

REMOVING THE ACCENT

AI 'accent masking' at overseas call centres sparks union backlash in Canada

Have you ever called a 1-800 number and thought you were talking to someone in Canada? We all have; until a certain inflection in the voice, the tone, or the pitch gives it away. And if you're Filipino, you can tell that the

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SCAN ME!



20th VIBT Reach A Milestone

LEFT, Number 8 Preston Sichantha of Undfnd drives through two Phenoms defenders in a semi-final game.

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

Canada is also joining the Luzon Economic Corridor. Canada expects to conclude free trade agreements with the Philippines and the wider Southeast Asian bloc this year.

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Help Yourself, Fill the Census

My census arrived and found out that it was a few days before the deadline.

Another one posted on facebook that they got theirs after the deadline.

CENSUS Page 4





Honey Shot

Nathalie, 14, is a student of Marky Hugh Productions. Her talents are singing, dancing, and modeling. She is also an accomplished athlete, exceling in swimming, as she attends a swimming club and swimming competitions, track and field, cross-country running, soccer, and volleyball at her school. She is the daughter of Josette and Justin. We wish her all the luck in her future.

Nathalie Bondoc



Undfnd finished runner-up to Durham in their division AT THE 20th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament.



GAFAA (Global Advocacy For Autism Awareness) officers led by Mereeryl Cauton (4TH FROM RIGHT) had a dance collab with MH Production talents for a dance number at the GAFAA fundraising gala.



1

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FCT FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

FILIPINO CENTRE TORONTO President Mary Ann San Juan addresses the invited guests during the June 1, 2026 flag-raising ceremony at the start of Filipino Heritage month.



2



3

Did Matteo Guidicelli's TV5 appearance affect talk show's TV run?

Napanood sa YouTube channel ni Matteo Guidicelli ang talk show nitong Matteo G Primetime noong Sabado, Mayo 30, 2026.

Malaking palaisipan ito sa kanyang mga tagahanga at sa mga sumusubaybay sa programa niya.

Ang Matteo G Primetime ang show ni Matteo sa Bilyonaryo News Channel.

Noong Miyerkules, Mayo 27, 2026, inanunsiyo ng actor-TV host sa kanyang social media accounts na ang mag-asawang Kim Molina at Jerald Napoles ang mga bisita niya.

Pero makalipas ang ilang araw, inimitahan ni Matteo ang lahat na panoorin sa Sabado sa kanyang

YouTube channel ang panayam niya kina Kim at Jerald.

What Happened to Matteo G Primetime?

Lumutang ang balita na, diumano, may malalim na isyu sa pagitan ni Matteo at ng news channel management dahil sa guesting niya sa Frontline Pilipinas noong Huwebes, Mayo 28, 2026.

Ang Frontline Pilipinas ang primetime news program ng TV5 na binisita ni Matteo para i-promote ang Patriots, ang kanyang 12-episode documentary-anthology series na siya ang host at ma-



Nag-umpisa naman noong Abril 11, 2026 ang Matteo

papanood sa Kapatid Network.

Diumano, ang guesting ni Matteo sa TV5 bilang guest anchor ang naging mitsa kaya nagkaroon ng lamat ang relasyon nila ng kanyang home station.

Pumirma ng kontrata si Matteo sa news channel na pinaglilingkuran niya noong Oktubre 2025, at naging bahagi siya ng show na Agenda.

G Primetime, na mabilis na gumawa ng ingay dahil sa mga kontrobersiyal at nakakaintrigang pagtatanong ni Matteo sa kanyang mga naging bisita — ang mag-asawang Judy Ann Santos at Ryan Agoncillo; Piolo Pascual; Nico Bolzico at Erwan Heussaff.

Ngayong Linggo, Mayo 31, nakipag-ugnayan ang Cabinet Files sa kinatawan ni Matteo para sa panig ng aktor, pero hindi pa siya sumasagot.

Samantala, hindi pa naglalabas ng paliwanag ang management ng Bilyonaryo News Channel tungkol sa pinaghihinalaang kanselasyon ng programa ng TV host/actor dahil sa paglabas nito sa TV5.

Coco Martin insists not entering politics: 'Honestly, wala akong interes'



Coco Martin (left) with Julia Montes at an LPG brand launch. Image: Instagram/@cocomartin_ph

For the umpteenth time, Coco Martin has denied that he

is entering politics anytime soon, though he admitted he had always been asked to run for public office.

Martin was again asked about his political plans during a joint LPG brand campaign launch, with his long-time partner Julia Montes in tow.

"Honestly, matagal na matagal na 'yan. Almost every election, lagi akong tatanungin niyan. Paulit-ulit kong sinasabi na honestly, wala akong interes kasi nakikita ko [kung] gaano kahirap," he said.

(None. Honestly, that's been going on for so long. In almost every election, I am asked that question. I always say that honestly, I have no interest because I've seen how difficult it is.)

The "Batang Quiapo" star said that while there are decent politicians, he doesn't see himself being a part of politics since he can help his countrymen in his own way,

which, he said, is already enough.

"Hindi ko sinasabi na ano ah. Meron naman tayong matitino na politician. Pero napakahirap na sitwasyon. Kasi kung nakakatulong ako kahit konti, sa ating kapwang mga Pilipino, sa sarili kong paraan, okay na ako d'un," he said. "Kaysa ang gainin ko is [ilagay] ko ang sarili ko d'un and after that, iba-iba ang intensyon ng tao eh — kung maa-appreciate nila or sirain ka nila."

(I'm not accusing anyone of such. But we do have decent politicians. But we're in such a difficult situation. If I could help my countrymen in my own way, I'm okay with that. Instead of putting myself in a situation, and after that, people have different intentions — if they're going to appreciate what you did or they're going to ruin your reputation.)

To conclude his explanation, Martin said he prefers to

live a quiet life and focus on his work as an actor and director. "Kaya sabi ko nga na better na lang na tahimik kami [ni Julia] bilang mag-partner and tahimik lang ako sa trabaho ko. At least sa simpleng pamamaraan, mas makakatulong tayo sa maraming Pilipino," he said.

(This is why I said that it's better if Julia and I live our lives quietly and focus on my job. At least in my own way, I can help more Filipinos.)

Martin and Montes are set to be the lead stars of the upcoming action-comedy drama "Sigabo," which will begin airing on June 22, three months after its supposed premiere.

According to the actor-director, the rescheduled premiere is due to improving the quality of its series and ensuring that it will be more fitting for what "Sigabo" is about.

Anthony Jennings enters new territory with foreign film debut

Actor Anthony Jennings did not expect the year to unfold the way it has. With endorsements, new projects, and an international film now on his schedule, the actor said he is simply trying to stay grounded as opportunities continue to come his way.

"Faithful lang talaga. As much as kung alam mo naman sa sarili mo na you're a good person, everything will follow. Ako, masaya ako sa kung nasaan ako ngayon. And happy and content naman," Anthony said.



The actor now brings that outlook into Nurse the Dead, an upcoming international film centered on the lives and sacrifices of Filipino nurses working abroad.

The project marks his first experience working on an American production, a shift that brought excitement and pressure in equal measure.

"Well, sobrang saya. Pero siyempre, andun pa rin yung challenges. Of course, yung pronunciation, yung accent, kailangan ko siyang ayusin," Anthony told Manila Standard Entertainment.

He said the language demands pushed him outside his comfort zone, especially since he had to deliver straight English dialogue and spend extra time memorizing lines. Even during breaks from filming, the work continued.

"Shoot namin doon from Monday hanggang Thursday lang. May Friday, Saturday, Sunday kami na puwede gumala. Nakapunta kami ng Disneyland, Universal. Pero kahit nasa Disneyland kami, nagbabasa pa rin kami ng script," he shared.

Anthony Jennings continues to take on new opportunities as he balances endorsements, acting work, and his role in the international film 'Nurse the Dead'

Still, he found comfort in sharing scenes with fellow Filipino actors, including Ruby Rodriguez, Gigette Reyes, Princess Punzalan, and Tootsie Guevarra.

"Feeling ko nga sa Manila shoot din ako. Buti nga mga Filipino co-actors ako doon. Kasi kung wala, feeling ko kakabahan ako pag ako lang mag-isa," Anthony said. The film

also introduced him to a different style of performing. Working with veteran actors based abroad made him rethink how comedy and screen acting can be played.

"Na-realize ko yung pagiging authentic lang. Kahit binabato nila yung nagpapatataw sila, parang hindi pa rin sila nagpapatataw," he added.

Anthony said he observed differences in rhythm and timing, particularly in American-style humor, and picked up lessons from the cast throughout production.

Meanwhile, Anthony continues to feel blessed as he recently appeared at the launch of KYU KYU Ramen 99's latest brand film as the face of the growing ramen chain.

"Slowly, my life is getting better. I'm also happy. I'm grateful that there are still blessings coming into my life," he said.

REMOVING the ACCENT

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person you're talking to is in the Philippines. You recognize your own accent. In fact, not just the accent but the emotion and the cloying sweetness of the voice that gives it away.

There's a certain warmth to the Filipino voice that you cannot mistake it for a Canadian or American.

Union leaders and academics are raising the alarm about the growing use of artificial intelligence to alter the accents of call centre workers in real time, who warn the technology could mislead customers and affect Canadian jobs.

You will not notice the delay. It's the equivalent of watching live television or listening to a radio with a 5-second delay so that the producer can delete any words or statements that might get the broadcaster in trouble with regulators.

The issue is receiving special attention in Canada after labour representatives said at least one major domestic telecommunications company is using the technology.

"We're aware of at least one of the

three big telco companies using it to mask the accents of offshore agents, altering how customers perceive who they're talking to," said Roch Leblanc, telecommunications director for Unifor, in remarks to a parliamentary committee on April 30. The "big three" are Rogers, Bell and Telus.

Leblanc did not name the company, but Telus Digital previously posted on its website announcing a partnership with an "AI-powered speech enhancement" company to "soften accents."

"Speech enhancement AI leverages cutting-edge speech-to-speech models to transform audio in real time. These models directly modify the acoustic features of speech, preserving the speaker's voice while improving clarity and reducing accent-related friction," it reads.

Telus did not respond to request for comment. Rogers Communications and Bell Canada both denied using AI in this way when asked.

AI tools demonstrated online show how a speaker's accent can be instantly modified, allowing non-native English

speakers to sound more like anglophones.

The Philippines and India are major global hubs for call centres serving North American companies, which are increasingly outsourcing such customer service operations to reduce costs.

As a growing number of firms are turning to AI to make workers' speech easier for customers to understand, the Canadian Telecommunications Workers Alliance is flagging the practice at the federal level.

"Canadians should know when AI is being used," said Leblanc.

Renee Sieber, an associate professor at McGill University, said the technology may appear harmless but could have broader consequences.

"Here's an application that a company may say is benign, but actually could be stealing Canadian jobs," she said.

"It's a kind of deception."

The practice appears to be expanding globally.

Teleperformance SE, the world's largest call centre operator, is reportedly

rolling out AI technology to eliminate the accents of Indian workers.

Supporters of the technology however say the tools can improve communication. "It is very hard sometimes when you're on the line with someone and you can't understand them and you want something done," said Maura Grossman, a research professor at the University of Waterloo.

But critics argue the technology could increase outsourcing and reduce acceptance of different accents.

"You have to ask yourself, would we be doing this if it was for an accent from Australia or the U.K.?" Grossman questioned.

"Because if the answer is no, then that sounds rather discriminatory."

The federal government has yet to release its long-awaited national AI strategy, but has said it will address issues of transparency.

It remains unclear whether that would include requiring companies to disclose whether a voice has been altered or generated by AI.



AI Removing Accent is a Problem Call Centres

No Accent Is Bad For Philippines

How many of you have called a call centre and you thought you were talking to someone in Canada? You were talking for around 5 minutes and then, you notice the change in the pitch, the tone, and everything else about the voice. Most of the time, it takes awhile before you notice it. But there will always be a point where a sudden change gives it away,

and you have the feeling, "Pinoy ito." If you're not sure, you say something in Tagalog, "mainit ba diyan," and they will answer to you in English "not really." Some are allowed to answer in tagalog, some are not. Then, you are sure you are talking to a kababayan, somebody from a call centre in the Philippines.

And you're at ease because you feel a certain kinship dahil kausap mo is a fellow Pinoy.

Now, these so-called AI is going to remove those accents away. You will not be able to tell a kababayan anymore.

How will you feel?

Personally, I don't like it. I like to talk to a kababayan sa call centre kahit hindi mo sila kilala personally, di ba?

There's a bigger problem for Philippine call centres with this AI "accent masking" apps.

A lot of them might be laid off. These Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) as they are called will lose business.

Philippines BPO will lose business to countries like India which has more workers and lower salaries. You cannot use personal touch as a selling point dahil hindi naman kayo nagkikita ng customer.

AI will not stop sa pagtanggap ng accent.

Eventually, AI will move into translation. When that happens, more countries will move into the BPO business. You can be talking to someone in Haiti, Liberia, Africa and you will not know it. If AI can translate it to the local language, the person on the other end will answer in their own language. Then, AI will answer you in the English language, you would not know that you talked to someone who never understood English anyway. Of course, the countries must have a good infrastructure like fast internet connection to be able to get into the business of call centres. But, that's beside the point.

Hypothetically, if all countries have a strong communication infrastructure, lots of

countries can get into the business. That will be the end of dominance of the Philippines as the call centre capital of the world. You can be talking to someone in Yemen, Somalia, Burundi, or even Afghanistan and you will never know it.

There's no way of knowing it. You're getting your answers in English.

Suppose you speak in Tagalog. AI can translate it to their language and still give you an answer.

And if it answers you in Tagalog, you will be fooled into thinking you are talking to a kababayan.

It's a scary world out there.

Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya.

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

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year, as Ottawa seeks to boost business ties with the region and grow its non-U.S. trade.

"Negotiations are really going well," visiting Canadian International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu said in an interview May 12, after meeting with Philippine Trade Secretary Cristina Roque and Finance Secretary Frederick Go.

Sidhu said Canada is also joining the Luzon Economic Corridor, a project backed by the U.S. and Japan and where

Ottawa is putting in \$2 million. "It sends a signal to the Canadian businesses out there that want to look at investing in the Luzon Economic Corridor that Canada's skin is in the game."

Potential investments include data center, logistics and energy, he said.

In pursuing free trade with



the Philippines, Canada is looking at Manila's expanding middle class, which bodes well with its agriculture exports, according to the minister.

"The Philippines is one of Canada's most dynamic partners in the Indo-Pacific. Last year alone,

Export Development Canada helped grow Canadian business here from \$400 million to \$1 billion—that momentum is real, and it's

accelerating. With support from sectors across Canada, I am pushing ahead with negotiations on both the Canada-Philippines FTA and the ASEAN-Canada FTA to conclude this year. My visit sent a clear signal: Canada is open for business in Southeast Asia, and the Philippines is a central part of that story," said Sidhu,

Canada and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed to start free trade talks in late 2021, when "the world

was in a different place," Sidhu said. Prime Minister Mark Carney is committed to diversifying the nation's trading partners and there's a political will to conclude the Canada-Asean FTA, he added.

Randeep Sarai, Secretary of State (International Development) pointed out Canada and Philippines' common goals.

"Canada and the Philippines share a commitment to building a resilient, inclu-

No need to prove he's 'pogi'

BEFORE Jerald Napoles could laugh about being called the "new pogi," he had already learned how to live with words that were not always kind.

The actor looked back on those experiences during the May 21 press conference for *Love, Ngo*, his upcoming Viva Films comedy directed by Darryl Yap. In the film, Napoles returns as Ngo, a character first seen in *Ang Babaeng Walang Pakiramdam*, now given his own story about love, family, self-worth, and how people are judged based on how they look.

For Jerald Napoles, feeling good about himself comes from having nothing to prove and no need to please everyone

Napoles said blunt remarks about his appearance were not new to him, especially while growing up around older relatives who spoke harshly.

He recalled how his grandmother would speak to him in the same direct manner.

"My grandmother would say, 'You're so fussy! The

way you act, you'd think you were handsome! You're not handsome, you're ugly!'" he shared in the vernacular.

Napoles said he did not take those words as anger toward his family, but he admitted they still left a mark. Over time, he learned to hold on to other things he could build for himself.

"Maybe that's why, as I grow older, I try my best to cling to whatever strength I have. If I'm smart, then I'll hold on to that. If I become successful, it will be because I'm smart and hardworking," he said.

That experience now gives a different weight to the "new pogi" label attached to *Love, Ngo*. For Napoles, being called handsome is no longer something he needs to argue about or prove to other



people.

"I feel most handsome when I don't have to prove anything, when there's no pressure and I don't have to please people," he said.

He added that confidence, for him, comes from being at ease with himself rather than trying to meet other people's standards.

"That's where my confidence comes from. Of course, I can't just say, 'I'm handsome, guys.' But that's the time I feel handsome — when I don't have to prove myself," he said.

In *Love, Ngo*, Jerald Napoles takes on a story about romance, family, and the hurt that can come from being judged by appearance

Love, Ngo follows Ngo as he deals with love, family, and social judgment while living with a cleft condition. Although the film is

packaged as a comedy, Napoles said viewers should see the full story before judging its intent.

"My explanation has always been...watch the film first. Don't judge it right away," he said.

He also stressed that he would not accept a project that would degrade other people.

"I would not accept a film or a project that would step on your dignity," he said.

At the same time, Napoles acknowledged that some viewers may have felt hurt after seeing the teaser or trailer.

"If someone was hurt after watching the teaser or trailer, that's valid. If it brought back painful memories for them, we can't control that. That's real," he said.

For him, the point is not to force everyone to accept the film right away, but to allow the story to be seen in full.

"If it hurt you, that's valid. Be angry if you want to. I'll just explain my side. That's all," he said.

Help Yourself, Fill the Census

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I commented that it probably arrived late for a lot of Canadians and just to fill it up and submit it.

Submission is by online anyway. It won't take you more than 5 minutes. I think I received the short version.

I am reading online about census questions that I did not get with mine.

Why some Canadians are

using the census to protest against the federal government

May 12 was the last day to complete the census, but what happens if you don't get it done on time? And new data is revealing a larger drop in travel to the U.S.

OTTAWA — As some Canadians claim that the federal government's national census

violates their privacy, a Liberal member of Parliament is calling on them to fill out their 2026 census forms for the good of their communities.

Canadians have been asked to fill out the census form by May 12, though Statistics Canada says that's a "reference date" rather than a deadline.

While the federal Statistics Act states a census must be held every five years, and that

every household and farm operator in Canada must participate, some Canadians have taken to social media to express their opposition to the census.

Several have posted pictures of ripped-up forms or envelopes marked "return to sender," sometimes with angry messages to Prime Minister Mark Carney.

Mark Gerretsen, member

of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands, said in a video posted to social media that the census is not a personal data grab by the prime minister.

The census, he said, is how Canada collects the data it uses to make informed decisions about how many schools a community needs,

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PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses on Significant Developments



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

FOOD PRICE SURGE.

According to Nomura Global Markets Research, a Japanese integrated financial services group, “the Philippines is one among the 50 countries most vulnerable to a surge in food prices if energy and fertiliser costs remain elevated amid the Middle East conflict and the coming El Niño develops into extreme weather. The Philippines ranked 21st out of 110 countries overall in Nomura’s Food Price Vulnerability Index. The index “measures exposure to sharp food price increases based on nominal gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in US dollars at market exchange rates, the share of food in total household consumption, and net food imports as a percentage of GDP.” The Philippines posted a score of 100.7 on the index, which estimated 2025 GDP per capita at \$4,270. It also “found that food accounted for 37.3 per cent of total household spending in 2023, while net food imports were equivalent to 2.7 per cent of GDP in 2024. The “consumer prices rose 7.2 per cent from a year earlier in April, as higher energy costs quickly spilt over to other household essentials.” Forty-eight of the 50 most vulnerable countries, like Montenegro, Libya, Tajikistan, Lebanon, Syria, Senegal, Bangladesh, Kyrgyz Republic, and Venezuela, are developing economies, with a combined population of about 4.7 billion. Twenty-eight of the 50 least vulnerable economies are advanced economies, such as New Zealand, Ecuador, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, Uruguay, Denmark and Singapore, which were the least exposed, with a combined population of about 1.1 billion. “Dahil dito, nagbabala ang



WORLD BEST COUNTRIES PHILIPPINES RANKING.

The 2026 Annual Best Countries rankings by US News & World Report in partnership with the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania were released on May 14, 2026, and ranked the Philippines 78th out of 100 countries “to live and work”, with an overall score of 46.2 out of a possible 100. Switzerland has claimed the top spot as the best country in the world, with Angola as a tailender. Canada was ranked No.19, and the USA, 18th overall. To determine the rankings, researchers evaluated 100 countries across eight categories of national well-being. The results for the Philippines, ranked under the 8 factors or indicators, are as follows: 1. Governance(Rank 66), 2. Economic Development(Rank 61), 3. Health(Rank 93), 4. Civic Health(71), 5. Infrastructure(78), 6. Opportunity(77), 7. Natural Environment(57), and 8. Culture and Tourism(57). The rankings also factored in 24 other sub-categories, including healthcare, public safety, labour markets, poverty, and wealth. Unlike previous years of the list, “this year’s rankings moved away from a perception-based approach that surveyed experts and business leaders, and instead used a data-

driven methodology.” The researchers asked their panel of experts to weigh the categories based on their importance and value to a country’s prosperity, operational health and societal well-being. Further, the Report said that “Governance and economic development were weighted the highest by a healthy margin, reflecting the panel’s consensus that a government’s most fundamental responsibility is to establish structural and financial stability.” U.S. News and World Report revealed its 2026 Best Countries list “to help citizens, business leaders and policy makers understand how each country is serving its people.” “Ang mga ranggo ay lalong sumasalamain sa kung ano ang higit na pinahalagahan ng maraming tao sa modernong buhay: katatagan, kaligtasan, pagkakaataon sa ekonomiya, kalidad ng pangangalagang pangkalusugan at pangkalahatang kagalingan. Ang mga natuklasan ay sumasalamain sa mas malawak na pandaigdigang uso na nakikita sa iba pang kamakailang ranggo, tulad ng mga pinakamasayang bansa at ang pinakaligtas na mga bansa.”

Nomura Research na ang pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain ay malamang na mas nakakapinsala kaysa sa pagkabigla sa enerhiya, dahil mas mababawasan nito ang paggasta ng sambayanan sa

mga mahahalagang bagay. Kapag tumaas din ang mga presyo ng pagkain, ang epekto ng stagflation ay mas malalim, lalo na sa pagbuo ng mga ekonomiya.”

B.I.R. TAX RELIEF

In May 2026, the Philippine Bureau of Internal Revenue(BIR) issued Revenue Memorandum Order No. 11-2026, which aims to “rationalise the collection enforcement efforts when continuous collection is no longer economically feasible.” A national newspaper columnist said that “The order states that if the amount of final, executory and demandable accounts receivable or delinquent accounts is less than P80,000, the BIR shall write off the uncollected amount and will not take further enforcement action against the taxpayer.” The threshold on the cost to collect small tax liabilities before was P20,000. In view of the present high cost of living in the Philippines, the amount may be considered barely sufficient and not worth the BIR’s time and effort, tax collection-wise. The rationale being that the recoverable amount of taxes should outweigh the cost of recovering them also applies in cases where the taxpayer is already deceased, insolvent or cannot be located despite diligent efforts. The BIR order is more of a cost-benefit analysis where the expected costs or expenses of a proposed action are matched against the possible benefits that would result from it. “Karaniwang kaalaman na ang pagtanggap ng anumang liham mula sa BIR ay kadalasang nagdudulot ng pagkabalisa o walang tulog na gabi dahil sa posibleng masamang implikasyon nito sa pananalapi. Kung maayos na ipinatupad, ang pataas na pagsasaayos ng threshold sa pangongolekta ng buwis ay magbibigay ng maraming espasyo sa paghinga sa mga nagbabayad ng buwis na, nang walang malisya o masamang layunin, ay nagkaka-mali sa paghahanda ng kanilang mga tax return. Kung ang bagong threshold na iyon ay pararangalan sa anyo at espiritu, ay nananatiling makikita.”

(Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

Help Yourself, Fill the Census

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where hospitals and clinics should be built, and how much federal funding a municipality should receive.

He said the census also helps governments plan transit, housing and infrastructure, and understand aging populations, labour shortages and demographic shifts.

“It’s literally the opposite of none of your business. It is your business,” he said. “When people refuse the cen-

sus, they’re not sticking it to Ottawa. They’re sticking it to their own community.”

Gerretsen said undercounts mean less funding, less representation and poorer services, especially in smaller towns.

“Skipping the census doesn’t hurt the government. It hurts your neighbours,” he said. “So if you want to protest something, go ahead. But mailing back a blank census form isn’t

a rebellion. It’s just volunteering your community for fewer resources.”

While Statistics Canada did not respond to a request for an interview, a spokesperson for the agency said it’s taking possible concerns about misinformation into consideration.

Geoff Bowlby from Statistics Canada explains how people in Canada can respond to the Census and why they should fill it out.

Response rate ‘compares well’

The agency’s website makes a nod to the threat some won’t fill out the census, with a section called “fighting misinformation.” It links to answers to a handful of questions guiding people on how to ensure those requesting the information in the census are legitimate and whether hackers could access the data.

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PULP Group launches newest girl group MEI MEI



Debuted under Groovy Garden Records, the new music label of PULP Group, MEI MEI is made up of eight members, namely Alexa, Jhamayka, Ada, Aerise, Thea, Jessie, Yuni and Dina.

MANILA, Philippines – Another P-pop girl group has emerged in the music scene. Meet MEI MEI, whose members are Alexa, Jhamayka, Ada, Aerise, Thea, Jessie, Yuni and Dina.

The eight-member act, under Groovy Garden Records, the newest record label of PULP Group, was officially introduced during a grand media launch on Wednesday at the Skydome, SM North EDSA. The girls also performed the novelty pop-track Telebong live for the first time, serving as the key track of their soon-to-be-released EP, "HELLO PO."

During the event, each member has revealed their official personas: Alexa as the purple "Spark MEI MEI," Jhamayka as the blue "Cool MEI MEI," Ada as the yellow "Dolly MEI MEI," Aerise as the lilac "Sweet MEI MEI," Thea as the baby pink "Princess MEI MEI," Jessie as the red "Power MEI MEI," Yuni as the green "Groovy MEI MEI" and Dina as the hot pink "Diva MEI MEI."

These personas, according to the group, represent the "individuality of each member while collectively embodying the spirit of MEI MEI – a group

that celebrates authenticity, self-expression and the many personalities of the modern Filipina."

"Each member manages to exude a unique character, showing diversity and how beauty can be so varied. The group strikes me as a cutesy-pa-toosy manifestation of 'Voltes VI' Today, I am still stunned by the development and progress they have made," chairman and president of PULP Group Vernon Go remarked in his welcome speech.

Looking back on their modest beginnings and the journey leading to their debut, MEI MEI Thea

shared, "Sobrang nakaka-touch and nakaka-proud po because we worked hard for this. We waited so long, 'yung mga pagod po namin worth it po."

The groups' name, MEI MEI, was inspired by the Filipino practice of repeating names and nicknames, such as, "Jan-Jan," "Len-Len" and "Mai-Mai" as "expressions of familiarity and affection."

Expanding on the meaning behind their name, MEI MEI member Jhamayka shared, "Gusto namin instantly relatable and familiar sa mga Filipino. We hope that when you hear MEI MEI, it feels like home. It's a tribute po kung saan po kami nanggaling and it describes us being so

out there and confident."

Jessie, the group's leader, said that their main goal is to share their brand of music to the fans and represent young Filipinas. "We want to use this platform to share our individual stories," she asserted.

On what makes them stand out among emerging P-pop groups, the rising artists shared, "We don't stick to one image or personality. We all have different personalities and that makes us MEI MEI – our individuality. We are encouraged to show our true selves. No pretention, just simple embracing who we are. Most importantly, we have a strong focus on storytelling through a Filipino lens."

MEI MEI member Ada added that their dream is to perform "in every street of the Philippines" because they want people across the country to enjoy their music with them as one collective experience.

The girls also shared this simple yet empowering message to today's youth, "Huwag kayo matakot magpakatotoo. Be one of us. Be MEI MEI."

For their upcoming record, "HELLO PO," fans and P-pop supporters can look forward to songs like Filipina and Sinta. Telebong, on the other hand, officially marked the beginning of their musical journey.

Bobot Mortiz returns to his first love

Veteran actor and director Bobot Mortiz returns to his musical roots with "Going Standard," a nostalgic concert celebrating timeless ballads, classic love songs, and the music that shaped his life and career.

For decades, audiences have known Edgar Mortiz – fondly called Bobot Mortiz – as a beloved actor, director, and television personality. But before the acclaimed projects, before becoming a household name in Philippine entertainment, there was music.

Now at 71, the veteran filmmaker is returning to where it all began.

"Actually, I really started as a singer. Not many people know that because I was only 13 years old when I began," Mortiz shared. "I started as a singer, and I just want to revisit that part of my life. I'm already 71, and I want to experience singing again – to perform the songs that became part of my life."

Long before he became one of local television's most recognizable directors, Mortiz first found the spotlight through music, even winning the iconic amateur singing competition "Tawag ng Tanghalan". That early passion eventually led him to film and television stardom, where he became a matinee idol and part of one of the era's most memorable loveteams.

But despite decades spent behind the camera and under studio lights, the pull of music never truly faded.

Inspired by the timeless sounds of Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, Mortiz revealed that "Going Standard" will feature classic ballads and love songs from his generation.

"That's why we decided to do this concert," he explained. "The songs are all standards – ballads, love songs."

For Mortiz, the concert is more than a performance. It is a heartfelt tribute to an era when songs were meant to be felt deeply and shared personally.

"Music has changed so much now," he reflect-



ed. "Today's singers are powerful and impressive, and that's beautiful too. But sometimes it feels like people forget the kind of songs you would sing to your girlfriend, or to your mother – songs where you simply want to listen to the story and emotion behind the lyrics."

He continued, "I want to revisit the simpler times because I grew up with standard music – kundiman, rock and roll. Today there are so many genres. This concert is like a trip down memory lane, and I hope younger singers can also rediscover and sing this kind of music again."

With "Going Standard", Mortiz is not only revisiting his roots but also preserving a musical tradition that shaped generations of Filipino listeners. It is a rare and intimate glimpse into the man behind the camera.

Presented by Wacky Solution and Charry Ito, "Going Standard" will be held on June 13, at the Proscenium Theater in Rockwell Center, Makati City.

Directed by Miko Angeles, the show will feature Direk Bobot's very good friends, Tirso Cruz III, and Christopher De Leon. He will also be joined by some of this generation's brightest stars - Alexa Ilacad, Klarisse De Guzman, and Julie Anne San Jose. A

taska hopes 'Pinay Kamasutra' opens talk on pleasure without shame

Ataska is taking on another adult-themed hosting project with VMX, but she said her latest special, Pinay Kamasutra, does not put her in the position of a sex expert. For the Viva artist, the project serves as a playful way to bring a usually private subject into open discussion, espe-

cially among adults who may still feel uneasy talking about pleasure.

"The good thing about my special and conversations like this is we get to talk openly about sex," said the 24-year-old during the May 18 press conference for the special feature. "I'm not saying this is sex education, but we get to show that we shouldn't be ashamed of pleasure."

Pinay Kamasutra sees Ataska as host, guide, and presenter. It follows her earlier hosting stint in VMX's Kama Sutra in 2025, though the new special stands as a separate project. She described the show as a mix of entertainment, performance, and commentary, built around scenes from various VMX titles.

"It was a script that was given to me, and in that moment, I put myself in the character of being a sexy teacher for everyone," she said. "It was really fun to play that character for you all."

Ataska admitted she was not deeply familiar with the Kamasutra before doing the special. Part of the work, she said, involved reading the script, studying the material, and finding the right tone for the show. "It was really fun shooting it and reading about the different types of positions and describing them because, honestly, I'm not super familiar with the Kamasutra," she said.

The actress-host also made clear that viewers should not mistake her role for that of a professional adviser. "For this special, I'm really just a host," she said. "I'm interpreting the script that was given to me in a sexy, playful way."

Asked about women who may still avoid such topics, Ataska said people have different levels of comfort when it comes to sexuality. "To each their own. Not every woman would be willing to explore sexually in that way," she said. "It really depends on the woman because all of us, or even men, have different things that turn us on."

Still, she believes projects like Pinay Kamasutra can help lessen the shame attached to these subjects.

"We all have our ways of exploring our sexuality, and this is just one thing that could open our eyes to things like that and to not feel shame about those things," she said.

For Ataska, the project also fits her decision to take on work outside her comfort zone. "I wouldn't accept this project if I wasn't ready to talk about things like this," she said. "I want people to know

that it's okay to talk about these things because it's human nature."

Pinay Kamasutra is now available to stream on the VMX app.

Rabiya Mateo denies election plans after giving back to former school in Iloilo

Before her intentions get misinterpreted, Rabiya Mateo clarified that she has no plans of running in the upcoming elections after she recently conducted an outreach activity for her former school in Iloilo.

Mateo gave a glimpse of her outreach effort through an Instagram post on Monday, June 1. She returned to Balasan Central Elementary School, where she once studied, to distribute 250 sets of school supplies, bags, and packed meals to students.

"Proud product of a public school.

Today, I had the privilege of returning to where it all began," she wrote. "Projects like these are deeply personal to me, and I look forward to creating more opportunities to serve our community in the future."

Anticipating speculation about her intentions, Mateo made it clear that the outreach activity was not connected to any political plans.

"And before anyone asks – no, I'm not running in the upcoming elections. I simply believe that if you've been blessed, you should find ways to give back," she said.

Mateo said she also visited the school's Special Education Department, which she described as being close to her heart because of her background as a physical therapist and her goal of becoming a doctor.

"Seeing the dedication of our educators and the smiles on the children's faces reminds me why investing in education will always be one of the most meaningful ways to give back," she said.

The former beauty queen also thanked her friends who helped organize the outreach, as well as her boyfriend, actor Jake Cuenca, who helped fund the initiative.

Mateo represented the Philippines at the Miss Universe 2020 pageant. She was recently accepted into medical school at the University of Santo Tomas



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The Philippine Artists Group of Canada

Annual Art Exhibition
Celebrating the 128th Anniversary of the Philippine Declaration of Independence and Filipino Heritage Month

Opening Reception:
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Neilson Park Creative Centre

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Dacara, Earl	Nagallo, Rose
De Leon, Sabrina	Quiachon, Calixto
Diamante, Jhun Ciolo	Tonido, Frank
Gonzales, Alex	

Guest Artists:
Manasan, Adryan Lampitoc, Rocille

Show runs from June 16, to July 3, 2026
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Friday to Sunday, 9:00 am – 4:30pm)

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'What's Changing with OSAP'



Norma Bernal

New Immigrants & the workplace

OSAP is the acronym for the Ontario Student Assistance Program. Newcomers may or may not be aware of it upon (or maybe even months after) arriving. I say this from my experience decades ago because like many other new arrivals then, my and my husband's immediate objective was not to study but to find suitable jobs. Besides, we had a hundred & one 'must do' things that took up much of our time & effort in the first few months of our Canadian landing. Fortunately, we didn't need to find a suitable accommodation as my sister-in-law kindly took us in. But still, we had to present our Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) along with valid permanent resident visas to obtain our work permits, apply for SIN (Social Insurance Number), register for the government health insurance specifically the Ontario Health Cards, find a suitable school for our kids, open our bank account & apply for credit cards, obtain a Driver's Licence & a Bus Pass, choose & apply for cell phone plans, find an immigrant-serving organization, start looking for work, and getting to know our neighbours and network with the community.

So, although OSAP was mentioned in our conversation circles, it was only when I lost my first double jobs that I started taking it more serious-



ly. I realized that I needed to change my career after I lost my contractual/ part-time position as Instructor/ Lecturer of 3rd World Economics at Brock University along with my permanent full-time survival job in Customer Service. There was no hope for me to land a permanent teaching/ research position at the university as I did not have a Ph.D. after my name. Nor did I intend to stay in the customer service/retail industry forever.

So back to school I went... to study, part-time, Human Resources Management at Ryerson University now Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). I easily qualified for an OSAP student loan as I was on Employment Insurance after I lost my 2 positions. I was allowed to start paying the loan after I found a job, not immediately after graduation. It was a soft loan, not meant to make money for the government, but to help students so my payback was quite easy, 18 bucks per month.

A quick AI search shows that: "The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) is a government financial

aid program that helps eligible Ontario residents pay for college or university through a mix of grants (money you keep) and loans (money you repay). It covers tuition, books, and living expenses for full-time and part-time students." Sometimes known as student aid or government student loans, Canadian citizens, permanent residents and protected persons currently residing in Ontario are eligible. Funding can come in the form of grants (non-repayable) and student loans (repayable) or a combination thereof which can be used towards expenses incurred in the pursuit of university degrees, college diplomas, and micro-credential training.

OSAP is a provincial program, but its funding is sourced from two levels of government: the Government of Ontario (Provincial), managed by the

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, and the Government of Canada (Federal), with the National Student Loans Service Centre (NSLSC) as administrator.

Ontarian Premier Doug Ford announced significant changes to the provincial part of OSAP early this year. Starting in the Fall Term, the major amendment to the program is the capping of student grants to 25% (from a maximum 85%) with the much bigger portion left for loans although the loan portion remains interest free for full-time students. Also, students at private career colleges will not qualify for grants, only repayable loans.

Anti sentiments were expressed across the province. There were massive protests, rallies, demonstrations, marches and walkouts with university/ college & high school students involved. A campaign called "Hands-Off Our Education" was also organized. The unions and student groups fighting the changes are the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario (CFSON), Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU), Student Unions (Local), University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTM-SU), Sheridan Student Union (SSU), and Laurier Students' Union (LSU).

But the government is unbending and says that OSAP, as it is structured currently, is a government financial program. OSAP page 22

FUN PHILIPPINES TORONTO FESTIVAL 2026 SETS AT HARBOURFRONT CENTRE

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

The Philippine Legacy & Cultural Alliance (PLACA) will hold its "5th Fun Philippines Toronto Food & Music Festival" on July 4, 5, & 6, 2026, at the premier downtown waterfront site, the iconic Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay West, Toronto. According to PLACA, in partnership with Harbourfront Centre, the 3-day festival is a "distinctive celebration of Filipino heritage, cultural richness, and global unity."

Founded in 2019, PLACA is a provincially registered not-for-profit organisation composed of culture-focused professionals & individuals, social and community advocates, and business entrepreneurs. Now in its 5th year, the popular event "will serve as a premier platform to showcase the vibrancy, diversity, and evolving global influence of Filipino culture." With its theme, "Philippines Shared with the World," the festival aspires to foster deeper cultural appreciation while bringing together communities in a spirit of celebration and connection.

PLACA's Executive Director, Teresa Torralba, and the

Board of Directors promised to present an exceptional program that will "feature Philippine culinary excellence, cultural showcases, live musical performances, TFC Hour with distinguished Filipino artists, the Philippine Pavilion, and curated immersive experiences throughout the venue." Likewise, the "kasayahan" (happy event) will showcase Filipino culture, including live music and dance performances featuring traditional & indigenous culture, and contemporary influences. It will be a "ipinagmamalaking selebrasyon" (proud celebration) of cherished Filipino cuisine, including home-cooked fare flavours and street food favourites through reputable vendors. Moreover, the festival guests will have the opportunity to experience interactive heritage-centred activities such as immersive storytelling workshops and the like.

As in the past five years, Fun Philippines Festival 2026 expects to have more than 200,000 guests, attendees, participants, and performers. Come, relive, discover and savour the vibrant Filipino spirit, heritage and culture! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

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GAFAA Raises Funds with a Fashionable Gala



Mercyl Cauton, Creative Director of Global Advocacy for Autism Awareness (GAFAA) addressed this to say about the GAFAA gala.

The 2nd Anniversary Celebration was more than just a fashion show — it was a celebration of passion, purpose, creativity, and compassion.

A heartfelt congratulations to the incredibly talented and inspiring new fashion designer, Melba Rosete, for the remarkable success of your fashion show segment, “Design for a Good Cause” in partnership with Global Advocacy for Autism

Awareness. Your vision, dedication, and hard work truly shined on the runway and touched the hearts of everyone who witnessed this meaningful event.

Thank you for using your gifts to make a difference. Together, we are creating hope, awareness, and a brighter future for many lives.

Thank you for your generosity, kindness, and dedication to making a difference.

May you continue to grow, inspire, and shine in the fashion industry while touching lives through your

creativity and compassion. The future is bright for you, Melba Rosete, and many people are proud of what you have accomplished.

Congratulations once again on a truly successful and meaningful fashion show. Wishing you even more success, opportunities, and blessings in the years to come.

Founder & President Margie Doce also thanked everyone.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. :: What we celebrated was more than just an event — it was a celebration of unity, compassion, friendship,

and our shared mission to continue creating awareness, acceptance, and inclusion for the autism community.

Behind the scenes were sleepless nights, sacrifices, challenges, and countless efforts from people who gave their time, energy, talents, and hearts selflessly. To our officers, volunteers, performers, models, sponsors, media partners, parents, vendors, and supporters — thank you for believing in GAFAA and standing with us every step of the way.

Seeing the room filled with people who genuinely support our advocacy reminded me that we are not alone in this journey. Because of all of you, our theme “Igniting Change Together” became more than words — it became reality.

As Founder and President, I am truly grateful and honored to be surrounded by people with kind hearts and the same passion to make a difference. This success belongs to - every

GAFAA page 23

Linda Walker: Why the viral Chinese micro-drama character is taking Filipino youth by storm

Who is “Linda Walker” and why is she a big deal among Filipino youth?

Note: Linda Walker is not a real person. She is a fictional character from the Chinese vertical micro-drama “The Heiress Who Won with Brains,” which has gained strong traction on TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube.

In the Chinese version of the series, the character is originally named Lin SiWang. The name was changed to “Linda Walker” for the English-dubbed release, which helped make the character more recognizable to international audiences, including viewers in this region.

Linda Walker is portrayed as a highly intelligent and determined student who overcomes social inequality and academic pressure through academic excellence.

Her character is also noted in the series for an exaggerated IQ of 180 and a fictional mock exam score of 719—details that have contributed to her viral popularity online.

Apparently, many Filipinos, particularly those of school age, consider her an inspiration. As a result, Linda Walker has become a trending reference across social media, especially among students. Her name is widely used in memes, study jokes, and motivational posts, particularly during exam season.

The trend has even reached mainstream entertainment, with TV host-comedian Vice Ganda referencing Linda Walker on “It’s Showtime,” while singer Angeline Quinto also joined the online discussions during her travels, further boosting the character’s visibility.



The phenomenon is expected to grow even further in the coming days, as the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCI) brings to the country the actress who plays Linda Walker, Zhang Yingfei.

She is scheduled to visit the Philippines from June 7 to June 11, 2026, as part of the “Education for a Better Future” advocacy campaign of FFCCCI.

According to FFCCCI’s Wilson Flores, the group aims to highlight the importance of education, discipline, and perseverance among Filipino youth through Zhang Yingfei’s visit. During her trip, Zhang is expected to make a courtesy call on former Manila Mayor Isko Moreno at City Hall, tour historic sites such as Intramuros and Binondo, and participate in an outreach program at Quezon City High School alongside Education Secretary Sonny Angara, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, China Ambassador Jing Quan, and FFCCCI officials.

FFCCCI, which has long been involved in education and civic initiatives including rural school-building projects, disaster relief, and community support programs, said the visit is part of its broader mission to promote education and cultural exchange.

Flores said, “In the Philippines, the Linda Walker phenomenon continues to grow as more than just an online meme. For many young viewers, she has become a symbol of intelligence, perseverance, and academic aspiration. We are hoping that our effort to bring the actress who portrays her in the show here will inspire local youth.”

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

CANADA from page 4

sive and sustainable future. Joining the Luzon Economic Corridor Partnership will strengthen trade and development ties, unlocking new opportunities to drive economic growth for both Canadian

and global markets.”

Carney last year laid out a strategy to double Canada’s exports to markets outside the U.S. within a decade to net an extra \$300 billion in trade.

Sidhu, who is also scheduled to meet with Manila’s Defense

Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., said Canada similarly wants to be a defense supplier to the Philippines which is aiming to modernize its military capabilities. Canada and the Philippines signed a visiting forces agreement last



year, and it deployed troops during the annual

flagship U.S.-Philippines military drills that ended. Filipino Rechie Valdez, Canada’s Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism) stressed the

CANADA page 10

Philippine Park Association-Mississauga Celebrates First Anniversary & Induction Event

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

A new, dedicated and determined player in the Mississauga Filipino-Canadian community is on the rise. The Philippine Park Association-Mississauga conducted its "Induction and First Anniversary Gala" on May 8, 2026 (Saturday) at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, Ontario. With its theme: "A Night of Celebration, Unity, and Pride", PPA welcomed more than 200 guests and dignitaries to its first formal and successful social event.

Among the distinguished guests who graced the occasion and delivered greetings were Mississauga Mayor Carolyn Parrish; Ward 5 Councillor Natalie Hart; Philippine Ambassador to Canada Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga; Philippine Consul General in Toronto Kristine Leilani R. Salle; Minister for Women and Gender Equality and



Mississauga-Streetsville Rechie Valdez; and other government and community dignitaries. Also in attendance were officers and leaders of several Filipino-Canadian organizations across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The members of the PPA Executive Officers inducted during the ceremony for the 2025-2028 term were Rick G. Falco, Chairman; Earl Francis O. Dacara, Vice Chairman - Internal and Treasurer; Dr. Solon S. Guzman, Vice Chairman - External; Lerma S. Valdez, Secretary; Marilou Banate, Assistant Secretary; Clemente Cabillan, Business Manager; Maria Chona Pas-

sistent Business Manager; Lani T. Whigan-Tamayo, Executive Assistant; and Kenneth Yanto, Youth Coordinator. Also inducted were members of the Board of Directors, namely Enrique S. Torres, Dr. Annette Simbulan, Dr. Ma. Christina Gambo, Maria Cabillan-Marasco, Melissa Cabillan-Brooks, and Philip Mendoza, together with members of the Board of Advisers, composed of Maureen Ahmad, Lapulapu Cana, and Agnes Miranda

The Philippine Park Association (PPA) is a registered non-profit and community-led organisation "dedicated to building the first Philip-

pine-themed park in Canada as well as celebrating Filipino culture, heritage, and unity through meaningful projects and partnerships" in the City of Mississauga, Ontario.

Historically, to honour the growing Filipino community in the City of Mississauga, Ontario, the Philippine Park, previously known as Max Ward Park and located at 2380 Matheson Boulevard East, was officially unveiled to the public at a milestone ceremony attended by City of Mississauga officials, leaders and members of the community in June 2025. In support and appreciation of the City's action, the Philippine Park Association (PPA) was established with a "mission of

partnership, stewardship, and cultural legacy by working with the City of Mississauga to shape Philippine Park as a lasting space of heritage, recognition, and community pride for generations to come".

On June 6, 2026, the Philippine Park Association-Mississauga will hold its "Inauguration of Philippine Park: Barrio Pista" event, in collaboration with community partners, at 2380 Matheson Boulevard East, Mississauga, Ontario, from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm. The event will feature the official inauguration ceremonies, cultural performances, live entertainment, community presentations, food vendors, family activities, and other Filipino cultural showcases. The public is warmly invited to attend this historic community celebration.

Everyone is welcomed!.
(Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Garcia on career lessons: Not everyone's there for you

After more than a decade in the entertainment industry, Joshua Garcia looked back on his growth both as an artist and as an individual during ABS-CBN Star Magic's latest "Spotlight" press conference.

The male lead in the romantic-drama series "Love Is Never Gone" also reflected on his 12-year journey, sharing he feels blessed to have remained in the industry for so long. Despite the challenges he encountered, he said he never felt abandoned by ABS-CBN and Star Magic and expressed appreciation for their unwavering support throughout his career. But more than the success he has achieved, Joshua was most thankful for the chance to provide for his family.

When learning about the project "Love Is Never Gone," he said that he immediately looked forward to it, especially because the project allowed him to work with Ivana Alawi and director Emmanuel "Manny" Quindo Palo.

"I was really excited to do it talaga, working with Ivana and, of course, working with direkt Manny. Tapos sa Morocco pa," he said.

He also admitted that filming in Morocco came with challenges, especially given the limited shooting time.

When asked about preparing for the show's romantic scenes, Joshua stressed how important openness and trust between actors.

He particularly praised Ivana for her professionalism and willingness to collaborate from the very beginning, despite having little connection before filming started.

"Malaking factor doon talaga kasi yung open both actors para mag-work yung eksena, and yun din (ang) nakita ko kay Ivana simula yung nagsimula kami," he said.

Looking back on what he learned from working on the project, Joshua shared what he valued more were the friendships that he built and the memories he gained, not just from his latest series, but from every production that he



had been part of. He fondly recalled that spending time together outside work grew that connection

on camera.

"In every show kasi (na) ginagawa ko, mas yung memories and yung mga tao binabaon ko," Joshua said.

Speaking on the realities that come with fame, he also admitted one of the hardest lessons was learning that not everyone around him genuinely had his best interests at heart. This pushed him to prioritize his peace and focus on those who truly care for him.

"Hindi lahat ng nasa paligid mo ay nandiyan para sa'yo," he added.

As one of his generation's most in-demand leading men, Joshua strongly believed that fame has not limited the kinds of roles he is willing to take on. Instead, it has made him more discerning

when choosing projects.

Moreover, Joshua shared that early on in his acting journey, he found it difficult to switch off after intense scenes or roles, especially after taking on such projects as "It's Okay to Not to Be Okay," "Meet, Greet & Bye" and "Love Is Never Gone."

"Noong una, nahahirapan akong mag-switch off after ng scene. Kasi bago pa lang sa akin yung pakiramdam. Na umaarte and like really doing the scene. Like really feeling the emotion. But right now, 'pag gumagawa ako ng mga scene after scene, mabilis ako na kapag switch off naman ako right away," he said.

Joshua is open to doing more action-oriented roles in the future, as long as they continue to push him as an actor.

"Moving forward, gusto ko palagi na challenge ako sa mga roles, eh. Dito kasi sa 'Love Is Never Gone,' challenge ako dito dahil action siya," he shared.

Bela Padilla sparks talks with cryptic posts amid Kim Chiu fallout rumors

Bela Padilla is once again making noise on social media after posting a series of cryptic art cards that quickly drew mixed reactions from netizens.

Among the messages she shared were:

"No one can defeat the person God choose to win."

"May God forgive the people who tried to break me."

"I'm proud of you for leaving. You made the right choice."

"Drama at this age is embarrassing. Go make some money and find peace."

"Everything you do comes back to you. Do good, be good."

The timing of the posts immediately fueled speculation, coming amid persistent rumors of a falling out between Bela and longtime friend Kim Chiu.

Talk of tension between the two actresses surfaced after fans noticed a lack of social media interaction and the apparent absence of public birthday greetings that had once been a staple of their friendship.

The alleged rift supposedly started following Bela's appearance on "Fast Talk With Boy Abunda" earlier this year, where she disclosed that Kim had undergone an egg-freezing procedure.

While Bela spoke positively about Kim's decision, the revelation sparked debate online, with some questioning whether the matter should have remained private.

Since then, fans have speculated that the disclosure may have caused strain in their friendship.

Adding to the chatter are unverified reports linking Bela to alleged issues behind the scenes of her current project, "Blood Vs. Duty."

Rumors circulating online claim that some production personnel have found the actress difficult to work with and overly demanding.

No official statement from the production team or Bela has been released regarding the allegations.

As expected, Bela's recent posts divided netizens. Some viewed them as simple motivational reminders about faith, healing, and personal growth, while others interpreted them as subtle responses to the controversies currently surrounding her name.

Without any direct explanation from the actress, the real meaning behind the posts remains open to interpretation.



Thank you Marky Hugh Films for letting the MHP family be a part of the program for the movie screening of "HARANA" - a Gawad Urian Best Documentary Film 2013 by the award winning Director Benito Bautista - Lulu De Jesus



Viewers of Confessions of a Hero pose after the showing at Namaste restaurant.



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



Global Advocacy For Autism Awareness (GAFAA) holds their induction.

Finally, the sunny month of June is here

When it doesn't rain on sunny days, can summer really be here? Let's enjoy it because before we know it, it's over. I feel the dread because spring is just beginning and I already see ads for CNE jobs. It's like it's telling us, don't enjoy summer too much because it will end soon.

In fact, these warm days are just like trailers of a movie, sort of a teaser of what summer has in store. And just like the movies, I hope when summer comes, it lives up to the trailer. Summer officially begins June 21. Let's enjoy every summery day.

I attended the Global Advocacy For Autism Awareness (GAFAA) gala and it featured lots of fashion shows and entertainment. And this is just what some of the words of inspiration from some supporters.

*To all our beautiful and selfless models,
From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for standing with us and believing in our advocacy. You gave not only your time, beauty, and resources – but your hearts – for a cause bigger than ourselves.
You did not walk the runway for applause or recognition.
You walked for every child longing for acceptance, for every parent silently fighting battles, and for every family hoping for a kinder and more inclusive world.
Because of you, children felt celebrated.
Because of you, families felt seen.*

Because of you, our dream of acceptance and inclusion became alive for one unforgettable evening.

Thank you for choosing compassion, love, and service. One day, people will remember that there were individuals like you who helped carry this dream for others.

*With love and endless gratitude,
Written by: Francis Miclat*

Canada's Alexa Marie Grant Continues Road to Tanzania 2027 with Autism Awareness Advocacy

Continuing her road to Tanzania 2027, where the 74th edition of the Miss World Festival will take place next May, Miss World Canada Alexa Marie Grant attended the 2nd Anniversary Celebration of the Global

Ofelia C A McPherson
CONGRATULATIONS GAFAA!... on celebrating your 2nd anniversary... our sincere appreciation goes out to all those who contributed to the success of this spectacular event, led by Margie Doce, our executives officers, Board of directors, photographers, our models in fashion shows choreographed by the talented Merycy Cauton and Melba Rosete, make up artist, our sponsors, community partners, guests, and we give all glory to our almighty GOD for granting us the strength to come together and celebrate the purpose of Gafaa



Miss World Canada for the 74th Miss World Festival Alexa Marie Grant attended the 2nd Anniversary Celebration of GAFAA.

“Since last year, I've collaborated with GAFAA through fundraising initiatives supporting children with autism and their families. I remain committed to creating spaces where children with special needs are empowered, included, and given opportunities to thrive”, she shared.

The 20th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament is still going strong as we speak. After the GAFAA fashion gala, this is the second big event I attended. of course, GAFAA was filled with people dressed in their best watching a fundraising fashion show where beautiful models walked and talented performers from the community sang and dance to the delight of the crowd, the VIBT showcased the sporting side of the Filipino community. Difference in attire and function but both similar in showcasing the best of the Filipino.

Advocacy for Autism Awareness (GAFAA) for the second consecutive year.

Alexa highlighted her ongoing collaboration with the organization through fundraising initiatives supporting children with autism and their families.

She praised GAFAA's work in creating inclusive spaces and opportunities for children with special needs, adding that she is committed through Beauty With a Purpose to supporting initiatives focused on empowerment and inclusion.

Mother's Day also fell under the month of May so of course, everyone wanted to celebrate it also. Filipino Centre Toronto held their get-together where moms get to have facials, and hairstyling done for free.

Happy Mother's Day to everyone.

Ella Cruz makes showbiz comeback after pursuing career in South Korea

Ella Cruz is back in Philippine showbiz after spending months exploring career opportunities in South Korea, a journey she says helped her grow both personally and professionally.

Marking her acting comeback through the Viva Movie Box vertical series Borrowed Life, Ella opened up about her decision to temporarily leave the local entertainment scene and pursue opportunities abroad.

The actress revealed that her love for K-pop and Korean culture inspired her to take a chance on building a career in South Korea.

“Simula bata ako, simula high school ako, mahilig talaga ako sa K-pop, so sabi ko since merong opportunity na nagbukas, bakit hindi ko i-try?” Ella shared.

Known for her passion for performing, Ella said she has no regrets about stepping outside her comfort zone to test her capabilities in a highly competitive industry.



“Wala naman po mawawala sa akin sa pag-try sa Korea. Tinry ko po kung kaya ko pa,” she said.

Before pursuing her plans, Ella sought the blessing of Viva Entertainment chairman Vic del Rosario, who supported her decision to explore opportunities overseas.

“Sinabi ko naman kay Boss Vic na, ‘Try lang, Boss.’ Pero kapag nakita ko na yung worth ko nasa Pilipinas pa rin, nasa industriya pa rin, siyempre babalik at babalik din naman po ako,” she recalled.

During her three-month stay in South Korea, Ella landed hosting jobs and special performance gigs. However, despite the opportunities, she admitted that homesickness eventually became one of her biggest challenges.

“I remember staying there and crying lang every day because of homesickness. Iba po talaga yung culture doon, iba yung culture dito,” she shared.

The experience ultimately helped

her realize how much she values her career and roots in the Philippines.

Looking back, Ella considers her South Korean venture a meaningful chapter in her life. She remains grateful for the opportunities that came her way and continues to receive invitations for major events in the country.

According to the actress, she returned to South Korea for a major New Year's countdown event earlier this year and is set to fly back again for future engagements. Now back in the local entertainment scene, Ella is making a fresh start with “Borrowed Life,” her first vertical series project.

She plays Aina, a hardworking online ready-to-wear seller who has spent much of her life being ridiculed because of a birthmark on her face. Despite years of bullying and rejection, Aina dreams of finding confidence, love, and acceptance.

Her life takes an unexpected turn when she discovers a mysterious beauty app that transforms her into a stunning woman named Isabel.

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

CANADA from page 8

the benefits and opportunities of free trade to small business in Canada and the Philippines.

“The relationship between Canada and the Philippines is stronger than ever, rooted in the deep people-to-people

ties that nearly one million Canadians of Filipino descent have built over generations. That foundation is creating real opportunities for small businesses on both sides to work together, open new markets and build

CANADA page 15

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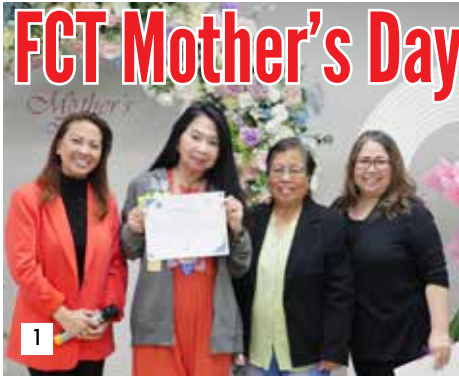
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FCT Mother's Day Celebration



1. Chinky del Mar, mother awardee Theresa Lumanlan, Nitz Rejdik, Jennifer Sy; 2. Mother awardee Gloria Mandigma; 3.

3. Bernadette Santos; 4. Mother awardee Lally Dividina Tidor; 5. Lou gets a hairstyling done; 6. Dong's Dremers

6. Academy Jennifer Sy, singer Cheska Lungayan, Princess Lungayan, & singer Ron Reyes Angeles.

Gabbi Garcia 'lucky' Khalil Ramos 'mastered being an Instagram boyfriend'

Gabbi Garcia expressed how fortunate she was that her longtime partner and fellow actor Khalil Ramos was a very capable "Instagram boyfriend."

The actress, in her capacity as a brand



ambassador, attended the recent launch of electronics and smart manufacturing company Xiaomi's new phone series and

smart products last May 29 in Taguig.

There Philstar.com asked Gabbi her personal definition of a smart ecosystem and her response was grounded on sustainability, using the prevalence of electric vehicles or EVs as an example.

She also pointed out the need for convenience especially in her capacity as an actress and host, though Philstar.com followed up by asking where do analog devices fit in an intelligent ecosystem.

"It's a matter of preference, for example Khalil loves analog devices," the actress said. "But also the world is rapidly evolving right now, kaya kung hindi ka maga-adapt, puwede kang mai-wanan."

Philstar.com also asked Gabbi if Khalil has mastered being an "Instagram boyfriend" – the colloquial term coined for designated, unpaid photographers in a relationship – regardless of what device he uses. "Ang swerte-swerte ko actually kasi



Mila Tolentino Lacerona of God's Strength Ministries continues to drop by the Filipino Centre Toronto to give free bread to the seniors. In photo on the left is Lally Dividina Tidor and on the right is Theresa Lumanlan.

lagi akong may magagandang content and photos because of Khalil," Gabbi laughed. "At the same time also, it's really his passion – taking photos – so whatever he needs, I'm really supportive of him."

Because Xiaomi just launched

its new 17T series, Gabbi was also asked what feature she was still waiting for smartphones to have.

Gabbi gave it some thought since "everything is so updated now," finally settling on a feature that would automatically



Philippine Park Association President Rick Falco, Vice-Chairman Internal-Earl Francis Oriño Dacara and Vice-Chairman External-Dr. Solon Guzman

filter negativity online. "[Something where] you can easily curate your phone na mabo-block lahat ng negativity,

automatic na ganoon," Gabbi ended. "Feeling ko it will be more peaceful, and better for our mental health."

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



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Happy birthday to celebrants Greatchen D. Griffiths, Rosemer Enverga, & Andrea Penaverde.



Congratulations to JDL students, Chloe Tiangson for the POV Pinas Idol search and Amira Kea Yoana Ortez & Sofia Soriano for being People's Choice Award winners at Pacific Mall Stars of Tomorrow.



JDL Sisters Catherine and Chloe Tiangson pose with Luz Del Rosario-Executive Director at Caras-sauga 2026



MH Talents Avery, Chloe & Rihanna entertained at the Mother's Day Celebration at the Filipino Centre Toronto!



20th VIBT of 2026 Reaches a Milestone

Twenty years can be considered a milestone in an organization in the Filipino community. The 20th FCT-Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament (VIBT) was founded in 2007 in commemoration of Dr. Vicky Santiago's position for improving the health and well-being of the Filipino-Canadian community. It started with 24 teams. "With 75 teams across 11 divisions, it is a big increase from last year," said organizer Philip Beloso, the driving force and the person

responsible for starting this tournament with philanthropist Dr. Vicky Santiago sponsoring it. And to this day, she still continues to support it. "We also like to thank Dr. Vicky Santiago for her continued support, she continues to be involved with the tournament," VIBT organizer Philip Beloso said in an interview with OMNI. The FCT Board of Directors in attendance are Mary Ann San Juan, Philip Beloso, Dan Mandigma, Theresa Lumanlan, Frank Cruzet, CANADA page 15



Preston Sichantha of Undftd team



Fashion Designer Melba Rosete, GAFAA President Margie Doce & Merycy! Caution shows the cheque for \$3,655 raised by the Global Advocacy for Autism Awareness gala.



Gawad Urian Best Documentary Film 2013 award winning Director Benito Bautista with Lalu de Jesus



Marky Hugh Production talents were present at the showing of Gawad Urian 2013 Best Documentary Harana at Vibe Manila.



Emcee Dong Sabanal, GAFAA President Margie Doce, emcee Jelly Beans enjoy the night away at the GAFAA gala.



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto • June 1, 2026

FCT Cultural dance instructors Wendy Arena and Jennifer Sy



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto • June 1, 2026

The Filipino Centre Toronto Seniors Art program cultural dancers pose with Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Lily Villacorta (5TH FROM LEFT) after they their performed at the June 1 flag raising at the Filipino Centre Toronto to start Filipino Heritage month.



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto • June 1, 2026
Philip Beloso, Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Lily Villacorta, Liberal MPP candidate Ahsanul Hafiz



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto • June 1, 2026
Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Lily Villacorta & PCCF President Rosemer Enverga



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto Jun 1, 2026
Theresa Lumanlan, Nimfa Lim Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Villacorta & PCCF President Rosemer Enverga



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto • June 1, 2026
Jeanette Rosales, Elsie & Kuya Wally yerro, Dan Mandigma, PCCF Rosemer Enverga, Lally Dividina Tidor



FLAG RAISING
Filipino Centre Toronto
June 1, 2026
Joey Baking & Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Villacorta)

SCENES IN the City

GAFAA is a Success

Global Advocacy for Autism Awareness (GAFAA) Fashion Gala raises funds for Autism. These are some of the people that made it a success.



Thank you GAFAA for this recognition as one of GAFAA President Choice Award. It is an honor to be part of GAFAA who created a unique platform for families and children that were affected by the Spectrum.

KUDOS to their hardworking President Margie Doce and to the Creative Director Merycyl Cauton. To Melba Rosete Congratulations your collaboration with GAFAA shows that we can lift each other up by supporting each other. Sherry Lacson Tan (CENTRE) & Merycyl Cauton (RIGHT)



Alexa Grant & Chloe Sabatin



Anne



Vicel



Keitlyn

Congratulations to MH Talent Nathalie Bondoc for being awarded "Most Creative Model" at the Global Advocacy for Autism Awareness! Your inspiring presence truly made a difference. We are proud of you!



MH Talents Anne & Hailey are holding a poster with the slogan, "Everyone Communicates Differently," in support of the Global Advocacy for Autism Awareness. This meaningful poster, made by Amme Park, carries a strong message about understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for everyone in the autism community.



Sugar Plum of Marky Hugh Productions



Jewel Hing of Marky Hugh Productions



Rockin' Siblings of Marky Hugh Productions



Hailey

'We just are': Kaila Estrada debuts on Daniel Padilla's Instagram

Actress Kaila Estrada is finally seen on Daniel Padilla's social media.

Daniel posted random photos on his Instagram account, and one of them is Kaila sitting in a golf cart.

"There is no ifs, would, could, should. Its just is. And we just are," Daniel captioned the post.

Kaila's

half-brother, Luigi Muhlach, son of Aga Muhlach and Janice De Belen, who is Kaila's mother, commented on the post.

"Yung isa panay gallery," Luigi commented.

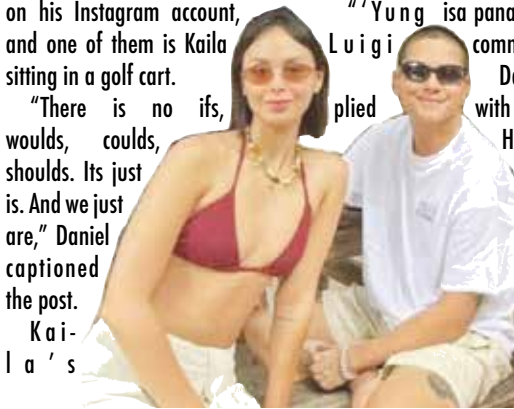
Daniel replied with "HAHAHAHA," while Kaila also commented with "face with tears of joy" emoji.

It will be recalled that Luigi was the one who seemed to confirm the status of Daniel and Kaila's relationship after he called the actor "bayaw."

However, the two stars have not directly admitted their relationship.

Daniel and Kaila started getting close in 2025, when they starred together in the teleserye "Incognito."

Daniel is the ex-boyfriend of his former love team partner Kathryn Bernardo, who is now linked to Lucena City mayor Mark Alcala.



Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Lily Villacorta join the raising of the flag on June 1 at the start of Filipino Heritage month.



Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle Lily Villacorta, Filipino Centre Toronto President Mary Ann San Juan, FCT Board Eren de Villa & Liberal MPP candidate Ahsanul Hafiz raise the flag on June 1 at the start of Filipino Heritage month.

June is filled with many celebrations across our country, and one of them is Filipino Heritage Month. Canada is known for being a beautifully diverse nation, and this month highlights just one of the many communities that contribute to its vibrant identity. As Miss Glamour Look International Canada 2026 – and coincidentally as a Filipino Canadian – I'm grateful to represent a country that embraces and uplifts all of its people. This week, I'm also honoured to join the Raise the Flag ceremony with the Filipino Centre in Scarborough, Ontario, as we recognize the achievements and spirit of Filipino Canadians nationwide. Happy Heritage Month to everyone celebrating.

JDL Mean Girls jr.



By popular demand, JDL held another showing of the musical Mean Girls Jr. at the LBP Theatre of the Toronto Metropolitan University Brampton branch. As expected, it was another successful presentation.



Toronto Talents walk at GAFAA Fashion Show Gala

Led by Strut's Darles Nota (1), Toronto models composed of Strut and MH Productions talents showed their support by walking at the Global Advocacy for Autism Awareness (GAFAA) Fashion Show Gala.

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

CANADA from page 10

strong partnerships. Canada looks forward to building on that momentum.”

While in Manila, he secured new growth opportunities for Canadian businesses, advanced Canada's trade diversification agenda and expanded two-way trade and investment in one of Southeast Asia's fastest growing markets.

Minister Sidhu reiterated Canada's commitment to mutual economic prosperity and global supply chains resiliency. In support of this, he announced:

Canada has accepted the invitation, extended by the Government of the Philippines, and in partnership with the United States and Japan, to join the Luzon Economic Corridor (LEC) Partnership on behalf of the Honourable Randeep Sarai, Secretary of



Maria Cristina Aldeguer-Roque, Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines

State (International Development), a contribution of \$2 million to fund targeted technical assistance for a LEC project.

During a visit to Asian Aerospace, Minister Sidhu highlighted the success of Canadian aerospace companies working in the Philippines, such as De Havilland Canada. Strategic partnerships with firms like Asian Aerospace facilitate effective market access, promotion and advance Canadian commercial interests abroad.

The Minister also spoke with Government of the Philippines officials about Canada's role as a strong, reliable and long-term trade partner for the Indo-Pacific region and highlighted opportunities for Canadian firms across priority sectors such as agriculture, aerospace and defence. He also reaffirmed Canada's commitment to concluding negotiations toward the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Canada and Canada-Philippines free trade agreements in 2026, highlighting their role in strengthening trade and investment ties, enhancing competitiveness and supporting long-term economic growth for both countries. He met with:

- Maria Cristina Aldeguer-Roque, Secretary of Trade and Industry of the

Philippines

- Frederick D. Go, Secretary of Finance of the Philippines
- Gilberto E. Teodoro Jr., Secretary of National Defence of the Philippines

Finally, Minister Sidhu engaged with senior business leaders representing the Philippines largest conglomerates, members of the Makati Business Club and of the Private Sector Advisory Council, to highlight Canadian capabilities and secure business partnerships for Canadian and Philippine businesses. He also hosted roundtables with the defence, aerospace and agricultural sectors to discuss Canada's trade and advocacy tools that help companies expand in the Philippine market. He took the opportunity to emphasize Canada's expertise as a stable agricultural



Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney with MPP Rechie Valdez

supplier that supports food security and promotes procurement pathways, partnerships and long-term industrial cooperation in aerospace and defence.

Secretary of State Randeep Sarai reaffirms Canada's commitment to climate resilience in the Philippines

The Philippines has the highest disaster risk from extreme CANADA page 16

20th VIBT of 2026 Reaches a Milestone

JOY from page 13

Nita Rejdik, Wendy Arena, Judith Gonzales, Wal-

ter Yerro, and Jeanette Rosales. Politicians joining VIBT opening ceremony



Preston Sichantha of Undftd faces off against three Phenoms players.

ter Yerro, and Jeanette Rosales. Politicians joining VIBT opening ceremony

ing-Brooklin, MP (Federal); Rechie Valdez, MP Mississauga Streetsville, Minister for Women and

As of 2026, VIBT is the longest running tournament and one of the most organized leagues with an assigned nurse and police security.

The Filipino Centre Toronto 20th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament 2026 opening and closing games were held at the Toronto Pan Am Centre.

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

On day two, I saw a game that tied and went into overtime by 2 minutes and Undftd lost by 2 points.

There was a free basketball who can shoot from the 3-point line. One parent got it.

Dr. Victoria Santiago sponsored this year's trophies.

The VIPS this year are:

1. Eddie Chung (RBC Branch Manager) Markham Sheppard
2. Remitly
3. UMAC Canada
4. Sandbanks
5. Nissan Morningside

6. Forex Toronto
7. Katenko

The winners this year are:

- 2017: 6:00 PM - C2 • Winner: ALL-IN • MVP: Ethan #3;
- 2016: 8:00 PM - C4 • Winner: UNDFTD • MVP: Aguilar#12;
- 2015: 7:00 PM - C1 • Winner: DURHAM • MVP: Abad #9;
- 2014: 8:00 PM - C3 • Winner: DURHAM • MVP: Hunte #44;
- 2013: 9:00 PM - C1 • Winner: PBT ELITE • MVP: Aguilar #22;
- 2012: 9:00 PM - C3 • Winner: UNDFTD WEST • MVP: Holder #11;
- 2011: 8:00 PM - C2 • Winner: THE COLOSSEUM • MVP: Clarin #2;
- 2010: 9:00 PM - C2 • Winner: NORTH YORK • MVP: Bondoc #0;
- 2009: 6:00 PM - C1 • Winner: FBA DURHAM • MVP: Aguada #11;
- 2008/07: 8:00 PM - C1 • Winner: NORTH YORK • MVP: RJ Belero #4;

See you all next year.

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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

In the workplace, hybrid work persists nowadays, with many employees still "Working From Home (WFH)" for part of the week, despite lots of grumbings about return-to-office mandates for civil servants and lowly workers at tech firms. A wave of studies is delving into the ripple effects of remote work on everything from work productivity to "family productivity". Researchers are asking if flexibility at work can affect people's willingness to have children, and they have found a connection between flexible work arrangements and fertility rates. A groundbreaking paper from a global team of researchers concluded that "fertility, both people's plans to have kids and how many children, is higher among those who work from home at least one day a week, and even higher when both partners work some of the week remotely." The paper source observations from more than 40,000 people ages 20 to 45 across two surveys, one global and one American. In the global findings, lifetime fertility rose by some 14 per cent when both partners worked from home at least once a week. The research concludes that "For those hoping to start a family, breathing room is important. When people feel their time isn't their own, they're less likely to see parenthood as a possibility". One of the study's authors said, "Our results suggest that flexible work arrangements can play a role in family planning, help-



DRIVERLESS CARS

"Robots on the Roads", otherwise known as "Driverless Cars". In 2018, Gallup, the venerable public opinion pollster, found that 19% of Americans expected those automobiles to be commonly used in the U.S. within five years (in 2023). In late 2025, Gallup found that the number had risen to 31%. Within six to 10 years (2031 to 2035), another 34% expect driverless cars to be common. Together, that makes nearly two-thirds of Americans who now expect driverless cars within a decade. But behind those predictions of increased acceptance is another number: the proportion of Americans who say they would personally own or use a driverless car if the technology became widely available in the next 20 years. Similarly unchanged was the number of people who say they prefer a car they can personally drive, coming in at 73% in 2025. Interestingly, to the question of whether roads would be safer with human-operated or driverless cars,

Americans have tilted toward humanity: 1) 58% say we're safer with all or mostly human-driven vehicles on the road than driverless cars. That's a jump from 47% in 2018 - illustrating the growing technological distrust. 2) Just 19% say the same about driverless cars, down from 28% in 2018. 3) Americans over 65, those without a college degree, people in rural areas & people with lower incomes, and women are all more likely to prefer human-operated vehicles. It's tempting to connect the souring on driverless cars to the deep scepticism about Artificial Intelligence (AI). Americans seem to think there's no escaping from the disruptive effects of the high-tech autos. But they're in no rush to embrace the former. Seems we're not quite ready to see what happens when our creations get sideways or run out of control and malfunction. Should autonomous cars come to Canada, would you buy or drive one?

ing parents combine work and family life." There you are. Work-from-home couples, eager to start a family, thus, will have a better chance and time.

AMERICAN ROBOTAXIS

Driverless cars are becoming more common in some cities in California, USA, but when the autonomous vehicles violate traf-

fic laws, police have not been able to ticket them - until now. The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has announced new regulations on autonomous vehicles (AVs), including a process for police to issue a "notice of AV noncompliance" directly to the car's manufacturer. The new rules, which will go into effect on July 1, 2026, are part of a larger

2024 law that imposed deeper regulation on the technology. There have been a number of reports of the cars breaking traffic laws, including during a San Francisco blackout last year. The California DMV is calling the new rules "the most comprehensive AV regulations in the nation". Under the new rules, police can cite AV companies when their vehicles commit moving violations. The rules will also require the companies to respond to calls from police and other emergency officials within 30 seconds, and will issue penalties if their vehicles enter active emergency zones. Waymo is one of the main operators of fully self-driving robotaxis in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County, but several companies, including Tesla, also have permits to test their AVs in some California cities. When the vehicles violate traffic laws, some police have been stumped as to how to hold the driverless cars accountable. Two incidents happened where 1) In September 2025, police officers in San Bruno - a city south of San Francisco - noticed a Waymo AV making an illegal U-turn at a light directly in front of them. But when police officers stopped the car, they were "not able to issue a ticket without a driver to give it to. Instead, they contacted the company about the "glitch". 2) In December, a massive blackout in San Francisco left some Waymo vehicles stalled in the middle of busy intersections, worsening an already congested traffic situation. San Francisco Fire Department officials have also repeatedly complained about robotaxis getting in the way of emergency responses. Watching people increasingly use Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology while also mistrusting it more and more is a fascinating paradox: "Inevitability, meet Undesirability." (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

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natural events and negative climate change impacts in the world, according to the 2025 World Risk Index. As part of Canada's continued support to advancing climate resilience in the region, Canada's Secretary of State for International Development, The Honourable Randeep Sarai, recently visited Alinea's project team and partner

province, Bohol. Together with Canada's Ambassador to the Philippines, H.E. David Hartman, Secretary Sarai learned how the Governance for Climate and Disaster Resilience (Gov-CDR) Project works to strengthen the resilience of communities to natural and climate-induced hazards. Funded by Global Affairs Canada, the Gov-CDR Project focuses on six provinces

that are highly vulnerable to climate change: Kalinga, Aklan, Bohol, Samar, Bukidnon and Davao de Oro.

Loboc River Watershed Management Council

As part of their visit, Secretary Sarai, Ambassador Hartman, and the rest of the Canadian delegation witnessed the signing of two Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) in the

Municipality of Loboc on November 15, 2025. The first MOA formalized the creation of the Loboc River Watershed Management Council (LRWMC), a multi-sectoral body tasked with overseeing sustainable efforts across the Loboc River Watershed which spans 67,563 hectares and covering 15 municipalities—the biggest in Bohol. The council will guide efforts that

are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsive. Its mandate includes preventing further degradation of the watershed and supporting the restoration of its protective and productive functions, ensuring the long-term health and resilience of this vital ecosystem. The MOA signing was led by the Government of Bo-

CANADA page 18

Canada eyes investments in Philippine defense

MANILA, Philippines — Canada has expressed interest in investing in the Philippine defense industry following the recent signing of the Philippines-Canada Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA), the Department of National Defense (DND) said last month.

The development was discussed during a meeting between Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and Canadian Minister of International Trade Maninder Sidhu on May 13 at Camp Aguinaldo, where both officials tackled regional security developments and opportunities to expand defense trade and industrial cooperation to address shared challenges.

During the meeting, Teodoro highlighted the strategic significance of

establishing a defense trade partnership with Canada, noting that Canada's expertise complements the Philippines' modernization goals.

The defense chief also expressed optimism over broader collaboration with Canada following the signing of the SOVFA, which is expected to further strengthen security and defense ties between the two countries.

Sidhu, for his part, reaffirmed Canada's commitment to supporting the Philippines' defense priorities and conveyed Ottawa's interest in invest-



ing in the Philippine defense industry across cyber, air, land and maritime domains. He also underscored Canada's role in securing defense supply chains amid global geopolitical changes.

According to the DND, the meeting focused on strengthening the defense trade relationship between the Philippines and Canada and highlighted the longstanding security partnership between the two countries.

The DND noted that bilateral

defense cooperation has continued through government-to-government engagements since 2013, following the signing of the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding Relative to Government-to-Government Transactions in Defense and Military-Related Equipment, Materials, Systems and/or Services between the DND and the Canadian Commercial Corporation.

Under the agreement, the Philippines acquired eight Bell 412EP helicopters (PHOTO) from Canada.

Both sides also discussed advancing bilateral cooperation further, including the possible integration of Canadian technology into Philippine defense systems to enhance interoperability and defense capabilities.

Rabin Angeles, Angela Muji embrace more mature roles



Rabin Angeles and Angela Muji are stepping into a more mature chapter of their careers with "Dating Alys Perez," the highly anticipated sequel to the hit Wattpad adaptation "Seducing Drake Palma."

The series reunites Rabin and Angela as Drake Palma and Alys Perez, respectively, but this time, both stars promise viewers a deeper and more emotionally complex story.

"Hindi na po kami pa-sweet. This time, challenging na po yung gagawin namin dito as nagma-mature na rin yung roles namin, Yung timeline po kasi ng story is like four years after 'Seducing Drake Palma,'" Angela said.

Rabin echoed the sentiment, admitting that "Dating Alys Perez" demanded more from them as actors.

"Mas mabigat po talaga siya. Parang iba po yung kaba kasi mas mabibigat na yung mga eksena. Kaya mas focused po talaga kami sa set ngayon, parang less kulitan," he shared. "Mas matured na po ito. Dito niyo po kami makikita ni Angela sa mas mature roles."

For Angela, landing the role feels like a full-circle moment. The actress revealed that she was already a fan of the Wattpad story long before she became part of the adaptation.

"It's exciting because this Wattpad series used to be the book that we read as pre-teens. Nakakakilig lang na

dati mong binabasa, ngayon gagampanan mo na. It's surreal," she said.

Apart from the more mature storyline, fans can also expect the natural chemistry that has endeared Rabin and Angela to viewers.

Both made clear they are not simply playing it up to please fans. "Sa amin po kasi, what you see is what you get. Kung ano lang po kami on-cam, ganoon lang po kami," Angela explained.

"Hindi po namin pinipilit," Rabin added, with Angela agreeing, "Oo, ayaw po namin ipilit."

Joining the cast is rising actor Zeke Polina, who takes over the role of Tripp Palma previously portrayed by Dylan Menor. Understandably, Zeke admitted feeling the pressure of stepping into a fan-favorite role.

"I definitely felt the pressure, of course. Especially for someone who portrayed Tripp so well. Pero I'll try my best, definitely," he said.

The actor acknowledged that comparisons are inevitable but stressed that he prepared extensively by watching the first season, reading the source material, and attending workshops.

"I think hindi maiiwasan na mami-miss ng fans si Dylan because he really portrayed Tripp really well. Pero may preparations din naman po ako," he shared.

Director Crisanto Aquino expressed confidence in Zeke's portrayal, teasing a significantly more mature and emotionally intense sequel.

"Nung ginawa ko yung 'Seducing Drake Palma,' ang visual peg ko talaga is cotton candy, lahat makulay, masaya. Pero, pagdating sa 'Dating Alys Perez,' ang visual ko is glass and metal. It's really serious, mature," he said.

Based on the Wattpad novel by Ariesa Domingo, also known as Beeyotch, "Dating Alys Perez" follows Alys as she tries to move on from her painful past with Drake and build a future with Tripp, only for old feeling to resurface when Drake returns.

Gabri Panlilio says Italian BF helped her deal with crab mentality in PH

Gabri Panlilio, a singer-songwriter who brings her innermost thoughts into music, opened up about how having an Italian boyfriend changed her perspective on how to deal with local crab mentality.

"I've been in a relationship with an Italian man, and I've been friends with European people, and I saw that their societal standards are different from here," she said in a brief chat. "I don't want to be offensive, but I notice that they're not sensitive all the time. Here, we practice Filipino crab mentality, where we [don't say negative things] to our face."

Speaking about her partner, whose identity she opts



to keep private, Panlilio said that through their relationship, she realized that there's nothing wrong with being straightforward, despite the repercussions.

"Ever since I got into a relationship with an Italian man, my perspective toward things has become so different. I realized that they're so straightforward. For example, if they like you or don't like you, they'll just say it to your face," she said.

"[Filipinos] would rather talk about it with other people, and how will you learn? Minsan, iiwasan, or gho-

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ghost ka pa. We have to keep breaking that cycle in the Philippines, we just can't keep bashing people and start being plastic in front of them," she continued.

Panlilio, who confessed that she lost friends because of this Filipino trait, also hoped that they would realize how crab mentality can affect adults, especially those

working hard for their own self-development.

"I admit that I lost friends throughout my journey, but even through everything, I kept blaming myself. But if they're really my friends, they would really support you and bring out the best version of you," she said.

Canada Eyes Free Trade with Philippines, Asean This Year

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hol represented by Provincial Governor Erico Aristote Aumentado, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) Officer Jose Cleo Colis, Loboc Mayor Raymond Jala, and the mayors of the 14 other municipalities that comprise the council.

The second MOA formalized the partnership between the newly formed LRWMC



are sustainable and responsive to Gender Equality, Diversity, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI).

In his speech, Secretary Sarai expressed his appreciation for the ongoing efforts to strengthen climate and disaster resilience in the Philippines, noting

and Gov-CDR Project. Under this agreement, the LRWMC and Alinea Philippines commit to work collaboratively to support municipalities within the Loboc Watershed Ecosystem as a unified alliance to better understand and manage the climate and disaster risks affecting both the upstream biophysical systems and the downstream tourism and livelihoods. The partnership will also ensure that all initiatives



the recent series of typhoons and earthquakes that have caused severe damage to communities, lives, businesses, and infrastructure in the country. He emphasized Canada's commitment to supporting countries across the Indo-Pacific as climate-related disasters become more frequent and intense. Secretary Sarai congratulated the local governments for institutional-

izing the LRWMC, recognizing their collective leadership in protecting, conserving, and sustainably managing the watershed to benefit agriculture, eco-tourism, and nature-based hazard protection. He also expressed his gratitude for witnessing these efforts firsthand and highlighted Canada's sup-



port through the Gov-CDR Project, reaffirming Canada's solidarity with the Filipino people.

The event was also attended by national government agencies, including Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works



Loboc River Watershed Management Council

and Highways (DPWH), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and National Irrigation Administration (NIA); partners from the Academe, Bohol Island State University (BISU)-Bilar; partners from the development sector, the Philippine Red Cross; and other local stakeholders.

A tour of the Loboc river followed, with a discussion of Gov-CDR's assistance led by one of the Project's Local Resource Partners Mr. Aurelio S. Salgados Jr., Executive Director of Participatory Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-reliance (PROCESS-Bohol Inc.) and Project Director, Ms. Marion Villanueva as part of the Proj-

ect's activity of Scoping and Assessing Climate Change and Disaster Risk (CCDR) Assessments for Climate Action ongoing in the six provinces.

Balilihan Association of Women for Development (BAWOD)

Canada has long supported inclusive development initiatives in Bohol, including the Gender-Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project, the Women's Rights Action and Advocacy Project implemented by Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), and the Local Governance Support Program for Local Economic Development (LGSP-LED).

In Balilihan, the GREAT Women Project helped strengthen the Balilihan Association of Women for Development (BAWOD)—a women-led organization engaged in food processing,

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'I'm happy she's

Actress Janice de Belen subtly dodged confirmation that her daughter and fellow actress Kaila Estrada is in a relationship with another actor Daniel Padilla, but still expressed support for her happiness.

Janice appeared on the May 29, 2026 episode of "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda" ahead of her appearances on two other GMA shows "Magpakailanman" and "Wish Ko Lang."

Halfway through the episode, Boy and Janice were the latter's children when the host brought up Daniel Padilla, who is rumored to be dating Kaila.



The actress feigned surprise after hearing Boy's question, prompting the host to apologize to Daniel who might be watching.

"I am just happy that Kaila is happy, 'yun lang. Para sa isang parent, ang gusto mo lang ay maging masaya [mga anak mo]," Janice said. "When you see your child's happy, anong karapatan mong makialam at gumitna

happy': Janice de Belen on daughter Kaila Estrada

sa happiness? Basta happy ka, 'yun lang gusto ko."

After Boy praised Kaila as a very good actress, Janice added that she always tells her children there will be misgivings from her end when it comes to their relationships, out of concern for their feelings and safety. Janice acknowledged she was rebellious when she was her children's age and always asked her own parents to trust her, and she reminds herself of that whenever she feels annoyed about her kids and their partners.

"I have to trust my children, na kaya nila, na kaya nila panindigan,

and whatever happens they'll come out of it okay," the actress ended. Kaila and siblings Inah, Moira and Yuan are Janice's children with ex-husband John Estrada. Janice also has son Luigi from her relationship with Aga Muhlach.



FCT FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

FILIPINO CENTRE TORONTO Relly Pardinias and her ukulele ensemble entertain the invited guests during the June 1, 2026 flag-raising ceremony at the start of Filipino Heritage month.



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Dolly de Leon earns praise for Fil-Am portrayal in 'Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed'

Award-winning actress Dolly de Leon is gaining attention anew for her authentic portrayal of Filipino-Americans in the new Apple TV show "Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed."

The series stars Tatiana Maslany as Paula, a newly divorced mother that works as a fact checker but ends up in a rabbit hole of black mail and dead bodies.

In the premiere episode, Paula believes she witnessed a crime take place via a video call, captures it on her phone, and contacts the local authorities, in this case represented by de Leon's Detective Sofia Gonzalez.

The detective deduces that the incident

might have been faked, to Paula's bewilderment, and Gonzalez lays out why in a straightforward manner.

De Leon's approach to Gonzalez's characterization was praised by Filipinos online, commending the actress for using her real accent rather than the heavier accent used to depict Filipino-Americans in US shows.

A quick touching moment between Paula and Gonzalez is when the latter shares she is also divorced, adding, "Love isn't about getting yelled at all weekend" and "Good people, they're like magnets, sometimes they attract troublesome things."

The exchange isn't repeated however lat-

er in the episode when Paula attempts to tell Gonzalez where the crime might have taken place, only for the detective to lay down the law. De Leon further showcases her Filipino identity in the second episode when Gonzalez drops by Paula's office bearing kasoy (cashew nuts), just before Paula reveals she may have stumbled onto another crime scene.

Paula explains she did so without contacting the police out of fear of getting dragged into an already difficult custody battle with her ex-husband Karl, played by Jake Johnson.

"Your ex sounds like a real jerk," Gonza-



lez commiserates as she continues munching on kasoy. "Marriage is a marathon, sometimes you puke."

The third episode shows de Leon's enjoy-

able banter with "Elementary" star Jon Michael Hill who plays Gonzalez's partner Detective Baxter, to whom the Filipina shares the most scenes with throughout the series.

In that exchange is a glimpse at Gonzalez's mild gambling addiction and slight aversion to cats, both which Baxter jests about.

The episode ends with Gonzalez speaking over the phone with Baxter, a mysterious character played by Murray Bartlett, and Paula — the detective revealing to the latter that she knows Paula had an encounter with a dead body in the past.

"Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed" will continue to release episodes weekly on Apple TV until the finale on July 15.



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Talent managers should stay in their lane

Their professional lane, that is.

Some years ago, I came across a Reddit post that said, "When you're famous, your manager works for you. When you aren't, you work for your manager."

This also reminded me of what my former editor and mentor, Isah V. Red, would often say about talent managers: "They can be fired by their talents if they're not doing their job well. Artists are basically the employers. But the narrative changes when the manager is more powerful than the artist because it means you just have to follow your manager as

if you're a dog on a leash."

In mid-May, when Bilyonaryo reported the alleged involvement of a veteran talent manager, Shirley Kuan, in the reported breakup of actress Bea Alonzo and business scion Vincent Co, the alleged relationship collapse has once again exposed an uncomfortable truth in Philippine showbiz: some talent managers have become too involved in the personal lives of the artists they handle.

Almost immediately after the breakup reached social media, netizens feasted on alleged prenup provisions, stories about living ar-

rangements, and claims meant to paint one side as controlling and unreasonable. But as more details surfaced, including reports about the couple's planned Rockwell home, many of the earlier rumors suddenly stopped making sense.

Now people are asking whether parts of the narrative were intentionally spun to shape public sympathy.

And that is exactly the problem.

In Philippine entertainment culture, many managers operate as if they are not just career handlers but also guardians, strategists, image-makers, and emotional deci-



The alleged involvement of talent manager Shirley Kuan in Bea Alonzo (left) and Vincent Co's breakup shows how some talent managers in Philippine entertainment have too much control

sion-makers for their talents.

And we couldn't agree more. That mindset is deeply unhealthy.

An artist is not a corporation to be packaged according to public mood. Celebrities are human beings with

private relationships, private conflicts, and personal decisions that should never be controlled by handlers trying to preserve careers, protect brands, or manipulate public opinion.

Yet local showbiz has long normalized a toxic culture where some managers allegedly become heavily involved in who their talents date, which relationships are "good for the image," and how breakups should be publicly framed.

Whether the speculation surrounding Shirley Kuan is fair or not is

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handicrafts, and eco-friendly enterprises.

Secretary Sarai and Ambassador Hartman, and the Canadian delegation met with BAWOD members and Balilihan Mayor Esther Patrisha V.

Chatto to listen to community stories about how Canada's support has helped sustain their livelihoods and how agriculture strengthened women's participation in the local economy.

After the discussions, the

delegation witnessed a live demonstration of how the BAWOD members produce its organic products, such as banana chips, squash noodles, and papaya pickles.

In 2025, through the Governance for Climate and Di-

saster Resilience (Gov-CDR) Project, BAWOD and other women-led organizations in the Loboc River Watershed deepened their understanding of climate change and disaster resilience. They have committed to supporting lo-

cal climate action, including tree-growing and watershed protection activities that are climate adaptive—linking women's economic empowerment with environmental sustainability and resilience building.

After concert cancellation, Filipinos visited by Bruno Mars, even if it's just AI

Following the postponement of Bruno Mars' opening concert at North York's Rogers Stadium due to severe weekend weather, a wave of humorous AI-generated content and memes flooded social media in Toronto. Fans utilized AI voice-cloning tools and face-swaps to place the Filipino-American singer in various scenarios with the local Filipino community.



disappointment and the singer's well-known Filipino roots.

• Concert Cancellation: Severe heavy rain and strong

winds forced Live Nation Ontario and Rogers Stadium to postpone the May 23 opening night of his "The Romantic Tour".

• Viral AI Mashups: Frustrated but



amused, Filipino fans in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) turned to creative AI tools. The internet was quickly filled with AI-generated audio of the singer covering popular OPM



(Original Pilipino Music) ballads and face-swaps depicting him hanging out in local Toronto hubs (like, for instance, eating Jollibee or posing in front of the CN Tower with families).

My mom Inday Badiday's legacy hard-earned, not Senate punchline material

Even if Sen. Miguel "Migz" Zubiri has already issued a public apology for dragging my mom's (Inday Badiday) name into the Senate circus, as her daughter I have to take up the cudgels for my mom since she's no longer around to defend herself.

I wonder if Sen. Zubiri would have apologized if my son, IC Mendoza, did not call him out on social media. Or could it be just damage control? Be that as it may, allow me to say my piece before we can finally put this issue to rest.

In his apology statement, Migz said that mentioning my mom's name ("Inday Badiday na ba tayo dito sa Senado?") was a slip of the tongue. Hmm... could it have been a Freudian slip? Oh, well, even if he claims it was unintentional, the harm has been done.

My mom worked so hard to build her



This columnist's mother, broadcast journalist Inday Badiday, went beyond showbiz. In her TV show, 'Eye to Eye,' she forayed into public service and put up the Mata ng Bayan Foundation. It was her way of paying it forward. Her being 'Queen of Intrigues' was overshadowed by her new moniker, 'Queen of Public Service.' She always went the extra mile with her supersized heart

name. That's why it was appalling to hear Sen. Zubiri use mommy's name as a punchline. To aggravate matters, he showed no

respect for the dead. Ma passed away 23 years ago. Please let her rest in peace. Spare her from your political theatrics.

Even if my mom was called the "Queen of Intrigues" at the peak of her career, being cheap and trashy was not her style. She was not into character assassination nor fabricating stories. Countless celebs can vouch for that. Mom's track record speaks for itself.

Zubiri's comparing Ma to fake news peddlers in the Senate is not just a mockery of Mommy but of all serious, legit entertainment broadcast journalists. Mom's credibility remained intact. Sad to say that these days, virality matters more than credibility. Ma blazed the trail and paved the way for many showbiz TV hosts.

So, how dare Zubiri defile Mom's legacy by depicting her in such a preposterous

way? Ma went beyond showbiz. In her TV show, "Eye to Eye" on GMA 7, she forayed into public service and put up Mata ng Bayan Foundation. It was her way of paying it forward. Ma's being "Queen of Intrigues" was overshadowed by her new moniker, "Queen of Public Service." She always went the extra mile with her supersized heart.

Back in the day, Ma was asked by some parties to run for mayor of Quezon City, but she begged off. When I asked her why she refused, Ma said, "Makakatulong naman ako sa tao kahit wala akong posisyon sa gobyerno." Politics was not Ma's thing. So, please keep her out of the Senate hullaballoo. Aside from Zubiri's public apology, he also posted a message on my FB account to say sorry, and he asked my dear amiga Allana Lopez Montelibano to extend his

apology. Migz could not have found a better peacemaker than Allana.

For the love of Allana and for the sake of peace, I accept Senator Zubiri's apology. But as my mom's famous line goes, "Careful, Careful," Migz next time around.

Thank you, Sen. Lacson

My family and I are so grateful to Sen. Panfilo Lacson for coming to my mom's defense. How kind of him to post this:

"Maria Lourdes Jimenez-Carvajal, more popularly known as 'Inday Badiday,' was a decent person. She was authentic and truthful, trusted and credible. In the senate plenary yesterday, peke ang source, peke ang messenger; pati ang back-up, peke."

If there were more statesmen and gentlemen like Sen. Lacson, our government would be a better place.

Talent managers should stay in their lane

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beside the point. The larger issue is why the public even finds it believable that powerful managers can influence narratives surrounding deeply personal matters.

That perception did not emerge by accident. It exists because the entertainment industry

itself normalized the idea that handlers can interfere far beyond professional boundaries.

For decades, some managers have acted like power brokers within showbiz—controlling access, shaping stories, influencing media coverage, and at times allegedly orchestrating public perception itself.

The saddest part is how easily personal pain

becomes entertainment.

A breakup turns into a publicity war. A failed engagement becomes a narrative battle. One side is packaged as the victim while the other is painted as the villain.

But real life is not a scripted drama.

Managers are supposed to guide careers, negotiate projects, and protect professional interests. They should never manipulate the personal lives of the artists they handle or weap-

onize heartbreak for image management.

Because once a manager starts influencing relationships, family matters, or emotional decisions, the line between guidance and control disappears completely.

And in a country where celebrities already surrender so much of their privacy to fame, the least the industry can do is allow them full ownership over their own personal lives.

Kyle Echarri reveals real score with Kai Montinola



Actor-singer Kyle Echarri has spoken about the real score between him and his "Roja" co-star Kai Montinola.

Fans believe that there is "something" between the two stars for a long time now and that they are just not admitting it for personal reasons.

There has been no direct admission or denial from either Kyle or Kai about the real status of their relationship.

In the new vlog of Diamond Star Maricel Soriano, Kyle was asked about the real score between him and Kai.

"Hanep 'yung nabalitaan, Nay, ha!" Kyle told Maricel.

"Hindi, si Kai kasi kasama ko siya nu'ng 'MMK' (Maalaala Mo Kaya). Ta's nag-kasama rin kami sa 'Roja,' 'yung teleserye po namin ni Donny (Pangilinan).

"Naging close din po talaga kami (ni Kai). One of my closest friends in the industry. Bago lang din po siya, pero hanga ako sa pag-iisip niya, kung paano niya dinadala ang sarili niya."

Maricel then asked Kylie: "Sure ka na friends lang kayo?"

"Yes, Nay. Promise!" Kyle answered.

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Help Yourself, Fill the Census

CENSUS from page 5

“We will continue communicating directly with Canadians through various channels and engaging with the media to present the importance of completing the census and the value of census data for all Canadians,” said spokesperson Julien Abord-Babin in an email.

Abord-Babin said it’s too early to determine how many people have refused to complete their census questionnaire and that more detailed information on the response rate will be published in due time.

“Since the census remains ongoing it is still too early to provide definitive numbers, but early indicators

suggest that the response rate at this stage compares well to previous census cycles,” he said.

‘Protest against Carney’s government’

Three in four Canadian households were mailed the short-form questionnaire, which collects basic demographic information.

The others received a long-form questionnaire, which collects the same demographic information along with information about the social and economic situations of people across Canada and their access to housing.

Nina Koumoudouros, who lives in Brampton, Ont., said she doesn’t have

concerns about the census but that



she returned the form to sender as a form of protest against Carney’s government.

“This is just a protest against Carney’s majority government gained without a general election,” she said.

“The overall sentiment is that we don’t wish to provide personal information to an illegitimate majority government.”

Koumoudouros also said Canadians distrust the government’s ability to protect their individual privacy and not abuse the information that’s given to them.

A series of floor-crossings and three byelection wins allowed the Liberals to secure a majority last month. Four Conservatives and one New Democrat have crossed the floor to the Liberals since November.

“Floor crossing is a betrayal to our democracy, to the Canadian voters

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GAWAD KALINGA CANADA HOLDS “INA NG BAYAN WARD 2026”

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.



Board of Directors with Rechie Valdez, Consul Kerwin Tate and MP Vince Gasparro

In a motherly, love-hearted event, Gawad Kalinga Canada presents its maiden “Ina Ng Bayan Award 2026” (Mother of the Nation) event on May 16, 2026, at the Novotel Hotel North York, 3 Park Home Avenue, Toronto. Proudly, it was a special evening of recognising and honouring inspiring “Pinay Nanays” who inspire, lead, and help build stronger communities.

The event was highly significant because it was the first-ever “Ina ng Bayan Award”, which aims to celebrate and honour extraordinary Filipino women in Ontario who participate, nurture, and uplift their “communities of hope.” It’s also a fundraising event that supports GK-Gawad Kalinga Canada’s community programs and initiatives, making it a meaningful way to recognise and empower women while giving back to the community.

Five “Proud Mamas” were nominated and joined the friendly competition. Amongst the nominees were Diana Gamboa, Dr. Teresita Maquiso, Kathleen Mae Ranjo, Valentina Salas, and Ophelia Santiago. Declared the winner and named the very first Ga-

wad Kalinga Ina Ng Bayan 2026 recipient was Valentina Salas.

Valentina was cited for her “dedication, leadership, compassion, and commitment to serving the community, truly embodying the spirit of an “Ina ng Bayan.”

Likewise, the GK Canada team and supporters extended their heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to all of the five outstanding nominees. The four contestants were lauded as having “inspired us through their service, generosity, and impact in the community. They are all winners in their own ways, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions and fundraising efforts in support of GK Canada.”

The GK Canada officers and staff graciously mentioned the 5 contestants’ unequivocal support for the GK programs. Adding that with high hopes and expectations, the outcome of the evening event will help benefit the proven and meaningful projects of Gawad Kalinga Canada, such as Building



The 4 GK Canada Ina Ng Bayan 2026 Nominees



GK Canada “Ina Ng Bayan Award dedicated to Elvira Tan and Family

Homes, Aral Program, Seed Program, Kusina ng Kalinga and many more



GK Canada Ina Ng Bayan 2026 Awardee Valentina Salas.

community initiatives that uplift families and transform lives. And together, we “continue to transform and build stronger communities through the spirit of Filipino compassion, volunteerism, and bayanihan.”

Formed on October 6, 2019, Gawad Kalinga Canada (GKC) is a federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation with charitable registration. The Executive Board is composed of Alfredo Pacis, Chairman; Jose L. Qurubin, Vice Chairman; Monique Fabregas, Secretary; Alice Herrera, Treasurer; and Aurora Elefano, Joel Licuanan, Agnes Manasan, Gizele Mirasol, Gene Pardo-Elamparo, and Ester Toribio, Board Members. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).

Ashley Diaz says she understands frustration toward nepo babies like her

Ashley Diaz, daughter of actor Joko Diaz and granddaughter of veteran character actor Paquito Diaz, said she understands the public's frustration toward "nepo babies," but stressed that she continues to work hard to prove herself in the industry.

When asked about the prejudice often associated with being a nepo baby during the media conference for her first micro-drama "The Mentor," Ashley acknowledged where critics are coming from.

"I get where the negativity is coming from. But, you know, it's not something that we ask for. So, it's something that we're dealing with. And we each have our own way of showing you if we deserve it or not," she told Inquirer Entertainment.

"I respect the opinion of those who don't want nepo babies. I get where the frustration is coming from. But, again, it's not something that I asked for. But it's something that I work hard for. This position where I'm in right now, it's something that I worked really, really hard for," added the young star.

Ashley also shared a personal lesson she learned from her father, saying it taught her to stay grounded and make responsible decisions.

"Can I say it? Because this is very explicit. Ever since I started going to college, when I was away from home for a while, what my father advised me was 'wag kang tanga.' Don't be stupid. Because he trusts me enough to know what that means, and that means a lot to me. His trust means a lot to me. So, everything I do, I always think to myself, don't be stupid. Make the right decision," she said.

Despite his father's tough image on-screen, Ashley described him as a relaxed and supportive parent.

"He's not strict at all. You would think that he's strict, but he's not. He's very jolly, and he knows what's up with my life. I tell

him everything," she shared.

Ashley, who recently graduated with Latin honors from De La Salle University College of Liberal Arts last February, also spoke about balancing her studies and career in show biz.

"I think because I'm the one who pressures myself. Not my parents. I was sent to a really good school. And I feel like I owe it to them to do my best," she expressed.

"And as for my work, I'm so thankful to Viva that they were so patient with me when I was still studying, especially with my schedule. They were so kind, so patient," added the young actress.

Ashley said that when she signed with Viva Artists Agency when she was 14, she and her father made an agreement that she would finish her schooling, whatever it takes.

"He said, you can't be delayed or anything. As much as possible, finish your schooling first. So that's what I did," she explained.

Ashley made her film debut in the 2022 romantic drama film "Expensive Candy," starring Julia Barretto and Carlo Aquino.

The young actress then appeared in the 2024 film "Sunny." Ashley later joined the cast of the TV series "I Love You Since," "Totoy Bato," "Lumuhod Ka Sa Lupa," and "Project Loki." The 21-year-old now stars in the second season of "Seducing Drake Palma: Dating Alys Perez" and her first vertical series, "The Mentor," opposite seasoned actress Eula Valdez.

"The Mentor" follows Portia (Valdez), known and feared for being a no-nonsense boss. Everyone is puzzled when she hires ex-convict Krissy (Ashley), even if there is currently no job opening at their company.

This big break seems too good to be true



for Krissy, who has a college degree but a criminal record, posing the question: is Portia really sincere in helping her, or is she planning something sinister all along?

Directed by Bobby Bonifacio Jr., all episodes of "The Mentor" are now streaming on Viva Movie Box.

Wendell Ramos admits receiving 'a lot' of indecent proposals at height of career

Sexy comedian actor Wendell Ramos has opened up about a little-known chapter of his decades-long career, revealing that he received numerous indecent proposals during his years as one of showbiz's most sought-after leading men.

Speaking on Fast Talk with Boy Abunda, Wendell did not hesitate when asked if he had encountered such offers at the peak of his popularity.

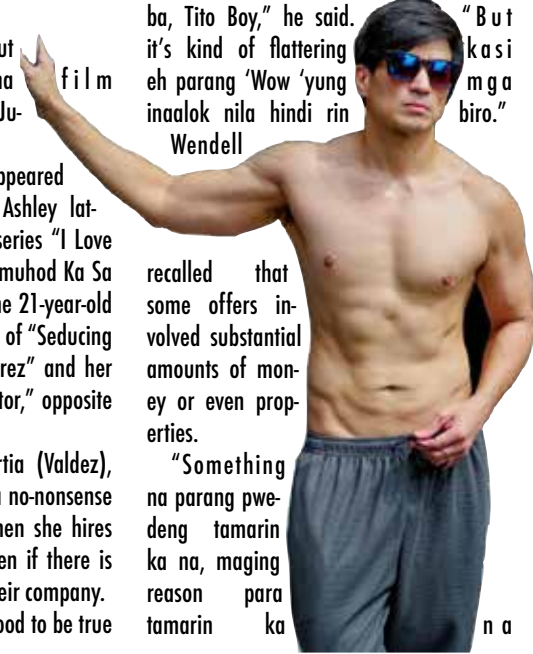
"A lot. Yes po," he said.

According to the actor, many of the proposals came through friends, relatives, and mutual acquaintances.

"So hindi po alam kung seryoso ba, Tito Boy," he said. "But it's kind of flattering kasi eh parang 'Wow 'yung inaalok nila hindi rin biro.'" Wendell

recalled that some offers involved substantial amounts of money or even properties.

"Something na parang pwedeng tamarin ka na, maging reason para tamarin ka na



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mag-work. I don't know... Tinatanong mo rin ang sarili mo, I'm asking myself, 'Totoo ba 'tong ganito?' Pero parang totoo, legit naman sila."

The actor said such situations could easily lead someone astray if they were not careful.

Now 47, Wendell said he considers himself fortunate to have stayed focused on his responsibilities as a father and provider.

"That's why I feel blessed pa rin po, Tito Boy, na naiahon ko 'yung mga anak ko sa dapat kong gawin."

Help Yourself, Fill the Census

CENSUS from page 21

and abuses the electoral process," said Koumoudouros. "It should never be allowed."

\$500 fine

Filling out the census is mandatory and Statistics Canada will send reminder letters to households that don't complete the census by mid-May.

Additional followup could involve phone calls and in-person visits to ensure the census is completed. In mid-July, Abord-Babin said, non-responding households with a mailing address will receive a final reminder letter informing them of their legal obligation to complete the census questionnaire and the possi-

ble consequences of failing to do so. "While completing the census is required by law under the Statistics Act, Statistics Canada's priority is the successful collection of data rather than the pursuit of penalties," he said. The federal Statistics Act says failure to complete the census can result in a fine of up to \$500.

Statistics Canada said that while repeated efforts are made to get people to complete the census, there are always a small number "that refuse to comply." The agency can refer those people to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada to initiate a summary conviction proceeding.

After the 2016 census, Sta-

istics Canada referred 47 cases for such action. It referred 43 cases after the 2021 census.

André Loranger, Canada's chief statistician, said in a message on the Statistics Canada website that census answers are collected under the authority of the Statistics Act and are kept strictly confidential.

'What's Changing with OSAP'

OSAP from page 7

rently, is not viable. The amendment to the province's \$6.4 billion post-secondary funding commitment is described as an essential step for long-term sustainability. In other words, what the premier is saying is, if you want the program to last or to last longer, better pay back a bigger portion.

For those contemplating on going back to school using OSAP, here's the government link to the changes: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1007034/ontario-investing-64-billion-to-support-postsecond->

ary-sectors-long-term-success-and-sustainability#resources .

You may want to study it further to see how it will impact on your study plans and how you might cope with the changes. For example, if you think that OSAP assistance may not be enough to realize your dream education, you may want to alert your parents to cut down on household expenses on non-essentials and put aside more savings while you find a part-time job post haste to help them.



Ganito pag-cut ng cake.

Rocel and her mom Rosemer Enverga watches Bernadette how to cut a cake.

GAFAA Raises Funds with a Fashionable Gala

GAFAA from page 8

single person who helped make this celebration meaningful and

unforgettable. Thank you for believing in our advocacy, in each other, and in the dream of cre-

ating a more accepting and inclusive world for every child and family affected by autism.



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1. Global Advocacy For Autism Awareness (GAFAA) Founder & President Margie Doce, External Vice President & Creative Director Merycy Cauton; 2. Cristina Doce; 3. Fashion Designer Melba Rosete; 4. Josh, Melba Rosete & Nimfa Lim shows the amount raised by the gala.



Hunk shot

Preston is the youngest of three brothers. All of them play basketball in the different Filipino basketball leagues in Toronto. Preston plays with the Undftd team. On his free time, he loves hanging with his family, cousins and friends. He is the son of Heidi and Vince Sichantha.
Cheers to you and the good life.

Preston Sichantha



Why did Coco Martin & Julia Montes keep their relationship private for years

Coco Martin opens up about his long-standing relationship with Julia Montes, revealing why they kept it private, the secret behind their lasting partnership, their upcoming series "Sigabo," and many others.

For years, fans have speculated about the true nature of Coco Martin and Julia Montes' relationship.

Some believe they are simply boyfriend and girlfriend. Others insist they are already married and living under one roof. There are even persistent rumors claiming they have children together.

To date, none of these claims have been publicly confirmed. And if you ask Martin, that level of mystery may have actually helped their relationship thrive.

Appearing relaxed, cheerful and unusually talkative, Martin opened up about the secret behind their enduring partnership, this, without even being prompted.

"Ako, share ko lang. Kaya siguro tumagal yung relation-

ship namin, una siyempre kami... dati pa ito. Lagi kaming pinag-uusapan na parang sila na yata," Martin said. "Pero kasi, talagang kineep namin na private yung relation namin. Kasi alam naman natin sa show business, di ba? Kapag marami nang pumapasok o marami nang nakikialam sa personal niyong buhay, dun minsan nagkakaroon ng problema."

For Martin, keeping their relationship private was never about hiding anything. It was about protecting something important from unnecessary outside interference. While many people associate successful relationships with love and passion, Martin believes respect is what truly keeps a partnership alive. "Pinaka-key yung marespeto kami sa isa't isa," he explained.

The actor pointed out that intense feelings are often strongest at the beginning of a relationship, but those emotions

alone are not enough to sustain it.

"Yung pagmamahal kasi minsan, pag bago kayo, matindi. Bugso ng damdamin. Pero pag wala kayong respeto sa isa't isa, later on magfe-fade yun." Instead, Martin said

mutual respect and unwavering support have become the foundation of what he and Montes have built together. ss"Yung respeto at saka suportahan ng isa't isa, iyon yung pinakasikreto namin. Kaya yung pagmamahal namin, mas tumitindi."

In fact, he believes their relationship has grown stronger over time.

"Yung iba pag bago, ang tindi ng pagmamahal sa isa't isa. Kapag tumatagal, nawawala. Kami, baligtad. Habang tumatagal yung relationship namin, kasi mas nagma-mature kami nang nagma-mature, mas naa-appreciate namin lalo yung isa't isa."



Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) Little Miss Krystelle Rivas joins Longo's 70th anniversary celebration.

Movie Showing of Temptations of a Hero



Thanks for coming, Toronto Netralya Lions Club President, Lion Vinod Karnal.



Nimfa Lim, Gloria Mandigma, producer Judith Gonzales, Romielle Villacorta, and Theresa Lumanlan enjoy the evening showing.



Miss Glamour Look 2026 Romielle (Lily Villacorta) with Tony San Juan at the Filipino Centre Toronto flag raising

The San Juan Family celebrates Papa Salvador R. San Juan 51st Death Anniversary. on May 9, 2026.



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1. The Canada San Juan Siblings: Ramon, Eva, Marie, Sylvia, Andrea and Sonia, Susan and Antonio (seated); 2. Seated: Sonia, Marie, Susan & Antonio; Standing(L-R): Jenny, Joy, Ramon, Eva, Matt, Josie, Sylvia, Frank, Andrea & Bob); 3. Filipino Centre Toronto board member Kuya Walter Yerro puts a medal on Preston Sichantha of the Undftd team at the conclusion of the Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament.



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Why Gary V is now open to interview political figures in new podcast

Mr. Pure Energy Gary Valenciano ventures into another creative field, which is podcasting, with 'Unshaken' featuring stories and conversations about 'grit and grace.' The digital show drops new episodes every Monday, 12 noon.

Gary Valenciano believes that one of the most powerful questions can also be one of the simplest.

And there's one question he hopes to ask or at least, start the conversation if given the chance to sit down with public figures, particularly politicians, as he ventures into podcasting for the first time with "Unshaken."

During a recent roundtable interview for the podcast, the veteran hitmaker was first asked if he still stood by his earlier hesitation to interview politicians.

"Well, I interviewed my brother-in-law (Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, brother of wife Angeli Pangilinan) and that's an excuse because he's my brother-in-law and I've known him ever since we were in grade school," Gary shared.

"I wish I could interview more people in politics because I think I don't know if I can do that, you know? But if I could, I want them to speak from their hearts" he continued.

Instead of grilling public figures over controversies or past statements, Gary said he would rather ask what they truly want to do, especially in a time when many Filipinos are dealing with uncertainty and stress.

"There won't be 'Yeah, but you said this and this is what's happening.' (It's like) what is it you really, really want? Because the only thing that I'll probably tell each politician that I talk to is, when this comes out, you're talking to me.

"You're talking to me, you okay? And right now it doesn't matter what color we support because there is a blatant color of darkness that is shading the entire country, and uncertainty and anxiety and stress. What is it that you really want to do? Because at least someday, I can text you, 'Hey, remember what you said, I'm just here to remind you so to keep you in check.'"

If the podcast eventually features politicians other than Sen. Kiko, Gary said he would want to give different sides of the political spectrum a chance to speak.

"If ever I want to interview a politician from the left,

I also need to interview one on the right. I want to give everybody a chance to speak, you know? Can you imagine if I sat down with and interviewed one from each 'color'? Tapos na ako sa bayaw ko, but if I could get si (VP) Sara and then I get the First Lady (Liza Aranta-Marcos).

"I think every politician knows that when you get Gary Valenciano — I know what's going on — I'm not going in there and say, 'Eh kasi...' But help me understand what is going on? What are you doing to move things in the direction that we are supposed to be taking?"

"Then it becomes something put on record in a non-partisan event where I ask the simplest of questions and hopefully their answers will somehow help them pave the way," Gary said.

Asked by The STAR what he would specifically ask if he were to sit down with the First Lady or VP Sara or any dream interviewee for that matter, he said, "Kumusta? You know, that's a good question. That one line, 'How are you?' Or 'Kumusta ka na?' That can generate an impact on the person you're asking because many times it's been used (randomly or frequently) 'Kumusta ka na?' But when you really say (sincerely) 'How are you?'

"I don't know what's going to come out from their hearts. But I'm just there to listen and hopefully be able to make people see them in a different light.

"To show them — hey, they're always either in front of the microphone at the Senate or they're dealing with issues. They're dealing with controversies, they're dealing with scandals, they're dealing with corruption, they're being blamed for it. But I'm not there to further try and dig bigger graves and say, 'Kasi ganito ka. This is what I heard. This is what they said.'

"No, mine is — that's a good question, 'How are you?' I'm not here to put you down. I'm here just to ask

you, how are you? If that can happen, it might be something that might give people some hope, you know?" Gary said.

Nevertheless, as Gary has been really considering the possibility of inviting politicians on his podcast, and he knows "it would be so unexpected" of him to do so, he stressed that he has no intention of turning "Unshaken" into a campaign platform.

"I'm not going to look at the camera and say, 'That's why in the next election, this is the person you want to (win),'" he said.

He also readily acknowledged that such interviews could draw criticism, especially from people who might want hardball questions.

"Of course, these are politicians so I don't know. Baka mamaya ma-bash ako, ay, ba't di mo tinanong 'yan or hindi mo tinanong 'to," he said.

"I'll cross the bridge if and when that happens."

Meanwhile, Gary V officially debuted as a podcaster last Monday with his pilot episode featuring Kuya Kim Atienza.

His other guests included comedian Michael V, actor musician James Reid, celebrity couple Coco Martin and Julia Montes, one of his best friends in the industry Martin Nievera, "Lumpia Queen" Abi Marquez, and a special episode with his kids Paolo, Gab and Kiana.

Teasing a few realizations from his conversations with these artists, he said, "Of course you know what Kim Atienza has been through, pero how nice to see him where he's at now... Still, it's hard to move on, but he's moving forward."

"With James Reid, I think he's so in love without him trying to say it but you see it and the way he propped her (Issa Pressman) up basically, it made me realize how big an impact she's had on his life."

"Martin's was really special. That's all I'm gonna say. Martin is like an egg shell, na walang laman that if you tap it, it cracks... When I see one of my best friends like that, there's a lot of things that he carries with him, he really wears his heart on his sleeve. Especially when he starts talking about his son (Santino who has special needs)."

With Michael V, there's a portion where "we can be as animated as we can be with our voices."

The good thing about podcasts is that they're not bound by the usual time limits. Some guests may even have two-part episodes because their stories need more room, according to him.

He, however, pointed out "Unshaken" is not just about famous names, but about people whose stories can resonate with others.

"I'm also very conscious of just getting popular people because the stories might be the same again and again. I'm trying to look for others who are successful, maybe, but who have really come through a lot of (suffering), and who really have stories of grit and grace because that's really what it's about," he said.

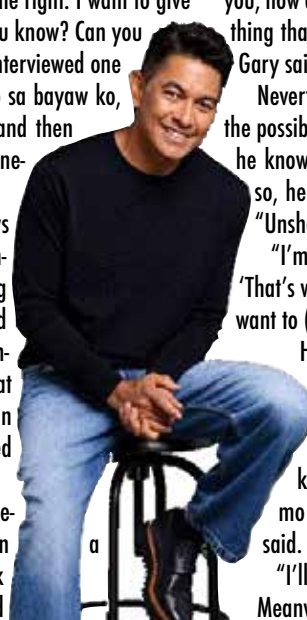
The title, he added, refers not to people who were never shaken, but to people who discovered what remained after they were shaken to the core but these life experiences.

"So they're telling us all the times of their life where they felt that they were most shaken and what did they discover about themselves na hindi nila makikita kung hindi nangyari yung shaking," he said.

"You'll hear about the moments when they were really shaken. But it was shaken to the point where that which cannot be shaken is left."

There's no better person in the industry to talk about "shaken moments" than Gary V himself. To say he has been through a lot — personally, professionally and health-wise — is perhaps an understatement.

It would be interesting to hear those stories from another point of view, especially from the people closest to him. Gary teased that his wife, Angeli, might offer a tell-all as the season ender.



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Angeline Quinto shares lessons from her 'hero of home'



Angeline Quinto is among the 16 honorees at the first Heroes of Home Award by Swiss Proli, recognizing her ability 'to balance motherhood with her active career in entertainment.' She will celebrate her 15 years in showbiz through the concert titled 'AQUIN5E' on Aug. 22 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Angeline Quinto is celebrating her 15th year in the showbiz industry this year. She belongs to that circle of singers who also have proven their worth as thespians. Last year, she starred in the drama-comedy thriller-mystery movie titled "Ang Happy Homes ni Diane Hilario."

Her win in the singing reality TV show "Star Power," however did propel Angeline's thriving career.

"Actually, natutuwa ako kasi lahat ng mga gusto kong ka-trabaho para mabuo itong 15th anniversary ko, sila yung nandun (I'm glad that all those whom I want to work with in my concert are already in the lineup)," said Angeline in a recent brief interview with The STAR after the Heroes of Home awarding ceremony. The singer-actress was among its 16 honorees coming from the entertainment, science and business fields.

"Siguro itong concert na ito ay parang selebrasyon siya ng kung ano po ang lahat ng nangyari sa akin sa loob ng labing-limang taon (Maybe this show is somehow a celebration of career milestones and significant life events for the past 15 years)," added she, also acknowledging the unwav-

ering support of followers, as well as people who have paved the way for her, if one may add.

Angeline wants to thank them through the showcase titled "AQUIN5E" on Aug. 22 at the Araneta Coliseum. Tickets for the concert are now available on TicketNet.

The singer-actress says that her Mama Bob taught her to work hard for her dreams and to love.

"Sa ngayon kasi nag-start na rin kami ng mga ibang preparasyon para sa concert (As of now, we've started the



preparations for other aspects of it)," said she. "So, ako po talaga kasi ang nag-iisip kung ano bang mga songs na kakantahin ko (I'm really the one who's thinking of and coming up with the repertoire) and marami naman po ang nasanay sa mga teleserye theme songs na kinanta ko sa ABS-CBN (a lot of people have been used to hearing me sing theme songs for the Kapamilya TV series), gusto ko may bago (I also want to offer something new)."

Aside from her musical treat, Angeline seems to have a lot on her plate in the forthcoming months.

"Actually, medyo na-pre-pressure ako kasi medyo marami po akong gagawin ngayong taon na talagang pinapasalamat ko (I feel a bit pressured because it seems that I'll be doing a lot this year, which I'm very thankful for)," said she, "dahil meron po akong gagawing isang movie na sa (I'll have a movie for) Netflix this year."

And the latest recognition Angeline has received is the Heroes of Home award by the wellness brand Swiss Proli. It honors her inspiring journey as a young mother of two and her contributions to the entertainment industry.

A piece of information from the event's publicity team says that the celebrated singer and actress (is) known for her powerful voice and emotional performances that have shaped modern OPM (Original Pilipino Music). She is also a hands-on mother who continues to balance motherhood with her active career in entertainment.

Asked about her pieces of advice to fellow mothers, Angeline said during the chat: "Well... ang pagiging nanay ay hindi madali (being a mom is never easy). Hindi siya madali, pero isa ito sa pinaka-magandang role na ginampanan ko sa buhay ko (it's not a walk in the park, but it's one of the most beautiful roles I've taken on in my life). Hindi siya madali, pero lagi ko itong ipagmamalaki na naging isa akong nanay (it's not easy, but I'm proud of being one), alam mo yun."



Awardee Angeline is pictured with sisters and Swiss Proli co-founders Karrel and Pianne Tobiano Sinfuego.

"Siguro kung may mga problema man minsan, may mga challenges minsan na kasabay nang pagpapalaki sa bata, sa mga anak nila (Maybe if there are problems and challenges sometimes as they raise their children), hindi naman yun forever (they are not forever)," added she, "and ako kasi kapag dumarating ako sa ganyang point (when I come to that point), tinitignan ko lang mga anak ko. Tinitignan ko ang asawa ko, pamilya ko (I just look at my children, my husband and my family). Dun palang wala na akong karapatang mag-reklamo na meron akong maayos na pamilya at kasama ko sila (with that, I don't have the right to complain because I have a nice family and I'm with them). Nakakakain kami ng tatlong beses sa isang araw (and we eat three times a day)."

And her Mama Bob has played a significant role for Angeline to pursue her knack for singing and showbiz dreams.

"Ang hinding-hindi ko makakalimutan na natutunan ko kay Mama Bob (the lesson learned I will never ever forget from her is), well, lagi niyang sinasabi sa akin (and she would always tell me), lagi mong paghihirapan ang mga pangarap mo (you have to work hard for your dreams)," said she. "Sa kanya ko natutunan yun kasi single mom si Mama, eh (I've learned it from her since she's a single parent). So, kaya siguro ganun din naging ang personality ko, parang feeling ko lahat kaya ko (perhaps that has contributed to my personality and 'I-can-do-everything' attitude), lalo na nung naging nanay ako (especially when I've become a mom), and lagi niyang sinasabi kapag pagmamahal ang binigay mo sa isang tao, pagmamahal din ang ibabalik sa'yo (and she also said that if you give love, it will also be given back to you). Laging love (and it's always about love and giving it)."



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Marco Gumabao 'super happy' for ex-GF Cristine Reyes' engagement to Gio Tingson

Actor-model Marco Gumabao serves as one of the judges during Miss Universe Philippines 2026 in Camarines Sur.

Actor and model Marco Gumabao is "super happy" about the engagement announcement of his former girlfriend, Cristine Reyes, to businessman and former National Youth Commission chair Gio Tingson.

"I'm super happy. You know what? I've known Cristine ever since 'Tubig at Langis' days. Kumbaga may pinagsamahan kami even before the relationship. We started off as friends. We ended the relationship as friends. So, of course, I want to congratulate her for her engagement. I'm sure that Gio will take care of her," Marco told The STAR in an exclusive interview during the recently concluded Kaogma Festival 2026 at CamSur Uptown in Cadlan, Pili, Camarines Sur.

"Actually, Gio is a friend of my sister from high school. I've met Gio before. He's a great guy. So, I'm sure that Cristine is in good hands. And I'm happy for them," he added.

Marco shared that he and Cristine parted ways on good terms.

"Cristine deserves to be loved. And sadly, our relationship didn't work. And ganun talaga, we move on, but we don't hold grudges. We pray for the other person as much as possible. And

no bitterness. Yun lang naman ang buhay," he mused.

Marco is "happily single" at the moment and is currently focused on his personal growth, health and "everything else."

Reflecting on singlehood, Marco said that he has more time for himself.

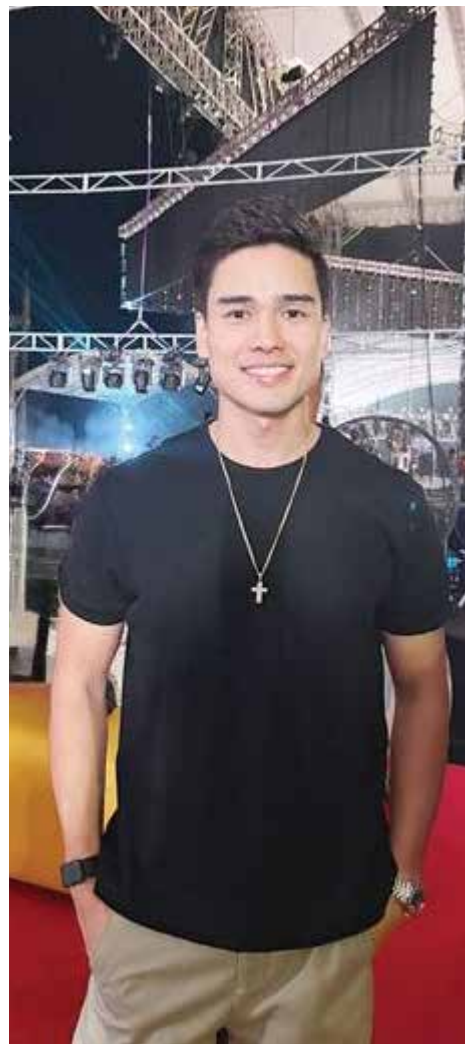
"I think you control your time. At the same time, I think it's time for me to take a backseat from dating and focus on myself, focus on my career and just enjoy being single," he ruminated.

Marco served as one of the judges during the Miss Kaogma Philippines 2026 coronation night, alongside Miss Eco International 2025 Alexie Caimoso Brooks, Miss Universe 2021 Top 5 Beatrice Luigi Gomez, Face of Beauty International 2025 Nikki Buenafe and Miss World Asia 2025 Krishnah Gravidez.

"Actually, it was a hard job because all the candidates are very smart, very beautiful and articulate in speaking. So, it was actually a hard time judging the queens. But I think we made the right choice on who will be the winner of Miss Kaogma. So, yeah, I hope it will be a good reign as Miss Kaogma Philippines 2026," Marco expressed.

Reynaleen Praferosa emerged as the winner and was crowned Miss Kaogma Philippines 2026.

A proud Bicolano, with both of his



parents tracing their roots to the province, Marco beamed that it is always a joy to return home and learn more about Bicolano culture.

He previously ran for representative of the fourth district of Camarines Sur in the 2025 midterm elections but

was unsuccessful in his bid.

"Because me, growing up in Manila, of course, I wasn't exposed to the culture of being a Bicolano. But now that I'm older, now that I have more time, I choose my time to learn the culture more, know the people more and just entrench myself more in the people," he shared.

One Bicolano trait that Marco is particularly proud of is being oragon. "Oragon baga means you have the courage, you have the confidence. 'pag sinabi mong oragon, parang you're really tough. You can do anything," he explained.

"So, for me, we, Bicolanos, we are tough people, but at the same time, we also show love to other people. So, it's just nice to be a Bicolano because the people here are kind. Everyone's hospitable. And yeah, I just want to know more about the culture and deeply know more about the province itself."

Marco has just wrapped up filming the Vivamax film "Pasakalye."

Jillian Ward plays sister to 'Clash Teens' contestants

MANILA, Philippines — Young artist Jillian Ward is back on the small screen after her successful action-drama "Never Say Die." But this time, she's joining Christian Bautista and JL of BGYO in the judging panel of "The Clash Teens."

Jillian will share professional experiences and industry insights that will guide young singing aspirants.

"Since bata po ako (I was young), sobra na pong malawak talaga yung hilig ko na genres in music (I have had this broad interest in different genres of music)," said she in a recent group interview. "And of course, as a judge, kailangan knowledgeable

din po talaga ako (I have to be knowledgeable)."

Part of her preparation, too, was taking up professional singing lessons, added she, who is also doing it for her singing and performing. Jillian has also released the song titled Pumapag-ibig, which "captures the sudden and powerful arrival of love — an emotion that shifts everything in an instant," her publicity team says. She will mount a concert on July 31 at the New Frontier Theater.

As a judge, she described herself as "hindi po kasi ako sobrang (someone who is not that really) judgmental or critical as a person. It's more of nag-bigay ako ng (I'm giving) constructive criticism,

especially since they're (the contestants) teens."

Her approach in talking to Teen Clashers is also anchored in empathy.

"Lahat tayo iba-iba ang journey natin (we have different journeys)," said she. "So, I think as a judge, pinaka-role ko (my primary role) here is to remind sa kanila (kung) gaano ka-importante na magkaroon ng isang puso (them of the importance of having a heart) while performing, while doing what you're doing and kung gaano ka-importante yung disiplina bilang



Young actress Jillian Ward takes on the role of judge-mentor in the forthcoming 'The Clash Teens.' Her pieces of advice and insights will help contestants to further hone their talents, improve their confidence and express themselves while performing. Jillian is there to remind everyone of performing with heart.

isang artist (how important it is to have discipline as an artist)."

Earlier in the chat, she mentioned that "parang akong ate nila po ngayon na pwede ko silang bigyan ng pieces of advice, kung paano nila mas ma-hone pa yung mga talents nila (I'll be like a sister to the contestants, advising them on how to further hone their talents), kung paano mas maging confident pa sila on stage (to become more confident on stage), at kung paano pa nila mas ma-express ang gusto nilang iparating (on how to express more what they want to put across) while performing."

During the interview, Jillian also got to share her thoughts on giving a nod to this project, which premieres June 7 at 7:15 p.m. on GMA 7 and Kapuso Stream. Pinoy abroad can watch it via GMA Pinoy TV.

"It's something new. It's something fresh, and naniniwala po ako na itong (I believe that) 'The Clash Teens,' parang bi-ni-break niya po kasi yung stereotypes sa isang (it somehow breaks stereotypes about a) singing contest," said she.

Before, a good or impressive performance was associated with hitting high notes or doing "vocal theatrics," as one could glean from her answers. Regardless of the song's genre and length, the audience should have an emotional takeaway from or connection with the performance.

"Pero sa generation po natin ngayon (but in today's generation), nag-ma-matter po talaga yung puso (what matters is having a heart) while performing," shared she, "atsaka yung impact ng isang performer or artist while on stage na kahit gaano ka-mellow yung kanta (and also the impact of the singer on those watching even if the song is mellow)."

And since some contestants belong to the Gen Z, like her, Jillian shared what many may have noticed about them.

"Ang pinaka-importante sa kanila ngayon is yung pagiging storyteller nila (what appeals and counts to them is being a storyteller)," said she. "Yung nakaka-touch ka ba ng puso ng mga tao, naka-relate ba sila sa kinukwento mo on stage (what they find important is being able to touch people's heart and the relatability of the story told through singing)."

Aside from the Clash Panel composed of Christian, Jillian and JL, the reality singing competition also features Julie Anne San Jose and Rayer Cruz.

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