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BC Premier David Eby



Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General



Mayor Brenda Locke of Surrey

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Premier David Eby and Solicitor General Nina Kriege have issued the following statements about fighting extortion



BC Premier David Eby

“We face a crisis caused by criminals demanding money from businesses and shooting up homes.

“Perhaps you are a victim, or maybe you know someone who is, or maybe you’ve heard gunshots in your neighbourhood. As a dad to three children, I know that every family needs security at home. It’s fundamental.

“Concerns raised by those who have received threats must be addressed urgently. Information offered by community members must be

received and incorporated into investigations immediately.

“That’s why we are establishing a community advisory group on extortion to close any gap between community members and police to solve this crime.

“Paul Dadwal will lead this group. He has years of senior police experience, including service with the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia. He knows how to combat crime, as well as how to connect with a community. He will lead efforts to ensure we are exploring all ideas – related to policing, community and communication – and share them with police to ensure we fight this crime with everything we’ve got.

“Our government will be listening, too. I want you to know that this issue is our most important public-safety priority, and we’ve ensured it’s Number 1 on the list of police and the federal government.”

Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, said:



Nina Krieger, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

“The safety of people of Surrey and all communities who have been targeted with extortion is our top priority. We know extortion incidents are deeply concerning for families, businesses and neighbourhoods impacted by these crimes.

“The community advisory group on extortion is being created to strengthen communication and trust between the community and law enforcement, including the B.C. Extortion Task Force and local police. The advisory group will listen to community concerns, identify emerging issues and relay them to law enforcement and government

so people are heard, supported and safe. It will also support the communication of information from law enforcement to the community.

“To further support ongoing actions to target extortion, the Province has successfully lobbied the federal government for more police officers, increased RCMP helicopter support, and a national meeting of provincial police leaders from communities across Canada impacted by extortion will take place in the coming weeks.

“We will continue to lobby Ottawa for additional enforcement supports and changes to criminal and immigration laws to close loopholes in Canada Border Service Agency’s removal system, and for transparency in identifying people who have been removed from Canada.

“We are committed to supporting residents through this difficult time. Their safety matters, their voices matter, and we will continue to take strong, co-ordinated action until those responsible are held accountable.”
(news.gov.bc.ca)

Statement from the Mayor: Provincial action on extortion crisis



Mayor Brenda Locke
City of Surrey

I want to thank Premier David Eby for his support in addressing the extortion crisis. We are facing an emergency and it’s critical the community, police, and all three orders of government are aligned. I welcome the measures that were announced today, which strengthen collaboration and take a

critical step toward cracking down on extortion and keeping our communities safe.

I’m pleased that the City will be able to collaborate with the province on membership of the Surrey Police Board and ensure it fully reflects the community and their public safety priorities. I also look forward to the work of the advisory group to improve communication between the public and the B.C. Extortion Task Force. It’s crucial we amplify the voices of residents and business owners who have been victimized by extortion and violence for far too long. I agree with Premier Eby that communication must

be improved with regular updates from police, and I’m optimistic that this committee is a positive step in that direction.

We need strong, coordinated leadership

from all government partners to give us the resources we need to keep our city safe. That’s why I’m in Ottawa, urging the federal government for immediate action on this crisis.

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Sit-down interviews, cooking recipes: Kris Aquino shares more details on comeback

“Queen of All Media” Kris Aquino gave fans more hints about her upcoming appearances in her latest update, sharing that she is “hopefully” being discharged from the hospital.

On Sunday, February 1, Kris said that there is a possibility she could go home after spending weeks in the hospital for her health condition.

She asked her followers for suggestions on “any indoor swimming pools in physical rehab centers or hotels that offer health club memberships,” as well as any condominium units, homes, or townhomes that “have easy-to-cover spaces with big patios and garden umbrellas.”

Kris also requested that the location be “within 30 minutes, inclusive of traffic,” from St. Luke’s Medical Center, Makati Medical Center, Asian Hospital, The Medical City, or Cardinal Santos Medical Center.

She added that this arrangement would be her “life’s new reality.”

“But in order for me to



Screengrab of Kris Aquino in this video posted on her Instagram on Feb. 1, 2026 (krisaquino via Instagram)

continue being brave, I need to do slowly what I love until I am stronger,” Kris shared.

“My goal is once a week sit-down interviews with people who, for me, are interesting and with God’s blessing, weekly enjoyable treatment of products I really use,” she added, referring to her comeback to the limelight.

“Because there’s a team

doing my hair [and] makeup, I have a skeleton crew, a [two-camera] setup shooting me and the close-ups of the others, as well as product shots, and I’m excited to start sharing new home cooking recipes made simpler with all of you. Happy viewing,” Kris concluded.

She also included the hashtags #Brave and her iconic three-liner #lovelovelove in her post.

Her post has racked up over 55,900 likes, with many fans sharing their excitement for her return. “Ayan na, guys! Madaldal na ang queen! God bless you!” an online user commented.

“Ang damping update ni Kris, ang sayang basahin. Get well, Kris!” another wrote. “Happy kami ang dami mong chika, Ms. Kris,” a different Pinoy said.

“Ang saya ko Ms. Kris, looking forward to your show,” another commented.

Last week, Kris hinted at a comeback to the limelight with a video podcast, sharing that she would start with a “partial home tour” as a birthday gift for her followers.

In 2016, she took a hiatus from showbiz to focus on her health.

Kris is currently battling several autoimmune conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, thyroiditis, chronic spontaneous urticaria, lupus (SLE), fibromyalgia, polymyositis, and mixed connective tissue disease. (J. Malasig/Interaksyon)

Surrey expands free Large Item Pickup program for faster service

Surrey, B.C. – Surrey residents can start the year with a cleaner home and neighbourhood by taking advantage of the City’s free Large Item Pickup program, now offering quicker service.

With more collection trucks in operation, residents can schedule pickups within two to three weeks, making it easier to responsibly dispose of bulky household items like old furniture, appliances, mattresses, and electronics.

Households can schedule a curbside pickup for up

to six large items per year, while homes with registered secondary suites qualify for up to eight items.

“Providing residents with free and convenient options to dispose of unwanted items is an important part of keeping Surrey clean,” said Mayor Brenda Locke. “We’ve added more vehicles so residents can schedule pickups even sooner, leaving no excuse for illegal dumping.”

Residents can book a Large Item Pickup online at surrey.ca/largeitems or by calling

604-590-7289 (press 3). Items placed at the curb without a confirmed booking may be considered illegally dumped and could be subject to fines.

For larger quantities or immediate disposal, residents can drop off unwanted items for free or at low cost at Surrey’s two recycling and waste facilities: the Central Surrey Recycling and Waste Centre (154 Street and 67 Avenue) and the North Surrey Recycling and Waste Centre (9770 192 Street).

By using the Large Item Pickup service or local recycling and

waste facilities, residents can help keep Surrey’s neighbourhoods clean and safe.

For more information on the Large Item Pickup service, visit surrey.ca/largeitems.

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ABS-CBN expresses gratitude to viewers and partners, celebrates growing viewership on ALLTV2

With growing viewers tuning in to Kapamilya Channel sa ALLTV2, ABS-CBN marked a milestone moment with the “ASAP Presents All2gether Kapamilya: A Grand Pasasalamat” special episode, thanking its viewers and partners last Sunday (February 1).

The musical event featured cast members from ABS-CBN shows like “FPJ’s Batang Quiapo,” “ROJA,” “What Lies Beneath,” and “It’s Showtime,” which started airing on ALLTV2 last month and continue to be a hit as more and more audiences tune in to the channel to enjoy their favorite Kapamilya shows.

“FPJ’s Batang Quiapo” star Coco Martin expressed his gratitude to viewers and partners who continuously support ABS-CBN’s mission to showcase Filipino stories.

“Maraming pagkakataon na punong-puno ng pagsubok ang ABS-CBN. Maraming pagkakataon na iinisip namin kung makakayanan pa ba namin ito? Pero dahil sa aming mga Kapamilya at sa aming partners, patuloy kaming lumalaban, bumabangon, at ipagpapatuloy namin itaguyod ito para makapagbigay saya at inspirasyon para sa lahat ng Pilipino,” the Primetime King said.

Moreover, ABS-CBN’s upcoming shows, such as Kathryn Bernardo and James Reid’s “Someone, Someday” and Kim Chiu and Paulo Avelino’s “The Alibi: Ang Buong Katotohanan,” were teased as new Kapamilya offerings that will air on ALLTV2 this year.

The special episode of “ASAP” also featured the New Gen Phenomenal



Loveteam, Donny Pangilinan and Belle Mariano, and their upcoming Star Cinema film reunion this 2026.

“ASAP” is now airing on Kapamilya Channel sa ALLTV2. Turn on your digital black box, press the scan button on the remote control, and look for ALLTV2.

Don't miss the second part of “ASAP Presents All2gether Kapamilya: A Grand Pasasalamat” this Feb. 8 (Sunday), 11:55am on Kapamilya Channel sa ALLTV2, Kapamilya Online Live, A2Z, iWant, and TFC. (abs-cbn entertainment)



#InTheServiceOfTheFilipino

The stories Filipinos don't skip

“Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho” (KMJS) has sustained its relevance by remaining anchored in stories that inform, connect and resonate with Filipino audiences.

For more than two decades, the program has been a fixture in Filipino households, translating viral moments, public service reports, emotional reunions and in-depth interviews with newsmakers and influential figures into accessible and meaningful television.

In 2025, KMJS sharpened its editorial focus, placing greater emphasis on investigative reporting that examined community issues and allegations of corruption with depth and accountability. Despite competing against lighter entertainment fare on Sunday nights, the program continued to draw viewers, with ratings and digital engagement underscoring sustained public interest in stories that help audiences understand the realities shaping their lives.

From January to December 2025, KMJS once again emerged as the most watched program in the Philippines. Data from Nielsen TV Audience Measurement showed that the program recorded a combined GMA and GTV people rating of 12.8 percent in Total Philippines and 14.4 percent in Urban Philippines.

The performance secured KMJS the distinction of being the number one program nationwide for the second consecutive year, following its top ranking in 2024. Beyond the figures, the milestone reflected the program's continued credibility and the enduring trust of Filipino viewers.

While television remains its primary platform, KMJS has expanded its reach far beyond its Sunday night broadcast, connecting with Filipinos across the globe through digital platforms.

In 2025, KMJS videos generated a total of 4.7 billion views across social media, including 1.6 billion views on Facebook, 1.8 billion on TikTok and 1.3 billion on YouTube. As of January 2026, the program had amassed a combined following of more than 45

million across platforms. “We owe our ratings and metrics to our loyal viewers and followers,” said Jessica. “Maraming, maraming salamat po. 2025 was KMJS’ 20th and most challenging year. We would not have made it without your loyalty and support.”

Jessica Soho marked her 40th year in broadcasting in 2025, a milestone that coincided with one of the most sustained and demanding periods of investigative reporting in her career. While investigative journalism has long been a cornerstone of her work, 2025 stood out for the scope and consistency of field reports she personally led nationwide.

During the year, Soho covered major earthquakes in Cebu and Davao, documented the devastation caused by Typhoons Tino and Uwan and reported from mining sites in Rizal and Palawan that have long faced opposition from local communities. She also examined dredging activities linked to shoreline erosion in Zambales, reinforcing her commitment to ground-level reporting on issues with long-term consequences.

Central to this investigative push was the “Katakot-takot na Kurakot” series, which reached its 16th installment as of this writing. The series, which examined alleged corruption and anomalous government projects, became a focal point of public discourse and the most watched KMJS segment online in 2025, with more than 90 million views across Facebook, YouTube and TikTok.

In 2025, Soho's influence and credibility were further reflected in invitations to speak at major academic and leadership gatherings, including the “National Schools Press Conference” and the “Global Youth Summit.” She also served as commencement speaker at the “University of the Philippines Diliman,” where excerpts from her address circulated widely on social media and resonated with a younger generation.

Public trust in Soho was likewise affirmed through several recognitions, including her being inducted as one of six inaugural members of the “Rolling Stone Hall of Fame.”



Throughout 2025, KMJS used its platform not only to report on current issues but to provide context and understanding around stories affecting everyday Filipino life. By treating storytelling as a means of awareness and accountability, the program continued to serve as a space for national conversation.

“We promise to continue telling

the stories of our country and our people, the best way we possibly can. We have always believed in the power of stories to not only inspire and change lives, but to shine a light on issues that our people need to know,” Jessica said.

“Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho” airs every Sunday at 8:20 pm on GMA 7. (Malaya Entertainment News)

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Love, Action, and More: GMA Pinoy TV Unveils Next Wave of Entertainment in February!



GMA Pinoy TV, the home of Global Pinoys, delivers an exciting and diverse program lineup that promises to entertain audiences in February. Viewers can look forward to a new season of a favorite program, a new action-drama series, a collection of classic and contemporary love stories from Philippine cinema, and must-watch Kapuso shows.

“Never Say Die,” the new series from GMA, kicks off the pulse-pounding action in February. Star of the Next Gen Jillian Ward and Pambansang Ginoo David Licaucó come together for their first on-screen pairing in a world where truth is dangerous and justice comes at a price. Joining the action-packed drama is an elite ensemble featuring Richard Yap, Kim Ji Soo, Angelu de Leon, and Raymart Santiago. Also joining them are Winwyn Marquez, Analyn Barro, Raheel Bhyria, seasoned artists Wendell Ramos, Ayen Munji-Laurel, and Gina Alajar. Find out how far the fight for justice will go beginning on February 2.

Dance fanatics have a

new season of “Stars on the Floor” to look forward to, and a fresh lineup of COLLABanan! Asia’s Multimedia Star and Box Office King Alden Richards returns as host, together with the show’s dance authorities led by Kapuso Primetime Queen Marian Rivera, Dance Trend Master Coach Jay, and the latest addition, Kapuso Total Heartthrob Rayver Cruz! Get ready to groove on February 15.

Global Pinoys can also look forward to romantic movies as GMA Pinoy TV celebrates the month of love.

On “FPJsaGMA,” Fernando Poe, Jr. plays the romantic lead in “Batya’t Palu-Palo” and “Mahal, Ginagabi Ka Na Naman.”

“Batya’t Palu-Palo,” with Vilma Santos, is about the unlikely romance that blooms between a rich heiress who pretends to be a washerwoman and a humble plumber. Is true love possible between two souls from vastly different worlds? Discover on February 1.



In “Mahal, Ginagabi Ka Na Naman,” co-starring Susan Roces, laughter and action await audiences as a loving and obedient husband juggles raising a family while battling neighborhood bad guys. Get ready for fun and romance on February 8.

Meanwhile, GMA Pinoy Blockbuster unveils “Love Month,” featuring tender yet powerful love stories “Ikaw Lang Ang Mahal” and “More Than Blue.”

“Ikaw Lang ang Mahal,” with Zanjoe Marudo and Kylie Versoza, is a steamy romance set in picturesque Sagada. A filmmaker and a prize-winning novelist meet in the mountains and

begin a sizzling affair. Find out if their passion for art and each other will lead to more on February 15.

“More Than Blue,” starring JC Santos and Yassi Pressman, is the Philippine remake of a popular Korean romantic drama. The film explores the lives of childhood best friends who grow up together.

They begin to fall for each other, but a terrible secret prevents them from confessing their true feelings. Will their love survive? Get ready

NEXT PAGE PLEASE...

Sylvia Sanchez finds family in 'ImPerfect' Down syndrome cast



Sylvia Sanchez, the chief operating officer of Nathan Studios.

by actress Sylvia Sanchez, the chief operating officer of Nathan Studios.

“Today is very special for Nathan Studios and for our artists. This is not just signing a contract—it is the start of a dream we are building together,” Sylvia said after the event.

Sylvia also said, “At Nathan Studios, we believe talent has no limits. It is not about labels, but about heart, hard work, and courage. These artists with Down syndrome have great skill, creativity, and honesty that comes from the heart.

The stars of “I’mPerfect,” who have Down syndrome, are now part of the Nathan Studios team.

This happened after Krystel Go, Earl Amaba, and other cast members signed a contract with Nathan Studios at a simple ceremony in Quezon City on Feb. 3. They were accompanied by their parents.

The new stars were welcomed



Sylvia Sanchez, of Nathan Studios; Ice, winner of ‘Time to Dance,’ and ‘I’mPerfect’ Down syndrome cast pose for a photo during a contract signing in Quezon City on Feb. 3. (Facebook)

artists, but as people with stories and voices who can inspire others,” Sylvia said.

Sylvia said she now thinks of the “ImPerfect” stars as family. She shared that they have many endorsements and new projects coming. “I am so happy that they are getting so much support.”

The award-winning actress said her family also plays a role in deciding whether to sign new stars to Nathan Studios.

“My family knows about this and fully supports it. I just speak for them. We want these artists to be heard, seen, loved, and accepted by everyone,” she said.

Sylvia said that more people now accept the stars. “We go to malls, and people want photos with them. It’s fun. We just need a little more push. We want them to be seen by everyone. That’s what Nathan Studios wants to achieve.”

Sylvia shared that she did not plan to manage new stars until she met the “I’mPerfect” cast. “I have my own career and family,

but when I met them, we didn’t want to part. I saw they could really do it. I feel it is my calling to help them.”

Aside from artists in I’mPerfect, the event also served as a contract signing for Ice, the winner of the dance competition “Time To Dance” on ABS-CBN.

“Even though we are mainly a production company, this contract is our way to honor our artists as they grow in and outside of show business.

“We cannot promise everything, but we will do our best to guide you and help you reach your dreams.

“This contract means we trust each other. I also want to thank the parents for their support, trust, and love, which help these children be strong,” Sylvia said.

Sought to comment on impressions that she is the new Mother Lily Monteverde of modern days, Sylvia said, “No! Mother Lily is way, way up there. She is incomparable.”

(R. Requintina/mb.com.ph)

GMA PINOY TV....

for an emotional journey on February 22.

Coming in February as well are GMA Pinoy TV’s original programs and digital content, giving Global Pinoy more entertainment across various platforms.

Kapuso 101 gives viewers exclusive access to interviews, behind-the-scene-insights, plus personal stories shared by Kapuso celebrities, beginning with the cast of “House of Lies,” led by Beauty Gonzalez, Kris Bernal, Mike Tan, Martin del Rosario, and Sparkle artists Kayla Davies, Angel Cadao, Geo Mhanna, and Kokoy de Santos.

More inspiring stories of Filipinos abroad are

also coming soon with new episodes of “Global Pinoy of the Week”, award-winning originals, “GMA Pinoy TV Podcast” and “Hanap ng Puso: A Global Pinoy Story.”

Aside from its new offerings, Global Pinoy can keep enjoying beloved Kapuso programs on GMA Pinoy TV: “Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho,” “Fast Talk With Boy Abunda,” “Encantadia Chronicles: Sang’gre,” “Tadhana,” “Unang Hirit,” “Bubble Gang,” and many more.

Keep watching GMA Pinoy TV for the latest programs and movies showcasing favorite Kapuso stars!

To subscribe to GMA Pinoy TV, visit www.gmanetwork.com/international/subscribe.



Vic Sotto & Pauleen Luna's renewal of vows for their 10th wedding anniversary



Pauleen Luna shared that the idea of renewing their vows to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary on January 30 came from her husband, Vic Sotto.

"Siguro naisip ni Vic na it is something to celebrate. It is not easy, I mean especially nowadays, it is not easy na makarating ng 10 [years], so it's very special for us," Pauleen shared in a video captured during the renewal of vows ceremony and posted by Nice Print Photo on YouTube.

She added that she feels more excited than nervous about the event highlighting: "This is not from nervousness, it's from a feeling of excitement kasi parang now it's more meaningful 'cause 10 years na and the idea of having a renewal came from my husband so siyempre ang ganda ko."

Pauleen expressed her gratitude to Vic for the years they shared as a couple. "To my husband I just want to thank him for making me feel like we are one, we are one unit. We've been tested, not us, but may mga pagsubok na dumating of course sa buhay namin, but I've never felt even a single probability na matitibag kami, so I just want to thank for always, always being there and for always choosing me," she remarked.

The couple's renewal of vows video also features the preparations and the highlights of the ceremony, which was attended by Vic and Pauleen's friends and family.

Following their renewal of vows, Pauleen took to social media to reflect on the ceremony. "Yesterday was a dream .When my husband first told me he

wanted to get married again, I honestly didn't think he was serious. Everyone knows how much he values small, meaningful moments over anything grand. But looking back now, I am so incredibly grateful that he wanted to do this again," she posted on her Instagram page.

After being together for 10 years, Pauleen described the ceremony as powerful. "Ten years after our first wedding, with two kids by our side, this vow renewal just hits differently. Now that we've truly lived marriage, seen that it's not only happy moments and butterflies, renewing our vows feels even more powerful. Saying those words again, this time with deeper understanding and intention, gives them so much more meaning. Celebrating our union again after ten years only strengthens and solidifies what we share," she said.

The actress then expressed her gratitude to Vic for the love he provided her all these years. "I want to honor my husband for loving me fully, for always respecting me, for choosing me every single day, and for valuing me so deeply. I love you beyond words, and I will love you forever," she said.

Pauleen also thanked the Lord for blessing their marriage. "Above all, our greatest thanks go to our Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you, Father, for Your grace, for sustaining us as a couple, for filling us with love for one another when we need it most, and for Your faithfulness to us. We are here because of You, and we celebrate You. We love You, Jesus. We are nothing without You," she remarked.

Vic and Pauleen tied the knot on January 30, 2016 at St. James the Great Parish Church in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

The couple welcomed their first daughter, Talitha Maria on November 6, 2017. Their family grew again with the birth of their second daughter, Thia Marceline on January 23, 2024. (Tff.C./Push Team/abs-cbn/photos from Nice Print Photography)



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Nic Chien, son of Lea Salonga, talks about his dad's new love



relationship, and it's totally fine with me. My dad is with another woman. A very lovely woman, she is my stepmother and I love her very much, but that doesn't mean I'm betraying my mom, I love my mom more, of course, because she is my biological mom," Nic said.

Nic also clarified that his father, Robert, did not cheat on Lea when they parted ways.

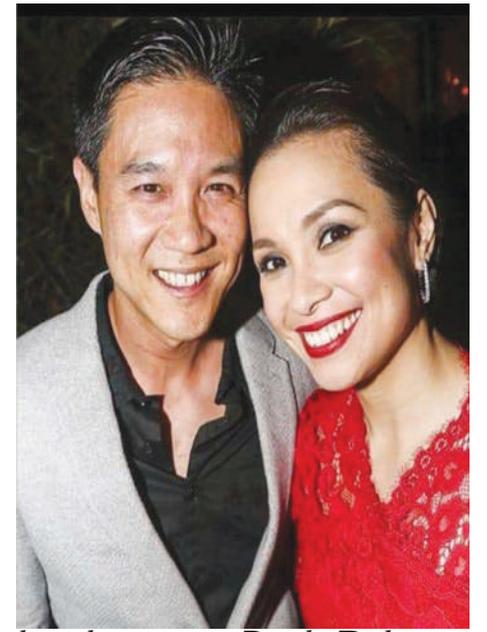
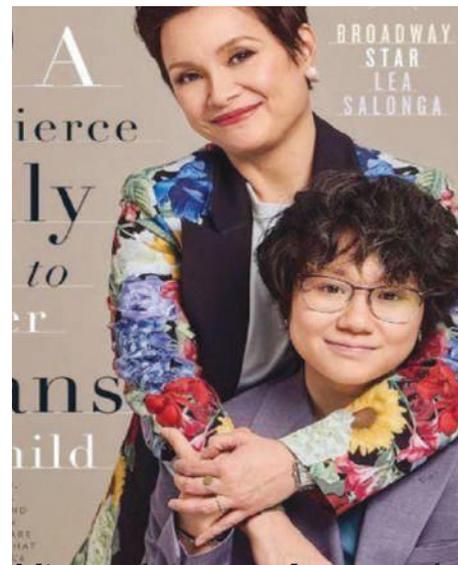
"My parents are on very good terms. My dad never cheated on my mom, that's number one, and my parents are still friends, that's number two, and they love each other, but they don't love each other romantically; they care about each other very much, and they both love me very much," Nic added.

Despite his parents' separation, Nic received unwavering support and love from both

After Lea Salonga confirmed her separation from Robert Chien, their son, Nic, spoke candidly about their relationship.

In an interview for the magazine show "Rated Korina" with Korina Sanchez, Nic shared that his parents maintain a civil relationship and that his father is now in a new relationship.

"They can both pursue a



Nic with mom, Lea and right photo are Dad, Robert, with mom Lea

when he came out as bisexual. "I'm bisexual, I'm okay with saying that out loud. I figured that out in grade 5, and my parents at the time. I don't blame them for this. They were like, "Are you sure? You're very

young, you could change your mind, don't label yourself right away", that's what they told me, and I'm very fortunate to have supportive parents," Nic said.

(C. Alcantara/mb.com.ph)

Gretchen Barretto, Claudine and Joaquin reunite at mom Inday's wake

The Barretto siblings, Claudine, Joaquin, and Gretchen, have reunited at their mother, Inday Barretto's, wake.

On Instagram, Joaquin Barretto shared photos of himself with sisters Gretchen and Claudine as they mourned their mother's passing.

In one photo, Claudine is seen resting her head on Gretchen's shoulder.

"I love you both so much. Mom is smiling in heaven. Wish come true for Mom. Thank you, Lord," Joaquin wrote.

In a separate post, Claudine shared a montage of the same photos and wrote, "Mommy, we're

all here. We love you."

Marjorie Barretto, who shared a touching tribute to her mom a few days after her death was announced, was not seen in JJ's post. Inday passed away on January 29.

Following the announcement of her death, Claudine took to social media to thank all her siblings for taking part in caring for their mom.

Shortly after, Marjorie's daughters, Dani and Claudia, posted their tributes for their lola. (—H.J. Tunac/LA, GMA Integrated News)



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Philippines joins Canada in 2026 Michelin top dining destinations

By Carlito Pablo

The Philippines has arrived on the global culinary stage, joining Canada on a list of top dining destinations in the world this year.

The Michelin Guide, which is regarded as the gold standard for dining, has included the two countries in its report titled "The Best Places to Travel in 2026 for Food Lovers: 16 Must-Visit Destinations".

Canada first landed on the Michelin map in 2022 when it gave 74 restaurants in Toronto its stamp of approval.

With the inclusion of the Philippines, "Filipino food claims its global moment", the guide stated.

Citing Manila and Cebu as hot spots for dining, the Michelin report noted that a "host of local young chefs with independent styles are now leading an emerging wave of food culture steeped in balancing traditional and international techniques".

"Still at the heart of Manila's local cuisine are savory staples such as sisig, sinigang, misal and adobo. These dishes showcase a balance of sweet, salty and acidic flavors through the skilled use

of regional fruits, spices and cooking techniques like marinating and grilling."

"In terms of vibe," the report continued, "Manila is a sprawling metropolis with a mix of traditional neighborhoods and skyscrapers, and this contrasting setting mirrors the various influences in its food scene."

"The city buzzes with modern dining rooms that mix American, Chinese, and Spanish influences, while Filipino food is a blend of the country's diverse traditions."

As for Cebu, this coastal city and second-largest metropolitan area in the Philippines is a "well-developed, iconic destination known for its beaches and swanky resorts".

"Here, the developing food scene is very much focused on seafood. January to March offers the best weather, best produce and best atmosphere," the Michelin guide said about Cebu.

For places to stay in Manila, it cited the Grand Hyatt Manila "for a rooftop pool" or the Shangri-La the Fort "for top service".

"In Cebu, the One-Key Dusit Thani Mactan Cebu Resort or Crimson Resort & Spa Mactan are great beachside options."

The 2026 Michelin selection features 108 establishments across Manila and its environs and Cebu.

One of these is the Pares Batchoy Food House in Cebu.

"Unpretentious and enduringly popular, this restaurant champions Filipino comfort food. Standouts include the stewed beef noodle soup, pares batchoy, and seared stuffed bangus, a delicately balanced milkfish specialty," a Michelin writeup stated about the Cebu establishment.

As for Canadian dining destinations, Quebec and Vancouver made the top 16 list of Michelin for 2026.

The guide described Quebec cuisine as a "food cul-



SEARED STUFFED BANGUS

The Michelin Guide has taken note of the seared stuffed bangus (milkfish) from Pares Batchoy Food House in Cebu, shown here in photo from the social media of the restaurant.

ture built on seasonality, restraint and French influences".

"Montréal's inventive bistros coexist with rural tables celebrating maple, game and cold-water seafood. September is ideal, when harvest flavors peak and landscapes glow. In 2026, Québec feels fully international — distinct, grounded and quietly expressive."

Where to stay in Quebec? "High-end Hôtel Place d'Armes (One MICHELIN

Key) is a favorite place to stay in Québec, as is the laid-back Petit Hotel..."

As a host city for the 2026 World Cup, the Michelin guide stated that Vancouver is stepping "onto a global stage it's long deserved".

"The city's culinary strength lies in its Pacific geography and cultural mix: pristine seafood, Asian influences and a growing spotlight on Indigenous cooking. New waterfront developments and hotel openings add momentum. Visit in sum-

mer 2026, when outdoor dining thrives and the city's natural beauty becomes part of the table."

As for places to stay, the guide stated that it has a handful of top hotels, including the Rosewood Hotel Georgia, and Wedgewood.

"In 2026, the world's most exciting trips begin at the table," Michelin Guide travel editor Rooksana Hossensally wrote in her report.

Hossensally noted that food

has "become one of the clearest indicators of where the world is going next".

"In 2026, that pull is felt everywhere, from obvious Italian heavyweights like Venice and the Amalfi Coast — where a smattering of luxury hotels are due to launch and an upscale new train from Paris will serve to sharpen already-famous tables — to places that are only just stepping into the light."

The 13 other top dining destinations in the 2026 list are Venice, Italy; Czechia; The Dolomites, Italy; Wrocław,

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Circulo Pampangueno Celebrates Four Decades of Service, Unity, and Giving Back



The Circulo Pampangueno Association, one of the longest-surviving Filipino organizations in British Columbia, celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2025.

For four decades, the association has demonstrated compassion and community spirit by extending aid to calamity victims, rebuilding chapels in Pampanga and Tarlac, supporting underprivileged students through scholarship programs, and working collaboratively with Filipino Canadian community organizations in British Columbia, including supporting initiatives toward the establishment of the Filipino Cultural Centre.

To welcome the New Year, Circulo Pampangueno held Winter Wonderland, a special celebration on January 10, 2026, at St. Patrick's Gym in Vancouver.

The event marked the official start of the two-year term of officers inducted during the October Gala, including the beginning of President Edith Montemayor's term, her 65th birthday celebration, and a Scholarship Program Fundraiser.

In the Philippines, CPABC carried out its Giving Back Programs, including the CPABC Feeding Program 2025 in Minalin, Pampanga.

The Handog Mula sa Puso Feed Program and Gift Giving was held on December 16, 2025, at Sta. Monica Multi-Purpose Hall, in partnership with Efren Macapinlac, Minalin Men & Women of the Sacred Heart, and Amado Mercado Jr. and Family. Another feeding program took



place at Sta. Rita Elementary School, Minalin, this time in partnership with Bong Nicolas and school officials.

The 13-day feeding program successfully concluded on January 21, marking its 13th and final feeding day.

Several Circulo Pampangueno officers hosted and treated the organization's scholars to two meaningful dinner gatherings in Pampanga.

On January 23, at Gerry's SM San Fernando, President Edith Montemayor and Past President Arman Arellano spent quality time with the CP scholars. This was followed by another dinner on January 31 at Cabalen Restaurant, Robinsons Mall, together with CP Treasurer Luz Bucad and Noel Bucad and Past President Arman Arellano.

Both occasions were attended by CP scholars Renzo Becilla, James Pantig, Ayay Zablan, Marco Armas, Erica De Jesus, and John Paul P. Salunga, providing an opportunity for fellowship, encouragement, and continued support for their academic journey.

With meaningful programs to

reflect on and a strong start to the year, Circulo Pampangueno looks forward to continuing its mission of service, unity, and giving from the heart.



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81 & Dancing: The unstoppable Boots Anson-Roa Rodrigo

At 81, Boots Anson-Roa Rodrigo shows that it's never too late to follow your passion. Her story reminds us that age is just a number and dreams never fade if you keep them in your heart.

During her 81st birthday celebration at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan, last Jan. 30, Boots took to the dance floor with her family and friends to "(I Had) The Time of My Life," which drew cheers.

"I love dancing. I am blessed with so many things. I hope to dance in 'ASAP' with Charo Santos and Helen Gamboa," said Boots as she laughed during an interview when asked about the things she still wants to do at this point.

Boots continues to embrace new challenges and opportunities; she stars alongside Charo Santos and Barbie Forteza in the upcoming drama film "Until She Remembers," directed by Brillante Mendoza, set to premiere on Feb. 25.

Asked about the gratitude at her age, Boots said, "One, that I woke up this morning. Many people did not, especially many people my age. I have a terrible schedule, but God gave me a surge of adrenaline."

Boots expressed deep gratitude for her enduring career in showbiz. Her advice to young dreamers: "Showbiz is a blessing—a place of



(L-R) Husband Atty. Francisco 'King' Rodrigo Jr., celebrant Boots Anson-Roa-Rodrigo, Charo Santos and Barbie Forteza.

growth, learning, and incredible challenges. It's not just glitz and glamour; it demands hard work, discipline, and heart. If you feel called to it, pursue your dream passionately, but always keep your eyes and mind open to the lessons along the way."

Admired for her kindness and grace, Boots has always chosen empathy and understanding.

"Wala naman akong tinarayan sa showbiz, but there are a lot of times I get angry. But I never let my anger affect me. Hindi ako nagpatalo. (I've never had conflicts with anyone in showbiz, though I've often felt angry. However, I never let my anger control or affect me.)"

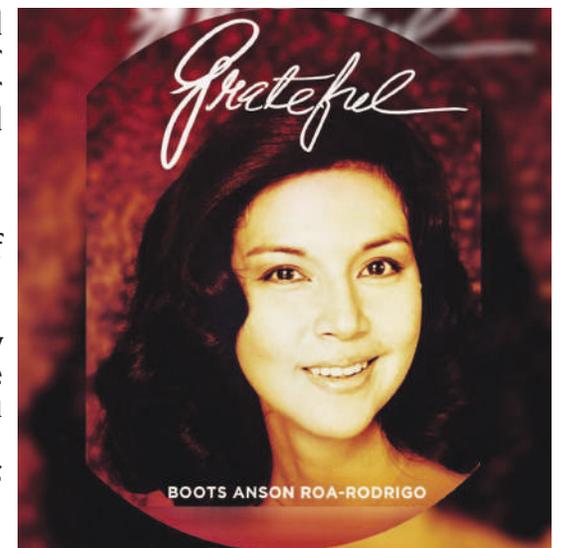
On her birthday, Boots launched her book, "Grateful," dedicating its proceeds to MOWELFUND (Movie Workers Welfare Foundation, Inc.), where she leads with a spirit of generosity and service.

Movie and Television Review

and Classification Board (MTRCB) Board Member Nestor Cuartero, co-editor of "Grateful," described the book.

"In a way, it's a tell-all book. She spoke of the stages of her life.

It's beautiful. She's very open. There's a part in the book that says things you didn't know about Boots, where she defies her public image," Nestor said. (R. Requintina/mb.com.ph)



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No third party: Barbie Imperial addresses controversy



After confirming her relationship with Richard Gutierrez, actress Barbie Imperial clarified that she had no involvement in the breakup between her current boyfriend and his ex-wife, Sarah Lahbati.

Despite being called names, Barbie said that people close to her know the truth.

"Kung ano man po yung naging rason ng hiwalayan nilang dalawa, masasabi ko po at alam ng Diyos po na hindi po ako yun tito. Alam po ng buong showbiz yan—ng mga nakakakilala kay Richard, kay Sarah, and sa akin (Whatever the reason

behind their separation may be, I can say—and God knows—that it wasn't me, Tito. The entire showbiz industry knows that, especially those who know Richard, Sarah, and me)," she stated.

Acknowledging Richard and Sarah's past relationship, Barbie

NEXT PAGE PLEASE....

Congratulations: 2026 Officers of the ANAFVets Unit 26!

Vancouver, January 11, 2026.-- Rev. Expedito Farinas, the Rector of St. Mary the Virgin South Hill church was installed as the Padre of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans (ANAFVets) Unit 26.

The installation of the new officers was held at the ANAFVets building located at 727 49th Avenue, Vancouver, BC.

Congratulations to the 2026 officers of the ANAFVets Unit 26:

President: Comrade Inder Malawarair

Vic President: Comrade Steve Foster

Executives: Comrade Jude Ling Chuong
Comrade Keith Singer
Comrade David Smythe

Past President: Comrade Cris Da Silva

The ANAFVets 26 is a friendly, not for profit veterans club. It is described as a “welcoming haven for veterans and their families, offering a space where stories are shared, friendships are forged, and memories are cherished.” Visit their Facebook Page - Army Navy and Airforce Club Unit26.

ANAFVETS Unit 26 building “embodies a sense of community and support, providing a place where individuals with shared experiences can come together to unwind and connect. From hosting events that celebrate service and sacrifice to fostering a sense of belonging among its members, this social club stands as a testament to the enduring bond that unites those who have served in the armed forces.”

Follow the ANAFVets 26 on the FB page “Army Navy and Air Force Club Unit 26”.

(Submitted by Erie Maestro)



Photo collage: The installation of officers of ANAFVets Unit 26. Photo credit: St Mary the Virgin Church



The new Executive Team of ANAFVets 2026 with their Padre Rev. Expedito Farinas (front row, first from the right) Photo credit: St Mary the Virgin Church

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BARBIE ... FROM LAST PAGE

pointed out that what happened between them is not her story to tell.

“Alam po nilang pareho kung ano po yung reason ng hiwalayan po nila. Alam din po nila pareho na hindi po ako ‘yun and kung ano

man po yun, syempre hindi ko po istorya yon. Respeto ko po ‘yan kay Sarah, kay Richard, and sa dalawa po nilang anak (They both know the reason for their separation. They also both know that it wasn’t me, and whatever that reason may be, of course, it’s not my story to tell. I respect Sarah, Richard, and their two children),” she said.

Barbie also shared how her relationship with Richard has contributed to her personal growth.

“As in parang nag mature talaga ako, Tito, sa mga desisyon ko sa buhay.

Especially yung ano—thinking first, bago ako magsalita—Kasi dati kapag alam ko lang na tama ako, enough na ‘yun para idefend ko yung sarili ko. Pero dito ko natutunan mag-mature na kailangan pag-isipan ang mga desisyon na gagawin ko (I really became matured when it comes to the decisions I make in life, especially learning to think first before speaking. Before, as long as I knew I was right, that was enough for me to defend myself. But through this, I learned to mature and to carefully think through the decisions I make),” Barbie added.

(Elizza Callos, intern/ mb.com.ph)



Conrad Ricamora gets emotional on first visit to Filipino father's homeland

"How To Get Away With Murder" star Conrad Ricamora couldn't help but shed tears when he flew to the Philippines, the country of his father, for the first time.

On Saturday, January 31, the actor shared a video of himself in an airplane, with a view of the Philippines below.

He was seen smiling while shedding tears at the same time.

Conrad also waved to his viewers.

"60 years ago, my dad said goodbye to the Philippines as a 10-year-old, unsure if he'd ever return," he wrote on Instagram.

"Now, I'm here for the first time, walking in his shoes, on the soil of my ancestors, carrying him in my heart," the actor added.

Conrad also shared the same post on the Meta-owned Threads platform, where it has garnered over 12,400 likes and nearly 530 comments.

Several commenters also claimed to have spotted him at Ayala Malls Circuit in Makati.

"I saw [you] in Circuit Mall earlier and noticed you because of your voice," a Threads user commented.

Others, meanwhile, shared

that they could relate to how the actor felt during his visit to the Philippines.

"My family moved to California when I was 5... I went back for the first time last fall, 40 years later. I didn't know that I was missing the feeling of being home and being grounded in where I belonged until I was there, with family, [whom] I never met before, but [my] soul knew my whole life. Enjoy your journey to the motherland," a Threads user wrote.

"I just did this, walked on the streets of Dagupan, San Fabian, and Baguio, which my mother left in 1950. I soaked in every minute. Love my culture, food and the people. I miss hearing 'po' after each hello, goodbye, and thank you. Pinay through and through!!!" another said.

"Hugs. Have so much fun! I love the Philippines. I know that feeling too well. My dad (may he RIP) came to California 1971, went back frequently after retirement. After he died, I went back to visit. I don't know why we do this when we land. It's magic," a different Threads user shared.

Fellow Filipino actor Lea Salonga also welcomed Conrad in the comments section.

"Oh, I love this homecoming for you! Welcome, and see you so soon!" she commented.



Conrad Ricamora in this photo taken by Brian Bowen Smith and posted on the actor's Instagram on July 4, 2024 (conradricamora via Instagram)

Filipino-American actor Jon Jon Briones also dropped several heart emojis on Conrad's post.

Conrad starred as Oliver Hampton in the multi-awarded legal drama series "How To Get Away With Murder," alongside Viola Davis, portraying the partner of Connor Walsh.

He began as a recurring cast member and became a series regular during the show's final four seasons.

Apart from television, Conrad also

dabbled in theater. He previously appeared in productions such as "The King and I," "Soft Power," "Oh, Mary!" and "Here Lies Love," in which he portrayed Senator Ninoy Aquino.

The actor's father, Ron Ricamora, was said to be from Cebu and did not move back to the Philippines.

In 2023, Conrad shared a photo of himself with his dad from his childhood, captioned, "I am a Child of the Philippines." (J. Malasig/Interaksyon)

Jodi Sta Maria on exploring all seven continents: 'She believed, she kept going, and she did'



Kapamilya actress Jodi Sta. Maria has explored all seven continents of the world. In an Instagram Reel she posted earlier this week, she shared some of the photos she took in all of the places she visited throughout the years.

Jodi has traveled across Asia, Oceania, North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Antarctica—completing all seven continents.

"This little girl once prayed, I hope

I get to travel all seven continents. She believed, she kept going, and she did," she wrote.

In her video, the Kapamilya star can be seen in all seven continents which she has properly documented. Apart from visiting the continents, she made sure to go to the tourist destinations of each of them based on the photos she showed.

Jodi then told her followers how this was once just a dream for her and reminded each "dreamer" to continue believing in their dreams no matter what.

"To the dreamer reading this: If your dreams feel far right now, it's okay. Let them be. No need to rush..only to believe," she expressed.

"May you one day stand in the places you once only imagined. Literally and figuratively," she added.

The Kapamilya actress has been posting on her social media



accounts the various places she's been around the globe. She has also been sharing some information on each country she visited to give her followers an idea of what they could look forward to in case they want to visit it as well.

Some of her fans shared how happy they are as she completed all seven continents—a rare feat to do. Other netizens hoped that they could also travel the world and explore other cultures just as Jodi did.

"You're living the dream po, really an inspiration! Exploring

all 7 continents is such a powerful life goal. Sooo proud of you po, Ate Jods," a fan wrote.

"You are one of the people that inspired me to travel more! Today is my birthday and I chose to travel and not to eat out and it was the best! Always proud of you, ate Jods," another fan added.

Aside from promoting other countries, Jodi has also been uploading videos on her YouTube channel to showcase the tourist destinations of the Philippines. She made sure to promote the beauty of her own country as well. (D. Acierito/push Team; abs-cbn)

Ai-Ai on healing after marital breakup: 'Almost there'

MANILA, Philippines — Following the end of her marriage, Ai-Ai delas Alas is still in the healing period but she's getting there.

"Konti na lang," the veteran actress-comedienne told The STAR during a brief one-on-one after the presscon for her upcoming film "Batang Paco." Ai-Ai also appears to be not closing her doors to love, but is choosing to focus on herself first.

"Ang hirap kasi magsalita ng patapos eh," she explained. "But for now, parang hindi muna." She admitted, though, that being alone has not always been easy.

"Na-experience ko namalungkot din pala 'pag mag-isa ka, although kaya ko naman," she said.

Ai-Ai believes she has to fully address the emotional impact of what she went through before committing to a new partner or relationship.

"Siguro aalisin ko muna yung trauma ng pagiging TH ko... Yung tamang hinala na, 'Oh, baka ganito 'to, baka ganyan,'" she said.

"Hindi ka puwedeng mag-start ng ganun eh. No! The trauma has to go away first. Siguro maging buong-buo ako and then maybe. Not sure."

Ai-Ai, who is a naturalized American citizen (dual citizen), also clarified rumors circulating online that she was planning to have her estranged husband deported from the United States.

"Ba't ko naman siya ipapa-deport?" she pointed out. "I don't even know where he is now (his whereabouts). I just had his petition revoked. Matagal na yun."

During this healing period, Ai-Ai said she draws strength from her faith.

"Si God and si Mama Mary (keep me strong)," she said.

She consciously keeps a daily schedule filled with work and activities.

"Gym, Zumba, work... and baking! Gumagawa ako ng paraan para maging busy ako," the fitness buff shared, adding that she is eyeing the popular Hyrox training next.

Another source of motivation and joy nowadays is her first grandchild from her eldest Sancho — baby Mia Isabela delas Alas — who was born in Toronto, Canada.

"Ang cute cute niyang bata and hindi niya pinahihirapan si mommy niya. Madali din nanganak yung mommy niya. I'm so happy because she's such a beautiful baby. Ngayon, ka-text ko si Sancho, 'Mommy, hindi ko akalain kaya nating gumawa ng ganito kagandang bata,'" she happily shared.

Calling herself "Maimai," short for Mama Ai-Ai, the actress is preparing and willing to be hands-on as a grandmother.

"Isa sa reason bakit din ako nagpapalakas is becauseaalagaan ko yung apo ko. Ready ako 'pag tumakbo siya. Ready ako sa terrible two niya. 'Pag hindi na ready yung mga magulang niya, pagod na, nandito si Maimai, ready for her," Ai-Ai quipped.

Meanwhile, she responded in jest when asked about any plans for the fast-approaching Valentine's Day, "Sabi nila, 'pag daw mga matatayang na babae, hindi dapat Valentine's ang araw namin, dapat daw Araw ng Kagitingan (every April 9)."

"So yun na lang aantayin ko, yung Araw ng Kagitingan. Para dun ako eh."

Love can wait as Ai-Ai resumes a heavier workload ahead. This year, she's making her TV comeback via the TV5 series "My Bspren Emman." But before that, she's returning to the big screen with the dark family comedy "Batang Paco," directed by Rechie Del Carmen, written by Gina Marissa Tagasa and produced by actress-turned-



Ai-Ai delas Alas says she's currently focused on work. She's set to return to the big screen, playing a congresswoman in the dark family comedy 'Batang Paco.'

entrepreneur Ana Abiera del Moral as the first venture of MiVida Productions.

Aside from Ai-Ai, the film stars Empoy Marquez, Mon Confiado, Ynez Veneracion, Chichi Rita and Cassy Lavarias, with special

performances by Richard Quan, Alma Concepcion, Lara Morena, Natasha Ledesma, Kookoo Gonzales, Gerard Acao, Josh Ivan Morales, Kim Rodriguez, Jovi Vargas and Quentin Molo. It will hit theaters nationwide on Feb. 18. (N. Tomada/Philstar)

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AT THE MOVIES
By Robert Waldman

Running time: 1h 43m

Spooking!

Danger is in the air. Thick and thin drama engulfs a professional woman in search of the truth in A Private Life. People looking for an exceptionally well acted thriller designed to keep you guessing will have their prayers answered in this outstanding whodunnit from Mongrel Media now causing quite a stir at The Fifth Avenue Theatre in Vancouver.

For a change a sophisticated adult drama that's original hits the big screen. Despite its French pedigree it's easy to follow the subtitles in This wicked tale of an American psychiatrist now plying her trade in Paris France. Academy Award winning actress Jodie Foster (Silence of the Lambs) gets the call to play Dr. Lilian Steiner and she is brilliant. Normally what happens between Doctor and patient is supposed to be kept private. Not so here as when one of the good doctor's patients goes missing and worse it sets off an unbelievable chain of events.

With a death or two on the menu Dr Steiner tries to be a modern day Columbo minus the humour as she goes about her merry way in an effort to solve

A Private Life
(PG)****

this mysterious puzzle. With the help of former husband Gabriel Haddad the pair dive deeper and deeper into areas of the unknown, all the while trying to stare down their own personal baggage and demons . Also convincing is Daniel Auteuil as the wily ex spouse.

Full of raw emotion and pent-up angst A Private Life is truly full of surprises and boasts layer upon layer of superb performances. Director Rebecca Zlotowski also co-wrote this extremely smart well developed movie that is enthralling from start to finish. Why even James Bond baddie Mathieu Amalric (A Quantum of Solace) is on hand as Simon Cohen-Solal in this great ensemble cast.

For more reviews please visit my website moviereviewssite.com.



Scarlet. (14A) ***

Running time: 1h 51m

Relentless!

Vengeance can take many forms. Family ties can be enduring. See a young woman go to the ends of the earth and beyond to right a wrong in the eventful Scarlet. Presented locally by Sony Pictures Classics and Mongrel Media this foreign animated saga is quite different and unique.

And entertaining. So visit a far off land currently on view at Cineplex Cinemas in iMAX at the Riverport and in Coquitlam and Landmark Theatres across B.C. In Japanese with English subtitles that don't deter.

From Japan with love rises Scarlet. Step back in time before jettisoning off to the future as we track the plight of a rather disenchanted princess to right a wrong.

Once upon a time in The feudal past a sticky family feud develops between a Devil May care king and his well-serving brother. Bad blood develops runs deep in this time -bending saga that some say has a plot line reminiscent of Shakespeare.

Director/writer Mamoru Hosoda takes this originally titled Hateshinaki Sukaretto story and brings it to pulsating

life on the big screen. Hosoda has a born knack for storytelling and Scarlet truly is a visually stunning movie. While we may have seen this story before it moves here at a crackling pace and you do get caught up in all the family intrigue. With a never say die spirit you'll be hissing at the villain and pulling for the heroine all the way. Maybe a touch confusing with all the back and forth time leapfrogging Scarlet is kind of original and fun and well worth a look,

For more reviews please visit my website moviereviewssite.com.



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Caritas head urges focus on human dignity, not projects



Caritas Philippines president Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos presides over Mass Feb. 3, 2026, to formally open the 42nd National Social Action General Assembly at the Mother of Grace Convention Center in Tagaytay City. PHOTO COURTESY OF CARITAS PHILIPPINES

Catholic social action should focus on restoring human dignity rather than chasing projects or targets, the head of Caritas Philippines said Tuesday.

Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos warned that social ministry loses its purpose when it becomes driven by reports, funding cycles, and measurable outputs instead of

people.

“Our work cannot be reduced by projects, reports, or targets. These are necessary, but they are not the heart,” Alminaza said. “The heart is whether dignity is restored.”

He spoke during Mass to formally open the 42nd National Social

Action General Assembly (NASAGA) at the Mother of Grace Convention Center in Tagaytay City.

The gathering, which runs through Feb. 6, brought together some bishops, priests, consecrated persons, and laypeople involved in social action ministry in different dioceses across the country.

Alminaza said the Church must see the poor not as beneficiaries, but as partners who help shape their own future.

Listening deeply to communities is essential, he said, because injustice is often expressed through silence, damaged land and broken livelihoods.

“The most important voices are often the least heard — the poor, the displaced, the workers, indigenous communities, and today, even the wounded earth itself,” he said.

The bishop said dignity-centered work demands patience, especially when progress is slow and resistance from powerful interests remains strong.

“Pananagutan (responsibility) means we stay, even when results are not immediate,” Alminaza said, using the Filipino word for responsibility. He said faith-based action is not denial of hardship, but courage to continue working even when hope appears unreasonable.

“Reacting is easy. Responding is harder,” he said. “But only response rooted in faith leads to lasting change,” he said.

Alminaza linked dignity-based ministry to environmental and economic issues, saying wounded communities and damaged ecosystems reflect the same injustice.

As Caritas Philippines marks 60 years of organized social action, he urged church workers to deepen listening and long-term accompaniment. He said success should be measured not by completed projects, but by whether people stand with dignity and hope. (R. Lagarde/ CBCP News)

SPORTS

Tennis: Alex Eala marches to Abu Dhabi q'finals with comeback win vs. Belarusian foe

(UPDATED) Filipina tennis star Alex Eala showcased her remarkable fighting spirit yet again in advancing to the quarterfinals of the Abu Dhabi Open, early Thursday morning (Manila time). Eala battled back from a set down and a 0-4 deficit in the third set to stun Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus, 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

It was a sensational result for the 20-year-old, who appeared headed for the exit after a sluggish start in the decider but instead gutted out one of the most impressive wins of her young career.

“Napasubok talaga ‘yung tibay ng dibdib ko,” Eala said, addressing the Filipino fans that packed center court to watch her. “Sigurado ako na kayo din, kaya congrats mga kababayan. Mabuhay, maraming salamat po.”

“She started really well and in the tight moments, she also stepped up, especially with the serve,” she added. “I really tried in those moments to fight, I really tried to find the fight. In the end, when I was coming back, I was able to find it.

“So I’m really proud of that.”

World No. 45 Eala had entered with great momentum after an impressive 6-4, 6-3 win over Turkey’s Zeynep Sönmez in the first round.

She dropped the opener against the veteran Sasnovich, but appeared to have turned the match around after battling to a gritty victory in the second set, breaking the world No. 109 in the tenth game to force a decider.

Sasnovich broke her immediately in the first game of the third set, however, and reeled off four straight games to seize control.

Showing no quit, Eala held her serve to get on the board, then pounced on Sasnovich’s errors to make it 4-2. Sasnovich broke back to take a 5-2 lead, with back-to-back miscues by Eala handing the momentum back to her opponent.

With an opportunity to wrap up the win, however, Sasnovich faltered. She reached match point off an ace, only to double-fault and give Eala another opportunity. Sasnovich would save a break point with another ace, but a forehand error gave Eala a third



Filipina tennis ace Alex Eala faces Japan’s Himeno Sakatsume in the WTA 125 Philippine Women’s Open Round of 16 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center in Manila on January 28, 2026. Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News

break point and this time the Filipina took advantage.

Eala fired a backhand winner for a 5-3 count, and she rode that momentum to win the next three games for a stunning 6-5 advantage.

Sasnovich held her serve in the 12th game to force a tiebreak, with Eala committing back-to-back errors that kept her opponent in the hunt.

In a back-and-forth tiebreak, Eala benefited anew from Sasnovich’s miscues, with the veteran sending

a forehand into the net to put the Filipina at match point. Another Sasnovich error -- this time with her shot going wide -- sealed the deal for Eala in the marathon match.

Up next for the Filipina in the quarterfinals is a showdown with the second seed, Ekaterina Alexandrova of Russia. “I do have a long way to go,” Eala said afterward. “Each round is even more of a challenge. I’ll try my best to recover and prepare for that one.” (C.B. Naredo/ abs-cbn)

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AT THE MOVIES
By Robert Waldman

Running time: 2h 12m

Soul man!

Say the words Song Sung Blue and everyone in the world knows what it is.

Hey it's a famous song by a master musician. Man of all seasons Hugh Jackman is pitch perfect in his portrayal of the one and only Neil Diamond in this mesmerizing tale. Still holding over from Christmas this tough love drama is reeling them in at Cineplex Cinemas and Landmark Theatres across B.C. Now that's stying power.

What we have with Song Sung Blue is a tale of family. Two families to be exact. And it's a love story to boot.

Sparks eventually fly when down a down on his look imitation singer meets up with a feisty Patsy Kline songstress at your typical small town bar.

But there's nothing "typical" about the budding friendship both Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson convey as Mike and Claire.

After some initial reluctance the pair hook up and form their own act: a tribute band pretending to be Neil Diamond, and yes, they are good.

Life on the road can be both tough and grueling. Nd when the pair become more than just friends each brings

Song Sung Blue (PG) ****



their own family into the fray.

But just as things start cooking and the band become a local and state phenomenon an accident shatters their dreams.

This in when the film kicks into high gear s both Hudson and Jackman must come to terms with how fragile life really is.

Lesser actors would not be able to pull off this struggle but you feel these two characters care for one another and may be able to pull off some sort of comeback -in music and in life.

Party music, part romance and let drama Song Sung Blue turns out to be.

Solid and memorable movie that tugs at your heart strings and comes through as a rel feel good flick.

For more reviews please visit my website moviereviewssite.com.

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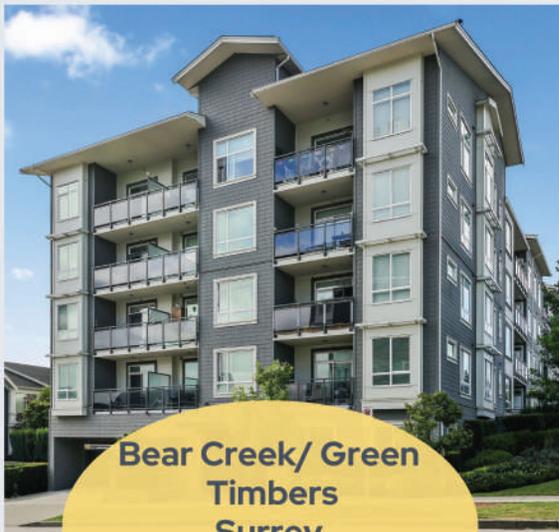
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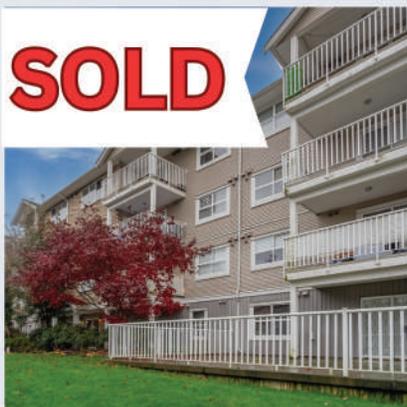
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