

Fashion in Springtime

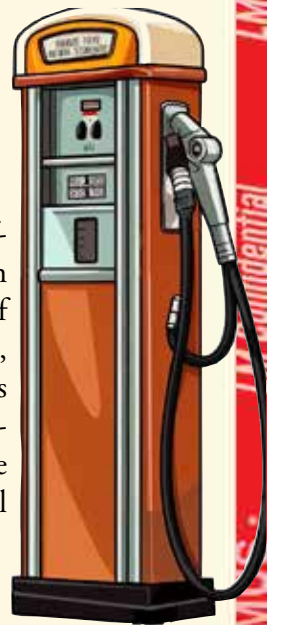


LEFT, Rianneh Greeley walks at the Paradiso Fashion Show by Sherwyn Darrell.
PHOTO BY WILLY SANTIAGO

ABOVE, Romielle Villacorta walks at the fashion show by Kim Mahistrado where she was crowned Miss Glamour Look 2026.
PHOTO BY JANSEN DELA CRUZ NACAR

PAIN in the GAS

Middle East conflict is pushing oil prices higher with no visible end in sight



Canadians are feeling the pinch as gas prices keep going higher with no end in sight since American and Israeli missiles began striking Iran. Global oil prices have jumped sharply. The conflict has resulted in the disruption of tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, which carries about one-fifth of the world's oil shipments.

PAIN pg 3

Canada Rejects Assembly Plant

Some Canadians say they're optimistic that adding Chinese EVs to the market will create new manufacturing jobs at home. Kamil Karamali reports. There has been a lot of pushback against the proposed assembly plant.

CHINA Page 4

Sisig Impresses Ottawa Crowd

Ottawa – The Philippine Embassy in Canada highlighted the Filipino culinary heritage of Iloilo province during the “Flavours of the Philippines” live cooking demonstration by Chef SISIG Page 4



If only Iran will read Truth Social Media, they'll learn they've been defeated already. Then, they'll stop firing missiles. So rude! 😊



Honey Shot

Isabella, 13, is a student of JDL School of Performing Arts. Her talents are singing, dancing and acting. She plays volleyball and badminton. She wants to be a pharmacist. She is the daughter of Cynthia and Joseph. We wish her all the luck in her future.

Isabella Puri



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Happy Birthday Kuya Hermie



CHINKY DEL MAR (standing 2nd from Right) is Honoured to continue serving as Vice President for Special Projects for a second term. Congratulations to the newly inducted officers and members of FILCREA.



Happy Birthday Len



Congratulations Catherine Tiongson on your Confirmation! May you hold the love for Jesus Christ in your heart forever!!

Toronto Kapuso Lions Club at Lions Clubs Attends the District A 711 Convention

The Toronto Kapuso Lions Club led by President Dr. Pepito (Nudge) Bicular, Vice-President Florida (Relly) Pardinias and Past President Joel Famadico, participated in the recently held Lions Clubs District A711's 25th

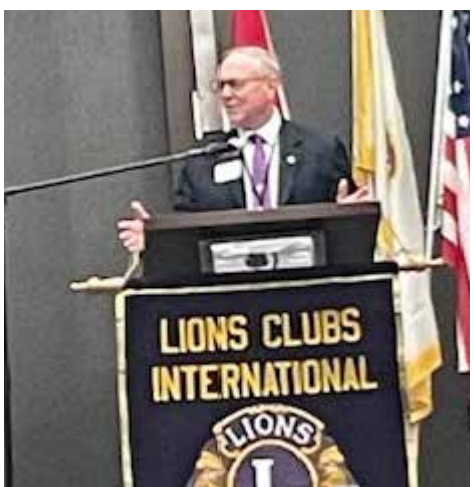
Convention held April 10-12, 2026 at the Double Tree by Hilton Toronto Airport West. (IMG 1382 & 1403)

Amongst those new Lions inducted at the Convention were Toronto Kapuso's Camilo Tayag and Jacqueline Lee

Tayag. (IMG 1397) District A711 is made up of more than 80 Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton clubs. The 2025-2026 District Governor is Abdullah Gamandie and Vice-District Governor is Verona Payne. The Convention's

Guest of Honour was Past Lions International President Joseph (Joe) Preston. (IMG 1380 & 1387)

Club guests were welcomed by members at their Hospitality Suite at the Convention venue. (d26...)



Canadians are feeling the Pain in the Gas and there is no end in sight

PAIN from page 1

Another opinion has started to be heard: higher oil prices are good for Canada. That impression is understandable,

given that Canada is the world's fourth-largest oil producer, with oil and gas being Canada's highest export earner.

Ironically, that belief misses two points.

First, while Canada as a whole might gain from higher oil prices as a net energy exporter, those gains are unevenly distributed across sectors and provinces.

Second, the reason that softened that pain — a stronger Canadian dollar — has weakened.

Together, these two facts clarify why rising oil prices are hitting Canadians harder than they did in previous decades.

Not all Canadians benefit

Oil and gas are undeniably important to Canada. Oil and gas extraction alone has averaged about five per cent of national GDP since 2000, and the sector supported approximately 446,600 di-

rect and indirect jobs in 2023.

The importance of oil also varies dramatically across provinces. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, for example, oil and gas production accounts for roughly 22 per cent and 16 per cent of provincial GDPs, respectively.

By contrast, in Ontario and Québec — home to about 60 per cent of Canadians — the sector contributes only a small fraction of provincial output.

When crude prices rise, Alberta and Saskatchewan collect more royalties, and energy company revenues climb. For that slice of Canada, conflict in the Persian Gulf can bring economic benefits.

Yet windfall gains are also constrained by infrastructure. Pipeline capacity and production limits mean Canadian producers cannot expand quickly when global prices surge.

The completion of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project in 2024 increased access to Pacific markets, but production cannot be scaled overnight and bottlenecks still blunt the swift supply response needed to realize a windfall gain.

For most Canadians, the picture is simpler and less pleasant. Higher oil

prices means higher costs not only at the pump, but also gradually in grocery stores and heating bills, and reduced purchasing power.

No 'toll fees' in Strait of Hormuz on PH-bound oil vessels — DFA

Iran is not imposing any "toll fees" on Philippine-flagged oil vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz following Tehran's assurance of their unhampered passage.

"On question regarding the reported toll fee, there is no toll fee," the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said April 2, that Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi assured the Philippines of "unhindered and expeditious" passage of oil vessels as well as Filipino seafarers in the Strait.

DFA Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro had earlier sat down with Iranian Ambassador to Manila Yousef Esmailzadeh to relay the country's request for safe passage of oil tankers as the Philippines scrambles to

Higher oil prices means higher costs not only at the pump, but also gradually in grocery stores and heating bills, and reduced purchasing power.

meet its energy needs.

Bulk of the country's oil supplies come from the Middle East, which exports its product through the Strait partially closed by Iran in its leverage amid its conflict with the US and Israel.

President Marcos, who had already placed the country under national energy emergency, directed Lazaro to do so, considering that the Philippines has available oil supply only until the end of June.

Following a phone call with Araghchi, Lazaro said such a "positive development is vital for the Philippines, as it will not only ensure the safety of Filipino seafarers operating in the area but will also help ensure energy security for the country."

Meanwhile, Araghchi "appreciated Philippines' sympathy," according to Iranian government's X ac-

PAIN page 9

Celeste Cortesi opens up on Philippines' Miss Universe semi-final streak end fallout



Miss Universe Philippines 2022 Celeste Cortesi opened up about how ending the Philippines' 12-year semi-final streak in Miss Universe affected her in the days following the coronation.

Celeste appeared as a guest on the 19th episode of

"Almost Honest," the podcast of fellow beauty queen, Miss International 2016 Kylie Versoza, on Wednesday, April 29.

During the episode, the Filipina-Italian's Miss Universe stint was discussed, where she described her finish as being "unplaced."

"I wish I got something!" Celeste shared with Kylie with amusement.

"I was unplaced. Now we can laugh about it," Celeste added. The half-Italian beauty queen admitted she was "also shocked" that she did not make it into the Top 16 roster of the 71st edition of Miss Universe.

Celeste said she prepared "so much with obsession" for the pageant, adding that she "felt bad" people only saw what was on their screens but "not the sacrifices and the hard work behind it."

"They're just so easy to judge for the result," she said. Celeste added that she remembered "half of the stadium walked out" after other countries failed to make it into the Top 16 roster at the time.

Moments after the coronation night, the beauty queen said she had pizza with her team.

Celeste was the first Filipina beauty queen to be unplaced in Miss Universe, ending the country's 12-year semifinal streak since 2010, when Venus Raj represented the Philippines. In Kylie's podcast, the half-Italian beauty queen opened up about how the result affected her after the coronation. "I also got a lot of opinions, like 'you didn't do this,' 'you didn't wear that,' 'it's because of this.' People start trying to attack you whenever you can. I definitely went through another trauma," Celeste said.

"I closed myself in my room when we traveled back to LA for, like, two to three days," she added, referring to Los Angeles.

"Nobody can get me out of there. All of my friends were, like, 'Come on, let's go out, let's get up, let's drink' or whatever. And I was just like, 'No, I'm going to stay in bed for as long as I can,'" Celeste said.

"But this is how I cope with problems. I'm like a couch. I don't move, I don't drink, I don't eat... I was just sleeping. I just don't do anything, and then I go back to my senses eventually," she shared.

Celeste was bested by American representative R'Bonney Gabriel, a half-Filipina, who also made history by bringing the Miss Universe crown back to the United States after almost a decade.celebrates Hispanic heritage.

MFFC Presents a Successful Love, a Musical Production by Malcolm Kitching)



LOVE, a musical production presented by the youth group, Rhythm Re-Choired, of the Markham Federation

for Filipino Canadians (MFFC), complete with a live band, ended on a high note on May 2nd, at the Peo-

ple's Theatre for the Performing Arts, Markham.

The show's theme works around the celebration of youth and the many meanings of love as experienced by pre-teens and teens. The familiar songs included in the repertoire were from the 60's to the present, resulting in familiarity and camaraderie with the audience. The simple but well-presented storyline was brought to life by the dynamic ensemble cast, aged 9 to 23, who showcased their talent and energy.

Gracing the event were Mayor Frank Scarpitti of Markham and Councillor Isa Lee. The show ended with the Mayor rendering a snippet of his singing prowess,

and congratulating the youth for their excellent performance. He was also full of praises for MFFC for always stepping up to the plate by promoting multiculturalism and the spirit of togetherness in the town of Markham.

The curtain finally closed with congratulations and bouquets from family and friends. Kudos to Rhythm Re-Choired and to all the people behind the production of the musical LOVE.





Robin Padilla to live abroad if Gov't System does not change?

Robin Padilla, one of us?

Can you imagine Robin Padilla being one of us immigrants? But unlike us who went abroad for a better life, to escape hardship, and in some cases, to escape persecution, Robin is talking about leaving the Philippine if the government system does not change. Oh? Really? But he's one of the reasons we left. He is part of the system. Now, he wants to join us. Naku ha. Feeling frustrated pa siya sa system which he is happily part of. Parang tunay.

Imagine waking up and kapitbahay mo si Robin Padilla.

Among say niyo?

The leaders we need are leaving - Sean Si

Vico Sotto is not running for re-election after his term is finished.

That's why it pains me to hear him say he won't run for higher office. After his term as Pasig mayor ends in 2028, he wants to teach and live as a private citizen. No Senate. No presidency.

This country is starving for exactly what he represents. And he's walking away.

Meanwhile, look at who stays. Look at who fights tooth and nail to hold power.

The ones who watched diesel climb from P55 to P172 and gave us P37 off a tank of cooking gas after six weeks. The ones sitting on P805 billion in alleged flood control kickbacks. The ones with P1.665 billion Forbes Park estates now frozen by the courts. The ones who delivered suitcases of cash to each other's homes while Filipinos were choosing between fuel and food.

Those are the ones who never stop running for office. Those are the ones who will spend billions to win elections. Those are the ones who cling to power like their lives depend on it — because their lifestyles do.

When this administration won in 2022, I watched people I personally knew pack up and leave the country. Not because they wanted to. Because they lost hope. It felt like a bad dream. Four years later, the nightmare has only gotten worse.

And here's what haunts me most. The Philippines is the only predominantly Christian nation in all of ASEAN. The only one. We name streets after saints. We shut down cities for Nazareno. We fill stadiums for prayer rallies. Faith is woven into every layer of Filipino life.

And yet — generation after generation — we elect leaders who govern as if God doesn't exist. Who steal with both hands and pray with those same hands on Sunday. Who

invoke His name at inaugurations and spend six years plundering the people He entrusted to them.

We've confused religion with righteousness. We've accepted leaders who look spiritual instead of demanding leaders who actually fear the Lord as the foundation of every decision they make.

Vico Sotto ended a 27-year political dynasty in Pasig — not with money, not with machinery, but with principle. He reformed procurement. He regularized contractual workers. He built transparency into the system. And when people beg him to run for president, he says no. He's not chasing power. And that alone makes him different from almost every politician in this country.

But I believe the leader the Philippines needs won't come from political strategy alone. That leader will come from prayer. Real prayer. The kind where you get on your knees and cry out to God — not for your

candidate to win, but for His will to be done.

2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Look at those conditions. Humble themselves. Pray. Seek His face. Turn from their wicked ways. God didn't say "ask and I'll fix it." He said turn first. Come back to me first. Then I will heal your land.

We can't keep voting for thieves on Monday and praying for healing on Sunday. We can't keep tolerating corruption because the corrupt candidate gave us ₱500 and a bag of rice.

The Philippines doesn't need another politician. It needs a leader who fears the Lord more than he fears losing an election. And it needs a people willing to pray — earnestly, desperately, consistently — until God raises that leader up.

Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

CHINA from page 1

sibility of Stellantis turning its idle Brampton assembly plant into a Chinese electric vehicle manufacturing hub since Bloomberg first reported that the global automaker was in talks with its Chinese partner, Zhejiang Leapmotor Technology.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford and federal Industry Minister Melanie Joly have



rejected the plan, while Uni- for national president Lana

Payne said Stellantis must stick to its promise of re-opening the plant to its original capacity.

Much of that opposition stems from concerns that the Brampton plant would be making "knockdown kits" — electric vehicles with parts made and largely assembled in China, then shipped to Canada for final assembly.

"These vehicles are completely manufactured in China with Chinese components, then partially disassembled and brought here to be reassembled by several hundred workers, like IKEA furniture kits," said Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA).

"That's completely different from making cars here

and buying \$3-billion worth of parts a year in Canada and employing 10,000 to 12,000 employees."

He added that such a model would offer little economic benefit to Canadians.

"This idea where we'd have several hundred workers with wrenches and screwdrivers to put together pre-manufactured cars and sell them to Ca-

CHINA page 8

Andrea Brillantes and

Usually, new showbiz tandems undergo screen tests and workshops to build their on-screen chemistry.

Enrique Gil and Andrea Brillantes had none of that for *A Secret in Prague*.

Enrique believes that the connection between their characters will naturally come from the way their stories are told.

"I think kasi yung interesting kasi dito sa story na ito, it's the situation of these two characters kasi. Yung mga nangyari sa paligid nila, I think, does so much for these characters that they don't really have to try so hard."

He further explained that it's not new for him to be paired with someone else.

Before his much-celebrated LizQuen love team with Liza Soberano, Enrique had starred opposite other leading ladies like Kathryn Bernardo, Julia Montes, and Lauren Young.

It was the same for Andrea, who had a short-lived love team with Seth Fedelin, and has since worked with different leading men.

"Matagal na po kasi akong solo artist. It's been years for me since I had a love team. Ilang years na ba? Di ko sure. Basta alam ko, teenager pa yata ako noon.



"And mas mindset ko lang na project ito, work ito, and artista ako, and, I'll just give my best at to make it work kung sino man yung magiging partner ko," said the Gen Z leading lady.

And while Andrea and Enrique believe that they don't need a love team at this point in their careers, they still acknowledge the benefits of being in one.

Andrea said: "Minsan napapaisip ako, kasi for the longest time, dream ko iyan, e, parang, magkaroon ng love team kasi it's, what works, especially here in the Philippines.

"Like if you really want to be mainstream or gusto mong, sobrang sumikat talaga or maging phenomenal, parang kailangan talaga yung magawa.

"And then, na-realize ko lang, I think it's not for me. Um, pero masaya, napapaisip ako, masaya din sana na

Enrique Gil weigh in on love teams

yung achievements mo, may ka-share ka, kasama mo, especially if kunyari, maganda pa yung relationship niyo, ang saya siguro noon."

Enrique added another benefit: having a regular partner makes acting work easier.

"When you get to work with somebody for so long, siyempre you'd know each other so well.

"So ang dali nung, kung medyo mabibigat ang eksena, isang tingin, isang salita lang, pag hindi niyo nararamdaman, isang tingin lang.

"There's a deeper level na only that person can really bring out of you," he explained.

Andrea agreed and added that a love team also makes shooting days lighter.

"Lalo na kung ka-partner mo talaga in real life yung ka-partner mo, parang hindi na siya work. Parang every day ka may date."

But the other side of that coin is having to hide fights from the public eye.

"Pag magkainisan kayo tapos kailangan, sweet-sweet. Pero pagka-cut, mamaya ka pa din sa akin!" said Andrea jokingly.

Enrique laughed before chipping in. "Super, super.

Tapos medyo halata? Guys kailangan sweet yung eksena, ha?"

Andrea continued: "Tapos kapag nag-aaway kayo tapos kailangan na kayo sa set? Tapos lalabas na kayo, magho-holding hands na kayo?"

Then turning to Enrique, she teased: "Weee, may nami-miss."

Taken aback, the male lead in the defunct LizQuen love team stammered, "Ano ko. wala akong sinasabi. Wala akong sinasabi."

Going back to the topic, the sweetness—whether genuine or not—often serves to shield the love team from obsessive fans.

Over time, however, that constant scrutiny can leave the reel couple feeling confined, as if trapped in a cage.

Andrea appreciates the truly loyal supporters who will always bat for their favorite duos. "Kasi siyempre yung cons, yung pagkontrol na masyado na parang may buhay ako, tao ako, yung part na iyon na alam na natin lahat.

"Pero yung pros is talagang andiyan sila for you. No matter what. Talagang ipagtatanggol ka nila. Through thick and thin and solid iyan," she said.

Sisig wins Ottawa Crowd

SISIG from page 1

Hero Provideo of Saboroso held at Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa on Saturday, 18 April 2026. The event was organized in celebration of Filipino Food Month and the 5th Filipino Restaurant Month in Canada (FRMC).

In partnership with Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa, the program featured Chef Hero's demonstration of Ilonggo cuisine, drawing strong interest and active participation from the guests. Chef

Hero prepared tinu-om, a heritage dish from Caba-tuan, Iloilo, describing it as a chicken soup traditionally wrapped in banana leaves to preserve its distinct flavor and cultural authenticity. It was simmered with aromatics such as lemongrass, ginger, garlic, and labog (a Philippine local herb that enhances the dish's distinct flavor and aroma). He also demonstrated the ingredients and cooking techniques for sisig, a popular Filipino dish



The dishes: sisig and tinu-om.

known for its bold and savory profile, which is also part of Saboroso's everyday menu offerings.

The presentation was further enriched by Chef Hero's spouse and owner of Saboroso, Ms. Danielle Casiple, who shared insights on Iloilo's culinary traditions. She expressed pride in presenting Ilonggo cuisine on an international platform and conveyed appreciation to the

Philippine Embassy for the opportunity to showcase their heritage dishes.

Ms. Casiple emphasized that Filipino cuisine is deeply rooted in warmth and hospitality, noting that meals are designed to bring people together and create a sense of home. She highlighted that Filipino food is prepared "with love," reflecting

values embedded in everyday cooking traditions. She further noted that soups often serve as the heart of Filipino meals, symbolizing comfort, nourishment, and togetherness.

The event gathered a di- **SISIG page 5**



From left to right: Saboroso Chef Hero Provideo, Saboroso Owner Danielle Casiple, Marilou Moles, Ambassador Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga, Chef Yann Le Coz, Ms. Catherine Patawaran, Madam Lorna Chan-Gonzaga, and son Inigo Joachim

TONY'S TAKE: TRENDS AND TRIVIA THAT MATTER



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Mail Delivery

On November 16, 2026, Canada Post would end home delivery and start community mailboxes with 136,000 homes across the country, including 18,000 addresses in Etobicoke, Toronto. Being converted are in the areas with postal codes beginning with M9V and M9W. Canada Post calls this decision "modernization" and is taking action "to ensure it can meet the evolving needs of Canadians in a financially sustainable way." While it finds suitable locations for the community mailboxes, the Crown corporation will still "provide home-delivery service for people who need it, including seniors or people with mobility issues." However, the delivery accommodation program will require "supporting documentation" as part of any application. There you are...the dreaded "red tape". Canada Post said it expects to convert the remaining 4 million homes getting home delivery within 5 years". With this "transformation", it is expected that 16,000 employees will retire or take voluntary departure by 2030 and 14,000 leaving by 2035.

World's First Lab-made Chocolates

Celleste Bio, an Israeli food tech company, has announced a significant milestone: the world's first milk chocolate bars produced using cell suspension culture technology to create real cocoa butter. The bars were made in partnership with Mondelez International, the confectionery giant behind brands like Cadbury and Toblerone. Celleste Bio produced the butter, which it says is bio-identical to the real thing, "delivering the same texture, melt profile, and sensory experience — meaning it is a true drop-in replacement rather than a substitute", by taking cells from cocoa beans and feeding them sugars and nutrients in large tanks to mimic the natural growth process. Persistent cocoa shortages have led to price shocks in the past two years, resulting in costlier treats and forcing some



Transit Fare Integration

The Ford government in Ontario, recently introduced a legislation that could allow the government "to take over TTC to "regulate fare prices and even share revenue with other transit systems". Under the new omnibus Bill 98, the "Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act", tabled by Housing Minister Rob Flack, among the priorities include "a way to expand fare integration across Ontario, harmonize transit fares in a variety of Toronto-area municipalities and

bring more uniformity to schedules." According to Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sakaria, the purpose of the bill is to advance the "One Fare Program", which enables free transfers between TTC, Go Transit, and GTHA local transit systems". The bill promises key principles" including preserving the autonomy of local transit systems, protecting transit quality and pushing for any provincial decisions to set fares with full funding, operational and capital, by the province.

manufacturers to cut their bars with other fats. believes its product can supplement supply, with a goal of producing 50,000 tonnes of lab-grown butter with the potential to replace thousands of hectares of cocoa plantations. The company aims to be market-ready by 2027.

Alcohol in Parks

Starting this spring and summer, the PC government in Ontario, as part of its continued easing of restrictions on alcohol, is changing rules to allow drinking in more places in provincial parks

such as beaches, picnic and day-use areas. According to Environment and Conservation, and Park Minister Todd McCarthy. "Updated rules where alcohol can be used are intended to improve the overall park experience and support local tourism..." He stressed, however, that park users must drink responsibly, and "existing rules still apply for unsafe or unlawful behaviour, including public intoxication, underage possession or improperly stored alcohol in a motor vehicle or boat". Signs will be posted in provincial parks to identify which areas remain alcohol-free, including sites of cultural or historical significance. Event organizers for outdoor

public events like festivals will be able to apply for permits starting April 30, 2026.

City Transit Line

As announced on April 16, 2026, Toronto's next big transit line, the Ontario Line, will start digging with 6 kilometres of tunnels beneath downtown and will stretch 15.6 kilometres from Exhibition Place to the Don Valley. It will have 3 stations, namely "Chinatown, Distillery District, and Leslieville" once completed and testing "toward early-2030s". The tunnelling "will be the first subway tunnels under the downtown core in over 60 years", said Ontario Premier Ford. Along the path of the line, construction has already caused disruptions for residents, causing intersection closures, noise complaints, and property expropriations.

Discount Stores

Canada's grocery chains in a race to open more discount shops. Last week, Empire, owner of Sobeys, Farm Boy, and other grocery stores, in a latest move, is looking to expand its discount footprint with a deal to buy Mayrand, a discount grocery chain based in Quebec. According to data compiled by The Logic. Last fiscal year, Loblaw, Metro, and Empire — Canada's Big Three grocers — opened a combined 61 new discount grocery stores. They show no signs of slowing and are on track to open at least 49 more this year. Canada now has 1,200 discount grocery stores, excluding Dollaramas, compared to ~2,500 conventional grocery stores and supermarkets, according to a report from research firm Kantar Retail. Experts cited that "punishing inflation has sparked a fundamental reorientation of the grocery market where shoppers are discarding preferences and focusing almost entirely on price". What really matters is that a growing number of people can't afford to shop at regular grocery stores. The good news is thus discount grocery stores are now popping up in more affluent neighbourhoods where the shoppers have a choice and chance to go for a No Frills or Food Basics store(my favourites). Society might finally be shedding its needless stigma around discount shopping.

Andrea Brillantes is no longer playing safe

Former child star Andrea Brillantes says she'd rather play 'baliw,' flawed characters than be stagnant. The actress topbills the TV5 primetime series 'A Secret in Prague.'

She first captured our hearts as the wide-eyed child actress in the iconic ABS-CBN sketch comedy show "Goin' Bulilit." However, it was her breakout performance in the acclaimed remake of "Annaliza" — stepping into the legendary shoes of the late Julie Vega — that cemented her status as a household name. Surrounded by a powerhouse cast including Zanjoe Marudo, Denise Laurel and Carlo Aquino, she proved even then that she was a force to be reckoned with.

Fast forward to 2026, and Ramona Andrew Blythe Daguio Gorostiza — better known to the world as Andrea Brillantes, or simply "Blythe" to her inner circle — has blossomed into a formidable dramatic actress and a digital titan. At just 23 years old, her resume is as expansive as her reach. Don't let her petite stature fool you; Andrea is proof that true star power isn't measured in inches, but in the depth of one's talent and the fire of one's ambition.

Currently, she is riding the crest of a massive wave with the premiere of "A Secret in Prague." Since its debut last Sunday, April 26 on Netflix and April 27 on TV5, the series has dominated conversations online.

Starring opposite Enrique Gil (who plays the charming waiter Mikoy Pinagpala), Andrea portrays Chiara Valtovi, a wealthy heiress trapped in a web of dark family secrets.

2026 seems to be a very good year for you. How are you balancing and coping?

"Honestly, I just take it one day at a time. I don't try to do everything perfectly. I just focus on what matters in the moment. I've learned to protect my energy more, choose my battles, and make time for myself, friends and family in between work."

From a child actress, you are transitioning to more adult roles. What other types of roles do you want to

play and why?

"I'm really drawn to complex characters. Yung may depth, may flaws, may pinagdadaan. I want roles that challenge me, not just safe or expected characters. Mas gusto ko na role na baliw kaysa sa stagnant, to be honest."

You are young and carefree. How do you enjoy, unwind and relax?

"I keep it simple. I like spending time with people I'm comfortable with, watching movies, traveling, or even just being alone and doing nothing. Minsan kasi that's what you really need — quiet time to reset."



Sisig wins Ottawa Crowd

SISIG from page 4

verse audience that closely observed the demonstration and expressed appreciation not only for the dishes but also for the cultural narratives shared throughout the session. Guests remained highly engaged, asking questions and showing keen interest in Filipino culinary practices.

Attendees were also served additional Filipino dishes, including bam-i, sisig

brochetta, and maja blanca, which were well received and highlighted the diversity of Philippine cuisine.

The event was supported by Filipino food businesses in Ottawa such as Sweet Puspín, which featured its mango and purple yam ice cream, and Mien's Cuisine, which offered beef and chicken empanadas and peach-mango pie. These offerings provided guests with a broader

taste of Filipino flavors and culinary creativity.

The Embassy also introduced Philippine-made artisanal alcoholic beverages, such as Calamansi de

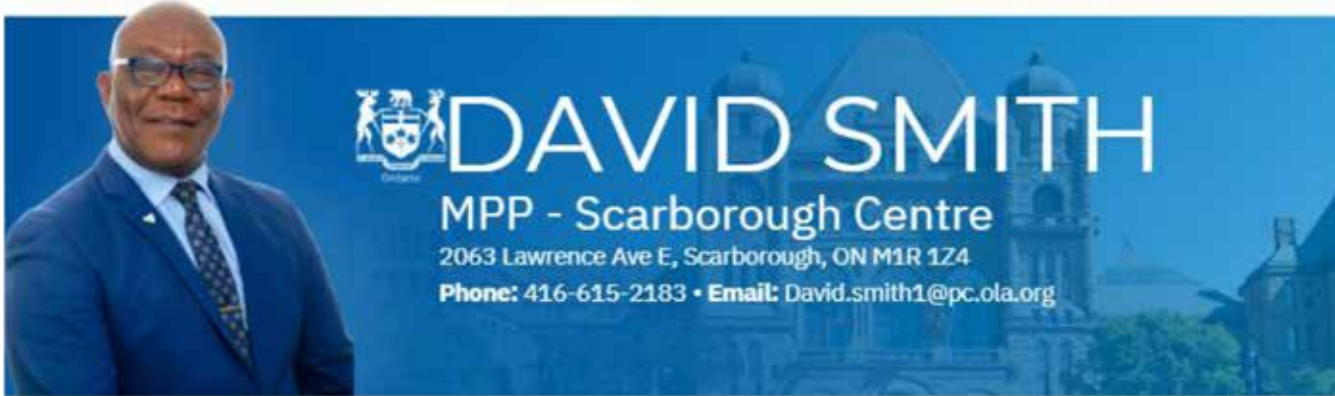


Le Cordon Bleu Director of Marketing, Mr. Abishek Sharma, distributing food samples to the guests.

Manille, a calamansi-infused liqueur, and Mango rum, a tropical fruit-based rum produced in the Philippines, highlighting the country's growing portfolio of premium craft spirits and beverages.

Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa Head Pastry Chef Instructor, Chef Yann Le Coz, welcomed the collaboration and expressed appreciation for Filipino cuisine as a

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MEDIA ADVISORY CIVIL REMEDIES ANNOUNCEMENT SUPPORTING AT-RISK YOUTH IN SCARBOROUGH

SCARBOROUGH, ON — The Honourable David Smith, Member of Provincial Parliament for Scarborough Centre, will be joined by the Honourable Aris Babikian,

Member of Provincial Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt to make an important announcement regarding civil remedies funding to support vulnerable youth in the

community.

Representatives from Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services will also be present to highlight their work and the im-

port of newly received Government of Ontario funding for The Shield Program.

This early intervention pilot program is designed to empower racialized, Indigenous, newcomer, and LGBTQ2SD+ girls (ages 10 to 18) who are at risk of human trafficking. The program will provide counselling, legal and housing supports, along with educational sessions to raise awareness and prevent exploitation. The program has received \$195,000 in funding from the Government of Ontario to support its implementation and impact.

WHEN: Friday, May 15, 2026 9:30 AM Remarks followed by a short tour

WHERE: Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services 1200 Markham Rd., Suite #214 Toronto, ON M1H 3C3

Office of MPP David Smith, Scarborough Centre
• david.smith1@pc.ola.org • 416-615-2183

PCCF joins the International Children's Day Festival

The annual International Children's Day Festival was held last Saturday April 11, 2026 at Nathan Phillips Square. The event featured amazing cultural performances and booths to showcase the traditions of various countries. It was a true celebration of multiculturalism!

Representing the Philippines, the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) welcome patrons to their booth and the PCCF Starlets took the stage! Special thanks to Krystelle- Little Miss Philippines Canada 2025, Little Miss Philippines Canada runners-up Scarlett, Victoria and Hannah who shared their talents with everyone.

Congratulations to the organizers on such a very successful event!

Join us on June 6 & 7, 2026 at the:

- Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show sa Toronto
- Albert Campbell Square
- 150 Borough Drive, Scarborough ON
- (behind Scarborough Town center Mall)

Kita kits.. See you there!



ABOUT PCCF

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

PCCF was founded by the late Hon Tobias C. Enverga Jr., the first Canadian of Filipino descent to be elected in the City of Toronto and to be appointed the Senate of Canada.

Let's have fun, while helping others!

For more info. e-mail PhilippineCanadianFoun-



dation@gmail.com or visit: www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com

PAG Presents Buhay Sinig Art Exhibit

Philippine Artists Group of Canada Presents "Buhay Sining" Life in Art Annual Exhibition Celebrating Filipino Heritage and 128 Years of Philippine Independence

Etobicoke, ON – June 2026 The Philippine Artists Group of Canada (PAGC) proudly announces its annual art exhibition, "Buhay Sining" (Life in Art), taking place from June 16 to July 3, 2026 at the Neilson Park Creative Centre in Etobicoke, Ontario.

This year's exhibition commemorates the 128th Anniversary of the Philippine Declaration of Independence and celebrates Filipino Heritage Month, honouring the rich cultural legacy, creativity, and contributions of Filipino-Canadian artists.

"Buhay Sining" showcases a diverse collection of works that reflect identity, heritage, and contemporary Filipino experiences through various artistic styles and mediums. The exhibition highlights

the dynamic spirit of the Filipino diaspora and its deep connection to art as a form of storytelling and cultural expression.

An Opening Reception will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at 1:00 PM, welcoming guests, art enthusiasts, and community members to meet the artists and celebrate this meaningful occasion.

Participating Artists:

Rolly Abarilla
Antonio Afable Teody Asuncion Joyce Bondoc
Frank Cruzet
Earl Dacara
Jhun Ciolo Diamante Alex Gonzales
Gene Lopus
Romi MananQuil Richelle Marquez
Omel Masalunga Mogi Mogado
Rose Nagallo
Toots Quiachon Sabrina De Leon
Frank Tonido
Guest Artists:

Adryan Manasan
Rocille Lampitoc

The Philippine Artists Group of Canada continues its mission of promoting Filipino art and artists across Canada while fostering cultural pride and community engagement through exhibitions and collaborative projects.

Event Details:

Exhibition Dates: June 16 - July 3, 2026
Opening Reception: June 20, 2026 | 1:00 PM Venue: Neilson Park Creative Centre

Admission: Free and open to the public
For more information, media inquiries, or artist interviews, please contact: Philippine Artists Group of Canada (PAGC)


Teody Asuncion
Email: Philippineartistsgroup@gmail.com, teodcez@yahoo.ca Phone: 416-822-7388

Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/philippineartistsgroup.canada/>

Buhay Sining

(Life in Art)

"Experience the richness of Filipino creativity, culture, and identity through art. "Bringing Traditions to Life through Sining."



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:
June 20, 2026, Saturday, 1:00pm
Neilson Park Creative Centre


Participating Artists:

Abarilla, Rolly	Lopus, Gene
Afable, Antonio	MananQuil, Romi
Asuncion, Teody	Marquez, Richelle
Bondoc, Joyce	Masalunga, Omel
Cruzet, Frank	Mogado, Mogi
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
(Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am – 9:30pm
Friday to Sunday, 9:00 am – 4:30pm)

Neilson Park Creative Centre
56 Neilson Drive, Toronto, ON M9C 1V7
Telephone: 416-622-5294
www.neilsonparkcreativecentre.com



www.philippineartists.com

'Naka-catch up din': Traditional outfit rentals in Intramuros draw praise from Filipinos

Filipinos wearing Philippine traditional attire in Intramuros in this photo taken by Roy Maceda and posted by Traje de Intramuros on Facebook (Traje de Intramuros via Facebook) "About time!"

This was what Filipinos commented on the new development that visitors in Intramuros can now rent traditional Philippine attire for a more authentic experience.

Intramuros is one of the most popular tourist spots in Manila, offering visitors a glimpse of life in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era.

The old-world district is a vestige of Spain's 300-year colonial rule, where visitors can explore heritage sites and cultural attractions such as Fort Santiago, Baluarte de San Diego, Casa Manila Museum and Museo de Intramuros.

Intramuros was once the seat of political and religious power during the Spanish era. As Manila's oldest district, it remains a sanctuary for some of the capital's most iconic and historic sites.

Now, visitors to the historic site can complete the travel back in time" experience by renting Filipiniana and barong.

Outfits include the iconic Traje de Mestiza
TRADITIONAL page 7

Little Manila Confidential

LMC

Delivering Filipino Stories • SINCE 1999

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Jose
"Joey"
Baking

PUBLISHER
&
EDITOR

PUBLISHED BY: Match International Group

'How to Avoid Using AI Deceitfully in Job Search: Some Suggestions'



Norma Bernal

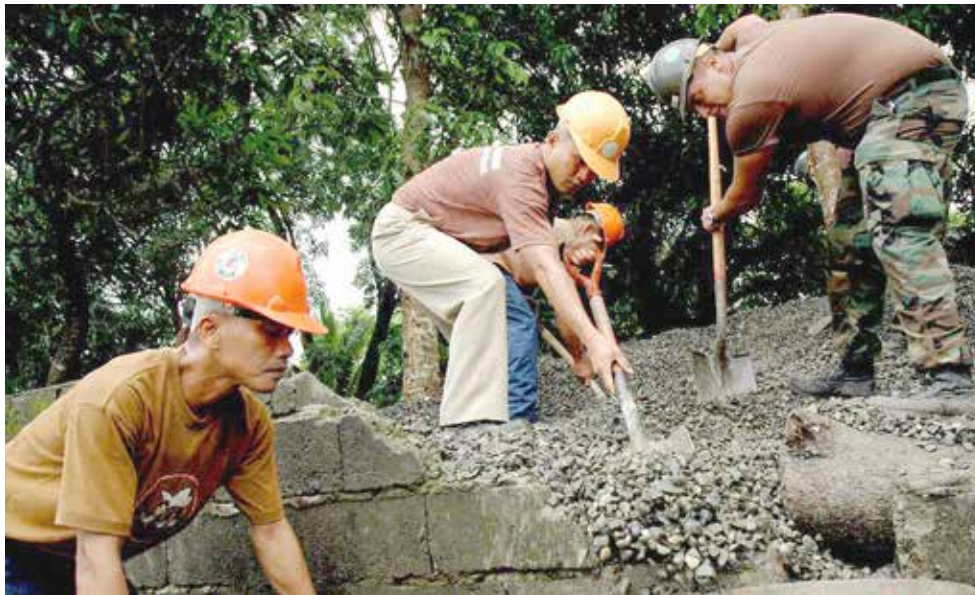
New Immigrants & the workplace

Last month, my piece was about AI-driven cheating in job search (JS), especially before and during job interviews. Not a surprising trend because the interview is the highest and most difficult part that job applicants must hurdle. In fact, if I drew a graph or chart plotting the level of difficulty of each stage of the JS process: Document Preparation (CV, resume, cover letter, etc.), Application (online, personal, referral), Skills Testing (language, competency, technical), Job Interview (phone, online, personal) and Reference Check (written, phone call), the peak or climax would be the Job Interview. After that, there would be a gradual denouement, leading to a hire or non-hire.

Stats-driven information, in general, have shown widespread practice in the above dishonest use of AI. Although there is no group-specific information, the temptation to use AI fraudulently in job search among new immigrants, especially those who have a weak command of Canada's languages, must be high.

If your language capability is limited and you are so inclined this way because of the pressure to earn money right away, consider doing the following instead:

a) Give priority to improving your



language proficiency. Among the four core language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking), the last two are the weakest among New Canadians. A wise way forward is not only taking general language upgrading courses such as LINC & ESL but also attending verbal & written language-focused training such as Conversation Classes, Master Speaking Programs and Professional Writing Circles.

b) Attend occupation-specific language programs such as Professional Terminology Courses.

c) Connect with an Information and Referral (IR) Counsellor who can refer you to an employment assistance program what provides the following:

- services of an Employment Counsellor who can assist you in Career Planning and later, when you are job search ready, refer you to a Job Search or Employment Preparation Workshop that includes: Resume & Cover Letter Preparation and Targeting, Preparation of Other Job Search Tools such as List of References,

30- Second Self-Marketing Pitch, List of References & JS Calling Cards, Interview Preparation, Networking and other useful topics.

- services of a Job Developer who can conduct a Mock Interview which is nothing but an organized/ structured interview practice, help you put together your Target Companies and eventually connect you with these companies and/ or other prospective employers.

d) services of a mentor in your field who can provide you with more focused guidance in pursuing your career plans and/ or conducting your job hunt.

All the above services are available through the provincially-funded Em-

ployment Ontario (EO) program. I was an Employment Counsellor at EO for many years, and assisted clients become job search ready. EO Offices are located all over the province:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>

Anyway, if you still are not confident in your language skills after going through the whole process above, especially regarding your job interview skills, you may want to explore other career options, in the short-term, like an alternative position. An alternative career is something related to your field although in an assisting capacity. The language requirements of an alternative may not be as stringent as the real one. It is not the ideal position you want now but could be a preparatory stepping stone towards it. For example, if your long-term goal is to be a licensed accountant, you may want to seek something more attainable now such as Bookkeeper or Accounting Assistant.

Just a cautionary note though. The steps I outlined above requires as well monetary & non-monetary resources from you. Your commitment, dedication and active participation are a must. Remember, nobody can 'career plan' and job search for you, not your career counsellor, not your job developer, not your mentor. They can only assist and guide you. The only person who can do all these is you!

Traditional outfit rentals in Intramuros draw praise from Filipinos

TRADITIONAL from page 6
or Maria Clara-inspired dresses, as well as Barong Tagalog ensembles. Packages range from simple attire rentals to a full experience that includes makeup and hairstyling assistance.



Guests may also use accessories such as abaniko, parasols, baston, payneta, floral accents and jewelry pieces, with prices ranging from P50 to P200.

They are allowed to rent the traditional attire within Intramuros for two hours, giving them time to explore the Walled City and relive the experience of life in the yesteryears.

The initiative is made possible by the costume rental shop Traje de Intramuros, which recently opened within the tourist site.

It was welcomed by Filipinos, who had long called for such an initiative, similar to other countries like Japan and Korea, where tourists can also wear traditional attire such as the kimono and hanbok, respectively.

"Finally!! Tagal na ganito sa mga historical and tourist destinations sa ibang bansa. Time to have it dito, lalo na sa Intramuros," a Pinoy wrote on Reddit. "Yesss, this is how it is in Thailand, a lot of pictori-

als happen. Makeup artists, photographers, and wedding [or] birthday planners will get jobs din," another commented.

"Matagal na may ganito sa Taal, 'yung kay Agoncillo, kaso syempre, hindi naman as mainstream as Intramuros. Glad to hear na may ganito na. Sa Vigan kaya next? Haha," a different Reddit user shared.

"Finally, naka-catch up din ang Pinas. This should be done in Vigan, Las Casas in Bataan, and any other tourist sites na may mga traditional structures," another Pinoy said.

"As they should. South Korea, Japan, Thailand, etc. let tourists wear traditional clothes," a different Reddit user wrote.

Wearing traditional clothing when visiting a historic site is an easy way to connect with the local culture and better understand it.

Done thoughtfully, it can enrich one's travel experience and create meaningful connections.

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Empowered Women Forum Highlight Stories of Support And Respect by Mskim Vi

TORONTO - I just want to take a moment to say thank you for providing this platform to all of us.

A platform not just to speak... but to share lived experiences of what it really takes to become the person I am today. Because behind every title, every achievement, every "confident woman" you see there is a story. There are sacrifices. There are moments of doubt, resilience, and growth. I am still learning, adapting to be fully confident in my own space.

I am thankful for the journey that God chose to plant in my life the easy moments, but especially the difficult ones.

Because those were the moments that shaped me, stretched me, and taught me who I am meant to be.

I am thankful for my roots my Filipino culture, my family, my community because they grounded me in values

of resilience, respect, and hard work. And I am thankful for spaces like this spaces where women are not just seen, but heard... where our voices matter, where our stories connect, and where our presence empowers one another.

Your story matters. Your voice is powerful. And you belong in every room you step into. So thank you again for the opportunity, for the connection, and for the reminder that when women come together like this, we don't just inspire... we transform.



Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) visits the ANCOP Tala Village they built



As one of several stops during PCCF's annual visit to the Philippines last February, members of the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) visited the PCCF-ANCOP Village in Tala, Caloocan. The village is home to more than 30 families affected by leprosy and is also the site of the Senator Tobias Enverga Jr. Multipurpose Hall, built in memory of PCCF's founder.

Residents of the village welcomed PCCF with warmth and kindness—an experience the group will cherish for years to come. The vibrant energy and heartfelt stories shared during the visit left a lasting impression that

will continue to resonate with PCCF well into the future. PCCF handed out care packages to residents and were given a tour of the village.

The PCCF delegation was led by PCCF President Rosemer Enverga and was joined by the Pageants with a Cause entourage, featuring Princess Salandino (Miss Philippines Canada 2025), Charisma Toupin (Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2025), Andrea Penaverde (Miss Philippines Canada Runner-Up), Scarlett Ubaldo (Little Miss Philippines Canada Runner-Up), and Syrille Guzman (Miss Philippines Canada candidate).

Enrique Gil on Liza Soberano: We check on each other sometimes

Enrique Gil is still grateful to Liza Soberano years after parting ways to focus on their solo careers.

During his interview on the YouTube show, "1 on 1 with Karen Davila," Enrique mentioned that he and his former love team partner and girlfriend still keep in touch.

"We are still in touch at times, especially when important things happen in our lives, we check on each other sometimes," Enrique said.

Enrique continued: "My life is here, and her life is there. I just really wishing her all the best, and I really hope that everything works out for her there, and all her dreams will come true. I'm happy for whatever's going on with her right now."

Looking back on their relationship, Enrique said,



"It was such a beautiful thing, like what she said on her interviews, it was a beautiful ending. The respect will always be there, I think we will always have some sort of love for each other because we basically grew up together."

Describing Liza as his childhood best friend and sweetheart, Enrique is thankful for all the memories they shared.

"I would consider her as my childhood best friend and sweetheart; we had some really great memories, and I'm just really thankful for all those memories," Enrique shared.

Being single for quite some time, Enrique was asked if he is ready to fall in love again.

"Yes! I think I've been so closed off for such a long time, and I always keep my heart open, kasi sometimes we need that, we have to move on, and I trust God whatever comes my way," he said.

Thank you so very much!

ABOUT PCCF

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

For over a decade, PCCF has supported and spearheaded various charitable projects, most notably, the building of the the ANCOP TALA Village in Caloocan, Philippines.

PCCF was founded by the late Hon Tobias

C. Enverga Jr., the first Canadian of Filipino descent to be elected in the City of Toronto and to be appointed the Senate of Canada.

The organization endeavors to celebrating Philippine Culture, heritage and helping others! PCCF is the proud organizer of the Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show Toronto, the Pageants with a Cause and PCCF Sports. Let's

For more info. e-mail PhilippineCanadianFoundation@gmail.com or visit: www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com

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Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

CHINA from page 4

adians ... Canadians would have no benefit of the spend that they were doing on cars and why would we do that?" he said.

But according to Volpe, there is an appetite for Chi-

nese-made EVs if the parts are manufactured in North America and the vehicles are fully assembled in Canada.

Volpe said regaining access to the U.S. market and restoring full production at the plant — including a model

like the Jeep Compass — could return it to a full operation "like it has been since 1962," putting 12,000 people back to work and bringing \$3 billion a year in purchases back into the Ontario economy.



Brampton plant has been closed for more than two years, leaving thousands of employees in limbo as it was retooled with support

from Ottawa. But in October, Stellantis announced it was moving production of the Jeep Compass, the model manufactured at the plant, to Illinois to increase production.

CHINA page 10

Canadians are feeling the Pain in the Gas and there is no end in sight

PAIN from page 1

count.

Iran's top diplomat also noted that "despite the imposed insecurity, Iran responsibly facilitates the safe passage of non-hostile vessels through the Strait."

"Stability remains a priority," Tehran said.

"Given that the Philippines imports the majority of its energy requirements from the Middle East, these assurances from Iran will greatly facilitate the steady delivery of critical oil and fertilizer supplies to the Philippines," the DFA said in a statement.

sits.

Trump said the US did not need the Gulf's oil. He has repeatedly urged countries reliant on the region's energy to send warships to the strait and to take the lead to ensure shipments can resume.

More than a month ago, several Asian countries including Pakistan, India and the Philippines - have made agreements with Tehran to let some ships pass through the strait safely. China has

also acknowledged that their vessels have also used the channel.

Nobody knows the exact details of these assurances and for how long.

We still don't know whether the guarantees apply only to some ships or all vessels flagged under a certain country, said Dimitris Maniatis from shipping consultancy Marisks.

Nevertheless, countries that need the Gulf's energy are now recognising that they must engage with Iran if they want to resume shipments, said Roc Shi from the University of Technology Sydney.

Hormuz is open except to allies of US but...

The Philippines is the latest nation to

strike a deal with Iran.

The Philippines imports 98% of its oil from the Middle East and was the first country to declare a national energy emergency after petrol prices in the country more than doubled after the start of the Iran war.

Tehran claims that the strait is open to all countries except the US and its allies making the case of the Philippines an enigma.

The Philippines, often seen as a US ally, is an interesting case that could suggest that Iran is "willing to compartmentalise", he said.

"Iran appears to be distinguishing between a country's alliance and its active participation in the conflict."

Other countries have also held talks with Iran.

Pakistan announced on 28 March that Iran has agreed to let 20 of its ships pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has openly welcomed India-flagged ships crossing the strait.

The embassy was responding to another post by its offices in South Africa saying that "only Iran and Oman" will decide the future of the Strait of Hormuz.

India's foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told the Financial Times in March that the passage of its tankers was the result of diplomacy.

China, the biggest buyer of Iranian oil, also confirmed last week that some

of its ships had crossed the strait, although it did not mention Iran or give more details on the vessels.

"Following coordination with relevant parties, three Chinese vessels recently transited the Strait of Hormuz. We express our gratitude to the relevant parties for the assistance provided," a foreign ministry spokeswoman told reporters.

Vessel-tracking data show that despite the war millions of barrels of US-sanctioned Iranian oil have been delivered to China in recent weeks.

Beijing holds friendly diplomatic ties with Tehran and has joined Pakistan in trying to broker a ceasefire between the US and Iran.

What we still don't know

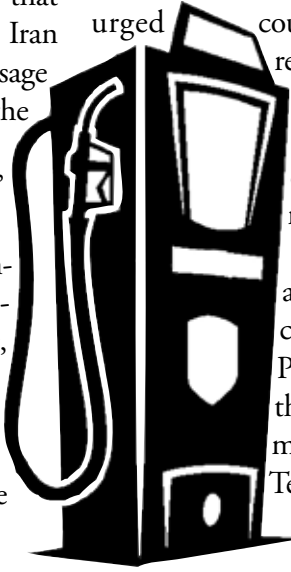
It is uncertain under what conditions some ships have negotiated safe passage - and whether they paid to cross the strait.

Last month, a Japanese vessel carrying liquefied natural gas passed through the Strait of Hormuz..

"The safety of the vessel and all crew members have been confirmed," said the company, without commenting on whether any tolls were paid and how the crew secured safe passage.

In March, Malaysia also said some of its tankers have been cleared by Tehran to pass through the strait, with Prime

PAIN page 9



What other Asian nations have made deals with Iran

Besides the Philippines, some countries had secured deals with Tehran for their vessels to use the key shipping route.

As noted, the Philippines have been particularly keen to reach agreements as their economies are heavily reliant on energy from the Gulf.

The critical route has become a global flashpoint after Tehran retaliated to US and Israeli airstrikes by threatening to attack ships in the strait.

Oil prices have surged since the disruption to shipping in the narrow waterway, through which a fifth of the world's energy shipments usually tran-

That's not me': Viva artist Christine Li denies Chavit Singson 'girlfriend' rumors

Viva artist Christine Li has refuted online claims that she is the "girlfriend" of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson.

The actress on Monday, April 20, posted a video denying that she was the woman seen sitting beside the former politician in a shared table arrangement.

The video showed an unidentified woman sitting beside Chavit and appearing to hold his hand under the table.

Online posts also circulated showing Christine's photo juxtaposed with Chavit Singson's, implying that she is his "girl-

friend."

The actress saw the posts and denied the claims in a video.

"That's not me," she said. She also played back the video and added, "Nope. Still not me."

Christine then said she has "never met Chavit Singson" in her life.

"I don't know him personally, but I know his son, whom I reached out to, kasi baka matulungan niya ako dito sa issue na 'to," she said.

The actress also shared a glimpse of her conversation with Chavit's son, who expressed shock over claims linking her

to his father.

Christine said she is a "victim of fake news" and appealed to the public to refrain from believing everything they see online.

"Please stop spreading misinformation about people," she said, adding that she does not want to go out in public at the moment following the claims.

"I can't even defend myself because it's been posted anonymously. It's so unfair, guys," the actress added.

Christine also shared her "frustration" over gossip being spread on social media instead of being used to build



communities in a positive way.

"Minsan na nga lang ako mabalita, ganito pa!" she quipped.

Christine's post has earned 1,000 likes and over 60 comments, with some noticing her wine glass in the video.

"Dama 'yung stress sa size ng glass," a Threads user commented.

The comment was liked by the actress.

Christine is known for appearing in the 2024 Metro Manila Film Festival entry "The Kingdom" and the TV series "Ang Himala ni Niño."

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY COUNCIL HOLDS OFFICERS INDUCTION

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Ontario's quintessential Filipino Canadian community organization, the Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), had its induction of officers and directors on April 17, 2026 at the Philippine Consulate in Toronto, Ontario. PIDC, a 37-year-old not-for-profit, volunteer-run entity in Ontario, Canada. The Philippine Consul General in Toronto, Kristine Leilani R. Salle administered the oath of office to the 16 executive officers and five board directors.

Sworn in for the 2026-2027 term, the executive directorate is composed of Tom Tan, President, Karen Pascual-Binaday, Executive Vice-President, Genevieve Elamparo, Vice-President-Internal, Aurora Ticzon Elefano, Vice-President-External, Carlos Cabaner-

os, Vice-President Special Projects, Chyrell Samson Ronquillo, Executive Secretary, Malou Lamang, Assistant Secretary, Meriel Corpuz Lumbao, Treasurer, Mary Jean Ilisan, Assistant Treasurer, Ben Corpuz, Auditor, Suzy Llanera, PRO, Danny Almodal Orbillio, PRO, Justin Bella, Business Manager, Cynthia Miranda, Business Manager, Baby K Jimenez, Community Liaison Officer, and Melinda Manlapaz, Community Liaison Officer. The Board Directors: are Leonor Abad, Sonia Balinas, Helen Lao, Jeffrey Mesina, and Ofelia Santiago. PIDC Advisers: Agnes Pasaporte Miranda, PIDC Past President and Tony A. San Juan, PIDC Correspondent.

PIDC, with its popular flagship program, the annual Mabuhay Philippines Festival,

has been developing and delivering meaningful community-based projects and activities with a focus in promoting and propagating Filipino heritage, arts, and culture in the province. In meeting its mission and mandate, PIDC collaboratively partners with community stakeholders and Philippine-based talents & resources including professionals, student groups, business entities, public colleges and other interested players in offering significant events and worthwhile endeavours. For operational advice, the umbrella organization is highly supported by its Council of Leaders.

In proud collaboration with the Philip-



pine Consulate General and other community organizations is inviting everyone to its first event celebrating Filipino Heritage Month, "Salu-Salo Sa Earl Bales Park". This

community event will be held on Saturday, June 6, 2026 at Earl Bales Park from 9am to 3pm, on Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario. See you there! (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).



Joey Baking The Socialist

"When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills".

CHINESE PROVERB

"Fire tests gold, suffering tests brave men."

SENECA



Models of the Kim Mahistrado Fashion show pose at the beginning of the show.



ABOVE, Jennifer Sy's cultural dance at FCT shows their progress in tinkling. BELOW, Cheska Lungayan performs a song number for the guests at FCT.

If it rains on a sunny day, it must be spring.

Finally, I just made an original quotation.

However, despite the rainy days and nights, the community schedule is heating up. The first big event I covered in April was not even a gala. It was Community Information Session by the Integrated Filipino Canadian Nurses Association (IFCNA) with the Filipino Centre during the day.

I consider it big because the buffet spread was a lot and they were delicious. And it lasted all day from 9 am until 4 pm. Anyway, the program had lots of speakers, raffle draws, information sessions, and games so the whole day was a lively affair.

May IFCNA continue to grow and keep helping the sick, and supporting our nurses.

With the intention of adding professionalism

to our fashion and glamour scene, Darles Nota launched her Strut Modeling school. She was also awarded the franchise for the Miss Teen Canada pageant franchise.

Congratulations to Darles for these remarkable achievements may you soar to new heights.

Speaking of fashion, Fashion Designer Sherwin Darrel held Paraiso - Heaven & Earth, a benefit

fashion show.

The event's main benefactor was the Ryan Chisim Charity, with a portion of the proceeds dedicated to supporting Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) research at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto.

The show would like to thank everyone involved, from the organizers, to the sponsors, the models, performers, the guests, without whom, the show would not have been possible.

Congratulations and more power to everyone who helped Paraiso a success.

One week later, Kim Mahistrado Fashions launched his latest fashion show. He thanks everyone who were instrumental in the success of his latest show.

"With immense gratitude and pride, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to everyone who made the recently concluded Mahistrado Fashions Fashion Show - Season VI Series XXII a remarkable success.

The show was a success.

Looking forward to their 9th anniversary Last May 1, Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT) is the Marky Hugh Productions which is now very busy with their preparations. They finished shooting their music video to commemorate the anniversary. On top of that, Marky Hugh is also making short and regular films. Their short movie "Empty Frames" just received an Award from "I Am Cinema" Festival in Montreal. Their movies have been accepted at film festivals from Ottawa to Toronto and other places.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said "Dare to live the life you have dreamed for yourself. Go forward and make your dreams come true."

Me, I'm just dreaming of warmer weather.



held a fundraising screening of For now get Me Not, a movie written by Mikayla Sy and produced by Jennifer Sy. Afterwards, the evening was followed by bingo. Some guys had trouble concentrating on the game because the Toronto Raptors were playing to avoid elimination. In this evening, the Raptors saved themselves from elimination against Cleveland winning by a buzzer-beater one point. Sadly, they were eliminated when they lost the next game. The evening continued with performances in between. Jennifer Sy's students at cultural dance showed us their progress in tinkling. Afterwards, there were song numbers by Kaitlyn Panganiban, Jewel Hing and Cheska Lungayan. The evening was fun, enjoyable, and everyone had a great time.

Canadians are feeling the Pain in the Gas and there is no end in sight

PAIN from page 9

Minister Anwar Ibrahim thanking Iran's president for facilitating the passage of its vessels.

Anthony Loke, Malaysia's transport minister, credited "good diplomatic relationship with the Iranian government."

It is unclear if other Malaysian-flagged vessels will be granted the same assurances.

Roughly 2/3 of Malaysia's oil



imports come from the Gulf.

The implications of these deals for other countries are still uncertain. For instance,

whether other countries would switch their flags to those of countries being allowed to pass through.

Many tankers currently carry the flags of countries such as Panama and the Marshall Islands, which have not secured assurances of safe passage, Maniatis said.

Energy economist Shi noted, however, that while these PAIN page 20

Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

CHINA from page 8

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Mark Carney made a deal with China to import up to 49,000 Chinese EVs at a heavily reduced tariff.

Volpe argues that if they are going to send knock-down kits, then those should count against that quota since they are almost completely manufactured in China.

"I think the federal government needs to be clear that knock-down kits and sales from knock-down operations are imports. They need to

CHINA page 15

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MH Productions Preparation for it's 9th Anniversary Celebration: These photos were taken during the making of their music video to commemorate that event on June 21, 2026 at Xinflix Auditorium.

Sarah Geronimo lauds BINI for proudly carrying Filipino music worldwide

Sarah Geronimo expressed pride in BINI after the P-pop girl group received the Global Force Award at the Billboard Women in Music 2026 in Los Angeles.

In a statement reported by Billboard Philippines, the Popstar Royalty reflected on receiving the same recognition last year and shared how meaningful it was to see BINI continue that legacy. "Receiving the Billboard Women in Music Global Force Award is such a meaningful achievement. I once said this award represents

courage and hope—courage to break barriers, and hope that Filipino music can reach and inspire the world. Seeing you now carry that message makes us all proud and even more inspired," Sarah said. She also praised the group for helping elevate Filipino music internationally.



"Through your passion and dedication, you continue to elevate the Philippine music industry by showing the world the immense talent and heart of Filipino artists," she added. Sarah ended her mes-

sage by encouraging the group to keep pushing boundaries as artists. BINI received the Global Force Award during the Billboard Women in Music 2026 ceremony held at the Hollywood Palladium on April 29 in the United States. The group recently made history as the first all-Filipino act to perform at Coachella



Darles Nota Opens Strut: Catwalk instructor Darles Nota opened up Strut, a studio to teach the fine arts of catwalking, or walking the runway for fashion shows. It coincided with her being awarded the franchise for Miss Teen Canada.



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Miss Philippines Canada visits her hometown

Miss Philippines Canada 2025 Princess Rogelyn Lapeña leads with a heart grounded in faith, humbly expressing her gratitude to God for the many blessings in her life and for the opportunity to serve as an instrument of compassion and generosity. She recognizes that every step of her journey is guided by His grace.

In true reflection of her purpose, she organized a feeding program at Vacante Elementary School, reaching approximately 200 individuals—including students, parents, teachers, staff, and Barangay officials. The initiative brought the community together over shared meals of spaghetti, chicken, and juice, while also extending thoughtful pasalubongs to the Barangay Vacante Captain, Kagawads, teachers, and staff as a gesture of appreciation.



If you or someone you know would like to be part of Miss Philippines Canada, Miss Teen Philippines Canada, Mrs. Philippines Canada, or Little Miss Philippines Canada, email info@missphilippinescanada.com for more information!



Councillor Isa Lee, MFFC Treasurer Alicia Chiu, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, MFFC CEO Art Canseco pose at the Markham federation of Filipino Canadians musical concert LOVE.



Miss Philippines Canada receives a warm welcome Miss Philippines Canada 2025, Princess Rogelyn Lapeña, is incredibly grateful to Juan G. Macaraeg National High School for such a warm and unforgettable welcome.



Congratulations to the JDL students who are winners of Open Mic competition. From second left, Chloe Tiongson Catherine Tiongson, and Sophia Sambrana

Sarah Geronimo sparks pregnancy rumors after last-minute festival exit

Sarah Geronimo's sudden withdrawal from Aurora Music Festival 2026 fuels pregnancy rumors after pulling out minutes after rehearsals. Here's what really happened.

Rumors don't wait. And in showbiz, they spread even faster when something unexpected happens.

That's exactly what unfolded when Sarah Geronimo suddenly pulled out of the Aurora Music Festival 2026 just hours before her scheduled performance.

The timing raised eyebrows: she had reportedly completed rehearsals, only to withdraw minutes later.

Almost instantly, speculation erupted online, with some fans wondering if the Popstar Royalty might be pregnant.

In a joint statement, Viva Artists Agency and G Pro-



ductions clarified that Geronimo had been examined by her physician after rehearsals and was advised to take full rest due to health concerns. With her well-being as the priority, she ultimately had to skip her performance.

The announcement came as a disappointment to fans, especially since Geronimo was one of the major headliners for Day 1 of the festival, held at Clark Global City. Organizers and attendees alike had been anticipating her return to the stage.

Her management acknowledged the last-minute nature of the decision, apologizing to both the festival organizers and fans. They emphasized that the situation was unforeseen and that stepping back was necessary for her recovery.

Still, the abrupt cancellation, paired with the lack of specific details, left room for public curiosity.

In the age of viral posts and fan theories, it didn't



1



2

PARAISO FASHION SHOW MODELS:

1. Kiana Craig 2. Savvy



Silayan honors Laly Dividina Tidor as Mother of the Year 2026.

take long for pregnancy rumors to surface, even without confirmation.

For now, though, there's no official word supporting those claims.

Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2025 joins 2nd Kiasnian Reunion

Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2025 Charisma Toupin had the warmest homecoming as she joined the 2nd Kiasnian Reunion in Baguio City.

The reunion brought together proud Kiasnians from all over the Philippines and even abroad. With her mother's side rooted in Barangay Kias, she reconnected with her heritage, community, and family.

Charisma was warmly intro-



duced to the crowd, where she delivered an inspiring message. Meeting the original settlers of Kias, barangay officials, families, and neighbors made

the experience even more meaningful, reminding everyone that tradition, culture, and community remain strong across generations.

Interested in joining the journey? If you or someone you know

would like to be part of Miss Philippines Canada, Miss Teen Philippines Canada, Mrs. Philippines Canada, or Little Miss Philippines Canada, email info@missphilippinescanada.com for more information!

Joy Barcoma defends Bea Millan-Windorski: 'She is not an opportunist'

Joy Barcoma didn't hesitate to stand up for her fellow queen, newly crowned Miss Universe Philippines 2026 Bea Millan-Windorski, after some netizens had bashed the latter for being an "opportunist."

Barcoma stood by Windorski amid some pageant fans accusing the Filipina-American beauty queen of competing in the na-



Joy Barcoma

JOY from page 13

ional tilt despite previously representing the United States at Miss Earth 2024, among other claims.

"[Bea Millan-Windorski] IS NOT AN OPPORTUNIST! She literally asked me where she can join protests. SHE RALLIED WITH & FOR FILIPINOS," she said.

The reigning Miss Philippines Earth titleholder said Windorski is "more Filipino"

Forget Me Not Screens at Filipino Centre Toronto



1-2. God's Strength Ministries was doing their food bank starting at 4pm; 3. MP Shaun Chen presented Mila Laceronaan Certificate of Appreciation for her food Bank initiative; 4. MP Shaun Chen talks about the Sheppard subway; 5. Theresa Lumanlan & Jennifer Sy; 6. Carlos Unas wins at bingo and Jewel Hing receives it on behalf of her parents; 7. It's hard to concentrate on bingo when the Raptors are also playing to avoid elimination; 8. Jewel Hing sings. 9. Cultural class of Jennifer Sy attends the screening and also showed off their tinkling steps; 10. LM Confidential publisher Joey Baking & singer Kaitlyn Panganiban; 11. Singers and friends Cheska Lungayan and Kaitlyn



12



13



14

KAINAN & KULTURA
12. Dong Sabanal Dreamers Academy talents; 13. Dana Bedoe; 14. Blogger Jes, Kath, Keitz Eisma & Jeff Tan.



11



Integrated Filipino Canadian Nurses Association (IFCNA)
7th Anniversary

Paraiso Fashion Show Raises funds for research for SickKids Hospital



Fashion Designer Sherwin Darrel with model Rianneh



Kaytlyn



Ianezza Greeley, FV Foods owner Mel Galeon, Fashion designer Kim Mahistrado, guest

Heaven and Earth - PARAIISO. Anticipation builds for the next instalment!

A spectacular evening featuring elegance, art, fashion, and music created an unforgettable experience

that will be remembered for years to come. The event, supporting D.I.P.G. research for SickKids Hospital, successfully brought together community leaders and philanthropists, including Ms. Cynthia

Grace Miranda, CEO of SINTA, a new fragrance brand, and Lyra Gavino. Sherwin Darrel's Paraiso: Heaven and Earth show dazzled with exquisite couture and accessories. Congratulations are in order for

Sherwin Darrel. EPOS's delectable hors d'oeuvres delighted attendees, who mingled with familiar faces in high glamour. Outstanding performances by talented artists, including a ballerina, tenor and soprano singers,

and rising Filipino talents, electrified the room. Scott Dion Brown proved to be an exceptional Master of Ceremony. Kudos to all the creators, collaborators, and volunteers.

Kim Mahistrado stages another successful Show



Sophia Daclan



Romielle Villacorta is crowned Miss Glamour Look International Canada 2026. In photo with her is Fashion designer Kim Mahistrado and behind is Miss Glamour Look International, 2025 Kiana Craig. PHOTO: Jansen Dela Cruz Nacar



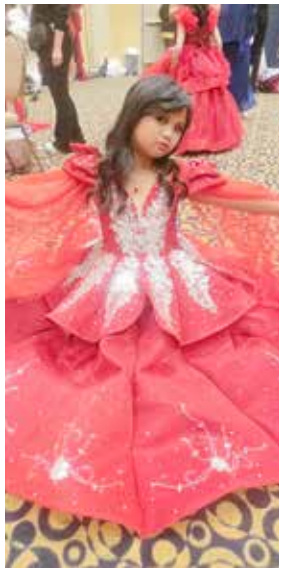
Ryeanna



Kirstine Alexandra



Angeline Bernal



Sofia

PAG Prepares for their Annual Art Exhibit



1



2

1. Standing (left to right): Frank Cruzet, Erwin Caliang, Rolly Abarilla, and Toots Quiachon. Seated/kneeling (left to right): Jun Atable and Alex Gonzales. Seated on her lap: Hannah (model), with Athena on her lap. Front (kneeling): Omel Masalunga. Also pictured: Teody Asuncion, (seating beside the model) during sketching from life session.

2. From left to right: Joyce Bondoc (seated), Teody Asuncion, followed by Nerissa Pineda (seated), Toots Quiachon, Jhun Cielo Diamante, and Frank Cruzet gather for an outdoor painting session. Photo by Jhun Cielo Diamante

3. Sophia Sambrana (2ND FROM LEFT) and her family attend the Paraiso Fashion show.



3

Donny Pangilinan, Belle Mariano to part ways with 'Tayo Sa Wakas'

Donny Pangilinan and Belle Mariano, collectively known as DonBelle, are taking a step back from working together to focus on their individual careers.

In an interview on "Paano Ba To?" hosted by Bianca Gonzalez, the pair confirmed that their upcoming film "Tayo Sa Wakas" will serve as their final project as a tandem at least for now.

Pangilinan said the decision was intentional.

"We've done so many projects throughout the years, but Belle and I decided that for this specific project, it will be our last DonBelle project for now," he said.



Mariano echoed the sentiment, describing the move as a mutual decision driven by their desire to grow individually as artists and explore opportunities beyond their established love team.

Despite the pause, both stars emphasized their continued support for each other as they pursue separate creative paths.

"But you know, it's a mutual decision. This is why this project required so much growth from him and me," Belle said. Despite the pause, both stars emphasized their continued support for each other as they pursue separate creative paths. The two admitted the decision was a hard one given that they are now used to working together.

"It's hard because we're going through it sa shoot na hindi namin alam when we're

going to shoot this kind of scene again, reminiscing the times we'll be on set. We're just glad that we get to go through this together," Donny said.

This might be their last project together for now, but Belle reassured fans that they are doing their best to make the most out of it.

"Now that we said this is our last for now, we really want to make it worth it for everyone...Right now, we are just really giving our best, everything," Belle said.

"Tayo Sa Wakas" marks Donny and Belle's first film together in four years, following "An Inconvenient Love" in 2022, although they previously reunited in the dramas "Can't Buy Me Love" and "How to Spot a Red Flag."

Since last year, the two have focused on separate projects. The actress starred in "Incognito" and "Meet, Greet, & Bye," while also working on her music and businesses.

Meanwhile, Pangilinan stayed busy with the film "GG" and the action drama "Raja."



Investing in meaningful engagement is a brilliant use of time, and I am privileged to be in the company of two exceptional individuals who embody dedication in their profession. Mr. Jem Pantig, a senior nurse at Ottawa Hospital, and Mr. Rodolfo D. Lastimoso, Jr., RN, CNO Council Chair, are exemplary figures whose commitment warrants recognition. Filipino nurses are renowned globally for their exceptional care and service and we have lots of them practicing here in Ontario, a leading province of Canada. Yet, Ontarian hospitals are laying off healthcare workers due to budget constraints. This is mind boggling to many of us taxpayers, particularly given the evident need for healthcare providers. It has been proven that staffing shortages result to burnouts and may compromise patient care. Perhaps a dialogue with a government representative is necessary to clarify why the over \$1B budget allocated to the Ministry of Health does not suffice to retain essential workers.



LEFT, God's Strength Ministries had a food drive at FCT, then FCT screened Forget Me Not movie, and held a fundraising bingo night. Guest pose for a group picture afterward; RIGHT, Kainan at Kultura had a Flavours of Spring festival and Mayor Olivia Chow and Councillor Neethan Shan were guests of honour.

Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

CHINA from page 10

clarify that so that the Chinese understand the rules of the game here" added Volpe.

"We know that Chinese EVs and Chinese investments are inevitable in this country. Let's make sure that we hold them to the same rules that they (applied to) Canadian investments when we wanted to invest in China. They said do joint ventures and we have to share the IP. We want to protect it and we want to protect Canadian workers."

The case for building Leapmotor Chinese EVs in Canada

Politicians have to stop putting up roadblocks if we're going to save what's left of our automotive industry.

You'd have sworn Stellantis was asking us to put down our favourite dog. Or our



FIRST IN THE PHILIPPINES. Mitsubishi executives met with President Marcos at Malacañang to announce plans to produce hybrid electric vehicles in the Philippines by mid-2028.

favourite aunt. Hell, my favourite aunt. Such was the outrage when the CBC reported Stellantis was considering its joint-venture partner Leapmotor, a Chinese manufacturer of EVs, use its idled Brampton, Ontario plant to build electric vehicles.

Condemnations were quick, Ontario Premier Doug Ford saying the provincial government was "dead against this," and that it is "everything against what the federal government told the auto workers here in Ontario." Lana Payne,

president of auto workers' union Unifor, expressed "serious concerns." Considering the desperate straits Ontario's auto industry finds itself in, that would seem, well, counterproductive.

What's up with Complete Knock-Down plants

The reason for their concern is that the proposed joint venture — Stellantis owns 21% of Leapmotor — would not be a full manufacturing plant, but a Complete Knock-Down facility, or "CKD" in industry terms. Rather than build parts inside the plant or buy them from locally-affiliated suppliers, a CKD plant would receive un-assembled parts and would then be assembled, welded, and painted into their final form, somewhat like an "IKEA furniture kit,"

per Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association.

That results in far less local employment. Considering that Stellantis used to employ about 3,000 Canadians in Brampton proper, and that suppliers accounted for as many as 8,000 more, that's a heck of a loss.

Even worse news is that most CKDs are used for low production runs — as low as 8,000 to 10,000 units — that can require as few as 150 to 200 workers.

While Canada and Ontario refuses to allow assembly-only

of Chinese EV vehicles because it will not bring back the thousands of jobs back, the Philippines just announced the production of EV vehicles soon. What form that will take is not clear yet. But

“

You'd have sworn Stellantis was asking us to put down our favourite aunt.

whatever form it takes, the Philippines is receptive to any manufacturing or assembly that will provide employment to Filipinos.

Philippine-made electric vehicles coming soon

MANILA – When it comes to not letting a crisis go to waste, Mitsubishi Motors Corp. may have made one of the clearest

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Joy Barcoma defends Bea Millan-Windorski: 'She is not an opportunist'

JOY from page 13

than those who came from the country, since she used her platform to fight for the rights of her countrymen.

"Don't ever question her pagka-'Pilipino' dahil mas Pilipino pa siya kaysa sa mga pinanganak at tumira sa Pinas pero hindi man lang kayang bumoses at ipaglaban ang bansa," she said.

Barcoma then pointed out that Windorski's mother is a Filipina, which adds to her lived experience of what it truly means to be one.

She also added that the beauty queen had long been

making an effort to reconnect with her culture, meaning she "is not performative."

"She grew up with her Filipina mom — if that's not enough Filipino lived experience for you then idk what is. And paano siya naging performative when even in her younger years she's spending her time trying to immerse herself sa Filipino culture?" she said in response to one @jmsreii on X.

Since her Miss Universe Philippines 2026 victory, Windorski has been accused of being an "opportunist" by bashers, including pageant vlogger Be Extra With Dell, with some pointing out that she used her Filipino heritage to win a title.

The Filipino-American beauty queen was raised in a family of immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where her Filipina mother met her American father. Her maternal grandparents, Alfredo and Marcela, were based in La Union, then moved to Nueva Vizcaya, and eventually migrated to the US for better opportunities.

Despite this, she has always

been passionate about connecting with her Filipino roots, which have given her a "sense of belonging and home." After winning the Miss Earth Water title in 2024, she decided to move to the Philippines for good, where she recently obtained her Filipino passport.

Windorski is also vocal about sea turtle conservation & other social issues and has been seen participating in rallies in the Philippines.

Joy Barcoma addresses bullying issue Miss Philippines Earth 2025 Joy Barcoma spoke about the bullying issue associated with her.

Joy clarified that the incident happened years ago while she was still a student at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

"I had an altercation with a college mate during my college days in PUP," she said. The beauty queen added that what affected her most was how the situation was portrayed online.

"Siguro 'yung pinaka-naging sad part for me here is not people calling me a bully, but how the bullying was framed in social media," she said.

She added that her online "dogshov" personality may have contributed to misunderstandings about how she handles criticism.

"I never want people to take bullying lightly," she said, noting that she continues to advocate for victims of abuse and violence.

Joy also said the word "bullying" is sometimes used loosely online, explaining that she only responds when provoked.

The beauty queen went viral in March after a blind item on social media hinted at allegations involving her.

Joy represented the Philippines at Miss Earth 2025, where she finished in the Top 8.



Bea Millan-Windorski.

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PERSPECTIVE AND PERCEPTION

Filipino-Canadian Glimpses of Significant Developments



Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

CORRUPTION IN THE PHILIPPINES: PERCEIVED NATURE.

In September and March 2025, the Social Weather Stations (SWS) asked Filipino respondents some pointed, relevant questions on corruption in the country. "Which of these actions, it asked, in the private or public sector, do you consider corrupt?"

The top three 3 answers were: 1) three out of four Filipinos consider bribery to be corruption but a quarter of the people don't share the same view; 2) two-thirds consider it corrupt to misuse public or corporate funds; and 3) about the same number consider kickbacks for contracts of services to be corrupt, but one-third think it's alright. Moreover, less than half think evading taxes or regulatory requirements, insider trading, or financial fraud is corrupt but more than 50% seem to think it's okay, and more than two-thirds do not think that nepotism or favoritism in hiring or promotions is corrupt, while close to eight out of 10 Filipinos don't see anything corrupt in not disclosing conflicts of interest.

Our society seems to have a built-in moral elasticity, with more than enough approval of corruption to be willing accomplices. The SWS survey listed and ranked, from highest the following: "Perceived Corrupt Actions from 74% to 21%: Accepting/ giving bribes; misuse of public /company funds; Kickbacks for contracts/ services; evading taxes/ regulatory requirements; Insider trading/ financial fraud; nepotism/ favoritism in hiring; Conflicts of interest not discussed. SWS lumps together social classes ABC (5.8 percent) into one; class D is the biggest at 87.4 percent ; and class E (6.8 percent) is the poorest of the poor.

As Dr. Rizal wrote many years ago, "An immoral say, of standards helps government begets a demoralized people; an administration without conscience, rapacious, and servile citizens in town, bandits and thieves in the mountains! Like master, like slave.

One noted national columnist then asked. "What exactly is the public angry about, and who exactly are the ones who are in trouble? He said that "When leaders and followers alike conveniently make wide-sweeping accusations, it is actually a license to steal." This is why the usual but popular phrase "pare-pareho lang 'yan!" remains so useful and it has become a "normalized unacceptable behavior."

Nasa dugo na natin yan, wala na yatang pagbabago or shall we say to our chagrin and national embarrassment as a proud people "it's already in our



FILIPINO QUALITY OF LIFE

According to a Social Weather Stations(SWS) survey, conducted March 24-31,2026, "Half of adult Filipino adults believe their quality of life has deteriorated over the past 12 months, which saw people's perceived well-being sink to its worst since 2021.

The SWS survey said that "among 1,500 adults, found that 50% were worse off, 26% said nothing changed, and 23% said they were better off." This produced an overall net score of -26, classified as "low," SWS said. That is a 19-point drop from -7 in November 2025, and 18 points below the full-year 2025 average of -8. The survey was fielded as inflation, transport costs, and rice prices continued to squeeze household budgets in the first quarter of the year, with the United States-led war in the Middle East driving fuel prices up worldwide. Every region, every demographic fell: Mindanao suffered the steepest dive, falling 33 points from +2 to -31. Metro Manila dropped 19 points to -23 and the Visayas slid 11 points to -25. Urban residents took a harder hit than their rural counterparts, falling 22 points to -32 versus a 15-point drop to -18 in rural areas. Men and women declined by nearly identical margins, or 20 and 19 points, respectively. Young adults lost the most ground: The sharp-

est single-group collapse came among 18-to-24-year-olds, whose score plummeted 35 points – from an "excellent" +31 in November to a merely "fair" -4 in March. Every older age bracket also worsened, with Filipinos 45 and above now deep in "very low" at -38 to -39. By educational background, perceptions of a worsening quality of life also did not vary much as College graduates posted the mildest decline, slipping 13 points to a "mediocre" -19 while Non-elementary graduates fell the hardest, dropping 35 points to a "very low" of -39.

"Tinutukoy ng World Health Organization ang "Quality of Life" bilang isang pansariling pagsusuri ng pananaw ng isang tao sa realidad kaugnay ng kanyang mga layunin, na nakikita sa pamamagitan ng lente ng kanyang kultura at sistema ng pagpapahalaga. Ang Kalidad ng Buhay ay ang kabuuang kagalingan ng isang tao at kinabibilangan ng kanyang pisikal na kalusugan at kasiyahan, na nakatuon sa mga karanasan at ugnayan.

Sa ganitong paliwanag, ang mga kababayan kaya natin ay kulang o hindi nakakaramdam. nagkakaroon ng maligaya at magandang buhay ngayon sa ating bansa? Nagtiti-is na lamang tayo o matagal na sa ganitong kalagayan? Ano ang ating magagawa at gagawin? Que sera, sera!

DNA.... an ingrained part and practice of the Filipino way of life?!? Kawawang mga kababayan natin, hindi ba?!?

NAGA MAYOR LENI ROBREDO

Last Tuesday, April 21st, former Vice President and 2022 Presidential candidate, Leni Robredo has

ruled out a return to national politics in 2028, Over a radio interview. She said that she plans to stay focused on her work as mayor of Naga City. and has already made up her mind, according to an interview with DWNX RMN Naga on Tuesday, April 21. Robredo, elected in 2025 as Naga's first female mayor, said "her administration has made headway, but still faces unfinished work. She pointed to the limits of a three-year term in completing reforms, especially within the constraints of the usual bureaucracy in government. Robredo said she is likely to seek a second term as Naga mayor. Her remarks come amid calls from some supporters for her to consider another presidential bid. Recent surveys, including those by OCTA Research, have tracked early public sentiment ahead of the 2028 presidential race, where her name has been floated alongside other potential contenders. But Robredo said a national comeback is no longer under consideration. "Malayo na sa horizon ko na babalik pa ako sa national stage. (It's already a distant possibility for me to return to the national government)," she said. Who exactly the opposition will field in 2028 remains unclear. She went on to provide a list of alternative contenders for the presidency – younger and also progressive political leaders whose principles and vision aligned with hers. The names included the usual suspects – chiefly Senators Risa Hontiveros, Kiko Pangilinan and Bam Aquino, as well as, down the road, Mayors Joy Belmonte and Vico Sotto (when he comes of constitutional age). They're all worthy and credible candidates, of course, all of whom Filipinos hold in high esteem; their only problem is, well, they're not named Leni Robredo. Watching this drama play out in what could be that is, despite her pronouncements, Leni Robredo cannot and should not shut the door for good on another presidential campaign, because as Kiko Pangilinan and Robredo's political supporters and allies say literally, "no one is in a better position to unify and to lead the country out of the moral and economic morass we find ourselves in today. Leni's abilities are established, her reputation unsullied. Our nation and people need her more than she needs the presidency, which is probably the most persuasive argument that can be raised in favour of her candidacy that even she cannot deny. " "Sayang ang talent, experience at mga adhikain ni "Mam Leni" para sa mga Filipino. " Sayang talaga naman, ano. Sa kasaysayan ng Pilipinas wala pa akong nalalaman na tumakbong pagkaPangulo na taga Bikol kundi si Leni Robredo pa lamang. May mga naging "presidentiables" noon, kaya lang ay wala na sila. Kabilang dito ay ang mga namayapang sina Senador Raul Roco at DILG Secretario Jesse Robredo. Kailan kaya magkakaroon ng kandidato at mananalong Presidente ang Kabikolan?" Hindi natin alam, matagal-tagal pa naman ang 2028, Kasabihan nga, at baka magbago pa ang direksiyon ng hangin, ano." Sana naman.

Janine Gutierrez urges gov't action on waste management in PH

Janine Gutierrez stressed the need for an effective waste management system in the Philippines, calling on the government to act.

Included in her post is a report about the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau in Central Visayas (DENR-EMB 7) partially lifting the cease-and-desist order

against the operator of a landfill at Barangay Binaliw, Cebu City, where a trash slide incident in January killed at least 35 workers.

"Something has to be done about waste management in the Philippines. Our landfills are a huge health risk—burning and landslides. Not to mention how we're one of the top plastic polluters in the world,"

Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez also cited countries with efficient waste management systems, saying the Philippines could take them as examples.

"There are so many examples we can look into, countries like Singapore, Switzerland, South Korea, when it comes to

recycling, waste-to-energy and more," she stated. "Government, please act on this."

Gutierrez's call also came amid the fire that hit the Navotas Sanitary Landfill in April. The incident posed health hazards as the smog from the fire has affected the air quality in

nearby areas including Navotas, Valenzuela, Malabon, Caloocan, Quezon City, Mandaluyong, Makati and Manila.

Environmental groups also warned against the pollutants from the burning waste which could contaminate the landfill's nearby waters.

Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

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plays yet.

A month into the Middle East crisis, the Japanese automaker announced plans to produce what could become the Philippines' first locally manufactured electric vehicle

(EV), timing the move as fuel prices continue to surge and push consumers toward alternative modes of mobility.

This plan involves producing a "new hybrid EV model" at the Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. plant in

Santa Rosa, Laguna. Production is targeted to begin around mid-2028, contingent on the company's application for the Philippines' EV production incentive program.

In preparation, Mitsubishi is planning to upgrade its La-

guna facility to support electrification, alongside efforts to expand the local supply chain and generate jobs.

For president and CEO Takao Kato, the move reflects both the country's long-standing role within Mitsubishi's

network of more than 80 markets and a growing willingness to localize next-generation manufacturing.

"The Philippines has long been one of our most important markets, where we have

Rabin Angeles, Angela Muji to showcase acting versatility in upcoming anthology series

Rabin Angeles on his and Angela Muji's upcoming anthology series Viva One Presents: RabGel: Noong ibinigay po sa amin itong anthology na ito, sobrang saya ko po. Apat na episodes po ito na iba't iba ang genre. Mata-try namin ang iba't ibang genre."



Rabin Angeles and Angela Muji are two of Viva's rising stars who have showcased their acting prowess in projects such as Ang Mutya ng Section E, Seducing Drake Palma, and A Werewolf Boy.

Now, while fans await the second season of Seducing Drake Palma, titled Dating Alys Perez, the young actors have been given an opportunity to further hone their craft through an anthology series titled Viva One Presents: RabGel.

"Noong ibinigay po sa amin itong anthology na ito, sobrang saya ko po. Apat na episodes po ito na iba't iba ang genre. Mata-try namin ang iba't ibang genre," Rabin said during a press conference for the new project last Wednesday, April 27.

In two of the episodes, Rabin and Angela will make hearts flutter with both kilig and thrills through the action episode Ang Rider Kong Hoodlum and the romantic drama Us, Maybe.

"Siyempre super na-excite po kami because after A Werewolf Boy, meron po kaming new series, which is itong

anthology. And I think it's perfect po para meron po tayong project before yung second season na Dating Alys Perez," Angela said.

In the comedy episode Same Day Error, Rabin will star alongside Jerald Napoles, whom he previously worked with in the film Instant Daddy. Meanwhile, Angela will share the screen with Carlo Aquino in the romantic episode My CEO Thinks I'm a Robot.

"Matututo po kami kasi may mga nakasama kami na mga beteranong aktor na tinuruan po talaga kami," Rabin added.

When asked which episode they are most excited to watch, the RabGel love team chose Ang Rider Kong Hoodlum, as it marks their first foray into the action genre. Rabin also compared his role in the episode to that of actor-politician Robin Padilla, who starred in the 1991 action film Ang Utol Kong Hoodlum.

"Parang Robin Padilla po ang peg. Sana po makatrabaho ko si Kuya Robin," Rabin said.

Viva One Presents: RabGel will premiere its first episode on streaming platform Viva One on May 15.

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- May 9-Gospel Trend Church -North York
- May 30- Dinner Movie Dance- Namaste Pavilion Restaurant (Scarborough)
- June 13-Xinflix Theatre-Markham
- 2 Screenings 6pm and 9 pm



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Inah de Belen's 'ew' remark draws Rosmar Tan's ire. Netizens say EW could mean 'either way'

(from left) Inah de Belen and Rosmar Tan.

Inah de Belen drew the ire of social media personality Rosmar Tan after the former expressed dislike to being compared to the latter, and appeared particularly disgusted with the actress' "ew" remark.

De Belen posted on Facebook a picture of herself with boyfriend Jake Vargas following their appearance at the Flores de Mayo celebration in Barangay Maysantol, Bulacan. A netizen was quick to notice their supposed resemblance, saying they mistook de Belen for Tan, prompting the actress to react violently in the comments section.

"Sorry po ha, nagtataka ako bakit nandiyan si Jake Vargas, akala ko talaga si Rosmar kung di ko nabasa pangalan, nagtingin-tingin pa ako, ang mag-jowa pala talaga, ang ganda mo pati ng damit mo," the netizen wrote.

De Belen responded by saying she was unfamiliar with Rosmar. "Guys, sino ba si Rosmar, hindi ko siya kilala," she said. After apparently looking up the social media personality, she added, "Naresearch ko na siya, plsss don't associate me with her, ew."

The comment has since been deleted. Tan, whose real name is Rosemarie Tan-Pamulaklak, then issued a clapback on her own social media post, expressing her dismay over de Belen's remarks.

"Kung maka 'ew' ka naman sa akin at di niya daw ako

kilala. Nahiya naman ako sayo, Filipina actress nakalagay pero di din naman kita kilala. Mas maraming beses pa ata ako lumabas sa TV kay sa sayo, ante. Kung maka 'ew' wagas, inaano ka?" she wrote.

In a separate post, Tan doubled down on her response. "Kung maka 'ew' ka naman sa akin. Mas mukha ka pa ngang mom of 3 sa akin. At kung makasabi ka ng di mo ako kilala?" she reiterated.

"Mas di kita kilala, saan ka lumabas? Hiyang-hiya naman sayo ang 30M total followers ko. Kala ko di mo ako kilala? Pero sasabihan mo ako ng 'ew' at nakaka-bwisit? Okay lang sana na di mo ako kilala pero anong ginawa ko sa'yo? Para sabihan mo ako ng 'EW'? Starlet na di pa nga sikat, attitude na agad. Pwe!" the vlogger concluded.

Meanwhile, several netizens came to de Belen's defense, claiming the "ew" she used may not have meant disgust but rather stood for "either way."

"Either way kasi 'yong HAHAHHA.' Don't associate me with her either way' in Tagalog: 'Huwag mo akong iugnay sa kanya sa anumang paraan.' Baka yan po ang ibig niya sabihin," defended one netizen.

"Ang 'EW' ay 'EITHER WAY' ang meaning po," added another netizen.

De Belen, daughter of seasoned actors Janice de Belen and John Estrada, has yet to address Tan's new posts as of this writing.

9th Year Anniversary Celebration Theme: "WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER"

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- June 21, 2026 (Sunday)
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 - Xinflix Media - Markham
- Let's celebrate together! RSVP, Text 647-278-4374



Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

CHINA from page 16

engaged in production and sales for many years," Kato says.

"We are honored to contribute to the advancement of vehicle electrification and industrial development through the Evis (Electric Vehicle Incentive Strategy) program, as well as to support the further growth of the Philippine economy."

Even as the government grappled with a fuel crunch, it moved quickly to capitalize on the opportunity.

President Marcos—along with key economic managers, including Finance Secretary Frederick Go and Trade Secretary Cristina Roque—met Mitsubishi executives on April 6, effectively backing the investment.

Central to the pitch is the Evis, a still-unreleased fiscal package expected within the first half of the year. Mitsubishi is poised to become the first major manufacturer to align with the program, which aims to attract EV production to the country.

An EV hub soon?

Beyond production for the



TOP HONCHOS Mitsubishi Motors Corp. president Takao Kato with President Marcos

domestic market, the investment is being positioned with export potential in mind.

"This is a landmark investment that will redefine the future of our automotive industry," says Finance Secretary Frederick Go. "And the even more exciting possibility is that we could be an exporter of hybrid cars."

For the Philippines, Mitsubishi's plan presents an opportunity to position itself as a viable EV production base.

Within days of the announcement, the Department of Trade and Industry identified Evis as its next flagship automotive incentives program, effectively sidelining earlier proposals focused on internal combustion engine production

Regionally, the timing is critical, with Asia increasingly becoming a battleground for EV manufacturing and sales. For instance, Vietnam's first car brand, VinFast, has aggressively expanded into the Philippines, buoyed primarily by the electric taxi service Green GSM.

This is not to mention China, which remains lightyears ahead of Asian EV players. Its leading carmaker, BYD, took the Philippine market by storm in 2025, selling 26,122 units—the highest among EV brands and marking its strongest year yet locally.

Mass market

For Mitsubishi, currently the country's second-largest car brand, the move also addresses a strategic gap.

It has yet to roll out a mass-market EV offering locally, with its electrified portfolio largely limited to commercial vehicles, such as trucks, based on Department of Energy listings. By contrast, market leader Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. has already established a strong foothold in electrified vehicles, particu-

larly hybrids, which dominate the local EV mix.

Although the road ahead may be bumpy for Mitsubishi—with infrastructure constraints continuing to fuel "range anxiety," particularly outside major urban centers—its rollout comes as Filipinos' appetite for EVs grows.

Based on industry data, EV sales rose 18.7 percent month-on-month to 3,098 units in February from 2,610 in January. Year to date, EV sales jumped 66.9 percent to 5,701 units from 3,416 units a year earlier.

Of the total EV units sold in the first two months of the year, 4,551, or nearly 80 percent, were hybrid models.

And for even some of these units to be called Philippine-made someday, it would be a good start.

Canada's Nostalgic Thinking

As for Canada, hoping that the days of car manufacturing employing thousands will come back is wishful thinking.



As for Canada, hoping that the days of car manufacturing employing thousands will come back is wishful thinking.

Stephen Betty, industry analyst and sometimes Driving contributor, recently reported in a blog

post, there's little chance of Brampton being re-opened for traditional manufacturing, thanks largely to the combination of Trump tariffs and America's gutting of environmental standards. Throw in Stellantis' recent 23.5-billion-euro write-off as it "restructures" both its manufacturing as well as its electrification plans and "the market for the vehicles that would have been produced in Brampton [has been] effectively terminated."

Betty does, however, note

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Ara Davao remembers dad Ricky Davao a year after his death: The pain never left

Ara Davao expressed her longing for her dad Ricky Davao on his first death anniversary, lamenting how his absence is a wound that will never heal.

The actress penned an open letter to her father through her Instagram page on Friday, May 1, while also showing some of their treasured moments together.

"Dear Pa, I can't believe we made it through one whole year without you. Some days, it just feels like yesterday because the pain never left," she said.

"I miss you in big, important milestones and in ordinary days at home. Some days are harder than others, especially when I think of

all the things I didn't get to say and do," she wrote.

Nonetheless, Ara said she often re-

members Ricky with a laugh as she gets reminded of how "silly" he was.

"I'll spend the rest of my life wishing we had one more day, one more meal, or even just one more moment," she continued. "No matter how old I get, I won't stop missing you."

She also vowed to talk about Ricky to her nieces, nephews, and future kids so that they would know the person that he was.

"I know some wounds will never heal, and that's okay with me because it means I'll always remember you and carry your love," she added. "I'll miss and love you forever, Pa. I'll keep try-



ing to live in a way that will honor you and make you proud."

Ara is Ricky's daughter with fellow actress Jackie Lou Blanco, whose mother, Asia's Queen of Songs Pilita Corrales, died just a few weeks before him on April 12 of the same year.

Aside from Ara, Ricky's non-showbiz partner Malca also paid tribute to the late actor by spending the day doing activities they usually did together.

"Today is all about you, my Bubba. I went to our favorite mall and a Mass was offered for you today and through-

out the month of May," she said.

"I hope you like my mini altar, with Mom beside you."

"I love you, forever," she added.

Ricky died at the age of 63 after suffering complications related to cancer.

ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS

Seniors in Action holds their weekly Friday zumba class at FCT from 1-2pm.



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FILIPINO CANADIAN COMMUNITY EVENTS IN ONTARIO

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

May 15, 16, & 17. "Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament: 20th Anniversary" by Filipino Centre Toronto(FCT), Pan-Am Sports, Scarborough, Toronto,(12 divisions tourney at \$700 registration fee per team)

May 16. "Ina ng Bayan Award Presentation", a fundraising event by GK Gawad Kalinga Canada-Toronto.

May 16. "3rd Spring Bazaar: Spam Project" by PINAS- Promoting Intercultural Network for Advocacy and Solidarity and Pinoy Ontario Vendors,

1250 Markham Road, Scarborough from 1:00 am to 5:00 pm.

May 18. "20th Victoria Invitational Basketball Tournament", by the Filipino Centre Toronto(FCT), PanAm Sports Centre, Scarborough, Toronto.

May 23. "Feast of Our Lady of Manaoag", by Devotees of Our Lady of Manaoag in Canada and the Magnificat Charismatic Prayer Community at Regina Mundi, 19309 Warden Avenue, Queensville, Ontario at 12:00 pm.

May 30. "The" IPEN Pageant: You be the Judge 2026" by IPENCanada . Toronto Pavilion, Railside. Toronto at 5:00 pm.

June 6. "Filipino Community Day: Salosalo sa Earl Bales Park, in Celebration of Philippine Heritage Month", by the Philippine Independence Day Council(PIDC) the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto, and other Filipino community organizations, Earl Bales Park, Toronto from 8:30 am to 8:30 pm. (Potluck Event)

June 6-7. " Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show-Toronto", Maki-saya Maki-fiesta at Maki-tulong , by the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation(PCCF), Albert Campbell Square, 150 Borough Drive, STC Area, Scarborough(Free Admission).

June 13. Two Screenings of a Fil-Can Film Feature: "Temptations of a Hero-Kailan Tama Ang Mali"

, MVF Production, at 6:00 PM and 9:00 PM, XINFLIX Theatre, Unit 7,8,9, Bentley St. Markham, On. (Ticket Price:\$25)

June 13-14. "Ottawa Fiesta Extravaganza 2026", Festival of Smiles, Sayaw at Saya, Celebrating Filipino Heritage.(Venue:TBD)

June 19-21. "Toronto Fiesta Extravaganza 2026", Festival of Smiles, Saya at Saya, Celebrating Filipino Heritage, Event Centre,1250 Markham Road, Scarborough.Toronto.



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Canada Rejects China Assembly Plant

CHINA from page 18

that CKD production, "when successful," can lead to expansion of both the assembly facility and local sourcing of parts. Perhaps the most famous example of CKD'ing, however, is VW's Beetle. Fully two million of the original "People's Car" — almost 10% of its lifetime production — were produced in knock-down plants 'round the world. CKD is a step back; it's not a death sentence.

We ain't getting a full Chinese assembly plant either

The Liberal government's prospects for a "joint venture" assembly plant with a Chinese automaker are somewhere between slim and none. Unlike knock-down facilities, assembly plants need to produce roughly 200,000 cars to be profitable. No such plant



could supply only our Canadian market. Export to the United States would be the only solution, and with 25% tariffs on anything produced here — and Chinese cars as welcome south of the border as freedom

of the press and immigrant labour — there's not a chance in hell that any Chinese-brand car built in Canada is finding itself shipped south of the border. The only thing more delusional is Industry Minister Mélanie Joly's contention that Chinese automakers build plants in Canada so they could export cars globally.

All the reasons we should encourage Stellantis' CKD experiment

Firstly, the most important detail about this deal is that any vehicle built in

such a knock-down plant in Brampton would still be considered, for all practical and legal purposes, Chinese-built. In other words, it would still be governed by the quota negotiated with China.

Were Prime Minister Carney interested in combining his desire to keep Canada's auto industry humming and simultaneously increasing the availability of cheap, Chinese EVs, he could give away much of that quota to Leapmotor. It would help Stellantis make a case for staying in Canada; improve the availability of much-needed cheap zero-emissions vehicles; and, most importantly, limit the impact that the truly scary Chinese giants — BYD, XPeng, etc. — might have on current Canadian automakers.

Oh, and anyone who thinks importing Teslas from China is better than

partially-building Leapmotors in Brampton needs a better calculator.

Secondly, a Leapmotor

“

Chinese cars as welcome south of the border as freedom of the press and immigrant labour.

CKD plant would definitely be the Chinese "joint venture" our American counterparts would find the least threatening. For one thing, the cars, would not be considered CUSMA-compliant, so couldn't be exported to the U.S.

Finally, if we indeed really want to retain what little of Stellantis' footprint that remains, the Leapmotor joint effort is probably both our last and best opportunity.

As Beatty said, there's almost no chance of seeing the Brampton plant resurrected as a full-blown assembly facility. Certainly not in the near-future (that should be read "as long as the current White House remains in power").

But if, in 10 years, conditions were to reverse, a Brampton CKD plant gaining full assembly status is a lot easier than one that has laid empty for the last decade. This proposal offers some hope to the future, and even if it is suboptimal, rejecting it might be the final nail in Brampton's coffin.

Indeed, a CKD facility might prove the perfect cornerstones of the federal government's new auto policy — reducing tailpipe emissions — and propping up auto manufacturing. It eats up the Chinese automakers' EV quota in a way least threatening to existing Canadian automakers; it is the likeliest such arrangement palatable to America's ever-expanding CUSMA ambitions; and it will offer consumers a cheap battery-powered alternative — without government subsidies! — while employing at least a few Canadians.

What JM Dela Cerna and Marielle Montellano learned after 'Your Face Sounds Familiar' win

Starting their careers as individual performers, Marielle and JM's journey as a duo felt like the perfect puzzle pieces unexpectedly coming together.

After clinching the crown in "Your Face Sounds Familiar" Season 4, Marielle and JM reflected on the biggest lessons they learned throughout the competition.

"Ang daming learnings po pero siguro yung pinaka-nakapagpa-realize sa akin is that the greatest risk is not taking a risk at all. 'Yun po yung naging learning ko nung natapos po yung 'Your Face Sounds Familiar,'" JM said. Meanwhile, Marielle shared that she discovered a deeper sense of purpose through the show. Beyond the prosthetic makeup and costumes, she realized that the heart of a performance lies in emotional connection with the audience.

"Being part of 'Your Face...' pushed me to become more intentional, not just with my music. Hindi lang siya

basta-basta, andiyan lang 'tas kakantahin mo as is. Dapat pala you put your heart into it, your soul, and how I connect with the audience as well," Marielle said.

By taking a chance on the reality talent show, the pair said their bond became stronger and more secure.

"I will say yes po, mas tumibay talaga yung connection namin ni Marielle. Sa lahat ng bagay, hindi lang po professionally but also sa aming dalawa," JM said.

JM also added that their connection played a big



Marielle Montellano and JM Dela Cerna

role in their growth and in overcoming the challenges they faced. "Syempre yung connection namin ni Marielle, it plays a big role kasi yun yung importante talaga. Paano kayo magwo-work kung hindi kayo okay ng taong katrabaho mo," he added. Marielle fully agreed, adding that their bond deepened not only because of their own efforts but also through the support of their fans.

"Ako po, agree po ako na mas naging matibay and stronger kasi dahil din

sa mga na-share naming joys and burdens. Sa journey namin ni JM, although may parts po na individual po namin inaaral yung icon, natutulungan po talaga kami," Marielle said. Now building a name in the music scene as JMielle, the duo is set to stage a concert titled

"JMielle Sings the Icons" on May 29 at the SM North EDSA Skydome.

According to Marielle, the concert serves as a tribute that reflects how their journey led them to their win on the show. "Hindi nalalayo ang concert na 'to sa journey namin sa 'Your Face Sounds Familiar,' kaya siya naging 'JMielle Sings the Icons.' Baka mag-expect sila na gagayahin lang namin angginawa namin dati. Dito, may gagawin kaming mga hindi namin nagawa nung journey namin," she said.

During their stint on "Your Face Sounds Familiar," JMielle performed iconic duets inspired by artists such as Jessica Sanchez and Jennifer Holliday, Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande, and TJ Monterde and KZ Tandingan.

JM and Marielle first gained public attention after winning as grand champions of the TNT Duets singing contest in 2023.

Canadians are feeling the Pain in the Gas and there is no end in sight

PAIN from page 10

agreements mark a "diplomatic breakthrough", it is not a resolution to the problem.

It is still unknown just how lasting these assurances will be and how military operations in the region will impact them, he said.

A weaker currency cushion

Perhaps the most consequential shift over the past decade is the changing relationship between oil prices and the Canadian dollar.

As noted by the Bank of Canada, for most of the 2000s and early 2010s, the Canadian

dollar behaved like a petrocurrency. When oil prices rose, the loonie often strengthened as well.

A stronger currency made imported goods cheaper and helped offset some of the inflationary pressure from higher gasoline and energy prices.

The exchange rate acted as a natural shock absorber.

That cushion has weakened substantially. Research by Alberta Central, CIBC Capital Markets and several economists all point out that the relationship between oil prices and the Canadian dollar weak-

ened in the mid-2010s and continues to remain weak.

Second, energy companies are now more likely to return profits to shareholders through dividends and buybacks than to launch new projects. However, many of those sharehold-

PAIN from page 10

How Aljon Mendoza felt after parting ways with Star Magic

We spoke with Aljon Mendoza this week during a junket organized by Boy Abunda and learned he is among the broadcaster's scholars. Tito Boy, known as the "King of Talk," has supported several celebrities, including Koari Oinuma and Jodi Sta. Maria, in completing their degrees.

"We met during a recent event at PWU. Matagal niya na po akong scholar and never po kami nagmeet until after several years," Aljon said, a detail Tito Boy later confirmed.

"He was referred to me by Mico del Rosario. I was told kailangan ng bata ng tulong, and we didn't meet until an alumni event held just recently. I was pleasantly surprised because he has so much potential," Tito Boy told Manila Standard Entertainment.

Tito Boy also confirmed that Aljon has parted ways with Star Magic, the young actor's talent management agency, for more than seven years.

"I'm his career adviser now," Tito Boy said. "As to managing his career, that's still on the table, but our goal here is to

guide him in his next steps since maraming gustong gawin ang bata."

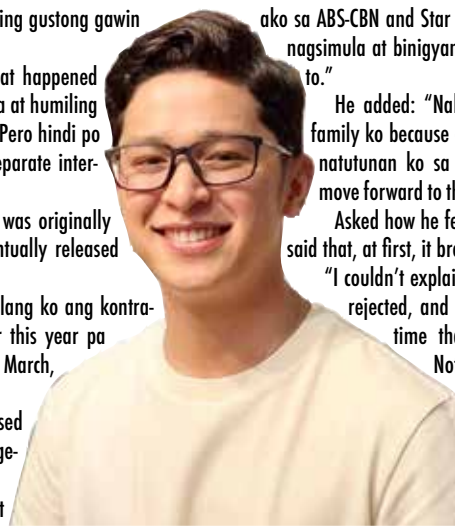
"Wala na po ako sa Star Magic. What happened was, last year, may offer sa akin ang Viva at humiling po ako sa Star Magic na magpa-release. Pero hindi po ako napagbigyan," Aljon shared in a separate interview.

He explained that while his contract was originally set to expire in November, he was eventually released earlier this year.

"Naiintindihan ko po 'yon at iginagalang ko ang kontrata na meron ako. Originally, November this year pa matatapos ang contract ko. Pero nitong March, ni-release po ako."

Despite the transition, Aljon expressed appreciation for the network and management that helped launch his career.

"Ganoon pa man po, nagpapasalamat



ako sa ABS-CBN and Star Magic dahil sa kanila ako nagsimula at binigyan nila ako ng mga proyekto."

He added: "Nakapag-provide din ako sa family ko because of them. Lahat po ng mga natutunan ko sa kanila, bibitbitin ko as I move forward to the next chapter of my life."

Asked how he felt about the release, Aljon said that, at first, it brought mixed emotions.

"I couldn't explain. I asked for it, but it got rejected, and then I was informed at a time that I wasn't expecting it.

Not that I'm not prepared, I was just surprised. Para akong maiyak hindi dahil sa lungkot, hindi rin dahil sa tuwa. It's like a relationship, no separa-

tion is easy. But after a while, I realized that it's time now to move and focus on what I really wanted to do."

Aljon rose to prominence after joining Pinoy Big Brother: Otso and went on to appear in television dramas such as Sandugo, Hoy Love You, and It's Okay to Not Be Okay. He also starred in films including Un/Happy for You and The Last Resort.

Aljon revealed that Tito Boy has been guiding him as a career adviser despite not meeting him in person. He said it is natural for him to entrust the King of Talk with big decisions he is making after parting ways with Star Magic. He is also glad that, through the television host's assistance, he has been able to manage his studies well while continuing to grow in his craft as an actor.

"And I'm graduating this July. I'm glad I was able to juggle my time working and studying. It wasn't easy, that's why I'm thankful to Tito Boy and to all the professors who have given me a little leeway because they understood my situation."

On June 6 & 7,
come join
us!



Mabuhay!

Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) is inviting you/ group to take part in a meaningful and symbolic moment at the Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show sa Toronto on Saturday, June 6, 2026, 12 noon. Let us celebrate the Philippines 128th year of Independence and Filipino Heritage Month.

- Location: Albert Campbell Square
- 150 Borough Drive, Scarborough, ON M1P 4N7
- (Behind Scarborough Town Centre Mall & Passport Office)
- Attire: Filipiniana/Barong

We would be deeply honoured to have you join us in the unfurling of the big Philippine flag, a highlight of our opening ceremonies. This special tradition is held in celebration of Philippine Independence Day (June 12)—a historic occasion that commemorates the Philippines' declaration of independence in 1898 and at the same month celebrating Filipino Heritage month.

This particular flag carries deep historical significance, as it is the same Philippine flag used during the very 1st flag raising at Canada's Parliament Hill, an initiative led by the

late Senator Tobias C. Enverga Jr. Its presence at our celebration serves as a powerful bridge between Filipino heritage and our shared Canadian identity.

The unfurling of the flag represents more than national pride—it is a symbol of unity, resilience, and the enduring spirit of the Filipino community around the world. By coming together as leaders and changemakers, we honour our past while inspiring future generations to stay connected to their roots.

Your presence would add great significance to this moment, and we would be grateful for your participation in this collective show of pride and solidarity. We hope to celebrate this meaningful occasion with you.

We will be happy to share further details regarding timing and program flow.

Highlights include entertainment from the best of the local talents, fashion show, game show, multicultural segment, SantaCruzan, 'Kultura Filipino Dance Showdown' and so much more.... Taste the different delicacies of Filipino dishes and the amazing vendors of Food and Non-Food products!

Tara na! Let's celebrate 16th year of Maki-Saya, Maki-Fiesta at Maki Tulong sa Pinoy Fiesta & Trade Show Toronto!

Thank you / Maraming Salamat,
PFTS Organizing Committee 2026

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Sisig wins Ottawa Crowd

SISIG from page 5

meaningful avenue for cultural exchange and culinary learning.

In his keynote remarks, Ambassador Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga emphasized the role of food in cultural diplomacy, stating: "Food is often the first introduction people have to a country... Through a meal, a dish, a memory so distinct, food can say something important about who we are."

He noted that Filipino cuisine reflects the country's history, geography, and cultural diversity, while remaining distinct-

ly Filipino. He added that it represents a convergence of regional traditions and shared experiences that come together at the table.

The Ambassador underscored that events such as "Flavours of the Philippines" allow Filipino cuisine to be experienced not only as food, but as a reflection of identity, heritage, and connection. He also recognized Filipino chefs and food entrepreneurs as cultural ambassadors who preserve traditions while elevating Philippine cuisine on the international stage.



Le Cordon Bleu Director of Marketing Abishek Sharma, Chef Yann Le Coz, and Ambassador Jose Victor Chan-Gonzaga.

Unit 2, Kanata, Ontario, serves authentic Ilonggo cuisine from Iloilo and is one of the participating restaurants under the Embassy's jurisdiction for the 2026 Filipino Restaurant Month in Canada.

Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa Culinary Arts Institute is North America's only campus for Le Cordon Bleu in Canada.

"Flavours of the Philippines" forms part of the Embassy's continuing efforts to promote Filipino cuisine as a platform for cultural exchange and strengthen cultural relations between the Philippines and Canada.

He further highlighted that cultural diplomacy supports broader national objectives, including the promotion of Filipino talent, products, tourism, and strengthened people-to-people ties between the Philippines and Canada.

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Robin Padilla pondering retirement abroad if 'gov't system doesn't change'

Actor-politician Robin Padilla is reconsidering past plans to retire in order focus on his wife Mariel Rodriguez and their children.

The sitting senator was a guest on the April 24 episode of Bilyonaryo New Channel's "Politiko Talks" where toward the end of the episode host Marichu Villanueva brought up the news that Robin was selling his family's Museo de Padilla in Quezon City.

The former home of the Padilla family now serves as

an events venue and is notable for its traditional Filipino architecture with Spanish motifs, with interior features including a music room, a meeting hall, a conference hall and three ballrooms.

"2010 pa nung naging lovey-dovey kami ni Mariel, gusto ko nang mag-retire, magpunta sa abroad," said Robin, sharing the couple had visited the Netherlands and Germany.

Looking ahead to the 2028 elections, Robin made it clear that if the Philippines

is unable to change its current system of government, which he has no faith in, he'd rather spend his time with family.

"I'm sorry, patawarin niyo ako, hindi ko nakikita ang future [sa] sistemang ito," the actor-senator added.

Robin said, upon being asked by co-host Atty. Jesus Falcis, that he had initially wanted to retire in Brunei and even did an ocular there with Mariel, however the latter found the Southeast

Asian neighbor too hot.

Another option the couple had visited was Iceland but it would be too expensive, which is why Robin thought about putting up the Museo de Padilla for sale.

Falcis also suggested Thailand but Robin shut that down, quipping that Mariel might strangle him if they moved there.

Villanueva admitted her speculation that Robin was selling Museo de Padilla to raise funds ahead of the



2028 elections, but Robin said he had no need for fundraisers and claimed he topped the 2022 senate race without any expenses.

Robin did express gladness that many were bidding on the sale, though he added wanting the purchase to be done with dollars.

"Wala akong tiwala sa pesos, mamaya kung saan pa galing 'yan... Okay lang basta huwag galing sa flood control [projects]," Robin quipped to end.

Janice de Belen to Kaila Estrada: Guard your heart

Janice de Belen doesn't interfere when it comes to her kids' relationships and life decisions.

She made this clear in an interview with Julius Babao, sharing that prying into her kids' love lives was never her thing. She gives them the freedom to make their own decisions.

"I will have to trust them, love them, get along with them. Kasi malay ko ba, baka mamaya sila na nga talaga 'yung mag-aalaga sa anak ko," she said.

Janice was then asked as to what love ad-

vice she would give to her daughter, Kaila, who is now rumored to be in a relationship with actor Daniel Padilla.

"She's 30 years old. Basta, guard your heart," she said.

Janice wants her kids to be free, independent in an effort to toughen them up.

"I don't coddle my children," she said.

While Kaila Estrada has not yet issued a categorical verbal confirmation, her recent



actions on social media are being widely interpreted by fans and media as a "hard launch" of her relationship with Daniel.

Last April 28, Kaila shared an Instagram story of them hugging, as set to "Hallelujah"

by Justin Bieber.

It was taken during Daniel's 31st birthday celebration on April 26.

Vice Ganda tells Leni Robredo: Magpapakalalaki ako, tumakbo ka lang ulit

Vice Ganda reiterated his support for former Vice President Leni Robredo as he appealed for her to run for president again in the 2028 elections.

He visited Naga City—where Robredo serves as a municipal mayor—as a celebrity guest at the first Isarog International Hot Air Balloon Festival 2026.

The TV host-actor and Robredo shared the stage during the event, with the latter thanking the comedian for immediately accepting her invite.

"Lahat ng panawagan n'yo

sa amin didinggin namin. Sana dinggin mo rin ang panawagan namin,"

Vice Ganda said in response, drawing cheers from the audience.

"You are our hope. We need you to continue hoping for a wonderful future not just for our families but for the entire Philippines," he added.

Vice Ganda made a deep bow as he begged Robredo to

heed their call. He then pointed out how the people of Naga are full of hope because they have a leader with a kind heart.

"Wag kang ma-pressure. Next year pa tayo mag-a-announce. For now, ie-enjoy muna ni Madam Leni ang Naga," the TV host said. "Hindi pa niya iniisip 'yon kasi bilang mayor, talagang ang utak at katawan niya ay naka-devote sa inyong lahat."

"Pero pagkatapos no'n, baka naman," Vice Ganda told Robredo, tapping her shoulders in a seeming effort to emphasize his appeal. Vice Ganda even quipped, "Magpapakalalaki



JDL's Cupid Arch 2.0 Concert is Another Toronto P-Pop success

At JDL School for the Performing Arts, founder Josie De Leon is breaking new ground with a first for the school: an all-girl band.

Known for shaping talent in vocals, dance, and acting, JDL now introduces JDL Cupid Arch 2.0, a group where every member not only sings, but also plays an instrument. Representing different JDL schools, these young performers are stepping into a new level of artistry, blending musicianship with the stage presence they've been trained for.

Though still growing and refining their sound, the girls

have built a strong bond over the years together. Their journey is one of dedication, discipline, and passion guided by Glenmore Records Studios owner Scott Dion Brown and fueled by the unwavering support of their parents.

This is the story of how a vision turned into a movement, how a group of young artists came together, pushed their limits, and found their voice as one.

Here's what founder Josie De Leon has to say.

"My heart is truly full seeing the success of JDL CUPID ARCH 2.0 Concert.

Moments like this make every challenge, every late night, and every ounce of effort worth it.

Watching talent grow, confidence shine, and dreams come alive on stage is the greatest reward for me and gives meaning to what we do at JDL Performing Arts.

To our girls, Raelyn, Kayla, Shaine, Charize, and Hailey, I'm so proud of you all.

To our guests, Dance Troopers, Alyssa, Mika, Cheska, Mark, Amber, and Aj, thank you for gracing the concert with your wonderful performances.

To our sponsors, friends, and JDL families thanks for the

support.

To the Cupid Arch parents, know that all your hard work paid off; treat yourself to a well-deserved vacation.

At JDL Performing Arts, we will keep believing and creating."

From the JDL Dance Troopers, "We are truly grateful for the opportunity to showcase our passion and talent in dancing.

Congratulations to our very own JDL Cupid Arch 2.0 for such a successful and amazing live concert!

It was an unforgettable experience and a moment we will

always cherish. Thank you for letting us be part of something so special.

Kudos & Thank you to our ever beautiful Tita Josie De Leon for giving us this once in a lifetime opportunity to be the front act for the first ever JDL Cupid Arch 2.0 live concert.

Of course, a heartfelt thank you to our very talented Coach Owen Synergy, Owen Andres With your guidance, we are inspired to continue showcasing more exquisite and outstanding performances.

To all the parents of JDL Cupid Arch 2.0, & to our parents

Canadians are feeling the Pain in the Gas and there is no end in sight

PAIN from page 20

ers are foreign investors, and even domestic holders, such as pension funds, distribute returns across global portfolios. As such, the reinvestment of oil windfalls back into the Canadian economy has declined significantly compared to the investment-led boom years of the 2000s. Other factors, like the rise of U.S. shale, have also weakened the oil-currency link.

The practical consequence is that when oil spikes today, Canadians absorb more of the inflationary impact

and receive less of the offsetting currency benefit they did a decade ago. For Canada, war-driven oil price spikes are therefore less a national windfall than a redistribution across sectors, provinces and from consumers to energy producers.

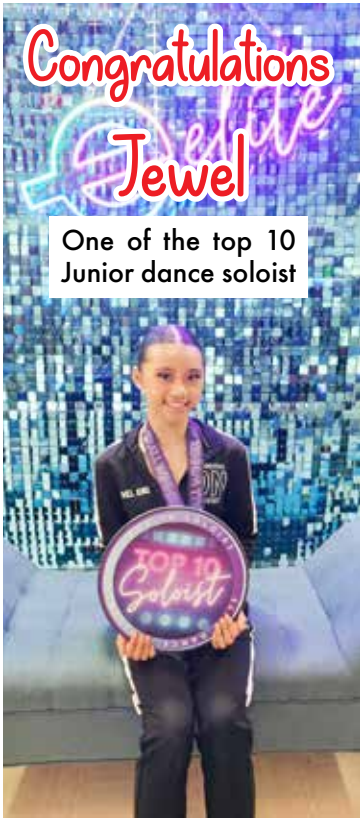
With the Canadian dollar no longer rising alongside oil as it once did, price spikes now translate more directly into higher living costs for Canadians.

The author would like to thank Vinh Nguyen, a research assistant and undergraduate student at MacEwan University's School of Business, for her contribution to this article.

Candid CAMERA



Carlos Unas wins at bingo while Jewel accepts the prize on behalf of her mom at the Filipino Centre Toronto Bingo night fundraiser while Theresa Lumanlan & Nitz Rejdik talk how much is the next round of bingo.



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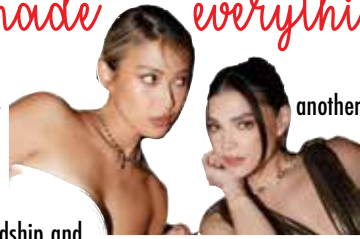
Rhian Ramos grateful to Michelle Dee:
'You've made everything lighter'

Rhian Ramos has nothing but gratitude for birthday girl Michelle Dee, as the former reflected on their friendship and how they understand each other even without words.

Ramos compiled photos and penned a message to mark the occasion, through her Instagram page on Wednesday, April 29. The post includes snaps of them taken during their mundane and glammed up moments.

"You've made everything so much lighter just with your presence," Ramos addressed Dee.

"I don't think anyone (including you) knows what you mean to me, but I like it that way. We speak without talking, we know just from feeling, we do without asking," she stated. "Happy birthday, wifey. Thank you for



another year in my life."

Days prior to this, the actresses also went on a beach trip with Ramos' mother.

Ramos and Dee's friendship earned the admiration of the latter's fellow beauty queen Pia Wurtzbach.

"This is actually so sweet!" the Miss Universe 2015 titleholder said, to which Ramos replied, "She's the bestest."

Ramos and Dee made headlines earlier this year after the former's driver accused them—along with beauty queen Samantha Panlilio—of assault and illegal detention. This allegedly stemmed from accusations that the driver stole Dee's angpao (red envelope) that contained sensitive photos.

The three female celebrities denied the allegations, with Dee filing a qualified theft complaint against the driver.

Hunk
shot

Johann is a student of JDL Performing Arts. He can sing, dance, and act. He plays soccer. Someday he wants to be a game producer. He is the son of Michelle and Eerwin.

We wish him all the luck in his future.



Johann Lucentales

JDL's Cupid Arch 2.0 Concert is Another Toronto P-Pop success

CUPID ARCH 2.0 from page 22

thank you for this wonderful opportunity and for your continuous sup-

port."

It was truly a spectacular concert borne of talent, sweat or the per-

formers, the parents, the mentors and the sponsors, without whom, this would not have been possible.

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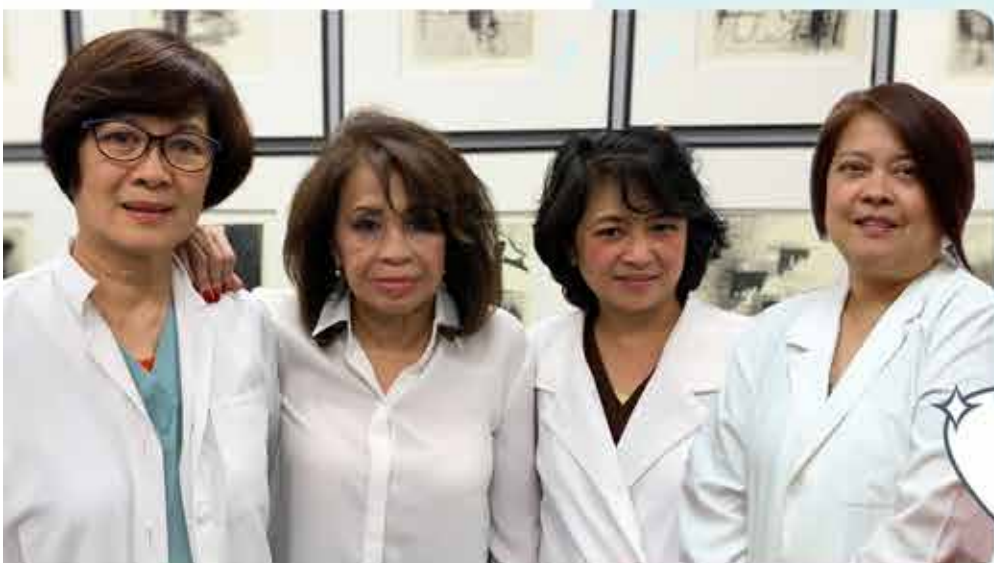
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'Almost Us' stars JM, Fyang grateful to fans for respecting their privacy

Regal Entertainment's 'Almost Us' stars JM Ibarra and Fyang Smith: What you see is what you get.

"Almost Us" director Dan Villegas recently revealed why he had long wanted to work with the love team of JM Ibarra and Fyang Smith.

First, it was JM who got him curious after seeing his acting debut in the Cinemalaya 2025 entry, "Child No. 82." Then the filmmaker found out that JM was one-half of the popular post-"Pinoy Big Brother" tandem JMFyang.

"Sobrang happy (to direct JM and Fyang) kasi first time kong na-encounter si JM, napanood ko yung pelikula niya sa Cinemalaya. Tapos sabi ko, gusto ko maka-work itong actor na ito. Nung night na yun, nag-research ako tapos nakita ko yung love team niya. Meron pa lang JMFyang," direk Dan shared during a presscon how he finally got to work with the JM and Fyang in Regal Entertainment's romantic-comedy "Almost Us," which opens in cinemas nationwide tomorrow, May 6.

"Tapos pinanood ko yung mga (works) nila, kinikilig ako...Nag-deep dive talaga ako. All of those nights na nagsimula ka lang sa isang video tapos 4 a.m. na tapos na puro JMFyang lang yung pinapanood mo? So, I said, I really want to work with these two."

In "Almost Us," Fyang is a woman obsessed with her celebrity idol Kenzo (Dustin Yu), while JM is the supportive best friend who is secretly in love with her.

According to direk Dan, he was impressed by the love team's professionalism despite being showbiz newbies.

"When I work with someone, it's more of... there are many talented people, but what's important is the attitude. So, when we started shooting, I told them, 'If we're going to work together, know these three



things: you come to work on time, memorize your lines, and don't step on set without bringing something to the table," he said.

"And they exceeded my expectations. They arrived early. Thirty minutes early. Then whenever they were on set, I never encountered them not memorizing their lines. We had sequences that were, my god, several pages long with continuous take.

"Third, I like working with actors who had their own take on the script, who had ideas on how to go about it. So we really took time before the shoot to discuss the script. And na-impress ako na may baon sila. (Again) the attitude is very important (for me) and that's why I salute them."

Meanwhile, as "Almost Us" brings their partnership to the big screen, JM and Fyang know that fans are also curious about the real score between them.

The two stars are grateful for the support, but they also said that they value keeping some things private.

Nevertheless, JM is not coy about the fact that he's seriously pursuing and courting Fyang.

During a separate one-on-one interview with this writer, they were asked if and when the time comes when they are officially a couple, would they opt for a "hard launch or soft launch" of their relationship.

Both were in agreement that they would rather go the low-key route.

"Hindi naman namin kailangan i-announce... Mas pinapahalagahan ko yung nasa amin na," JM said.

"So, I guess, kung dumating man sa pun-



JMFyang in one of the scenes from the film.

to na yun, kung ano man yung nakikita nila hanggang dun na muna. Hindi naman namin kailangan i-announce pa or i-launch pa."

Fyang agreed, saying their fans have also been respectful of their privacy.

"Mahal namin ang mga fans namin. Mahal kami ng mga fans namin na they know kung paano rumespeto ng privacy," she said.

"Kung ano nakikita nila, happy sila."

The two were, likewise, asked if they were excited to transition from "almost us" to "finally us" in real life.

JM readily admitted there is excitement, but said that he's not going to rush things.

"Excited, pero hindi ko naman siya (ni-ru-rush)... nandun yung excitement, pero hindi ako gagawa ng bagay (to rush her) para at least kung dumating man, mas masaya," he said.

For Fyang, they also don't feel pressured



On and off screen, JM and Fyang say they enjoy being together.

each other about their priorities.

"Di nakaka-pressure kasi kami naman very vocal kami sa isa't isa na career muna ang unahin," she said.

One thing is for sure, JM said working together has made even the heavier parts of their job feel lighter and happier.

"Mabigat yung pressure, mabigat yung ginagawa namin, pero may part pa rin na nag-e-enjoy kami. Mabilis kaming makalabas dahil yung kasama namin isa't isa.



Fyang is obsessed with someone else and belatedly notices her bestie's feelings for her.

Nagiging magaan," JM, who'd want to more heavy drama in the future, said.

Fyang likewise said that like JM she'd also want to explore more heavier material, reasoning that she welcomes any chance to challenge herself as an actress.

"Gusto kong i-test kung hanggang saan yung kaya ko," she expressed.

But of course, they enjoy giving it — that romantic thrill — to the fans, who they believe are also willing to wait for them should they

decide to be officially together in real life.

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Ronnie Liang expands free cleft lip, cleft palate operations nationwide



Singer-actor Ronnie Liang is continuing his humanitarian efforts as his “Project Ngiti” now offers free cleft lip and cleft palate operations nationwide, with plans to expand the initiative to include free dialysis services.

Liang told Inquirer Entertainment that the program’s reach significantly widened after gaining the support of Smile Train New York.

“The good news is napansin ni Smile Train New York ‘yung Project Ngiti, so nagpa set ng lunch meeting ‘yung representative nila here sa Smile Train Philippines. They offered na

pwede nilang i-cater yung mga pasyente under Project Ngiti, na operahan under Smile Train affiliated hospitals and surgeons kaya ngayon nationwide na,” he said.

Since its launch in 2021, Project Ngiti has already assisted around 500 patients. With its nationwide expansion, beneficiaries from across Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao can now access free surgeries without traveling to Metro Manila.

“Mas maganda yung ganitong system rather than just medical mission because ang nangyayari pag medical mission kasi, hindi sila nababalikan after operahan ‘yung bata. Ngayon, we have plenty of doctors. Kaya namin 20 na mga bata sa loob ng isang linggo,” said the actor.

“Before, it was under NCR and Mega Manila only. Binibiyaha pa namin pagpunta dito. But now, the good news, nationwide na siya. Kung Luzon-Visayas-Mindanao, hindi na nila kailangang magbiyahe dito sa Metro Manila to avail our free surgery and operation. Ngayon meron na kahit sa Sultan Kudarat, sa Davao, Gen-

san, etc.,” Liang added.

The “Ngiti” singer emphasized that the initiative continues to grow despite ongoing challenges in the country, noting the generosity of partner hospitals and doctors.

“At least through this way naka-send ng good news, may good vibes, despite political noise, crisis, uncertainties na nangyayari sa bansa. Mas lalong na-intensify ‘yung kawang gawa. Usually lahat nagtaas pero itong mga hospital, itong mga doktor, hindi sila ganoon nagtaas. At ‘yung iba, hindi na sila nagpapabayad. Kasi alam naman nila para doon sa kabutihang actions,” he explained.

Liang said that he hopes to sustain and expand the impact of “Project Ngiti” even beyond his entertainment career.

“Masarap sa pakiramdam kasi di naman ako habang buhay na artista. So, kahit na dumating ‘yung time mawala ako sa industry or maging airline pilot na ako, in the future, meron tayong mga nabagong buhay under Project Ngiti. Habang narinig nila yung kantang to, maaalala nila

na there’s this project. And salamat sa mga ka-partners naming hospitals, mga surgeons and also the Smile Train Philippines,” he added.

Meanwhile, Liang also shared that the free cataract surgery for patients of all ages is still ongoing, and patients who want to avail themselves of the services can message their official Facebook page to be accommodated.

The singer-actor also said that he’s planning to expand his foundation to provide free dialysis services on top of its existing medical assistance program. As of now, though, he said he is still gathering the resources.

Liang, who’s also an Army reservist and pilot, earlier headlined the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ new music video, “Kanluran,” which highlights the protection and conservation of the country’s resources, particularly the West Philippine Sea.

Liang was awarded Hero of the Year at Asia’s Modern Hero Awards in 2025. Last month, he was recognized as the Nation Builder of Purpose-Driven Excellence across Arts, Aviation, and Service.

Sheryl Cruz supports daughter Nicole Sonora’s choice to join showbiz

I could only see love and admiration in the eyes of Sheryl Cruz and Nicole Sonora when they recently guested on my show, “Fast Talk with Boy Abunda.” It was their first joint interview since Nicole entered the entertainment industry. As a daughter, Nicole described her wonderful relationship with her mom, whom she considers her protector and peer.

“Pag nag-chi-chikahan po kami. Gossip po. Iyong sa school ko, about boys. Lahat alam niya,” she said.

Nicole is aware that the Cruz clan is very famous in the Philippines. It is not surprising that performing talent also runs deep in her genes as part of a family of showbiz royalty. Anyone would expect her to use Cruz as her screen surname when pursuing a showbiz career, but instead, Nicole is using Sonora.

She explained, “Iyong Cruz is a legacy na po. Kilalang-kilala na sila dito sa Pinas. Iyon ang paternal side ng mom ko. This time, gusto kong mag-pay ng homage pati i-honor naman iyong maternal side ng mama ko, which is my lola, Rosemarie Sonora.”

Sheryl was initially hesitant when Nicole decided to join show business. We understand where Sheryl is coming from since she was only four when she started her career.

“Showbiz is very hard. I know that she will always



Veteran actress Sheryl Cruz supports the decision of daughter Nicole Sonora to enter show business. Her advice to Nicole is not to lose her moral compass. ‘I would like Ashley to have the time of her life here in show business. For whatever happens, if it’s a rollercoaster ride of emotions, then I just want her to enjoy the ride and know herself better than anyone else,’ says Sheryl.

have something to fall back on because tapos naman siya ng kanyang pag-aaral. Hindi ko sa kanya pwedeng ipagkait itong passion niya to pursue what is in her blood, which is acting and the love of singing and creation because she’s also a talented writer.”

The promising artist graduated summa cum laude from San Francisco State University. Was it a difficult decision for Nicole to transition into showbiz?

“I would say no, kasi acting, story and creation since preschool, I’ve always loved it. I didn’t think it would be my career path at first, not until towards the end of college. I had a professor come up to me and say, ‘You have potential. You should learn and try to enhance it more.’ The person saying it is somebody sa America. They don’t know me. Wala silang paki sa mga family ko. Walang bias.”

Sheryl is proud of her unica hija’s academic achievements.

“I always tell people that she’s my pride and joy. A lot of things may not have been perfect in my life, but she’s the most perfect thing that’s been close to perfect that was given to me by God,” she enthused. The versatile actress is civil with her former husband, Norman Bustos, who also attended the graduation of their daughter.

Sheryl is starring in ‘Born To Shine’ with fellow ‘90s teen stars Manilyn Reynes and Tina Paner.

According to Nicole, seeing her parents together on that special occasion felt different.

“At the same time, para siyang invigorating kasi nabuo ulit iyong pamilya. And not just that, kasi meron na pong additions sa mga family namin. My mom and my titas were there po sa graduation ko, my dad and my stepmom. I feel like siguro kailangan talaga mag-di-

verge ng paths nila for the family to be more whole.” She was only seven when her mom carefully broke the news about their separation because Sheryl thought it was the responsibility of either the father or the mother to tell their child.

At a young age, Nicole didn’t understand the explanation for why her parents had parted ways. She thought someone had to be blamed. Nicole has a better understanding now at 24. “Ngayon na mas matanda ako, people are just different. Sometimes, life takes you to different paths, and that’s okay. If anything, sometimes, it makes it better.”

Nicole admitted that she thought it was her fault that her parents had gotten a divorce. She shared about her relationship with her dad now.

“Sobra na pong grounded. Mas gusto ko iyon kasi wala na pong bigat. Mas grounded siya kasi he’s more honest and more straightforward to the point na para siya iyong balance ko.”

As a veteran in the industry, Sheryl advised Nicole not to lose her moral compass. “I would like Ashley to have the time of her life here in show business. For whatever happens, if it’s a rollercoaster ride of emotions, then I just want her to enjoy the ride and know herself better than anyone else,” she added.

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Vice Ganda slams individuals who get high pay despite not reporting to work

Netizens claim TV host alluding to Sen. Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa

Vice Ganda again made another cryptic remark, this time taking aim at individuals earning hundreds of thousands without putting in the work, stressing that it is unfair to those working extra hard just to receive minimum wages.

The "It's Showtime" mainstay said this on Labor Day, May 1, as he and his fellow hosts Vhong Navarro and Jhong Hilario talked to Filipino workers during the noontime program's "Laro Laro Pick" segment.

Drawing from the experience of one of the participants, the TV hosts pondered how among Filipinos, there are those who graduated but could not land a job; those who did not finish college but have a job; and those who are able to secure a job but are not paid what they rightfully deserve.

"Meron ding nakasweldo pero hindi naman nagtrabaho. 'Di ba? Ang sakit sa Pilipinas!" Vice Ganda lamented. "Ang daming nagtrabaho, pero hindi sumu-sweldo nang tapat. Merong hindi pumapasok pero ang laki ng sweldo—tapos wala tayong magagawa."

(There are also those who get paid even when they do not work. Right? It's so frustrating in the Philippines! So many people work hard but are not getting paid properly, while some don't even show up but earn huge salaries—and there's nothing we can do about it.)

"Imagine mo, 'yung mamamayang Pilipino nagtrabaho nang eight hours, nagjeep, nag-LRT (Light Rail Transit), binaybay ang tanghali, hindi nakakain [tapos] minimum [ang sweldo]," he continued. "Tapos merong hindi pumapasok pero daang libo ang sweldo."

(Imagine, a normal Filipino worker puts in eight hours, rides a jeepney, takes the LRT (Light Rail Transit), endures the midday heat, even skips meals—only to earn minimum wage. Meanwhile, someone who doesn't even show up to work earns hundreds of thousands.)

"It's just not fair!" he stressed.

The hosts further gave emphasis on how most Filipino

households follow a tight budgeting routine in order to survive.

"Nakakapanlumo talaga. Ang hirap mag-budget. 'Yan ang araw-araw na problema ng mga Pilipino,"

Vice Ganda said. "Ang sweldo isang buwan pinagpapaguran pero ilang minuto lang nauubos. Minsan hindi pa nga kini-kita, ubos na rin."

(It's really disheartening. Budgeting is so difficult. It is an everyday problem for Filipinos. The money you worked hard for a month is just gone in minutes. Sometimes, it's already spent before you even earn it.)

Expressing hope, he continued, "Sana gumanda ang situasyon ng mga manggagawa sa Pilipinas. Tumataas ang gasolina, ang bilihan, tumataas lahat pero hindi tumataas ang sweldo... Hindi siya balanse."

(I hope the situation of workers in the Philippines improves. Fuel prices are rising, the cost of goods is going up—everything is increasing, but wages aren't... There is no balance.)

Vice Ganda also honored Filipino workers and thanked them for their hard work.

"Maraming salamat dahil pinapanatili niyong humihinga kahit naghihingalo ang ekonomiya," he stated. (Thank you for keeping the economy alive, even when it is barely breathing.)

While Vice Ganda did not mention any names in his statement, some netizens pointed its relevance to Sen. Bato dela Rosa who has not been attending Senate sessions since November 2025.

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Dela Rosa's absences started amid reports that an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court will be served against him, in connection with his alleged involvement in former President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs.



Joshua Garcia goes back to action in 1st series with Ivana Alawi

Joshua Garcia revealed that he is relishing going back to action and doing stunts in his upcoming series "Love Is Never Gone" with Ivana Alawi.

Joshua said during the show's recent press conference that his enthusiasm extends beyond his individual role, highlighting the shared effort that drives the entire project forward.

"Tulad nila 'yung sinasabi mo, really excited. Hindi lang parang sa akin. And excited for everyone, sa mga cast member ko. Kasi hindi lang ako 'yung naghirap dito," he said.

He also teased what viewers can look forward to, saying it was fulfilling for him to return to action.

"Na-enjoy ko ulit siya. Lagi, palagi. 'Pag every time mababalik ako sa action, na-enjoy ko siya. And hindi rin naman ako babalik kung hindi rin ako mag-enjoy," he said.

"Nandito naman ako. Pagod mag-action ha. So, salute na sa mga action star ng Pilipinas," he added.

Joshua and Ivana blend romance and suspense in "Love is Never Gone," the first Filipino series shot in Morocco that will stream on

Prime Video beginning this May 8.

Joshua plays Teo, a hardworking mechanic and breadwinner who moves to Morocco to make a living. His life will take an unexpected turn when he confronts Yana (Ivana), a scheming member of a crime syndicate, for stealing his wallet, only to find out that she's driven to do it to help pay for her ill mother's medical expenses.

Their encounter spirals into a twist of betrayal and revenge when Teo is led to believe that Yana framed him for a crime that leads to his wrongful imprisonment. Years later and back in Manila, he crosses paths yet again with Yana, who is now a socialite with a new identity.

Apart from Joshua and Ivana, the show also stars Jameson Blake, Jane Oineza, Michael De Mesa, Epy Quizon, and Dina Bonnevie, together with Fyang Smith, JM Ibarra, JC Alcantara, Rans Rifol, Kiko Matos, Argel Saycon, Heart Ramos, Alex Medina, Benj Manalo, Carlo San Juan, and with the special participation of Ara Mina and Irma Adlawan.

It is directed by Manny Palo and Jojo Saguin and under Dreamscape Entertainment, the production unit behind hit ABS-CBN series, such as "Linlang," "Saving Grace," "Dirty Linen," and "The Alibi."



Sanya Lopez finds 'real' sisterhood with 'Midnight Girls' co-stars

Despite being the "new one" in the group while filming Irene Villamor's "Midnight Girls" in Japan, Sanya Lopez found a sense of belonging with her co-stars.

The only Kapuso in a lead cast made up mostly of Kapamilya stars, namely Jodi Sta. Maria, Jane Oineza and Loisa Andalia, Sanya admitted that she could have easily felt like an outsider. Instead, she told The STAR in an exclusive chat that her co-stars made her feel like family from the start.

"Yung feeling na kahit na bago ako, never nilang pinaramdam sakin yun. They made me feel, 'Uy welcome ka dito samin.' Hindi ko na-feel na 'uy iba 'to,' or yung parang



'belong ka ba sa amin or hindi.' Na-feel ko agad yung, 'We're a family here.' We're one," she told this writer.

That off-camera bond helped Sanya connect more with the heart of the film.

Opening on May 13, "Midnight Girls" follows Filipina women working as entertainers in Japan and the friendships they form while experiencing sacrifice, loneliness and survival abroad.

In preparation for their characters, the stars immersed themselves in the lives and jobs of these women in Ja-

pan prior to the shoot. According to Sanya, they saw for themselves one of the film's central messages – women lifting each other up – at work.

"When they're together, you will really see their support for each other. As a team sila. Yun ang nakita namin sa kanila," she said, referring to the women whose stories helped inspire the film.

The experience also made her appreciate and understand more the emotional reality of many Filipinas working overseas, especially how they endure their own loneliness while trying to stay strong for their families.

"Yung pagiging resilient nila dun sa ibang bansa, yung pagiging matatag na pinanghahawakan nila na malayo sila sa pamilya nila," Sanya said.

"May mga kanya-kanya silang pinagdaraan na problema sa buhay nila... But their being strong, yun



Jodi, Sanya, Loisa and Jane bonding behind the scenes.

ang kapalit sa bawat sacrifice na binibigay natin sa pamilya natin. Kailangan mong maging matatag."

Sanya said another major takeaway from the film was empathy, particularly toward people whose

struggles are not immediately visible.

"Sometimes, we are quick to judge people not knowing them talaga... Like, 'pag nakita natin sila, ang bilis natin pagtismisan or pag-usapan pero hindi natin alam kung ano yung mga pinagdaraan nila. May mga kanya-kayang battle sa buhay, yung mga taong yun and bawat isa sa atin."

Take, for example, her character Paris, whom she described as a woman who may appear fun, bubbly and happy-go-lucky on the surface, but who deep inside is also carrying her own pain.

"We don't know if she's also going through something.

Sometimes, she finds comfort in the lives of other people. She finds her happiness in other people but you know, deep down, that it (happiness) should start within you."



The actress plays Paris, a bubbly and happy-go-lucky woman who hides her pain.

That's why Sanya believes Paris will resonate with viewers who have tried to look for happiness, comfort or a sense of belonging in other people.

Meanwhile, one of the "Encantadia" star's most challenging moments during the shoot



Sanya in a dramatic scene with Jodi and Jane.

was an emotional monologue delivered entirely in Nihonggo while dealing with the freezing weather.

The original dialogue had to be revised to make it more colloquial or less formal in tone. Sanya had to memorize her script all over again.

"We were on location with Kenji," she recalled her scene with a love interest played by a Japanese theater actor. "Tapos sobrang lamig doon. Ang mahirap pa doon, emotional yung scene plus Nihonggo lahat ng sasabihin ko so monologue na drama."

It was also her last day on set and the other cast members already went sightseeing. "I was the only left on set.... tas kailangan maramdaman ko yung sinasabi ko kahit na hindi ko naintindihan yung sinasabi ko. Pero bago ko naman siya sabihin naka-translate naman yun," she shared.

To make the scene work, Sanya said she had to repeatedly practice the lines until she could deliver the emotion truthfully despite the language barrier.

Seeing the reaction of Filipinas and Japanese women who watched the scene gave her reassurance that she pulled it off and the emotion landed.

"Yung umiiyak sila doon.... so tama yung sinasabi ko," she said.

As for her happiest memories from the Japan shoot, it was spending time with the cast under the country's famous cherry blossoms.

"The happiest time was whenever we were together... We would stay under the cherry blossoms and eat together like having a picnic. It was super fun! That was our bonding moment where we were complete," she said.

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