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Grieving son, ex-Filipino B.C. director call for transparency on Lapu Lapu Day tragedy donations



Alejandro Samper lost his sister Glitza Daniela Samper, his mother Glitza Maria Caicedo, and his father Daniel Samper at the April 26, 2025 Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy in Vancouver.

P. 2 & 4

Lina Vargas is one of four volunteer board members who resigned from Filipino B.C. in September 2025. The three others are Antonio Ortega, Concepcion Colobong, and Oscar Bisnar.

Canada tax records show small percentage of low-income Filipinos

P. 12-13



Canadian leaders, led by PM Carney, mourn victims of tragic B.C. shooting

P. 8



RP NEWS

Cardinal urges faithful to turn Lent into acts of compassion through 'Alay Kapwa'

P. 20

Happy Lunar New Year!

P. 5

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Grieving son, ex-Filipino B.C. director call for transparency on Lapu Lapu Day tragedy donations

By Sarah Grochowski, Vancouver Sun reporter

A former member of the Filipino B.C. board and a man who lost his family in the Lapu Lapu Day festival attack want greater transparency from the non-profit organization on how \$1.5 million in donations were spent over the past year.

Alejandro Samper, whose mother, father and sister died in the attack last April, also says it is too soon to hold the festival again, though it is planned in 2026.

“There needs to be more help for the victims before moving on to another festival,” said Samper, 34, whose family were among the 11 people killed



Alejandro Samper lost his sister Glitza Daniela Samper, his mother Glitza Maria Caicedo, and his father Daniel Samper at the April 26, 2025 Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy in Vancouver.

when an SUV drove into a crowd at the festival.

Lina Vargas, a leader



Lina Vargas is one of four volunteer board members who resigned from Filipino B.C. in September 2025. The three others are Antonio Ortega, Concepcion Colobong, and Oscar Bisnar.

in Vancouver’s Filipino community, is one of four volunteer board members who resigned from Filipino B.C. in

September, citing concerns over transparency over the Kapwa Strong Fund, the long-term endowment that was first established as an emergency fund following the attack.

Temporarily managed by United Way B.C., \$1.57 million was raised from public and private donors in the span of several months, with \$1.5 million distributed as grants to 40 non-profit and charitable organizations as of December. About \$451,570 of the Kapwa Strong Fund went directly to Filipino B.C., as specified by donors.

“After the tragedy, there were lots of donations coming in, and

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Latincouver denies partnership in Filipino BC's 2026 festival amid calls for accountability of Lapu-Lapu funds P.4

In the January 16-31, 2026 edition of Philippine Asian News Today, Janice Lozano's article "Latincouver denies partnership in Filipino BC's 2026 festival amid calls for accountability of Lapu-Lapu funds" was mistakenly credited to Oscar Bisnar in the story's byline. We apologize for any confusion this error may have caused.

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GRIEVING SON ... PAGE 2

many community members were asking questions about where the Kapwa Strong Fund money was going," said Vargas, founder of the Diversity and Inclusion Support Group of B.C. She said that the public expected their donations to go directly to the victims of the attack and their families.

Vargas said she was shocked by the organization's response to the questions.

"They decided not to answer," she said. "Every community member should have the ability to ask where money is going — it's just a question."

At the time the donations were first being made, Filipino B.C. said in a public Facebook post that the fund would "ensure 100 per cent of proceeds will go to victims, their families and the services and programs that will aid recovery."

When Postmedia News requested a breakdown of how Filipino B.C. used donations from the Kapwa Strong Fund this week, the organization declined, saying "a detailed breakdown of expenditures and allocations will be provided in our annual report."

It did not say when that will be ready.

Filipino B.C. defended its use of funds, saying all grant decisions for the broader Kapwa Strong Fund were made independently by United Way B.C. Kapwa is a Tagalog word meaning kindred and conveys a core Filipino belief that all people are equal and connected.

"All funding decisions were made by United Way of B.C. through an independent granting committee. Two grant streams were offered: emergency grants of \$25,000 and a subsequent stream of \$50,000 grants intended to support longer-term recovery efforts over a six-month to one-year period," the organization said. Approved groups received funds by e-transfer.

"As outlined by United Way B.C., eligible initiatives included immediate to midterm recovery and ongoing strategic support for those impacted by the

emergency, healing supports and basic needs, mental health and counselling services, opportunities for community members to grieve and community-led events."

United Way B.C. told Postmedia on Monday that it does not disclose grant amounts at the individual-organization level, citing Canada Revenue Agency guidance, privacy expectations and partnership agreements.

"It is at the discretion of the agency to disclose the funding amounts received. We report on the overall fund, the types of supports provided, and the communities reached."

The agency referred Postmedia to its Kapwa Strong Fund web page, which does not list exact amounts granted to each organization but broadly outlines programs the fund supported, including mental health care, case management, legal support, therapy dog visits and programs for nurses, volunteers and others affected by the attack.

Fifteen grants from the Kapwa Strong Fund supported cultural activities such as music, dance, art, storytelling, therapeutic yoga and community gatherings. Some victims, including Samper, criticized these grants, saying they came at the expense of direct support for those most affected.

Samper pointed to a grant used for "community space dedicated to healing circles and mental health support" at Latincouver's Carnaval del Sol in July, which he said provided no direct benefit to victims.

"That event was completely irrelevant."

Jhosie Sico, whose son AJ suffered a traumatic brain injury in the attack, previously told Postmedia that she expected that the non-profit would first use funds to help victims and families. "But that didn't happen," she said.

Sico's son remains unable to walk or work. The retiree spends most days next to his bed at a long-term care facility in South Vancouver.

In September, the Kapwa Strong Fund was moved to the Vancouver Foundation, as a long-term endowment fund managed by Filipino B.C. to directly fund its programs,

services and operations.

Filipino B.C. said it continues to provide case management and support to 70 people affected by the attack, including victims and their loved ones, helping them navigate social systems and connect to external resources, including mental health support and food assistance.

Filipino B.C. board chair R.J. Aquino previously told Postmedia that emergency funds donated are expected to run out, and many families directly affected continue to face permanent loss of income and lifelong care needs.

"In many cases, the tragedy has left the family's main breadwinner unable to work," Aquino said in December.

Samper and the four former board directors continue to call on Filipino B.C. to disclose the exact grants made to programs and individuals from the Kapwa Strong Fund.

In an open letter in December, the former board members — including Vargas — asked for an independent audit of all fundraising and distribution records.

"Victims continue to suffer, and the public has placed significant trust in Filipino B.C. Full transparency is necessary to demonstrate that every dollar raised was used as intended," their letter states.

One of the former board members, Antonio Ortega, has organized an indoor commemorative event on April 12, with funds going directly to victims and their families.

"We should have focused more on the victims and their families with the donated money ... It

has made me cry. How can you survive in this expensive city if you're injured?" Vargas questioned.

Filipino B.C. announced last month that its annual festival will be held from April 17 to 19, 2026.

"Continuing Lapu Lapu Day is not only about cultural celebration, but about creating space for care, unity and connection, while coming together in collective healing," it said.

"We will also continue working closely with the City of Vancouver, the province of B.C. and first responders to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place," the statement added.

But Samper described the toll of receiving notice of the new festival date in an email from organizers the day before Christmas. "Filipino B.C. sent an email to all the victims and families directly impacted, inviting us to the new date of the festival."

"I was in the middle of clearing out my parents' home. It was so traumatic," he added.

Vargas says that the timing of the 2026 festival is "inappropriate."

"As part of the organizing committee for last year's Lapu Lapu Day festival, it was painful to hear about the plan," Vargas said. "In our culture, in the first year after losing a loved one, you're still in mourning. It's a very solemn time."

[Editor's note: This story was first published by the Vancouver Sun on February 8, 2026.]

File photo Philippine News Today



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Snippet of Stories

Joe Larano Jr.

Hope Does Not Follow a Calendar

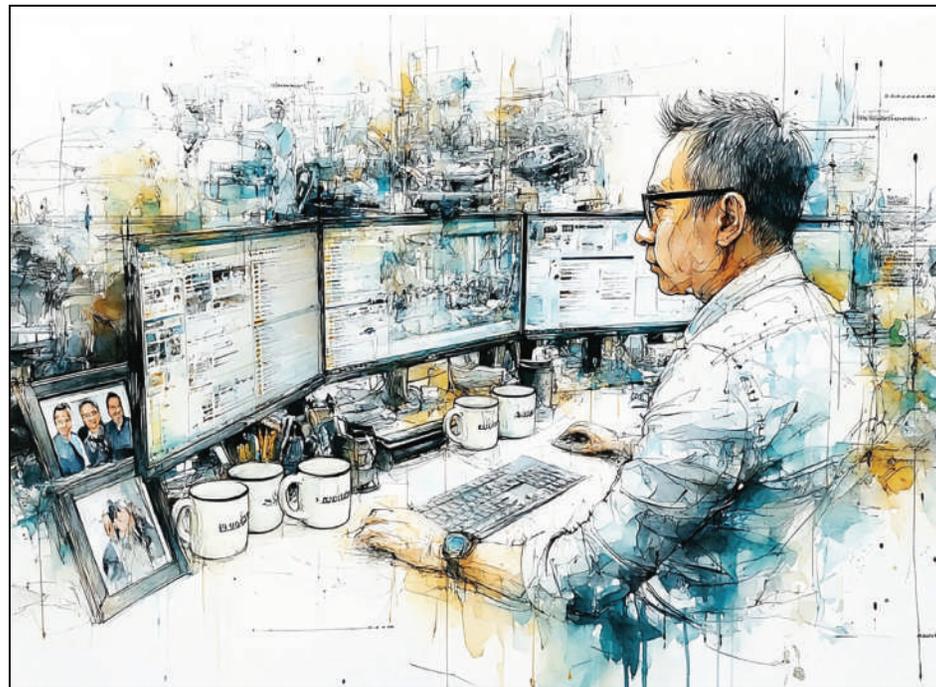
By the time winter loosens its grip on Vancouver and the months quietly move forward, many Filipino immigrants find themselves returning to a familiar moment of reflection. It does not require a new calendar or public celebration. Often, it happens in silence sitting by a window, a cup of coffee slowly cooling, thoughts drifting back to the long road already traveled.

It is rarely an easy road. It is shaped by night shifts and survival jobs, by homesickness and the constant pressure to do better for family left behind or growing alongside us. Yet it is also marked by patience, faith, and a steady belief that progress is possible, even when it comes slowly.

For overseas Filipino workers and immigrants in Canada, meaningful planning does not belong to a specific season. It happens whenever life demands recalibration. Goals are not declared loudly; they are written carefully. Save a little more. Learn one more skill. Apply again, even after rejection. These quiet decisions become anchors that help us move forward when the path feels uncertain.

Consider the story of Roddie Oriente, a forty-year-old I.T. professional now working for a software development firm in Burnaby. His current workspace is filled with computer screens, conference coffee mugs, and family photos. This is a picture of stability many aspire to. But this was not where his journey began.

When Roddie arrived in Canada more than a decade ago, his professional credentials from the Philippines did not immediately open doors. Like many newcomers, he started where opportunities were available, not where his degree



pointed. He cleaned offices at night and stocked shelves at dawn, often running on very little sleep. There were moments of doubt, when the cold felt heavier and the distance from home more profound.

What sustained him was a quiet commitment to his passion for technology. He enrolled part-time at a community college, studied online, practiced coding late into the night, and slowly built a portfolio. Exhaustion was constant, but so was resolve. He reminded himself that this stage was temporary.

Roddie eventually moved from cleaning jobs into entry-level tech support, then into short-term contracts that paid modestly but expanded his skills. Rejections were frequent. Emails beginning with "we regret to inform you" became all too familiar. Still, he continued to set personal targets: upgrade skills, apply consistently, and remain open to learning.

That habit of intentional planning was done not because it was a new year, but because it was necessary

to support his family, but also to save, to plan, and to dream with greater confidence.

This is the shared experience of many Pinoys abroad. We do not erase our hardships; we carry them as proof of endurance. We plan not because life is easy, but because direction matters and no matter what month it is.

To every "kababayan" in British Columbia and beyond, whether you work in healthcare, construction, hospitality, or are working toward returning to your profession, know this: progress does not wait for January. Sit down when you are ready. Reflect.

to keep him grounded. Last year, his persistence paid off. A software development firm in Burnaby offered him a position that recognized both his skills and his journey. Today, he contributes to application and software projects used by companies across Canada. His income now allows him not only

Write your goals. Trust that your sacrifices have purpose. Like Roddie, your present may not yet resemble your dream. But with patience, perseverance, and belief in your own worth, each step forward brings you closer to the life you once imagined.

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Surrey takes key step toward opening new medical clinics

Surrey, B.C. –City council has approved a framework agreement with Total Life Care Granville Medical Inc. (TLC) that will advance the delivery of two new medical clinics in Surrey.



Mayor Brenda Locke of Surrey

The agreement establishes the governance structure, roles, responsibilities and principles that will guide the delivery of Surrey’s Community Medical Clinics Initiative, aimed at increasing the number of family physicians and attaching residents to long-term physician care.

“Today’s decision allows the City to move forward with an experienced healthcare operator while ensuring that Surrey residents remain the priority,” said Mayor Brenda Locke. “This framework sets the foundation to bring new clinics online, increase primary care capacity, and support better

long-term health outcomes for our community.”

Surrey currently has approximately 59 family physicians per 100,000 residents, substantially below comparable metropolitan areas. As the population continues to grow, the City is taking a proactive approach to help expand access to family physicians. Under the framework agreement:

- TLC will lead clinic planning, staffing, regulatory compliance and day-to-day operations, ensuring the City does not assume responsibility for medical service delivery or operational risk.
- Clinics will prioritize attaching Surrey residents to long-term family physician care.
- A limited walk-in component will be offered to support urgent and episodic care needs.
- Future collaboration with Simon Fraser University’s School of Medicine is intended, allowing potential development of teaching clinic sites.
- A revenue-sharing model will help offset municipal costs associated with clinical space and supports.

Council’s approval follows

a competitive procurement process conducted in 2025 and subsequent negotiations with TLC, the successful proponent tasked with establishing and operating the first two community medical clinics.

City staff and TLC will now begin finalizing site identification and advancing lease negotiations. Staff will then bring forward a report to Council seeking approval of proposed lease agreements and outlining associated costs. The first two clinics are anticipated to open in fall 2026.

Find more details in the corporate report: Community Medical Clinics Initiative – Proposed Framework Agreement.

Surrey’s \$20 tree sales return this spring

Surrey, B.C. – The City of Surrey’s highly popular \$20 tree sales return this spring, giving residents an affordable way to beautify their property while helping expand Surrey’s urban forest.

The first online sale opens on March 3 at 9 a.m., with a pick-up date of March 29 at the Surrey Operations Centre. The second will open on April 28 with a pick-up date of May 24.

“Every tree planted strengthens our urban forest and improves the quality of life in Surrey,” said Mayor Brenda Locke. “Trees provide shade, improve air and water quality, and help reduce stormwater runoff. By offering affordable, high-quality trees for private properties, we’re helping residents contribute to a more sustainable future by making our neighbourhoods healthier and more livable.”

Since online sales began in 2020, the City has sold nearly 23,000 trees, with each sale typically selling out within hours. For the first two sales of the year, residents can choose from a variety of fruit and ornamental trees, including apple, cherry, plum, fig, dogwood, maple, and magnolia.

“The City’s tree sale program is a meaningful and effective way for residents to help protect and grow Surrey’s urban forest,” said Rob Landucci, urban forestry manager.

For more information, visit surrey.ca/treesale.

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Canadian leaders, led by PM Carney, mourn victims of tragic B.C. shooting

PM said flags atop Peace Tower and all government buildings will be flown at half-mast for a week

A small community in B.C. is in mourning after a mass shooting on Tuesday left nine dead, including the suspect, and dozens injured.

RCMP have identified the suspect as Jesse Van Rootselaar, 18, who was found dead of a 'self-inflicted injury.'

Suspect killed her mother and stepbrother at home before opening fire at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School.

One educator and five students were found dead at the school, most of them in the library. The students were between 12 and 13 years old.

Police did not say how Van Rootselaar might have obtained two firearms recovered in the school and could not speak to a motive for the shooting, which has devastated the small community of 2,400.

Leaders across the nation and around the world, including King Charles, offered condolences to those grieving what is one of the worst school shootings in Canadian history.



PM Mark Carney

"I am devastated by today's horrific shootings in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. My prayers and deepest condolences are with the families and friends who have lost loved ones to these horrific acts of violence.

I join Canadians in grieving with those whose lives have been changed irreversibly today, and in gratitude for the courage and selflessness of the first responders who risked their lives to protect their fellow citizens.

Our ability to come together in crisis is the best of our country – our empathy, our unity, and our compassion for each other.

I have connected with Premier Eby to express my condolences, and with the Minister of Public Safety, Gary Anandasangaree, who is coordinating the federal response.

Our officials are in close contact with their counterparts to ensure the community is fully supported as best we can. The Government of Canada stands with all British Columbians as they confront this horrible tragedy." (PM Website)



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre offered condolences to everyone in Tumbler Ridge, B.C.

'I can't imagine the heartache and hell' parents are living through, said Poilievre, as he called on Canadians to unite and support the community. "



Premier David Eby and Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Premier David Eby and Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, will travel to Tumbler Ridge to meet with people impacted by yesterday's tragedy, community leadership, and officials on the ground.

The Premier and minister will arrive in the community this evening. Details for a media

availability will be shared as soon as possible.

They are travelling with federal ministers Gary Anandasangaree and Gregor Robertson, who are representing the federal government on the ground in Tumbler Ridge.

Provincial resources from across British Columbia are being mobilized to Tumbler Ridge to support the community, including mental-health and victims-services professionals. People are on the ground now, with more en route and preparing to travel.

According to Eby, police were at the school within two minutes of receiving the emergency call. He thanked the officers who quickly put themselves in harm's way. "It's heroic work," says Eby on rapid police response

"That speed and professionalism saved lives today. I would also like to thank paramedics, firefighters, healthcare workers, victim services staff and all first responders who acted immediately to support this community in an unimaginably horrific moment," said the premier.

"That fast response time to the school meant that what was already quite a devastating tragedy was prevented from being significantly worse. And as a police officer attending a shooting scene like that, you're putting yourself at risk to protect the lives of other people. And it's heroic work. And I am very grateful that the police responded so quickly and so fearlessly and executed their training to protect as many people as possible at the school today."

RCMP officials said about 100 people were safely evacuated from the school.

VICTORIA - Mike Farnworth, Government House Leader; A'aliya Warbus, Official Opposition House Leader; and Rob Botterell, BC Greens House Leader, have released the following joint statement on changes to events in the



Mayor Brenda Locke City of Surrey

"My heart breaks for the families in Tumbler Ridge who are facing this unimaginable tragedy. This horrific event has shaken communities across British Columbia. On behalf of our city, I extend my deepest condolences to the victims, their families, and the entire community, and we stand in solidarity with them as they begin the long road to healing."

legislature over the coming days in reflection of the tragic events in Tumbler Ridge: "The horrific shooting and tragic loss of life in Tumbler Ridge have devastated this small community and impacted people across B.C., Canada and around the world.

"In recognition of these events, the planned Throne Speech for tomorrow will not be delivered. "Thursday, Feb. 12 will be proclaimed a day of mourning in the province of British Columbia.

"At noon, the legislative assembly will stand for a moment of silence in honour of the victims in Tumbler Ridge, their families and the entire community. The house will then adjourn.

"At 2 p.m., the lieutenant governor will deliver a speech in the house dedicated to the people of Tumbler Ridge, followed by brief legally required procedures.

"The people of British Columbia mourn together with the people of Tumbler Ridge.

We are united and will continue to ensure every possible support for community members in the coming days."

(news.gov.bc.ca)



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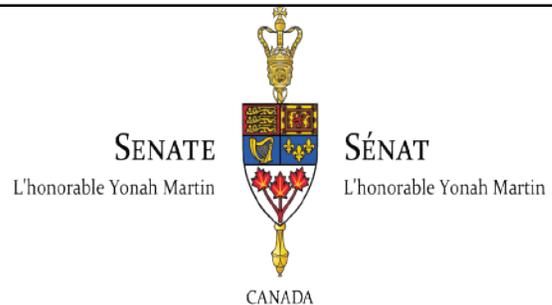
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Statement from The Honourable Yonah Martin on the Tumbler Ridge Tragedy

For immediate release
 February 11, 2026

OTTAWA, ON – Senator Yonah Martin issued the following statement regarding the mass shooting at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School on February 10, 2026:

"Today, our nation stands in mourning alongside the community of Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. As a parent and a former educator, I am heartbroken by the senseless loss of lives that were full of promise, laughter, and hope. A school should be a sanctuary—a place where dreams are nurtured, not where they are taken away.

"To the families who are facing an unimaginable void: no words can heal your grief, but please know that all of Canada grieves with you. We honor the bravery of the first responders and the resilience of the students and staff who witnessed the unthinkable.

"I wish to acknowledge the leadership of Bob Zimmer, Member of Parliament for Prince George–Peace River–Northern Rockies, who is currently on the ground supporting his constituents. We stand united in our grief for this tight-knit community where every loss is felt personally by all.

"In the difficult days ahead, we must hold one another close and ensure that the victims and their loved ones are never forgotten. Our hearts are with the families of the victims and the entire community of Tumbler Ridge; and pray for healing and strength to be upon them."



*The Tall Order
By Mon Datol*

Impeachment ke PBBM Ibinasura ng Kamara; Lusot din Pangulo Marcos sa flood control anomaly; '25% kickback nina Joel Villanueva, Jinggoy Estrada dokumentado'; Sara Duterte dinikdik sa ikatlong impeachment; Papel lang, walang ebidensya' - VP Sara; Lacson binira mga Pinoy na traydor; 5 senador ayaw kay Marcoleta, Loren Legarda bulilyaso sa Senate presidency

Sa botong 39-4-0 (yes-no-abstained) ay ibinasura ng Justice Commitee ng Mababang Kapulungan ng Kongreso sa pamumuno ni Cong Gervile Luistro ng Batangas, ang 2 impeachment complaints kontra Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. Lunes ng umaga, Pebrero 9, dahil sa 'insufficient in substance' Sa madaling salita...

Bigo mga DDS patalsikin sa Malacanang si PBBM.

Wala rin nakita ang Senate Blue Ribbon Committee na basehan para papanagutin si Pangulong Bongbong Marcos Jr. kaugnay ng anomalya sa flood control projects, ayon kay Senate President Pro Tempore at Blue Ribbon Chair Panfilo Lacson, kayat sa madali ring salita ay salampak na naman mga DDS dahil...

Lusot si PBBM sa anomalya sa baha.

Nanindigan din si Sen. Ping Lacson na may dokumento hinggil sa pagtanggap ng kickback sa proyekto nina Senador Joel Villanueva at Jinggoy Estrada kaya inirekomenda niya bilang chairman ng Senate Blue Ribbon Committee na kasuhan sa Ombudsman ang dalawang senador.

Hala, himas rehas na Villanueva at Estrada? Dapat lang.

Ayon kay Lacson, ang testimonya ni dating DPWH Usec. Roberto Bernardo sa komite ay napatotohanan ng mga alokasyon sa General Appropriations Act (GAA) at iba pang dokumento. P625-million sa hininging P1.5 billion ni Villanueva para sa multi-purpose na 25% kumisyon. Maang-maangan pa si Kaka, pero...

Wala ng lusot. Huli na si balbon.

Kay Senator Estrada, "P355 million worth of projects, different projects, anim o pitong projects, pagkatapos may porsiyento na 'yung nakalista na sinasabi ni Bernardo at tumugma naman doon sa sinabing binigay, dinala doon sa Artiaga building," paliwanag ni Lacson sa isang radio interview nitong Linggo.

Balik-Oblo na naman si Jinggoy?

Tanging sina Villanueva at Estrada lang umano ang nakitaan ng ebidensya dahil ang ibang dinawit ni Bernardo, tulad nina Senador Mark Villar, dating Senador Grace Poe at Nancy Binay ay kulang sa dokumento. Walang validation, walang corroborative na dokumento, paliwanag pa ni Sen. Ping, kaya't...

Lusot sa kaso sina GP, NB at MV.

Inihain ang ikatlong impeachment complaint laban kay VP Sara Duterte nitong Lunes na mayroong 13 complainant na kinabibilangan ng mga pari at madre, sa tanggapan ni House Secretary General Cheloy Garafil, na inendorso ni House Deputy Minority Leader at Mamamayang Liberal party-list Rep. Leila de Lima.

Pati taong-simbahan kinasuhan na rin si Inday Sara.

Binatikos naman ni VP Sara Duterte ang bagong impeachment complaints laban sa kanya sa pagsasabing "baseless" at "abuse of process" dahil walang kalakip na ebidensya na susupporta sa

mga akusasyon at...

Isang papel lang na mga paratang. Ha? Talaga lang, Inday?

Lulutang daw muli at handa umano si Ramil Madriaga, dating aide at umano'y bagman ni VP Sara, na tumestigo sa impeachment proceedings at Office of the Ombudsman kapag siya ay pormal na pinatawag. Lalabas na tunay na katauhan ng mga tumanggap ng confi funds mula sa Bise Presidente na ilalantad ni Madriaga, tulad nina...

Mary Grace Piattos at iba pang cartoon characters. Abangan.

Nagbabala si Senate President Pro Tempore Ping Lacson laban sa mga tinawag niyang "homegrown traitors", o mga Pilipinong handang ibenta ang Pilipinas kapalit ng pansariling pakinabang, at ang ganitong mga traydor, kasama ng technical intelligence, ang pinakakaraniwang pinanggagalingan ng impormasyon sa geopolitics. Sila yong mga ...

Makapiling Pinoy na me bayong sa ulo.

Nuong Sabado, mariing tinutulan ni Sen. Lacson ang mungkahi umano ni Sen. Rodante Marcoleta na isuko ang Kalayaan Island Group (KIG), na aniya'y walang pinagkaiba sa pagsuko ng Luzon o maging ng buong bansa.

Pilipinas me-ari ng KIG at bayan yan ng Palawan.

Muntik nang maging Senate President si Sen. Loren Legarda noong Miyerkoles kung hindi ipinilit ng mga kaalyado nina Sen. Allan

Peter Cayetano na ibalik si Sen. Rodante Marcoleta bilang chairman ng Senate Blue Ribbon Committee, ayon sa isang Senate source, na nagsabing...

Bumalikad agad 5 Senador na ayaw ke Marcoleta sa BRC.

Ani pa Senate insider ang nabigong kudeta ay pinangunahan nina Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano at Sen. Imee Marcos matapos umatras nga ang limang senador na kabilang sa majority nang malaman na ibabalik si Marcoleta bilang Blue Ribbon chair.

Paktaylo na si Marcoleta, baka pati INC, bitawan na siya.

SHORT ORDER: Happiest birthday (February 6) to our Ditseng Baby Datol-Lei of Jaen, NE, from wifey Frances & children Mabel & Edgar & children Nicole & Kyle; Yeng & Lenny & children Iyam & Yumi of Toronto; from your hubby Bayaw Vic, children Jing, Oliver, Lala, & all your grandchildren; Greetings, too, from sister Mila D. Tucker, hubby Martin Tucker & Family from England and from sister Flora D. Quinto & hubby Guy Quinto & Family from New Jersey and Tuguegarro....

Happy birthday to my dear friend Roberto Valdes (February 7) of Surrey, BC...

Happy birthday to my friend Brgy. Langla, Jaen, NE Chairman Emiliano Hernandez (February 8) greetings from his Family & Brgy. Sto. Tomas North Chairman Abay Larry Baguisa, Yorme Eboy Esquivel, Pempe Cullado & Brgy. Chairmen of Putlod, Imelda, Marawa, Sto. Tomas South & other barangays of Jaen, NE...

God Bless.



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My PC Can't Upgrade to Windows 11... What Now?

“Over the past weeks, I've heard this question more than almost any other - My computer says it can't upgrade to Windows 11 — what am I supposed to do now?”



Ask Computer Dean greets you a Happy Valentine's Day and a lucky Year of the Horse 祝大家农历新年快乐——马年快乐! We are on FB & IG, please follow us so that you don't miss our TIP of the DAY. Please email us with your questions and for urgent ones, start subject line with **HELP** in capital letters. Please scan this QR Code or follow this link: <https://linktr.ee/askcomputerdean>.



First, a quick reality check. Windows 10 support officially ended on October 14, 2025. That means computers still running Windows 10 no longer receive regular security updates unless you choose one of the options below. And security updates matter — they protect your computer from new viruses, scams, and online threats.

So let's walk through your choices in simple terms.

Option A: Your PC might already qualify — it just needs a setting turned on

Sometimes a computer can upgrade to Windows 11, but features like TPM 2.0 or Secure Boot are turned off in the system settings (called BIOS or UEFI).

Pros: Free upgrade, best long-term security, no new computer needed. **Cons:** Changing these settings can be tricky, and doing it wrong can cause problems. **Tip:** Run Microsoft's PC Health Check tool to see why your PC failed the test.

Option B: Stay on Windows 10 with Extended Security Updates (ESU)

Microsoft offers a paid Consumer ESU option that keeps security updates coming until October 13, 2026.

Pros: The least expensive short-term solution; buys you time. **Cons:** It's temporary — just one more year — and usually requires enrolling through Windows Update and signing in with a Microsoft account.

Option C: Buy a Windows 11 PC

For many people, this is the cleanest long-term fix.

Pros: Full support, better performance, quieter operation, and longer battery life for laptops. **Cons:** Upfront cost and the need to move your files and email. **Tip:** Aim for 16 GB of RAM and a 512 GB SSD for a computer that will last several years.

Option D: Avoid risky “Windows 11 bypass” tricks

Some people force Windows 11 onto unsupported computers.

Pros: It may work — temporarily. **Cons:** Future update problems, instability, and many bypass tools are copied by scammers. I don't recommend this for everyday users.

My simple recommendation:

If your computer is close to qualifying, try Option A first.

If it's truly too old, Option B buys time, but Option C is the best long-term solution.

If you're unsure which path is right for you, feel free to reach out.

Just send me an email: askcomputerdean@gmail.com.

“Technology choices don't have to be confusing — you just need the right guide.” ~ Computer Dean

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NEWS

Canada tax records show small percentage of low-income Filipinos

By Carlito Pablo

With hard work and education, Filipinos are doing well in Canada.

A recently released government study on tax filings shows that a lower percentage of Filipinos experience low income compared to most racialized and non-racialized populations.

The paper also indicates that Filipinos are second only to people of Japanese heritage in terms of having the least proportion of populations with low income.

Released on February 4, 2026, the study by Statistics Canada is titled "Who experiences persistent low income? A study of various demographic groups from 2016 to 2022."

Authors Sharanjit Uppal and Travis Facette wrote that low income is an "important dimension of poverty".

"Understanding poverty is crucial because of the broad and lasting harm it may cause," Uppal and Facette explained.

Moreover, "Long-term poverty tends to have a cascading impact on a person's life course and across generations: worse health outcomes, difficulty finding employment, more contact with the criminal justice system, and greater dependence on social support and assistance."

For the study, Uppal and Facette looked at tax filers from 2016 to 2022.

The researchers found out that during the said period, 5.6 percent of Filipinos experienced "persistent low income".

For comparison, non-racialized and Indigenous tax filers experienced persistent low income at rates of 6.9 percent and 19.7 percent, respectively.

Filipinos have a lesser proportion of experiencing low income than the overall racialized population (13.9 percent). South Asian (12.9 percent), Chinese (17 percent), Black (15.1 percent), Latin American (11.9 percent), Arab (19.8 percent), Southeast Asian (13.8 percent), West Asian (20.5 percent), and Korean (14.7 percent).

People of Japanese heritage have the least rate of low income at 4.9 percent.

Uppal and Facette also looked at the proportion of tax filers who exited low-income situations in 2017 and re-entered the same condition the following year in 2018.

The study showed that Filipinos "stood out" as having the highest proportion of people who surmounted low-income situations in 2017 at 39.8 percent.

For comparison, the rate for racialized peoples in general during that year was 30 percent; non-racialized, 30.5 percent; and Indigenous, 23.9 percent.

Filipinos also stood out because they have the lowest proportion of those who scaled low-income in 2017 but returned to the same situation in 2018 at 15.4 percent.

To compare, racialized populations as a whole



Canada Revenue Agency suggests filing tax returns early to avoid penalties. Photo by PiggyBank on Unsplash.

faced a similar experience at a rate of 21 percent; non-racialized, 19.1 percent; and Indigenous, 29.6 percent.

The study states that education is "strongly associated with income".

"A higher level of education is associated with higher income and hence a lower risk of low income. For many of the groups with the greatest risk of persistent low income, a higher level of education seemed to be protective, with a lower percentage of people in these groups experiencing persistent low income."

Filipinos in Canada are well educated, with over 40 percent possessing a bachelor's degree or higher, according to a Statistics Canada study titled "A portrait of educational attainment and occupational outcomes among racialized populations in 2021" and released on January 18, 2023.

Using labour data, a Statistics Canada profile piece about Filipinos on June 19, 2023 described Filipinos as "among the hardest working people in Canada".

Titled "Filipino Canadian proud with a strong sense of belonging", the article noted that almost four in five (78.6 percent) Filipino Canadians aged 15 years and older were working or actively looking for a job in 2022. That's the "highest labour force participation rate among all Canadians and well above the national average of 65.4%".

"Filipino Canadians had an unemployment rate of 4.3% in 2022, a full percentage point below the national average of 5.3%", the piece also noted.

On a related note, tax season is around and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has released important dates and deadlines:

February 23, 2026 - This is the date you can start

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filing your 2025 income tax and benefit return online. For the early tax filers, make sure you have all your tax slips before you file:

Most tax slips are issued by employers or financial institutions by the end of February. If you have a CRA account, you can also get copies of your tax slips there, once the CRA processes them.

If you have not received your tax slips by the end of March, contact the issuers directly to get a copy.

Once you have all the necessary tax slips and documents, file as early as possible to avoid the end-of-season rush and the

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busiest time for the CRA.

April 30, 2026 - This is the deadline for most individuals to file their 2025 income tax and benefit return and pay any taxes owed. By filing and paying on time, you will avoid late-filing penalties and interest.

June 15, 2026 - This is the deadline for self-employed individuals to file their 2025 income tax and benefit return. If you are not self-employed, but your spouse or common-law partner is, you have the same deadline. If you owe money, you will still need to pay by April 30, 2026, to avoid paying interest.

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Tinig Migrante

By E. Maestro

Connecting the news, from Abra de Ilog to Congress

Breaking news happens all the time and perhaps takes some of the visibility and perhaps priority from the not-so-new ones. But all are connected.

The AFP marked the first day of 2026 by bombing Abra de Ilog in Occidental Mindoro, resulting in deaths and displacement. The military narrative of the “rescue” of Chantal Anicoche, her “voluntary” confinement in the custody of the military, and her release back to the US was news for a short time.

The sustained, vocal and strong international support for the safety and release of Chantal was quick, viral, and focused – from churches, educators, human rights groups, solidarity allies, grassroots organizations and many more – which many believe saved her life and secured her release from the military who probably thought that they had put on a good show but had not.

The International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) echoed the analysis of the reason for Chantal’s release, as “the result of a relentless, international campaign” and that “Chantal’s advocacy and dedication for the rights and welfare of her fellow Filipinos has inspired and emboldened people around the world to emulate her concerns and support the most marginalized of Philippine society, including especially impacted communities in Mindoro where she was detained by the AFP.”

News about the dead and displaced in Abra de Ilog are hard to come by, especially because both fact-finding and humanitarian missions from Philippine human rights groups have not been allowed access to the communities by the military. The people still remain in great danger from militarization, mining and so-called renewable energy projects.

The Supreme Court overturned the 25-year mining moratorium in Occidental Mindoro last year which means the possible return of Agusan Petroleum and many mining companies. Where there are big mining and so-called development projects, state military forces and private security of companies and



BAYAN Rally calling for vigilance before Congress voted on the second impeachment complaint. Congress voted to dismiss the complaint and in doing so, abandoned its constitutional duty and denied the people the right to know the truth. Photo credit: BAYAN FB page.

local bigwigs will be there. And with military presence and operations, expect an increase in the number of human rights violations committed against farmers, indigenous peoples, and environment defenders. **No one has been held accountable with what’s happened in Abra de Ilog.**

What happened in Mindoro is easy enough to connect with what is happening in Congress. Congress, described by Bayan as a den of unrepentant thieves, ratified the 2026 Budget, seemingly oblivious to the anger of the people over the scandal of corruption, flood control projects, and massive pork barrel abuses that implicated the members of Congress! Congress then transmitted the budget for Marcos Jr to approve and sign, and he did!

Marcos, Jr. signed off on the 2026 National Budget described by economists and progressive groups like **BAYAN** as a budget filled with all forms of pork barrel, the “very mechanisms through which public funds are siphoned off through kickback, political favors and patronage networks.” Pumirma ang pangulo at katulad ng dati, wala siyang karapatan na sumigaw na “Mahiya naman kayo!” dahil siya ang pasimuno nito. Siya

ang pumirma, hindi naman siya tinakot o pinilit. This is the reason why Marcos Jr is given the crown title of Utak at Hari ng Korupsyon. And the connection of this to Abra de Ilog? Marcos Jr. is accountable for the increased budget for confidential and intelligence funds, counterinsurgency programs, militarization and AFP modernization. That translates to more public money to terrorize and bomb communities like Abra de Ilog, silence those who defend their

lands and rights, like the people in Mindoro.

And of course, the impeachment news. Marcos Jr. escapes impeachment, thanks to the dismissal by Congress of the second impeachment complaint against him. How can the people expect the members of Congress to do otherwise when Congress is dominated by members involved and implicated in many ways and forms in the multi-billion flood control scandal and other pork barrel abuse? By protecting the Big Cheese, they were also protecting themselves.

No one has been held accountable.

The connection of all this to the communities in Abra de Ilog is real and deadly. The plunder of land by corporate interests made possible by backing from corrupt officials, local government, government agencies, and the military is just a matter of time.

It does not take rocket science to understand why no one has been held accountable under this bankrupt political system. It is only through organized, sustained, determined actions from the people, by the people, that we can continue to demand and fight for truth, accountability and justice. For the communities of Abra de Ilog. For everyone.

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By Editha Corrales Nelson
Immigration Consultant, Notary
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Visitor visas for workers and students: How to apply from inside Canada

A work permit or study permit is not a visa.

You won't automatically be issued a visitor visa if you extend your work or study permit. If you need a new visitor visa, you may need to submit a separate application.

You can apply for a visitor visa from inside Canada if you meet all the conditions below:

- you're already in Canada
- you hold a valid study or work permit
- you want to leave and return to Canada in the near future
- your existing visitor visa is expired or was valid for only one entry

You should apply at least 2 months before you plan to leave Canada.

If you applied to extend your work or study permit online

If we approve your application, we send you a message in your online account and mail you your new work or study permit. You can apply for your visitor visa before your work or study permit arrives, but you must provide proof that your application has been approved, such as:

- a screenshot of your online approval
- your application number
- any other document that

proves you have a valid and approved study or work permit extension

Apply online for a new visitor visa

To apply online, you need a scanner or camera to create electronic copies of your documents, and a valid credit or debit card.

Apply on paper for a new visitor visa

Get the application package. The package includes the application guide and all the forms you need to fill out. Read the mailing instructions on this page carefully before you fill out the form. Download the application package.

Please note the following:

You must fill out and sign your own form, even if you are travelling as part of a family. If you are under 18, a parent or guardian must sign your form. We will not refund your processing fee.

Even if you send a complete application and all the needed supporting documents, you may not get a visa.

Be sure to send us all documents we asked for. Missing information or documents can delay your application.

Pay your application fees

In most cases, your fees will include processing fees for you and anyone you include on your application.

You must pay your fees online.

Third-party fees

Depending on your situation, you may need to pay third parties for:

- your medical exam
- a police certificate

Our instruction guides can help you understand which fees apply to you and show you how to pay them.

Submit your application

When you have filled out the application forms, make sure you:

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Mailing instructions

- Buy two prepaid 24 x 32 cm Xpresspost-National envelopes at any Canada Post retail outlet.
- Put one envelope in the other envelope. We will use the second envelope to return your passport and other documents to you.
- Add the documents you are sending that support your

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- Put your full mailing address in the "Deliver To" field and the Case Processing Centre-Ottawa post office box address in the "Return Address" field.
- Note the tracking number for each envelope.
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- We'll only return your passport through regular mail or a prepaid Xpresspost envelope. (If you include a prepaid envelope from a private courier company, we won't use it.)

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A Canadian Certified Immigration Consultant, Certified Senior Advisor and a Notary Public in the City of Burnaby, Editha Corrales Nelson's preferred areas of practice are Powers of Attorney, Wills Preparation, International Legal Documents, Name Changes, Affidavits, Letters of Invitation, Statutory Declarations, Drafting of Business Contracts and other notarial services. For an appointment, please call: 604-777-2757.

The following should not be construed as providing legal advice and information in this column is intended only as a general guide and should not be applied to specific circumstances without further consultation. For more information on the subject, contact Editha Corrales Nelson at 604-777-2757 or email: corrales@shaw.ca.



COMMUNITY CORNER

BY CHRISTIAN CUNANAN AND APPLE PLATA



Norman Belen's 1966 Retro Birthday Celebration

Norman Belen is a veteran animator, illustrator, and educator with over 30 years of experience in the arts. He began his career in 1987 after training at Japan's Tokyo Movie Shinsha and later became one of the Philippines' first 3D animators, with notable work on the award-winning series *Rats 2099: The Young Heroes* in Singapore.

On Sunday, February 8, 2026, Norman celebrated his birthday with a 1966 Retro Vintage Birthday Party held at The Party Room – Escala Tower, Burnaby. The celebration was filled with warmth, music, and nostalgia, surrounded by close friends, family, and fellow artists.

The celebration brought together friends of Norman and Joan Belen and family, the Dimasalang III International Artist Group, Circulo Pampangueno officers, MA3ASBC - Raymon Maliwat and Apple Plata, Purple Hearts Entertainment Canada led by Sandra and Rommel Gumboc, Myrna and Anlyn, and special guests including celebrities Rachel Navales, Phebe Jacobsen, and Mayo Landicho, Leo Orpilla Cunanan and Larry for the Live Music and jamming session. Also in attendance



were Emir Bautista and family, Amado Mercado and family, William Orsua, Rovz Canono, Jay and Rizel Celestino, Lina Vargas, Liza Lucas, Josephine & Ahmad Fard and other dear friends who made the night truly memorable.

A joyful celebration honoring creativity, friendship, and a life well shared.

Catered by: Pampanga Cuisine
Birthday cake: Vanessa Carpio Orsua
Tasty Cupcakes: Mel GP Dy Tan
Photo credit: Phillip Louis Pua



Surrey Libraries Announces New Writer in Residence



Surrey, BC – Surrey Libraries is excited to announce acclaimed

author Sabina Khan as the 2026 Writer in Residence.

Throughout her residency, Sabina will offer free 45-minute writing consultations, in person or online. These sessions are open to writers aged 12 and older and provide an excellent opportunity for personalized feedback and guidance.

"We are delighted to welcome Sabina Khan as our Writer in Residence," said Lisa Werring, Chair of the Board of Trustees at Surrey Libraries. "Sabina's impressive body of work and her dedication to nurturing new voices will in-

spire and support writers across Surrey."

Sabina Khan is the author of the middle grade fantasy *The Bloodstone Thief*, and young adult contemporary novels *What a Desi Girl Wants*, *Meet Me in Mumbai*, *Zara Hossain Is Here*, and *The Love and Lies of Rukhsana Ali*. Her books have earned widespread recognition and praise from readers and critics alike, appearing on notable lists and being acknowledged by major media outlets and literary organizations.

The Writer in Residence program at Surrey Libraries began in 2025

with Anthony Nerada as the debut Writer in Residence. The program was met with tremendous enthusiasm. Anthony conducted 161 consultations and participated in several programs, making a significant impact on Surrey's writing community.

Aspiring writers are encouraged to participate in the Writer in Residence program and take advantage of the resources and expertise Sabina Khan brings. For more information and to book a consultation, please visit <https://surreylibraries.ca/writer-residence>.

(michael.hunc@surrey.ca)



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GMA Network Earns Two Global Filipino Icon Awards

GMA Network, the country's leading media company, was recognized with two awards at the Global Filipino Icon Awards 2026 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates: Excellence in Global Filipino Storytelling for GMA Pinoy TV and Lifetime Achievement in Public Service Journalism for broadcast journalist Atom Araullo.

GMA Pinoy TV, the flagship international channel of GMA International — the overseas arm of GMA Network — won the Excellence in Global Filipino Storytelling Award for its commitment to Filipino storytelling while also serving as a platform to elevate the talent and voices of Filipinos on the global stage.

Accepting the award was GMA Network First Vice President and Head of International Operations Joseph T. Francia.

In his speech, Francia spoke of the enduring mission of GMA International in advocating for Filipino global communities beyond providing entertainment and information through its international channels GMA Pinoy TV, GMA Life TV, and GMA News.

"There are more than 11 million Filipinos living across the world—and with them, 11 million stories waiting to be told," he said. "Stories of courage and sacrifice, of hope and aspiration— stories that are some-



Broadcast journalist Atom Araullo,

times victorious, sometimes unfinished—but always deeply human. At the heart of these stories is one shared longing: the longing to belong, to be seen, to be understood and to feel connected—no matter how far from home we may be."

"We don't just broadcast programs. We build bridges—strengthening bonds across oceans, generations, and cultures. We tell stories that remind Filipinos everywhere: you matter, you belong, and your story counts."

Broadcast journalist Atom Araullo, meanwhile, was conferred the Lifetime Achievement in Public Service Journalism Award, in recognition of his years of rigorous field reporting and in-depth docu-



GMA Network First Vice President and Head of International Operations Joseph T. Francia

mentary work, through which he consistently brought social, humanitarian, and environmental issues to public attention. Araullo anchors the late-night newscast "State of the Nation" and hosts the public affairs shows "The Atom Araullo Specials" and "I-Witness."

Addressing the audience, Araullo spoke of the power and impact of journalism and the importance of aspiring young storytellers to keep using their voice:

"Journalism is never about the person holding the microphone or holding the camera. It is about the people whose stories are often ignored, dismissed, or sometimes deliberately silenced," he said.

"Lalo na sa mga kabataan na gustong magkuwento, ang message ko lang sa inyo: Your voice matters. Your work matters. And in a time marked by chaos and uncertainty, choosing accuracy, patience, and empathy is already an act of public service."

In celebration of the occasion, Maryam Delim Aljawi, Publisher and CEO of The Global Filipino Magazine said, "When we started this platform, we had a simple goal: to tell Filipino stories that deserve to be seen, heard and remembered. The Global Filipino Icon Awards is a reflection of that vision — Filipinos coming together from around the world to celebrate excellence, impact and purpose. At the heart of this event is one belief: Filipino stories matter — wherever we are in the world. Our deepest gratitude to GMA Pinoy TV and Atom Araullo for their presence and support."

The Global Filipino Icon Awards 2026 honors individuals, organizations, and companies for their contributions, leadership, and influence in supporting and promoting Filipino excellence across the globe. The awards are presented by The Global Filipino magazine, which is based in Dubai. The awarding ceremony took place on January 31, 2026.

For more news and updates, visit www.GMANetwork.com.

Hansen Industries Ltd. Furthers Commitment to Richmond Health Care with POWER UP Campaign Donation



From left to right: Gaurav Dhawan, Controller, Hansen Industries Ltd.; Gina Ungaro, Associate Director of Leadership Giving, Richmond Hospital Foundation; Dario Babic, Machine Shop Foreman, Hansen Industries Ltd.

RICHMOND, BC — With a long-standing commitment to strengthening local health care, Hansen Industries Ltd. has do-

nated \$20,000 to the Richmond Hospital Foundation POWER UP Campaign in support of the future Yurkovich Family Pavilion, the new

acute care tower at Richmond Hospital. This donation reflects Hansen Industries Ltd.'s continued dedication towards enhancing access to high-quality, compassionate care for the Richmond community.

"A community and its people thrive when businesses engage in supporting crucial needs and services like health care," says Amit Chhabra, CEO of Hansen Industries Ltd. "The future Yurkovich Family Pavilion is a once-in-a-generation project that will benefit so many families in Richmond, including our own staff, customers, and partners. By supporting innovative, future-ready care close to home, we're investing in the well-being of the people who make our community, and our company, strong."

"Every family deserves access to compassionate and efficient health care," shares Spencer Gall, Chief Philanthropy Officer of Richmond Hospital Foundation. "Hansen Industries Ltd.'s support reflects a shared commitment to strengthening care in Richmond, and their donation towards the POWER UP Campaign will help ensure the future Yurkovich Family Pavilion will be equipped to meet the community's needs into the future."

To learn more and donate towards the Richmond Hospital Foundation POWER UP Campaign, please visit: <https://www.richmondhospitalfoundation.com/campaign/power-up/>



VANCOUVER PREMIERE
 Sunday, March 8th, 2026, 12PM - 3PM
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An extraordinary mother-daughter documentary story, their escape from war-torn Vietnam, a birth on a sinking ship, a heroic rescue at sea, and a new life in Canada.

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 Gary Smith, Shining Light story consultant, former Canadian Ambassador
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 Chris Frieson, Chief Operating Officer, Immigrant Services Society of BC
 Jessica Nguyen, co-owner, BAKTO Cookies
 Margaret Tebbutt, former Canadian Foreign Service Immigration Officer

MODERATOR
 Kathryn Grotzinger, Journalist and Associate Professor, UBC School of Journalism

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The Pacific Canada Heritage Centre – Museum of Migration Society is proud to collaborate as the host sponsor with White Pine Pictures and Adobe Productions International in showing “Shining Light: A Vietnamese-Canadian Legacy”, an extraordinary documentary film, which will have its Vancouver premiere at the Rio Theatre on March 8th, 2026.

Anh Vu (born aboard a sinking cargo ship fleeing Vietnam) and her mother, Mui, who both arrived at a refugee camp in Hong Kong, and then settled in Canada 3 weeks later in the Spring of 1975.

The film recounts Chieu-Anh’s tribulations and triumphs on her settlement journey as a newborn to where she is today, a successful e-commerce entrepreneur. In the film, former Canadian diplomats and journalists provide the historical context of what was happening at that time and how the Canadian government, citizens and communities opened their hearts and hands in welcoming thousands of refugees fleeing their homeland.

We hope you will come out on March 8th, International Women’s Day, to support and see the film as well as listen to introductory speakers, a panel discussion with Chieu-Anh and others, and opportunities for a Q&A session with the audience. Advance tickets will be on sale through our website <https://www.pchc-mom.ca> and the Rio Theatre riotheatre.ca/tickets starting now, as well as on the film date.

On behalf of White Pine Pictures and Adobe Productions, we are also seeking monetary donations to assist in bringing this important documentary and discussion to Vancouver, and to cover the costs of Chieu-Anh’s transportation and accommodation.

Our organization believes in the power of storytelling as a way to educate and uplift the voices and narratives of immigrants, refugees and newcomers who are all part of the larger story of courage, migration and belonging.

Should you wish to support, donations can be made at <https://www.pchc-mom.ca/donate>.

In “Shining Light” you will encounter the brave and beautiful story of protagonists Chieu-

tachment, to your colleagues, friends, and family that would be greatly appreciated, as we are hoping for a large turnout for this important event.

ing of SHINING LIGHT on March 8th, 2026!

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RP NEWS ...AND MORE.....

Cardinal urges faithful to turn Lent into acts of compassion through 'Alay Kapwa'

Cardinal Jose Advincula is calling on Filipino Catholics to transform their faith into meaningful action this Lenten season by supporting Alay Kapwa, the Church's annual charitable initiative.

In his pastoral letter, the cardinal said Lent offers the faithful a time to deepen their spiritual lives through prayer, reflection, and compassionate service to the poor, the sick, and the marginalized.

"Lent invites us to embark on a journey of faith, hope, and love, drawing closer to Jesus Christ through acts of charity and generosity," Advincula said.

He stressed that compassion "is the highest expression of Christ's love," and encouraged

parishioners to share their blessings with those most in need, especially the homeless and disaster-affected families.

Alay Kapwa collections will be conducted during the second offering on six Sundays of Lent: Feb. 22 and March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29. Donations will directly support Caritas Manila's Damayan Program.

The program provides relief and humanitarian aid to families affected by natural and man-made disasters, continuing the Church's mission to support vulnerable communities nationwide.

The cardinal encouraged Catholics to open their hearts and give generously, reminding them that each contribution, no matter the size, embodies

love, solidarity, and the spirit of true Christian charity.

"As we continue to provide so-

cial services to the poor, it is our fervent prayer that we support Alay Kapwa 2026," Advincula said. (CBCP News)



Cardinal Jose Advincula

Sale of babies has reached alarming level – PNP

SIX babies have been rescued since last January after they were offered to be sold, the PNP said on Monday, adding that these cases have already reached an alarming level.

PNP Women and Children Protection Center director Brig. Gen. Maria Sheila Portento said the number is lower by only three compared to the nine babies rescued for the entire 2025.

In 2024, Portento said they also rescued six babies, all through entrapment operations.

"To say the least, (it's) alarming for 2016 because we just

entered the month of February and we already rescued six babies," Portento told a press briefing at Camp Crame.

Three of the victims were rescued in January and the remaining three were rescued this month.

One of the victims is a two-day-old baby boy that WCPC operatives rescued during an entrapment operation in Angeles City in Pampanga on Wednesday last week.

Portento said the baby's mother, who was arrested during the operation, claimed she sold her baby because she had no

job and she had a sick child. Also last Wednesday, WCPC operatives rescued a three-month-old baby girl in Baliuag City in Bulacan. The sellers — the baby's mother, aunt, and grandmother — were arrested.

Portento said the suspects claimed they sold the baby for P130,000 because the baby's father and grandfather needed money for bail and medical treatment, respectively. (Malaya News)



SPORTS

Cauldron Lighting Ceremony 2026 in Vancouver

Vancouver's iconic Olympic flame returns!

More than a thousand people joined as the Vancouver Olympic Cauldron was relit last February 6 in celebration of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Games.

This was held at Jack Poole Plaza, outside the Vancouver Convention Centre.

This special public ceremony

honours the spirit of global athleticism and the lasting legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver.

As of this date, Canada Olympic medal count 2026

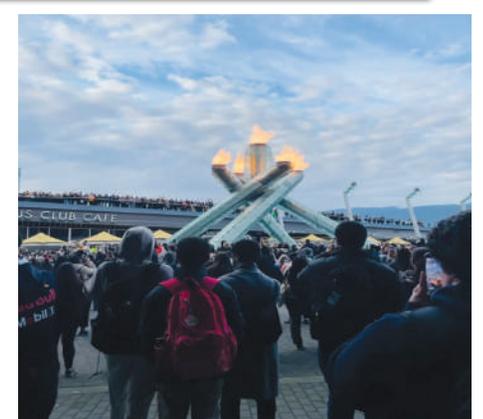
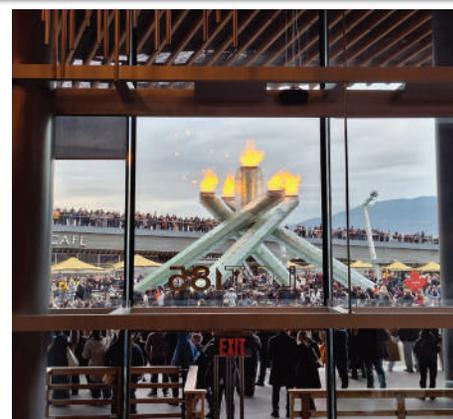
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Total: 4

(Photos by Juliemae Germia)




**Wisdom from
the Word**

Ben Berto



MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY- Part 2

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not [b]puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, [c]thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is [d]perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 1 Corinthians 13: 4-10 NKJV

It was said that Charles Bronson was faithful to only one wife, and that was Jill Ireland. There was one actress who had seven husbands, including Rock Hudson and Eddie

Fisher to name a couple. The Bible said that "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." (Matt. 19:6) When the disciples ask Jesus why Moses permitted divorce, Jesus said that because of the hardness of their hearts, but in the beginning it was not so. That is why in wedding vows we read that marriage should be "to love each other in sickness and in health...till death do you part."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Fundamental Beliefs, 22, states thus, "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.

For the Christian, a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honour, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which

is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery.

Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord.

By their example and their words, they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the

family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message."

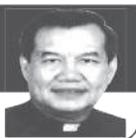
Today, there are deviations from God's ideal marriage. In the Ten Commandments, God said in the Seventh Commandment, "Do not commit adultery." Jesus said, that if one looks at a woman {or man} with lust in his/her heart, he/she has committed adultery in his heart.

The deviations could be polygamy or polyandry, fornication and adultery, impurity of thought, incest, homosexuality, and divorce. These should be avoided by Christians with the help of God. The Barna Research group said, "indicates that divorce rates among Christians, including practicing Christians, are roughly similar to the general population, with about 16% to 20% having

WISDOM TO PAGE 22 ...

Moments

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD



Making a difference

The story is told about an adolescent coming home from school who casually asked her mother, "Mom, what is sex?" Rattled by her young daughter's question, the mother said, "My child, well, sex is ... ah ... well, it's something natural ... ah ... it's something which two people do ... ah ... to show their love for each other. Yeah, that's it!" The young girl looked at her in amazement and said, "Wow, that's a rather long sentence to put in the resume I'm filling out."

Adultery is the sin of adults, not so much in the sense of the sixth commandment, but in their tendency to adulterate truth, goodness and life itself. In today's Gospel (Matthew 5:13-16), Jesus tells us to be "salt of the earth" and "light of the world." We often lose our potency as salt and light because instead of being straight and simple, we become complicated and sophisticated. We no longer make a difference be-

cause instead of choosing the "road less traveled," we choose the road of comfort, success, lies, half-truths, and easy compromises. Instead of becoming salt and light to worldly people, we often get sullied and blighted by them.

Did you ever wonder why Jesus told us to be salt, and not sugar? That's because sweetness can be faked. And so it is that we have artificial sugar and so many hypocrites filled with niceties, lies, and pretenses. More than sweet talk and sweet smiles, God is calling each and every one of us to make a difference, and to be true to our commitments.

There is a story about a mental patient who was singing while he lay on his bed. Suddenly he stopped and turned his head face down, and then he started singing again. When asked by the nurse what happened, his reply was that he had switched

to side B. "Side B" of being salt of the earth is being light of the world. It is not enough to be good. One must also do good deeds and be a light for others to see so that "they may see your good deeds and glorify your Heavenly Father." When people see and encounter you, do they glorify God? Do they remember God at all?

People who make a difference are not so much those who shine, but those who reflect God's light in their lives. In fact, some people shine too much that they no longer reflect the source of their light. Are you a reflector or a deflector of God's light? Do you convert, or do you divert and obvert God's light in your life?

How do we make a difference? If we translate "difference" in Tagalog, we come up with the word "diperensya," which connotes not so much that something is different, but that something is

wrong. Perhaps this can give us a clue on how we can be different or how we can make a difference and that is being "wrong" or being "fools" in the eyes of the world. The reason why we never really make a difference is that we conform to the ways, values, and standards of the world. The bottom line is, at the end of our lives, did we make a difference in people's lives because we encountered them? Did we make a difference in this world because we passed by? This should lead us to another clue: we can make a difference if we are truly aware that we are just passing by.

Let us all say a fervent prayer to our dear St. Pope John Paul II, someone who was truly a salt and light of this world, an inspiration for all of us.

Feb. 18 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten
MOMENTS TO PAGE 22 ...



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WISDOM from PAGE 21....

experienced divorce. Despite this, Christians tend to remarry more often, maintaining higher overall marriage rates. Key factors contributing to these splits often include unrealistic expectations and communication issues."

All these issues affecting Christians could be laid at the feet of Satan who is working hard upset the good plans of God for His creation, for man who was created in His image. Sin is the cause of all the trouble in the world culminating in

the death of mankind, but because God loves man, He provided a solution. In John 3: 16 NIV we read, 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

To contact us: Our website is www.abundantlifeadventist.ca. Worship with us every Saturday Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Genesis 2: 2, 3, Exodus 20: 8-10, Isaiah 58: 13, 14; Isaiah 66: 22, 23; Matthew 5: 17-19; Revelation 22: 14, John 14: 1-3, Rev. 6:6-12, Romans 8: 35-39

FR ORBOS from PAGE 21....

season. We are all reminded again that we are "dust, and to dust we will return." In our own simple and truthful ways, let us all "repent and believe in the Gospel." May we also as a nation and as a people, starting with our leaders, change our deceitful and greedy ways.

What attracts people to Batanes? It's the beauty, simplicity, and serenity of the place and its people. Yes, simple is beautiful. May we all try to live simple, meaningful, and beautiful lives filled with lots of good deeds.

A moment with the Lord: Lord, help me make a difference by living a life of substance (salt) and good deeds (light). Amen.

momentswithfrjerry@gmail.com

(Reprinted from inquirer.net)

Feb. 17 is also the Chinese New Year. Wishing all of us a better new year in all aspects, in Jesus' name. We all want good health, long life, prosperity, and progress; but more than these, let us wish for peaceful, meaningful, and substantial lives.

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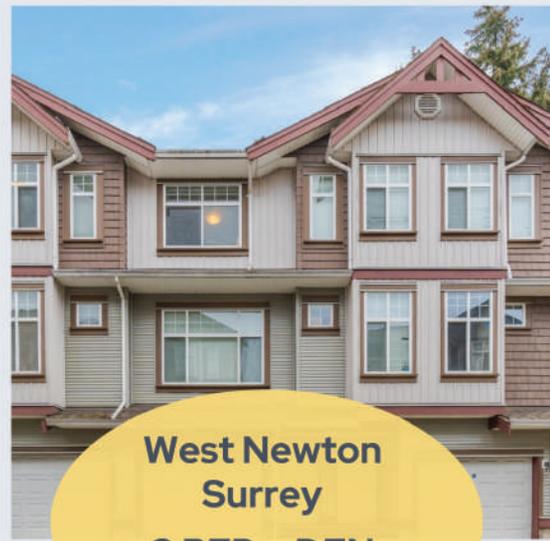
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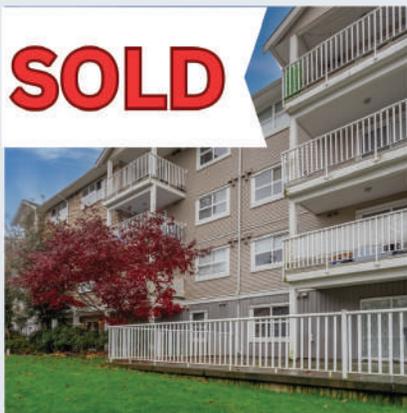
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