

Canada, Phil Labor Pact Signed

The agreement by Philippines and Canada will further guide the cross-border labor migration

The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) announced that it signed the first-ever federal-level bilateral labor agreement with Canada, ensuring fair and safer recruitment regulation for overseas Filipino workers.

DMW Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac said during a press briefing on Friday, July 10, that the joint declaration of intent (JDI), signed during the four-day working visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in Canada, ensures there are legal pathways for Filipinos working abroad.

He added that, under the joint declaration, the recruitment and deployment of workers will be governed and regulated by the laws of both nations.

"The elements of the JDI is an emphasis on the le-

gal pathways of migration, where the recruitment and deployment of workers will be governed and regulated by the laws of both countries," Cacdac highlighted.

The move also seeks to ensure ethical recruitment and licensing processes, as well as the establishment of a mutual recognition of worker credentials of migrant workers, according to Cacdac.

He further reminded that the recruitment fees or related costs are not charged to workers and job seekers, including the overcharging schemes of immigration consultancies.

"No such recruitment fees and related costs shall be charged against the workers and job seekers, including those we are complaining about, the over-

LABOR page 15



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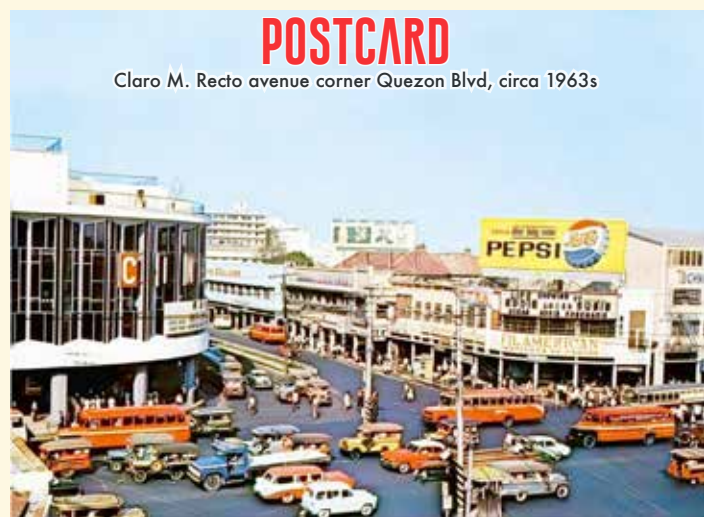
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The Filipino Centre Toronto students of the Senior Art program enjoys their summer picnic.

1. Jennifer Sy holds up her painting of a scene at Milliken Park.
2. Like a scene in the musical Oliver, seniors ask, "please sir, can we have more balat ng lechon."
3. Theo gets a cake for his 2nd birthday.



POSTCARD

Claro M. Recto avenue corner Quezon Blvd, circa 1963s

Canada pauses parent, grandparent sponsorship applications

OTTAWA — The federal government will not accept any new applications this year from people who want to sponsor their parents and grandparents to come to Canada as permanent residents under a program meant to promote family reunification.

The Immigration Department said the change is part of an effort to responsibly man-

SPONSORSHIP page 15



*Happy Birthday
Heather & Heidi*

POP EXPLOSION

A Celebration With Purpose Presented by Saviours Eagles Foundation International Inc concert.



MPP David Smith hold Youth Careers Expo



MPP David Smith and MPP Stephen Lecce pose with the Pink Titans robotics team at the Youth Skilled Trades & Careers Expo.



Honey Shot

Ryeanna, 13, is students of Josie de Leon School of Performing Arts or popularly known as JDL. Obviously talented, she can sing and dance. She plays volleyball. Her parents are Anna and Ryan.



Ryeanna Ponce de Leon



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MPP David Smith hold his annual Youth Skilled Trades & Careers Expo

MPP David Smith held his Youth Skilled Trades & Careers Expo to connect with employers, training organizations, universities, colleges, unions and industry professionals and explore the many pathways available.

It was held last Sunday, July 26, 2026 at the Ellesmere Community Centre.

It was a very successful, and well-attended event.

As a proof that the government is serious about the future of the youth in this province, several other MPP's were in attendance. Some of those in attendance were MPP David Piccini (Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development), MPP Stephen Lecce, MPP Sheref Sabawy, MPP David Smith, MPP Mohamed Firin, Councillor Michel Thompson, Toronto Fire Platoon Chief Paul O'Brien.

The representatives of some colleges, trade groups and employers were in attendance.



MPP David Piccini, MPP Stephen Lecce, MPP Sheref Sabawy, MPP David Smith, MPP Mohamed Firin, Councillor Michel Thompson, Toronto Fire Platoon Chief Paul O'Brien

Companies looking to hire also set up booths at the event.

"If you have nay questions, just ask us. We're looking forward to working with you today," opened MPP Piccini.

MPP Firin complimented MPP Smith.

"Let's give it up for MPP Smith. He's the champion for Scarborough."

He also opened that Ontario is investing \$200M into infrastructure.

"We'll create new jobs for

the next generation. I see a lot of young people today. Get involved."

MPP Sabawy said that, "we want to make sure that the youth have the mobility, option, the choice, we need to inspire the youth to make the right job, the right curriculum for you. If you are in trade, or IT, we have the job for you."

He talked about his start as am IT professor.

"When I started 40 years ago as an IT professor, it was

difficult. But through 40 years, i see lots of technology changes, it opened new beginnings for young people make good jobs, make good career and continue building up."

He also gave credit to MPP David Smith.

"You have an amazing MPP. He is close to the people, listen to the people. Make sure you give your concern here and he is your voice."

MPP Piccini talked about opportunities.

"When my grandfather came to this country, he

worked in the steel sector, he founded, gave opportunities to my father, my family, and that's what's it all about. That's what Dave is working for here in Scarborough, we got a new med school, we got new schools, we're expanding these opportunities."

He talked about the future of Ontario.

"We're going to talk about a new investment the federal government has made in Ontario to expand training centres and so much more. Ontario is a great province. We're building a lot, we could be an energy superpower, we can do so much on Ontario because we have it all. We have the best people. That's our secret in Ontario."

MPP Smith talks about the jobs that will be need in Ontario in general.

"All the jobs will not be in the city of Toronto. We have to prepare to move a little bit."

MPP DAVID SMITH page 22

Model-entrepreneur Katrina Llegado crowned Miss Supranational

The Philippines further secured its place in the international pageant scene when Katrina Llegado bested 66 other aspirants in the Miss Supranational competition in Poland.

The 28-year-old model and entrepreneur from Taguig City was given the title by last year's winner, Brazil's Eduarda Braum, as she became the second Filipino woman to win the crown.

Llegado's victory came 13 years after Binibining Pilipinas Mutya Johanna Datul scored the Philippines' first-ever Miss Supranational victory in 2013 at the international pageant's fifth edition held in Belarus.

With Llegado's win, the Philippines also sustained its placement streak in 14 successive editions, beginning in 2012 when model Elaine Kay Moll finished third runner-up.

Her 'best version'

Now with two wins, the Philippines has dislodged India as the best-performing country in the Miss Supranational pageant's 17-year history

The South Asian nation also has two winners and 14

total placements, but was edged out of the top spot because it did not have any runners-up, unlike the Philippines.

During the final round of the competition, Llegado was asked to share "the moment you stopped trying to become the woman the world expected and started becoming the woman you're really meant to be."

She responded: "I always believe that we should never fit into a mold. We are perfectly imperfect. I am someone who struggles

[with] perfection, but I am here today doing my best and becoming my best version."

"And here in Miss Supranational, I know I belong. I know [there's] a place for me and this is becoming Supra, above and beyond," Llegado said.

Hispanoamericana runner-up

The Miss Supranational pageant is Llegado's second international competition. She previously represented the Philippines in the 2019 Reina Hispanoamericana contest in Bolivia and was proclaimed "quinta finalista" (fifth runner-up).

The beauty titlist—a military reservist—

graduated cum laude from De La Salle University with a degree in financial management.

She is also cofounder of beauty brand Clocheffame, of which she is chief financial officer.

Finishing second to Llegado in the Poland pageant was another seasoned contender, Eve Gilles of France, who was a semifinalist at the 74th Miss Universe pageant.

Completing the winners' circle are second runner-up Lara Marina of Brazil, third runner-up Ndah Eno of Nigeria and fourth runner-up Karolina Gorylova of the Czech Republic.

Dingdong Dantes keeps options open for new collaborations, possible crossover

The words "collaboration" and "crossover" appear to be in the career horizons of actor Dingdong Dantes.

This possibility has been fueled when Dingdong, the lead star of "The Master Cutter" and Coco Martin, the lead star of "Sigabo," met to discuss a project for the League of Filipino Actors (AKTOR PH). Dingdong serves as the organization's chairman.

It has piqued everyone's curiosity.

Dingdong gave media friends bits and pieces about it in a brief chat after the recent presscon that launched him as the brand ambassador of MARSTEK Philippines.

"Gusto ko mang mag-share ng details, but ayoko munang i-spoil yung mangyayari dahil magkakaroon siya ng separate announcement (as much as I wanted to share details, but I don't want to spoil what's going to happen because it's going to have a separate announcement)," said he, "and I'm very excited to share it very soon."

Available online information says that Coco would like to produce a play that will create job opportunities for the industry members. It's a delight for fans to see either



The AKTOR PH chairman teases a collaboration project with Coco Martin of the action-romance-comedy series 'Sigabo.' Photo shows Dingdong and wife Marian Rivera bonding with Coco. They are joined by AKTOR PH officers Ricci Chan, Iza Calzado and Joel Saracho.

Dingdong or Coco or even both of them essaying roles on stage.

"But for now, yun na muna (that's what I can say). Pinag-uusapan na namin ang mga detalye (we're discussing details in the) sa planning stage," added he, who wanted Coco to make the announcement.

The idea behind it came from the "Sigabo" actor, shared Dingdong.

"Bilib na bilib talaga ako sa kanyang dedication at sa kanyang utak sa pag-iisip ng mga ganitong bagay na para talaga sa industriya (I'm impressed by his dedication and mind in thinking of such a project for

the industry). I can feel his love and dedication for the industry kaya bilib na bilib talaga ako sa kanya," said he.

During the chat, Dingdong also mentioned the fate of Tonet, played by Shuvee Entrata, in "The Master Cutter."

"Napaka-galing ng kanyang portrayal bilang Tonet. Sobrang dami talagang nagmamahal sa character niya (she has done a good job in portraying the character. Many have loved the latter),"

said he.

An online article shares that the character's journey came to an end.

As for the idea of Dingdong's character Atoy and Coco's Gabo crossing over to each other's show, Dingdong said, "Why not? Pero hindi ko pa masasagot sa ngayon yun, pero napakagandang eksena siguro yan (But I cannot answer that now. Seeing the characters together is probably a nice and interesting scene)."

Since his birthday month is August, he was also asked about his plans for his

special day and celebration today, Aug. 2. He said that he will take a rest and a short vacation. The hardworking actor Dingdong deserves an out-of-the-country sojourn.

Dingdong also has a movie titled "Remember" with actress-wife Marian Rivera. He said that it's in production and the goal is to show it this year. Dingdong described it as a "family drama." Their characters will be seen in Quebec (in Canada) and the Philippines.

He is also returning to the new season of "The Voice Kids" as host.

With his visibility on the mainstream and streaming platforms as host of "Family Feud" and lead actor of "The Master Cutter," Dingdong's hands are full. Again, he has a movie to complete. With that, Dingdong is on a roll.

Beauty Gonzales' childhood dream?

During a visit to Maddox Jewelry Store, Beauty shared

what she had originally wanted to become while growing up in her hometown.

Born into an affluent family that owned vast tracts of farmland, Beauty spent much of her childhood around farm workers. Seeing them every day sparked an unusual dream.

"I wanted to fix their nails even if, at first, I got scared and kind of squeamish seeing how dirty their fingernails were," the Kapuso actress recalled. "Basta, all I wanted was to be a manicurist!"

Of course, that dream never materialized. Instead, Beauty found herself in show business, even though she never really needed to work for a living.

A close friend of Ellen Adarna, Beauty also admitted that if there is one actress she would rather not work with, it is Derek Ramsay's estranged wife.

Beauty explained, "I can't imagine doing an emotional scene with Ellen. All we'll end up doing is magharutan no end. In scenes where we're supposed to cry, can you imagine us applying vapor rub on our eyes? So, it's better huwag na lang!"





Under-15 Bloggers Need Permit

Filipino kids under 15 who vlog may now need a work permit

Kids under 15 who appear in vlogs, livestreams, ads, or other online content in the Philippines may now need a work

permit from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).
Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne. Ano ba ito? Pati bata kailangan pang gatasan ng gobyerno? Kapag blogger, kailangan ng permit. Pero kapag under 15 ang gumawa ng crime, hindi

naman makasuhan. They can commit a crime and cannot be charged but they cannot blog without permit.
Hmmm...
If they are going to be treated as adult to blog, they should also be chargeable if they commit a crime tulad nang bumail a isang school kamakailan.
Let's put this in persepctive.
How many of them are monetized? Does the government know the bureaucracy na magiging result nito? I guess iyon ang gusto nila, na lumaki ang mga department ng government. Sa overseas labor na lang, ilang department

na ng government ang na-create nila. Job generator nga but it doesn't make the life of the lowly Filipino laborer any easier. In fact, the departments created are just pamparami lang ng paperwork para sa worker.
So, kapag hindi nag-register ang under-15, sino aarestuhin nila? Iyong magulang? If you are the parent, are you going to tell your teenager na "anak, don't blog, don't go online?"
You might as well tell them not to eat, or huwag huminga.
My friend's 2 year old grandson already know how to use a cellphone. I'm sure it will not take long for him to learn how to go online. I do not

underestimate the child. When (not if) If he learns how to post his face or video online, are the aprents going to be in trouble?
I know you're not supposed to show kids online. But to those who do, so family and relatives can follow the child's progress, do they need a permit to do so?
What if the child is the one doing it on their own? At 5 years old, they can operate social media apps themselves already.
Snapchat was created with disappearing messages so young people started using it.
I am curious for the result of this law by the Philippine government.

MarJo, '90s young love and why nostalgia always wins

Marvin Agustin and Jolina Magdangal, one of the '90s iconic lovetteams, reunite for TV5's upcoming show titled 'Mommy Guard.' The latter won't just center on a love story, but also on one of the country's most overlooked professions — being a security guard.
I've interviewed almost every generation of love teams from the VHS era to today's TikTok stars. Chemistry is often described as something magical, but after years of covering this industry, I've realized it's actually easy to spot when it's genuine.
Some tandems have chemistry only when the director says, "Action." But here comes a Filipino pop culture's favorite, Marvin Agustin and Jolina Magdangal, who have it even when nobody's rolling. They are living proof that it is possible even if you have a platonic relationship.
Tandems like Marvin and Jolina, or MarJo, whose chemistry has quietly evolved into something even more special, are a treasure to have in this industry — a real friendship.
Watching them together, I realize what we've all been missing. It isn't just the kilig that they offer, but also the comfort that we see that transcends through the screen.
I got the chance to chat with MarJo after their look test for TV5's latest show, "Mommy Guard," which will take the noontime slot soon for "Eat, Bulaga."
It's not the first time I have interviewed both, but each time is always a joy to see, especially the way Marvin effortlessly teases Jolina. The way Jolina laughs before

he even finishes the joke. Yes, the hilarious one-liners and banters between the two. They can even do stand-up and finish each other's thoughts if they want to — the way they poke fun at each other without anyone taking offense. Nothing feels rehearsed. Nothing feels like they are trying to convince everyone that "MarJo is back."
Maybe that's why people can't seem to get enough of nostalgia these days.
Look around us. Fashion is borrowing from the '90s. Old songs are topping playlists again. Vinyl records are making a roaring comeback. Even young people, who weren't even born when Marvin and Jolina first became household names, somehow know exactly who they are.
I asked them about this because, honestly, I was curious. Jolina admitted she's still surprised whenever kids ask to have their photos taken with her.
"Wow, naabutan n'yo pa talaga ako?" she laughed.
Marvin, being Marvin, immediately shared his favorite encounter of Jolina, and it was sarcastic.
"Ah, oo. 'Yung lola ko po, sikat daw kayo (Jolina) dati.'" It was classic Marvin, and the room erupted in laughter, including Jolina.
But if you think about it, that exchange says so much about where we are today.
The kids asking for selfies weren't even around during the MarJo era. Parents introduce their children to the artists they grew up with. TikTok breathes new life into old clips. YouTube becomes a time machine. Before you know it, an entirely new generation has fallen in

love with the same faces.
That's when I realized nostalgia isn't about looking backward. It's about bringing the best parts of yesterday into today. It's escapism. Maybe we're all craving that these days.
Life moves so fast now. Every scroll introduces a new trend. Fame can happen overnight, and the turnover is superfast. Stars disappear just as quickly. Everything feels temporary.
Then you see Marvin and Jolina laughing the way they did decades ago, and somehow it reminds you that not everything has to change. Some things are worth holding on to.
Of course, the show "Mommy Guard" isn't relying on nostalgia alone. One of the reasons Jolina immediately said yes to the project was its heart. This time, the spotlight isn't just on a love story. It's on one of the country's most overlooked professions — our security guards.
How often do we walk past them without even making eye contact?
They're the first people we see at malls, schools, offices and hospitals. They open doors, check our bags and keep us safe, yet we rarely stop to wonder what happens



after they clock out.
Jolina said it best. Guards are people, too. They have families waiting for them at home. They have worries. They have dreams. They have bad days. And yes, they deserve our respect. That's the kind of story that also has to be seen and heard more of.
"Mommy Guard" feels like such a smart fit for Marvin and Jolina. It gives us the nostalgia we didn't know we were craving while reminding us to appreciate the everyday heroes

we often overlook.
"Mommy Guard" also boasts an impressive ensemble cast. Joining Marvin and Jolina are Dominic Ochoa, Susan Africa, and Star Worx artists Cedrick Juan and Pearl Gonzales. Also part of the series are Celyn David, Nathalie Apollo, Patrick Ballesteros, Amo Wilding, Ge Villamin, Quinn Carillo, GB Labrador, Inah Evans, Tabs Sumulong, Angkie Gray, Roxanne Guinoo and social media personality Ian Mark Kamangkang.
"Mommy Guard" is set to premiere soon on TV5, bringing together nostalgia, heart, and a stellar cast in what promises to be one of the network's most anticipated family series.

Moi Bien recalls hilarious first day as Piolo Pascual's househelp

Comedienne Moi Bien looked back on her unforgettable first day working as Piolo Pascual's househelp, recalling how the actor had to climb onto the roof of his own house after she accidentally locked him out while fast asleep.
Speaking on Kara David's "i-Listen with Kara David" podcast, Moi shared that she spent her first day doing an overwhelming amount of laundry before exhaustion got the better of her.
"Yung pang-first kong pasok, na-lock ko ang pinto. Hindi siya nakapasok. Kasi nag-laba ako ng maraming, maraming, marami. Kasi siguro matagal na silang walang kasambahay," she recalled.
After finishing the chores, Moi fell asleep inside the house without realizing she had locked the doors.
"Tapos nakatulog ako. Ako lang mag-isa sa bahay. Alam mo kung saan siya dumaan? Sa bubong. Inakyat niya 'yung bahay niya," she said, laughing.
She added that she never heard Piolo repeatedly calling her because her room was far from the gate.
"Nai-lock ko 'yung bahay. Tapos tawag siya nang tawag. Hindi ko siya marinig. Kasi, ito 'yung gate, ito 'yung kuwarto, malayo sa akin."
"Wala, nag-akyat-bahay siya. 'Yun 'yung first meet namin."
Fortunately, the actor took the incident in stride instead of getting angry.
"Kasi naiintindihan siguro niya na ang dami kong nilabhan. Sabi ko, 'Sorry po. Sorry po, inantok ako, nakatulog ako, ang dami ko kasing nilabhan eh.'"
Moi revealed that she landed the job after her brother-in-law, who had also worked for Piolo's family, recommended her when the actor's sister was looking for someone to care for her baby.
At the time, however, Moi admitted she wasn't impressed by celebrities and didn't even recognize how famous Piolo already was.
"Nag-aartista na rin yata siya that time... hindi



ako masyadong aware sa mga arti-artista. Hindi ako masyadong kinikilig sa mga artista. Si Robin (Padilla) lang 'yung ano ko dati, tsaka si Joko Diaz."
She added with a laugh: "First kita ko nga kay Papa P, hindi ako fan. Wala, dedma."
Moi later transitioned from being a househelp to becoming Piolo's personal assistant. Before officially taking on the role, she became pregnant and honestly informed the actor about her situation.
"Kasi honest ako, sinabi kong buntis ako, huwag kang magalit."
She recalled Piolo jokingly asking, "'Saan mo ba ginawa 'yan, dito ba sa bahay?'"
After a brief pause, the actor simply replied, "'Okay lang 'yan, blessing 'yan.'"
Moi said she felt fortunate that Piolo allowed her to continue working despite her pregnancy.
"Hindi niya ako pinauwi. Pero ginagawa ko 'yung trabaho ko. Hindi ako 'yung pabaya na, 'Ay, buntis ako, hindi ako magbubuhat.'"
She even continued carrying heavy objects around the house, something that worried the actor whenever he returned home from work.
"'Paano nalipat 'yung TV galing sa taas, sa ibaba?' 'Binuhat ko.' Sabi niya sa akin, 'Anong ginagawa mo sa buhay mo? Gusto mo ba malaglag 'yung bata?'"
Looking back on their years together, Moi said what

she appreciated most about Piolo was the way he treated everyone in his household like family.
"Hindi niya kasi kami itinuring na iba. Alam namin trabaho namin, kasambahay kami, driver 'yung mga kasama ko, pero hindi niya kami finuturing na iba."
She recalled that Piolo insisted everyone share meals together instead of eating separately.
"'Family tayo dito, kailangan sabay-sabay tayo kain.' Pare-pareho kami lahat. Pare-pareho ng baso, pare-pareho ng kutsara."
Moi served as Piolo's personal assistant for nearly 16 years before eventually leaving to pursue her own career in show business.

Kara David on her bipolar disorder: 'It's my superpower'



Kara David won several awards at the inaugural FAMAS Broadcast Arts Awards last July 20, 2026 at the Manila

Hotel
Seasoned broadcast journalist Kara David is embracing every part of her journey living with bipolar disorder.
Kara was the guest on the July 29, 2026 episode of "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda," where she discussed her early musings to be an actor and her relationship with husband LM Cancio.
Boy then brought up how open the newcaster is about navigating having bipolar condition and briefly asked her message for others dealing with it too.
"While it's called bipolar disorder, if you learn to accept it and seek the right help, it's a gift [and] not a curse," Kara shared. "It's a disorder pero in my case dahil natuto akong yakapin ang aking condition at humingi ng tulong... I actually view it as a gift, it's my superpower."
The journalist explained how persons living with bipolar disorder experience manic and depressive phases, and during the former, they can be very creative, think fast, and exude confidence when managed well.
She even recounted being bolder, able to write scripts quickly, and think on the fly when in her manic phase, but reiterated the need for proper management at the risk of crashing out suddenly.
"You can't do it alone. Sana 'yung community hindi kami tinitignan as 'baliw,' 'loka-loka,' 'krung-krung,'" Kara ended, reiterating that people living with bipolar disorder can make the condition work in their favor rather than against them.
After the titular "Fast Talk" segment, Kara and Boy also discussed the journalist jointly winning Best Public Service Host at the inaugural FAMAS Broadcast Arts Awards with Ivana Alawi and the so-called controversy brought about by content creator Boss Toyo regarding Kara's coverage of an illegal dumpsite on Aeta ancestral land.

PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses at Significant Developments



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

FILIPINO HEALTHCARE COSTS CONCERNS

According to a report by the Boston Consulting Group(BCG), “For many Filipino households, getting sick is a major financial event just as much as it is a medical event, which can mean debt, delayed tuition, or rapidly eroded savings.” The report said, “Sixty-four per cent of Filipino families cannot afford a Php 10,000 hospital bill without going into debt, pushing many Filipino workers to seek better income abroad just to secure access to basic healthcare.” In June 2026, the BCG surveyed 1,337 overseas Filipino workers across the United States, the Middle East, Asia and the United Kingdom. The survey found “that access to healthcare was among the main forces behind their decision to work abroad.” Based on the report, “financial security that can guarantee access to health services during medical emergencies is a top priority for 70% of Filipino families.” However, most respondents also admitted they struggle to pay even small emergency health expenses. Twenty per cent of respondents said they could pay less than Php 1,000 for a medical emergency without borrowing money or using health insurance; 28 per cent said they could pay only up to Php 5,000, and 16% said they could afford up to Php 10,000.

Medical emergencies accounted for 40% of the most recent loans of OFWs, indicating that unexpected health concerns were also the top reason Filipino workers abroad resorted to borrowing. Also, medical emergencies were the top reason for extra remittances among respondents. In the past year, 39% of OFWs in the US, 31% in the Middle East, 46% in Asia and 56% in the United Kingdom said they had to send extra money to families in the Philippines to pay for emergency medical expenses. In the



PHILIPPINE UPPER-MIDDLE-INCOME STATUS?

The World Bank, on July 1, 2026, classified the Philippines as an upper-middle-income economy(UMIC). The classification from lower-middle-income to upper-middle-income status was based on 2025 gross national income per capita (GNI) estimates. The country’s GNI per capita reached \$4,850, above the \$4,636 threshold for upper-middle-income economies. Last year, 2024, the data released by the World Bank showed that the Philippines remained a lower-middle-income country, with its GNI per capita reaching \$4,470. The World Bank classifies economies with a GNI per capita calculated and measured in U.S. dollars using the Atlas method of \$1,136 to \$4,495 in 2024 as lower-middle-income countries; those with a GNI per capita between \$4,496 and \$13,935 are classified as upper-middle-income economies; and high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of over \$13,935. The Philippines was among six countries, such as Jordan, Micronesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam moved to the upper-middle-income status category in the latest update. The classification matters because the World Bank uses “income groups as a global reference for tracking development and economic prog-

ress.” These groupings also help determine, though with limits, “which countries can access concessional loans and development assistance and smooth out short-term exchange-rate swings.” The updated classifications will remain as a global reference until the end of June 2027. “Ang Pilipinas ay bahagi ng lower-middle-income economy grouping mula noong 1987. Ang upper-middle-income classification sa ngayon ay isang malugod na pagbabago. Gayunpaman, nagbabala ang World Bank na “walang isang panukala ang maaaring ganap na makuha ang pagiging kumplikado ng pag-unlad ng isang bansa.” Dahil isa itong pambansang average, hindi nito ipinapakita kung paano ipinamamahagi ang kita sa mga sambahayan, rehiyon o sektor. At gayundin, hindi nagpapahiwatig na ang kahirapan, hindi pagkakapantay-pantay, mababang sahod o mataas na gastos sa pamumuhay ay natugunan. Bagama’t isang milestone na sumasalaamin sa malawak na paglago ng ekonomiya, hindi ito nanganagahulugan na karamihan sa mga Filipino ay biglang nasa gitnang uri ng kita(upper-middle-income) kaagad-agad. Sana ay talagang umabot ang maraming Filipino sa sitwasyon na ito!”

Philippines, the government allocated Php 448.125 billion for the health sector in the 2026 national budget. However, IBON Foundation, an economic think tank, criticised the amount, say-

ing it remains “far from the 5% standard” of the World Health Organisation. “Nabanggit sa ulat na ang mga padala ng mga OFW ang pangatlong pinakamalaking pinagmumulan ng

pagpasok ng dayuhang pera sa Pilipinas, katumbas ng 7% ng gross domestic product, kung saan ang mga padala ng pera sa ibang bansa ay umaabot sa \$35.6 bilyon sa 2025. Ang Pilipinas ay lalong umaasa sa suportang ipinapadala ng mga Filipino sa ibang bansa,” sabi ng ulat.” Paano na kaya kung wala na o mabawasan na ang bilang ang mga kababayan nating OFWs, lalo na kung marami na ang uuwi o babalik sa ating bayan? Lalo sigurong mas malaki ang magiging kahirapan sa Pilipinas tungkol sa kalusugan at pagpapagamot.”

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS RETURN.

In its survey report released on June 18, 2026, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) cited data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showing there were 2.19 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in 2024, the highest in five years and that one in 14 Filipino families has an OFW. The BCG reported that “Most Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are carrying the weight of an emotionally complex life abroad, but they cannot return home yet, not until there is a better Philippines.” The BCG surveyed 1,337 OFWs across the United States, Asia, the Middle East and the United Kingdom in February 2026 “to determine the emotions Filipino workers often feel about life abroad and how these affect their intent to return to the Philippines.” The BCG said that “while 47% of OFWs said they are happy with their life abroad, 43% also said they feel homesick, revealing an emotional complexity that contributes to their uncertainty over moving back to the Philippines.” Based on the report, “more than half of OFWs, or 56%, remain undecided about moving back to the Philippines. While most OFWs remain undecided about whether to come home, 14% said they would

‘Dream come true’: Lovi Poe officially joins Star Magic

Actress Lovi Poe marks a new milestone in her career as she officially signs with ABS-CBN’s talent management arm, Star Magic.

The actress was formally welcomed to the Star Magic family.

For Lovi, becoming part of Star Magic is the fulfillment of a longtime dream.

“I would always watch Star Magic or hear about Star Magic in the past when I was younger, and just to be part of this family, I just can’t believe it. For me, it’s a dream come

true,” she shared.

The actress also looked back on her recent role as Mokang in the hit ABS-CBN action series “FPJ’s Batang Quiapo,” describing the experience as memorable. She expressed hope that she would have another opportunity to work with lead actor and director Coco Martin in future projects.

Beyond acting, Lovi spoke about balancing her professional ambitions with motherhood. She has been raising her first child with producer Monty Blencowe.

“Ambition and motherhood go well together. It strengthens each other. We get anxious and think, ‘What if we don’t get to do the things that we love?’ No, you’ll still be able to do those dreams with the right people around you and with the right mindset,” she said.

She was with GMA Artist Center (now Sparkle) for 15 years before she trans-

ferred to ABS-CBN in 2021 as an exclusive talent for the latter’s content. She was not signed with ABS-CBN’s Star Magic until this July.

Star Magic and TV Production head Laurenti Dyogi praised Lovi’s versatility, calling her one of the industry’s most accomplished artists.

“Lovi represents excellence. She can do a lot of things. She is a

great actress, a performer, and a producer. She can and is in a good place to protect the legacy of her father, FPJ,” Dyogi said during the event.

Flying between Manila and the United States, Lovi has built a filmography that features Filipino and foreign productions. Her projects outside of the Philippines include “Bad Man” and “My Sister’s Bones.”

When she is not acting, she stands behind the camera through her production outfit, C’est Lovi Productions.



Toronto City Council Okays Dedicated Filipino Community Cultural Centre

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

In a 24 to 0 vote, members of the Toronto City Council approved Motion MM43.8 during its meeting on July 30, 2026. The unanimous vote gave the Council's nod to the motion presented by Councillor Neethan Shan and duly seconded by Mayor Olivia Chow for a "dedicated Filipino community centre". The legislative measure is, indeed, a welcome development for the Filipino-Canadian community in Canada's popular multicultural city.

MM43.8 is described as a proposal to "Support Exploring Partnerships for a New Filipino Community Centre in Toronto". Put forward by Councillor for Rouge Park-Ward 25 Neethan Shan, the motion calls on the City of Toronto to work directly with local Filipino community representatives to explore partnerships for a new community hub. Moreover, the approved motion requires the City to consider areas in the City including Scarborough



Toronto Ward 25 Councillor Neethan Shan with community leaders on June 28, 2026.

and North York as potential sites "to ensure the centre can best serve Filipino communities across the City, while building on the work of grassroots organisations that have long created spaces for the community."

One would recall that Councillor Shan, a friend of the Filipino community, is the same municipal legislator who nine years ago, in November 2017, moved to approve a motion to proclaim "June Heritage Month" in

Canada's largest city. The official declaration marked the first time Filipino Heritage Month, which began in June 2018, was recognised "by any level of government in Canada". Additionally, as part of his motion, Councillor Shan called on Toronto City Council to formally ask the Federal and Provincial governments to make the same milestone declaration.

Pointing out that more than 270,000 Filipinos call Toronto home, the "commu-

nity deserves a permanent space to gather, celebrate our culture, access programs, and strengthen community connections." And one meaningful way is to "create a dedicated community and cultural centre" in the city. A large number of Filipino city residents showed their utmost support by signing petitions, writing letters of support, and sharing and voicing interest in the proposal. A delegation of community leaders and officers of social, professional and business organisations were in attendance at the Council's Chamber.

Bayanihan Spirit Inc., the prime mover of the successful proposal, acknowledged the support of several community leaders and advocates "to build a lasting home for Filipino communities across Toronto" and by "taking an important step toward creating a space that honours our history, celebrates our culture, and supports future generations." Community leaders Tom

Tan, Dr Eileen De Vila, and Michael Herrera are reported to have had past and present conversations with political and social advocates concerning the need for a permanent Filipino community cultural space.

Observers cited, however, that the worthwhile endeavour would require resolve and pathways to pursue relevant partnerships and collaborative actions, including but not limited to development research, organisational planning, funding proposals, feasibility studies, and further community engagements. The Bayanihan Spirit Inc. leaders and other community advocates are hopeful of having continuing consultation with community stakeholders, including city staff and housing proponents, on opportunities and options for realising a "cultural centre-housing-business units mix for the oftentimes labelled "quiet and invisible community". (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Donated Canadian Books are a big Help to Philippine Students

by teacher Catherine



Tabungyan Elementary School (182M) in Buruanga, Aklan is a public school "situated in a rural area characterized by rolling to gently sloping terrain, hills with patches of forest vegetation, agricultural land primarily used for coconut plantations, and vegetable and root crop production. Cultivated crops, like corn, root crops, bananas, and vegetables are mainly for household consumption and local market sale, hence the primary livelihood of the com-

munity is farming.

The school offers a complete elementary curriculum. It currently has no library but each classroom has a reading corner. There are about 120 books (all textbooks) and printed material for the students to reference.

Non-readers are at a minimum, in spite of the lack of books, which is commendable. Results of reading assessments show that many of the students have achieved indepen-



dent reading proficiency. But for the few that are struggling, remediation is in place, but without age-appropriate reading books, it is difficult for the teachers to properly

guide them.

We are providing the school books that will encourage the children to read, because of the colorful pages of the story books and large font used. "A well-equipped reading corner will encourage independent learning and support the school's intervention programs. Access to appropriate and engaging books is essential in helping every learner become a confident reader."

Thank you to the benefactors.

*quotes from Teacher In Charge Catherine

Thank you to the donors; Philip of OLOLCS, Chantell of AMCL PS,

Kelly of LPS, Tessie Dejesus, Florinda Rodriguez Florido, Cherrylyn Murayao-Sera

Jen Torres, Walter Yerro/Elsie Sazon Baking Yerro, Jose Joey Baking, and Lilian Trballo.

Thank you to Malou De Jesus Dizon who collected the books and sent them.



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'Foreign- Credentialed Lawyers Face New Licensing Requirements



Norma Bernal

new immigrants & the workplace

One of the most difficult challenges faced by foreign-trained professionals in Canada is the non-recognition of credentials earned in their countries of origin and elsewhere including academic qualifications (education & training), experience (work & employment) and professional/occupational licenses and certificates. For foreign credentials to be recognized, the following needs to be done--- assessment of such by appropriate bodies to ascertain whether these fulfill Canada’s parameters for licensure which are required for professional employment.

Professions/ occupations in Canada are generally classified in two groups: regulated and non-regulated. By its term alone, it is more difficult to prove and meet the required professional equivalency of regulated professions. As AI points out: “Regulated jobs require a license from provincial/territorial bodies. Unregulated jobs may only require an ECA” (or Educational Credential



Assessment).

In Ontario alone, there are 100 regulated lines of work, of which 27 are health related, 36 are non-health, with the rest belonging to the trades sector. Law is among the non-health occupations that require a license. Not only that. It has also been observed that the licensing process of lawyers is among the most difficult along with medicine, engineering and accounting.

According to AI, for foreign-trained law professionals to obtain a license to practice in Ontario, these are the must haves:

1) A Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) or Juris Doctor (J.D.) education from a Canadian university. Going back to school is usually a non-choice among immigrants, whether old or new, because of the money, time and effort involved. So, the option usually taken by internationally trained lawyers is to obtain

a Certificate of Qualification (CoQ) from the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA). CoQ isn’t easy to obtain either as it requires passing certain exams which will be a test not only of one’s knowledge of the law but also requires a very high command of the English language. It is noted in AI that Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 9 is usually an implied prerequisite at this stage.

2) Passing the two (one for barrister, the other for solicitor) Licensing Examination or Law Society Examination of Ontario. While no language level is explicitly required here, CLB 9 is necessary to understand dense, complex and idiomatic prose or sentences that are usually included in the bar exams.

3)An experiential training consisting of a 10-month placement under a qualified lawyer called Articling or a blend of a training course and a work

- placement (4 months each) called Law Practice Program (LPP).
- 4) Good character to be evaluated by LSO through a questionnaire.
- 5) Application to the LSO’s lawyer licensing process and payment of required fees.

As if the above list is not tough enough, there are two new requirements effective March 1, 2026:

- Language Competency- a screening/test for English or French is a must even before commencing the assessment of qualifications. As noted by AI: “applicants must pass a mandatory language screening test (Versant) or submit valid test results less than 2 years old, unless exempted.”
- indigenous Law Competency- fundamental understanding or core knowledge of Indigenous Law and Peoples is another essential, obtained through either a CPLED (Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education) module or a course offered by a Canadian- recognized and NCA- approved law school.

Both requirements might be manageable, if not, easy hurdles for Philippine-trained lawyers as English is the medium of instruction in the Philippines and practically the language of governance and business. Still, these new requirements will add more time, money and effort in achieving one of the most coveted but arduous-to-obtain licenses in Canada.

Derrick Monasterio and girlfriend Elle Villanueva thinking of Migrating

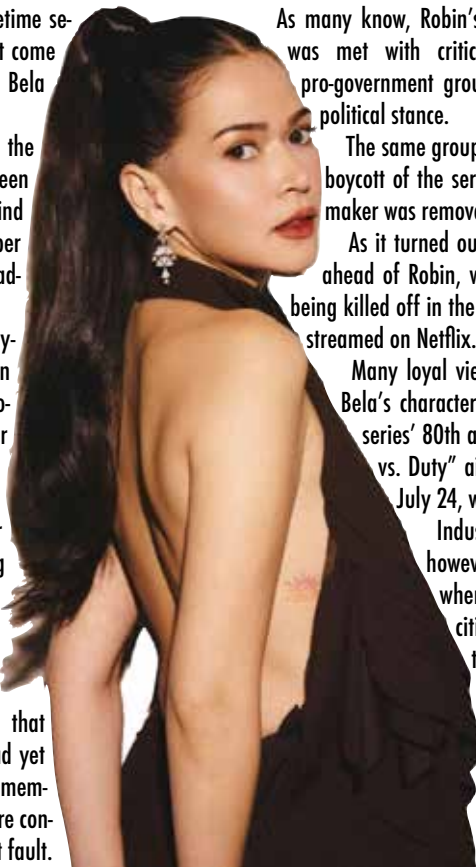
HER removal from the primetime series “Blood vs. Duty” did not come as a pleasant surprise for Bela Padilla.

Long before her exit from the series, Bela had reportedly been the subject of several blind items involving a cast member said to have become a headache for the production.

Allegedly, the multi-hyphenate actress was less than accommodating toward a co-star who allegedly threw her weight around on set. To a certain extent, she was also said to have meddled in her co-stars’ roles, even offering suggestions on how they should portray their characters, much to the director’s consternation.

It was likewise reported that Bela and Barbie Imperial had yet to resolve an issue. As far as members of the staff and crew were concerned, Bela was allegedly at fault.

Adding to the controversy were claims that Bela had influenced the casting of her uncle, Sen. Robin Padilla, in the Richard Gutierrez-led series. Bela, however, denied having any significant say in production decisions, including casting.



As many know, Robin’s inclusion in the series was met with criticism, particularly from pro-government groups that objected to his political stance.

The same groups reportedly called for a boycott of the series unless the actor-lawmaker was removed from the cast.

As it turned out, Bela exited the series ahead of Robin, with her character, Lara, being killed off in the show’s 66th episode, as streamed on Netflix.

Many loyal viewers were puzzled that Bela’s character did not make it to the series’ 80th and final episode. “Blood vs. Duty” aired its finale on Friday, July 24, with little fanfare.

Industry friends close to Bela, however, said they understood where she was coming from, citing the breadth of her talent.

As they put it, casting Bela in any television or film project means getting far more than what one initially bargains for.

After all, Bela brings not only acting skills but also valuable creative input in storytelling and directing.

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FILIPINO-CANADIAN KABABAYANS, ORGANISATIONS, AND BUSINESSES ACCORDED HONOURS

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

At an appropriate morning ceremony, twenty-six Filipino-Canadian leaders, organisations and businesses received recognition certificates on June 27, 2026, in celebration of “Filipino Heritage Month”. Federal Member of Parliament for Eglinton-Lawrence, Vince Gasparro, presented “Community Appreciation Award” and “Community Recognition Award” to the honourees at the Columbo Centre, Villa Charities, 901 Lawrence Avenue West, North York, Toronto, Ontario.

Among the individuals given honours were. 9 community leaders, namely Paulo Bucud, Norma Carpio, Mel Galeon, Rolando Mangante, Agnes P. Miranda, Tony A. San Juan, Rizza Solis, Leny Rose Simbre, and Teresa Torralba. The six community associations include Chartered GTA Legacy Lions, Filipino Centre Toronto, Guardians



Recipients of “Certificate of Community Recognition” posing with Philippine Consul General Leilani Salle, top-middle.

MUGBII, Knights of Columbus Council 12582, Philippine Independence Day Council, and Saviours Eagles Foundation International. At the same time, the 11 business groups were Balita, DGA Variety Store, Filipino Making Waves, Filipino n’ Toronto, HAIR Form, Jer’s Filcanasian Restaurant, Julsam Variety Store, Lerma Salon, Pampanguena, Ronnie D Salon, and TOMZ Radio.

The congratulatory scrolls were personally handed by MP Vince Gasparro, together with the Philippine Consul

General in Toronto, Kristine Leilani R. Salle. PhilConGen Salle and Consul Rodney Jonas Sumague were present and played an important role in a meet-and-greet session and an outreach conversation with members of the Filipino community in the North York area.

The Appreciation Certificate for individuals states: “Presented in recognition of your outstanding dedication and meaningful contributions to the Filipino Canadian community. Through your generosity, leadership, and unwav-



Member of Parliament for Eglinton-Lawrence Vince Gasparro with Philippine Consul General Kristine Salle.

ering commitment to serving others, you have enriched the lives of those around you and strengthened the bonds that unite our community. Your leadership, generosity, and enduring commitment to community service are sincerely appreciated. For organisations and businesses, the Recognition Certificate reads: “Presented in recognition of your outstanding service and meaningful contributions to the Filipino Canadian community. Your unwavering commitment to preserving Filipino Heritage, support-

ing newcomers and families, and fostering cultural pride has strengthened generations of Filipino Canadians. We extend our sincere appreciation and wish you many more years of success.”

Afterwards, a light breakfast of coffee, tea, juice, cheese, cookies, croissants, bagels, and muffins was served. Group photos and selfies, as usual, ensued. The memorable event was organised by Manny Gutierrez, community liaison & outreach staff at MP Vince Gasparro’s constituency office. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Angel Locsin urges Robin Padilla to ‘wake up’ in open letter over political stands

Actress Angel Locsin publicly called on Senator Robin Padilla to “wake up” in a strongly worded open letter on Thursday questioning the actor-turned-lawmaker’s recent political positions and expressing disappointment over his departure from the ideals they once admired together.

Locsin’s statement came after Padilla made headlines during the ongoing Senate impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte. During the proceedings, the senator remarked, “Komunista po ako,” while questioning lawyer Amando Virgil Ligutan Lotoc Jr. about the alleged “Operation Romanov.”

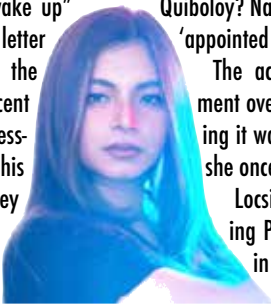
Sharing a screenshot of Padilla’s statement on her social media accounts, Locsin said the remark reminded her of the Robin Padilla she once knew.

“Nung mga panahong magkasama tayo, madalas mong ikwento yung panahon na namundok ka at nag-arms para ipaglaban ang bayan. Sabi mo pa nga, dinadalaw ka ng ex mo sa bundok,” she wrote. “Sa statement mo na ‘to, kahit papaano, natuwa akong makita ulit yung dating Robin Padilla na nakilala ko. At least, honest ka ngayon, Kuya.” The actress then questioned why Padilla remained silent when she was previously subjected to red-tagging despite, she said, knowing the allegations against her were false.

“Ang tanong ko lang, nasaan ka nung panahong nirered tag ako kahit alam mong hindi totoo?” she wrote.

“Actually, kasama mo pa nga at kachikahan yung mga nangre-red-tag. Naghugas-kamay at pumikit sa katotohanan.”

Locsin also criticized what she described as Padilla’s shifting priorities in public office, saying many Filipinos had supported his Senate bid because they expected him to be a strong advocate for the country’s Muslim community.



“Pero bakit parang mas ipinaglalaban mo pa si Quiboloy? Naniniwala ka ba talaga na siya ang ‘appointed son of God’?”

The actress also expressed disappointment over Padilla’s position on China, saying it was inconsistent with the patriotism she once admired in him.

Locsin concluded her letter by reminding Padilla of their shared beginnings in life and the responsibility they

owe to the Filipino people. She ended the message with a direct appeal to the senator. “Tama na, Kuya. Gising na. Hindi pa huli ang lahat.”

Locsin has long been one of the entertainment industry’s most outspoken voices on social and political issues, frequently speaking out on human rights, disaster response, and government accountability. She has also previously denounced red-tagging and repeatedly called for greater protection of civil liberties.



Sandara Park: From struggling immigrant to K-pop icon

Sandara Park shares her inspiring journey from a shy immigrant in the Philippines to a global K-pop star, revealing her struggles, dreams and the country that became her second home.

Before Sandara Park became a global K-pop star, she was a young immigrant trying to find her voice in a country that would eventually become her second home.

Long before her success with 2NE1, Sandara was a 10-year-old girl adjusting to a new life in the Philippines.

“I immigrated to the Philippines when I was in the fourth grade of elementary school, 10 years old. I spent all my formative years there,” Sandara shared.

Her early years in the country were not easy. “It was really hard. I’m still shy, but it was worse when I was younger,” she said. The language barrier became one of her biggest challenges. Sandara said her pronunciation often became a reason for classmates to laugh at her, leaving a painful memory from her childhood.

During those lonely moments, music became her escape. After school, she would spend time listening to songs and watching performances, slowly developing the dream of becoming a singer.

“After school, I would always go home and listen to music,” she shared.

Her love for performers such as Seo Taiji and Boys, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera eventually inspired

her to dream of performing on stage. “I want to be on TV too,” she recalled thinking as a young fan.

Growing up between South Korea and the Philippines shaped Sandara’s identity. She described herself as having Korean “hardware” and Filipino “software,” reflecting how deeply both cultures became part of her.

Her unexpected entry into Philippine showbiz happened in 2004 when she accompanied a friend to audition for ABS-CBN’s “Star Circle Quest.” Instead of simply supporting her classmate, Sandara ended up joining the competition herself eventually finishing as the competition’s first runner-up.

Her popularity grew almost overnight, with Sandara experiencing firsthand how passionate Filipino fans are about their entertainers.

However, fame also came with challenges. Sandara admitted that her demanding schedule at a young age became overwhelming.

Despite those struggles, the relationships she built in the Philippines became some of the most meaningful parts of her journey. She said the people who supported her during her early career became like family.

After becoming a member of 2NE1 in 2009 and achieving international success as a K-pop star, Sandara continued to carry her Filipino roots with her.

More than two decades after entering the entertainment industry, Sandara is now embracing a new chapter as a solo artist. She recently launched her own label, ARADNAS, and released her single album “RE-PRISM,” featuring songs she wrote and performed herself.

From a shy immigrant struggling to communicate to a beloved entertainer in two countries, Sandara Park’s story remains a testament to finding one’s voice despite the challenges along the way.





“Cold tea and cold rice are bearable, but not cold looks and cold words.”

JAPANESE PROVERB

“If you spend your whole life waiting for the storm, you’ll never enjoy the sunshine.”

MORRIS WEST



Pop Explosion concert featured all the local artists. The concert was produced by Saviours Eagles Foundation International with Ron Angeles as a headliner.

The Days of Simultaneous Events are here

The days of events happening at the same time has caught up on me. The concert of local artist Arielle Perez and the birthday of Rocel Enverga happened at the same time. So, I had to beg off Arielle’s concert.

There will be others.

Josie de Leon school of Performing Arts or JDL held their first sports-fest at La Liga. It was a fun and relaxing day. On July 25, they also held a musical called “Decades.”

In Josie’s own words,

Our recently concluded JDL Performing Arts – “The Decades “Showcase Mississauga, Scarborough and Central - was more than just a performance—it was a journey through the history of music. From the timeless classics of the 1950s to today’s chart-topping hits,

our students explored how music, dance, fashion, and performance styles have evolved over the decades. Along the way, they developed confidence, stage presence, teamwork, creativity, and a deeper appreciation for the artists and cultures that shaped each era. We are incredibly proud of every student for bringing each decade to life with dedication, and talent. Thank you to our mentors , parents, and audience for making this celebration of music and learning such a memorable success! Through music, our students didn’t just perform history—they experienced it. Until the next JDL showcase!”

On July 25, the day of JDL show Decades, I was invited to watch Pop Explosion at Xinflix by Saviours Eagles Foundation International with Ron Angeles as a headliner.

So, I was not able to watch Decades.

Incidentally, The Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC) also held their beauty pageant on the same night as Pop Explosion at the Peoples Theatre for the Performing Arts which is just one block away from Xinflix.

I was thinking of dropping by afterwards but Pop Explosion already finished around 11 pm so I did not bother.



Melissa kadas & Aielle Perez performed at Pop Explosion

Robb Guinto takes on new challenge with first solo showcase

Robb Guinto pivots to live performance following her VMX success

Robb Guinto has become familiar with the spotlight, the demands of film sets, and the attention that comes with being one of VMX’s most recognizable stars. However, standing alone before a live audience presents a different kind of test for her.

The actress faced that challenge on July 29 when she headlined Solid Gold: The Robb Guinto Experience at Viva Café, her first solo showcase after years of building her career in streaming films and television.

Robb admitted that despite the milestone, she still wonders whether her name alone is enough to draw a full house.

“I’m not that confident that I can fill Viva Café,” she said, adding that being known on social media does not automatically convince people to buy tickets.

Rather than dwell on those doubts, Robb said she

wanted the audience to leave feeling they got their money’s worth.

“I hope we can meet their expectations with everything we’ve prepared and that they’ll be satisfied with what they paid for,” she continued.

The show featured solo performances from Robb, along with production numbers with fellow VMX actresses Roxanne De Vera, Margaret Sison, Paula Santos, and Aila Cruz. She promised a lively performance, joking that fans should bring towels and an extra shirt because the cast planned to turn up the heat on stage.

The actress said she never imagined receiving her own showcase and believes the opportunity came only after years of learning and improving as an actress.

“Maybe management saw that I was finally ready and could already handle it,” she shared.

Looking back, Robb said she once questioned why her career was not moving as quickly as she had hoped.



She now sees that period as part of her growth.

Her television work, particularly in GMA programs, also helped expand her confidence. Playing both protagonists and antagonists showed her she was capable of more than she initially believed.

“I would surprise myself and say, ‘Oh my God, I can do this.’ I thought that was all I could offer, but there were still hidden talents I hadn’t discovered,” she explained.

Robb has starred in several VMX original titles, including X-Deal 2, Sugar Baby, Vigilante, Ligaw, Kiskisan, Foursome, Kaulayaw, Showroom, and Unang Tikim. She has also appeared in television programs such as Pepito Manaloto, Black Rider, Bubble Gang, Tadhana, and Mga Batang Riles.

While being regarded as one of VMX’s top stars is flattering, Robb admitted the label also comes with pressure because she knows fans look up to her.

She said she unwinds after long shooting days by catching up on sleep before rewarding herself with shopping.

During the event, fans participated in games and got their hand on exclusive merchandise.

Malou De Jesus Dizon collects & sends books to the Philippines for students to read

Casili Elementary School (169M) is located in Balamban, Cebu, specifically in Casili, Barangay Ginatilan. Casili is a peaceful rural community, surrounded by mountains, and is part of the upland area of the barangay, a perfect location for nature lovers due to the cooler air, green landscape, and scenic mountain views. Visitors are able to walk the trails and spot butterflies and birds. Natural springs and streams benefit the households and farms.

Casili ES has 7 classrooms for Kinder to Grade 6. There is a library and reading corners in the classrooms, however books are very limited, and shelves in the library are empty. While the school is the primary source of reading materials, with not enough books to offer, the remedial programs do not progress as they should. The reading assessment (Phil IRI report) shows a fair percentage of the students in the struggling and frustra-

tion levels. The school is providing remedial sessions to the identified students using whatever books and printed materials they have.

As per teacher Irish:

“Access to quality books helps pupils develop reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills, which are fundamental to success in all learning areas.

“Pupils who regularly read books tend to perform better in all subjects because they build stronger comprehension and problem-solving skills.

“Books help ensure that all learners have equal opportunities to succeed regardless of economic status.”

The books we are sending will assist the reading coordinators in upgrading the reading skills of the children. Thank you benefactors.



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



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JDL's DECADES

presents history from the 1950s to today's chart-topping hits, our students explored how music, dance, fashion, and performance styles have evolved over the decades.

FCT Painting Class Picnic



The Filipino Centre Toronto, Senior Art Program students had a picnic organized by Theresa Lumanlan, the lovely wife of Artist Frank Cruzet, their instructor. It was nice relaxing, sunny day with friends and food, lots of food.



Philippine ConGen Kristine Salle (Left, 2nd), with JB Ramos, "Community Appreciation" and "Community Recognition" awardee Tony San Juan (FAE RIGHT), Gizele Mirasol and 3 PCCT lady officers.



Miss Philippines Canada joins Santacruznan

Back in May, our reigning Miss Philippines Canada 2025, Princess, had the honour of being invited by MUGBII to take part in their annual Santacruznan as the Reyna Emperatriz. Joining her in this beautiful celebration of faith, culture, and Filipino tradition were Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2024 1st Runner-Up, Chaileen, and Mrs. Philippines Canada 2025 2nd Runner-Up, Kriss, who proudly represented our organization as fellow Reynas.

We are grateful to MUGBII for the warm invi-

tation and for providing our titleholders with the opportunity to celebrate and preserve this cherished Filipino tradition while representing the Filipino-Canadian community with grace and pride. - Interested in joining the journey? If you or someone you know would like to be part of Miss Philippines Canada, Miss Teen Philippines Canada, Mrs. Philippines Canada, or Little Miss Philippines Canada, email info@missphilippinescanada.com for more information!



Chaileen Frances Zarate Ong is Silayan Summer Queen



Truly honored to be crowned SILAYAN'S SUMMER QUEEN 2026! Last Saturday, July 4th, I had the unexpected privilege of receiving this beautiful crown, trophy, title, sash, and plaque. What was supposed to be a regular recognition turned into the most wonderful surprise. I am deeply grateful to the one and only President of Silayan, Lolo Ben, for this incredible opportunity and for choosing me as this year's Summer Queen. This is a moment I'll cherish forever.

Toni Fowler feels 'sobrang gaan' after removing decade-old implants

Content creator Toni Fowler said she felt immediate relief after having her breast implants removed following 10 years of physical discomfort. Toni documented the surgery and recovery in her latest vlog. She explained that the procedure was originally planned for May but was delayed until she completed work commitments and celebrated her 10 years as a content creator. "Kasi ang hirap na rin sa araw-araw ng buhay ko na palaging ang bigat-bigat ng dala ko...ang hirap...kaya it's about time na tanggalin na ang nagpapa-kuba kay Toni Fowler," she said. Each implant weighed 280 grams. After seeing them outside her body, Toni remarked, "Oh my god, ang bigat nito sa araw-araw na buhay ko. Sobrang bigat niya, ngayon ang gaan-gaan na." She also underwent breast reduction surgery to achieve the smaller size she had long wanted. "Grabe sobrang gaan," Toni said after seeing the result. Although pleased with the outcome, she admitted experiencing mixed emotions while adjusting to the major change in her appearance. Her partner, Vince Flores, and her children supported her throughout her recovery.



MH Magazine Launched

Marky Hugh Productions launched their annual magazine at Seafood City Scarborough. Some of their talents performed at the event.



Markham Celebrates Canada Day

The rains did not stop the celebration of Canada Day at Markham Downtown. This annual event has been advocated by the Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians (MFFC) for many years. It is also a fundrais-

ing effort to support the youth group and the Federation.
Manned entirely by dedicated volunteer members, the Filipino food booth is a famous sell-out attraction, and this year's

fundraising drive was no exception. The crowd-pleasing Pinoy barbecue, cooked onsite, lured visitors from across the festival grounds with the aroma of grilling meat. Joining the fundraising menu this year was

halo-halo, a sweet, layered ice dessert that proved to be a massive hit for the hot day.
We'll be seeing you again next year for a day of food and entertainment during Markham's Canada Day celebrations.



Rhianna's 11th Birthday



DK Tijan & Rhianna



Nathalie, Rhianna, Jewel, TJ



Rhianna with fellow MH talents



Rocel's Birthday



MAYOR CHOW MEETS WITH TORONTO'S FILIPINO CANADIAN COMMUNITY

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.



Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow addresses the attendees at the Town Hall meeting. PHOTO: Leny Rose Simbre

In a special town hall meeting, City of Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow meets with leaders, advocates, sponsors, and supporters in the Filipino-Canadian community. The incumbent mayor is registered to run for reelection in the City's municipal election on October 26, 2026.

Dubbed as "Filipino Community Town Hall" and with the theme: "Ating Lungsod, Ating Boses" (Our City, Our Voice), the 2- hour community gathering was held on July 28, 2026, at the Earl Bales Park Community Centre, 4169 Bathurst Street, North York, Toronto, with over 150 people in attendance. Some guests characterised the early evening occasion as a desirable meeting of "the young and the old in the invisible community".

Organised by the Filipino Advisory Council (FAC) in collaboration with community organisations, socio-professional, business and advocacy groups, the 3-hour event was described as " a unique opportunity to sit down with the Mayor of Toronto and make sure the needs, ideas, and voices of the Filipino community are heard directly. Whether you want to ask a question, share your vision for the city, or simply show up to support your neighbours, your presence matters."

Several vital issues and concerns were determined by the attendees af-



Filipino Advisory Council of ficers Tom Tan, Dr Eileen de Villa & Michael Herrera PHOTO: Leny Rose Simbre

ter a 45-minute workshop-style discussion among resident-participants from East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, and downtown Toronto. Among the prioritised public issues presented to the Mayor were housing, mental health, transit, safety, seniors' welfare, and



Toronto Ward 25 Councillor Neethan Shan with community leaders on June 28, 2026 PHOTO: Leny Rose Simbre

community spaces.

In her response, Mayor Chow thanked the town hall event organisers and community leaders for their collaborative spirit in putting on the "one-on-one" gathering. The hizzoner outlined some of the city's current major programs under her leadership, and about her plans for the "next term" related to non-profit co-op housing, community hubs, apartment rental increase protection, support workers' hiring, TTC ride discounts, and 211 communication service for mental health.

Among the community partners and sponsors of the occasion were Gender Inclusive, Leadership, Involvement, Wellness (GILIW), Rise Tribe, Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), Society of Professional Artists, Recreation & Community (SPARC), Filipino Student Association of Canada (FSAC), and other concerned groups & individuals. Notably, former Toronto Medical Officer Eileen De Villa, George Brown Polytechnic

Vice President & CFO Michael Herrera, PIDC Pres-

ident Tom Tan, and City Councillor Neethan Shan, among others, were in attendance at the rare meeting.

One of the highly applauded statements was Mayor Chow's call and challenge when she asked: "Don't you think that it's about time for the Filipino community to have a Councillor in Toronto"? As of July 26, 2026, there are 32 registered candidates for mayor as published by the City Clerk. Likewise, voters will elect 25 city councillors and twelve school trustees for the public, catholic, and French school boards. Many agreed that the Toronto municipal board needs to have a first "Filipino city councillor" to follow the historic achievements of Markham's Alex Chiu, Niagara-on-the-Lake's Max Viola, Brampton's Rowena Santos and Ajax's Lisa Bower. Mabuhay! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).

Canada, Phl Labor Pact Signed

LABOR from page 1

charging or charging by Immigration consultancies here in the Philippines with the intent to hire a particular job seeker," Cacdac said.

Although the country already established labor cooperation with several Canadian provinces, he emphasized that the shared framework with Canada's federal government outlined the principles that will further guide the cross-border labor migration.

Cacdac expressed that the agreement is a significant step towards "making overseas employment safer, fairer, and more accessible for Filipino workers and their families."

Canada pauses parent, grandparent sponsorship

SPONSORSHIP page 15

age the system and reduce wait times.

In a statement posted online, the department said interest in the program continues to exceed the number of available spaces. There are 60,500 applications in progress already and wait times for processing are around 33 months, or up to 66 months in Quebec. The program was launched in 2020, when more than 200,000 permanent residents and citizens expressed interest in sponsoring a parent or grandparent to come to Canada.

Each year, thousands of people who expressed interest are selected to formally apply.

An official with the Immigration Department said the pause will not

change the plan to approve up to 15,000 people for permanent residence in 2026 and 2027 as part of the government's immigration levels strategy.

The pause on accepting new applications is in effect "until further notice," the government said.

Canadian citizens and permanent residents can still apply for a "super visa" to allow their parents and grandparents to visit for five years at a time, and for up to 10 years total, on a temporary basis.

Telus to expand Philippine AI operations in shift away from traditional call centers

Canadian communications technology firm TELUS Corp. plans to increase its investments in the Philip-

pines in the coming years to support the growth of its artificial intelligence (AI)-related services, according to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Trade Secretary Cristina Roque said TELUS' commitment to expand its Philippine operations reflects the country's position as a global hub for digital services.

TELUS' investment plans were discussed during President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s recent state visit to Canada, where he also met with executives from NQX, another Canadian IT-BPM firm.

"This expansion is a testament to the Philippines being a trusted destination for global business services," Roque said.

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Vice Ganda draws backlash over ‘It’s Showtime’ skit involving Baby Dolls member

“It’s Showtime” host Vice Ganda apologized Saturday to viewers offended by remarks made to dancer Johaira during the show’s “Memerimar” segment. The controversy came from a live episode where Vice Ganda spat water onto the face of Johaira, a member of the show’s resident dance group, Baby Dolls, as part of a slapstick routine. Moments later, the host commented, “Anong nangyari sa ‘yo? Ba’t nagputik ka?” (“What happened to you? Why do you look like you’re covered in mud?”) Clips of the incident drew criticism from viewers who argued the remark targeted Johaira’s skin tone and crossed the line from comedy to humiliation. In an official statement released on social media on July 25, the television host directly addressed the public’s grievances. “Nakarating po sa aming kaalaman na may mga Madlang People po na hindi nagustuhan o na-offend sa ilan sa aming jokes o biruan dito sa Showtime pati rin sa ginagawa namin sa ‘Memerimar,’” Vice Ganda said.

“(It has come to our attention that some of our viewers were offended or displeased by some of our jokes here on ‘Showtime,’ as well as what we do in ‘Memerimar.’”)



The host emphasized that offending viewers was never the production’s intent. “They found the jokes offensive or insensitive... the last thing we want is to displease you o hindi mapasaya ang aming Madlang People,” Vice Ganda added. “Kaya naman ina-acknowledge namin ang inyong sentimyento at humihingi po kami ng paumanhin sa inyo and we will try to do better.” (The last thing we want is to displease you or fail to make our audience happy. That is why we acknowledge your sentiments, sincerely apologize to you, and we will try to do better.”) Following the statement, several social media users praised the host for acknowledging the mistake and taking swift accountability. Neither Johaira nor the management of ABS-CBN has issued separate statements regarding the incident as of posting.

Ivana Alawi - Kara David FAMAS public service honor tie get mixed online reactions

A tie between actress-content creator Ivana Alawi and

veteran broadcast journalist Kara David for the Best Host for Public Service award at the inaugural FAMAS Broadcast Awards has sparked debate on social media, with netizens divided over what defines public service in today’s media landscape. The awards ceremony, held on Monday, marked the first edition of the FAMAS Broadcast Awards, expanding the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences’ recognition beyond cinema to honor excellence in television, documentaries, podcasts, digital content and other broadcast platforms. Alawi and David shared the Best Host for Public Service trophy, recognizing their efforts to use media in serving communities and creating positive social impact. David posted on Instagram, “Waaaaaahh! Maraming salamat FAMAS awards for Broadcast Arts. This was totally unexpected. Salamat po sa pagkilala sa aming mga programa.” Shortly after the winners were announced, social media users expressed mixed reactions over the tie. While many congratulated both women, others questioned whether influencer-driven charitable content should be evaluated alongside public service journalism.



Several netizens argued that David’s decades-long career in journalism, highlighted by investigative documentaries on “I-Witness” and stories that amplify marginalized communities, represents a different standard of public service. David, a Peabody Award recipient and journalism professor, also won Best Documentary during the ceremony for “Embalsamador De Motor,” an episode of “I-Witness.” Others, however, defended Alawi, pointing to her large-scale charitable initiatives through her online series “Ivana for All.” Supporters said the actress and YouTube creator has used her massive digital following to provide direct assistance to families in need, raise public awareness and mobilize donations, arguing that tangible community impact should also be recognized as public service.

Despite the differing opinions, both awardees emphasized in their acceptance speeches that public service is rooted in compassion, sincerity and a genuine commitment to helping others. Alawi also received the Best Public Service Show award, while David emerged as one of the night’s biggest winners after taking home multiple honors.

Vice Ganda, Kim Chiu exchange remarks after FAMAS speech draws backlash from fans

Vice Ganda and Kim Chiu exchanged remarks on social media Tuesday after Vice Ganda’s acceptance speech at the inaugural FAMAS Broadcast Arts Awards drew criticism from fans who noticed that Vice failed to mention Chiu while thanking the hosts of “It’s Showtime.” Vice Ganda won Best Host for Entertainment at the inaugural FAMAS Broadcast Arts Awards held on July 20. ABS-CBN’s noontime program “It’s Showtime” also received the Best Variety Show award. During the acceptance speech, Vice Ganda thanked several of the show’s hosts but did not mention Chiu, leading to some fans questioning the omission on social media. Addressing the issue during an episode of “It’s Showtime,” Vice Ganda said, “Kim Chiu, congratulations to us! Nakalimutan ko banggitin yung pangalan mo kahapon. Pasensya na po. 16 po kasi yung host. Wala akong prompter.” (Kim Chiu, congratulations to us! I forgot to mention your name yesterday. I’m sorry. There are 16 hosts, and I didn’t have a teleprompter.) Chiu responded jokingly, “Sanay na ako hindi nababanggit. Di ba nga nung nakaraan din.” (I’m already used to not being mentioned. Wasn’t it the same the last time?)



Vice Ganda replied, “Di nababanggit pero pinapasalamat ng personal.” (You may not be mentioned publicly, but you’re thanked personally.) Despite the on-air banter, several fans continued to express disappointment online. One X user wrote, “Strange how someone could forget to mention her name when she’s an essential part of the show — one of the main hosts while the newer ones were mentioned.” Vice Ganda responded by posting, “The toxicity of these fantards! @prinsesachinita.” Another user criticized the explanation, writing that it appeared to be favoritism because newer hosts were acknowledged while Chiu was not. Quoting the post and tagging Chiu, Vice Ganda wrote, “Grabe the kacheapan of these fans! Look @prinsesachinita.” (These fans are being incredibly cheap! Look, @prinsesachinita.) About an hour later, Chiu appeared to address the issue on X without directly mentioning Vice Ganda. “Ayaw ko na sanang palakihin ito. Pero bilang mga taga supporta hindi naman cguro ka cheapan ang tawag duon. Cguro po marahil sa sobrang pagmamahal at supporta nila sa idolo nila ay protective sila. Initial reaction po cguro ito. Hindi sa tinolerate ko sila pero sana hinayaan na natin ito. Kung wala ang mga taong sumusuporta at lubos na nagmamahal sa atin wala din tatangkilik sa lahat ng ginagawa natin.” (I didn’t want to make this any bigger. But as supporters, I don’t think it’s fair to call them cheap or petty. Perhaps they’re simply being protective because of their love and support for their idol. Maybe that was just their initial reaction. I’m not tolerating their behavior, but I hope we could just let it pass. Without the people who support and genuinely love us, no one would patronize the work that we do.) She later added, “Let’s spread love and love always!!!!” Vice Ganda also appealed to his supporters to avoid attacking others online. “Sa aking mga LITTLE PONIES hindi sapat at katanggap tanggap na dahilan na mahal nyo ko para maging masama kyo sa iba. Ipinagpapasalamat ko ang supporta

nyo but i will not enable your toxic behavior just because i seek ur support. I love you my mature and thinking Little Ponies!” (To my Little Ponies, loving me is not a sufficient or acceptable reason to be unkind to others. I appreciate your support, but I will not enable toxic behavior just because I want your support. I love my mature and thoughtful Little Ponies!) “Little Ponies” is the name of Vice Ganda’s fan community. He later injected humor into the situation with another post, writing, “Sa mga kamag anak ng Nanay ko sana po wag nyo kong ibash dahil nakaligtaan kong imention ang Nanay ko sa speech ko kagabi.” (To my mother’s relatives, I hope you won’t bash me because I forgot to mention my mother in my speech last night.) “Ay di po kami magkaaway. Magka-message po kami now. As in.” (Oh, we’re not fighting. We’re actually messaging each other right now. Seriously.),” he finally said. Vice Ganda has been with “It’s Showtime” since its launch in 2009, initially as an evictable judge before becoming a main host, while Chiu joined the program as an official regular host in September 2020 after making several guest-host appearances.

School in Philippines receive Books Donated from Canada

Gregorio Moralizon Elementary School II (151M) in Manay, Davao Oriental has unloaded the box of books with students looking on. Principal Melvin extends his gratitude and sincere appreciation to the benefactors.

He adds: “...thank you for making a

difference in the students’ educational journey. The donations will strengthen our literacy initiatives and provide our learners with opportunities to read, learn and grow. Every book opened and every lesson learned is an

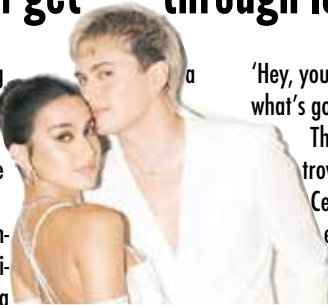
investment in the dreams, knowledge, and future of every learner” Malou De Jesus Dizon collected the books and shipped them to the Philippines.



James Reid says Issa Pressman helped him get through losing P150M

James Reid revealed that he lost P150 million during one of the darkest periods of his career, crediting girlfriend Issa Pressman for helping him recognize what was happening and supporting him through the ordeal. Speaking on Gary Valenciano’s podcast “Unshaken,” the actor-singer said the amount represented almost everything he had earned over the past decade. “That was like the last 10 years of work that I’ve done, probably more. It was almost all of what I’ve saved,” James said. James said the financial loss stemmed from

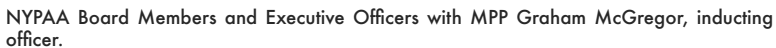
problems involving former business partner at Careless Music, whom he considered both a colleague and a close friend. Because of their relationship, James admitted he initially failed to see the warning signs. “It was Issa that woke me up to all of it,” he said. “She’s the one that really had to shake me and be like,



‘Hey, you really need to wake up. This is, I think, really what’s going on.’” The difficult period also coincided with the controversial Wavy Baby Music Festival in Mandaue, Cebu, in 2023. Produced by Careless Music, the event drew criticism over delays and logistical issues. “It was a nightmare... just problem after problem after problem, and police showing up because it was just not planned properly,” James recalled, adding that the project was handled by his former business

partner. Despite the setbacks, James said he found comfort in his growing relationship with Issa. “As horrific as everything that was going on right then, there was also something even more beautiful happening at the same time,” he said. James eventually ended both his business and personal relationship with his former partner. Looking back, he said the experience changed his outlook on life and strengthened his relationship with Issa. “That love became my compass,” he said. “I believe that God sent specifically the brightest light in my darkest moments.”

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.



The Honourable Graham
McGregor, Ontario Minis-
ter of Citizenship & Mul-

One of the main highlights of the 5-hour gathering was honouring the four founding leaders and directors of the admirable organisation. The NYPPA pillars accorded plaques of recognition to Bob A. San Juan, Ed Sotto, Vilma Tahsin and Roger Tarca. They were cited “for creating a last-

Moreover, three Fil-Can community leaders were conferred with the “NYPAA Lifetime Achievement Award 2026” for a “legacy of faith, a life of service, and inspiration to generations”. The awardees include Gani Gregorio, NABA co-founder & commissioner and former PBA-Mariwasa basketball player; Agnes Pasaporte Miranda, business leader, advocate & philanthropist and Co-founder and Senior Executive Vice Chairman of World

Ablly hosted by Merecy Cauton, Dr. Grace Vincent and Jomar Cabrera, the lively program includes the singing of national anthems, welcome addresses, brief speeches, vocal renditions, special dance performances, acknowledgements, video presentation and closing remarks. Admi-

As expected, the celebratory milestone cum fundraising occasion was certainly an “unforgettable evening of elegance, great food, music, dancing, fellowship and social networking”. A crisp salute to the event leaders, organisers, “at sa mga tumulong at punong-abala”! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)



rably, the excellent evening performers were amazing singers Lilac Cana, Bevs Saraza, Cristina Grace Duce, Alexandra & Kassandra, Maria Franchesca Lungayan, Ed Ravalo, Jelly Beans, and motivational presenter Ronz Turla. The highly-applauded group dancers include Air'z Dance Squad and Dynamic Motion Dancers of Canada. DJs Roc,



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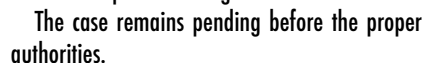
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"Since then, Kim has discovered material information that came to light in 2025, which prompted her to take legal action. As a result, a criminal complaint filed by Kim against Ms. Lakambini Chiu is currently pending before the



Canadian books reaches School in Iloilo

Tigbanaba Elementary School (175M) is located in Barangay Tigbanaba, in an upland area in Igaras, Iloilo. Due to the mountainous landscape, students travel a considerable distance by foot through paths and trails, which



becomes a challenge during the rainy season. The school, being in an almost isolated upland location, is not only the center of learning, but also becomes the venue for community activities, and the evacuation center during calamities.

The school has 10 classrooms, however, 2 are unusable; the kinder classroom doubles as the library. Books are few, but even so, the remediation programs are able to cope with the lack of reading materials.

We thank our benefactors for the book donations. These books help to improve literacy in the Philippines. Without enough reading books, teachers are at a loss as they are unable to have the means to have the students practice reading, and ultimately improve their comprehension.

The books were collected and shipped by Malou De Jesus Dizon of Toronto.



Bangs Garcia reacquires Filipino citizenship, becomes dual citizen with UK

Former actress Bangs Garcia has reacquired her Filipino citizenship, making her a dual citizen of the Philippines and the United Kingdom.

Bangs shared the news on Instagram, where she expressed gratitude for holding both Filipino and British citizenship. She became a British citizen in 2024, several years after marrying her husband, Lloyd Birchmore, in 2016.

In her post, Bangs said her reacquisition of Philippine citizenship came nearly two years after taking her oath of allegiance as a British citizen.

"Dual citizenship: unlocked today! Officially Filipino (again) & British," she wrote.

She also pointed out a coincidence between the two milestones, saying she wore the same pair of heels during both her British and Philippine oath of allegiance ceremonies.

"Here's a fun little coincidence: I only just noticed that I wore the exact same pair of heels to both my Oath



of Allegiance ceremonies for the UK and the Philippines! I guess these heels were destined for dual citizenship too," Bangs said.

The actress also responded to followers who asked about the process of reacquiring Filipino citizenship. She described it as straightforward, saying she submitted her application on July 9 and received approval the following day.

Bangs said she was able to secure an earlier oath-taking schedule after a cancellation became available.

"I got lucky there was a cancellation for the Oath taking so I was able to have mine expedited for only £10 extra fee on top of the £46 application fee. The new passport application is only £55," she shared.

Bangs is currently based in London with her husband and their two daughters, Amelia and Isabella.

Aside from managing several businesses in the United Kingdom, she remains active on social media, where she shares updates about her family and life abroad.

Nadine Lustre welcomes life beyond love teams, praises Alden Richards as co-star

Viva artist Nadine Lustre says stepping outside the traditional love-team formula has made her career more creatively fulfilling, allowing her to collaborate with new artists such as Alden Richards, whom she described as a supportive and highly collaborative leading man in their first major project together, "Love, Siargao."

The award-winning actress said the Philippine entertainment industry has gradually become more open to actors working with different partners which she believes benefits both performers and audiences by bringing fresh perspectives to every project.

"I think it's great that, this time around, our actors are no longer confined to a love team or just one screen partner. What makes projects exciting for me are the people I get to work with. This time, it's no longer repetitive. Every project has a different flavor, and it becomes more collaborative," Lustre said.



Her latest collaboration pairs her with Richards for the first time in a full-length acting project, although the two have known each other professionally for years.

Beyond his easygoing personality, Lustre said Richards' collaborative approach elevated their scenes, as the two often exchanged ideas and dissected their characters' motivations before filming.

Meanwhile, Lustre also expressed openness to collaborating with fellow actress Kathryn Bernardo, whose former on-screen partnership with Daniel Padilla, popularly known as KathNiel, was often seen as a counterpart — and at times a rival — to Lustre's own JaDine pairing with James Reid. She noted that the two actresses have already worked together once on a commercial endorsement.

"Yes, why not? We've actually worked together before, but it was only for an endorsement," she said.

Beyond acting, Lustre continues to balance music, entrepreneurship and advocacy, saying she remains open to projects that challenge her creatively while aligning with her personal values.

Donny Pangilinan vows more inspiration, motivation after 2nd Men Who Matter award

Actor Donny Pangilinan promised to continue paying forward the motivation he's obtained from the men in his life to everyone looking up to him.

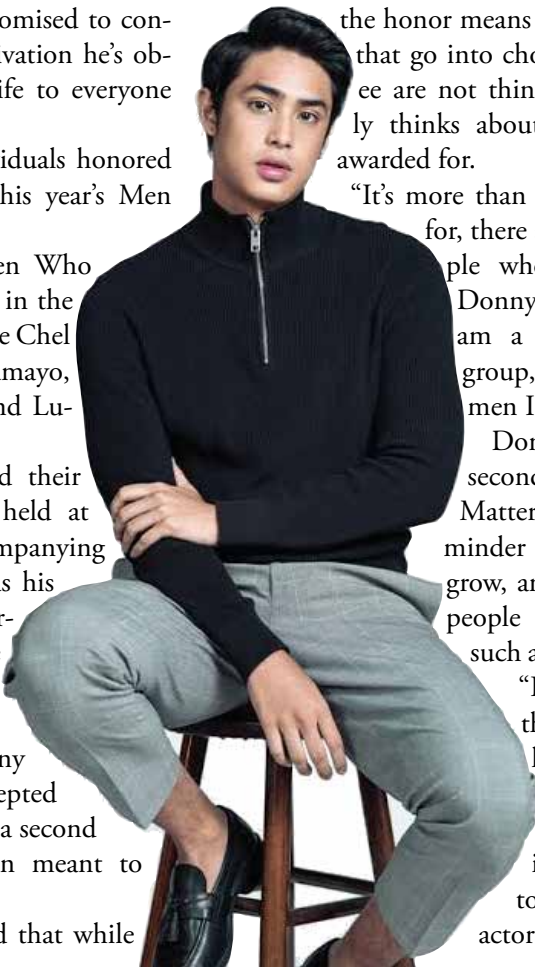
Donny was one of 14 individuals honored by magazine PeopleAsia for this year's Men Who Matter awards.

This is Donny's second Men Who Matter recognition after being in the 2022 batch of winners alongside Chel Diokno, Stanley Ng, Carl Tamayo, Ed Lingao, Chele Gonzalez and Lucio Tan III.

The 2026 awardees received their trophies during a ceremony held at Lanson Place, Pasay. Accompanying Donny to this year's event was his mother and fellow actress Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan, a change from 2022 when his father Anthony was his companion.

Philstar.com spoke to Donny outside the event after he accepted his new award and asked what a second Men Who Matter recognition meant to him.

The humbled actor admitted that while



the honor means a lot, the aspects that go into choosing an awardee are not things he consciously thinks about, much less be awarded for.

"It's more than I could ever ask for, there are so many people who deserve this," Donny continued. "I am a part of a [sic] group, many of them men I look up to."

Donny labelled his second Men Who Matter award as a reminder to do better, grow, and be a voice for people who may need such at any given time.

"If any way in this life I can help someone be more inspired and motivated, it's always going to be worth it," the actor said.



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Maricel Soriano to 'Young Maricel' Fyang Smith: You're your own person



Maricel Soriano with her "Haunted Carnival" costars Fyang Smith and Julia Barretto.

Maricel Soriano is all praises for Pinoy Big Brother Big Winner Fyang Smith, who has been touted as the veteran star's rightful successor in showbiz firmament.

Soriano and Smith were together during the cast presentation of their upcoming film "Haunted Carnival," which is Regal Entertainment's official entry to the 2026 Metro Manila Film Festival.

Interviewed by reporters, Soriano said she is looking forward to working with Smith, to whom she has been compared with because of their frank and quick-witted

haba ang narating mo, kung gaano kataas ang naabot mo, ikaw yon."

This is the first time that Soriano and Smith would be working together for a project, although they have collaborated last May when the former invited the Kapamilya star for a vlog.

Recalling that instance, the veteran star said she was surprised to learn that Smith was very talented in terms of acting.

"Sabi ko, 'Ang husay-husay mo naman pala!'" Tuwang-tuwa talaga ako sa kanya kase ang galing galing nya," she said of Smith.

As for their fellow costar Julia Barretto who was also present during the cast reveal, Soriano said she was very happy when she learned that they would be working together.

"Hanga ako dito, napakaganda, napakagaling na babae neto. Napalaki ng maayos, mabuti ang pagpapalaki. Natutuwa ako sa kanya. And I'm very happy dahil nakita ko ulit sya, sa tagal na di nakita," she said.

Barretto returned the compliment and told her that she is looking forward to building her own relationship with Soriano and the rest of the cast. She noted that it is her mom who was really friends with Soriano even when she was younger.

"We're going to build our separate relationship. Kase nagkasama na kami through my mom. Si mommy, love na love na love ni mommy si Tita Maricel. So finally kami naman ang magkaron ng bonding."

Aside from Soriano, Smith and Barretto, other cast members include John Arcilla, James Reid, RK Bagatsing, Joaquin Arce,

Charlie Fleming and Prince Carlos, among others. The movie is directed by Joey de Guzman, who has previously helmed an episode of "Shake Rattle and Roll," also for MMFF.

"Haunted Carnival," which has yet to start filming, is the third installment of the "Haunted" horror franchise under Regal, after "Haunted Mansion" in 2015, and "Haunted Forest" in 2017.

This also marked Soriano's return to the MMFF scene since the 2013 movie "Girl, Boy, Bakla, Tomboy" with Vice Ganda.

'Para may divorce': Barbie Forteza dreams of Las Vegas wedding

Barbie Forteza gave a playful answer when asked about her dream wedding, saying she would love to get married in Las Vegas while wearing a Vera Wang gown.

During the grand mediacon for Regal Entertainment's upcoming film "Saving Cherry," Barbie was asked to describe her ideal wedding.

"Dream wedding ko? I wanna get married in Vegas. In Vera Wang. Para may divorce," she said.

Her candid response drew laughter from members of the media, with the actress making a reference to Nevada's divorce laws. Divorce

remains unavailable for most couples in the Philippines.

Barbie's answer came as she discussed portraying a married woman for the first time in her acting career.

The actress revealed that "Saving Cherry" marks her most mature role to date, as the story delves into marriage and the complexities that come with it.

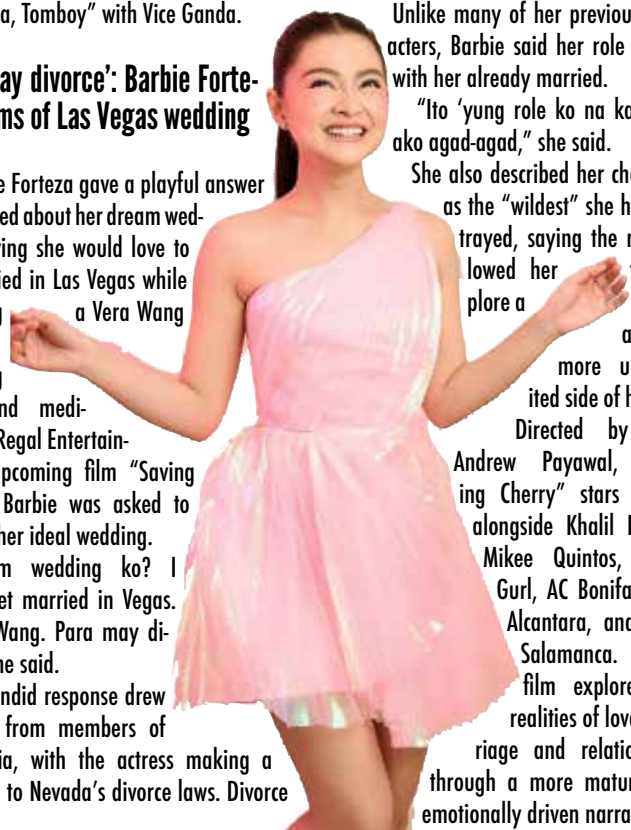
"And most of all, ito 'yung most mature role ko 'coz we will tackle about marriage, e," she said.

Unlike many of her previous characters, Barbie said her role begins with her already married.

"Ito 'yung role ko na kasal na ako agad-agad," she said.

She also described her character as the "wildest" she has portrayed, saying the role allowed her to explore a freer and more uninhibited side of herself.

Directed by Ivan Andrew Payawal, "Saving Cherry" stars Barbie alongside Khalil Ramos, Mikee Quintos, Sassa Gurl, AC Bonifacio, JC Alcantara, and Mika Salamanca. The film explores the realities of love, marriage and relationships through a more mature and emotionally driven narrative.



'Hindi pa para sa akin': Claudine Barretto puts love life on hold



Actress Claudine Barretto said she is in no rush to fall in love again, admitting that she is not yet ready to commit to another serious relationship after trying to date following her previous romance.

Speaking to the media after the successful "Maddox Iconic Runway: Diamond Jewelry Fashion Show 2026" held on July 30 at Shangri-La Plaza in Mandaluyong City, Claudine shared that she is currently single and has chosen to put her love life on hold.

"Wala muna! Ano muna, pause after 12 years. Nag-try naman talaga ako na, I mean, mag-date and all," she said when asked if she wished for a new romance on her birthday. She turned 47 last July 20.

"Pero parang hindi pa para sa akin. Hindi pa siguro talaga dumarating," she added.

Claudine also clarified speculation linking her romantically to Milano Sanchez, saying their relationship never became official.

"Unang-una, hindi naman talaga naging kami ni Milano. We were dating, we were dating and hindi kami umabot ng two months," she said.

"But we're good friends. We still talk. We

see each other from time to time. So, walang ano..."

The actress also opened up about her emotional birthday celebration, admitting she initially did not want to celebrate because she was still grieving the loss of her brother and mother.

"Ayoko sana kasi nga, siyempre, nawala 'yung kuya ko, 'yung mommy ko. Parang...

sabi ko, pass muna siguro itong birthday na ito," she recalled.

Despite her initial hesitation, Claudine said the surprise celebration organized by her family, friends, and supporters made her realize the importance of appreciating life's milestones.

"Pero alam mo, parang na-realize ko, dapat talaga siguro every birthday, mag-cel-

brate kahit maliit. Pero 'yun, sobrang happy. Sobrang happy ako," she said.

Meanwhile, Claudine was among the celebrity guests and muses at the Maddox Iconic Runway: Diamond Jewelry Fashion Show 2026, where Maddox Jewelry founder Charo Cordial shared that the actress has long been one of her biggest inspirations.

According to Cordial, Claudine would be her top choice to portray her if a film about her life were ever made, citing not only the actress' talent but also her kindness and humility.

Cordial also expressed gratitude for the overwhelming success of the fashion event, which marked another milestone for the jewelry brand.

"Tonight is deeply personal for me. Five years ago, Maddox Jewelry began with a simple dream — to create jewelry that was not only beautiful, but meaningful. Jewelry that people could wear not just to complete an outfit, but to express who they are," Cordial said.

"From the very beginning, I believed that luxury should never be out of reach, because confidence is not defined by status, age, or background. It is something every person deserves to feel," she added.

Aljur Abrenica, AJ Raval dodge marriage questions anew

Celebrity couple Aljur Abrenica and AJ Raval subtly dodged inquiries about them tying the knot in the future, shifting

focus instead to their children.

Aljur and AJ attended a jewelry fashion show last July to mark their first runway appearance as a couple.

Media spoke with the two actors, asking AJ hasplans for a full showbiz comeback.

AJ's last acting credit was a Mother's Day special episode for weekly drama anthology "Magpakailanman" but prior to that she hasn't starred in any project since departing streaming platform Viva-max to focus on her family. wThe actress confirmed a gradual return, though at the moment she is prioritizing her family and education. AJ also revealed that she has been working on maintaining a fit body after each pregnancy through workouts with the help of Aljur.

The actor was then asked an update of marriage between him and AJ. Aljur initially tried to avoid the question by adding to AJ's response about her fitness before laughing with the press.

"Everything happens at the right time. Kung ano man ang nangyayari ngayon, ang masasabi namin [ay] our priority is our kids," Aljur said. "Lahat ng mga bata. That's it."

AJ and Aljur have three kids together. AJ has one daughter from a previous relationship, while Aljur has two sons with ex-wife Kylie Padilla.

Aljur also confirmed he was being approached for movies and reiterated that AJ had projects lined up, "Very thankful sa Panginoon... We're grateful. Abangan niyo."



How introverts Kathryn Bernardo and James Reid found their chemistry in ‘Someone, Someday’

Both introverts, Kathryn Bernardo and James Reid needed a little help from their co-stars and team to break the ice and develop their chemistry in the ABS-CBN series “Someone, Someday,” now streaming on Netflix.

Kathryn and James play childhood best friends Billy and Jordan in their first team-up series.

“To be honest, going into our roles as best friends since childhood and jumping right into that wasn’t easy. We had a lot of help from the whole cast actually to help break the ice and to really help build the relationship of Billy and Jordan,” James shared during the Netflix Philippines event.

“I don’t think I had to really, like, what’s the word? Conception? About Kath before working together other than she’s talented. But being able to work with her on the show, (seeing) how much attention she has to details, to the story, the perfectionist in Kath, I super appreciate it, especially this project. It’s my first project (in such a long time), and I think that was extremely helpful to me.”

James added the car scene served as an ice breaker for them.

“Because it was so crazy. The scene that we had in the trailer, like we were car racing, it was so fun. It was an icebreaker.”

For Kathryn, she expected her co-actor to be “really shy.”



“And I was right,” she said with a laugh, recalling their first meeting. “He was very shy. I’m the type of person pa naman na it takes a while for me to warm up and usually may isa na mag-break ng ice. So, the problem with us was, ‘Sino?’

“I was shy, he is shy. So, parang, ‘So, paano ‘to?’ Because we are childhood best friends (in the series). So, it’s a group effort. And also I think it worked because we didn’t force anything because I think anything that’s forced, the audience will see it.

“I think personally, what helped me was just trying

to create a world for Billy and Jordan. So, when we’re on set, and then when the director says, ‘Action,’ it’s like, ‘OK, this is Billy and Jordan talking.’ And then once we hear, ‘Cut!’ It’s James and Kath (again). And I think it worked.”

The beauty of doing a series, according to Kathryn, is that it gives actors an ample amount of time to get to know each other – something that happened with her and James. Through the project, she was able to get to know him even more.

“I know James not so much still because we don’t have common friends, and we haven’t had any common projects together. So, James is very unfamiliar to me. But now, every taping, I’ve gotten to know him more, and I’ve become curious about him. I think it helped, too. If you’re too familiar with a person, it’s a different (approach).”

Kathryn was able to discover more about James as an actor – how he gets into the zone, prepares for his role and processes his emotions.

“It’s nice to witness that during the taping, and it helped create the world of Billy and Jordan, which is

really different from Kath and James. So, you have to see both... I hope you enjoy it because it’s a beautiful friendship we have talaga.”

Director Dolly Dulu described James and Kathryn as a “good pair.”

Kathryn and James are paired up for the first time in the ABS-CBN series, which is now streaming on Netflix.

“Nagkaroon talaga ng warm up dun sa proseso ng paggawa ng chemistry because they are both introverted,” he told The STAR. “It came in naturally because it took a group effort from everybody else to help them warm up to each other. And when they finally warmed up, lumipad na yung chemistry nila. You could see it in the clips that they are very cute together.”

“They have chemistry, and it’s something that you don’t force. It’s something that happened naturally. They have magic, I guess,” he added.

Also directed by Chad Vidanes, “Someone, Someday” follows a woman scarred by her past who creates a modern dating app to help women find the right love at the right time. Through the love stories she brings together – and while navigating the challenges in her own life – she begins to rediscover what love truly means for herself.

Maja Salvador and Dimples Romana are also part of the cast.

Mississauga Community Safety Specialist Runs for City Council Post

by Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Gerald Adad, a community safety professional, is running to become a Councillor in the City of Mississauga, Ontario on October 26, 2026 (Monday). The Canadian national of Filipino origin is reported to have registered as a City Council candidate for Ward 7 in Ontario’s third-largest city in terms of population. Mississauga’s Ward 7 consists primarily of the Fairview and Cooksville neighbourhoods, as well as part of the Erindale neighbourhood.

Born, raised and a lifelong resident of Mississauga since 1996, Adad spent a lot of time in Cooksville and Mississauga Valley. He was a high school student at Father Michael Goetz, and as a “Goetz Gator”, he wanted to be in community and public service, saying that “it was only right for me to dedicate my life to giving back to the city that was so good to me and my family.” Adad completed his Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Criminology & History program at the University of Toronto in 2017. Licensed as an International Crime Prevention Specialist with CPTED-Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design certification, Adad was trained to design streets and spaces that are safer by default.

His community volunteer



engagements include serving as a Volunteer Probation Officer with the Ministry of the Solicitor General from 2016 to 2020, Outreach Lead at Safe City Mississauga in 2018, and as Advisor in 2021 with Filipino Youth Fellowship- under its Civil Rights and Social Action program. He has also worked with Peel Regional Police and Filipino Canadian Civic Action Network to host community safety townhalls with the Filipino community in the wake of the Lapu-Lapu tragedy in Vancouver. Currently, he is an Assistant Coach in Filipino Martial Arts (Pekiti Tirsia Kali) in Mississauga with Sabong Kali under Mataas Na Guro Justin Patricio Fernando.

Adad has also worked with the Cooksville Business Improvement Area in Ward 7, a neighbourhood

he considers that “played a part in his formative years. Moreover, Adad ran a Neighbourhood Watch program, with more than 6,000 members and launched a Business Watch in Cooksville to protect local businesses and build bridges with local law enforcement.

For seven years, from 2017 to the present, Adad has been employed full-time at Safe City Mississauga in various leadership capacities, serving as Manager in several challenging assignments on Neighbourhood Services, Youth Services, and the Countering Hate in the Community project. He has extensively and collaboratively worked with Peel Regional Police, City Council, various levels of government, and other non-profit groups, focusing on collaborative crime prevention solutions for everything from vehicle theft to hate crimes.

The Council candidate has chaired the Peel Regional Police’s Countering Hate Committee, leading 35 partners including service providers, advocacy

groups, and both municipalities in jointly designing and delivering anti-hate programs to over 4,000 community members across Peel Region. His work attracted international attention when Adad was invited to speak at the 4th International 2SLGBTQ+ Conference for Criminal Justice Professionals in Austin, Texas, USA in 2025.

Asked why he is running for Councillor, Adad responded that he has frequently heard from many residents in Ward 7 and across Mississauga about “continuing concerns regarding community safety and the future of our city as we continue to grow, study, live and work here.” Reasoning that “Most candidates discover community safety at election time. I’ve done it for a living. It is not a promise, it’s a track record!

Gerald Adad, a public safety expert and fellow “kababayan” with a purpose, hopes to “continue serving our great city as your Councillor and to bring a safer and happier future for our community.” Pledging, Adad added, “Crime prevention is my life’s work. Let’s make Ward 7 a safer and happier place - together.” Get out the vote and elect our first Filipino-Canadian councillor in Mississauga! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses at Significant Developments

PHILIPPINE from page 5

most probably move back to the Philippines, and 21% said they are certain about returning. Thus, only one in five Filipino workers abroad expressed certainty about returning home.” Further, the report said, “This emotional texture matters because return is not a purely rational calculation. It is also a

feeling about home, and about whether the Philippines can hold what the OFW has become.” “Napagpasyahan ng ulat na ang emosyonal na pagiging kumplikado ng pakiramdam ng parehong kaligayahan at pangungulila, bagama’t laganap sa mga OFW, ay hindi sapat upang maibalik ang mga ito. Sa katotohanan, ang takot na mawala

ang lahat ng kanilang pinaghirapan sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang kalagayan sa Pilipinas ay pumipigil sa marami na makauwi. Ang nawawala, para sa marami, ay kumpiyansa. Kumpiyansa na may mga trabahong dapat balikan. Kumpiyansa na hindi mabubura ng isang medikal na emerhensiya ang inabot ng isang dekada upang maitayo.

Kumpiyansa na ang mga paaralan, mga kalsada at ang mga patakaran at sistema ay mga suliranin, na ang pagbabalik sa bayan o ating bansa ay hindi mo mararamdaman na isang hakbang na paurong at walang saysay.

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Why showbiz needs more of Dimples Romana

Dimples is part of the series titled ‘Someone Someday,’ where she plays Tita Precious, the woman who sees Kathryn’s character Billy through childhood. ‘As for my character, she’s deep. She kind of grows on you. She’s not someone you immediately understand. What I love about her is how real she is.’



this industry. My gift is I am able to hype whoever it is I’m working with,” she told me with her trademark smile. “That’s what I do. Kath, I just needed to remind her how beautiful she is and how good she is at what she does. Once that button clicks,

tuloy-tuloy na siya.” Think about it. How many people would describe their gift as making someone else feel more confident? But it is simply who she is. It is also why so many younger stars naturally gravitate toward her. Kathryn. Julia Montes. Andrea Brillantes. Through the years, she’s become an unofficial mentor, older sister, and second mom to many of today’s biggest names. She even laughed while telling me she’s become one of the industry’s original “showbiz moms.” “Kathryn is one of my OG babies,” she shared. “Earlier in my career, whenever they were launching future superstars, I was usually the mommy. Kathryn, Julia Montes, Andrea Brillantes.” That’s a role she’s embraced both on- and off-screen. People know her as the actress. Others know her as one of the country’s most trusted endorsers. Many now wake up with her every morning on “Gud Morning Kapatid.” Then she goes home and becomes a hands-on mom to three children before creating social media content that somehow manages to be trendy without ever looking like she’s trying too hard. If you’ve seen her TikTok content lately, you’ll know what I mean. Hair trends? Check. Nail trends? Check. She’s game for almost anything, and somehow she makes it look effortless. Fans even joke online, “Is that really a mom of three Vampire?”

Having been in the showbiz industry and on the field interviewing superstars day in and day out for more than 15 years on the entertainment beat, I’ve learned that one of the biggest compliments you can give a celebrity has nothing to do with awards, box-office numbers, or endorsement deals. It’s this: “She’s exactly the same person when the cameras are off.” That’s Dimples Romana. I first had a real conversation with her in Cebu when I visited the set of “The Iron Heart,” and she played Selene on the show. Beforehand, it was purely in and out of coverage for projects she was in as well. I remember how pleasant her aura was. I got to know her better when she joined TV5’s morning show “Gud Morning Kapatid” as the main host in 2023. Since then, I always looked forward to our on- and off-cam conversations. She’s one of the most authentic people you’ll ever meet in this industry. In a business where everyone is fighting for attention, Dimples has built a career doing something completely different. She makes other people shine. I was reminded of that during our recent interview for “Someone Someday,” her primetime return where she reunites with Kathryn Bernardo 16 years after “Mara Clara.” While many actors would naturally talk about their own comeback or the excitement of landing another major role, Dimples immediately opened the conversation to be shifted to Kathryn. “It is important that you know what your gift is in

“I’m completely apolitical,” she said. “Nothing in me is too strong of an opinion for me to voice it out. If people want to voice out their opinions, that’s on them. It takes a lot of courage. I grew up in a very humble home. My father, my grandmother... I realized there’s always power in humility and keeping it to yourself.” She’s proof that longevity doesn’t always come from making the most noise but from consistently showing up, treating people well, and letting your work speak for itself. People’s trust is not something you can manufacture. You earn it one relationship at a time, one project at a time, one act of kindness at a time, and she has been consistent since decades ago because that is who she is. After all these years covering entertainment, I’ve realized the celebrities who leave the biggest impression are the ones who make everyone around them feel like stars, too. And that’s exactly who Dimples has always been.

‘I love hard’: Mika Salamanca says cheating ex betrayed her twice

Kapuso actress Mika Salamanca opened up about one of the most painful chapters of her love life, revealing that she stayed with a former boyfriend even after he cheated on her twice. Mika shared the candid revelation during the grand mediacon of Regal Entertainment’s upcoming film “Saving Cherry,” where the cast discussed love, forgiveness and second chances. During the press conference, the cast members were asked whether they believed in giving second chances to a partner who had been unfaithful. For Mika, the answer was an unequivocal no. “No! No talaga. Kasi, kapag nag-cheat talagang may lamat na, e. Hindi mo na maibabalik ‘yung tiwala. And magsa-suffer lang ‘yung relationship. So, it’s a big NO!”



she said. Despite her firm stance today, the actress admitted she once endured repeated heartbreak because of how deeply she loved. Asked about the craziest thing she had ever done for love, Mika said: “When I love kasi, I love hard. And one crazy thing I did for love is yung iniwan ko... I surrendered my green card for that person.” She then disclosed that she remained in the relationship even after discovering her boyfriend had been unfaithful not just once, but twice. “Yung isa pa, siguro I stayed din kahit nag-cheat siya ng dalawang beses! Du’n sa best friend niya tsaka du’n sa ex niya,” she said. While Mika reflected on the lessons she learned from a past relationship, she also gave an update on her present love life. Although she stopped short of confirming the real status of her relationship with fellow Sparkle artist Will Ashley, the actress hinted that their bond has continued to grow following their stint on “Pinoy Big Brother: Celebrity Collab Edition.” Asked about their current relationship, Mika smiled and replied: “You mean, the real score? I would say it’s high! Actually, our relationship is getting deeper.” She said Will has remained consistent in pursuing her since they left the reality show. “I’m getting to know him better in the passing of days. You know, Will is someone who’s very consistent with me after PBB. Until now, he’s very consistent in pursuing me. On my part, I’m strongly considering what with all the efforts he’s been exerting,” the actress said. Mika added that while they have yet to define their relationship publicly, they have grown much closer. “We’re very, very close at this point. He’s been consistently pursuing me, and I appreciate it so much. Let’s see in the coming days,” she said. Mika and Will first became close as housemates in “Pinoy Big Brother: Celebrity Collab Edition,” with fans continuing to follow their blossoming relationship after the show ended.

Always-connected Pinoys attracts Pinoy-baiting by Susie in the Philippines

I’ve avoided talking about “Pinoy baiting” for years. But now that our family is preparing to leave the Philippines after more than a decade, the topic has come up more and more often, and I think it’s finally worth sharing my thoughts. First, for those who may not know the term: “Pinoy baiting” is usually used to describe content creators who make videos about the Philippines mainly because they know Filipino audiences are highly supportive and engaged online. It often refers to exaggerated reactions, over-the-top praise, or content that feels designed to attract views rather than coming from a genuine connection to the country. The reason the term exists is because, over the years, there have been creators who discovered that Philippines-related content performed well, made a few videos about it, gained followers, and then moved on as soon as another trend became more profitable. So yes, Pinoy baiting is a real thing. But not every foreign creator who talks about the Philippines is a Pinoy baiter. And not every creator who shares content from the Philippines is automatically genuine either just because they say so. The truth is, it’s not always easy to tell the difference. Personally, my story with the Philippines started long before social media algorithms ever discovered that foreigners reacting to Filipino culture could get views. I was already living in the Philippines before I started making content about it. My relationship with my Filipino husband began in 2013. I started vlogging before “foreigner in the Philippines” content was even really a category. In fact, I started creating videos when vlogging itself was still relatively new.



Back then, there was no roadmap. No one was talking about “Pinoy baiting.” I just simply shared my life. And over the years, that life became deeply connected to the Philippines. This country became my home. It’s where I built my family. It’s where my daughter was born. That’s why sometimes I find it strange when people assume every foreign creator is only here because of views. Of course, there will always be people who chase trends. But I also think people underestimate what it actually means to build a life in another country. Creating content is a lot more work than most people realize.

Unless you’re one of the very few creators with a massive audience, content creation is not some magical shortcut to becoming rich. It takes years of consistency, countless hours of filming, editing, planning, learning, failing, and starting over again often spending more on creating the content than what it earns. And honestly, if someone’s only goal was to exploit the Philippines for money, living here for years, adapting to local life, building relationships, raising a family, and making the country their home would be a very difficult and inefficient way to do it. Instead of judging someone based on one video, look at the bigger picture. How long have they been here? Do they actually spend time in local communities? Do they have relationships here? Do they still care when the views are lower? Those things often tell you much more than a single viral clip ever could. But I also understand why viewers have become cautious. And I think audiences should absolutely continue thinking critically about the content they consume. I just find it a little sad that “Pinoy baiting” became such a common term. Because while the negative side exists, the rise of foreign creators in the Philippines has also brought something genuinely positive. As a European, I can honestly say that the Philippines is often not very visible in Western media. And when it is, the coverage frequently focuses on poverty, natural disasters, crime, political issues, or other challenges. Those things are real, but they are not the whole

story. The Philippines is so much more than the headlines. Many foreign vloggers—especially those who genuinely live a local life here—have helped show another side of the country. The kindness of Filipino people. The sense of community. The humor. The resilience. The incredible food. The beautiful islands and provinces. The everyday moments that make life here special. Because of these creators, millions of people around the world have seen parts of the Philippines they would never have seen otherwise. That exposure has helped tourism, local businesses, and even challenged some of the stereotypes people abroad have about the Philippines. So while Pinoy baiting itself is not a positive thing, I don’t think the entire phenomenon of foreign creators making content in the Philippines is negative either. Like most things, the reality is somewhere in the middle. There are people who exploit. There are people who genuinely appreciate. For me, the Philippines was never just content. It was home. And even though our next chapter will take us elsewhere, the Philippines will never simply become a place we used to live. We are a Filipino-Hungarian family. My husband is Filipino. My daughter is half Filipina. The Philippines will always be part of our daily life, our traditions, our family, and our identity no matter where in the world we are.

Nadine Lustre opens up about wedding plans with Christophe Bariou

After years together and building a life in Siargao, Nadine Lustre opens up about her future with longtime boyfriend Christophe Bariou, revealing why they aren't rushing into marriage—and where she'd like to tie the knot someday.

Is Nadine Lustre getting married anytime soon?
The award-winning actress says not yet.

Lustre addressed the question many fans have been asking about her longtime relationship with Filipino-French entrepreneur Christophe Bariou, revealing that while marriage is definitely something she has imagined, the couple isn't in a hurry to walk down the aisle.

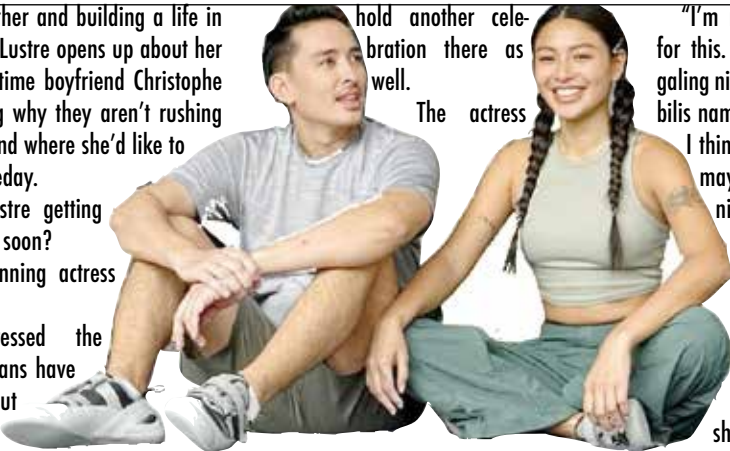
"Wala pa... hindi naman kami nagmamadali," Lustre told reporters when asked if wedding plans are already in the works.

Still, she already has a clear picture of what her dream wedding would look like.

According to the actress, she'd love to exchange vows in Siargao, the island she and Bariou have called home for the past several years.

Because Bariou's family is based in France, Lustre said they would most likely

hold another celebration there as well.
The actress



spoke about her personal life during the media launch of "Love, Siargao," her upcoming Viu Original series with Alden Richards.

The series marks Lustre's return to the romance genre after years of taking on critically acclaimed dramatic roles. More than another love story, she said the project gave her the chance to showcase the place she now considers home.

"With this, I want people to see the real Siargao, which is, para sa akin, is just a beautiful, warm place. There's a sense of community talaga na mararamdaman mo," she said.

"Love, Siargao" also brings together Lustre and Richards for their first on-screen pairing.

"I'm really happy working with Alden for this. Napaka-down-to-earth niya. Ang galing niya makisama so, nakakatuwa. Ang bilis namin nakampante sa isa't isa, which I think is very important lalo na kapag may romance element yung pairing ninyo."

Joining them in the series are Kyline Alcantara, South Korean actor Kim Ji-soo, and a supporting cast.

"Nakakatuwa kasi very chill ang set namin, ang saya," Lustre shared. "Parang siyang hindi work talaga. And all of them, sina Alden, sina Ji-soo, they have fallen in love with Siargao na din."

Outside acting, Lustre said she's continuing to explore different creative pursuits while looking forward to making music again.

"Isa sa ina-eye ko is paggawa uli ng music," she said. "I miss that so, yeah, hopefully soon, I get to do that again."

While fans may continue hoping for wedding bells, Lustre made it clear that she and Bariou are simply enjoying where they are, with no pressure to rush into marriage.

"Love, Siargao" is a collaboration among GMA Network, Viu Philippines, and Viva Entertainment.



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

FILIPINO CANADIAN COMMUNITY EVENTS IN AUGUST

August 11. "Meet-And Greet with Secretary Dante Francis "Klink" M. Ang II of the Philippine Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO)", by the Philippine Consulate General-Toronto, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Kalayaan Cultural Community Centre (KCCC) at 5225 Orbitor Dr #3, Mississauga, ON L4W 4Y8. (By invitation)

August 15-16. "Taste of Manila 2026 Toronto: A Feast of Flavours & Culture", by the Society of Philippine Arts, Recreation and Community (SPARC), at Bathurst and Wilson, North York, from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm.

August 22- 23. "Mabuhay Philippines Festival 2026", by Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), Nathan Phillips Square, Queen Street West, Toronto, from 9:00 am to 11:00 pm. (Headliners: August 22- Janine Gutierrez; August 23- Apl. De. Ap)

August 29. "Manlilikha Arts and Music Festival: Lakambini Film Screening, Filipino Food Showcase & 4 Workshops", by Likha Filipino Cultural Hub and Adhika, from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm, at People's Theatre for the Performing Arts, 22 Esna Park Dr., Markham. (A Fundraiser)

August 29. "Heto nAPO sa Toronto: APO Hiking Society Concert", by Likha and Adhika, People's Theatre for the Performing Arts, 22 Esna Park Drive, Markham, Ontario, 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Tickets from \$100 to 250. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Sisters Cianne Dominguez and Chloe Florendo share how they help each other

It's not only Cianne Dominguez who's enjoying a flourishing career in showbiz — her older sister is right there with her, and the two even get to share the same stage on It's Showtime.

From a trial stint to marking her four-year anniversary as a regular host on one of the country's longest-running noontime shows, Cianne has come a long way — and she has plenty to be grateful for.

One of the more heartwarming parts of her journey is having a family member by her side at work.

In case you didn't know, Chloe Florendo — one of the members of the rising girl group Baby Dolls — is Cianne's older sister.

In a guest appearance on MYX Now to promote her debut EP Gumamellow, Cianne opened up about her relationship with her sister, among other things.

She revealed that it was actually she who encouraged Chloe to join Girl on Fire, the competition that would eventually lead to Chloe's spot

on Baby Dolls.

Cianne, on the other hand, was a finalist on Showtime's "Sexy Babe."

Meanwhile, Cianne admitted that her sister continues to amaze her to this day.

"Si Ate, pinush ko siya na sumali. Kapatid niya ako, ha, pero every time na nakikita ko siyang sumayaw, sobrang nagagaligan ako sa kanya," she said.

"Iba 'yung kaya niyang gawin kasi. Hindi normal — na parang hindi lahat kayang magpa-popping, mag-robotics, ganyan. So, sobrang na-a-amaze ako," she added.

Explaining how she encouraged her sister to join the contest, she said, "Nung una, ayaw niya eh. Pero pinilit ko talaga eh. Sabi ko 'Sige na 'te sali ka."

"Siguro kinakabahan din siya kasi host na ako nu'ng time na 'yun. And siyempre, may masasabi rin 'yung mga ibang tao, 'di ba?" she added.

She continued: "Pero ako confident ako sa kanya na kaya ka nandito, kasi ikaw

'yan. Meron kang talent na talagang maipapakita na ikaw talaga 'yan."

The 25-year-old singer and host also shared that working alongside her sister has been a source of comfort — giving her a sense of family close by, even on days when she can't see the rest of her loved ones at home.

"Sobrang happy ako kasi kasama ko siya every day. Kasi siyempre hindi naman na madaling umuwi ng bahay. So, at least, may mafi-feel kang family," Cianne said.

"Tulad neto lang. Nag-beach kaming dalawa, nag-Tagaytay kaming dalawa. Kasi nag-gu-grow din 'yung relationship namin as siblings," she added.

In a separate interview, Chloe opened up about what it's like working with her younger sister on the show.

"Actually, parang every day is a [great] moment kasi hindi ako masyadong nakakakita pa ng artist na kasama 'yung kapatid nila sa work," Chole said.

Despite being the older sibling, Chloe revealed that it has been Cianne who has been guiding her ever since she entered the industry — not the other way around.

Perhaps the most important lesson Cianne imparted to Chole was this: to choose



her battles wisely.

"Hindi ako nahirapan kasi since nauna siya sa akin ng two years, naga-guide niya ako na 'Ate, ito 'yung mga pwede mong i-absorb at mga hindi mo pwedeng i-absorb,"

Chole shared.

"Kasi mas emotional ako sa kanya. So naging shield ko siya sa mga unwanted or mga unnecessary na pwedeng dumaan sa akin," she added.

MPP David Smith Announces Grant

MPP DAVID SMITH page 3

to the north. So, we have to make sure we take advantage to get the skills in demand. Let us take courses that will lead us to great success.

MPP Lecce opened with praise for MPP David Smith.

"He has heart, he has passion, he has commitment to this community."

He then talked about achievements under Premier Ford.

"We are on track on building a Scarborough subway to being developed. We're building a medical

school that's opening up this September.

More workers will be needed in the future.

"In the Ministry of Energy and Mines, we're looking for 150,000 skilled workers to build the next generation of Canada's mines.

He pointed out the contribution of immigrants to Canada.

"What unites us, from the four elected officials, that we and our parents, are immigrants to this country. We came here to work and dream. Never give up on this province. Never give up on Canada.

Candid CAMERA

Outgunned and outnumbered by a superior force is how Philippine & American soldiers felt when Japan attacked the Philippines on December 8, 1941 in pursuit of raw materials. 🙄

On July 29, 2026, Theresa Lumanlan looks on, also feeling outgunned and outnumbered by a superior force of attacking seniors in pursuit of crunchy lechon balat during the picnic of the Filipino Centre Toronto for the students of the Senior Art program. 😊

Bataan fell after four months of fighting.

The lechon fell in four minutes.

The woman in sunglasses on the right is wanted. She is the ringleader.



MISS TEEN CANADA FUNDRAISING GALA



Miss teen Canada winners pose with their mothers. From left is Francesca Perrone, Rosemary Alcayde, Arielle-Sapphira Awai, and Trish San Mateo

PCCF Beauties join Canada Day Festivities in Peterborough

Miss Philippines Canada is with Greatchen Griffiths. 2025, Arlene, Mrs. Philippines Canada 2026 Candidate, Lauren, and Little Miss Philippines Canada 2026 Candidate, Jhayra, proudly represented the Filipino-Canadian community by joining the Canada Day Parade and festivities in their town of Peterborough. Interested in joining the journey? If you or someone you know would like to be part of Miss Philippines Canada, Miss Teen Philippines Canada, Mrs. Philippines Canada, or Little Miss Philippines Canada, email info@missphilippinescanada.com for more information!



Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) beauties Kryz Joi, Krystelle Rivas and Sinulog Ambassador Imelda Concepcion attend the Hamilton Fiesta extravaganza.



Toronto city councillor Neethan Shan with Tony A. San Juan on July 28, 2026 at Town Hall with Mayor O. Chow at Earl Bales Park, Toronto.



KMC Director Rizza Solis and Migrante Ontario Chairperson Leny Simbre with Tony A. San Juan at Mayor Olivia Chow's town hall meeting with the Filipino community PHOTO: Leny Rose Simbre

Filipino Centre Toronto Senior Painting Class holds a picnic



LEFT, Filipino Centre Toronto Seniors holds a zumba exercise. RIGHT, both young once and young ones can use some rest and relaxation now and then.





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DOLE said the advisory aims to protect the welfare, safety and rights of children involved in entertainment and information activities.

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The advertisement features three devices displaying the November 2020 issue of LM Confidential. The laptop screen shows the main headline "L is for Rabbit" by DepEd Online, a feature on Heaven Peralejo titled "Happy to be the lead in...", and a section on the Philippines starting national ID cards. The smartphone and tablet also show the same content, demonstrating the magazine's mobile accessibility. The background consists of blurred newspaper clippings.

Princess, Ruby and Tootsie find their way back to acting in America

MANILA, Philippines — Ruby Rodriguez, Princess Ponzalan and Tootsie Guevara have found their way back to acting, this time in the US, thanks to “Nurse the Dead.”

The “Hollywood-made, Filipino-led” supernatural workplace comedy-drama on iWant brings them together with a multicultural cast that includes seasoned actors with credits in American network television, Hollywood studio films and international productions, from “Freakier Friday,” “Glee,” “S.W.A.T.,” “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” to Telemundo shows.

Show creator Mark Labella said the project’s mission is to put Filipino faces and stories in front of Hollywood and global audiences. The series, after all, centers on Filipino healthcare workers.

“Nurse the Dead” follows Noa Reyes, played by Jelynn Malone, a hardworking Filipina nurse in a US hospital who can see and communicate with the spirits



Ruby plays Rosalinda, a member of the haunted Ward 5 hospital team.

roaming the facility. While handling patients, families and relationships with co-workers, she must also deal with ghosts carrying unfinished business.

Ruby plays Rosalinda “Ross” Amee, a member of the haunted Ward 5 hospital team, while Tootsie portrays Nurse Zeny, who brings humor and heart to the workplace. Princess takes on the role of Camille Alejandro, a former Filipino child star who now works as a nurse, a character that interestingly reflects the actress’ own transition to the US healthcare field.

For the three former Philippine showbiz personalities, “Nurse the Dead” reconnected them with their “past lives” in the Philippines, while allowing them to draw from the lives and careers they had already established in the US.

Relocating for family

Ruby recalled that she had not planned to leave showbiz. The comedienne and former “Eat Bulaga” host eventually chose to move to the US for her children, particularly for her son’s special education and medical treatment for an autoimmune condition.

“It’s always family first. It (the show) resonates with me so much because I left the Philippines for my family,” Ruby said during the show’s global media conference.

“I still had a good run there. I was doing well when I left. It may not have been at the peak, but I was still there. I left because I had to, for my son — not just his education but his treatment.”

Relocating meant starting over in a country where her credentials in the Philippines didn’t necessarily bear the same weight.

“I said, ‘Forget it. I’m just going to start over and work hard again for my son, not just for my son but my daughter,’” she further shared.



Former Philippine showbiz personalities Princess Ponzalan, Ruby Rodriguez and Tootsie Guevara are part of the supernatural workplace comedy-drama ‘Nurse the Dead’ by show runner Mark Labella.

Her decision, ultimately, came down to determining what mattered most at this stage of her life. “It’s the mom in me. I had to weigh what’s important in your life. You had a good run. You enjoyed your showbiz life. It’s about time to devote yourself. You’re a mother now.

“Sacrifice whatever comfort and joy and everything that you had in the Philippines. Say goodbye and be a mother — this time a full-time mother.”

That’s why Ruby, though working as a staff member at the Philippine Consulate Office, could relate very well



Tootsie portrays Nurse Zeny, who brings humor and heart to the workplace.

to the sacrifices made by Filipino healthcare workers portrayed in “Nurse the Dead.”

“That’s how nurses are. They sacrifice their families, their lives because they serve families that are not their families,” she said.

“That’s why I always tell people, if a Filipino nurse or caregiver is taking care of you, be thankful. Love them. Be nice to them because they will be your family forever.”

Ruby also said that she drew from her personal history for one of her character’s most emotional scenes. She was already crying during rehearsals and had to hold back the emotion until the right moment.

“There’s a term in the Philippines when you’re doing something like that: ‘Saan mo hinuhugot?’ Where are you pulling it from?” she said.

“You’re pulling it from there, but at the same time you’re pulling it down so that you give it out at the right time. That episode hit me right there.”

Apart from reuniting her with former colleagues such as Princess and Jett Pangan, the experience made Ruby realize that her love for acting had never waned.

“When I got on the set, I didn’t even realize that I

missed it so much,” she said. “I was so happy doing it.”

Reinventing away from showbiz

Tootsie, meanwhile, moved to the US in 2004 after making her name in the Philippines primarily as an OPM singer in the late ’90s and early 2000s.

She became known for such hits as Kaba, Pasulyap-Sulyap, Mahal Ka Sa Akin, Nang Dahil sa Pag-Ibig, etc.

Acting formed a smaller part of her Philippine showbiz career but the “That’s Entertainment” member appeared in films like “Psycho Sex Killer,” “Rubberman” and “Radio Romance.”

“Nurse the Dead” marks her return to the craft.

“Gusto ko po talagang maging actor even when I was based in the Philippines,” she stressed. But as her family’s breadwinner, she had to make practical decisions. During her time in the industry, acting could mean spending an entire day or longer on one set for a single paycheck. As a singer, she could perform on several stages in one day and earn separate fees from each appearance.

That led her to prioritize music before moving to America and creating a completely different professional identity.

“I moved here to the US to reinvent myself as Emma,” she said. “I reinvented myself as a different person, but I still have it in my heart as Tootsie Guevara.”

She has since pursued a successful non-entertainment career, becoming a hospital executive. Her daily work has given her a closer view of the contributions and pressures experienced by overseas Filipino nurses.

“I work in the healthcare field. Sa hospital po ako nagtatrabaho. I’m in management, so I see my fellow Filipinos who are nurses,” Tootsie said.

Having worked in healthcare for more than two decades, she noticed that many of the nursing leaders in the hospitals are Filipinos.

“Maasahan ko talaga the way they take care of and represent my hospitals, the way they treat patients and difficult families,” she said. “Filipinos, especially in healthcare, we are the heart of the company. Napakahirap po ng trabaho ng nurses.”

So, when Labella and director Wesley Villarica approached her for “Nurse the Dead,” the opportunity didn’t only reawaken her interest in acting, it also let her two identities — Emma, the healthcare executive, and Tootsie, the performer — to finally meet.

She jokingly described herself as “Emma during the day, Tootsie at night.”

One thing’s for sure, she said, it filled a space in her life that she had long wanted to explore.

“That is such a huge addition, not only to my résumé but as a human being,” she said. “My soul right now, I’m at the point in my life that it’s complete.”

She also welcomed the chance to act opposite performers working in the US, including those who were discovering the Philippine veterans’ body of work for the first time.

Working in US healthcare

Princess, on the other hand, brought real hospital experience to the set while pulling off a demanding balancing act to make the project work.

“It felt nice to be able to do what I actually do in real life,” Princess said of her character.

She also felt responsible for helping the production portray hospital procedures and workplace realities more accurately.

“I felt like I had the responsibility to help guide them on what really happens and how things are done in the hospital,” she said.

Her two careers sometimes collided during production.



Princess takes on the role of Camille Alejandro, a former Filipino child star who now works as a nurse.

Labella recalled Princess reporting to the set after completing a 12-hour hospital shift.

“Pag mahal mo talaga ang ginagawa mo, gusto mong ginagawa mo, you will do everything to make it possible para mangyari siya,” the actress explained.

She hoped the series would help patients and families understand that nurses often work under intense pressure while still trying to provide the best possible care.

“We want to help you. We want to find solutions. We want to be able to give you the best care possible,” Princess said.

“It’s just that sometimes there are too many tasks to be done and too little time. More often than not, we rarely eat. We rarely take our breaks. We can’t even go to the toilet.”

She added: “We try our best to help as much as we can, and it’s nice when we meet patients and families who are understanding and kind.”

*Kung good deal ang
hinahanap ninyo,
Harold Guarin
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Why Kokoy de Santos wants showbiz colleagues to try theater

Kokoy de Santos ventures out again into stage acting with the YPC Stage three one-act play production titled 'Mapanakit.' He is part of 'Ganito ang Pinangarap Kong Kasal' and takes on the character Noel, who will test the friendship between best friends France and Kris. It's Kokoy's follow-up to his theater debut play, 'Ateng,' last year.

MANILA, Philippines — Kokoy de Santos has again heeded the call of the theater by starring in the production titled "Mapanakit," which is now playing at the IBG-KAL Theater, UP Diliman.

The Kapuso actor collaborates with the Biñan-based community theater Youth Performance Council, Inc. (YPC) and director BJ Borja for Kokoy's follow-up to his stage debut LGBT-themed play, "Ateng," last year.

Kokoy is part of the one-act play, "Ganito ang Pinangarap Kong Kasal," with "Liknayan ng ating mga Katawan" and "Ilihan at Kalingaw" as the two other "bit-tersweet" stories featured in the presentation.

Venturing out into this theater production also means bringing his

insights gained from doing "Ateng" and years of acting for the small and big screens.

"Pagkakaiba, marami din talaga (there are many differences this time)," said Kokoy when The STAR asked him about coming into his second theater project in a recent virtual chat. "The expectation is also different."

He added that playing his character Noel requires him to remember a lot of blockings and costume changes.

Although his one-act play also has an LGBT theme, the story pursues a different overall direction. The actor described it as "mapanakit siya na masarap (it's hurtful but delightful)."

"Siyempre, masarap magmahal (of course, it feels great to love), pero dahil todo kang magmahal, todo ka ring masasaktan (but since one loves completely, one gets hurt fully)," shared he, adding that his character is fluid, gender-wise.

To pique one's interest, Kokoy said Noel will test the friendship between best friends France and Kris, played by actor Phi Palamos and YPC member Loudette Barias.

"Bilang si Kokoy, kabado talaga ako (as myself, I'm always nervous)," said he of having

jitters, like es-saying a role on stage in which scenes unfold live and moment to moment. "...yung kaba ko, imbes na pabawas, padagdag (you know, feeling nervous, instead of decreasing, increases). Never ako yung ang yabang ko na kaya ko (I have never become overconfident). Lagi akong kinakabahan."

Some actors look at it as a way to keep themselves motivated and not complacent.

"Kumbaga, kung wala yung kaba, dapat kang kabahan (one should worry if one doesn't feel any jitters)," said Kokoy. "Sa akin, yung kaba, hindi ko lang siya hinahayaan mag-take over dun sa excitement (For me, I don't let it take over the feeling of excitement that comes with acting). I'm always excited every time I do something, like I act in front of everybody or before the camera."

"So, motivation siya para sa akin para patunayan din sa sarili ko na kaya ko (it serves as a motivation for me to prove to myself that I can do it)," added he.

Now that he has immersed himself in the creative process that comes with theater acting, will he encourage colleagues from showbiz to give it a try?



Kokoy with co-stars, actor Phi Palamos and YPC member Loudette Barias.

"Based on my experience, since I've been telling this to my friends (working on) TV... it's a different experience... siguro once (in your) life, kailangan mo ma-experience dahil iba yung fulfillment bilang actor, lalo na bilang tao (you need to experience it once in your life because the sense of fulfillment is different as an actor and also as a person)," said he. "To be able to perform in theater, it's like a dream come true for me... ano siya, eh, panibagong achievement unlock para sa akin (it's another achievement unlocked). So, I always tell my colleagues to give it a try."

Part of it is experiencing what it's like to act without Take 2 and to be present as the actor plays the character. Kokoy also expressed his gratefulness to Sparkle GMA Artist Center for supporting his foray into theater and accommodating it in his work schedule.

"They really know my love for the arts — be it movie or theater," said he.

Aside from the "Mapanakit" production, Kokoy is seen in the weekend gag show, "Bubble Gang," and in the forthcoming action-drama series "Hari ng Tondo" with Ruru Madrid. He also added that he has a movie titled "Saving Cherry" with director Ivan Andrew Payawal and under Regal Entertainment.

Direk BJ said in a message that the YPC Stage as a platform is "YPC's commercial venture to support its community arts activities." It introduces local talents to Manila stages and gives them the chance to work with professional actors.

Arthur Nery is now top male singer in Philippines

Eight years ago, Arthur Nery, a former call center agent and online English teacher, was brought to Manila to embark on a music career. The move was risky, but fame came instantly. His first album ‘Letters Never Sent,’ released by Viva Records, produced big sellers like Binhi and Higa. He became the hot singing heartthrob and from that time on, fans could not get enough of his unique mix of soul and R&B with a Filipino touch rendered in his sexy falsetto.

Arthur Nery is now the top male singer in the country. Spotify provided proof to that when the music streaming platform announced that the guy from Cagayan de Oro now has 10 million followers. That is a lot. That is more than any other male idol around has managed to garner. That is a milestone many of his contemporaries can only dream of.

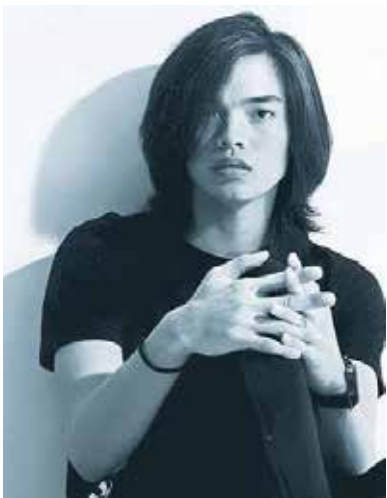
Eight years ago, Arthur, a former call center agent and online English teacher, was brought to

Manila to embark on a music career. The move was risky, but fame came instantly. His first album “Letters Never Sent,” released by Viva Records, produced big sellers like Binhi and Higa. He became the hot singing heartthrob and from that time on, fans could not get enough of his unique mix of soul and R&B with a Filipino touch rendered in his sexy falsetto.

The songs, all of them his own compositions, turned into hits one after the other. Arthur’s

recordings get uploaded and then go from a hundred or two streams or views to millions in no time at all. No media hype or padding in this case because the numbers not only for Arthur but for other musical entities are easily available on Spotify, YouTube and the other platforms. Those tell us what tunes are truly selling.

As of this writing, Arthur’s 10 million and still counting followers, plus other fans have also given millions of streams to



his songs. Take a look at these figures: Isa Lang, 503 million which translates to streamed half a billion times; Pagsamo, 375 million; Take All the Love, 362 million; Higa, 295 million; Binhi, 166 million; and Segundo Seguro with 48 million, among other titles.

If these numbers keep up, then Arthur’s songs will certainly be among those that music lovers will still be listening to 50 years from now.

Aside from his solo works, Arthur has also been open to collaborating with other artists, some of them big names and some of them newcomers who still have to attain stardom. Needless to say, those co-ventures have also resulted in more hits. Pelikula with Janine Tenoso, 100 million; Palaisipan with Loonie 100 million; Di Nakakasawa with Kiyo, 61 million; Palayo sa Mundo with Jolianne 58 million; Life Puzzle with Yuuk Ta-castacas, two million.

Arthur’s latest release is the album “Fictions You Produce.” Nice observation in that title. Arthur has this way of getting into our insides using strange but often correct ways. Must be because of the Psychology major that he was at Xavier U in CDO. We all do, in our own way, produce our own fictitious tales. Sometimes only in our minds. Other times, the daring or the desperate will bring their fictions out for everyone to see.

Among the tracks included are Desperado, Cloud 9, Plorera, Serbesa at Vino, Paralisdado, Double Timed and Far Away. Plorera is cute, but the sweetest of them all is What Did I Do. The song is asking, “What did I do for you to love me?” The answer is nothing. Expect happy swoons from happy lovers all around who will surely relate to that message.

By the way, one of Arthur’s favorite hobbies is playing basketball. Those who have watched him on the hardcourt say he is very good at it. Come Aug. 16, he will be joining other singers under Viva Records in an exhibition game against the heartthrobs of the streaming channel, Viva One.

Among Arthur’s teammates will be Amiel Sol, Adie, Rob Deniel and Migo Valid of the boy group Xerenade. Watch them do battle at the Smart Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.



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