsyento ang hindi sumasang-ayon kumpara sa

34 porsyentong approval rating. Tila patuloy itong nagiging alalahanin at hindi na karaniwang problema ng bansa at ating mga kababayan. May gagawin o ginagawa ba sila tungkol dito o wala?”

FILIPINO DIASPORA ASSESSMENT.

The “Komisyon sa Mga Pilipino sa Ibayong Dagat” (Commission on Filipinos Overseas-CFO) has concluded its “first-ever comprehensive institutional assessment, unveiling a 10-year strategic roadmap designed to revolutionise the Philippines’ engagement with its global diaspora”, marking a historic milestone in its 45-year history.

Titled “Evaluation of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Formulation of its 2026-2035 Strategic Roadmap,” the study was presented on January 6, 2026.

It was undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Research and Communication Foundation, Inc. (CRCFI) of the University of Asia and the Pacific. The 2035 Roadmap is structured into three distinct phases: Phase 1 focuses on policy leadership, digital transformation, and organisational restructuring; Phase 2 aims to strengthen investment channels, diaspora communities, and deeper stakeholder engagement; and Phase 3 runs from years

7 to 10, and embeds these advancements into the permanent fabric of Philippine migration governance.

The CRCFI assessment “recommends a major shift in the CFO’s organisational structure to strategically re-align with its mandate of linking overseas Filipinos to the Philippines politically, economically, and culturally. Among the key proposed changes include enhanced digital platforms for better connectivity and a revised mission and vision that reflects modern migration trends.”

The CFO, is an agency under the Office of the President established under Batas Pambansa Blg. 79 and is dedicated to the welfare and empowerment of Filipinos permanently residing abroad. It “works to strengthen the social, economic, and cultural ties of global Filipinos to their home country.” The said Global Filipinos include Filipino permanent migrants, dual citizens, spouses and partners of foreign nationals, individuals under the Exchange Visitor Program, au pair participants bound for Europe, and Filipino descendants overseas.” It is distinct from the Philippine Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), which primarily serves Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) and other temporary migrants.

“Dapat bigyang prayoridad ng CFO nang agarang mga inisyatiba na palalimin ang mga koneksyon na ito, sa pagbibigay-diin na ang roadmap ay dapat magsilbing isang praktikal na gabay para sa lahat ng mga darating na mga programa, proyekto, at aktibidad.

Sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng kapangyarihan sa diaspora na mamuhunan at mas lalo pang makilahok sa Pilipinas, dapat na layunin ng CFO na tiyakin na mananatili ang 10 milyong malakas na komunidad ng mga Pilipino sa ibang bansa bilang isang mahalagang puwersa sa progreso at pag-unlad ng bansa.”



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Older Nights Hotter Parties

HOTTER PARTIES from page 19

To our judges, supporters, families, and the amazing crowd at the Tala Entertainment's Appreciation Night at The Kampo @12fifty, thank you for sharing your energy and love with us. Events like this remind us why Dong's Dreamers Academy continues to stand as a home for artists and champions alike.

Once again, congratulations, Cheska!

This is only the beginning of a bright and exciting journey. We are the home of "The Champions!"

Attending the Tala Entertainment Appreciation Night, this one comes from Jackie Cristini who, like the rest of us had an unforgettable evening of sparkle, exquisite cuisine, and generous giving!

"We had a grand time meeting old friends and making new ones. Gerald Aquintey

and Yana Alvaro, your kindness and generosity have left us with heartfelt gratitude. May your selfless spirit be rewarded with abundance and joy, inspiring others to do the same. Please expect our support in your future humanitarian endeavours. May the Good Lord guide you and protect you always. May your stars continue to shine brightly for everyone to see. Thank you for caring to share your successes with those who are most in need."

Congratulations to Riela Leonor for making history as the First-Ever Sinulog Idol 2026 Junior Division Champion at the recently concluded Sinulog Sa Toronto Bazaar 2026!

Your powerful voice, confidence on stage, and heartfelt performance truly captured the spirit of Sinulog and left a lasting impression on the judges and the audience.



FV Food owner Mel Galeon with singer Ron Angeles at Sinulog sa Toronto 2026

Winning the very first Sinulog Idol title is no small feat—this moment marks the beginning of an exciting journey filled with greater stages, louder applause, and bigger dreams.

Riela, you didn't just compete—you inspired. You represented passion, dedication, and the fearless pursuit of talent, proving that Filipino artistry continues to shine brightly even across oceans. We are incredibly proud of you and can't wait to see where

your music will take you next. Daghang salamat for sharing your gift and for being part of Sinulog history. Viva Señor Santo Niño!

Ron Reyes Angeles

I would like to thank Sinulog Sa Toronto Bazaar 2026 for making this event happen, and I'm truly honored to be among the guest performers.

My 2nd Family: Dong's Dreamers Academy

Congratulations to the ever-radiant Jia Hannah Bassalote for winning the Darling of the Crowd award at Sinulog Queen 2026 Sinulog Sa Toronto Bazaar 2026

Thank you Mitzify Canada and Mitziville Event Memories for generously sponsoring this special portion of Sinulog Sa Toronto 2026!

Your support helped elevate the celebration and made this moment even more meaningful for our performers and community.

A heartfelt thank you as well to Johanna Flowers for

the beautiful bouquet! Your elegant floral touch added extra warmth and charm to the occasion.

From the moment Jia stepped onto the stage, Jia Hannah captured hearts with her natural charm, confidence, and infectious smile. The crowd couldn't help but be drawn to her warmth and genuine connection with the audience—truly a fan favorite in every sense of the word. This recognition is a testament to the love and support she inspired throughout the celebration, proving that true beauty shines brightest when it comes from the heart.

Your Sinulog spirit, grace, and crowd-winning presence made this year's festival even more unforgettable. We celebrate you and the joy you brought to everyone who cheered, clapped, and voted with their hearts. Congratulations once again, Jia Hannah! You absolutely deserved this honor!

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.



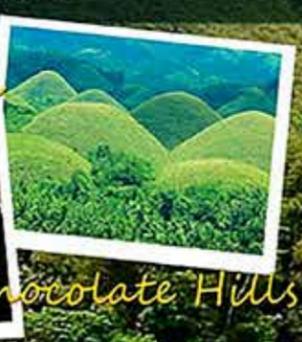
One of the Rare Faunas found in the Philippine archipelago, the Tarsier is the smallest primate in the world. It is a nocturnal primate measuring from four to five inches, with a tail that is longer than body.

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, Cabiao 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.



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Chocolate Hills



Clown Fish



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'They don't deserve him'

Mariel Rodriguez says Robin Padilla won't run in 2028

Television host Mariel Rodriguez revealed that her husband, Sen. Robin Padilla, decided not to seek an elective post in the 2028 elections, saying the public "doesn't deserve" him.

In her interview with Julius Babao, Mariel said that their lifestyle did not change when Robin became a senator.

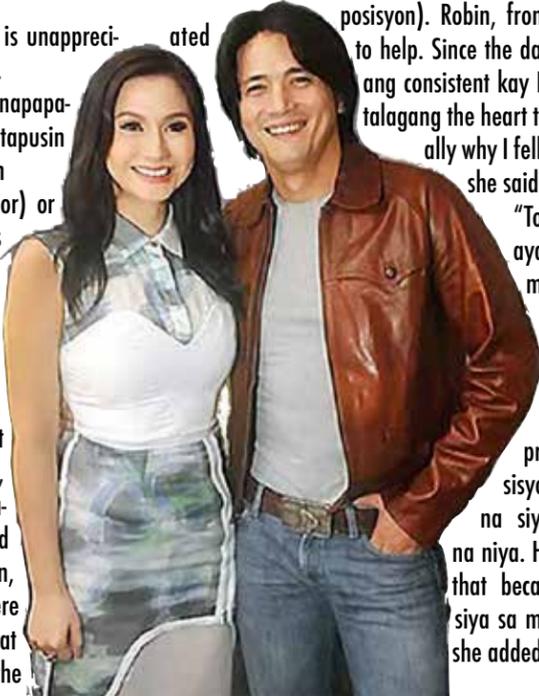
"Wala kaming bagong kotse simula nu'ng si Robin ay nanalo, wala kaming bagong bahay, wala kaming bagong kung anuman na katas ng pagiging senador ni Robin, so 'yun ang aking taas noong masasabi," she said.

"I still believe that Robin is not a politician. I feel that the title for Robin is a public servant. Para sa akin 'yun ah, siyempre sasabihin (ng iba), siyempre asawa ka, di 'yan ang (sasabihin mo), 'di sige, basta ako ganu'n ang paniniwala ko," she added.

Mariel said that there are moments when

her husband is unappreciated by the public.

"Minsan napapaisip ako na tapusin na lang (term bilang senador) or sometimes kapag may nasabi na out of context na parang I feel na they don't deserve him, may mga ganu'n ako. And then again, there were those days that when I see the



indigenous people, when I see the Muslims, how they are so grateful to him, so parang paano sila umaasa [sa kaniya]," she said.

She also said that Robin doesn't want the idea of him running for vice president.

"Robin has no ambition (mas mataas na posisyon). Robin, from day one, wants to help. Since the day I met him, 'yun ang consistent kay Robin, sincere and talagang the heart to help; that's actually why I fell in love with him," she said.

"To tell you the truth, ayaw niya 'yung mga people na 'yun; nate-turn off siya (sa mga nagsasabing tumakbo siyang vice president). Nagdesisyon na siya, hindi na siya tatakbo. Ayaw na niya. He's always saying that because nababagalan siya sa mga bagay-bagay," she added.

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Canada-Phl FTA talks Starts

FREE TRADE from page 1

began in late 2024.

At the time, Canadian Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development Mary Ng said sectors expected to benefit from the agreement include agriculture, infrastructure and energy.

She added that the Philip-

pine side has expressed interest in cooperation in energy, tourism, digital and artificial intelligence, food and agriculture, as well as critical minerals and green mining.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines president Christopher Ilagan said conditions were "ripe" for both countries to start and conclude negotiations in

2026, citing shifts in the global trade landscape.

"We remain optimistic that the Canada-Philippines FTA negotiations will remain a top priority for both countries this year and hope that it will be concluded at the soonest," Ilagan told the Inquirer. "The current global situation demands a more rapid diversification of trade and invest-

ment relations."

Last month, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said at the World Economic Forum in Davos that Canada was negotiating FTAs with the Philippines, India, Thailand, Mercosur and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Consultations conducted by the Canadian government from late 2024 to early 2025

showed that agriculture is expected to be a major focus of the proposed FTA.

About 45 percent of respondents supporting the agreement came from the agriculture and agri-food sector, including export-oriented firms in sugar, beef, grains, and pulses.

Alden Richards reveals reasons that make him smile nowadays

ALDEN from page 3

brated his 15th year in showbiz, in a group chat. "(I don't have that) feeling of (being) stuck up, na parang nagawa mo na lahat, parang what's next (that I seem to have done everything, thinking of what's next to me). There is always a next. There is always something new to try."

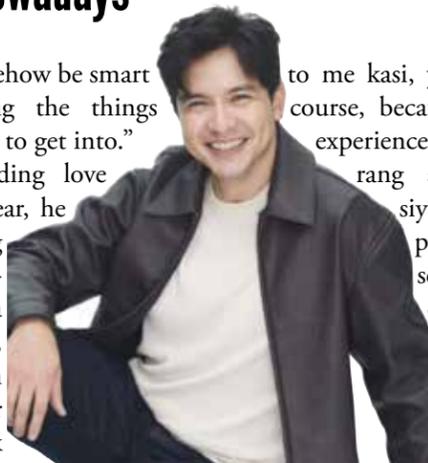
That's why he has dabbled in producing and "being involved

in different projects within and outside the Philippines, and also the business aspects of the things I'm exploring right now. I think never-ending ang opportunities," shared he.

"You just have to find those things by yourself and find the best ones because not all opportunities are the same," added Alden. "Not all opportunities will give you growth, maybe learn-

ings, but somehow be smart with choosing the things that you want to get into."

As for finding love in the new year, he said, "Kung dadating, dadating siya (if it comes, it will). I'm waiting for love to talk



to me kasi, you know, of course, because based on experiences as well, parang ayoko muna siyang ilagay sa priority list (it seems that I don't want to include it on my list) right now 'coz there's

so many things happening (in my career), and at the same time, gusto ko munang ma-solidify lahat yun, at least ma-sustain ko muna lahat ng yun before diving into things like that, which is a different commitment naman."

Aside from his creative pursuits, Alden is also a businessman, who will soon open a heritage branch of a fast-food restaurant.

Liza Soberano feels vindicated as fans apologize over love team remarks

Liza Soberano felt vindicated after critics apologized for targeting her over her comments on the love team culture in the Philippines.

On her X account, Liza expressed confusion over the apologies.

"Why are people saying sorry to me? I'm so confused," she wrote.

X user Tada commented, "They cancelled you after your love team remarks only to be proven that you're right."

"Well, thank you, I guess, hehe," Liza re-



sponded. "I never really got to expound on why I personally think it's 'dangerous' to be in a love team, so it makes sense people get offended. They didn't fully understand where I was coming from," she added.

The issue stemmed from Bianca de Vera and Will Ashley, love team partners rumored to be dating other people.

In 2023, Liza said she had limited opportunities because she was con-

finied to a love team as one half of LizQuen with ex-boyfriend Enrique Gil.

"In the Philippines, the only way to become a big star really, if you're not a singer, if you're an actor, is to be in a love team," she said at the time.

"In love teams, you're expected to be with just that one person throughout your career and in your personal life. People don't want to see you aside from any other male actor or any other male in general," she added.

Candid CAMERA



Birthday celebrant Marky Hugh prepares to blow the candle in his cake.



Jun Alapan with Tala Entertainment owners Gerald Aquintey & Yana Alvaro

Darles Nota & emcee Dong Sabanal

Onofre Quijano, Joey Baking

Mika Sy, Shaine Jaramillo

Eva Agpaa, Gemma Pascual

Cheska Lungayan

Ryan Orlanda, Vicel Yarra, Cesar Marquez

Congeniality awardee Jackie Cristini

Community leader & philanthropist Agnes Misranda

Tala Entertainment, the biggest Filipino concert producer awarded selected Filipinos for their effort in different fields. Gerald Aquintey and Yana Alvaro held a by-invitation party with delicious food by FV, dessert by Jackie, music, and drinks (pop). There were also lots of prizes for everyone. Only in its third year, Tala has distinguished itself with delivering superb entertainment.

Thank you very much Gerald and Yana for making me part of this celebration. Congratulations and more power to you both.

'We weren't hiding': Richard Gutierrez, Barbie Imperial finally confirm relationship Jan Milo Severo

Richard Gutierrez and Barbie Imperial finally confirmed that they are in a relationship. The couple, who are long-rumored to be dating, confirmed their relationship to ABS-CBN reporter MJ Felipe. They are set to co-star in ABS-CBN's action drama "Blood vs. Duty," with Gerald Anderson and Bela Pa-

dilla. "Matagal na naming iniisip na what if magka-trabaho [kami], eto na 'yun finally. Thanks to ABS-CBN, we were given the opportunity to work together," Richard said. "It's refreshing makikita rin kami ng audience together, on-screen. We really try to live pri-

vately, away from social media. But now we're gonna be working together," he added. Barbie said that working with Richard means more time together. "Hindi na ko bibisita sa

set ng 'Incognito,'" she jokingly said. The couple then opened up about their relationship. "Can I just say that we weren't

hiding. We just chose to have a private relationship talaga, 'coz we know na ayaw namin ng, even I... What people don't know they can't ruin," Barbie said. "I agree from the beginning, ganun talaga. We want to keep things private. Mas relaxed 'yung ganun, mas gusto namin 'yung ganun," Richard added. "Blood vs. Duty" will premiere this 2026.





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Alden Richards has found his purpose beyond fame

MORE often than not, top-tier celebrities often find themselves caught up in the hustle-and-bustle of their everyday life, and they get used to people running their life for them. They work very hard for their families, and fulfill every detail in the multi-million contracts they signed with their networks, brand partners and production houses. This makes it very easy for most of them to lose sight of what truly matters.

Multimedia artist Alden Richards has experienced more than what ordinary actors have gone through. His career continues to skyrocket as he takes on one project after another. People have ensconced him to the pedestal and he certainly knows the taste of real success. But not so long ago, he also has admitted to have hit rock bottom, feeling an indescribable sense of loneliness and being lost despite being on top. And during those times, Alden made glaring realizations about himself, about people, and about life that made him slowly bounce back to that place where he feels safest and most at peace.

"I have learned that it is important to be a man with purpose. When we have a clear sense of our life purpose, we are better able to focus our energies and efforts on things and people that truly matter. We are able to make more meaningful contributions to the world around us," he told us when we

spoke to him recently, a week after he celebrated his 34th birthday.

He added, "When I realized how important it is to have a clear purpose of who you are and who you'd want to be, my life started to make sense. It was no longer what I could have but how I can make a difference in the life of others. One of the biggest benefits of having a clear purpose is that it helps us to set goals that are in alignment with our values and our priorities. Another benefit is that it helps us to find meaning, sense, direction and purpose in our work."

The new year is off to a good start for Alden. He returns to anchor the second season of Stars on the Floor this February, GMA Network's original dance contest that made waves last year on television.

"You know when I started my career, I had to go through all kinds of training and workshops—singing, dancing, hosting, acting, everything. This show re-sparked my interest in



celebrity leaders. "It will be something exciting to watch out for," he said, adding that Marian Rivera, dance coach Jay Joseph Roncesvalles and Rayver Cruz will take on the judging duties for the new season.

He continues to be well-loved not because he is popular. When the studio lights are dimmed and you get the rare chance to sit beside Alden and exchange deep thoughts and no-holds barred stories about anything, just like I did a few times as his colorful career progresses, you realize that here is a

good man who has found his purpose beyond fame, someone who has, in many instances, discovered and rediscovered who he is—his strengths, his yearnings, his frailties, someone who has cultivated a positive attitude in order to maintain control of his life, and in doing so effortlessly stands out in an industry filled with many shallow beings.

Alden Richards is a man with a deep sense of kindness and integrity, a man with a very clear purpose, and a man that is truly for others. Indeed, he is in a league of his own.

the art of dancing, and seeing all the talented dancers during the first season, and how hard they train and how much discipline they have in order to perform, all that made me dig deeper into dance as an art form. Each dance has a narrative and tells a story, and each movement of a dancer opens up something that he'd like to share not only with his partner but also to everyone watching him perform. That's the beauty, grace and complexity all combined when we watch a dance performance."

Alden hinted that the new season will feature dance stars with P-pop

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Original 'Bagets' stars recall happy times upon seeing stage version

"Bagets the Musical" stirred some happy memories in the original 1984 film production is based on.

Raymond Laucheng-Herbert Bautista, Eula Valdez, Yayo Aguila and Cheska Inigo all attended the show's gala night last January 29 at the Newport Performing Arts Theater.

Speaking to members of the media, including Philstar.com, Raymond said the production's music and characters allowed nostalgia to flow.

"It's so much to fun to watch! I think it might be even funnier than the movie," Raymond smiled. The actor originated the role of Arnel, now played onstage by KD Estrada and Ethan David.

He admitted feeling a little embarrassed that people were seeing the antics his generation got up to, quipping how fortunate it was that social media didn't exist yet then.

"Kung may Facebook, Instagram, patay kami 'nun.



Watching it now, it feels like we're doing it all over again," Raymond also said, adding he still related to the young boys and not the parents.

Eula, who originated Janice now played by Sam

Marasigan, confessed that flashbacks had her shedding tears.

She did give her stamp of approval for the new iteration, where her character was given an activist's background, as it aided in the contrast with her romantic partner Arnel.

Yayo expressed happiness at being able to see the production with some of her co-stars, even though they were incomplete, and seeing all their reactions.

"Si Herbert ang daming tanong! Kalabit ng kalabit," she exclaimed. Yayo previously portrayed Rose (now played by Yani Lopez) while Herbert played Gilbert, now alternated between Noel Comia Jr. and Tomas Rodriguez.

If there was one thing the musical reminded Yayo of way back when, it was the friendship the cast formed that lasted through the decades, adding that Herbert also mentioned it was nostalgic.



Cheska appeared

in the "Bagets" sequel that came out months after the first, and she shared that seeing the original film in Greenhills Theater prompted her to tell her cousins she'd be in the next one.

"I was so overwhelmed by how it spoke not just to me but the generation," she continued. "And I'm so happy that the kids today get to see what it was like for us before cellphones, Instagram, Facebook, when we could get away with so much and nobody knew."

Other members of the original film were Aga Muhlach as Adie, William Martinez as Tonton, J.C. Bonnin as Top-ee, Jobell Salvador as Melissa, and Chanda Romero as Christine.

The musical adaptation sees Mico Chua and Aga's son, Andrea, alternating Adie, Milo Cruz and Migo Valid alternating Tonton, Jeff Moses and Sam Shoaf alternating as Topee, Brigitta Marilla as Melissa and Ava Santos as Ivy.

Rochelle Pangilinan says SexBomb Girls ready for 3 more reunion concerts

SexBomb Girls leader Rochelle Pangilinan shared how she and the other members are preparing for their upcoming three-night show next month.

She and the girls will be up for another round of reunion shows from February 6 to 8 at the Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay City.

Rochelle sat down with seasoned broadcast journalist



Karen Davila, where she said that she is glad that the SexBomb girls are all dedicated to their craft.

"Ang maganda sa kanila 'yung sipag, tiyaga at disiplina nandun pa rin, so simula nung September, nag-training na lahat. Umulan, bumagyo, dumarating sila. Kahit masakit ang katawan nila, nagda-dance class ang lahat kahit po ako," she said.

"Nagsta-start kami from scratch and then hanggang sa gumaling ulit, gumaan, nag-diet ulit. Kaya na-deliver 'yung ganung klaseng concert," she added.

When asked about their plans after when their "Get Get Aw" concert series ends, Rochelle answered: "Actually, tulala po talaga kami. Wala pa po talagang masyadong nilalata sa amin sa schedule. Though may nilalata pero hindi pa po ganun kasigurado. May mga ini-inquire sila sa management kasi po hindi na rin kasi kami isang management lang. May kanya-kanya nang managers. 'Yun po, inaayos pa rin siya."

"Yung 'rAwnD 3, 4, 5' na magkakasunod na gabi na tatlo, 'yun muna ang inuuna namin kasi 'yung katawan namin, kaya ba namin 'yun," she added.

The SexBomb Girls had two sold-out reunion concerts last December.

DonBelle in 2026: Donny Pangilinan, Belle Mariano reunite for upcoming film

Jan Milo Severo

Onscreen pair Donny Pangilinan and Belle Mariano are set to reunite for an upcoming Star Cinema movie.

In its Instagram account, Star Cinema teased the big screen reunion of the DonBelle love team.

"DonBelle is making us fall in love ALL OVER AGAIN!" Star Cinema announced.

"This 2026, DonBelle Mariano finally reunite for the big screen — ABANGIT added.

Further details of the upcoming film are yet to be revealed.

Donny and Belle's onscreen partnership began in the series adaptation of "He's Into Her."

The love team since worked together on several films and TV projects, such as "Can't Buy Me Love," "Love is Color Blind," and "An Inconvenient Love."



What Boots Anson Roa-Rodrigo is most grateful for at 81

Boots Anson Roa-Rodrigo turns 81 years old, surrounded by friends in and out of the showbiz industry. The celebration coincides with the launch of her memoir Grateful to benefit



MOWELFUND, a non-profit organization that provides for the welfare of marginalized and undeserved workers in the film industry.

At 81, Boots Anson-Roa-Rodrigo is still dancing — and clearly still having the time of her life.

Friends and guests from inside and outside showbiz saw this for themselves when she celebrated her birthday at Club Filipino on Friday.

To the music of Dancing Queen, she had everyone singing and swaying as she entered the ballroom, where she was surprised with white roses from attendees, including fellow actors Charo Santos-Concio, Nova Villa, Barbie Forteza and Leo Martinez, among many others. Later, she owned the dance floor, with children and grandchildren as backup dancers, to the "Dirty Dancing" theme song, (I've Had) The Time of My Life.

It was both a joyful gathering and a reminder of how it all began for the veteran star and industry leader. She was 19 and graduating from the University of the Philippines, where she studied English, Speech and Drama, when Boots (whose real name is Maria Elisa Cristobal Anson) was offered a co-hosting stint on Channel 5's top evening dance show, "Dance-O-Rama."

Although she was the daughter of actor Oscar Moreno, she initially declined the opportunity, determined to graduate with honors at the time. It was her mother, Belen de Leon Cristobal, who eventually convinced her

to give it a try. The rest, as they say, is history.

More than six decades later, Boots has much to be thankful for — not just in her showbiz career, but also in her personal life. Gratitude, in fact, is at the heart of her newly-launched memoir, Grateful, unveiled during her birthday celebration.

In the book, she looked back on the highs and lows, answered prayers and even the simplest blessings in her life.

Sharing excerpts from Grateful that readers can also learn from, she wrote how thankful she was "that I woke up this morning. Many didn't make it through the night. My mission on earth is still unfinished."

She is especially grateful for her family — children Leah, Joey, Chiqui and Ben — for helping "keep my late husband Pete's memory alive."

She lovingly penned all the things she's grateful for



The veteran actress is flanked by 'Until She Remembers' co-stars Barbie Forteza (right) and Charo Santos-Concio, who is also Boots' long-time close friend.

embraced me as their own" and their 11 — going on 12 — years of marital bliss. They married on June 14, 2014.

"He has made my life whole, a heaven here on Earth. And he has proved that God can be a God of second chances," said Boots, whose bonding moments with her husband include attending the 6:30 a.m. daily Mass at the Carmelite Convent and ending each day with the Rosary.

Boots also expressed her deep gratitude to the film and entertainment industry for the career longevity she continues to enjoy.

The screen veteran, whose upcoming film is Brillante Mendoza's "Until She Remembers," wrote about her life-long relationship with showbiz: "I was born into it with my father, Oscar Moreno, as an actor. I was adopted by it from age 18 to 80. Some of the most authentic people are friends I have grown old with in the industry."

Boots revealed that it was her late uncle and her father's first cousin, Vic Valenciano (also known as Gary V's dad), who was responsible "for sowing into my heart and mind the seeds for this book."

Grateful is published by Atty. King, co-authored and edited by Jennie Ilustre, co-edited by Nestor Cuartero, proofread by Isabella Cuartero, with book cover design by Ellen Ramos.

Proceeds of Grateful will go to MOWELFUND, or the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation, the long-standing non-profit dedicated to the welfare of marginalized, underserved and underpaid film industry workers in the Philippines.

Boots has been serving MOWELFUND (currently as its chairman) for more than 40 years. She wrote of the organization that's turning 52 this year: "They have become my raison d'être, my reason for being."



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Martin del Rosario takes a breather from villain roles

"Longevity" is what Sparkle GMA Artist Center actor Martin del Rosario aspires for in his entertainment career, as he shared in a brief chat with The STAR. He has shown his acting mettle on TV and stage as well as in film.

"For me, it's what I'm aiming for," said he, adding that he is bent on following in the footsteps of seasoned actors Nonie Buencamino and Joel Torre.

"So, I'm a character actor," described himself. "Kahit anong ibigay sa akin (whatever role that is given to me, I'm up for it). I can even do (roles in) theater and even play off-beat characters. For as long as the role is maganda (well-written and meaty), challenging and masarap (fun and enjoyable) to do, gagawin ko talaga (I'll take on it)."

Perhaps he can dabble in other areas of show business, but acting is his strong suit.

"Love ko kasi, love ko yung ginagawa ko (I love it and what I'm doing)," said Martin. "Parang na-imagine ko ang sarili ko kahit matanda ako na ginagawa ko pa rin siya (I can imagine myself still acting even if I'm old)."

As an actor, he continues to display his reliability and versatility by portraying new roles and being part of different projects. Last year, Martin did the primetime adventure serye "Lolong: Pangil ng Maynila" and three movies, "Beyond the Call

of Duty," "Haplos sa Hangin" and "Flower Girl." His performance in "Haplos sa Hangin" won him the Best Actor award at the CineSilip Film Festival. He also ventured into stage acting through the play "Anino sa Likod ng Buwan."

2025 was a very creative and productive year for Martin, who said, "Blessed talaga (I'm really blessed) and thank you, Lord."

After wrapping up the last show for "Anino," he was already on the set of "House of Lies." This time, he plays the good son and family member, Edward, in the GMA Afternoon Prime family drama.

"(In) my past projects, (my roles were) mostly dark and kontrabida. (In 'House of Lies,') my character is kind and very genuine," Martin gave bits and pieces of his role. "He's the brother of Mike (Tan's character, Paolo). Mine is not the favorite son, and he is the husband of Kris Bernal's Althea. He is surrounded by people who are lying (or making up stories)."

That kind of characterization required Martin to take a different approach, which is internal, as he put it.

"I needed to prepare more internally because Edward is restrained.

Mas marami siyang feelings na hindi nilalabas dahil takot siya sa rejection (he has more suppressed feelings because of fear of rejection). Insecure siyang tao kasi lagi na lang panalo ang kuya ko, eh (he's insecure because his brother always wins). (Paolo) is the favorite, while Edward is not."

The portrayal veers away from his kontrabida roles that also saw him work on the external aspect of the characters.

It's also a first for Martin to take

Martin del Rosario carries on to display his reliability and versatility by portraying new roles. The Kapuso actor takes on the role of a good son, Edward, in the family drama, 'House of Lies.' Martin aspires for longevity in his showbiz career, following in the footsteps of seasoned actors Nonie Buencamino and Joel Torre.

on a character who is part of a truly complicated and multi-layered story.

"Actually, the strength of the show is its story," said he, referring to how it's being crafted and the way the lies

are being woven."

"Just react. Maging natural ka lang (be natural)," answered Martin when asked about acting. "Wag mong masyadong isipin. Alamin mo lang ang character mo (don't over-think and just know your character). Ilabas mo lang kung ano yung tingin mong natural (just bring out and act out what you think is natural). Acting is reacting."

Although he enjoys his work and commits to it, the actor knows how to take a breather and recharge his batteries. Martin went on a vacation in London and Paris.

In the future, the Broadcast Communication student at the University of the Philippines also considers directing. He will be a welcome addition to the local tinseltown's circle of actors' directors.

"Gusto kong mag-direct (I want to direct)," said he. "Gusto kong gumawa ng kwento. Gusto kong maging storyteller (I want to create and tell a story). Ako yung mag-unfold ng script kung paano siya sa vision ko (I will be the one unfolding what the script presents based on my vision)."

Please watch the good son portrayal of Martin and "House of Lies" weekday afternoons. Pinoy around the world can watch it via GMA Pinoy TV.

Melanie Marquez, Rhian Ramos' mom defend daughters against allegations

Jan Milo Severo

The mothers of actress Rhian Ramos and beauty queen Michelle Dee defended their daughters after driver Bonifacio Baro filed illegal detention and torture cases against them.

Rhian's mother, Clara Ramos, questioned Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) for helping Bonifacio.

"I don't understand VACC's support for a lying thief. Nagpa-interview pa left and right, dishing out unverified information," she wrote on Instagram.

"It has helped fuel this social media frenzy, leaving the ones stolen from and betrayed to be victimized even more by depraved imaginations with stories morphing like cancer.

"Watching the internet tear my daughter apart for things she didn't do. She doesn't deserve this. Sure, through the years we know bashers will bash, but this? This is brutal, and whoever's running this show is sick!" she added.

Melanie Marquez, Miss International 1979, seeks justice for her daughter.

"To exposed such crime without proper complaint in place is a criminal offense," she said.

"This maligned acts to stain the character and the reputation of our celebrities must put to justice for their unprofessional behaviors just to gain fame from our hardworking achievers who are public figures!" she added.



Charlene proud of Andres, says she and Aga are no stage parents

Hello Dolly - Dolly Anne Cavajal

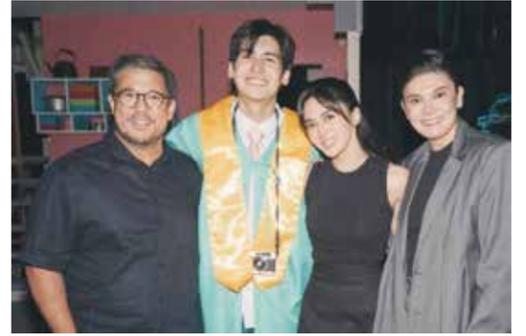
Charlene on son Andres doing 'Bagets the Musical' After reading all the positive reviews about "Bagets the Musical," my mind went into flashback mode. During the disco era back in the day, Liezl Martinez and I used to leave her cousin, Aga Muhlach, on the dance floor because he didn't want to stop dancing. That was way before "Bagets," the movie that made Aga famous. Even though he was not yet in showbiz, Aga was already unstoppable. Fast forward to today. It's Aga's son, Andres, who's making

waves as he portrays the same role (Adie) that his dad played in the iconic 1984 movie. Since I'm close to Aga and his fab wife, Charlene Gonzalez, I can't be any happier for them. Seeing them beam with pride as they watch their twins, Andres and Atasha, soar reminds me of one of my fave quotes. Here goes: There are two gifts that parents can give their kids. One is roots. The other is wings.

Aga and Charlene planted good seeds. Now the time is ripe for Andres and Atasha to be in full bloom. Even sans Aga's acting awards and Charlene's Bb. Pilipinas crown, the power couple are winners just being mom and dad. Charlene shares her thoughts about Andres and "Bagets the Musical" (BTM): "When Andres got the part in 'BTM,' the four of us watched Aga's movie, 'Bagets.' Watching it for the second time with my fam made it more meaningful. The movie was a big part of my 'growing up years,' but when I watched it in the '80s, it didn't cross my mind that I (would) become Mrs. Aga Muhlach (chuckles).

"On our way to the theater during opening night, Atasha played the soundtrack of 'Bagets.' Then, Aga told her, 'Stop the music. I'm getting too emotional.' That's understandable because 'Bagets' changed Aga's life, and it impacted him as a person and as an actor. 'BTM' is a full circle moment for Aga and Andres. "Andres wanted to surprise us. So, he didn't tell us what he was up to during rehearsals for 'BTM.' So, we were blown away when we watched him sing, dance and act at the same time. What a privilege and blessing it is for him to be working alongside seasoned thespians like Carla Laforteza, who portrays his mom. I'm so grateful to her for guiding Andres. She

Charlene Gonzalez and Aga Muhlach with their twins, Atasha and Andres. The family shows their all-out support for Andres' musical theater debut in 'Bagets the Musical' at Newport Performing Arts Theater. NWR MUSICALS' FACEBOOK PAG ADVERTISEMENT



already calls him 'my son.' "It's hard to compare the musical and the movie because it's two different genres. Both are well-made. But doing theater is harder than shooting a movie because there's no take two. "Aga and I are not stage parents at all. We let the twins do their own thing, make their own mistakes and learn from

them. We don't give them unsolicited advice but they know that we are behind them all the way. Aga and I taught the twins to always be kind and humble. So, it looks like they are on the right track.

"As a mom, it's only natural that I get a bit nervous for my son because it's his first time to do theater. I have confidence that he will pull it off. What worries me is how he will juggle his schedule. Aside from 'BTM,' he is also taping for his Viva One series. We hardly see him at home. For now, he's super busy with his career. So, no love life yet."

Samantha Panlilio says torture allegations by Rhian Ramos' driver 'pure fabrication'

By: Jessica Ann Evangelista

Samantha Panlilio, through her legal counsel, has denied the allegations linking her to the complaints filed by Rhian Ramos' personal driver, calling the accusations a "pure fabrication." In a statement sent to Inquirer Entertainment via text message on Saturday, Jan. 31, Panlilio's lawyers, Buenaventura Miranda and Carl Jon Mucha of Chavez Miranda Asecho Law Offices, said their client is confident that the case will be dismissed.

"Our client has not read the complaint yet, but she is confident that after due investigation, it will be dismissed for being a pure fabrication," the statement read.

Miranda cited police records to counter the driver's claims of illegal detention and torture, as records from the Makati City Police showed that he was arrested Jan. 19 for qualified theft and remained in detention until Jan. 22.

The lawyers added that while the qualified theft case was initially dismissed without prejudice, it has since been refiled.

"Our client will coordinate with the relevant authorities to clear her name," the statement



concluded. The driver, alias Totoy, previously alleged that he was illegally detained and tortured from Jan. 17 to 19 inside a condominium unit in Makati City shared by Ramos and beauty queen Michelle Dee after he allegedly stole sensitive photographs owned by Dee. He alleged that he was physically assaulted by the two women along with Panlilio.

The case is currently under investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation, with no formal complaint yet filed before the prosecutor's office.

Ramos and Dee's legal counsel previously denied the allegations, and the latter is considering filing libel and perjury cases against the driver, on top of a police blotter she earlier filed against him for allegedly hurting her.

As of writing, Panlilio's camp has not indicated whether countercharges will be filed in response to the driver's allegations.

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