

KEEPING CALL CENTERS

Philippine BPO group pushes back on US plan to bring call center jobs home

Major business groups representing the Philippine outsourcing sector have pushed back against a US plan to bring customer service jobs back home, arguing that the proposed rules unfairly target legitimate offshore operations without

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JDL's Triple Act performed at the closing program of the very successful Pinoy Fiesta 2026 festival

Philippines seeks global protection for Bohol's famous 'Kinampay' purple ube

'Ube Kinampay,' also known as the "Queen of Philippine Yams." (Photo courtesy of PCAARRD) The Intellectual Property



Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) is now evaluating Bohol's application to register the ube variety known as Kinampay as the

country's latest geographical indication (GI), which is seen to strengthen its market value amid growing global demand for ube.

In a statement, IPOPHL said it has received a GI application for Bohol Ube Kinampay from the pro-

UBE Page 4



Sophia and Hannah take a selfie with GMA7 star Michael Sager at the Pinoy Fiesta festival.

Why some newcomers develop allergies after moving to Canada

(NC) Building a new life in Canada can come with unexpected changes, including developing allergies that were never an issue back home. In fact, research shows that the longer newcomers live in Canada, the more likely they are to develop allergies.

A study in an immunology journal found that about 14 per cent of

ALLERGY Page 16



POSTCARD
Escalante 1957

UMAC holds their "I pares Mo-Premyo Mo" game at the Toronto Fiesta Extravaganza.



UMAC Forwarder Express Manager Anna Eusebio poses with "I pares Mo-Premyo Mo" winner Hermelinda M. from Aurora Ontario

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MHP 9th ANNIVERSARY

Marky Hugh Prodcutions celebrated their 9th anniversary and here are some of the pictures.



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KEEPING CALL CENTERS

CALL CENTRE from page 1

proof that they are causing consumer issues.

In a position paper dated May 18, the business groups told the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that the proposed measures

would have substantial operational and economic consequences without clear consumer benefit.

“Proposals to limit the percentage of

customer service calls handled offshore would impose arbitrary constraints on how companies allocate resources,” the position paper read.

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Applying for grants is like dealing with USA

New requirements pop out of nowhere

Two years ago, I applied for a Canada publication grant. I did not qualify because this paper did not contain 50% Canadian content. That was the reason then. The grant opened again this year

and I applied. Now, the reason is that the grant is not open for free publication and that I also did not spend a minimum of \$2500 for editorial, Meaning, I did not pay myself or any of my writers. I told them there was no money left to pay ourselves. I looked at the requirements. As far as I

understand what I read, the grant is open to free publications. And there was no requirement about spending a minimum of \$2500 for editorial. It's like dealing with the United States. The requirement comes out of nowhere or it just changed that we were not informed about.

First World Problem Happens in the Philippines

News like shootings in schools ususally happen in the Untied States and in a few instances, here in

Canada, like the recent shooting in British Columbia at Tumbler Ridge..

In the Philippines, the recent shootings committed by a 15 year old and a 14 year old sent shock waves in the Philippines. The nation is not used to hearing about thses kind of news. The 15 year old will be charged while the 14 year old was turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The news is not even old yet when another potential mass shooting was prevented.

Unlike the Tumbler Ridge incident

in British Columbia, this one was averted when the 14-year old went a warning on social media. In the Tumbler Ridge incident, the social media did not alert the authorities.

Now, the Philippine government is now trying to figure out how to deal with something like this in the future. Do they lower the age threshold where a person can be charged?

I hope the Philippines finds the right way ind ealing with these situations.

Philippines seeks global protection for Bohol's famous 'Kinampay' purple ube

UBE from page 1

vincial government of Bohol, through its Bohol Economic Development and Investment Promotion Office (BEDIPO).

The GI bid seeks to formally recognize the qualities, reputation, and cultural heritage of the ube variety, which are

linked to the province's geography, soil, climate, and traditional farming practices.

Widely known as the "queen of Philippine yams," Bohol Ubi Kinampay is famed for its naturally vibrant violet flesh, earthy aroma, and rich flavor, making it a sought-after

ingredient both locally and abroad.

"The world is now in the middle of a 'purple gold rush,' and GI protection can help the Philippines stake its claim in the growing global demand by strengthening its market identity and position," said

IPOPHL Director General Teodoro Pascua.

"As ube becomes more global, we must make sure the roots of varieties from the country are not lost. GI protection helps ensure that the true heart of the Bohol Ubi Kinampay—its soil, story and

people—remain Boholano and Filipino," he added.

IPOPHL said GI protection could help shield the ube variety from unauthorized use of its name and false origin claims, which would help improve its market value.

This is also expected to pre- UBE page 22

WREATH-LAYING FOR JOSE RIZAL'S 165th BIRTHDAY

Philippine national hero, Dr. José Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Re-



Councillor Issa Lee, MFFC Director Alice Chiu, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, MFFC President Art Canseco, Councillor Nimisha Patel

bute the idea of having Rizal's monument in Markham to the late Councillor Alex Chiu. Through his initiative, funding and its final location in the Luneta Gardens was brought to fruition.

Self-taught Filipino artist and Rizalista, Mogi Mogado created the cold cast 6-foot tall, full-body bronze statue, depicting a rare smiling Rizal. The monument is now part of Markham's public art collection.

In attendance during the cere-

mony organized by The Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians and its Youth Group were the different organizations:

Balita, Block Rosary Crusade, Filipino Centre Toronto, Knights of Columbus, Knights of Rizal, Ladies of Rizal Philippine Artists Group of Canada, UP Alumni Association Toronto, Philippine Independence Day Council, and IPEN c/o Angela Santiago

After the wreath-laying and the Canadian and Philippine national anthems, dignitaries present were acknowledged:



MFFC youth group, Rhythm Re-Choired



Philippine Deputy Consul General Kerwin Orville Tate (Toronto), The Honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek (MP, Markham Stouffville), Mayor Frank Scarpitti (Markham), Councillor Nimisha Patel, Ward 7, and Councillor Issa Lee, Ward 8

A short bio of Dr. Rizal's life ensued followed by a fitting tribute to the national hero by Makata Lino Reyes.

MFFC Rhythm Re-Choired youth group ended the event, followed by refreshments.

Canada currently has 6 monuments, dedicated to Dr. Jose P. Rizal

- Markham, Ontario: Located in Boxgrove Community Park
- Niagara Falls, Ontario: Located in the only Canadian city veri-

fied visited by Dr. Rizal in 1888

- Airdrie, Alberta: Located in Nose Creek Regional Park
- Winnipeg, Manitoba: One located in 55 Waterford Green Common, and another at 111 Sewa Crescent
- Montreal, Quebec: Located in Parc Mackenzie-King

All over the world there are more than 100 monuments dedicated to Dr. Jose P. Rizal. This is a testament to his life as a physician, scientist, writer and poet, and a peaceful revolutionist - a true advocate of peace, freedom, diversity, and inclusivity.



MFFC President Art Canseco, Angela Santiago - Miss Model Mediterráneo Global Internacional 2024, Philippine Deputy Consul General for Toronto, Kerwin Orville Tate, Angelica Canseco - Miss Petite Teenager World 2025

alonda was born on June 19, 1861. To commemorate his birth, a wreath-laying ceremony was held in his honor at the Box Grove Bypass, where a statue was erected in 2019 to mark the first Filipino Heritage Month. The statue was presented by Filipino Canadians to the people of Canada as a gift for Canada's 150th anniversary. We attri-

PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses on Significant Developments



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

WORLD'S HAPPIEST COUNTRIES: PHILIPPINES RANKING.

As of March 2026, the Philippines, with a score of 6.206, ranks as the 56th happiest country out of 147 nations, according to the "World Happiness Report". The national happiness measurement survey primarily uses data from the Gallup World Poll. It is based on respondent ratings of their own lives, which the report also correlates with various quality of life factors. The rankings, produced annually by Gallup, the Oxford Wellbeing Research Centre, and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, are based on a three-year average of how residents in more than 140 countries rate their own lives alongside factors such as GDP, social support, life expectancy, perceived freedom, generosity and corruption. With the best possible life for them being a 10, and the worst possible life being a 0. Each report is organised by chapters that focus on issues relating to happiness, including mental illness, the objective benefits of happiness, the importance of ethics, and policy implications. Finland has been ranked the happiest country in the world for nine years in a row. For the second year in a row, no major English-speaking countries made the top 10, with Australia at 15th, with a score of 6.916, the United States at 23rd (score of 6.816), Canada at 25th (6.741 score) and the UK at 29th (6.694 score). "Gayundin, ang mga bansang nasa ibabang bahagi ng distribusyon ng kaligayahan ay may tendensiyang magkaroon ng mas mataas na antas ng korapsiyon, mas mahihinang institusyon, at mas mataas na antas ng kawalan ng tiwala sa ibang tao sa lipunan. Hindi maikakaila, ang layunin ng pamahalaan ay dapat na ipatupad ang mga patakaran na pinakamahasay na nakaposisyon upang mapataas ang kaligayahan sa lipunan. Ang hamon kung gayon ay nasa pagsusuri ng mga patakaran batay sa kaligayahan – isang kumplikadong gawain na nangangailangan ng maingat na pagsusuri ng gastos-benepisyo sa usapin ng kagalingan na nalilikha bawat tao."

PHILIPPINE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SETBACK.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on June 10, 2026, warned that the Middle East conflict "could set back human development in the Philippines, with poor households facing the heaviest burden from higher fuel, food and



WORLD'S SAFEST COUNTRIES: PHL RANKING.

In the 2026 Global Peace Index (GPI), the Philippines ranks 102 out of 163 countries in the world and has a score of 2.092, according to the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). Iceland ranks as the safest country in the world, with a GPI score of 1.124. Canada is ranked 14th with a score of 1.525, while the United States, with a score of 2.535, is ranked 134th. The top 10 safest countries are predominantly in Europe, with New Zealand and Singapore as notable exceptions. The Global Peace Index evaluates 163 nations, collectively accounting for 99.7% of the world's population, based on 23 indicators and ranks the safest and most peaceful countries in the world. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), which publishes the report, is "an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organisation dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable and tangible measure of human wellbeing and progress." The indicators used to compile the GPI include the number of internal and external violent conflicts, the level of distrust, political instability, the potential for terrorist acts, the number of

homicides, and military expenditures as a percentage of GDP. These indicators are grouped into three broad categories: 1) Ongoing International Conflict, 2) Societal Safety and Security, and 3) Militarisation—and a score is calculated for each of the 163 nations featured in the report. The Global Peace Index (1-5) is 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, and 3.5. The lower the score, the higher the nation's ranking in terms of safety and higher scores mean less peaceful. Common attributes of the world's safest countries include high levels of wealth, social welfare, education, effective criminal justice systems, and positive government-citizen relationships. "Ayon sa pinakabagong Global Peace Index, ang mundo ay naging hindi gaanong mapayapa kumpara sa nakaraang taon. Ang pangkalahatang kapayapaan ay lumala sa 99 na bansa, na nagmarka ng ika-12 sunod-sunod na taon ng pandaigdigang pagbulusok. Ngunit sa gitna ng lumalalang sitwasyon, isang maliit na grupo ng mga bansa ang patuloy na namukod-tangi bilang mapayapang bansa, ngunit hindi kasama ang Pilipinas dito."

fertiliser costs". UNDP said the Philippines is "among the more exposed economies in Asia and the Pacific, and among the harder hit "because it depends heavily on Middle East crude oil, imports food and fertilizer, and receives close to a fifth of overseas remittances from the region." The UN agency said "The shock has reached households through three reinforcing channels: energy imports, agricultural inputs, and labour migration and remittances, "Its concern is "not only the immediate rise in prices, but the possibility that temporary shocks could force poor households to reduce food, delay medical care or pull children from school." UNDP, citing microsimulation analysis by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), said poor households could lose around 16.2% of their real purchasing power from the oil-price shock, compared with 3.4% for

the richest households. "Poor households are losing close to five times as much real purchasing power as the richest," the report said. The same PIDS analysis found that the shock could push between 1.3 million and 3.5 million additional Filipinos into poverty, depending on how long the disruption persists and how strongly global oil prices pass through to domestic prices. The recent good news is that Philippine energy officials predict that local fuel prices may return to pre-crisis levels in six months to a year once the US and Iran formally sign the peace agreement. "Kinakailangan na ang layunin ng tugon ng gobyerno ay pigilan ang pansamantalang pagkabigla sa presyo na maging permanenteng balakid sa pag-unlad ng tao. Kung ang tulong ay maantala o hindi maayos na natutukoy, ang mga tugon sa pagharap sa krisis tulad ng pagbawas ng pagkain, hindi nabigyan ng pangangalag-

ang pangkalusugan, at pagkaantala sa pag-aaral ay maaring magdulot ng pangmatagalang pagkawala ng kakayahan sa pag-unlad ng tao. Dahilan dito, ang gobyerno ay dapat panatilihin matatag ang presyo ng pagkain at gasolina, siguraduhin ang suplay ng enerhiya, magbigay ng naka-target na tulong sa mga mahihirap na sambahayan, at suportahan ang mga magsasaka, manggagawa, at maliliit na negosyo."

FILIPINOS TO TRIM OVERALL SPENDING.

According to the latest TransUnion Consumer Pulse Study, based on 11,398 respondents surveyed from Feb. 6 to March 4, 2026, amid persistent inflation concerns and the Middle East crisis, "Nonesential expenses are among the first items Filipinos plan to trim from overall spending", including spending on dining out, travel and entertainment. Only 26 % of Filipino respondents said they plan to increase spending in these categories in the second quarter of 2026. In other areas, only 28 % said they plan to spend more on digital services, while other Filipinos are looking to increase their retirement funds and savings. TransUnion Philippines said the data points to a more deliberate shift in consumer behaviour. Inflation is the top concern of many Filipinos. Philippine inflation has surged, driven largely by oil price shocks linked to the Middle East crisis and a weaker peso. 52 % of Filipinos cited inflation for everyday goods as their top concern over the next six months. Job security was cited by 19 % of respondents, followed by recession concerns at 8 %. Despite these pressures, financial resilience appears broadly intact, with 59 % of Filipinos saying they expect to fully pay their bills and loans, outpacing the 41 % who said they would be unable to do so. TransUnion is a credit insights firm operating in more than 30 countries. Its quarterly Consumer Pulse Survey assesses changes in consumers' personal finances and expectations. "Hindi kataka-taka, ang pag-aaral ay nakakakita ng pagbawas sa sinasabi ng mga Pilipino tungkol sa kabuuang paggasta. Ang mga customer ay dapat mag-alala tungkol sa inflation, at ang feedback ay nagpapakita na sila ay matalinong gumastos nang mas mababa. Ang mga Pilipino ay dapat ngayong gumawa ng maingat na mga hakbang upang bawasan ang kanilang sariling paggasta na talagang isang napaka-positibong kalakaran, dahil nangangahulugan ito na talagang nag-iisip na sila ngayon tungkol sa paggawa ng isang bagay tungkol mismo dito." (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

AN UPDATE: TWENTY-TWO REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIASPORIC FILIPINO-CANADIANS

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Last July 1, 2017, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in 1867, I wrote an article: “150 Filipino-Canadian Contributions to Canada”, chronicling the remarkable achievements and contributions of Filipinos for Canada’s well-being and success since the beginning of the Filipino diaspora from the 50’s until 2016. The “2017 List” was published by Atin Ito, Filipino Bulletin, Little Manila Confidential, and Pinoy News in their July 2017 issues. This year, Canada will celebrate its 159th Confederation Day, and I decided to add and update our Filipino kababayans’ significant accomplishments made through their respective professional practices, careers, and private & government service since 2017. As before, the following citations were based on thorough research and verified from known sources and available written materials. Chronologically presented from 2017 to 2026, here they are:

*In February 2017, Dr. Eileen De Villa, MD, MHSc.& MBA and former Peel Region medical health officer was appointed the City of Toronto Medical Officer of Health, beginning in March 2017. She retired on December 31, 2024, after almost 8 years as the City’s Medical Officer of Health.

*Isabel Kanaan, a performer and comedienne, became the new face on the Canadian show “Air Farce”, making her debut on the show’s Air Farce

Canada 150 special on July 1, 2017, on CBC.

*In November 2017, with the initiative, advocacy, and leadership of Paulina Jocelyn Balisi Corpuz for a specific Filipino cultural celebration in Toronto, and the supportive motion of Councillor Neethan Shan, the City of Toronto Council unanimously passed and officially declared “June as Filipino Heritage Month” in the city. The historic proclamation, according to Corpuz, marked the first time a government body in Canada had urged the provincial and federal governments to consider a similar Filipino Heritage celebration across the province and Canada.

*The Philippine Entertainment, Arts, Culture and Heritage (PEACH), founded by Nestor Von Canton, offered “Fiesta Extravaganza”, a “celebration of Filipino heritage and culture in Ontario and across Canada “. It started in August 2018, with its First Fiesta Extravaganza in Vaughan, Ontario. As of 2026, Fiesta Extravaganzas are held in nine Canadian cities, including Brampton, Hamilton, London, Miramichi, Montreal, Niagara Falls, Surrey, Toronto, and Vaughan.

*On October 22, 2018, two Filipinas won as Councillors in 2 municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Rowena Santos was elected Regional Councillor for Wards 1 & 5 in the City of Brampton, while in the Town of Ajax, Lisa Carino Bower won as Local Councillor for Ward 3. Santos and Bower, the first Filipina councillors in Brampton and Ajax, respectively, were both reelected in 2022.

*Teresa Mendoza Torralba and Ramon Torralba helped form the Philippine Legacy & Cultural Alliance (PLACA) in July 2019, and organised the “Fun Philippines To-

ronto Food and Music Festival”. The event is a “high-energy celebration of Filipino culture that brings together the Philippines’ culinary delights, musical traditions and artistic expressions”. Held at the iconic Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, the 3-day festival is a “distinctive celebration of Filipino heritage, cultural richness, and global unity”.

* On September 10, 2019, Malaya Marcelino, daughter of former Manitoba MLA Flor Marcelino, was elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Notre Dame. Marcelino was reelected MLA on October 18, 2023, while Jellyn De la Cruz, at 23, became the youngest elected MLA in the Manitoba Legislature.

* Ana Serrano assumed the role of President and Vice-Chancellor of OC-



AD-Ontario College of Design and Design University, Toronto, on July 1, 2020. She was Chief Digital Officer of the Canadian Film Centre, founder of the centre’s Media Lab and co-founder of Canada’s first digital entertainment accelerator.

* Rechie Salazar Valdez assumed office on September 20, 2021, as Member of Parliament for Mississauga Streetsville, becoming the first woman of Filipino heritage to be elected as an MP and serve as a Cabinet minister. Valdez was appointed Minister of Small Business on July 26, 2023, by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. She was reelected in 2025 and, on March

14, 2025, served as the Chief Government Whip. On May 13, 2025, she was named by Prime Minister Mark Carney as Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism in the 45th Canadian Parliament.

*Stephanie Valenzuela has represented the Borough of Darlington district since November 7, 2021, as an Ensemble Montréal city councillor. She is now the Mayor of Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, an area of Montreal, elected in the November 23, 2025, municipal elections. Valenzuela’s election marks a historic moment as the first Filipino Canadian to hold office as Councillor and Mayor in the city.

* Nina Lee Aquino, a renowned Filipino Canadian director, dramaturg, artistic leader, and teacher, was appointed the Artistic Director of the National Arts Centre English Theatre on January 6, 2022. She served as Artistic Director at Cahoots Theatre (2009–2012) and Factory Theatre (2012–2022). She edited the country’s first two-volume anthology of Asian Canadian plays and co-edited the award-winning inaugural book on Asian Canadian theatre.

*In July 2022, Toronto Catholic District School Board Loretto Abbey Catholic Secondary School Vice Principal Lily Ann Adams assumed the position of Principal. Adams, with a Master of Education degree, served as Vice Principal of Loretto Abbey CSS from February 2018 to June 2022.

*Dr. Flordeliz “Gigi” Osler was appointed to the Senate of Canada on September 26, 2022. Osler, born and raised in Winnipeg to immigrant parents from the Philippines and India, is an internationally renowned surgeon and advocate for health and health care. Senator Osler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Manitoba. In 2018, she became the first female surgeon and the first racialised woman elected as President of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA).

* Luz Del Rosario, one of the longest-serving School

Trustees in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) in Ontario, was elected Chair of the Board on November 22, 2022. A Trustee for Wards 6 & 11 in Mississauga, Del Rosario was first elected in 2006, then in 2014 and 2018, and was named Vice-chair in December 2020. Herman Vilorio, a former Mississauga high school principal and the Trustee for Wards 2 & 8, was also named Vice-chair on November 22, 2022.

*June 5, 2023. SJC Media has appointed Jason Maghanoy, previously VP of digital solutions and business development, as publisher of iconic 118-year-old Canadian publication Maclean’s. Maghanoy is responsible for raising the brand’s profile and expanding its revenue streams. He will also continue to work as publisher of Canadian Business, a role he added to his remit in early 2022

* Elementary School Principal, Karlo Cabrera, in August 2023, was named Centrally Assigned Principal, Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression and Teachers Leading & Learning System at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), City of Toronto.

* Michael Herrera, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of George Brown Polytechnic since 2019, took on additional leadership responsibilities associated with Strategic Planning and Institutional Analysis as Senior Vice-President, Institutional Planning in 2023. Herrera is a Chartered Professional Accountant.

* On September 7, 2023, teacher Richard F. Llanera was designated High School Principal of North Caribou Lake First Nation School in a First Nation Authority in Northern Ontario. He is now with the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB).

* Michael Masangkay, on September 11, 2023, founded Sine Institute, a non-profit community-based organisation dedicated to “creating a community for new and emerging artists to collaborate with established and influential leaders in the creative industry”. Filipino film festivals were successfully held in 2024 and 2025.

*Sometime in 2024, Te-

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'Are you Happily Unemployed'



Norma Bernal

New Immigrants & the workplace

Are you happily unemployed? There are many situations where one can be happily or at least comfortably unemployed.

Those who have a good job and are not looking for another fall in this group. Retirees with a substantial egg nest can also be happy in their unemployed/ non-working situation. Included in this group are housewives/househusbands/common law partners who do not need to work outside their domestic lives. Full-time students with no other time but to study are another. Bums, idlers, shirkers, slackers, malingerers and sluggards also choose to be workless although they may not necessarily be happy.

If you are as described above, stop reading this article. You don't need it. But if you are unhappily/ uncomfortably unemployed, this is a 'read-you-must'.

Where to go for assistance depends on whether you are a newcomer or an old-timer in Canada.

If you are new to Canada, the more suitable service you can avail of after landing is the Settlement Program. A.k.a. immigrant, refugee or newcomer services, it is specifically designed to help brand-new Canadians



settle here. It is funded (up to \$ 1.0 Billion) by IRCC or the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Google identifies this federal agency as "responsible for managing immigration, refugees, and citizenship in Canada. It facilitates the arrival of immigrants, offers protection to refugees, and grants citizenship to newcomers. IRCC also manages study permits, work permits, and Canadian passport issuance." Its core mandate is: "manage immigration, facilitate newcomer integration, and protect refugees".

The Settlement Program is thus the best option because it offers a comprehensive settlement package of services for the newly arrived which are:

- Health: how to find a family doctor, how to apply for a health card, how to avail of the free Canadian Dental Care Plan, etc.

- Education: where/how to enroll kids in school, where to find ESL/ LINC classes, where to find day care services/ early childhood facilities, what supports children can have in school, etc.

- Housing: what types of housing are available, where to find low-cost dwellings, how to avail of and whether eli-

gible for government- subsidized housing, what rights do tenants have, etc.

- Legal Matters: where to find a Community Legal Clinic, how to avail of and if qualified for their free services, etc.

- Financial Services: are there social welfare assistance for newcomers, how to qualify, where to apply. etc.

- Community Services: where to find community centres, recreational facilities and library resources, and how to apply/qualify for their free services such as swimming and other sports facilities, etc.

Aside from the above, Settlement Program offices also assist in employment and job search. Their services include one-to-one coaching with a trained employment specialist; employment preparation and job search workshops on resume targeting, cover letter preparation, company research, interview

preparation & practise, networking, etc. They likewise assist with company outreach, employer connections, job matching and the coordination/conduct of job/ career fairs.

Some settlement agencies also help with the assessment of foreign credentials/ licenses. If the assessment cannot be done in-house, they have referral services to other community resources. Still others have paid (or unpaid) training and co-op programs towards skills certifications. Self employment programs that will train/ enable you to set up your own business, if you desire to go this way, are also available in some agencies. They can also refer clients who need language and skills assessment/ testing to appropriate agencies/programs/ services.

If you are no longer new in Canada and therefore will not qualify for the Settlement Program, you can be assisted, of course, by the Employment Ontario (EO) Program which I discussed in my May 2026 column. EO's core programs include Employment Services: individual and/ or group counselling and employer connections for which there will be information, referral & employment counsellors, job developers and even mentors to guide clients.

In need of more details? Googling the appropriate keywords should bring you to the pertinent links and pages.

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses on Significant Developments

odoro Alcuitas, G.E. Gatchalian and Patria Rivera jointly edited and copyrighted the 50 writers & 363-page book, "Magdaragat: An Anthology of Filipino-Canadian Writing", 2nd edition, with the aim "to unroll a polytextural tapestry that reflects as many modes of Filipino-Canadian life as possible".

* Larah Luna of Vancouver, BC, was the CBC Story Prize winner, out of 3,000 submissions, for her "A Season of Crows" ("Mga Uwak sa Kalangitan") and received \$6,000 from CBC Books and the Canadian Council for the Arts on May 7,

2026.

* Renato Gandia won the 2026 RBC Bronwen Wallace Award for Emerging Writers for his poem collection, "Psalmody for the Estranged" on June 1, 2026. Gandia, a queer Filipino-Canadian Calgary-based writer, also won the 2025 Pacific Spirit Poetry Prize and was shortlisted for the 2026 Open Season Awards at The Malahat Review. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Here's to the next 159 years! Mabuhay ang Canada ! Mabuhay ang mga Filipino !

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God's Strength Ministries and Markham Federation of Filipino Canadian hold a Food Drive

God's Strength Ministries (GSM) and Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians (MFFC), together, in God's name, held the first outreach by GSM at the MFFC centre on June 11, 2026. The food distribution was planned and organized so members and their families converged at the centre at the designated time to pick up their goods. Everyone went home happy with their bread, hummus, and apples.



Pastora Mila Lacerona who assisted in the pickup of the provisions. Malou sent 11 photos Ikaw na ang pumili.

This collaboration will be held regularly, and will also be included during some MFFC events. Dates will be announced.

Thank you, Pastora Doris Greaves for the accommodation. Thank you,



Celeste Cortesi's BF breaks silence on rumored split

MANILA, Philippines — Celeste Cortesi's techpreneur boyfriend, Jonathan Sterling, clarified that he is a billionaire, not a millionaire, breaking his silence on the rumored breakup between him and the beauty queen.



Sterling said in an Instagram post that he decided to return to social media to clarify the rumors circulating about his relationship with Celeste.

The techpreneur corrected the "millionaire" tag on him in various articles.

"There have been a lot of false allegations going around online and in the media about me recently, so I'd like to break my silence, come back on social media, and take a moment to correct the record: I am NOT a millionaire. I'm a billionaire," Sterling said.

"But seriously, if you want the full story, watch 'Celeste Unscripted' when it comes out later this year," he added.

"Celeste Unscripted" is an eight-part docu-series about the life story of Miss Universe Philippines 2022.

Recently, the Filipina-Italian beauty queen spoke about her current relationship and set-up with Jonathan.

There was a rumor that she and Jonathan had broken up and the reason was said to be actress and another beauty queen, Binibining Pilipinas-Universe 2009 Bianca Manalo.

Celeste said that she and Jonathan are doing well and are now focused on preparing for the birth of their first-born, whom they will name Sergio.

"Jonny and I are good. Our focus remains on caring for our child, Sergio, and supporting our family. I believe some situations call for greater consideration and respect, especially

when a child and family are already involved," Celeste said.

"Our priority is our family, and that is where our time, energy, and attention will remain. With that said, people can now relax and focus on their own lives instead," she added.

Meanwhile, Sparkle GMA Artist

Center released a statement clearing the name of their talent, Bianca.

"On behalf of our Sparkle Artist, Bianca Manalo, we would like to clarify that there is no truth to rumors circulating about her involvement with another couple. She is single and not in any relationship."

Filipino Centre Toronto Now Accepting Candidates For 2026 Outstanding Student Awards



By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Purposefully committed to encouraging and challenging Filipino-Canadian students in Ontario to excel in academic performance and to achieve student success, the Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT) is now accepting candidates for its annual competition for “2026 RCJ Outstanding Students Awards.” The Filipino Centre Toronto is a registered not-for-profit community-based and volunteer-run organisation established with a primary purpose to promote and preserve Filipino heritage, history and culture in Canada.

The FCT-Rosalinda C. Javier Outstanding Students Award Competition, which started 20 years ago in 2005, is an annual program of recognising and celebrating outstanding and exemplary elementary, high school, and post-secondary graduates from Public, Catholic, and other government-supported educational institutions in Ontario.

Through its Outstanding Students Awards Committee (OSA), the FCT will present awards to selected outstanding student graduates who have completed their elementary (Grade 8), high school (Grade 12) or post-secondary college or university studies. The competition criteria for Grade 8 or 12 include 1) scholastic achievement/academic marks – 50%, 2) community involvement and extra-curricular activities – 30%, and 3) interview performance – 20%.

All applicants who have been screened and approved by the Outstanding Student

Awards Committee will be recognised and honoured appropriately in a ceremony. Monetary awards, trophies, plaques, and certificates will be presented to the Grade 8 and Grade 12 winners and/or

following categories: The elementary school applicant should have completed Grade 8 in June 2026 or past 2 years, and be going into high school (grade 9); The high school applicant should have complet-

ed Grade 12 in June 2026 or past 2 years and be accepted and going into university or community college or apprenticeship program. 2) The student should have a minimum academic average of 85% or equivalent during the last two (2) school years Grades 7 & 8) or (Grades 11 & 12) and must be involved in extra-curricular and community/volunteer activities. 3) The applicant must submit the following documents: For the elementary school graduate – Original copies of final report cards for the last two years. For the high school graduate – A current and original transcript bearing the school’s official seal. Additionally, two (2) original letters of character reference (one from the school, excluding immediate

family), two (2) passport-size colour photos, and a completed FCT application form with an attached Brief Resume.

C. Qualification Requirements for Post-Secondary Honour Candidates: 1) For

scale. 3) Documents (Photocopies only) to be submitted: a) Undergraduate program: Bachelor’s Diploma with Academic Honours Notation; b) Graduate program: Transcript of Academic Record or Master’s/ Doctorate diploma, and 4) Passport-size colour Photo; 5) Completed “FCT Application Form” with a Resume. Academic awards received must not be more than 5 years old from the date of application.

The members of the FCT-RCJ Outstanding Students Awards Committee (OSA) include notable Filipino Canadian professionals and educators, composed of Tony A. San Juan, as Chairman, with Mary Ann S. San Juan as Co-chair, and the members are Fermer Santos, Garry Tanuan, and Jodelyn Huang.

Application forms for the FCT’s Outstanding Students Awards are now available at FCT; call 416-335-0485 or email filipinocentreinfo@gmail.com or announcement@filipinocentretoronto.org. The Deadline for submission of forms and documents is September 5, 2025, Saturday. To determine the Most Outstanding Graduate Honourees, personal interviews for Grade 8 and 12 candidates will begin on September 12, 2026, Saturday via Zoom. Completed forms and requirements are to be submitted or mailed to The Filipino Centre Toronto, RCJ OSA Committee, c/o Tony A. San Juan, Chairman, 4395 Sheppard Avenue East, Toronto, ON M1S 1T9. Awarding Day is tentatively set for October 25, 2026 (Sunday), 2:00 pm at the FCT Social Hall.

(Tony A. San Juan, OCT).



nominees of each category.

The overall requirements for the 2026 FCT-RCJ Outstanding Student Award Competition are as follows:

A. General Requirements for All Categories: Any applicant or candidate for an FCT Award must be a 1) Natural-born Filipino or of Filipino descent (either parent is Filipino); 2) Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada; 3) Of good moral and exemplary character, i.e. has no pending charge involving sexual or child abuse or criminal case.

B. Specific Requirements for Elementary and High School Graduates. To qualify: 1) The applicant should be currently registered in the secondary school or college in Ontario, under one of the

ed Grade 12 in June 2026 or past 2 years and be accepted and going into university or community college or apprenticeship program. 2) The student should have a minimum academic average of 85% or equivalent during the last two (2) school years Grades 7 & 8) or (Grades 11 & 12) and must be involved in extra-curricular and community/volunteer activities. 3) The applicant must submit the following documents: For the elementary school graduate – Original copies of final report cards for the last two years. For the high school graduate – A current and original transcript bearing the school’s official seal. Additionally, two (2) original letters of character reference (one from the school, excluding immediate

Undergraduate or Baccalaureate Degree candidates: Must have achieved Academic Honours, with Notation printed in the candidate’s degree diploma, such as any of the following: “Summa Cum Laude” or “Magna Cum Laude” or “Cum Laude” or “With Highest Distinction” (GPA 3.8 or higher) or “With Distinction” (3.5 to 3.79) or “First-Class Standing”; or other university/college equivalent academic honours distinction awards. 2) For candidates with a graduate Master’s or Doctoral degree: Must have achieved a Graduate Average Grade of Letter Grades of A+, A, A- only; or Numerical Marks of 90-100%, 85-89%, 80 -84% only; or High Pass-Clear Excellence or acceptable equivalent marking



I am deeply appreciative of my fellow GSM Ayuda sa Canada volunteers for helping organize another successful free food distribution @The Hub-Mid Scarborough, serving 155 recipients. Nicnak Nichole



Joey Baking The Socialist

“Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.”

OSCAR HANDLIN

“No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.”
WARSAN SHIRE



On June 21, summer officially arrived. It was also the day Marky Hugh Productions celebrated their 9th anniversary with movies, awards, performances, and of course, food.

The Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer are here

The Filipino Heritage Month Act was passed by the Ontario legislature, legally proclaiming June of every year as a time to recognize the social, economic, and political impacts of the Filipino community. As expected, last month was very busy with Filipinos attending events everywhere in the province.

Pinoy Fiesta celebrated Filipino month last June 6 and 7 at Albert Campbell Square in Scarborough. This highly anticipated event features live entertainment, shopping, and an extensive showcase of traditional Filipino food. What was forecast to be a rainy day on Saturday, turned out to be a wonderful sunny day. Of course, it was windy at times. In fact, if not for the audience sitting at the stands under the canopies grabbing the legs when a strong gust of wind comes, those would have been blown

away.

On Saturday, the festival was capped by the appearance of GMA7 Sparkle artist Michael Sager. Just like everyone else, I am not familiar with him. But he is an up and coming star. He reminds me of a young Piolo Pascual when he appeared here for his movie Lagarista at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2000. It's a hard for me to know star power until I see them with the crowd. And seeing Michael Sager mingle

with the crowd, I can tell he has the makings of becoming a big star. He is a natural with the crowd.

Pinoy Fiesta on Saturday was already full of crowds. Sunday had even more people even if there is no more star appearing. This festival is busy from the time it opens around 12 pm until the time it closes. It has always been like this since it moved here at Albert Campbell Square in May 2022 after the city reopened to public gatherings after the pandemic.

Congratulations to Pinoy Fiesta.

Marky Hugh Productions celebrated

their 9th year anniversary with food, movie showings, awards, and performances.

Run by its namesake, Marky Hugh started with a performing school. Then, it ventured into concert producing and co-producing. Now, it is venturing into movie production. The last I heard, it started a film festival called OpenFrame International Film Festival. Oh, and Marky Hugh still runs a Massage Therapy clinic.

Does this guy even sleep?

Anyway, congratulations to Marky Hugh and its ventures.

Pinoy Fiesta says Thank You to Everyone who Contributed to Success of Festival

Hello,

On behalf of Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF), I would like to extend my deepest appreciation and sincere gratitude to all the performers, volunteers, vendors, and supporters who contributed to the success of Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show Toronto. Special mention to the PCCF officers who worked tirelessly from the wee hours of the morning to late night for 2 days (June 06/07). PCCF officers are all volunteers who share a common passion to help the poorest of the poor

and a mission of community service.

As a not for profit organization, our mission goes beyond organizing events. Part of the net proceeds from the Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show Toronto will be donated to charity, helping those in need and making a positive impact in our community here in Canada and the Philippines. This achievement would not have been possible without your commitment and readiness to give your time, talents and willingness to participate for a worthy cause.

Together, we have demonstrated the power of 'Bayanihan' spirit, kindness and volunteerism. You have not only helped create a memorable festival but have also helped bring hope and assistance to others through the charitable work that will benefit from this event.

I am truly grateful for each and every one of you and look forward to your support in the years ahead.

Please share this message to your members.

Maraming Salamat/ Thank you.

Rosemer Enverga (PCCF President)

www.pinoyfiesta.ca

www.PhilippineCanadianFoundation.com

www.MissPhilippinesCanada.com

Facebook

www.facebook.com/PinoyFiestaToronto

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IG: @pinoyfiestatoronto

@PCCF



Kirstine Alexandra Lauricio Co. is going Places



Kirstine Alexandra Lauricio Co is a Pekiti Tirsia Kali practitioner (A combat Filipino Martial Arts that is being taught now to military personnels

I am Maika po and I'd like to inquire if it's possible to request LM Confidential to feature my 19-year old daughter po in your newspaper. Her name is Kirstine Alexandra Lauricio Co.

Not to brag about her achievements but to inspire the Filipino Youth in Canada to love and promote our Filipino heritage and to encourage them to contribute not just to the Filipino community but the world.

worldwide) and an Arnisador. She promotes Arnis by performing Anyo to different places here in Canada. She performed Anyo last year in (1) Grey Bruce Area during their multicultural event, (2) London Ontario during the Pinoy Fiesta Extravaganza and Toronto during Pinoy Fiesta. She also volunteers to teach Arnis to the Filipino Canadian youth attending the Filipino Cultural and Language School of London ON.

Anyo was also her talent when she



joined and won the PCCF's Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2024.

Aside from her love and passion for our Filipino fighting art, she is also a self-defense instructor combining her knowledge in Aikido (Brown Belt), Taekwondo (Black Belt) to our own Filipino Martial Art. She is also a Youth Ambassador representing Philippines & Canada for AFS Youth Global, an International Youth Organization promoting UN's Sustainable Development Goals. She was sponsored by EmpowerHer Diversity Hub to attend the 2025 AFS Conference in New York. This year, she might be given a speaking opportunity in the 2026 AFS Conference in Zurich. In 2024 she was also a speaker in an international sustainability conference.

She has received awards from the London Community and Member of the Parliament and recently was the youngest awardee of "Tanyag na Pinay".

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Congratulations Miss Teenager Philippines Trisha San Mateo! We are so proud of you

Congratulations Francesca Peronne for winning the Miss Pre-Teenager Canada! We are so proud of you

Congratulations Rosemary Alcayde for winning the Miss Petite Teenager Canada! We are so proud of you

Congratulations Lovell Remedios for winning Miss Petite Teenager Canada 2nd Runner up. We are so proud of you

Representing the Beauty Queens of Marky Hugh Productions. Congratulations Girls! Marky Hugh poses with his talents.



Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation, led by President Rosemer Enverga celebrate Independence Day in Ottawa with Canadian and Philippine dignitaries.



Thank you Demo Theo for choosing MH Talent's Erlene Belardo and Nathalie Bondoc as recipients of the Iconic Kid Award 2026 at the International Children Expo.

Marky received an award. he says, "It is an honour to receive an award at the International Children's Expo. We would

like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Juanita Nathan, MP for Pickering-Brooklin, for presenting this recognition.

Congratulations to @danieltatulli, Erlene, and Bhelle on receiving an award at the Children's International Expo!



The kids group name is Tinig ng Kultura NextGen
The Buljaklakan is FCT Ukulele Dancers





PCCF President awards a certificate of Recognition Rosemer Enverga Jesse Asido, founder of Scarborough Spots, a popular social media community and apparel brand, and was recently inducted into the Scarborough Walk of Fame in 2026 for his community and business contributions.



Krystelle Rivas wins a singing contest and poses with PCCF President Rosemer Enverga.



Mayor Olivia Chow presents the proclamation of June 2026 as Filipino Heritage month to PCCF President Rosemer Enverga of Pinoy Fiesta.



Mayor Olivia Chow with community leader Dr. Solon Guzman.



PCCF president Rosemer Enverga with GMA7 Sparkle artist Michael Sager.



PCCF President Rosemer Enverga receives well-wishes from Federal Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre through his representative.



MFFC celebrates Philippine Independence Day

Filipino Heritage Month was officially proclaimed by the Canadian Parliament on October 30, 2018, MFFC page 22



Ms. Angie Bansil



MFFC Board of Directors with Con Gen Salle and Councillor Ho



Past and current IPEN pageant titleholders



MFFC senior group



MFFC youth group Rhythm Re-Choired

Filipinos join 38th Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival (TIDBRF) Talent Competition

by Ron Reyes Angeles

I am overwhelmed with gratitude and huge congratulations to all participants in this incredible competition, especially my loving family, Dong's Dreamers Academy who have been my rock since day one, the dedicated parents, and

all the talented students. A million thanks for making this dream a reality and claiming the Grand Championship of 38th Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival (TIDBRF) Congratulations Maria Francheska Lungayan,

Grand Champion for Teen Division The DDA Divas, Krystelle Rivas, Anne Viesca and Kait, 3rd Place Teen Division. To the Saviours Eagles Foundation International Inc. family who were there and of course

the other talent academies who cheered me on, thank you, thank you all! Jennifer Sy, thank you for this opportunity! I appreciate it a lot! From the deepest emotions, Maraming Salamat po!!!



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Fil-Can Community Day Ushers Filipino Heritage Month in Toronto

By: Tony A. San Juan,
OCT.

On June 6, 2026, the Filipino-Canadian communities in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario, proudly gathered and celebrated to kick off “June as Filipino Heritage Month” with a distinctive “Filipino Community Day” event. This year’s apt celebratory theme was “Makiisa, Makisaya, Makibahagi”, and the occasion was held at Earl Bales Park in North York, Toronto, Ontario.

Historically, the significant milestone was proclaimed on October 30, 2018, by the Parliament of Canada, through House of Commons M-155 sponsored by Salma Zahid, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre-Don Valley East, Toronto. Since then, the month of June has been celebrated ‘from coast to coast to coast’ across Canada. In the City of Toronto, Filipino Heritage Month was declared in November 2017, through a city council motion of Councillor Neethan Shan and the determined advocacy and leadership of the late Paulina B. Corpuz. Then MPP for Scarborough Southwest, Doly Begum successfully sponsored the Bill on May 20, 2021, designating the Filipino heritage celebration in the province of Ontario.



Dignitaries at Dr. Jose Rizal statue: Emcee Ryan Orlanda, MPP Michael Kerzner, MP Vince Gasparro, ConGen Kristine Salle, Minister Rechie Valdez, KOR Placido Mique & Emcee Gizele Mirasol.

The lively event at the park was also in commemoration of the 128th “Kalayaan ng Pilipinas” on June 12, 1898 and the 165th (June 19, 1861) birth anniversary of the national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal. The whole-day festivity was organised under the auspices of the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto in co-operation and collaboration with leading Filipino-Canadian associations in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Philippine Consul General Kristine Leilani R. Salle spearheaded the cultural celebration together with Deputy Consul General Kerwin Tate, Consul Rodney Jonas Sumague, Consul Katrina Isabelle Borja-Martin, Cultural Officer Tey Samonte,

and the entire Toronto Consulate Staff.

Among the dignitaries who attended and gave their greetings were the Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville and Minister of Women & Gender Equality, Honourable Rechie Valdez, the MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Vince Gasparro, and the MPP for York Centre & Ontario Solicitor General, Hon. Michael Kerzner.

The prominent participating organisations were the Philippine Independence Day Council, Kalayaan Cultural Community Centre, Knights of Rizal Central Canada, Pinoy Ontario Vendors, Philippines Integrated

Network for Advocacy & Solidarity, University of the Philippines Alumni Association-Toronto, Philippine Chamber of Commerce-Toronto, Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan, Seeds of Hope Pinakbet International, LKOR, ALKOR, Kababaihang Rizalista, Annak Ti Batac, Elite Eagles Club, BIBBAK, JDL School of Performing Arts, Combat Science-Warriors Art of Asia, and other community-based associations.

Able and jointly hosted by popular community emcees Gizele Mirasol and Ryan Orlanda, the morning program includes the singing of the national anthems, land acknowledgement, wreath

laying, welcome remarks, delivery of special messages, parade of community organisations, and is highlighted by the unfurling of the huge Philippine Flag by representatives of participating organisations. The second part of the day-long event engages the crowd with cultural performances, including folk dances, traditional songs & music, native games, and martial arts demonstrations. At noon, the guests, attendees, and parkgoers were treated to a “salosalo kainan ng lechon, adobo, pansit, inihaw, lumpia, kakanin”, atbp. generously hosted by the Philippine Consulate and joined in with a potluck food shared by respective community organisations.

Notable Filipino businesses have welcoming booths for sampling, selling and promoting their products and services. One of the popular tents was the PINAS space, where multicoloured “sorbetes sa kariton” were freely handed out by the friendly “Mamang sorbetero”. It was indeed a remarkable Saturday showcase of Filipino pride, spirit, sharing, fellowship, beauties and talents of all things “tungkol sa ating mahal na bayang Pilipinas”!!! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

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TONY'S TAKE: TRENDS AND TRIVIA THAT MATTER



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

This column is to keep the reader posted on developments in Canada and elsewhere, with their possible impact on Filipinos who reside and live especially in Canada. Hopefully, this will help them make informed decisions in navigating challenging information and relevant issues happening around.

WFH AND FERTILITY RATES

TONY'S TAKE: TRENDS AND TRIVIA THAT MATTER

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

SMART META AI GLASSES.

Is wearable AI becoming mainstream? Many people believe so. The "Ray-Ban Meta AI" glasses, for one, combine a camera, speakers and AI assistant in a frame that looks much like a conventional pair of glasses. In late 2023, Meta and EssilorLuxottica, the parent company of Ray-Ban, launched the glasses that are "part of a fast-growing category of AI wearables and are moving from novelty to mainstream use". More than seven million Meta smart glasses were reportedly sold in 2025. In theory, they combine the functions of a guidebook, translation app, smartphone and audio guide in a single wearable device. Wearable AI can help travellers navigate cities, translate menus and fundamentally transform travel. The promise for travellers is immediately appealing, such as live translation, help with directions, hands-free photography and quick answers about restaurants, landmarks, menus and whatever else happens to be in front of the wearer. Privacy issues cover the darker side of travel tech. Camera-equipped smart glasses have attracted growing criticism for the way they can be used to film and photograph people without their consent. Wired, an American magazine that examines the impact of emerging technologies on culture, the economy, and politics, has reported instances of Ray-Ban Meta AI glasses being used to record women without their knowledge or



SELF-DRIVING DELIVERY ROBOTS

Delivery robots are now a common sight in some cities around the world. The robots, more formally known as "autonomous urban delivery vehicles", have started to appear on pavements in several cities across the US, UK, Japan, South Korea and Germany, transporting groceries and fast food, using cameras, sensors and GPS to navigate. The robots provide a useful service and help cut down on traffic and emissions, they claim. According to the companies operating them, they can reliably identify and avoid objects in the path, cross streets safely and react to their environment. However, some local authorities in the US and Canada, and members of the public, are less than enthusiastic. Bans have been put in place, and protests have been launched. San Francisco has limited the access of vehicles to less busy parts of the city, and Toronto has, since 2021, prohibited the robots from using sidewalks. In Chicago, the

machines have now been banned from two small areas of the city, and some people want the robots to be suspended across all of Chicago until safety tests are carried out and clear rules are set on their usage. "There have been reports of collisions and injuries. robots causing issues with traffic, blocking emergency vehicles because they're acting erratically at crosswalks." Started in the UK back in 2018, supplier Starship Technologies says these robots are perfectly safe and that perceptions need to change. "While the use of autonomous delivery robots is still limited, analysts believe they're set for a major boom. A report last summer from research firm Transforma Insight concluded that by 2034, there will be 2.1 million in operation around the world. "There's a sense that change like this, even when it's unwanted, is inevitable. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

consent, earning the glasses the ugly nickname "pervert glasses". Swedish newspaper Svenska Dagbladet also reported that workers reviewing data from Meta smart glasses had seen intimate and sensitive footage, including people who appeared not to know they were being recorded. The object-recognition feature is similarly mixed. Sometimes it identifies what the wearer is looking at accurately, while other times it just offers vague observations. Would you like to buy and use one? I don't know about the selling price.

PESTICIDES ON FRUITS.

Berries, like blackberries or strawberries, are packed with antioxidants, fibre and vitamin C, according to the annual 2026 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce of the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nonprofit health advocacy organisation. EWG, however, lists blackberries and strawberries, along with the ever-popular blueberries, in the "Dirty Dozen" as some of "the most pesticide-laden produce grown in the United States". The 2026 Dirty Dozen

list also includes cherries, apples, pears, grapes, peaches, nectarines, and leafy greens such as kale and spinach. There is one bright spot, though, raspberries. Partly due to the way they are grown, raspberries aren't on the 2026 list. In fact, raspberries are ranked 22nd, much closer to EWG's "Clean Fifteen" group of fruits and vegetables with the fewest pesticides. The EWG ratings are calculated from testing done by the US Department of Agriculture. Most of the pesticide levels found by the USDA fall below benchmark levels set by the US Environmental Protection Agency. However, critics, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, say those levels are much too high and fail to address the health impact of long-term, cumulative exposure to multiple pesticides. "Pesticide exposure during pregnancy may lead to an increased risk of birth defects, low birth weight and fetal death," according to the AAP. "Exposure in childhood has been linked to attention and learning problems, as well as cancer." Studies show pesticides are also associated with lower sperm concentrations, heart disease, cancer and an increase in genetic damage in humans. Many "contact" pesticides that sit on the surface of a fruit or vegetable can be effectively removed, said Peng Gao, an assistant professor of environmental health and exposomics at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston. However, "systemic" pesticides, which are absorbed through the roots and leaves of a plant, become part of the fruit and cannot be washed off, Gao said. If you're worried about pesticides, the best solution — if you can afford it — is to buy organic versions of the most pesticide-laden produce, including berries. If you can't afford organic, you can still reduce levels of contact pesticides in berries and other produce with a short soak in your choice of baking soda or vinegar (but not both), according to a peer-reviewed April report by EWG scientists.

Why some newcomers develop allergies after moving to Canada

ALLERGY from page 1

recent newcomers to Canada reported non-food allergies, but that number climbs to roughly 24 for those with a decade or more here. Researchers believe a mix of environmental and lifestyle changes may be driving this shift. These can include differences in

air quality, diet, sanitation and how the immune system adapts to a new environment.

"We're seeing a pattern suggesting that the Canadian environment plays a significant role in allergy development," says Dr. Harold Kim, an allergist and immunologist. "If you're someone who hasn't experienced allergies before, it's important to recognize

the signs early and speak with a doctor if something feels off."

Signs to watch for

Allergy symptoms can range from sneezing and itchy eyes during allergy season to hives, swelling, or serious reactions after eating certain foods. In some cases,

reactions can happen very quickly. Severe and potentially life-threatening reactions, known as anaphylaxis, require immediate treatment with epinephrine, such as from an EpiPen.

What to do if symptoms appear
If you or a family member develops new

or worsening symptoms after arriving in Canada, don't ignore them. A family doctor can help assess your symptoms or refer you to an allergist. Getting a diagnosis can help you manage your condition and be prepared if a serious reaction occurs.

You can find more information on allergies and treatments at epipen.ca.

Street festival Taste of Manila Toronto 2026 is ready to welcome the more than 500,000 visitors again



Taste of Manila Toronto 2026 Highlights

Get ready for Canada's largest celebration of Filipino culture, food, and entertainment!

Taste of Manila Toronto returns on August 15-16, 2026, bringing together over 500,000 visitors for an unforgettable weekend filled with delicious food, world-class entertainment, cultural pride, and family fun.

As one of North America's biggest

Filipino festivals, Taste of Manila will feature more than 150 food, retail, community, and commercial vendors, showcasing the very best of Filipino cuisine, products, and services. From iconic street foods and barbecue specialties to halo-halo, ube treats, and refreshing tropical drinks, visitors will experience the authentic flavors of the Philippines right in the heart of Toronto.

Admission is completely FREE, making the festival accessible to everyone and creating an inclusive environment where families, friends, tourists, and community members can gather to celebrate Filipino heritage.

This year's festival will be more exciting than ever with three entertainment stages featuring continuous live performances throughout the weekend. Audiences can enjoy cultural presentations, dance performances, music, local talents, and special appearances by six celebrity guest stars

from the Philippines, creating a truly star-studded experience for attendees.

Families and children can enjoy a variety of fair games, interactive activities, and entertainment attractions, making Taste of Manila a destination for all ages.

Community spirit remains at the heart of the festival. Cultural organizations, community groups, businesses, schools, and associations are invited to participate in the highly anticipated Taste of Manila Grand Parade on Saturday morning, showcasing the diversity, unity, and vibrant traditions of the Filipino-Canadian community.

Festival Highlights Include:

- Over 500,000 visitors expected
- More than 150 food, retail, and commercial vendors
- FREE admission for all attendees
- Six celebrity guest stars from the Philippines
- Three stages featuring non-stop live entertainment

• Filipino street food, desserts, and beverages

• Fair games and family-friendly activities

• Cultural showcases and community exhibits

• The Taste of Manila Grand Parade open to organizations and community groups

• The largest Filipino street festival in North America

Whether you're coming for the food, entertainment, cultural experiences, or family fun, Taste of Manila Toronto 2026 promises a weekend filled with excitement, community pride, and unforgettable memories.

Join us as we celebrate the richness of Filipino culture and showcase the best of the Philippines to Canada and the world.

Taste of Manila Toronto 2026

August 15-16, 2026

Free Admission

Everyone is Welcome!

404,000 viewers can't be wrong: Coco Martin hits the ground running with 'Sigabo'

Coco Martin returns to primetime with "Sigabo," drawing more than 404,000 concurrent viewers on YouTube and unveiling a new storytelling approach following "FPJ's Batang Quiapo."

Actor-director Coco Martin made a triumphant return to primetime television on Monday, June 22, as the pilot episode of his new series, "Sigabo," delivered strong digital numbers and immediate audience attention.

According to reports, the pilot of the action-comedy drama peaked at more than 404,000 concurrent viewers on Kapamilya Online Live via YouTube.

The massive turnout further solidifies Martin's status as the "Hari ng Aksyon ng Ating Henerasyon" following the recent conclusion of his long-running hit series, "FPJ's Batang Quiapo."

Naturally, Martin was delighted by the strong reception.

"Masaya ako na nagustuhan ng ating mga kababayan yung aming pinaghirapan," Martin said following an executive watch party that featured a live performance of the show's theme song by Yeng Constantino.

With "Sigabo," Martin is offering fans something different. Unlike the long, heavily serialized storytelling of

his previous projects, the new series adopts a lighter, episodic format built around weekly missions.

Martin explained that he designed the show this way to make the story easier to follow without requiring viewers to wait weeks or even months for major plot resolutions.

That said, he retained one of the most popular elements of his previous series, frequent guest appearances from well-known stars.

Beyond providing novelty, Martin said one of the show's primary goals is to create opportunities for veteran actors who have gradually been sidelined by the industry.

He revealed that the production has already employed 59 artists, with more celebrity guests expected to appear in future episodes.

Martin, who developed the original concept alongside co-star and real-life partner Julia Montes, said he envisioned "Sigabo" as a family-friendly program that blends action, comedy,



romance, and drama.

The premiere introduced Gabo (Martin), a newly paroled man determined to clear his name after being wrongfully imprisoned for a murder orchestrated by his former associate, Django (Jhong Hilarion). During a bus ride home, Gabo single-handedly neutralizes a holdup gang and stops a runaway bus just inches away from a car driven by Samantha "Sam" Jacinto (Montes), an agent of the National Crime Investigation Agency (NCIA).

A misunderstanding ensues when Sam mistakes Gabo for one of the robbers. The tension escalates when a surviving criminal shoots Gabo in the chest, prompting Sam to eliminate the threat and administer emergency CPR. In a comedic twist, Gabo regains consciousness after the third chest compression and kisses Sam, later revealing that a lucky coin inherited from his father and kept in his jacket pocket had stopped the bullet.

Some viewers might call it corny, even a little "too Pinoy" in its embrace of melodrama and improbable twists. But that is also exactly why Coco Martin's brand of storytelling continues to land. He does not shy away from expectation, he leans into it fully sans apology. For a large audience, that is not a flaw but the appeal.

The action sequences are fast-paced, explosive, and unmistakably in-your-face.

Set in a fictional community in Tondo, the series once again highlights Martin's affinity for portraying the lives of ordinary Filipinos, celebrating their resilience and spirit, flaws and all.

The approach recalls a previous conversation with Martin.

At the time, he revealed that he had turned down a project designed to emulate Korean-style aesthetics.

He said, "Kako, hindi ako yun e. Mas gusto ko kung ano yung meron tayo. Yung mauunawaan ng mga kababayan natin."

In many ways, "Sigabo" feels like Martin's statement on what mainstream Filipino television can still be, proudly local, unapologetically mass-oriented, and rooted in stories that ordinary viewers can immediately recognize as their own.

The early ratings suggest audiences are willing to follow him in that direction.

"Sigabo" airs weeknights at 8 PM across multiple platforms, including TV5, A2Z, ALLTV2, Kapamilya Channel, Kapamilya Online Live, and iWantTFC.

Anthony Jennings says he's now 'happy, blessed and on a good path'

Anthony Jennings didn't expect to bounce back after the 2024 cheating controversy involving him, his former onscreen partner Maris Racal and his ex-girlfriend Jamela Villanueva.

The Kapamilya actor was asked during the Kyu Kyu Ramen brand film launch if he had expected his career to survive after what happened.

"Hindi, eh. But kung alam mo naman sa sarili mo na good person ka talaga, everything will follow. I'm happy where I am right now."

Anthony landed the lead role in Sid Maderazo's short film for the ramen brand, "World of Bowls." Also present at the media launch, held at Dean & DeLuca in Tanay, Rizal, were Anthony's "Incognito" director Lester Pimentel Ong, who also happens to be the chairman and chief executive officer of Binondo Food Group (which operates the Kyu Kyu Ramen 99 brand,



Anthony as his character in a scene from Kyu Kyu Ramen's short film.

among others) and Luigi Pimentel, the company's chief operating officer.

Anthony said that he had learned many lessons from his past experiences. "But what's more important is to be a good person because everything will follow," he reiterated. He added that he is "OK now" and "happy."

"Everything's going well. I'm blessed right now because andaming blessings na pumasok pa rin. I think I'm on a good path because I did a project in the US ('Nurse the Dead'), and I have an upcoming film. Maraming aaban-

gan, of course."

"But happy lang ako sa mga susunod ko pang tatahakin sa buhay. Ganun lang naman kasi, sabay lang ako sa wave. Yun naman importante, dapat ini-enjoy mo lang yung process na ganun. Happy naman po," he shared.

The supernatural comedy-drama series "Nurse the Dead" tells the story of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and nurses, Anthony said.

"We will show the grief, loneliness and family themes in the series. It highlights the sacrifices of our Filipino nurses who work away from their families." He also expressed appreciation for the veteran co-actors he worked with, including Princess Punzalan, Ruby Rodriguez and other cast members. "I've learned a lot from them, especially when it comes to (comedic) timing."

Anthony and direk Lester previously collaborated on the

action-packed series "Incognito." Asked about updates on the second season of "Incognito," the director said, "My team and I are working very, very hard for the next season to happen. Right now, there's no finality yet because marami kasing moving parts."

"The cast of 'Incognito' are A-listers. All of them are busy with their respective careers. I'm still talking and negotiating with ABS-CBN for it to happen and still hoping that it will happen soon. We are working very hard, all of us — from ABS-CBN to the producers of Star Creatives to the management of all of these cast members. Still, we're trying to make it happen," he added. The cast of the first season included Richard Gutierrez, Baron Geisler, Maris Racal, Kaila Estrada, Ian Veneracion and Daniel Padilla.

Meanwhile, Anthony shared that his favorite ramen

flavor is spicy.

"Just like in our lives, lahat ng pinagdadaan natin, ganun din ako sa buhay ko may excitement pa rin. I need that 'spice' in my life," he said, likening the spicy flavor to the excitement and challenges he experiences in life. The quirky short film "World of Bowls" reminds viewers that "even on the toughest days, a comforting bowl of ramen can make things feel lighter and better," according to the media release.

The film reflects the "brand's mission of quality ramen bringing comfort across the country without the premium price tag or the premium pretense," direk Lester remarked.

"It reflects Kyu Kyu Ramen 99's mission of providing world-class quality food that is affordable to everyone by showing how accessible it truly is, making authentic Japanese ramen feel within reach and easy to enjoy," he added.

Liza Soberano reveals challenges of starting over in Hollywood

Former Kapamilya actress Liza Soberano has spoken out about the hardships and sacrifices she has endured since leaving her career in the Philippines.

Liza admitted that she was very hurt when people called her "laos" when she went to the US to pursue her Hollywood dream.

The actress gave up and sacrificed a lot when she decided to leave the Philippine showbiz to pursue her dream of becoming a Hollywood star.

Liza shared on the "Painfully Human Podcast" hosted by Edward Barber the events that took place in her life and career when she moved to Los Angeles in 2024.

Edward asked Liza what things she had to sacrifice when she left



her beautiful showbiz career in the Philippines.

"Money," Liza answered. "For the longest time, this is something that

I've realized about myself after stepping away from showbiz and kind of the Philippines in general."

"I don't mean disrespect by this, but like I was so afraid of looking poor... It's not like I look down on poor people, I definitely don't. I was poor growing up. I remember when I joined showbiz, everybody was always saying like 'Oh, don't talk too much about your personal life'

that's why nobody knows much of my upbringing," Liza said.

She recalled how people often assumed she came from a wealthy background because she was half-American and mestiza, but said that was far from reality.

"In order to not distract people from the brand that we were carefully curating, I never really went in-depth about my story. But now that I've moved to LA, obviously, money is the biggest thing that I've sacrificed because I could be here in the Philippines doing the same thing I've been doing since I was 12, making lots of money," the actress said.

Liza shared that she felt like she was just doing the same thing over and over again in showbiz and that everything had become "auto-pilot" for her.

"I could be easily just doing that and still making the same amount of money that I used to, but now I don't. That's what I sacrificed to be living in LA and discomfort," she said.

However, she chose to start over in the US, where she described herself as a new artist learning the industry from the beginning.

Soberano said it hurt when people called her "laos" and questioned her career after she started appearing in smaller projects.

"I have to do all these little gigs every now and then because that's how I pay my bills. That's the price that I'm paying so that I can fulfill this ambition or dream of mine," she said. "Money and just the comfort of not having to put in the effort to grow."

Liza also said that she spends

money on acting workshops and vocal lessons.

"In America, I do three to four auditions a week and I get rejected constantly. But I'm loving it now because I'm learning and growing so much. All these different roles which is fun, but then I still get rejected because I'm doing the thing I said I wanted to do," she said.

After her Hollywood debut in the 2024 horror-comedy film "Lisa Frankenstein," alongside Kathryn Newton, she landed another international project as one of the lead voice actors of "Forgotten Island."

This is the upcoming animated feature from DreamWorks Animation. She will be joined by Filipino and international artists such as H.E.R., Lea Salonga, Manny Jacinto, Dave Franco and Jenny Slate.

Heart Evangelista recalls being 'sugar mommy' with ex-boyfriend

Actress and fashion influencer Heart Evangelista felt like a "sugar mommy" to an ex-boyfriend.

Heart made the remark after recalling how she was always the one paying when they dated.

In an interview with "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda," the issue of who should pay when a couple dates was talked about.

For Heart, she has no problem

paying if she is the one who invited.

"Agree...(kapag ako ang nagyaya), ako na ang magbabayad," she said.

"Pag lalaki, oo naman, yes (dapat mag-pay sa date). Pero kapag kunwari sa pagkakaibigan, I feel like (ako na ang magbabayad), because I like to host. That's me,"



she added.

When asked if there were times when she spent money on men, she said yes.

"Lagi akong gumagastos, sira ako sa lalaki. Hahaha-haha!"

"That's my language of love. That's always been my language of love. I'm very, very giving. I'm very generous," she added.

Heart continued, "But I did have one boyfriend that I felt was not too (generous), I didn't like. There is something about him that left a bad taste in my mouth."

"Parang, I felt like, 'Okay...I feel like I'm a sugar mommy na' parang ganyan," she added.

When asked for a clue on who she was referring to, Heart said: "They're all good-looking. Hahahaha!"

Wedding reveal? Barbie Forteza headlines new Regal comedy

MANILA, Philippines — It appears wedding bells aren't ringing yet for Barbie Forteza, at least not in real life.

The actress caught the attention of fans after posting a series of photos of herself in a bridal gown while inside a church.

"I've waited for this for so long," Barbie captioned her post. "Nobody can ruin my big day."

Not many were convinced that Barbie might be tying

the knot, assuming instead that the pictures might be promotions for an upcoming project.

The latter was soon confirmed as Barbie will be leading the cast of Regal Entertainment's upcoming comedy movie "Saving Cherry."

The film follows the titular character, a conservative and devoted woman played by Barbie, who has saved her virginity for her wedding night — that is until she catches her husband-to-be, portrayed



by Khalil Ramos, cheating on her.

The cheating partner tries to

make amends but Cherry instead heads out on a roadtrip with her bridesmaids and the wedding planner with plans

to "pop her cherry" on her own terms.

Rounding out the main cast are Mika Salamanca, AC Bonifacio, Mikee Quintos, and Sassa Gurl — all of whom commented on Barbie's initial post.

"Saving Cherry" will be directed by Ivan Andrew Payawal, whose past credits include "Gameboys," "Love at First Spike," and most recently, "Miss Behave."



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Kris Aquino thanks supporters for praising Bimby's hosting skills

MANILA, Philippines — "Queen of All Media" Kris Aquino expressed her gratitude to supporters who praised her son, Bimby Aquino Yap, for his hosting abilities and humility following his recent appearances in the noontime show "Eat Bulaga."

Kris thanked viewers for their encouraging comments about Bimby's performance in her Instagram post. The popular host said her youngest son's comfort in front of the camera comes naturally due to his lifelong exposure to the entertainment industry.

"Thank you for your encouraging comments about Bimby's hosting on 'Eat Bulaga.' He's natural because from the time he was born, 'laking studio' na siya and he's done major



endorsements from the time he was four months old and has been my co-host for the summer episodes of 'Kris TV,'" Aquino said.

The TV host and actress also expressed appreciation for the positive feedback regarding her son's character and attitude.

"Thank you for praising him for being humble and marunong makisa-

ma," she said.

Many social media users have commended Bimby for his confidence, poise, and ability to interact comfortably with hosts and guests. Others have noted his respectful demeanor and down-to-earth personality despite growing up in one of the country's most prominent political and entertainment families.

Bimby, the son of Kris with former professional basketball player James Yap, has largely stayed away from the spotlight in recent years while focusing on his studies and supporting his mother's health journey. However, his recent television appearances have sparked renewed public interest, with many viewers praising his potential as a future television personality.



Ice Seguerra and Sitti's signature songs mark milestones

Original Pilipino Music (OPM) hit-makers Ice Seguerra and Sitti are celebrating significant milestones in their respective music careers. It has been 25 years since Ice's timeless song, *Pagdating ng Panahon*, came out in 2001, while Sitti's hit single, *Para sa Akin*, marks its 20th year. Both songs have transcended time and become soundtracks of our lives, including courtships, weddings, anniversaries, heartbreaks and reconciliations. They acknowledged that their iconic songs have brought them to where they are now in the music industry.

"Pagdating ng Panahon 25 years na, and for me, it's one of the biggest milestones ng career ko. I don't think I'd be sitting here with you now if it weren't for that song. The 25 years deserve to be celebrated kasi di naman parating nangyayari iyon na kahit 25 years na ang lumipas, the clamor for it every time I play gigs, hindi ko siya pwedeng hindi kantahin talaga," Ice remarked during their guesting on "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda."

He recorded and released a new version of the ballad. "The '25' release is not just to celebrate, but at the same time to look back on the journey of *Pagdating ng Panahon* as it grew with



Recent visitors at this columnist's 'Fast Talk' on GMA, Ice Seguerra (right) and Sitti are known for their signature songs *Pagdating ng Panahon* and *Para sa Akin*, respectively. Ice recorded his 25 years ago, while Sitti released hers 20 years ago. Both songs have transcended time and become soundtracks of our lives.

me. If you listen to the first and the second releases, makikita mo rin iyong maturity ng singer at ng kanta."

I have known Sitti for a long time since I used to manage her career. She has a soothing voice that calms both body and soul. I'm proud that her song, *Para sa Akin*, is still part of the listening public's playlist two decades after her debut album, "Café Bossa," was released.

The country's Bossa Nova queen recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of the song through a concert that was directed by Ice. "This also chronicles my journey and growth as an artist. It's a celebration of love, music and friendship," she said.

I asked Sitti and Ice about the role of

music in these ongoing societal problems plaguing the country right now. Ice replied, "Music is not just about entertainment. I think music iyong paraan rin na masasabi iyong mga nararamdaman natin kasi ang music, tama sa puso, diretso iyan. I think sa panahon ngayon talagang lalabas din iyong nararamdaman nating mga Pilipino through these songs."

Ice shared that the song titled *Lupang Pinangako*, which he wrote more than 10 years ago, remains relevant today. "Parang walang pinagbago. Kung ano ang nag-inspire sa akin — the frustrations I felt — kaya ko nasulat iyon; ganoon pa rin."

Sitti commented, "When I feel something so deeply, and I feel like wala akong magagawa about it, that's when I retreat into music. Hindi tamang sabihin sa panahon ngayon na mag-e-escape tayo into the music kasi talagang this is not the time to just let things happen na wala kang gagawin."

She recalled a songwriting camp in Dumaguete that she attended in 2013 after Typhoon Yolanda. "There were so much deaths that could have been prevented. Ito iyong tanong ko lagi: tuwing may sakuna sa bansa natin, bakit hindi tayo mas prepared? Bakit

hindi tayo natututo?"

As musical artists, how do they keep themselves competitive and relevant in this digital age?

"I really believe that we have to show our uniqueness coz that's the only way you can be competitive. Kapag gumaya tayo, I think that would be your downfall. No. 2 is that you really have to be the best at your craft. You have to do better every single time. Hindi ka pwedeng mag-relax," Ice remarked.

"For me, pour out more of your humanity to whatever craft you are doing. Iyon talagang hindi ka na mag-ho-hold back pa," Sitti added.

Music is an emotional outlet that could help in the healing process of someone suffering from grief and pain. The two singers discussed how they use music to deal with the passing of their beloved mothers. Sitti said, "It's a release. It's saying the things you can't say. Iyong minsan, wala kang words talaga. Only the music will say that."

Ice shared, "I'm very stoic talaga, especially when I'm really feeling so many things. Mahirap akong mag-release. I remember when my mom passed away; it's through songs na alam kong favorite niya, doon ako nakakaiyak."

Michelle Dee says friendship with Rhian Ramos not affected by legal issues

Actress and beauty queen Michelle Dee revealed that her friendship with Rhian Ramos and Samantha Panlilio has not been affected despite legal issues they faced.

In her interview with "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda," Michelle said they remained close to each other.

"Hindi naman naapektuhan. We're still very, very close, and we'd like to keep it that way," she said.

Michelle also said that she is doing fine despite the legal challenges that happened earlier this year.

"I mean, especially kasi January pa nangyari. I'm really focused on things that I'm working on. Pero, you know, nobody wants to be put in that spot — to be under national spotlight, scrutiny, [and] accusations — especially without fact-checking," she said.



Rhian Ramos, Michelle Dee, and Samantha Panlilio

The Miss Universe Philippines 2023 also said that she is glad that social media users now fact check before

believing stories in the internet.

"I guess I'm also lucky na matalino na 'yung mga tao ngayon. Matalino silang mag-husga. They can connect the dots, they can check facts, they can discern, and we've always said this, the truth is going to come out. It has been coming out and you can see it sa general opinion talaga," she said.

She also zeroed in on the pervasive problem in social media.

"Fake news is such a problem nowadays and it's so easy to come out with a story without even fact-checking. I think people should stay accountable. Hindi naman porket may source ka it means totoo. A lot of people are victims of that — I just hope the truth comes out in that

regard. I definitely don't agree na dapat binibigyan pa ng panahon ang mga nagfa-fake news," she said.

Michelle, Rhian, and Samantha previously came under scrutiny after the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) issued subpoenas in connection with allegations made by Rhian's former driver. The complainant claimed that he was physically assaulted and illegally detained from January 17 to January 19.

The three women have firmly denied the accusations and have since cooperated with authorities, appearing before investigators and complying with the requirements of the ongoing probe. As the investigation continues, they maintain that the allegations against them are unfounded.

Kim Molina calls out netizen after threatening Jerald Napoles over role

Actress Kim Molina is alarmed after her husband Jerald Napoles received threats from a social media user who appeared to disagree with the latter's controversial role in an upcoming movie.

Jerald is the star of "Love, NGO," a movie that tackles the life of a person with disability (PWD).

On Facebook, Kim posted a screenshot of a message from a netizen warning her against making movies involving people with cleft lip and cleft palate.

Kim was worried that the content of the message is an outright threat of harm to the actor. The message was in Filipino that described doing physical harm to the actor.

"Messages like this are alarming and should never be normalized," Kim wrote on Facebook.

"Criticism is one thing, but threatening physical harm is another. Let's keep discussions respectful and remember that behind every screen is a real person," she added.

Even before its premiere on June 3, "Love, NGO" was already at the center of controversy due to its original title "Ngongo," which was criticized for allegedly using



Kim Molina and Jerald Napoles were preparing for their wedding during the film shoot of 'Wonderful Nightmare,' making the experience of playing a married couple feel even more personal. They officially exchanged I do's on March 1 in a star-studded Christian wedding in Bohol.

a derogatory term.

One of those who opposed the film was the National

Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), which expressed concern regarding the representation of PWDs.

Kim defended her husband's decision to accept the project.

The actress previously insisted that Jerald would not accept a film that aims to belittle or hurt the dignity of anyone.

John Lloyd Cruz's GF Isabel Santos deactivates IG after 'I give up' post

Artist Isabel Santos, girlfriend of actor John Lloyd Cruz, has deactivated her Instagram account after sharing a series of cryptic posts that fueled speculation about her relationship status.

In one post, Isabel wrote: "I give up."

She followed it with a message reflecting on birthdays, saying she had not had a good birthday in more than six years and adding: "Men don't protect you anymore."

Before deactivating her account, Santos also shared a birthday message to herself on Instagram Stories. The



Composite photo of John Lloyd Cruz and Isabel Santos during their visit at the Strays Worth Saving, an animal shelter in Batangas

post encouraged her to embrace compliments, believe in her own path and pursue her dreams despite challenges.

"This year your task is to believe in the promise of your own life," part of the message read.

Santos later deactivated her Instagram account.

The development came weeks after Isabel and John Lloyd were seen in Boracay with actress Ellen Adarna and her son Elias.

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KEEPING CALL CENTERS

CALL CENTRE from page 3

“Customer service operations are designed to route calls based on skill, availability, and efficiency. Artificial geographic caps would reduce flexibility, increase costs, and potentially degrade service quality,” it added.

The comments were filed by the IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP), the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham), and the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC).

This comes as the FCC in March released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking to explore measures to encourage businesses to bring call center jobs back to the United States and improve customer service at existing US-based facilities.

According to Chairman Brendan Carr, Americans get “frustrated” when they call American businesses and end up connecting with an overseas call center as this has often meant “confusing service, delayed support, and even security risks.”

Carr also noted that there have been cases where would-be scammers are trained at legitimate call centers and access client data illegally, or take their training to a foreign robocall operation.

“Philippine-based providers’ experience, including providers supporting public-sector emergency and hotline services, further confirms that legitimate enterprise contact-center operations in the Philippines are not the source of unlawful robocall traffic,” the Philippine business groups said.

“These operations function within authorized client workflows, monitored

channels, and auditable systems; they do not independently initiate, route, spoof, or control mass robocall campaigns,” they said.

The groups also noted that American companies generally do not permit offshore providers to operate under lower standards, and they are typically subject to the same scripts and workflows, customer-experience standards, audit requirements, cybersecurity controls, escalation procedures, and contractual performance obligations as their US-based counterparts.

“For many providers, failure to meet these standards results in contractual penalties, financial clawbacks, mandatory remediation obligations, or termination of vendor relationships,” the position paper read.

“These operational realities are important because they demonstrate that

customer outcomes are primarily determined by governance, training, supervision, tooling, and accountability, not by geographic location alone,” it added.

The business groups also noted that the proposals to limit the percentage of customer calls handled offshore would have substantial operational and economic consequences without clear consumer benefit.

“US companies have retained offshore components of their customer-service models precisely because integrated global delivery allows them to preserve cost efficiency, continuity, surge capacity, specialized talent access, and service quality for US consumers,” they said.

Anne Curtis celebrates 29 years in showbiz, unveils three new film projects

Nearly three decades after entering the entertainment industry, Anne Curtis is marking her 29th year in showbiz with gratitude and a slate of new projects, including her first collaboration with director Mikhail Red and reunion films with directors Ruel S. Bayani and Irene Emma Villamor.

The milestone was celebrated during Curtis’ “A Toast to What’s Next” media conference, where she reflected on her journey from a young aspiring actress to one of the country’s most recognizable stars.

Looking back on nearly three decades in the business, Curtis said one of the people she remains most grateful to is her longtime home studio, Viva Entertainment.

“I think definitely my Viva family, that they never gave up on me. I’ve been with the Viva family for 29 years. They never gave up on me when I was a 12-year-old kid who didn’t know Tagalog. They gave me roles and really gave me an opportunity to shine, to hone and to learn. For that, I’ll always be truly grateful because we’re still here,” Curtis said.

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The celebration also doubled as a preview of what lies ahead for the actress. Leading her upcoming projects is “Remote,” a psychological horror film that will pair Curtis with Red for the first time. The project will be produced by Viva Films and the filmmaker’s Evolve Stu-

dios.

Curtis said she is particularly excited to return to darker, genre-driven storytelling. Murder charges filed vs 15-year-old shooter

“This one with Mikhail Red, I’m very excited to do a psycho-thriller. It’s been a while since I’ve done something like that. I really like doing genre films, not just love stories,” she said.

She will also reunite with Bayani, who directed the blockbuster romantic drama “No Other Woman,” one of the defining films of her career. Another reunion is in store with Villamor, following the commercial success of “The Loved One.”

The projects come as Curtis prepares to wrap up an ambitious action series for Netflix that she has been filming with director Erik Matti for the past three years.

“When I saw the realization that it’s been 29 years, I was surprised admitted. I definitely want to focus more on films. These past three years, we dedicated our lives to that project, and we know it’s going to be worthwhile. It’s a series on Netflix coming very soon. Hopefully after that, we’ll make films again and explore different genres. I’m excited to start that again,” she shared.

The actress said the experience of working on the action series has tested her physically and creatively, but she believes audiences will understand why it took years to complete once they finally see it.



“We’ve been working on it for three years. Sometimes it’s like, ‘I’m so tired,’ because of course it’s action. But when I see the preview, it’s so beautiful. It’s so,” she said.

Despite a career filled with box-office hits, hit television programs, endorsement deals and international fashion appearances, Curtis said there are still goals she hopes to achieve.

Among them is attending the Cannes Film Festival not as a fashion guest but as part of a film being showcased on one of cinema’s big-

gest stages.

“A lot of people ask me what I haven’t achieved yet. One of the biggest dreams of mine is to attend the Cannes Film Festival for a film. We’re invited by brands, but my heart still can’t accept that it’s not for the art, for a film or for a series. Maybe that’s one of my dreams,” she said.

She added that the dream remains within reach regardless of age.

“There’s no time limit. You could even be in your 60s or 70s and still achieve that. I hope the right project happens,” she said.

Curtis also expressed optimism about the growing recognition being received by Filipino artists on the global stage, whether in fashion, film or television. Advertisement

“It’s a great time for the Philippines. We’re finally getting invited, we’re getting recognized and we’re on the map. I hope this is just the beginning of great things for the Filipino film and television industry,” she said.

Philippines seeks global protection for Bohol's famous 'Kinampay' purple ube

UBE from page 4

serve traditional and organic farming practices that give the Bohol-grown variety its distinct aroma, texture, and color.

The IPOPHL has so far approved four commodities for GI registration, which include Guimaras Mangoes, Aklan Piña, Albuquerque Asin Tibuok, and Tau Sebu T'nalak.

If approved, Bohol Ubi Kinampay could become the

second locally protected GI from Bohol following the artisanal sea salt from Alburquerque town.

As part of the registration process, IPOPHL said it will now review the application's submitted manual of specifications, which covers the product description, geographic production area, production methods, quality control measures, standards, and labeling rules.

It also provides evidence linking the distinct qualities

of Bohol Ubi Kinampay to Bohol's natural conditions and traditional know-how.

Earlier, Trade Secretary Cristina Roque said ube would be among the growth drivers of the country's agricultural exports this year, especially as it continues to be a trending product in overseas markets.

SexBomb Legend Rochelle Pangilinan Leads All-Star GMA Sparkle Lineup at Taste of Manila Toronto 2026

Toronto, ON - Canada's largest Filipino festival is turning up the excitement as Taste of Manila Toronto 2026 proudly welcomes an incredible lineup of GMA Sparkle stars fresh from the Philippines for a weekend of world-class entertainment, cultural celebration, and unforgettable fan experiences.

Headlining the stellar roster is Rochelle Pangilinan, one of the Philippines' most iconic performers, best known as the leader and main dancer of the legendary

SexBomb Girls. Renowned for her electrifying stage presence, hit dance numbers, and successful television career, Rochelle remains one of the most recognizable entertainers in Philippine show business. Her appearance at Taste of Manila promises to bring energy, nostalgia, and excitement to festival-goers.

Joining her is award-winning actor Miguel Tanfelix, one of GMA's most sought-after leading men, known for his starring roles in hit television dramas and films.

Fans will also get the chance to see Jillian Ward, one of the country's brightest young stars, celebrated for her outstanding performances in television and her growing success as an actress and singer.

Also appearing is rising star Shuvee Etrata, whose popularity continues to soar through major television projects and appearances, along with versatile actor Paul Salas, a fan favorite known for his dynamic performances on screen.

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Adding laughter and excitement to the festival is the hilarious Beki Velo, one of the Philippines' most entertaining comedians and social media personalities. Known for his quick wit, relatable humor, and crowd-engaging performances, Beki Velo is sure to keep audiences laughing throughout the weekend.

Together, these celebrated Sparkle artists will bring star power, live performances, fan interactions, and unforgettable moments to Taste of Manila Toronto 2026, creating one of the festival's biggest entertainment attractions ever.

With over 500,000 visitors, more than 150 vendors, three entertainment stages, cultural showcases, family activities, and admission that is absolutely

FREE, Taste of Manila continues to be one of the largest Filipino festivals in North America.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to see some of the Philippines' biggest stars live in Toronto as Taste of Manila celebrates Filipino culture, food, music, and community on an unprecedented scale.

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MFFC celebrates Philippine Independence Day

MFFC from page 14

designating the month of June as a nationwide month of recognition.



Toronto Con Gen Kristine Salle, MFFC Director and Treasurer, Alice Chiu, MFFC a President, Art Canseco, & City of Markham Regional Councillor Alan Ho

Even before this proclamation, the Markham Federation for Filipino Canadians (MFFC) held festive celebrations for its members, family, and guests, with the presence of Canadian and Philippine dignitaries. Through

the initiative of the late Markham Councillor Alejandro "Alex" Chiu, the Philippine Independence Day Celebration (PIDC) began to be held at the MFFC after his election as Councillor, where he served for 33 years. We can also attribute Councillor Chiu's effort in proclaiming Philippine Week in Markham, which has now been upgraded to a month-long celebration by Parliament as Filipino Heritage Month.

Everyone gathered together for the flag-raising at the MFFC community centre, with O Canada, sung by the youth choir and Lupang Hinirang, sung by the senior choir. Philippine Consul General Kristine Salle and City of Markham Regional Councillor Alan Ho graced the occasion and briefly gave their celebratory messages. Also present were the IPEN beauties, providing glamor and elegance to the celebrations; and

finally, a rendition of favorite Filipino songs by Ms. Angie Bansil before the break for lunch.

After the sumptuous lunch, performances by the youth group, Rhythm Re-Choired, and the senior group followed, both showcasing their talents

in song and dance. The festivities ended with the closing remarks of MFFC President Art Canseco, highlighting the Filipino's role in the community and the contribution of MFFC towards multiculturalism and the economy.



GMA7 Sparkle artist Michael Sager entertain the guests at the Pinoy Fiesta meet and Greet at FV Foods.

Philippine Artists Group Annual Exhibit



Philippine Artists Group holds an exhibit and here are some of the pictures.



JDL PERFORMING ARTS Dance Troopers performed at the International Children's Expo 2026 (International Kids Expo).

Photos below and on the right are taken from the Pinoy Fiesta 2026 festival.



Cheska Lungayan of Dong's Dreamers Academy performs at the Pinoy Fiesta 2026 festival.

"Canada Strong Medal" Recipient, Tony A. San Juan with Canadian Member of Parliament for Scarborough North, Shaun Chen and Guest Speaker Dr. Alvin Curling, former MPP, Speaker of Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Canada's Ambassador to the Dominican Republic on June 18, 2026 at Cinnamon Convention Centre, Scarborough, Toronto.

Congratulations Jennifer Sy! You have been selected as a recipient of the Canada Strong Medal, awarded in recognition of your outstanding contributions to help build a stronger Canada. Awarded by Shaun Chen, Member of Parliament, Scarborough North.



The De Leon Family celebrate a Grand Reunion



Honourable Rechie Valdez, Canada's Federal Minister of Women & Gender Equality, Secretary of State for Small Business & Trade, and Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville, poses with Jeff Messina, business executive & Philippine Independence Day Council Board Director, and Tony Apuya San Juan, during "Filipino Community Day and Filipino Heritage Month" celebration on June 6, 2026, at Earl Bales Park, North York, Toronto, Canada.



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Kim Atienza: 'Tell your children you love them every chance you get'

TV personality Kuya Kim Atienza will always be the fun dad to his now-adult children. He says his wife, Fely, is the disciplinarian, while he's 'the playful dad, the source of all jokes.' His kids like to make fun of him, and he enjoys it.

Fathers and father figures were often portrayed in popular entertainment as the strong and silent types, the disciplinarians of the family. Mothers were nurturers whom their children sought out whenever they needed comfort. It may still hold true for many nuclear families, but for Alejandro "Kuya Kim" Atienza, he will always be the fun dad to his now-adult children.

"My wife, Fely, is the disciplinarian in the family. I'm the playful dad, the source of all jokes. The kids like to make fun of me, and I enjoy that," Kim said.

Now that they're older, the relationship he has with them has evolved as well. The couple's eldest child, 24-year-old Jose, has become a friend. Although Jose is based in the US, they keep in touch several times a week, usually via FaceTime. "I consider my son a good friend, especially after he got into the things I'm into, like triathlons, biking and running."

Two years ago, in 2025, Jose joined

the Boston Marathon, finishing with what his father described in an Instagram post as "a respectable 3:51 on a tough Boston day." Kim also shared a photo of Jose holding his medal and a video of him and Fely on marathon day with the caption, "The Boston Marathon is THE most important marathon of all. Good job, son, Mama and Papa are so proud of you."

Last month, his daughter Eliana graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania. "She's really smart, that girl of mine. That's why I'm really proud of her."

Kuya Kim on a family trip with his wife, Fely, and their daughter Eliana.

Kim is one dad who really wears his heart on his sleeve. He's not stingy when it comes to expressing his love for his children, which is why it hurt so much when his daughter Emman left this world last October. Since then, he has been very vocal about his grief, granting interviews where he talks at length about the experience he



and his family are still undergoing.

"I've realized that people grieve differently. My kids grieve like their mom — they're very smart, they process things mentally. They grieve alone, and I don't begrudge them that, while I'm very public with my grief."

Since 1995, he has lived life in the public eye. From that year until 2004, Kim served as a Manila councilor for three terms before shifting gears to become a TV personality. After stints on TV and radio, he moved to GMA in 2021. He is now a segment presenter for "24 Oras (Kuya Kim, Ano Na?)" and host of daytime variety game show, "Tiktoclock" and infotainment program "Dami Mong Alam, Kuya Kim!"

Despite his busy schedule, Kim has always strived to carve out time for and with his family. Since Jose and Eliana are in the US, he and Fely visit them when they can. And there's always FaceTime.

His being a demonstrative and expressive parent has apparently rubbed off on his children. "Now, when Jose and I end our video calls, he always tells me, 'I love you, Dad,' and I reply, 'I love you, Jose.' It's the same with Eliana. She is still my baby. She may be 20, but she will forever be my baby."

"I would tell them I love them 10 times a day. They picked that up from me. They've become very expressive to their mom, to me and to their friends as well," he said.

It's fortunate that Kim laid down that foundation when they were very young.

"When your children are under the age of 12, ideally from six to 12, you should bond with them, instill in them the values you hold dear and tagalog make them your babies. When they reach their teens, they will often gravitate towards their peers, their barkada, and by then you might have lost your chance."

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Yasmien Kurdi, Tuesday Vargas call for action after fatal Tacloban school shooting

(from left) Yasmien Kurdi and Tuesday Vargas. Photo from their official Facebook pages.

Yasmien Kurdi and Tuesday Vargas expressed grief and concern following the deadly shooting at San Jose National High School in Tacloban City that left three students dead and at least 20 others injured.

The shooting, which occurred on June 22, was allegedly carried out by two Grade 9 students, aged 14 and 15. Police said one of the suspects was able to fire at least 33 shots. Both minors have since been arrested.

In a lengthy Facebook post following the incident, Kurdi reflected on issues of bullying, school safety, and parenting as she cited lessons she drew from the Korean drama "Teach You a Lesson."

The actress admitted she initially hesitated to watch the series because it was "triggering," due to a personal experience but said it raised important questions about how schools and communities respond to bullying and student welfare.

"The first episode tells the story of a student who took his own life after relentless bullying while the school failed to act. Kapag hindi naaakasyunan ang bullying, hindi natatapos ang cycle dahil maghah-



anap lang ulit ng bagong target ang mga bully," she said.

"May episode din showing how toxic parenting becomes when adults refuse to discipline children at eto, may personal experience kami sa ganitong scenario," she added.

Kurdi said the show highlights how unchecked bullying can have devastating consequences and emphasized the role of parents in disciplining their children.

"Sa mga kapwa kong magulang: kapag may 'sungay,' disiplinahin habang bata pa. Schools should be safe places for learning, not environments where abuse is tolerated," she said.

She also stressed that raising children is a shared responsibility among families, schools, communities, and government.

"It takes a village to raise a child," she quoted from another series, adding that while children aged 15 and below are exempt from criminal liability under Philippine law,

they may still face civil liability through their parents.

Meanwhile, Vargas called for immediate government action as she expressed condolences to the families of the victims following the tragedy.

"Isang napakabigat at nakakadurog ng pusong balita ang sinapit ng ating mga kababayan sa naganap na pamamaril sa San Jose National High School sa Tacloban City," she wrote.

"Hindi madaling tanggapin na ang isang lugar na dapat ay ligtas para sa ating mga kabataan ay naging eksena ng ganitong karahasan. Buong-puso po akong nakikiramay sa mga pamilya ng mga estudyanteng binawian ng buhay," she added.

The actress urged national authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into how the firearms ended up in the hands of minors and called for stronger security measures in schools.

"Nananawagan po kami ng hustisya at masusing imbestigasyon

kung paano napasakamay ng mga menor de edad ang mga armas na ginamit," she said. "Kailangang palakasin ang seguridad sa ating mga paaralan upang hindi na ito muling maulit pa sa kahit saang bahagi ng bansa."

Vargas also appealed to the government to shoulder the medical and financial needs of the injured victims and sought long-term psychosocial support for students, teachers, and families affected by the incident.

"Huwag po nating hayaang maiwan sa ere ang mga biktima at ang mga sugatan na kasalukuyang lumalaban para sa kanilang buhay—siguraduhin po nating sagot ng gobyerno ang lahat ng kanilang medikal at pinansyal na pangangailangan," she expressed.

Vargas also asked the local officials in Tacloban for a clear plan to assist bereaved families and help the school community recover from the trauma.

The actress likewise urged public officials and political figures not to use the tragedy for political gain.

"Hindi ito ang panahon para sa pamumulitika, pagtuturuan, o pagpapasikat," she said. "Ang kailangan ngayon ay tunay na serbisyo, tulong, at solusyon... Ang bawat buhay na nawala ay pangarap na naudlot. Hustisya para sa mga biktima ng Tacloban school shooting. Huwag nating payagang maging numero na lamang sila sa estadistika," concluded Vargas.



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What prompted Rita Daniela's shift to Viva? New opportunities

As she marked more than 20 years in the entertainment industry, Rita Daniela felt that shifting to Viva Artists Agency was the right move. There's no personal vendetta or a hidden intention; all she wanted was a fresh start.

"I really just want to explore new opportunities po talaga because we all know that Viva has a lot of platforms right now," she said in a media con after signing with the talent agency.

"Siyempre, they produce concerts, they have musicals, they do series; and I heard [of] Viva Movie Box or Viva One. I would really love to try them all, 'yun talaga ang aking naisip and nanggaling sa puso (this response came from the heart)," she continued.

The singer-actress made headlines after it was announced that she signed a contract with Viva after a 21-year stay with Sparkle GMA. Looking back on her final days at the latter agency, she became emotional as she expressed her gratitude to the friends she had made along the way.

"Of course, [I'm grateful]. It opened a lot of doors for me. Hindi biro ang nabuo namin... I'm very, very grateful with that," she said. "My [All-Out Sundays] family will always be part of the highlights

of my career. I really gained and built a family and friendships there. That's very important for me."

What made the move significant for Rita was the support of her partner, family and loved ones.

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Transat

"Grabe itong blessing to have a fresh start and a new journey with the most important people of your life," she said, wiping tears from her face.

Embodying courage

Last year, Rita found herself in a legal battle against her "Widows' War" co-star Archie Alemania, whom she complained against for acts of lasciviousness. Alemania was found guilty in October 2025 and sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

Without directly addressing the incident and Alemania, Rita pointed out that it was meant to echo her rights. She hoped it would also inspire women to use their voices to fight for themselves when the situation called for it.

"May pinaglaban lang naman ako worth fighting which is my right as a woman. I don't see it as a negative thing... It's not



just for myself, but I want to be a reminder for every human being na nakaranas na n'un na okay lang," she said.

"May boses tayo na sabihin 'yun out loud kasi hindi ka nag-iisa kasi nandi-to rin ako. I don't see that as something negative. In fact, that actually made me stronger as a woman," she continued.

(I just had a fight that was worth fighting for, which is my right as a woman. I don't see it as a negative thing. It's not just for myself; I want to be a reminder to every human being who has had the same experience and considered it as okay. We have a voice to say things out loud because you're not alone, I'm here. I don't see that as something negative. In fact, that actually made me stronger as a woman.)

As the topic shifted to what to expect next from her, Rita said she's excited to

release an album and embark on a solo concert. She is also looking forward to exploring more genres as an actress.

"Sa genre, when it comes to acting, basta magandang material and alam kong mailalabas ang best in each actor. I'm so willing to do that," she said. "Sa music, I'm very happy because meron akong naka-prepare na album and it's all written by me. I'm very, very excited that I'm going to do this with Viva."

(In terms of genres, when it comes to acting, as long as the material is good and will draw out the best in each actor, I'm willing to do that. In music, I'm very happy because I'm preparing an album where the songs are all written by me. I'm very, very excited that I'm going to do this with Viva.)

Rita said the blessings coming her way reminded her of how strong she truly is — especially as a mom to her son, Uno.

"Alam kong matapang akong tao, pero noong naging nanay ako, mas may ikakatapang pala ako. It's also a reminder for me na mas ma-aalagaan ang sarili ko (I know that I'm courageous, but when I became a mom, I realized how more courageous I truly can be. It's also a reminder that I can take care of myself more)," she said.

Jose Mari Chan reveals he no longer receives royalties from his hit songs

generation of young talents. 23.
Photo: INQUIRER.net/Jessica Ann Evangelista

Jose Mari Chan revealed that he has stopped receiving royalties from his songs due to declining record sales and digital consumption.

Chan made the revelation during the press conference for his upcoming concert "Afterglow: Seasons of the Heart" in Pasay City on Tuesday, June

23. "Unfortunately, since record sales are almost zero now, nobody buys records. Nobody buys CDs anymore. They download. And so, it's hard to quantify those. So, I have not been receiving my checks from those recording companies," he said.

Chan, whose catalog includes enduring hits such as "Beautiful Girl," "Can We Just Stop and Talk Awhile" and the perennial Christmas favorite "Christmas in Our Hearts," admitted feeling frustrated by the situation,

particularly for younger artists trying to build careers in music.

"I feel frustrated, but more so, I feel frustrated for the young singer-songwriters in this country. What is the future that they can look forward to?" he said.

"If they don't have money, where can they get their income from? How can they support their families? They have to look for other jobs. How frustrating, no?" added the veteran singer-songwriter.

When asked when the payments stopped, Chan said he could not recall exactly when he last received royalties.

Article continues after this advertisement

Despite no longer receiving royalty checks, Chan said the appreciation people have shown for his music over the decades remains more rewarding than financial compensation.

"Because the joy comes from people liking my songs and making my songs a part of their lives. That's more than any check that I can receive," he said.

"Music is God's gift to me. And the joy that I give to people, that's more than any amount of check that I can have," he added.

The 81-year-old performer also dismissed the idea of retirement in the near future, saying he intends to continue performing for as long as audiences remain supportive.

"I don't know. I think for as long as the audience is there, I'm happy to sing for them. God willing," he expressed.

"Because music is God's gift to me. And expressing my songs and giving joy to people, that's my gift back to God," Chan added.

For the "Afterglow: Seasons of the Heart," Chan is set to share the stage with a new generation of talented young artists including Kolette Madelo of "Pinoy Big Brother" Gen 11, "Tawag ng Tanghalan" champion Lyka Estrella, and "Your Face Sounds Familiar" grand winners JM Dela Cerna and Marielle Montellano.



Jose Mari Chan reveals he no longer receives royalties from his hit songs

Jose Mari Chan (center) is set to headline the July 11 "Afterglow: Seasons of the Heart" concert with a new

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